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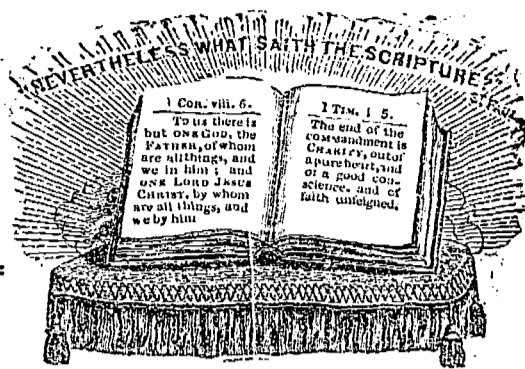
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# THE BIBLE

TRUTH, HOLINESS,



# CHRISTIAN.

LIBERTY, LOVE.

VOL. IV.

MONTREAL, MAY, 1847.

No. 5.

## THE SCRIPTURAL DOCTRINE OF GOOD WORKS.

1. *Regeneration* is a primary doctrine of Christianity. It is the being born to a new life by the power of a new religion—ushered into a new world of thoughts, affections, relations and obligations. Now all these are comprised by an apostle, in that very phrase whose import we are considering; as a single passage will sufficiently show—Eph. ii. 10.—“For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.” The ordaining purpose of God, the regenerating power of Christ, and the character of the new workmanship, or the Christian himself, are here expressed by that one term—“good works.”

2. *Faith* is a primary doctrine, a vital principle of Christianity. Observe the connexion in which it stands, and what is declared essential to make it a ground of hope. “What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? Can faith save him?” “Yea, a man may say, thou hast faith, and I have works; show me thy faith without thy works and I will show thee my faith by my works.” “Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.” “For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.” These are remarkable declarations, though very familiar. They leave no room for doubt. They give no permission to exalt faith above works. They make the latter quite as important, to say the least, as the former. Or, what is nearer the truth and more to our purpose, they make faith and works inseparable, identical. The apostle represents even the principle that actuated Abraham, as of works, and declares that his faith was made perfect by works, and that he himself was “justified by works.”

3. *Justification*. This, though a Scriptural term, has been so darkened by words without knowledge, that it may be better here to use a more common and intelligible term; as pardon or acceptance. And here we might adduce some striking passages from the Old Testament. All those which express this sentiment of Isaiah, are to the point.—“Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, and he will abundantly pardon.” Ezekiel tells us that the man who turneth from his sins, “and doeth that which is lawful and right,” shall surely live. Why, or how shall he live? “In his righteousness that he hath done he shall live;” yea, “if he doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive;”—a most pointed and emphatic assurance. Passing to the New Testament, we find Paul declaring, that there is “glory, honor, and peace to every man that worketh good.” We find him appealing exultingly to his own past life, mentioning his good works as if they had something to do with his hopes and his reward. “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown,” &c. We find Cornelius, a heathen not then converted, called a devout man, on account of his past deeds, and miraculously assured that his good works had been marked and accepted; “thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God.” From this fact we find Peter drawing the same inference that we draw, and in the same language—“in every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted with him.” We find numerous declarations, like one already cited, which show that the final reward will turn upon the works done. “God will render to every man according to his deeds.”—“Every man shall receive his own reward according to his labor.”—“We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.”

## MYSTERY.

The world is full of mysteries. The chamber in which the infant opens its eyes, is a universe of mysteries. The father's voice, the mother's smile, reveal to it slowly the mysterious world of the affections. The child solves many of these mysteries; but as the circle of knowledge is enlarged, its vision is always bounded by a wall of mystery. The sun that wakens it at morning and again at night, looks into its window to bid it farewell; the tree that shades its home, and into whose branches the birds come and sing before the dews are dry; the cloud with shining edges that moves across the sky, calm and stately like the chariot of an angel;—all are mysteries. Nay, to the grown-up man there is not a thing which the hand touches, or on which the eye rests, which is not enveloped in mystery. The flower that springs at my foot, who has revealed the wonderful secret of its organization? Its roots shoot down, and leaf and flower rise up and expand into the infinite abyss of mystery. We are like emigrants travelling through an unknown wilderness. They stop at night by a stream of water, they tether their horses and set up their tent and build a fire. And as the flames rise up, all within the circle of a few rods around is distinct and clear in its light. But beyond and bounding this, rocks dimly seen, and trees with vague outline stoop forward to the blaze; and beyond, the branches creak, and the waters murmur over their bed, and wild and unknown animals howl in the dark realm of night and silence. Such is the light of man's knowledge, and so is it bounded by the infinite realm of mystery.

The world then is full of mysteries. But so far as religion is concerned, it has changed most unhappily that men have made articles of faith out of mysteries, made them the most important articles, and looked on religion as if its main purpose were to introduce mysteries into the world. From these things have arisen much of the idle theology and many of the miserable disputes that have disgraced Christendom. That which is the most important fact practically in this subject is this, viz., that there are less mysteries in the world now than there were before Christianity. Christianity has not added to the number of mysteries, but has lessened their number. And not only this: those which it has done away were of the most important character to man. We would repeat, that the number of mysteries in the world now, is not so great as before the coming of Christ; that Nature has more mysteries than Revelation.

Before that time, death and a future life were enveloped in mystery. Where are the dead? Do they yet live? and do they love? Parents and children, with breaking hearts, asked these questions; but neither priest nor oracle could give an answer; the tombs were silent, and from the heavens came no voice of reply.

But this mystery no longer exists: Christianity has done it away. The dead live and they love. So far as the great truth of a future life is concerned, it is revealed, and stands as clear before us as the mountain, from whose wooded sides the mists are rolled away by the rising sun.

The character of God, before the coming of Christ, was unknown. What is the character of this power, or of these powers, above me? It is the most important question that a human being can ask, for on it his destiny turns. But all before Christ's time was uncertain. From the ferocious religions of the North, to the sensual and luxurious religions of the South, a thousand answers were given. The wisest sage, when he approached this subject, was lost in doubt.

All was mystery: but Christianity has removed the mystery that surrounded the character of Deity. It has disclosed that He is a Father. And by the light of his divine word, we read history and experience and our own hearts and the world around us, and we know that He is a Father. The mist, the mystery has sunk to the earth, and the sun, full-orbed, shines clear in the heavens.—E. Peabody.

## RELIGIOUS REFORM.

This anticipated improvement of Christianity must consist, I apprehend, in its simplification; in leaving out of the Christian faith what does not belong to it; in separating from its true principles the human additions that have grown upon them; in making it, in short, more intelligible, more reasonable, and more agreeable to the universal natural feelings of mankind. The great end will be accomplished when the Supreme Being is looked up to as a Father, equal in his regards, and eternally and unchangeably benignant; when Jesus Christ is believed in as the messenger of the Divine love and the example of human goodness; when men shall esteem and treat one another as brethren, having the same rights and expectations; and when the world to come shall be contemplated as a scene of perfect justice, but a scene also of triumphant mercy. These are the great principles of the Gospel. To these all reformation tends. One after another they are conceded in controversy. They are more or less promoted by all discoveries in Biblical literature. They are shadowed forth in all schemes of philanthropy, all improvements in judicial science, and all the advances of legislation. They form that general religion which all men of all nations and ages, whose minds are awake and active, may receive, and in which they may be united; and the union of mankind, not in an entire creed, but in an undivided heart,—not in ceremonies, but in charity,—is both the drift of all social improvement and the design of Christianity, which was characterized by an unwilling prophet as having for its end to join “in one the children of God scattered abroad.” Ignorance and prejudice and bigotry divide mankind; knowledge and reason, and good nature bring them together, and for mutual benefit. The late increased acquaintance with the powers of nature, and the successful application of them to purposes of utility, tend to form the human race into one grand community, one happy family,—to make the bounties of nature, the products of industry, and the acquisitions of the mind common, and, by consequence, to dissolve anti-social confederacies, whether for gain or power, to render tyranny less tolerable and less practicable, and to diminish the motives and to augment the difficulties of war. These discoveries and inventions, so many of them coincident, seem, like the nearly contemporaneous invention of the mariner's compass, the discovery of the new world, and the acquisition of the art of printing, to form a new era in the history of mankind; and as the former era was the commencement, may not this be the revival, of the reformation of the Christian religion? For it is not by accident that philosophical discoveries and literary improvements are united, in point of time, with ecclesiastical reforms; they all spring from the same source, the natural vigour of the human mind setting strongly in one direction; as they all flow to the same end, the glory of God and the happiness of man, and the glory of God in the happiness of man. There is not in reality a sound maxim in reasoning or science, or a just conclusion from history, or a truth built upon human nature, which does not agree with the grand moral principles of the Gospel, as before described, and which does not directly or indirectly point to them. They have been spoken of, indeed, by those that make and those that bow down to and worship creeds, the worst idols that have come out of human hands, as *generalized Christianity*, as if all essential truth were not a generalization or induction from particulars. Did not one apostle generalize religion when he resolved it all into the royal law of equity?—did not another generalize it when he declared the end of the law and the beginning of the Gospel commandment to be charity out of a pure heart?—and did not our Lord himself generalize it when he declared all the law and prophets to be summed up and fulfilled in the love of God and the love of man? Here is divine authority for setting up great principles above forms and details,—for nug-

nifying the “weighty matters of the law” above “the titling of herbs, the anise and the cummin” of creeds and ceremonies. These essential doctrines—rational and therefore Christian, moral and therefore powerful—are the spirit of truth, the spirit of God. All the vitality and power of every scheme of faith is owing to them, though they may be overlooked, and even for a time buried, in the huge mass of popular belief. When decomposed and disembodied, they will act with greater energy and produce purer and wider social happiness. Christianity will then, in and by them, be glorified, and it will be acknowledged by wise and candid men that a scheme of doctrine which will bear this reduction to the simplicity and purity of reason, which will be more like the original Gospel as it is thus reformed, and which, in its simplest and purest state, will be most efficacious in promoting love to God and good service to man, has within itself a witness of its truth, a witness strengthening with the succession of ages—for Time sweeps away error and delusion—and growing with the vigour and activity of the human mind, before which all lolly and falsehood are doomed finally to perish.—Aspland.

“CONTENTMENT is the sweetest spice,” the proverb says. So it is, and the rarest. It is not to be had at any of the shops—not but that the keepers may have it for home consumption; but it is not saleable, though a primo article. We know a good woman who said she tried and tried to get contented with things but in vain, till one day all at once, she determined not to try any more, and be satisfied without it—and the very image of content she has been ever since. Now there is the secret—you will never get contentment for the hunting of it. It is the reflection of the peaceful heavens in the calm waters of the soul, and one might row his fishboat from all the coves of Thought and Endeavour to the remotest shores of Accomplishment, and not find the image he sought, in all the way. But let him slip his oars of anxiety, and float serenely on the tide of Heaven's Will, and the sky-broad beauty of a deep content will be universal in his soul. That is it; to be willing to get along without it. But for a man to be contented, is not to be so at peace with things as not to bring the crooked into shape, but to be so satisfied with himself as not to quarrel with the work after he has done all he can; to be satisfied, even, that he has got something to do; for if anything was perfectly satisfactory to begin with we should find a dull world of it when the novelty wore off. The best recipe for content is to be doing something that will make the world better, not trying to get contented—but making men happy.—*Charter Oak.*

A STORY WITH A MORAL.—When Charles the Second chartered the Royal Society, it is narrated of him, that he was disposed to give the philosophers a royal, but at the same time a wholesome lecture.

“Why is it, my lords and gentlemen,” said he, “that if you fill a vessel with water to the very brim, so that it will not hold a single drop more, yet putting a turbot into the water it will not overflow the vessel?” Many were the sage conjectures; that the fish would drink as much water as compensated for his own bulk—that he condensed the water to that amount—that the air bladder had something to do with the phenomena—and a hundred others which were propounded and abandoned in their turn, much to the amusement of the merry monarch. At length, Mr. Wren, (afterwards Sir Christopher) modestly asked, “But is your Majesty sure that such would be the case?” “Aye, there,” exclaimed his Majesty laughing, “you have it; always, gentlemen, find out if a thing be true, before you proceed to account for it; then I shall not be ashamed of the Charter I have given you.”

“No Church has, nor have all churches together, any authority to make articles of faith. Jesus Christ was the author and finisher of the faith, to which nothing can be added and from which nothing can be taken.”—*Bishop Sherlock.*

THE BIBLE CHRISTIAN.

COLUMN FROM FENELON.

Everything which happens to us comes from thee, O God. It is Thou who hast done it; and who hast done it for our eternal welfare. In the light of eternity we shall see that what we desired would have been fatal to us, and that what we would have avoided was essential to our well being; it is Thou who doest all things, it is Thou who during every moment of our lives art the life of our hearts, the light of our eyes, the intelligence of our minds, the soul of our souls; all that we are, life, action, thought, will, we are through thy power, thy spirit, and thy eternal will.

How unspeakable are the blessings that piety bestows; pure, disinterested piety, piety that never fails, that does good in secret! It enables us to conquer our passions and our bad habits; it destroys our love of the polluting pleasures of the world; it touches our hearts with the salutary truths of religion; it protects us from the fatal snares that are around us. Shall we be ungrateful for so many benefits? Shall we not have the courage to sacrifice to piety all our irregular desires, however it may wound our self-love?

Everywhere we see men who disfigure religion by vain attempts to make it accord with their own caprices. One is fervent in prayer, but he is insensible to the miseries and weaknesses of his neighbour. Another talks much of the love of God, and of self-sacrifice, whilst he is not willing to suffer the least contradiction. Another deprives himself of allowed pleasures, that he may indulge himself in those that are forbidden. This woman is fervent and scrupulous in works of supererogation, but faithless in the most common and positive duties; she fasts and prays, but she does not restrain her pride or the violence of her temper. Thus we see people who think, because they do what they are not commanded to do, that they may dispense with what is required.

To pray is to say, Let thy will be done; it is to form a good purpose; it is to raise your heart to God; it is to lament your weakness; it is to sigh at the recollection of your frequent disobedience. This prayer demands neither method, nor science, nor reasoning; it is not necessary to quit one's employment; it is a simple movement of the heart towards its Creator, and a desire, that whatever you are doing, you may do it to his glory.

Let us do good, according to the means that God has given us, with discernment, with courage, and with perseverance. With discernment; for charity, while it seeks to promote the glory of God by imparting to man, has reference to the nature, the work, and the condition of him who undertakes it; it avoids disproportionate designs. With courage; St. Paul exhorts us not to be weary in well doing; that is, let us not be wanting in true zeal and faith. With perseverance; for we see weak spirits, light and inconstant minds, soon looking back in the career of virtue.

Never let us be discouraged with ourselves: it is not when we are conscious of our faults that we are the most wicked; on the contrary, we are less so. We see by a brighter light; and let us remember for our consolation, that we never perceive our sins till we begin to cure them. We must neither flatter, nor be impatient with ourselves, in the correction of our faults. Despondency is not a state of humility: on the contrary, it is the vexation and despair of a cowardly pride,—nothing is worse: whether we stumble, or whether we fall, we must only think of rising again, and going on in our course.

Whoever desires to do good must be willing and must expect to suffer. You must arm yourselves with courage and patience. You must be willing to endure tribulations and trials of all sorts, which would overwhelm you if you were not supported by well-established faith and charity. The world will blame, will tempt you; your friends and your enemies may appear to combine against your good designs. Those even with whom you are united to promote a good work may be a snare to you. Opposite humors and temperaments, different views, contrary habits, may cause you great suffering from those upon whom you have depended for support and consolation. Their defects and yours will perpetually clash in your intercourse with them. If true charity does not soften these difficulties, if a more than common virtue does not sustain you under these bitter trials; if an unflinching and fervent piety does not render this yoke easy to you, you will sink under it.

COLUMN FROM WILLIAM PENN.

Such is now become our delicacy, that we will not eat ordinary meat, nor drink small, palled liquor; we must have the best and the best cooked for our bodies, while our souls feed on empty or corrupted things. In short, man is spending all upon a bare house, which hath little or no furniture within to recommend it; which is preferring the cabinet before the jewel, a lease of seven years before an inheritance. So absurd a thing is man, after all his proud pretences to wit and understanding.

For disappointments, that come not by our own folly, they are the trials or corrections of heaven: and it is our own fault if they prove not our advantage. To repine at them does not mend the matter: it is only to grumble at our Creator. But to see the hand of God in them, with an humble submission to his will, is the way to turn our water into wine, and engage the greatest love and mercy on our side.

We are apt to be very forward to censure others, where we will not endure advice ourselves. And nothing shews our weakness more, than to be so sharp-sighted at spying other men's faults, and so purblind about our own. When the actions of a neighbour are upon the stage, we can have all our wits about us, are so quick and critical that we can split a hair, and find out every failure and infirmity; but are without feeling, or have but very little sense, of our own.

Frugality is good, if liberality be joined with it. The first is leaving off superfluous expenses; the last is bestowing them to the benefit of others that need. The first without the last begins covetousness; the last without the first begins prodigality. Both together make an excellent temper. Happy the place where they are found.

Love labour: for if you dost not want it for food, you mayest for physic. It is wholesome for thy body, and good for thy mind. It prevents the fruits of idleness, which many times come of nothing to do, and leads too many to do what is worse than nothing. A garden, a laboratory, a workhouse, improvements, and breeding, are pleasant and profitable diversions to the idle and ingenious; for here they miss ill company, and converse with nature and art, whose varieties are equally grateful and instructing, and preserve a good constitution of body and mind.

Covetousness is the greatest of monsters, as well as the root of all evil. I have once seen a man that died to save charges! "What! Give ten shillings to a doctor, and have an apothecary's bill besides, that may come to I know not what!" No, not he: valuing life less than twenty shillings. But, indeed, such a man could not, well, set too low a price upon himself; who, though he lived up to the chin in bags, had rather die, than find in his heart to open one of them, to help to save his life. Such a man is "felo de se," and deserves not Christian burial.

There can be no friendship where there is no freedom. Friendship loves a free air, and will not be penned up in straight and narrow inclosures. It will speak freely, and act so too; and take nothing ill, where no ill is meant; nay, where it is, it will easily forgive, and forget too, upon small acknowledgments.

A true friend unbosoms freely, advises justly, assists readily, adventures boldly, takes all patiently, defends courageously, and continues a friend unchangeably. These being the qualities of a friend, we are to find them, before we choose one.

If thou hast done an injury to another, rather own it than defend it. One way thou gainest forgiveness; the other, thou doublest the wrong and reckoning.

Believe nothing against another, but upon good authority: nor report what may hurt another, unless it be a greater hurt to others to conceal it.

Have a care of vulgar errors. Dislike, as well as allow, reasonably. Inquiry is human; blind obedience is brutal. Truth never loses by the one, but often suffers by the other. The most useful truths are the plainest; and while we keep to them, our differences cannot rise high. There may be a wantonness in search, as well as a stupidity in trusting. It is great wisdom equally to avoid the extremes.

Never esteem any man, or thyself, the more for money; nor think the meaner of thyself, or another, for want of it: virtue being the just reason of respecting, and the want of it of slighting any one.

COLUMN FROM ROBERT HALL.

The exclusion of a Supreme Being, and of a superintending Providence, tends directly to the destruction of moral taste. It robs the universe of all finished and consummate excellence even in idea. The admiration of perfect wisdom and goodness for which we are formed, and which kindle such unspeakable rapture in the soul, finding in the regions of skepticism nothing to which it corresponds, droops and languishes. In a world which presents a fair spectacle of order and beauty, of a vast family nourished and supported by an Almighty Parent; in a world which leads the devout mind, step by step, to the contemplation of the first fair and the first good, the skeptic is encompassed with nothing but obscurity, meanness, and disorder.

Detesting war, considered as a trade or profession, and conceiving conquerors to be the enemies of their species, it appears to me that nothing is more suitable to the office of a Christian minister, than an attempt, however feeble, to take off the colors from false greatness, and to show the deformity which its delusive splendor too often conceals. This is perhaps one of the best services religion can do to society. Nor is there any more necessary. For dominion affording a plain and palpable distinction, and every man feeling the effects of power, however incompetent he may be to judge of wisdom and goodness, the character of a hero, there is reason to fear, will always be too dazzling. The sense of his injustice will be too often lost in the admiration of his success.

Of an accountable creature, duty is the concern of every moment, since he is every moment, pleasing or displeasing God. It is a universal element, mingling with every action, and qualifying every disposition and pursuit. The moral quality of conduct, as it serves both to ascertain and to form the character, has consequences in a future world, so certain and infallible, that it is represented in Scripture, as a seed, no part of which is lost, for whatsoever a man soweth, that also shall he reap. That rectitude which the inspired writers usually denominate holiness, is the health and beauty of the soul, capable of bestowing dignity in the absence of every other accomplishment, while the want of it leaves the possessor of the richest intellectual endowments a painted sepulchre.

He must know little of the world, and still less of his own heart, who is not aware how difficult it is, amidst the corrupting examples with which it abounds, to maintain the spirit of devotion unimpaired, or to preserve, in their due force and delicacy, those vivid moral impressions, that quick perception of good, and instinctive abhorrence of evil, which form the chief characteristic of a pure and elevated mind. These, like the morning dew, are easily brushed off in the collisions of worldly interest, or exhaled by the meridian sun. Hence the necessity of frequent intervals of retirement, when the mind may recover its scattered powers, and renew its strength by a devout application to the Fountain of all grace.

Though religion in its ordinary exhibition commands but little respect, when it rises to the sublime, and is perceived to tincture and pervade the whole character, it seldom fails to draw forth the homage of mankind. The most hardened impiety and daring profligacy will find it difficult to despise the man who manifestly appears to walk with God, whose whole system of life is evidently influenced and directed by the powers of the world to come. The ridicule cast on religious characters, is not always directed towards their religion, but more often perhaps to the little it performs, contrasted with the loftiness of its pretensions—a ridicule which derives its force from the very sublimity of the principles which the profession of piety assumes.

Slavery, considered as a perpetual state, is as incapable of vindication as the trade in slaves; they are integral parts of the same system, and, in point of moral estimate, must stand or fall together. If it be unjust to sell men into slavery, who are guilty of no crime, it must be equally so to retain them in that state; the last act of injustice is but the sequel and completion of the first. If the natives of Africa were originally despoiled of their freedom by rapine and violence, no man is entitled to avail himself of the condition to which they are reduced, by compelling them to labor for his benefit; nor is it less evident, that they could not possibly transmit the forfeiture to their children of those rights which they never forfeited for themselves. Thus it appears, that the claims of the planters to hold their negroes in perpetual bondage, is vitiated in its origin; and having commenced in an act of injustice, can never acquire the sanction of right.

COLUMN FROM CHANNING.

An humble spire, pointing heavenward from an obscure church, speaks of man's nature, man's dignity, man's destiny, more eloquently than all the columns and arches of Greece and Rome, the mausoleums of Asia, or the pyramids of Egypt.

The worst error in religion, after all, is that of the skeptic, who records triumphantly the weaknesses and wanderings of the human intellect, and maintains that no trust is due to the decisions of this erring reason. We by no means conceive that man's greatest danger springs from pride of understanding, though we think as badly of this vice as other Christians. The history of the Church proves that men may trust their faculties too little as well as too much, and that the timidity, which shrinks from investigation, has injured the mind, and betrayed the interests of Christianity, as much as an irreverent boldness of thought.

No books astonish me like the Gospels. Jesus, the hero of the story, is a more extraordinary being than imagination has feigned, and yet his character has an impress of nature, consistency, truth, never surpassed. You have all seen portraits, which, as soon as seen, you felt to be likenesses, so living were they, so natural, so true. Such is the impression made on my mind by the Gospels. I believe that you or I could lift mountains or create a world as easily as fanaticism or imposture could have created such a character and history as that of Jesus Christ.

It is common to speak of the house of public worship as a holy place; but it has no exclusive sanctity. The holiest spot on earth, is that where the soul breathes its purest vows, and forms or executes its noblest purposes; and on this ground, were I to seek the holiest spot in your city, I should not go to your splendid sanctuaries, but to closets of private prayer. Perhaps the "Holy of Holies" among you is some dark, narrow room, from which most of us would shrink as unfit for human habitation; but God dwells there. He hears the music more grateful than the swell of all your organs; sees there a beauty such as nature, in her robes of spring, does not unfold; for there he meets, and sees, and hears, the humblest, most faithful, most truthful worshipper; sees the sweetest trials severely borne, the deepest injuries forgiven; sees toils and sacrifices cheerfully sustained, and death approached, through a lonely illness, with a triumphant faith. The consecration which such virtues shed over the obscurest spot is not and cannot be communicated by any of those outward rites by which our splendid structures are dedicated to God.

No doctrine is more common among Christians than that of man's immortality; but it is not so generally understood, that the germs or principles of his whole future being are so wrapped up in his soul, as the rudiments of the future plant in the seed. As a necessary result of this constitution, the soul, possessed and moved by these mighty though infant energies, is perpetually stretching beyond what is present and visible, struggling against the bounds of its earthly prison-house, and seeking relief and joy in imaginations of unseen and ideal being. This view of our nature, which has never been fully developed, and which goes further towards explaining the contradictions of human life than all others, carries us to the very foundations and sources of poetry. He who cannot interpret by his own consciousness what we now have said, wants the true key to the works of genius. He has not penetrated those secret recesses of the soul, where Poetry is born and nourished, and inhales immortal vigour, and wings herself for her heavenward flight.

A blow given to a single slave is a stripe on the souls of all who see or hear it. It makes all abject, servile. It is not the wound given to the flesh of which we now complain. Scar the back, and you have done nothing compared with the wrong done to the soul. You have either stung that soul with infernal passions, with thirst for revenge, or, what perhaps is more discouraging, you have broken and brutalized it. The human spirit has perished under your hands, as far as it can be destroyed by human force.

Most Protestant sects are built on the Papal foundation. Their creeds and excommunications embody the grand idea of infallibility, as truly as the decrees of Trent and the Vatican.

I am not sorry that society is taxed for the drunkard. I would it were taxed more. I would the burden of sustaining him were so heavy, that we should be compelled to wake up, and ask how he may be saved from ruin.



Some friends have written for a complete file of the "BIBLE CHRISTIAN" from the commencement. We regret to say that we cannot furnish them. The early numbers are completely exhausted.

The hour of public worship in the Montreal Unitarian Church, on Sunday evenings, is changed from Seven to Half-past Seven o'clock, and will be so continued during the summer months.

The Bible Christian,

MONTREAL, MAY, 1847.

JOSEPH BARKER.

Since the issue of our last number we have received a letter from Mr. Barker, of England, whose name as a religious reformer is now pretty well known in this country. He is still busy in his labours to remove ignorance and error, and to extend the sway of a simpler and purer form of Christianity, than that which now prevails in the world under the name of Orthodoxy. He operates on the public mind mainly by means of the press. His exertions have been attended with a large measure of success. He writes, "I see the cause of truth prevailing, and the cause of error declining. Liberal principles are making their way in this country very rapidly. Great numbers are renouncing the old errors of Orthodoxy, and embracing the simple principles of primitive Christianity. The opponents of Evangelical reform are daily becoming less popular. Their sects are declining both in numbers and in power, and there are signs of an approaching revolution with respect to religious sentiments generally."

We learn also from this letter of Mr. Barker that one of the leading ministers of the Methodist New Connexion in England—the Rev. W. A. McCombe—has lately renounced Orthodoxy, and embraced more correct and liberal views of Christianity.

Mr. Barker likewise enclosed to us the printed copies of two letters already published in England, and very probably republished in the United States. Taken together, they exhibit a correspondence which took place between himself and some members of the Christian connexion in America in the early part of the present year. His request to us, is, that if we should meet with any members of the Christian denomination of Canada, to show them the correspondence. But as these belong mainly to Upper Canada, and as none of them are to be found in this region of the country, we reprint the letters in our columns. Owing to their length, we are obliged to omit a few paragraphs. The Bible Christian finds its way to some of the Christian Brethren in Upper Canada, and the information contained in the correspondence will no doubt be interesting to many others of our readers. The letters will be found on our fourth page.

THE "MONTREAL WITNESS."

A few days since a friend handed us a copy of the Montreal Witness, a weekly journal published in this city which devotes a large share of its attention to religious affairs. The copy to which we refer is that of the 26th ult. The first article on the first page is entitled "Which is the True Faith?" and is written in the form of a dialogue "between Mr. A., Catholic, and Mr. B., Protestant." With its style we have nothing to do, but on one of its statements we feel bound to offer a remark.

To arrive at our point, we may be pardoned if we extract two or three of the commencing paragraphs. The conversation, it will be observed, springs out of a very laudable curiosity on the part of "Mr. A., Catholic":

"Mr. A. What is the object of holding meetings every evening in the Methodist Church?"

Mr. B. In order to bring before the public a large amount of Christian instruction.

A. Can you tell the difference between the various Protestant sects?

B. There is no difference between the various Protestant sects on the principles essential to salvation.

A. Wherein do they disagree?

B. On points that are non-essential. For instance, they are agreed on the doctrine of the Trinity, justification through the blood of Christ, and sanctification through the Holy Spirit."

Now "Mr. B., Protestant," is made to assert here that all Protestants are agreed on the doctrine of the Trinity, and it is this which surprises us. We are somewhat at a loss to account for the assertion. We scarcely know whether to attribute it to the ignorance of Mr. B. concerning simple matters of fact, or whether he is designedly taking a slight controversial advantage of Mr. A., who is evidently a very unsophisticated character in matters of this nature. We are disposed to incline to the former opinion. We think Mr. B. was speaking without sufficient knowledge. We are afraid he was making assertions at random. We regret that the fault is so common with a certain class of controversialists.

And yet—our mind is changeable on this point; that is, concerning Mr. B.'s ignorance. The Protestants all agreed on the Trinity! Is there any individual, we ask, with any pretension to information, who does not know better than this? Could any one, presuming to take up a pen to impart religious instruction, be so entirely unacquainted with the history of the theological controversy, as it has been carried on during the latter half of the last, and up to this time in the present, century, as to suppose that all Protestants believe the doctrine of the Trinity? It is hard to think so. Yet if we do not rest in this supposition, we are forced to the conclusion that Mr. B. was endeavouring to impose upon the Catholic by a false representation, with the view of gaining a paltry advantage in the argument.

Let us glance a moment at a few of those countries where Protestantism exists to any considerable extent. Take the country of the Reformation first. Does the writer in the Witness suppose that the Protestants of Germany are agreed on the doctrine of the Trinity? If he does, he is under a very serious mistake. We saw it stated not long since in one of the London papers, that what would be regarded as heterodoxy in England would be regarded as orthodoxy in Germany, so wide has been the departure of the German Protestants from what would be called orthodox standards in this country. We know that some of the most eminent orthodox divines in Germany decline the use of the term "Trinity" altogether; but what their precise views are with regard to the doctrine denoted by it, we would not undertake to say. Then look at Geneva, the birthplace of one of the most remarkable forms of Trinitarian orthodoxy,—we mean Calvinism. There this system has now found its grave. Efforts have recently been made to revive it, but these have been attended with no very large measure of success. In Dr. Beard's book, lately published, we are informed, that "Generally among Swiss Protestants, the old doctrines [the Trinity, &c.] find few adherents among the clergy or the people. Without falling into extreme rationalism, the ministers, especially the older ministers, have quietly abandoned the ancient church doctrines, while the young men educated in part at German Universities, particularly at Berlin and Bonn, have brought home the views of Schleiermacher under several modifications." Look we now to France. The Protestant Church in that country, in its two divisions, comprises about two millions of souls, with seven hundred and twenty-nine ministers. "How many have renounced the Trinity [we quote again from Dr. Beard's work] we have not the means to determine with exactness. Facts, however, within our knowledge, give us reason to think that not more than two hundred of these clergymen still hold the doctrine in any form." From this it appears that the great majority of the Protestants of France, as well as those of Germany and Switzer-

land, have rejected the doctrine of the Trinity.

Let us come now to Great Britain and Ireland. Is the writer in the Witness so negligent of the religious and political history of that kingdom, as to forget the agitation which existed there about three years ago, in consequence of the interference of Parliament to protect the interests of a certain class of Protestant Dissenters? Did not the camp of orthodoxy then ring throughout its length and breadth, because any protection should be extended to a class of Protestants who denied the doctrine of the Trinity. This was their alleged crime, and there were about three hundred and fifty congregations involved in it. Add to this number, the societies of the "Christian Brethren," referred to elsewhere in our present sheet, and we shall have about six hundred worshipping societies in Great Britain and Ireland who have set aside the doctrine of the Trinity. Now let us cross the Atlantic. Let us look at the United States. And here again we must express our surprise at the statement put forth in the Witness. Does the writer of that statement not know that there are thousands of congregations in America who have long since abandoned the Trinity? These are known by various denominational titles, and have various modes of Church government. Some are called Unitarians, others Christians, others Universalists, &c. Some are Congregationalists, others Quakers, others Baptists, &c. We might extend this explanation farther, but we do not think it needful.

All Protestants agreed on the doctrine of the Trinity! It might have been followed by the statement that all the human race were of the same colour. As far as truth is concerned, the one assertion would be on a par with the other.

THE BOSTON UNITARIANS.

The following notices, taken from our Boston papers just come to hand, may not be without interest to our friends and readers in Canada. It will be seen by them that the Unitarians of Boston are active and earnest, numerous and hospitable. It will be seen too that the laymen of eighteen worshipping societies are concerned in the invitation to the Clergy. These eighteen churches recognize the denominational title "Unitarian," and of course have no faith in a three-fold Deity. Besides these, however, there are a dozen other churches in Boston (known by other names) which have no more belief in the Trinity than they have in Transubstantiation. The knowledge of these facts may be of some use to such random discourses as "Mr. B., Protestant," of the Montreal Witness:—

TO THE CLERGY OF THE UNITARIAN DENOMINATION.

Brethren,—The period of our anniversaries being near at hand, the committee who were charged with the arrangements for the present year, take this opportunity, in the name of the laymen of Boston, most cordially and affectionately to invite you with your ladies to be present at the annual collation, to be served in the hall over the Maine Rail-Road Depot, Haymarket Square, on Tuesday, May 25th, 1847, at 2 o'clock P. M.

It is hoped that every clergyman who sympathizes with us, from all parts of our land, and all who may be in our country from abroad, will unite with us, on the return of this pleasant occasion, affording to the laymen of the city the privilege of meeting our friends from every section in social intercourse and friendship.

Clergymen's tickets may be obtained at the store of Messrs. Crosby & Nichols, No. 111, Washington street.

We would tender the hospitality of our homes and firesides to all who will favor us with a visit during Anniversary week. The Secretary, to whom all communications on this subject may be addressed, will provide every one who desires it, with a hearty welcome in the families of our brethren in the city.

In bonds of Christian fellowship,  
For the Committee,

W. D. COOLIDGE, Secretary,  
No. 32, Pearl street.

THE COLLATION.—The Committee who are charged with the arrangements for the approaching Festival, would give notice that an equal distribution of the tickets has been made to each Society, and may be obtained of the gentlemen named below.

It is desirable that an early application be made, so that no disappointment or delay may occur in the necessary arrangements.

- Rev. Mr. Lathrop's Society, of Mr. Eben's Dale.
- Coolidge's, Calvin W. Clark.
- Washington's, Joseph East.
- Gray's, David Price.
- Peabody's, William Thomas.
- Harrot's, Lewis G. Pray.
- Frostingham's, J. T. Hayward.
- Waterston's, S. H. Barnes.
- Thomas's, Francis Alger.
- Lippett's, Emanuel E. Guild.
- Ginnott's, F. W. Lincoln, Jr.
- Robbins's, J. G. Wetherell.
- Young's, B. H. Greene.
- Clarke's, Charles Arnold.
- Parkinson's, G. F. Williams.
- Fordick's, G. G. Loring, Jr.
- Fox's, W. W. Alcott.
- Livermore's, W. W. Alcott.

or of the Secretary,  
W. D. COOLIDGE, No. 32, Pearl street.

BOOKS FOR SALE,

AT

G. BRVSON'S BOOK-STORE,  
ST. FRANCOIS XAVIER STREET.

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Every text connected with the Trinitarian controversy on both sides of the question is noticed in this volume. The book is divided into two parts. The first of these contains 'the Scripture evidence of Unitarianism;' the second 'the alleged Scripture evidence for Trinitarianism.' In the first part, besides quoting the texts as they appear in the authorized version, Mr. Wilson furnishes us, in many cases, with a variety of renderings, by scholars of acknowledged eminence; and throughout the whole he presents us with a series of forcible and pertinent remarks of his own. In the second part, he not only cites the controverted texts in full, but also gives 'illustrative texts' to throw light on the meaning of the prominent terms which appear in them."—Boston Christian Examiner

THE CONCESSIONS OF TRINITARIANS; being a Selection of Extracts from the most eminent Biblical Critics and Commentators. By John Wilson.

"We cannot conceive a Trinitarian looking this book in the face, without a decided sinking of the heart,—without a sense of the ground, which he had taken to be so solid shrinking from under him,—without the involuntary ejaculation 'Save me from my friends!' For here are six hundred pages of refutation of Trinitarianism, by Trinitarians themselves, drawn from over two hundred eminent writers of that denomination. In other words, it is a volume of extracts from celebrated orthodox writers of all ages of the church, in which they have given Unitarian expositions of Trinitarian proof-texts. And it appears, from examining the work—what, indeed, has often been loosely asserted,—that there is not one out of all the passages in the Bible brought forward in support of the doctrine of the Trinity, which, by one or more Trinitarian writers, has not been given up to their opponents, as admitting of requiring a Unitarian interpretation. Here, therefore, we have a perfect armoury of weapons for the destruction of the Great Error, furnished by the believers and defenders of the error themselves."

HISTORIC AND ARTISTIC ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE TRINITY; showing the Rise, Progress, and Decline of the Doctrine, with Elocutory Engravings. By the Rev. J. R. Beard, D.D., of Manchester, England.

PRAYERS for the use of Christian Families. With a Preface recommending the Practice of Family Worship. By the Rev. J. Scott Porter.

LECTURES ON CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE. By the Rev. A. Peabody, Pastor of the South Congregational Church, Portsmouth, N. H.

THE APOLOGY OF THE REV. THEOPHILUS LINDSAY, M. A., on resigning the Vicarage of Catterick, Yorkshire.

THE REMONSTRANCE OF A UNITARIAN. Addressed to the Right Rev. Thomas Burgess, D.D., Lord Bishop of St. Davids. By Capt. James Gifford, R. N.

THE ATONING SACRIFICE—a Display of Love, not of Wrath. By the Rev. Noah Worcester.

LETTERS ADDRESSED TO RELATIVES AND FRIENDS, chiefly in Reply to Arguments in Support of the Doctrine of the Trinity. By Mary S. B. Dana, author of the "Southern and Northern Harps," "The Parted Family," &c.

THE RECOLLECTIONS OF JOTHAM ANDERSON. By the late Rev. H. Ware, Jr., of Cambridge University, New England.

SERMONS. By the Rev. F. W. P. Greenwood, D.D., Minister of King's Chapel, Boston. In two volumes.

A COLLECTION OF PSALMS AND HYMNS for Christian Worship. By the Rev. F. W. P. Greenwood, D. D. Montreal, December, 1846.

JUST RECEIVED,

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

CORRESPONDENCE

BETWEEN

J. BARKER AND THE BODY OF CHRISTIANS OF AMERICA.

Boston, January 1st, 1847.

REV. JOSEPH BARKER:

DEAR SIR,—As a Committee appointed by a Convention of Christian ministers, held October 7, 1846, at Union Mills, Fulton County, State of New York, we address you for the purpose of ascertaining more definitely and fully the character of the Reform in which you are engaged. Our sympathies embrace all true Reformers, who are labouring to redeem the church from error, both in doctrine and in practice; and, regarding you in this light, we desire from your own pen a statement of the principles of faith, action, and Christian union in which you confide, for the recovery of man from the error of his ways, and for the prosperity of Zion.

Perhaps you may wish to know more particularly of the denomination who are so deeply interested in your cause, and who seek to open a friendly communication with you. We suppose that they stand upon similar views with yourself. This denomination has never taken a Sectarian name, and it is probable that it never will. Its members are known only by the ancient, Scriptural and Catholic name 'Christians'; which name they cheerfully give to all who live the lives which this holy word signifies, whether their doctrinal speculations are with them or not. With the first years of the present century this class of Christians arose: in the East, the West, and the South there was a simultaneous movement, with no one man as its cause or representative. Masses of people unknown to each other started up, demanding the Bible as their only creed, perfect religious freedom as their inalienable right, and Christian character as the only authorized test of Christian fellowship. Thus spontaneous was the movement in which the denomination had its origin.

Since that time, churches have been planted in the several States of this republic, and nearly 1600 ministers and churches comprise their present number. But it may not be improper to state a few general ideas, which the use of this religious freedom in the investigation of truth, has quite generally established among them. God is worshipped as ONE—His Unity is not divided into three persons, but is believed to exist in One person, the Father Almighty. You perceive, therefore, that they are not Trinitarians. They acknowledge Jesus as the Son of God, the only Saviour, the Mediator between God and men. They believe in the Holy Spirit, and pray for it as the divine influence which God will send and give to all who ask it; as the comforter, as the helper of our infirmities, as the reprover of sin, and the support of holiness throughout the whole earth.

Their theory of the Atonement affects man as its prime object. He it is that stands under clouds of darkness and of sin. God is light, and is unchangeably true. Man needs the change, and he receives it.—The gospel, crowned with the death and resurrection of Christ, is the power of God unto salvation to all who believe. Regeneration is the want of every sinner. The plan of salvation is restorative. It brings the lost to God and secures eternal life. But, sir, neither time nor space allows us to do justice to the doctrinal views on which they stand. A more ample view may be given at some future time. We believe in progress, we believe in reform. But we want the gospel in its light and power to preside over this progress, and to produce this reform. The Bible is the eternal light to ages. The reason may penetrate its truths. We want freedom to study and believe it for ourselves, independent of all extrinsic authority. There are those indeed who rob believers of their freedom, by punishing its conscientious exercise with exclusion; and however strongly such sects may declaim against Rome, is it not clear that they act on the same principle? The difference is in favour of the Pope; for he offers no freedom, only the liberty to believe what the church affirms; but the proscriptive Protestant holds out freedom to you with one hand, and retains a whip in the other, should you use the freedom against his will. The truth however makes free. Man cannot be strong without the free use of his powers. Man errs, it is true, in his attempts at truth, as the child falls in his attempts at walking. But would we say the child shall not walk lest he fall? No sooner would we say, the disciple shall not be free lest he err. Why should Christians allow a name, the form of an external rite, or a merely intellectual speculation to divide them in feeling? Do we not need to be enlarged with gospel views of Christian brotherhood? Ought not they who have light to go forth with the burning zeal and self-sacrifice of the ancient disciples and apostles, and, in prudence and love, labour to restore the Christianity of ancient days?

We rejoice, sir, to think that you are doing a work of this kind among the mass of the people in England, and we pray that you may find great success. We have some knowledge

of the cause you represent. But we greatly desire to know still more. Will you be so kind as to give us a full account of the leading views you embrace, of the name, rise and present prosperity of your people. There are now some five periodicals in the Christian denomination, all of which would gladly publish your statements. We should be very happy as a people to receive a visit from you in this country. The churches would hear you with candour, and would give you a fraternal welcome. Please answer this as soon as convenient."

We are, dear Sir, very truly yours,

ELS. HOLLAND,  
N. SUMMERBELLE, } Committee.  
B. S. FAULTON,

ANSWER.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,—I thank you for your kind and interesting letter. I was aware of the existence of your community, and had heard something of its character and principles; but I was not aware, before I received your letter, that you had become so generally Anti-trinitarian in your views, or that you were of such a reforming character. The perusal of your letter has given me great pleasure, and I lose no time in sending you my reply. I shall give you the information which you desire, respecting myself and the Christian friends with whom I am specially connected, as briefly and as freely as I can, and I trust our correspondence may prove mutually pleasing and profitable.

I was myself brought up among the Methodists, and became a member of the Methodist Society when I was about sixteen years of age. My views at that time, so far as I can recollect, were exceedingly simple. I believed in God and in Christ; in the distinction between right and wrong, and in my own accountability to God; in a future judgment; in the everlasting blessedness of the righteous, and the everlasting punishment of the wicked. I believed that God required men to deny themselves of all ungodliness and sinful pleasures, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world; and I have no distinct recollection that my views at that time went any farther than this. With respect to the doctrines of the Trinity, of the Supreme Godhead of Christ, of Satisfaction to Divine Justice, of Natural and Total Depravity, and the like, I had not, so far as I can remember, any thoughts at all. These were doctrines of which I had either not heard, or doctrines which, if I had heard of them, had made no impression upon my mind. I was, at that period, so far as I can recollect, a simple-minded rational Christian.

But I had not been long in the Methodist Society, before I began to hear people talk about those matters. I had not been long in the Society before I was given to understand that it was necessary for me to believe all those doctrines, and if I would be a proper Christian, and especially if I would be a preacher. As soon as I joined the Society, I heard people talk about a peculiar kind of faith which was said to be necessary to salvation, different from the common belief in God, in Christ, and in the truth unfolded in the Gospel; and I began to seek after this new kind of faith. I also began to labour to understand those peculiar doctrines respecting the Trinity, and the like; and for years my mind was harassed and bewildered with those matters. At one period of my life I supposed myself a believer in the peculiar doctrines of orthodoxy, and if I did not believe in those doctrines, I acquiesced in them; I did not reject them. It was not, however, long before my mind gathered strength enough to investigate those matters, and to test them by what I had learned of the teachings of Christ and his apostles. I then began to have doubts on some of those points. I especially began to doubt some of the representations given by orthodoxy respecting the object of Christ's death. I then began to have doubts with respect to the nature of that faith which was required by the New Testament. As I proceeded in my inquiries, I was led to reject the doctrine of the Eternal Sonship, and to believe in the Unity of God. I still, however, believed in the Godhead of Christ, though not in the existence of separate persons in the Godhead. I supposed Christ to be the incarnation of the Father, and not the incarnation of a second person in the Trinity. I now laid aside the use of the word Trinity altogether, as well as of the word persons when speaking of the Divine Being. I still called Jesus God, and thought myself right in so doing; for though I did not believe in the existence of more than one God, or in the existence of separate persons in the Godhead, I still believed that Jesus was called God in the sacred writings, and that the fact that God dwelt in him was a sufficient reason for his being called God, as well as for his being worshipped as God. With respect to the Holy Spirit, I considered it to be the same God that dwelt in Christ, operating in

a peculiar manner in the great work of human salvation.

These were my views when I entered the New Connexion, and became a travelling preacher in that body. The list of doctrines drew up by that body was chiefly expressed in Scripture language, and the Scriptures were laid down in the list of doctrines as a perfect rule of faith and practice; I therefore found no difficulty in subscribing that list, with the exception of two or three words. As my objection to those two or three words was not considered a sufficient reason for excluding me from the ministry in that body, I became in 1828, a new Connexion travelling preacher on trial. I was then rather more than twenty-two years of age. About four years and a half after that time, I was received into full Connexion. I was not however received without objections. During the time of my probation, my views had become more heterodox than they were at the time that I entered on my probation, and the freedom with which I had conversed on my religious opinions with ministers and others, had given rise to serious rumours respecting my heterodoxy, and some had expressed a strong assurance that I was not fit to be received into their community. A committee was appointed to meet me previous to my reception, in order to ascertain what my views were, especially with respect to the Trinity and the doctrine of Atonement. I stated at once my objection to use the word Trinity, at the same time stating my belief in the divinity of Christ and of the Holy Spirit, adding, that I believed that the Scriptures spoke of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, as we should speak of three separate persons, but that what it was in the divine being that gave rise to such a mode of speaking, I did not understand, but regarded it as a mystery. I also stated my firm belief in the doctrine of the Atonement, but refused to state that I considered the death of Christ as a satisfaction to the justice of God. To prevent mistake, I wrote down my statement, and gave a copy of it to the deputation. When it was presented to the Conference, some objected to its reception, stating that it was no more than what a Unitarian or a Socinian might say: others pleaded strongly in favour of its reception, contending that it was as much as any man ought to say, and as much as any man was warranted by the sacred Scriptures in saying. Those who were in favour of its reception, prevailed, and I was admitted as a minister in full connexion.

In the year 1835 I commenced the publication of a small periodical called the EVANGELICAL REFORMER. In the twentieth number I published an article on CREEDS, in which I contended that all human creeds were useless and mischievous,—that they served only to strengthen error and to oppress the truth,—that they gave power to the indolent and ambitious in the church, and led to the persecution of the thoughtful, and intelligent and the faithful. I pleaded for the Bible as the only rule of faith and practice, according to an article in our list of doctrines, and according to the principle professed and contended for by Protestants generally. This article was censured at the following Conference as erroneous and dangerous, and the censure was published in the minutes.

About this time also I met with a volume of the works of your celebrated countryman, William Ellery Channing, and was so delighted with it, that I formed the purpose of publishing it as soon as I could do so, and spoke of my intention in my small periodical. This commendation of Channing, and some other articles in my Evangelical Reformer, were made the ground of another prosecution at the Conference following, when resolutions were passed suspending or expelling me in effect, unless I could give some kind of guarantee that I would not disturb or alarm the leading members of the Connexion any more. The proceedings of Conference however met with serious opposition from the people without, and created a terrible excitement. This led the Conference to seek an interview with me, and make offers of peace, which ended in a temporary settlement of the dispute.

In this Conference it had been laid down as a principle, that in religious discussions we had no right to appeal to the sacred writings,—that the standard of appeal in Conference investigations into the soundness of a minister's principles, were the writings of John Wesley,—that the question to be decided in reference to my opinions was, not whether they were in accordance with the Scriptures, but whether they were in accordance with those interpretations of the Scriptures contained in John Wesley's sermons, and in his notes on the New Testament. Towards the close of this year I concluded my Evangelical Reformer. In the last number of this work I took occasion to contradict a rumour that has been circulated by some of the preachers, that I had recanted some of the things which I had published in that work. I also took occasion to publish my protest against the principle which had been laid down in the Conference

respecting the standard of appeal in theological disputes, and to declare my determination to acknowledge no authority in matters of faith or in matters of practice but the Scriptures. This renewed the controversy, and a few days before the Conference, the leading minister of the Connexion sent out a letter designed to prepare the way for my expulsion. The letter was an exceedingly weak one, and proved the writer to be exceedingly ignorant on the subject in debate. Before the second day of the Conference had passed over, my reply was out, and was circulated extensively throughout the district where the Conference was held. The effect of this reply upon the people was such that the Conference was divided, and came to terms again, and I continued in the Connexion as before.

During the following year I proceeded still further in my opposition to creeds, as well as to some of the rules and customs of the Connexion. On this occasion the annual committee had a secret meeting, and sent round circulars to the superintendent preachers, and the leading friends throughout the Connexion, respecting the danger to the Connexion if I were continued any longer in the body, and urging the necessity of my expulsion forthwith. The plan succeeded. Though by far the majority of the people were in favour of my continuance in the body, the ruling party were against me, and in the Conference they had a large majority. I was accordingly expelled, together with two other ministers who held views somewhat similar to my own on many subjects.

The Connexion at that time numbered about twenty-two thousand members. From six to seven thousand of those, including a great number of local preachers, class-leaders, and other officers of the Connexion, left the body, and formed themselves into separate congregational churches. Most of those were Methodists of a liberal character, Methodists who were wishful to have religion made plain to them, and who were prepared, wherever Methodism was found to be at variance with the teachings of Christ, to set the doctrines of Methodism aside, and to embrace the simple teachings of Jesus in their stead.

As far as I can judge, the principles which I advocate, are spreading very rapidly throughout the country. Both the number of churches and the number of individuals holding those views, are far greater than they were a year and a half ago. There are, at present, as far as I can learn, upwards of three hundred churches meeting together on the simple principle of faith in Jesus as the Christ, for the object of promoting each other's improvement in knowledge and piety, and of advancing the cause of truth and righteousness in the world. Those churches vary in point of numbers; some of them are very small; others of them are rather large. In some cases not more than six, or a dozen, in a score meet together; in others several hundreds assemble. The whole number of members contained in those churches, I cannot ascertain; but it can scarcely be less than from ten to fifteen thousand.

The number of persons who have been led, during the last three or four years, to embrace the sentiments which we advocate, cannot be less than from thirty to forty thousand.

What our views are on most subjects, you will be able to learn from the accompanying publications.

The principles which we advocate are at present spreading more rapidly than at any former period. Not only are vast multitudes eager to hear what we have to say in our lectures, but anxious to obtain our publications. Several of the churches with which I am connected have lately built lecture-rooms and school-rooms, and instituted free-libraries and reading-rooms.

I thank you for your invitation to visit you. It has long been my wish to see your country, and to observe the work of reform as it is progressing amongst you, and at times I entertain a hope, and even a belief, that I shall one day be able to accept your kind invitation, and have the pleasure of forming a personal acquaintance with you. But the future is all uncertain. How long I shall live, or how my future life will be disposed of, is alike unknown to me. I do however trust, that whether we should ever see each other's face on earth or not, we shall hold intercourse with each other by means of letters, and by an exchange of publications. And I do especially trust, that we shall do our utmost, in the fear of God, and in the love of truth, to enlighten and regenerate our race, and to bring about that happy state of things when all shall enjoy together the blessings of knowledge and freedom, of purity and peace, of fellowship with God, and the hopes of a blessed immortality in heaven.

Yours affectionately,  
JOSEPH BARKER.

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