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Truth, Holiness,

Liberty, Love.

Vol. II.

MONTREAL, NOVEMBER, 1845.

No. 11.

## CHRIST NOT OF THE WORLD.

Jesus was not of the world; but see how he treated the world. There was one of its great ones came to him by night; and he rebuked that 'ruler of the Jews,' and censured his timidity, and disregarded his patronage, and admonished him to learn, and demanded of him manliness and consistency, if he would see the kingdom of heaven. See how he treated the world: there was one of its outcasts, who sought him not, but whose path he crossed, and whose penitence he marked, and whose soul he saved; and when she blessed him he did not frown; and when her gratitude, with trembling boldness, followed him to the rich man's table, and she anointed his feet with ointment and wiped them with her hair, amid a throng of scandalized and sneering hypocrites, he rolled back the tide of reproach and contempt with which the Pharisees thought to overwhelm him, his convert, and his cause, upon their own heads, leaving them prostrate and confounded before the insulted dignity of his pure and beneficent character.

The people sought to take him by force and make him a king. He fed their hunger, healed their sick, and retired from their solicitations to hold communion with his God in the mountain solitude. The Pharisees possessed public veneration, guided public opinion, wielded public fury. He arraigned them on their spiritual thrones, where they judged the tribes of Israel, that awful sanhedrim; he denounced their ostentatious devotions: he spoke at once of the long prayers they made, and the widows' houses they plundered; he laid bare their hidden iniquity, and he prophesied their coming destruction. He stood, defenceless and alone, before the corrupt and time-serving Pilate, the wantonly tyrannical Herod, the malignant and vindictive Caiaphas: amid a relentless priesthood, an insolent soldiery, and an infuriated multitude; alone and defenceless, but neither raging nor cringing; calm in the uncompromising majesty of innocence; and when they led him away as a lamb to the slaughter, it was evident that they were shedding the blood of 'the lamb of God.'

We may take another view of this contrast between the spirit of the world and the spirit of Christ, and turn our attention from the particular facts of his history which have been cited, to the dispositions which are implied in those and other facts of the gospel narrative. Thus the mere worldling is selfish, essentially and grossly selfish, seeking only personal enjoyment or personal aggrandizement. Christ gave his life for the world, not only in the act of parting with that life, but in its previous and entire devotion to the universal good of mankind. His existence in the world was one great act of disinterested sacrifice for the world's salvation. The worldling contracts a certain callousness of heart; his feelings lose their native quickness, purity, and delicacy. In Christ there was all the tenderness and sympathy of the unsophisticated child. He evinced the acutest susceptibility of all that acts upon humanity.

The worldling has an external smoothness and polish of manners, which is but external, and but manner; too often a mask. In the manners of Christ we trace nothing conventional, nothing artificial; but that 'grace was on his lips,' and in his looks, of which art never produced more than a feeble imitation, and which is the soul of benevolence within, manifesting itself by the bodily organs; beaming or melting in the eye; softening the voice to music; giving expression to the features; and regulating every gesture by its pervading and harmonizing influence. The worldling makes men his tools. He plays upon them, and he works with them. He thinks basely of them, and basely does he use them. With Christ every human being was a holy thing, not to be profaned, not to be sported with. If they were lost, he would recover them: if polluted, he would cleanse them; if desecrated, he would sanctify them afresh to their God: but still, in all its forms, he loved and venerated humanity. The worldling partakes

of the world's impurities. If he have not walled in wickedness, not shown himself in the loathsomeness of iniquity; yet its stains are on him; the gold of his nature is become dim; he has not escaped the contagious leprosy of vice. Christ was the friend of publicans and sinners; nor did he shun the intercourse of Scribes and Pharisees; he moved among them all; but the foul atmosphere of profligacy and hypocrisy became pure when he breathed it, purified by his presence; and when he penetrated earth's foulest mists, there was a light and a glory around him which they could neither defile nor obscure. The worldling is absorbed in the things of time and sense. The invisible to him is the non-existent. His morality is, 'Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.' He walks by sight and not by faith. All his desires and hopes crawl upon the earth; none mount upwards towards heaven, none fly onwards towards futurity. But while Christ trod the earth, he lived in heaven. By devout communion and spiritual perception, he was even then in the bosom of his Father. He had meat to eat which his disciples knew not of, living not by bread alone, but on the word of God. Invisible realities were not the less realities to him; they were ever present in his mind. God, and Providence, and immortality, and heaven, rose as distinctly on his soul, as the towers of Jerusalem and the hills of Judaea on his bodily sight. They entered into all his thoughts, feelings, motives, anticipations. The visible and the unseen were to him but parts of one whole; and death and resurrection but a slumbering and an awaking, to pursue the same objects, and go on in the same course. This world was ever in his view; but how small a portion of the whole that he contemplated! God and man, time and eternity, made up the moral universe in which he lived, moved, and had his being.

## DENUNCIATION AND EXCLUSION.

It is truly astonishing that Christians are not more impressed with the unbecoming spirit, the arrogant style of those who deny the Christian character to professed and exemplary followers of Jesus Christ, because they differ in opinion on some of the most subtle and difficult subjects of theology. A stranger at hearing the language of these denouncers, would conclude, without a doubt, that they were clothed with infallibility, and were appointed to sit in judgment on their brethren. But for myself, I know not a shadow of pretence for the language of superiority assumed by our adversaries. Are they exempted from the common frailty of our nature? Has God given them superior intelligence? Were they educated under circumstances more favorable to improvement than those whom they condemn? Have they brought to the Scriptures more serious, anxious, and unwearied attention? Or do their lives express a deeper reverence for God and for his Son? No. They are fallible, imperfect men, possessing no higher means, and no stronger motives for studying the word of God, than their Unitarian brethren. And yet their language to them is virtually this:—'We pronounce you to be in error, and in most dangerous error. We know that we are right, and that you are wrong, in regard to the fundamental doctrines of the gospel. You are unworthy the Christian name, and unfit to sit with us at the table of Christ. We offer you the truth, and you reject it at the peril of your souls.' Such is the language of humble Christians to men, who in capacity and apparent piety are not inferior to themselves. This language has spread from the leaders through a considerable part of the community. Men in those walks of life which leave them without leisure or opportunities for improvement, are heard to decide on the most intricate points, and to pass sentence on men whose lives have been devoted to the study of the scriptures. The female, forgetting the tenderness of her sex, and the limited advantages which her education affords for a critical study of the scriptures, inveighs with bitterness against the damnable errors of such men as Newton, Locke, Clarke and Price! The young, too, forget the mo-

desty which belongs to their age, and hurl condemnation on the head which has grown grey in the service of God and mankind. Need I ask, whether this spirit of denunciation for supposed error becomes the humble and fallible disciples of Jesus Christ?

In vindication of this system of exclusion and denunciation, it is often urged, that the 'honor of religion,' the 'purity of the Church,' and the 'cause of truth,' forbid those who hold the true gospel, to maintain fellowship with those who support corrupt and injurious opinions. Without stopping to notice the modesty of those who claim an exclusive knowledge of the true gospel, I would answer, that the 'honor of religion' can never suffer by admitting to Christian fellowship men of irreproachable lives, whilst it has suffered most severely from that narrow and uncharitable spirit which has excluded such men for imagined errors. I answer again, that 'the cause of truth' can never suffer by admitting to Christian fellowship men who honestly profess to make the scriptures their rule of faith and practice, whilst it has suffered most severely by substituting for this standard conformity to human creeds and formularies. It is truly wonderful, if excommunication for supposed error be the method of purifying the church, that the church has been so long and so woefully corrupted. Whatever may have been the deficiencies of Christians in other respects, they have certainly discovered no criminal reluctance in applying this instrument of purification. Could the thunders and lightnings of excommunication have corrected the atmosphere of the church not one pestilential vapor would have loaded it for ages. The air of Paradise would not have been more pure, more refreshing. But what does history tell us? It tells us, that the spirit of exclusion and denunciation has contributed more than all other causes to the corruption of the church, to the diffusion of error: and has rendered the records of the Christian community as black, as bloody, as revolting to humanity, as the records of empires founded on conquest and guilt.

But it is said, Did not the apostle denounce the erroneous, and pronounce a curse on the 'abettors of another gospel?' This is the strong hold of the friends of denunciation. But let us never forget, that the apostles were inspired men, capable of marking out with unerring certainty those who substituted 'another gospel' for the true. Show us their successors, and we will cheerfully obey them.

It is also important to recollect the character of those men, against whom the apostolic anathema was directed. They were men who knew distinctly what the apostles taught, and yet opposed it; and who endeavored to sow division, and to gain followers, in the churches which the apostles had planted. These men, resisting the known instructions of the authorised and inspired teachers of the gospel, and discovering a factious, selfish, mercenary spirit, were justly excluded as unworthy the Christian name. But what in common with these men have the Christians whom it is the custom of the 'Orthodox' to denounce? Do these oppose what they know to be the doctrine of Christ and his apostles? Do they not revere Jesus and his inspired messengers? Do they not dissent from their brethren simply because they believe that their brethren dissent from their Lord?—Let us not forget that the contest at the present day is not between the apostles themselves and men who oppose their known instructions, but between uninspired Christians, who equally receive the apostles as authorised teachers of the gospel, and who only differ in judgment as to the interpretations of their writings. How unjust, then, is it for any class of Christians, to confound their opponents with the factious and unprincipled sectarians of the primitive age. Mistake in judgment is the heaviest charge which one denomination has now a right to urge against another; and do we find that the apostles ever denounced mistake as 'awful and fatal hostility' to the gospel, that they pronounced anathemas on men who wished to obey, but who misapprehended their doctrines? The apostles well remembered that none ever mistook more widely than themselves. They remembered, too, the lenity of their Lord towards their errors, and this lenity they cherished and labored to diffuse.

But it is asked, Have not Christians a right to bear 'solemn testimony' against opinions which are 'utterly subversive of the gospel, and most dangerous to men's eternal interests?' To this I answer, that the opinions of men, who discover equal intelligence and piety with ourselves, are entitled to respectful consideration. If after inquiry they seem erroneous and injurious, we are authorised and bound, according to our ability, to expose, by fair and serious argument, their nature and tendency. But I maintain, that we have no right as individuals, or in any associated capacity, to bear our 'solemn testimony' against these opinions, by menacing with ruin the Christian who listens to them, or by branding them with the most terrifying epithets, for the purpose of preventing candid inquiry into their truth. This is the fashionable mode of 'bearing testimony,' and it is a weapon which will always be most successful in the hands of the proud, the positive, and overbearing, who are most impatient of contradiction, and have least regard to the rights of their brethren.

But whatever may be the right of Christians, as to bearing testimony against opinions which they deem injurious, I deny that they have any right to pass a condemning sentence, on account of these opinions, on the characters of men whose general deportment is conformed to the gospel of Christ. Both scripture and reason unite in teaching, that the best and only standard of character is the life; and he who overlooks the testimony of a Christian life, and grounds a sentence of condemnation on opinions, about which he as well as his brother may err, violates most flagrantly the duty of just and candid judgment, and opposes the peaceful and charitable spirit of the gospel. Jesus Christ says, 'by their fruits shall ye know them.' 'Not every one that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he who doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.' 'Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.' 'He that heareth and doeth these my sayings,' i. e. the precepts of the Sermon on the Mount, 'I will liken him to a man who built his house upon a rock.' It would be easy to multiply similar passages. The whole scriptures teach us, that he and he only is a Christian, whose life is governed by the precepts of the gospel, and that by this standard alone, the profession of this religion should be tried. We do not deny that our brethren have a right to form a judgment as to our Christian character. But we insist that we have a right to be judged by the fairest, the most approved, and the most settled rules, by which character can be tried; and when these are overlooked, and the most uncertain standard is applied, we are injured; and an assault on character, which rests on this ground, deserves no better name than defamation and persecution.—Dr. Channing.

## A WORD AGAINST SCEPTICISM.

Because God is in some respects incomprehensible, do not suppose that he is in no others to be understood. Because you know not every thing, do not think that you know nothing respecting him. Because every thing cannot be explained, do not thence infer that nothing is to be believed; and because you cannot always describe the mode, you must not therefore deny the fact. Nothing would be more unwise or unjustifiable.

I am utterly unable to comprehend the eternal duration, the universal agency and the unlimited presence of God: The facts themselves I acknowledge: They are truths, which are susceptible of the strongest proof: My reason, my experience, the history of every age, the progress of every day and hour, every event and every object around me combine to declare and enforce them: I carry within myself an indelible record: The frame of my body and the powers of my mind indicate the existence, and display the agency and providence of God: They are depicted on the face of creation with a pencil of light: But the modes of the divine existence, or agency, or providence I confess myself unable to apprehend or explain. To do that would require universal knowledge and a capacity commensurate with the infinite subject: my

powers are small: the range of my observation is limited: the vastness of the subject places it utterly beyond my reach: But surely it would be extreme folly, if, on this account I relinquished, denied, or doubted those great principles, which are not less determined than my own existence, nor less universal than the works of God, nor less luminous than the path of the sun; which are the first principles of all virtue and happiness. It is a necessary condition of human trial that we are often compelled to act upon the knowledge or belief of facts, which we are not competent fully to explain. It is a principle, which every day applies to the ordinary actions of human life. Shall I refuse food, because I am not able to explain in what way it will contribute to the support and nourishment of my body? Shall the husbandman neglect to cast the seed into the ground, because he cannot describe or conceive the manner in which this dry kernel is to be reared into a plant? No, my brethren, it is none but the fool, who hath said in his heart, there is no God; and may I never distrust the great principles of religion, because the limitations of my mind and condition render me incompetent to explain fully the facts on which they are grounded. All life and nature are full of mystery; and it becomes me to bow with deep reverence and adoration before that incomprehensibility, which arises from the greatness of God.—*Colman.*

UNITARIAN CHRISTIANITY:

ITS ADAPTATION TO WOMAN.

Unitarian Christianity has achieved much for woman. It has come to fortify her, precisely in those departments of her constitution which expose her to her greatest dangers; while at the same time it possesses resources which amply respond to the religious tenderness and generosity of her nature. Under other systems, the voice of usurped authority has found in woman a too unquestioning and unresisting subject: she has yielded submissively to arrogant pretension; she has trembled slavishly before unwarranted denunciation, she has surrendered her imagination and her affections to theatrical, fantastic, imposing forms, or extreme principles, of religion; she has prostrated her faculties in helpless despair before perplexing doctrines, which forbade and condemned the very use of her reason; she has listened to too predominant exhibitions of the terrific, until distraction and suicide have hastened to close the scene. In these circumstances, the female nature has almost cried aloud instinctively for aid, and has found it more than any where else in the genius of Unitarian Christianity. There is a modesty and fairness in the very manner by which Unitarianism asserts its authority over the mind, which not only appeals to woman's delicate sympathy, but at once raises her from the dust, and awakens her to the fact of her own significance. It bids her to be calm—to reflect—to receive a revelation through the medium of her reason, as well as of her imagination and affections.

Yet whilst this system presents just enough of poise and negation to restore woman to her lost equilibrium, it retains, as we have hinted, sufficient positiveness and warmth to satisfy the demands of her earnestly religious constitution. It gives her, in the Eternal Father of spirits, an object of profound adoration, combining in himself whatever glorious, awful, and endearing attributes or agencies can possibly be ascribed to the Trinity of the middle ages; while, by demonstrating the singleness and simplicity of his being, it quiets her narrowed faculties, fixes her distracted vision, and raises her faith from a state of abject prostration to a serene, enlightened, and confiding repose. In the innocent babe upon her knee, she no longer beholds a mass of total depravity, a viperous enemy of God, a vessel of eternal wrath and torment—but a hopeful subject of the kingdom of heaven, whose immortal powers are in part to be unfolded by her own prayerful vigilance and faithful exertions. In the Scriptural view of the Atonement which she is now called upon to adopt, she is not bewildered by the dramatic representation of one Divine being possessing all the justice, and another all the mercy; nor is she baffled by the contradictions which incessantly spring up between the alleged necessity that a Divine being should be sacrificed, and the allowed impossibility that he could die, coupled with the freshly puzzling fact that after all only a human being endured the sacrifice required. She rather sees in the Atonement a great scheme of reconciliation—a series of healing and restoring influences, contemplated from eternity by a God whose justice and mercy well knew how to temper

and co-exist with each other, and at length introduced by the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world—a scheme, thus truly worthy to be illustrated, and even prefigured, by the types and shadows of the Mosaic dispensation. In her prospect of the retributions of futurity, her imagination is no longer either pampered or revolted by presentments too over-powering for human nature; but it is wholesomely stimulated by that solemn indistinctness, yet awakening certainty of result,—the heaven of happiness and progress all above her, the hell of darkness and misery all below her,—which are every where characteristic of the moral government of God. In Jesus Christ, as presented by the same system, the chief among ten thousand and the one altogether lovely, the chosen of the Father from the bosom of a past eternity, she recognises the link which unites the human and Divine—the realized ideal of her most exalted imaginings—the perfect archetype of her purely aspiring affections. While the perplexing metaphysics of a falsely styled orthodoxy had taken away her Lord, and buried his identity in a mass of contradiction and mystery, Unitarian Christianity has restored him to her in his original proportions: it has rescued from artificial clouds and darkness the great subject of the New Testament biography; she can now venture to approach him again as a being whose heart beats in unison with her own—to bathe his feet with her tears, and to wipe them with the hair of her head.

Accordingly, woman in return has effected much for Unitarian Christianity. In the critical transition-period when a change was in progress from a complicated and humanly devised to a purer and simpler faith—when the spirit of reform was necessarily more or less analytical, negative, and defensive—when charges of coldness and unbelief rang from all the camps of Orthodoxy,—woman was found ready, in a full-proportioned representation, to partake of the enlightening process. She perceived, by her characteristic intuition, much that was positive and profoundly religious in the system that was unfolded anew, and she acted upon it by anticipation. The moment that Unitarianism respected, appealed to, and convinced her understanding, she accepted it with all its consequences—discerning and despising the hollowness of the spasmodic outcry raised against it. The Divine authority of Jesus and his religion she at once and honestly felt could be no cold negation, no isolated or empty fact, no dictate of infidelity or deism; but, from the very terms of the question, a principle deep as the wants, lofty as the hopes, and wide as the workings of the human soul. Therefore it has been, that in the darkest and most laborious periods of his career, the Unitarian reformer has been invariably cheered and supported by her countenance and adhesion. Part of his reproach her manifest faith and piety have turned away, and the rest she has cheerfully borne along with him. When, with an anxious heart, he has first spread the table of his Master, and invited the guests to come, she, if few or none else, was near, to partake of the speaking memorials. How often, in the hour of death, has her deliberate testimony and ripe preparation put to silence and shame the solemn but silly saying, so widely circulated, that Unitarianism is a poor religion to die by! How often, in the battle of life, has she sustained with a heavenly composure the lowering odium of excited communities! And how often have her quiet smile and pungent remark refuted the extravagant dogmas, or retorted the menacing artillery of bigotry and fanaticism! With her "willing hands" she has toiled to uphold and adorn the ark of her faith, as it rose amidst sad discouragements and difficulties; and even now, wherever that faith, no longer struggling and militant has become triumphant and commanding, many of its golden fruits, its spontaneous emanations, are started into life, or carried into larger effect, by her fostering and benignant enterprise. Religious charities and amenities spring up all around her home; while the missionary, supported by her exertions and bounties, transplants to the distant wilderness the truths and principles which her experience assures her are from above. It is unquestionably the peculiar blessings of every Unitarian Minister in the land, that he can gratefully point to the female portion of his congregation, as unsurpassed for intelligence, refinement, virtue, and attachment to religious institutions.—*Boston Christian Examiner.*

PRAYER.

The practice of devotion is a sign of spiritual life, and a means of preserving it. No one prays heartily without some deep religious sentiment to actuate him. This sentiment may be but occasionally felt: it may be transient in duration; but the exercise of it in acts of devotion tends to render it habitual and permanent, and its frequent exercise causes the mind at length to exist always in a devout posture. He who truly prays, feels, during the act, a sense of God's presence, authority,

and love; of his own obligations and unworthiness; of his need of being better. He feels grateful, humble, resigned, anxious for improvement. He who prays often, often has these feelings, and by frequent repetition they become customary and constant. And thus prayer operates as an active, steady, powerful means of Christian progress.—*H. Ware.*

OBSTACLES TO HUMAN PROGRESS.

It is a well known historical fact, that every great discovery in astronomy, in natural history, in chemistry, or in any of the physical sciences—that everything which has made us better acquainted with the heavens, with the earth, and with human nature—that every acquisition of knowledge which has tended to elevate humanity, every attempt at free inquiry, every effort to shake off the trammels of authority, has been successively attacked by the ignorant and narrow-minded, as leading to infidelity. Under this malignant and accursed plea some of the greatest spirits of the human race have been persecuted and slain. Socrates was put to death as an infidel; he who first said there were Antipodes was burnt. The followers of Copernicus were persecuted as disbelievers, and the great Galileo on bended knees was compelled to assert that the earth was immovable. Bacon and Descartes were taxed with irreligion; the doctrines of Locke were said to lead to materialism; Newton was accused of dethroning the Deity by the discovery of the law of gravitation; a similar charge was made against Franklin for explaining the nature of the thunderbolt; Priestley's library was burnt and his person endangered on account of his religious opinions; and, in our own days, Buckland, Sedgwick, and the other geologists are accused of overturning revelation by their discoveries with regard to the past existence of the earth. In short, in all ages, and amongst all nations, infidelity has ever been the war cry which the base, the ignorant, the intolerant, and the canting tribe have raised against the great, the noble, and the generous spirits of the human race.—*Sir W. Molesworth.*

UNITARIANISM IN TRANSYLVANIA.

From some statistics which have just been published, it would appear that the churches founded by the Socini, and their followers, the *Poloni fratres*, are in a flourishing state. In 1766, the number of Unitarians in Transylvania was only 28,647—in 1789, they had increased to 31,921. In 1818, they amounted to 40,000; at the present time (1845) the estimate is 51,700; so that, within 80 years, the Unitarians have, in Transylvania, almost doubled their numbers. They have three colleges—one at Clausenburgh, of which the most reverend Alexander Szekeley is the head. This gentleman is called 'General Notary,' 'Clerical Vice President,' &c., and his office appears similar to that of an archbishop. The number of students at Clausenburgh is 220. Another college is at Thorda; it contains 174 students. A third college is at Szekeley, Keresztur; it contains 184 students. The capital of the Transylvania Unitarian Church is—in money, 30,000 florins; in landed and real property 40,000 florins; total 70,000. With this sum, it would appear, they are able to defray the whole of their church expenses, and put by annually 200 florins for contingencies. The professors of this faith enjoy all the rights of citizenship in the principality; among them are advocates, judges, censors of the press, registrars, and privy-councillors.

ANECDOTE OF JOHN WESLEY.

The following anecdote of John Wesley and an old woman who was one of his disciples, is related by one who had been minister in his connection, some years before he became an Unitarian:—The old woman lived at a distance of five miles from the Wesleyan chapel she belonged to, which she was seldom able to attend, on account of the distance. At a short distance from her dwelling there was an Unitarian chapel, the only place of worship in the neighborhood, which she had been in the habit of attending regularly, when she was not able to go to her own, as she considered it to be her duty to attend some place of worship every Sunday, when she could. In process of time, an Independent Chapel was built near the Unitarian Chapel. When this was the case, doubts arose in her mind whether she should go to the Unitarian chapel, or to the Independents': she therefore determined to lay the case, the first opportunity, before Mr. Wesley, to resolve her doubts. "Go," said he, "where you have been used to go, for the Unitarians will give you a dry crust of morality; but if you go to the Calvinists, they will give you rank poison."

Just Published.

THE FAITH OF THE UNITARIAN CHRISTIAN, EXPLAINED, JUSTIFIED AND DISTINGUISHED.

A DISCOURSE

Delivered at the Dedication of the Unitarian Church, Montreal, on Sunday, May 11, 1845.

BY THE REV. DR. GANNETT, Minister of the Federal Street Church, Boston.

For Sale—price 7½d.—at the Bookstores of Mr. C. BRYSON, St. Francois Xavier Street, and Mr. McKay, Notre Dame Street.

The Bible Christian.

MONTREAL, NOVEMBER, 1845.

THE UNITY OF GOD,

THE DISTINGUISHING FEATURE OF THE JEWISH FAITH.

On another page of our present sheet we give our readers the principal part of a discourse delivered by Rev. Dr. Raphall in the Jewish synagogue, Birmingham, of which he is the regular preacher. It was written at the request of one of the Unitarian Ministers of that town, with the view of laying before the public an authentic statement of the Jewish faith, respecting the Divine Unity. The fact that such an idea as that of a three-fold division of God was unknown to the patriarchs, to Moses and the prophets, bears, we think, most powerfully against the popular dogma of the Trinity. For let any reflecting man consider a moment the circumstances of the case. Through successive ages and centuries the Deity manifested himself in a peculiar and intimate manner, to the ancient Hebrew people. He raised up legislators and prophets, and great religious reformers in their midst. Through these He proclaimed himself One, "and his name One." To give them a suitable knowledge of himself, and to win them to His own service was the great aim of all His revelations to them. Is it credible then, that under such circumstances He should have left His faithful prophets and chosen people in error, or in the dark, respecting such a doctrine as that of His triune existence? There was no such thing as triune existence, and that is the simple and only way of accounting for the absence of all knowledge of the doctrine, or belief in it. The Hebrew people of old maintained the absolute unity of God in opposition to the idolatry of the world, and their descendants at the present day vindicate the same grand doctrine against those who would divide and describe the indivisible and incomprehensible One.

So long as the Jewish people deny the divine mission of Jesus of Nazareth there must of course be a "great wall of separation" between them and all Christians. But we must remember, that, prior to the Christian dispensation, and from the remotest antiquity, the Israelites were made the depositaries of the true religion, and their testimony concerning the doctrine in question is of the highest value. The division of God into three persons is a comparatively modern error, and were it not that we are familiarised to the expression of it, by the common technical language of certain creeds of man's formation, it would fall upon our ears with the utmost discordance, and strike our minds as something profane. It was unknown in the first ages of Christianity. It took its rise from the subtleties of Platonic philosophy, and gradually progressed towards its present definite shape. According to Mosheim, himself a Trinitarian, the doctrine of the Trinity did not receive its "finishing touch" (we quote his own phrase) until the close of the fourth century. But many of the earlier fathers, as they are called, tinged with the fashionable philosophy of the time, were cautiously introducing it, much to the alarm of the plain, unlettered Christians who were the great body of believers. A single extract from a controversial work by Tertullian who wrote at the close of the second century, will shed a flood of light on this matter. "The simple," says he, (by which he means the plain unlearned mass of Christians) "who are always the greater part of believers—presume that the number and arrangement of a Trinity, is a division of the Unity, they therefore hold out that two, and even three Gods are taught

by us; assuming that they are worshippers of One God." Well said by the plain, unlettered multitude of believers. But the subtleties of philosophising doctors marred their simple faith. Their one God was tripled.

Archbishop Tillotson said he wished the English Church was well rid of the Athanasian creed. Our wish is more extensive. It is, that the whole church of Christ was well rid of the doctrine of that creed. The Trinity, with its palpable inconsistencies and contradictions, has too long marred the simple fabric of Christianity.

DR. GANNETT'S DEDICATION SERMON.

We have great satisfaction in being able to lay before our readers the following notice of this discourse. It will be read with additional interest when they are informed that it is from the pen of a gentleman of well known attainments in this Province—a D. D. and in connection with the Scottish Church. The writer says, the sermon "most justly deserves the perusal of all those who profess to be guided in their religious conclusions, by the Holy Scriptures." We have said repeatedly that we only wish our opinions fairly understood in the community, and then we are willing to leave them to make their own impression. By an advertisement elsewhere in our present sheet it will be seen where the discourse can be procured.

*The Faith of the Unitarian Christian Explained, Justified, and Distinguished.—A Sermon, delivered at the Dedication of the Unitarian Church, Montreal, on Sunday 11th May, 1845. By Ezra S. Gannett, Minister of the Federal Street Church, Boston. Published by request. Svo. pp. 40.*

Dr. Gannett's discourse consists of three parts:—1. An exhibition of Unitarian belief in one God, the Maker, the Preserver, and the Judge of all; in Jesus Christ, the Son of his love, and Messenger of his grace; in the perpetual obligation of the Divine law, the law of Conscience and Morality; and finally in the immortal destiny of man, in which he will receive the necessary and unavoidable fruit of his actions whether good or evil, but without pretending to state the duration of the latter. 2. A statement of the grounds of this belief: First, in Reason, which God has given us to guide our opinions and actions, and which is not so utterly deficient for this purpose as many persons maintain; and secondly, in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments which God has graciously superadded to assist our natural understandings. 3. The distinction of Unitarians from numerous prevailing denominations among us; from Unbelievers of all grades and classes, by their belief in the supernatural mission of Christ; from Trinitarians by their belief in the perfect Unity of God; from Calvinists of every shade in respect to primitive human corruption; from the self-styled Orthodox, in regard to their doctrine of atonement; from the Episcopal Church, in regard to the office of the ministry; from the Baptists, in regard to ordinances; from the Universalist body, in regard to their view of retribution. Having thus amply, and with much good feeling, illustrated this wide field of argument, the Preacher draws to his conclusion by solemnly dedicating the building in which divine service was then first performed, to the holy works of praise, of instruction in religious knowledge, of charity and of humble prayer to the Father of all through Jesus Christ the Mediator:—"Father, Almighty" said he, "hear thou our desires and grant their fulfilment. To Thee, in the name of thy dear Son, we consecrate these walls, these seats, this altar. Thine be the glory of their fresh beauty, and thine the richer glory of their decay."

This is a most able discourse, and most justly deserves the perusal of all those who profess to be guided in their religious conclusions by the Holy Scriptures. It is very true, as announced in the body of this sermon, that the sentiments which it breathes and the truths which it embraces, are widely different from those followed by the great majority of those who hold themselves Christians. It is melancholy and afflicting to reflect that the great body of men professing to adopt the religion taught, and authoritatively confirmed by our Lord Jesus Christ, have for ages and centuries, diverged widely from the faith he introduced, and adopted numerous tenets which he never sanctioned. This circumstance has greatly retarded the progress, and defeated the influence of that divine and most philanthropic institution. It is therefore delightful to see at last a place of worship erected among us, by a society engaged to derive their faith from the Sacred Writings alone, without regard to the dictates of any human authority, to the accumulated errors of past ages, or the inventions that have been added to deface the truth.

CONVENTION OF UNITARIANS IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK.

The usual Autumnal Convention of Unitarian Christians, was held this year, in the City of New York. The attendance was full, and the proceedings in the highest degree satisfactory. The sessions were continued during three days, commencing on the evening of Tuesday, Oct. 21st, and closing on Thursday, the 23rd. The Convention first assembled in the Church of the Messiah, and was called to order by Rev. Dr. Dewey. On motion of Rev. Mr. Burnap, a committee was appointed for the nomination of officers, consisting of Rev. Mr. Peabody of New Bedford, Rev. Mr. Farley of Brooklyn, and Rev. Mr. Bellows of New York. The list of officers reported was as follows:—For President, Rev. Dr. Parkman of Boston; for Vice Presidents, Rev. Dr. Dewey of New York, Rev. Mr. Burnap of Baltimore, and Hon. Stephen Fairbanks of Boston; for Secretaries, Rev. Mr. Robbins of Boston, and Rev. Mr. Brooks of Newport, R. I.; for the Committee on the Business of the Convention, Rev. Dr. Putnam of Roxbury, Rev. Mr. Lothrop of Boston, Rev. Mr. Osgood of Providence, Seth Lowe, Esq. of Brooklyn, and George A. Crocker, Esq. of Taunton.

After the President had offered some remarks appropriate to the occasion of his taking the chair, it was announced that the evening would be occupied with religious services.

At this meeting the discourse was preached by Rev. Dr. Gannett of Boston. His text was from 1 Timothy i. 15; "This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners."

On their re-assembling next morning at 9 o'clock, in the Church of the Messiah, prayer was offered by the Rev. Mr. Hill of Worcester. Some Ministers of the 'Christian' denomination being present, and Rev. Mr. Taylor, a Methodist, they were invited to sit with the Convention, and accepted the invitation. After some discussion on certain resolutions presented to the Convention, carried on in a free, earnest and harmonious spirit, the body adjourned, and rose to attend the dedication of the new Church of the First Congregational Society of New York.

This we understand is a very fine building, capacious and elegant. It is called the "Church of the Divine Unity." The Rev. Mr. Bellows, minister of the church, preached the sermon of dedication. The text of the discourse was from Ezra vi. 5, 16. The other clergymen officiating on the occasion were Rev. Mr. Farley of Brooklyn, Rev. Mr. Furness of Philadelphia, Rev. Dr. Kendall of Plymouth, and Rev. Mr. Osgood of Providence.

In the afternoon, the members of the Convention, clerical and lay, with a large number of ladies, sat down to a collation beautifully prepared by the Unitarians of New York and Brooklyn, in the Apollo Hall. The company was very large,—between five and six hundred in number. A blessing was invoked by Rev. Mr. Lunt of Quincy. Appropriate sentiments were introduced by the President, Jonathan Goodhue, Esq. who was supported by Hon. M. H. Grinnell, and were responded to by Rev. Dr. Parkman, Rev. Dr. Dewey, Rev. E. T. Taylor of Boston, Rev. Mr. Farley, Rev. Mr. Hall, Rev. Dr. Kendall, Rev. Mr. Robbins, and David Reed and Samuel Greele, Esqrs. of Boston.

In the evening, religious services were again held in the Church of the Divine Unity. The introductory devotional exercises were performed by Rev. Mr. Huntington of Boston. The sermon was preached by Rev. Dr. Putnam of Roxbury, from the text John xviii. 37, "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth."

On Thursday morning at 9 o'clock, the Committee was again called to order in the Church of the Messiah. Rev. Mr. Hall offered prayer. The discussions on the resolutions prepared by the Business Committee were resumed. An idea may be had of the nature of these discussions from the character of the resolutions which we subjoin:—

*Resolved*.—That Unitarian Christianity being derived solely and wholly from the Scrip-

tures, avoids alike the errors of hierarchical and traditional faith and discipline on the one hand, and of the rationalistic theory on the other.

*Resolved*.—That while we adopt our Theology on account of its Scriptural truth, we hold it pre-eminently valuable for the influences it is suited to exert upon the personal character.

*Resolved*.—That it is worthy of consideration whether the changes which have been adopted by some of our congregations in the mode of conducting public worship be expedient.

*Resolved*.—That the recent death of a venerable teacher of theology to many of the members of this convention, Dr. Henry Ware, Senior, of one of the former Presidents of the Unitarian Association, Mr. Justice Story, and of one of its Vice-Presidents, Hon. Leverett Saltonstall, calls for our solemn and affectionate commemoration of their Christian worth and valuable services in the cause of truth.

*Resolved*.—That while we steadfastly maintain the independence of the individual congregations, we cordially favor such modes of association and organization as may quicken the life and secure the purity of our Churches.

In the evening of Thursday, the services of the Convention were closed with much solemnity by divine worship in the Church of the Divine Unity. The devotional exercises were performed by Rev. Mr. Lothrop, of Boston. The sermon was then preached by Rev. Mr. Peabody of New Bedford, from the text 1 Corinthians xv. 14, 20: "And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is vain; . . . but now is Christ risen, and become the first fruits of them that slept."

The impression made by the Convention on the public mind in New York, must have been very favourable. That City, we know, is a great gathering place for the "Orthodox" sects, and it is satisfactory to know that our brethren of the faith, in holding their Convention there for the first time, did not suffer anything by comparison with others. The following paragraph on this point is from the *New York Post*, a journal in no way prepossessed in favor of Unitarianism:—

"There have been several ecclesiastical bodies gathered in this city during the week, to consider the affairs of their respective churches. All of these, so far as we have had an opportunity of observing them, have been more than respectable in the talent which they exhibited; but that, perhaps, which has left the deepest impression on the public mind, was the assembly of Unitarian divines, which met in Mr. Bellows's new church. There seemed to us to be an amount of intellectual force and culture collected in this body that has seldom, if ever, been surpassed in this region. Their proceedings, too, were conducted with great spirit, but at the same time with unusual dignity and self respect. But what was chiefly to be commended in their proceedings was the absence of those disgusting manifestations of sectarian exclusiveness and bigotry which too often mark meetings of this kind. There was, it is true, no want of a manly and decided expression, in the various addresses, of the peculiar views of this branch of Christianity; yet this was unaccompanied by wholesale denunciations of other forms of faith. Indeed, the general tone of the whole convention, was that which every honest right-minded Christian must have approved. We say this the more willingly, because, not professing any peculiar attachment to the religious tenets of the Unitarians, the writer feels more free to speak in terms of the warmest praise of the refinement, intelligence and liberality of their clergy."

CORRESPONDENCE.

To the Editor of the Bible Christian.

SIR,—Mr. McLeod, one of the deputation from the Established Church of Scotland, delivered an address, in the Methodist Chapel at this place yesterday. His object was to defend the conduct of the residuaries in the late disruption in the Scottish Church.

My interest was highly excited by the indubitable, though unintentional testimony which the speaker bore, to the truthfulness and ultimate triumph of Unitarian principles.

He laboured hard to impress upon the minds of his hearers the preeminent necessity of maintaining Church Establishments; and he succeeded so far as to prove to my satisfaction that the union of Church and State was the only safeguard which would prevent the Confession of Faith, or what he termed "Evangelical religion," from being entirely rejected by the people. In order to strengthen his position he quoted several cases from the Ecclesiastical history of the Free States of Germany, of Dissenters in England, Ireland,

and Scotland, and of the Christian Societies in the United States, wherein sometimes the majorities of churches embraced Unitarian principles; and he demonstrated the superiority of the Established system from the fact, that as long as the minister preached the religious doctrines established by civil law, he might retain his globe, manse, and stipend, even though his people should leave him altogether, which he evidently considered the chief guarantee for maintaining sound doctrines in the land. While we acknowledge the moral world to be under the providence of the God of Truth, it appears to me that all such arguments only prove that the doctrines they are designed to support must be founded in error. With regard to the 'Confession of Faith,' do we not all know that it was compiled two hundred years ago, when the moral and intellectual world was yet encumbered with the remains of the long night of barbarism and superstition from which it had just emerged.

Those must be blind indeed, who do not see in the signs of the times the approaching triumph of the Voluntary principle, which shall number among the things of the past, Church Establishments, Religious Tests, Confessions of Faith, and all such fetters forged by spiritual tyrants, to bind the freeborn spirit of man;—all except the Bible—which is our only spiritual authority, shall then be banished from Christian society:—then, according to the reasoning of Mr. McLeod, will the triumph of Unitarianism be complete.

Mr. McLeod seemed in speech a liberal and tolerant Christian man—taking a just view of God's goodness in giving us a Revelation, and man's rights in interpreting the record of it, but I regretted to find that he was neither liberal nor tolerant in reality. He told us that our Heavenly Father had sent the Bible, as a letter to every individual, and every person was bound to study it, and take nothing for truth but what he found clearly expressed therein. This, he said, was the right of private judgment, which each and every individual was bound to exercise; and it was nothing but the most arrogant presumption, one of the peculiar characteristics of Popery, that would induce one man to condemn another because he could not draw the same conclusions from that Book as he had done himself. Verily, Truth is a jewel wherever it may be found; but I had been too often deceived and disappointed before, by taking for granted that such men meant to act consistently with what they said when they uttered such sentiments. Too well was I convinced that Mr. McLeod never intended that those who had drawn such conclusions from the Letter of Heaven as I had done, should find any shelter beneath his spacious liberality. And of this I was fully convinced by a conversation which I had with him after he had closed his address. For notwithstanding all he had said concerning the sufficiency of the Bible as a rule of faith, and the right and duty of every one to read it for himself, whenever he heard that the careful study of the Sacred Scriptures had made me a Unitarian, he condemned me at once as unworthy the Christian name. Here was an exercise of pope-like authority, though on a small scale, worthy the Vatican itself. To me it seems that such a class of men only want the power of the pope to be as intolerant as the pope.

G. R.

Carlton Place, Sept. 16th, 1845.

[Our correspondent furnished us with the conversation in detail, which took place between himself and Mr. McLeod. Our limits, however, compel us to omit it.—Ed. B. C.]

Our friends will be gratified to learn that the sum of Fifty pounds, was realised by the late sale of useful and fancy articles, held by the ladies of the Unitarian Congregation of this city. The amount was given towards the liquidation of certain incidental expenses connected with furnishing the church. For their exertions in this matter, the Committee of the Society have passed a vote of thanks to the Ladies.

NOTICE TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Some communications are unavoidably held over, and some are under consideration.

GREENWOOD'S HYMNS, (the Collection used by the Montreal Unitarian Congregation,) FOR SALE, at the Bookstore of Mr. C. BRYSON, St. Francois Xavier St.

NOTICE.

The hours of Public Worship on Sundays, in the Unitarian Church, Montreal, are—ELEVEN in the forenoon, and SEVEN in the evening.—Free Sitings are provided for Strangers.

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ORIGINAL POETRY.

"It is a tradition of the early Catholic ages, that a chapel being built on the spot from which Christ ascended, it was found impossible either to pave the place on which he last stood and where the marks of his feet remained, or to close the roof over that place, and which was the path of his ascent."—*W. J. Fox.*

'Tis an old legend, and though born  
In superstition's night,  
Its import beautiful and true  
To those who read it right.

For the dear footprints of our Lord  
Nor time nor art efface:  
Still over earth's dark wilderness  
His glorious steps we trace.

And the bright path of his ascent  
Into the peaceful skies,  
O! what shall veil it to our hope,  
Or close it from our eyes.

Life has wild tracts where we should sink  
In anguish and dismay,  
Had not his patient footsteps passed,  
And sanctified the way.

And death!—before its portals dark  
How should we trembling stand,  
Did not that glorious path reveal  
Jesus at God's right hand.

O! blessed Saviour!—tender guide,—  
Humanity's sweet friend,—  
In life or death, thou, only thou,  
Canst solace or defend.

E. J. D.

Montreal, 1st Nov. 1845.

THE UNITY OF GOD,  
THE DISTINGUISHING FEATURE OF THE  
JEWISH FAITH.

A SERMON

By the Rev. Morris I. Raphael, M. A., D. Ph.

'Hear, O Israel! the Lord our God, the Lord is one!'—DEUT. VI. 4.

This was the sum and substance of the first commandment which the Eternal spoke to their whole assembly on the mount from the midst of the fire, when he said, 'I am the Lord thy God, who brought thee out from the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage; thou shalt have no other gods before me.' All this is condensed in the short but powerfully expressive sentence 'Hear, O Israel! the Lord our God, the Lord is one!' One, absolute, immaterial, indivisible, without equal or associate; without plurality of essence or of person. Eternal, Omnipotent, Omniscient, Omnipresent, and Immutabile; who alone of all that exists can proclaim himself, I AM, because He is the only one whose existence is inherent, absolute, and unconditional. Immaterial—He is not confined to space, nor subject to the accidents of matter. Eternal—He was without beginning and without end, therefore not subject to the influence of time. Omnipotent—He suffices to himself alone, and requires neither companion nor associate. One—He is perfect. Such is the God who created and who preserves the universe; the God who brought Israel out of Egypt, and whom alone they worship; the God who revealed himself on Sinai's Mount, that his unity might become known to mankind. For the principal object of revelation must be, and is, to place within the reach of man those truths to which his own unaided researches could not lead him, but with which, nevertheless, it is most essential for the welfare of his soul, and the happiness of his species, that he should be acquainted. I say truths to which his own unaided researches could not lead him, for man's researches must ever be guided by his reason, and though religious truth, as such, will always command the assent of reason, or rather, will never present itself, in a shape so questionable as to be rejected by human reason, yet as reason, the attribute of man, is, like himself, finite and limited, whereas, religious truth relates to the attributes of Him who is infinite and unlimited; it follows that human reason unaided by revelation, cannot form to itself any conception of that which is so much purer, holier, grander than itself, and in speaking of which, man is obliged to employ words to which he can attach no clear and positive idea, but which he must define by negatives. Thus it is evident that religious truths of a higher order can only become known to man by means of revelation; a fact, to which, moreover, the experience of all ages and of all nations affords its testimony. For if it had been possible for human research to arrive at such truths, the profound wisdom of a Socrates, the sublime meditations of a Plato, the indefatigable studies of an Aristotle, might have led to results as important, to knowledge as certain, and to authority as generally acknowledged as the legation of Moses. But such was not, and could not be the case, for to none of these great men, though the most celebrated of profane antiquity, though gifted with reason as powerful and penetrating as ever fell to the share of mortal man, to none of them was that granted, the want of which Socrates and Plato deplored, and

without which the highest religious truth remains beyond the reach of man:—namely, that revelation or communication from on high, which, as God alone knows himself and can reveal himself, proves the legation of Moses to have been divine; and by means of which, whatever of religious truth has become known to man, is either founded on that legation or recorded in its history. And of all the truths which that legation has been the means of promulgating, the first is the Unity of God. Indeed to me it appears clear that the chief purposes for which the Jewish religion was founded, for which the law was given, for which so many miracles were wrought, and so many observances were instituted, were—first to impart to mankind in the fullest, clearest, and most authentic manner, the knowledge of that greatest of truths, 'the Lord our God is one'; and, secondly, to preserve that knowledge among them by means of witnesses, with whose very existence as individuals and as a people, and with whose every act of worship, public or private, the profession of this truth, the belief in the unity of God, should become identified to such a degree as to render it the distinguishing feature of their faith. Let me direct your most serious attention to these two points; and may He whose loving kindness is extended to all who approach Him with humility of heart and singleness of purpose, vouchsafe to enlighten your minds and my own, that we may clearly perceive, and duly appreciate, the importance of the inquiry on which we now enter.

I. The chief purpose for which the Jewish religion was founded, was, first, to impart to mankind in the fullest, clearest, and most authentic manner, the knowledge of that greatest of truths, 'The Lord our God is one.'

If we carefully examine the most ancient and most trustworthy of historical records, the sacred Scriptures, we find that man, in the exercise of that free will with which the Creator has endowed him, soon became disobedient; and that the more he yielded to his own passions, to his sensuality, his vanity, and his sordid selfishness, the more he became estranged from that Being who is all-perfect, and from that truth which it behooved him to cherish; and though a sense of his own weakness and of his dependence on some superior or controlling influence, taught man the necessity of propitiating whatever was greater and mightier than himself, it was not to the Eternal that he directed his thoughts. He raised his eyes to heaven and beheld its hosts, but did not inquire 'who created these.' He felt the genial warmth of the sun, and he worshipped; he admired the pale light of the queen of night and of her radiant attendants, and again he worshipped; he heard the loud peals of the thunder, and was alarmed, he saw his favourite deities obscured, and he trembled. Wherever he looked around him he beheld evidences of power far surpassing his own, and he bent before them. But he beheld those powers acting in so many various and even conflicting ways that he could not, because he would not, trace effects so dissimilar to one first great cause. Therefore his imagination influenced alike by his hopes and by his fears, depicted each manifestation of the workings of nature as the act, either of some malignant being to be dreaded, or of some beneficent being to be thanked; in the former case his terrors extorted the same adoration, that in the latter his gratitude and expectations prompted him to yield. We cannot with certainty decide how soon this worship of strange gods began to be practised by man. Tradition tells us that as early as the days of Enosh, the third in descent from Adam, mankind began to transfer their worship from the Creator to the creature; for Him who gifted them with reason to the offspring of their own imagination. One would have thought that the fatal catastrophe which befel that sinful race must have impressed on the minds of the chosen few who survived the waters of the deluge, a feeling of awe and of love for the power that preserved them; but few as there were, there was a Ham among them; and he who drew down upon his head the just malediction of an outraged parent, could not have been very scrupulous or attentive to the instruction of his own children. Once more mankind forsook their God! How soon after the deluge they relapsed into the worship of idols sacred Scripture does not tell us; but that the defection began early and was by no means confined to the descendants of Ham, is proved to us by the words of Joshua, who addressing the Israelites, says, 'Thus saith the Lord God of Israel; beyond the river your fathers dwelt of old, Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nahor, and worshipped other gods.' (Joshua xxiv. 2.) That it was not long before the adoration due to the Creator degenerated still further, and that along with, or as representing, the powers of nature, men began to worship idols, images made by human hands, is proved to us by the words of Laban, who, when some figures (Teraphim) had been carried away from his house, complains 'why hast thou stolen my gods?' (Gen. xxxi. 30.) And that this vain belief, this outrage on reason and religion spread more and more, and grew stronger and stronger, is proved to us by the fact, that though in the days of Abraham there was a Melchizedek, a priest of the Most High God, and who as a priest, must have had a congregation of faithful to which he ministered; that though Joseph, when addressing Pharaoh of his days, directs the king's thoughts to God, who alone can ease his mind, 'God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace;' (Gen. xli. 16) and in return hears the king confess the power of God, 'Forasmuch as God hath showed thee all this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou art;' (ibid. 30.) yet when, a few generations la-

ter, Moses presents himself before Pharaoh in the name of the Eternal God, so completely is all trace of that name lost, that the king at once confesses his ignorance, and exclaims, 'I know not the Lord.' (Exodus v. 2.)

But though men forgot their God, He did not forget them. Not only did he continue to them his manifold bounties, without which they could not exist even one moment, but while they, in the perverse abuse of their own free will, sought to rivet firmer and firmer the chains of superstition and ignorance, He, in the fulness of mercy, provided for them the means of returning freely and without constraint, to light and to truth. Among the myriads who prostrated their reason and wilfully closed their mind's eye, there was one man who looked around him and reflected. Nature, in the vastness of its immensity, attracted his notice, and while he admired the creation, his soul gradually became conscious of the Creator. Tradition tells us that Abraham recognised God in His works, and when he did so in humility and devotion, Revelation was afforded to him to guide and purify his meditations. His faith was put to many a test, his constancy had to pass through many an ordeal; but his faith still clung to the assurance, there is one El Shaddai, 'Almighty God'; and his constancy was rewarded with the promise, that in his and his posterity all the nations of the earth should be blessed. Thus strengthened by a knowledge of the truth, Abraham went forth, the missionary of the Lord. Wherever he came he proclaimed the name of the Eternal and Indivisible One, and thus once more a ray of light and of truth broke through the general gloom. The work thus begun by Abraham was continued by his son Isaac, and his grandson Jacob; and that which had been the faith of one man, became the belief of a family. Yet among the millions of idolaters, throughout the wide extended sway of craft and ignorance, the influence of one family must of necessity, have been very limited. Therefore it was provided that that family should increase and become a nation; and in order to preserve the descendants of that family from mixing and becoming lost amongst the crowds that surrounded them, in order to keep them isolated and distinct, they were transplanted to a country, the inhabitants of which, were averse to strangers in general, and to shepherds especially,—disdaining intercourse or connexion with this alien race. And, as mankind is most strongly attracted by contrast, it was so ordained, that when the descendants of this family had increased and multiplied, and were become a nation, they should be placed in the most abject and degraded condition—that of slaves—used with barbarous cruelty; and that they should be so placed in the most civilized country of the ancient world, but which, at the same time was the stronghold of idolatry.

If we look at the condition of mankind at the time when Moses entered on his legation, we shall find that, throughout the whole earth there existed not at that time one nation or tribe—probably not many individuals—who knew and adored the Creator. The scanty remains of primitive knowledge, faint gleams amid the general gloom, were hidden by interested men, enveloped in mysteries and disguised by types. The few who were initiated into these mysteries, held that it was needful to practice on the weakness of the multitude, and that it was dangerous to afford the common people a knowledge of truth; and so effectually did they disguise and conceal it, that in process of time even the initiated lost the key to the types and mummeries they had to pass through, and were but one remove above the general ignorance of the mob whom they deluded. Thus the darkness of falsehood overspread the earth; despotism and priestcraft were the twin excrecences to which that darkness gave birth, and by which it was fed. Temples were erected to all the passions, diseases, fears, and evils to which mankind are subject. Suited to the character of these divinities was the worship offered in their fane. Absurdity, impurity, and cruelty contended for mastery in their rites. Bestial intoxication was an act of adoration to one, public prostitution to another of these foul creations of a diseased imagination. Human victims bled upon their altars. The cries of infants consumed by a slow fire in the embraces of a brazen image; of boys being whipped to death before the altar of a female divinity, were held to be music grateful to the ears of the gods; and all these horrors emanated from Egypt, the parent of civilization, which also became the parent of idolatry to the surrounding nations. The power of evil, of falsehood, of superstition had reached its height; and truth, which had sheltered within the household of Abraham, seemed to lose its last adherents, when the descendants of Jacob, slaves in Egypt, were made to join the foul rites of their masters.

But mankind is not destined for ever to be the victim of error. In the moral as in the physical world, in religion, as in every other branch of knowledge, the triumph of truth, though slow, is sure; the downfall of error, though long delayed, is not the less certain. The Great Being who called the universe into existence, and who wills the happiness of all his creatures, still pardons their backslidings and deigns to extend His protection unto them. At the very time when the reign of darkness seemed most firmly established, the victory of light was most sudden and complete. Moses, the messenger of God, appeared. 'Truth and liberty' were the potent words which he proclaimed. Before the power delegated unto him, the lofty fabric, reared by superstition, crumbled into dust. Vain were the struggles of despotism and the efforts of priestcraft; the first step towards the regeneration of mankind was effected in the liberation of Israel.

Had the end and aim of Moses' mission been only to free the descendants of Jacob from bondage, and to constitute them into a nation, that might have been effected at once, by a power whom nothing can resist. It was to raise the standard of truth, which once unfurled, is never to be lowered. It was to consolidate the opposition to error, an opposition which the unceasing efforts of error, for upwards of thirty centuries, have not been able to overcome. Therefore it was that gradually every hope the Egyptian placed in the protection of his divinities was made to fail him, as one after another, the most potent of them bent in lowly submission at the bidding of the man commissioned by God. As animate and inanimate creation, the luminaries of heaven and the beasts of the field were alike worshipped by the Egyptians, so the supremacy of the one true God was manifested over each of them. And at the announcement of each new wonder, Moses was directed to declare it was done that men might know the Eternal, and that his name might be proclaimed over all the earth—and it was so proclaimed. One, at least, among the nations of the earth had learned to know the Lord. They in whose behalf the first great victory over evil and fraud had been achieved, were also the first who, in the fulness of freedom and conviction, had proclaimed his supremacy in the memorable words, 'This is my God and I will praise Him; the God of my father and I will exalt Him.—The Lord shall reign for ever and ever.' From the shores of the Red Sea, where they had beheld the power of the Creator over the elements, they were led on to Mount Sinai, that there, as had been foretold to them, they might serve the Lord; and become the witnesses of his unity as they had been witnesses of his power, his justice, and his mercy. Six hundred thousand men, with their wives and children, heard the voice of the Lord proclaim, 'I am the Lord thy God, thou shalt have no other gods before me.' Six hundred thousand men, with their wives and children, heard and repeated the divine precept, 'Hear, O Israel! the Lord our God the Lord is one!' Thus a host of witnesses was raised, whose evidence it has never been possible to discredit; and thus the purpose for which Abraham had been chosen, for which the Israelites had been delivered, for which the Jewish religion, taking its date from Mount Sinai, had been instituted, was accomplished; for the unity of God was made known to mankind, and that knowledge was preserved by means which the experience of thirty centuries has proved to be efficient. And as this was the chief purpose for which the Jewish religion was instituted, so for that same purpose it still stands erect among the many and conflicting systems of faith, which, in that long interval, have arisen and fallen, and those that still survive. Whichever of these has admitted the doctrine of the unity of God, has derived its knowledge of that doctrine from the inspired records of the Jewish religion, and supports itself by their authority. Whilst every system which does not admit this most sacred doctrine meets with a flat contradiction in those records, the divine inspiration of which, admitted by all believers in revelation, cannot be better proved than by the direct and pointed manner in which they meet and refute every departure from this truth, that may have been promulgated by systems which did not come into existence till centuries after the sacred canon of the Old Testament was closed. To the idolater these records briefly but decidedly pointed out his fatal error. (Isaiah xli. 9.) 'The makers of images are altogether vanity; their detestable divinities avail them not; a declaration again and again repeated. To the Sabean, who claimed worship for the heavenly bodies, these records point out a higher power, saying, 'Raise your eyes on high—who created these? He fixes the numbers of the stars, and has given names to them all.' When men, unable to account for the origin of evil, asserted that the government of the world was contested by two independent principles, the one of light and good, the other of darkness and evil, the sacred records of our faith vindicated the absolute unity of the first great Cause, and declared in the name of the Lord, (Isaiah xiv. 1.) 'I form the light and create darkness, I make peace and create evil; I the Lord do all these things.' When in after ages the doctrine was propounded that divine justice required a vicarious sacrifice, a divine redeemer, who should redeem mankind by taking upon himself and removing their sins, these sacred records rejected the doctrine by declaring, (Isaiah xlii. 25.) 'I, even I, am He who blot out their transgression because of me, and thy sins I will not remember.' And when the doctrine was propounded that the deity is a plurality of persons, proceeding one from another, those sacred records met the assertion by the solemn declaration, 'Thus saith the Lord, the King of Israel, and his redeemer, the Lord of hosts:—I am the first and I am the last, and beside me there is no God.' (Isaiah xli. 6.) Each attempt to set up an associate to his supremacy, Holy Writ rejects with the words of the Lord, 'I am God, there is no other:—my glory will I not give to another.' And every denial of His absolute and indivisible unity it refutes in the emphatic words of our text, 'Hear, O Israel! the Lord our God, the Lord is one!' And, as thus the religion resolves itself into one great truth, into which all its records may be condensed, we are warranted in saying that the chief purpose for which the Jewish religion was instituted, was to impart to mankind, in the fullest, clearest, and most authentic manner, the knowledge of that greatest of truths, 'The Lord our God is one.'