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THE FIRST CENTURY OF THE CHRISTIAN
ERA.

(Continued from page 311.)

It was amid the members of a social system thus constituted that the christian teacher had to teach the liberty of the gospel, and the equality of all men before God: he had to announce that the slave was not less than his master in the sight of the Deity;—had equal duties to perform, equal rewards to hope for;—that woman, very generally degraded to a mere *thing*, was an intellectual being, accountable before her Creator for the rational soul bestowed on her, which no bondage could extinguish:—and that children, who, in the most ancient states, were mere chattels of the father, liable to be sold to pay his debts or supply his needs, were the especial favorites of the Deity, and the model on which the christian was to form his own character. It was a difficult task to make this doctrine palatable to the dominant portion of society,

and equally difficult to prevent it from being made an ill use of by the other part ; for among uncultivated minds the first proclamation of liberty is usually the signal for the casting off *all* restraint, whether oppressive or not. The task was difficult, but it was accomplished with singular judgment and success. The proclamation of equal rights and duties was accompanied by earnest exhortations to submit to existing customs and laws, wherever they did not interfere with the direct and immutable distinctions of right and wrong :—slaves were exhorted, as a part of their duty to God, to obey their masters and serve them faithfully, even though they might be “forward” and harsh in their conduct towards them, “with good will doing service, as unto the Lord, and not unto men :”* — women, in like manner, were required, in Christ’s name, to conform without murmuring, to the usages of the country, that they might give no occasion to the heathen adversaries of Christianity “to speak reproachfully :”† to stay within ; — to submit to their husbands ; — not to appear in public without a veil ; — to avoid embroidery and costly apparel ; to take no part in the assemblages of men ; such being the custom of maids and matrons of good character in all the Grecian states : and all these things are expressly required by the apostle in order that no scandal should attach to the profession of Christianity : for the liberty of the gospel would easily have been misinterpreted and maligned ; and the doctrine itself might thus have fallen into disrepute. Children also, were exhorted to the unhesitating obedience which ancient manners required ; but whilst he called for this submission to

* Ephesians vi. 7.

† 1 Timothy v. 14. Tit. ii. 5.

existing usages in the name of God, who would count it as service done to himself; he no less earnestly inculcated on masters, husbands, and fathers, a set of duties, till then little thought of or practised, and that, upon the ground that there was in the heavens A MASTER of the master; and that there was no respect of persons with Him.

So effectual was this teaching that none, even of the enemies of Christianity, have ever brought forward an instance of domestic insubordination consequent upon the new doctrine: the Christian servant, wife or child was but the more anxious to fulfil, "as unto God" all the duties which his or her situation on the then social system imposed: no servile war followed the proclamation of equal rights; and the slave bore his fate patiently, looking for the freedom of a better world. The profound wisdom of these injunctions cannot but be instantly recognised; for persons unaccustomed to self guidance are unable at first to exercise new rights with discretion; and the mind must be formed to thought by long training, ere it becomes capable of acting under new circumstances. The slave, brutalized by hardships and severity, had no self command; and even as late as the time of Clement of Alexandria, we find that writer anxiously endeavoring to teach some few of those decencies of life which even a common laborer of modern England would not wholly disregard. So too, the Greek woman, shut up within the walls of the Gynæceum, without literature or mental culture, would have found in the freedom to mix in men's society

* We shall see at a later period a husband suing his wife, she having embraced Christianity, for denying him conjugal rights. She herself hereupon pleaded her cause before the emperor, and proved that he had demanded of her such vicious compliances, that she was held justified by her judge in the course she had pursued.

as modern European custom allows, only an occasion for license, such as no rational teacher could desire.

The records of the first proceedings of the apostles of Christ are so scanty that we must depend more on the conclusions to be drawn from casual hints, than on any actual history: from these slight notices, however, we may gather that the diligence of these preachers and their pupils had been such, that converts had been made throughout the whole Roman empire, and even beyond it at a very early period. The tradition of the church assigns Egypt to Mark the Evangelist, Parthia to the Apostle Thomas; Andrew is said to have devoted himself to Scythia; John to Asia minor, where he took up his abode, and died at Ephesus.* Peter preached to the dispersed Jews; Paul's journeyings we gather from his own epistles, as well as from the Acts of the Apostles. He is said also to have visited Spain.

The death of Christ took place, as is well known, about A.D. 33, in the reign of the Emperor Tiberius;† and during the thirty following years, the preaching of the gospel met with scarcely any opposition from the ruling powers excepting among the Jews. Cornelius, a Roman Centurion, was converted A.D. 37; and a few years after, Sergius Paulus, the pro-consul of Cyprus. Dionysius, a member of the council of the Areiopagus at Athens, consequently one who had borne high office in the state, was convinced by the discourse of Paul before that body, about A.D. 53: and indeed, so great had been the success of the apostles

* Euseb. Hist. Ecc. lib. ii. c. 16.—lib. iii. c. i.

† The vulgar era differs from the common one by about four years, but this is of no consequence in the consideration of general results.

in their mission, that we find the unbelieving Jews at Thessalonica complaining that "the men who had turned the world upside down, were come thither also :"^{*} a proof that great numbers must have been converted to the faith, and that the change in their life and conversation had been considerable enough to excite notice.

During this time the Jewish nation had again past from the condition of a Roman province to that of an independent sovereignty under Herod Agrippi, the grandson of Herod the Great. This prince having been retained in captivity by Tiberius, was liberated by Caius Caligula, and elevated to the tetrarchy of his deceased uncle Philip ; and finally, at the accession of Cladius, received the kingdom of Judæa and Samaria in addition. It was during his reign that James the Apostle was put to death, and Peter was imprisoned ; but at the death of this monarch, which happened shortly after, Judæa relapsed into a Roman province, although young Agrippi was permitted to retain some part of the regal dignity ; for he nominated the high priest, and he is occasionally termed *king* ; although not regularly invested. This was the Agrippa before whom Paul defended himself when allowed by Festus to plead his own cause. Excepting, however, in the point of idolatry, — which the Jews resisted with a pertinacity which astonished all their heathen governors, as well now, under the Romans, as formerly during the sway of the Seleucidæ, — the habits of the people differed little from those of surrounding nations. Rome was the metropolis of the world, and the fashions of Rome were adopted among the higher classes here, as elsewhere.

^{*} Acts xvii. 6.

Herod Agrippa built an amphitheatre, and exhibited gladiatorial shows, with no other difference from those of Rome than that the chief of the persons who thus fought were criminals, "to the number of seven hundred of a side;" says Josephus; "thus improving the punishment of the criminals to the pleasure of the spectators; for they were all destroyed to the last man."* Such were some of the *pleasures* of the civilized world at that time!

I shall not here repeat what all can find elsewhere, — namely the state of Rome itself under the first Cæsars; yet still, notwithstanding the general dissolution of manners, almost the only opposition offered to the spread of the gospel appears to have been that of the unbelieving Jews settled in the different cities of the empire. It would seem that this was the case even in Rome itself; for, according to Suetonius, such tumults took place there among the Jews, "incited by one Chrestus," † that the Emperor Claudius commanded all of that nation to quit the city: but the progress of the gospel was not arrested by this, for the epistle of Paul to the Romans, written before he had ever visited that city, ‡ shows that the number of converts was considerable, and those not altogether of the meaner sort: and in the epistle to the Philippians, written a few years after, we find greetings from "the saints of Cæsar's household" — to the Church at Philippi; moreover in the beginning of that epistle the Apostle observes that his bonds, — for he was then a prisoner, — had turned out for the furtherance of the gospel; for that the cause of his imprisonment, etc., the enmity of the Jews, — was

* Antiq. lib. xix.

† Suet. in loc. This was a name not unfrequently given to Christ and the Christians by the heathens. v. Tertull. Apol.

‡ Probably about A. D. 58.

known to the whole Prætorium, and elsewhere ; and that the brethren in consequence of this, grew daily bolder in preaching the word.

A circumstance took place about this time in which perhaps the wide spread of the Christian doctrine in Rome was not without its influence, and which possibly might also have some share in causing the shortly subsequent persecution. About A.D. 61, Pedanius Secundus, the præfect of the city, was murdered by one of his slaves, to whom, it seems he had refused his freedom after having fixed the price of it : and whose rival in love he appears also to have been.* The law of Rome decreed that when a master was killed by one of his domestics, all the other slaves should be put to death also, without further enquiry ; on the presumption that they must have connived at the murder. In this instance the number of these unfortunate persons, including women and children, amounted to four hundred ; and the populace, struck with horror at a wholesale execution like this, where so many of them must necessarily have been innocent, rose in tumult to prevent the enforcing so barbarous a law. The senate met to deliberate, and after a hot debate, on the motion of Caius Cassius, voted that the law should be acted upon. The tumult grew :— the emperor called out his troops to repress it, and through lines of soldiers, who drove back the people, and kept the way open, these miserable victims of an inhuman law were led to execution, amid the groans, threats, and imprecations of the incensed multitude. Even Nero was almost ashamed of this severity, and when in addition to this, the banishment of the freed-

* Tacit. Ann. l. xiv. c. 42.

men with their families was called for, he refused his assent.

We can only conjecture the cause of the popular resistance to this act of cruelty; but as such a law could not have been viewed by the majority of the senate as a valuable relic of antiquity, unless it had at some time been enforced without causing any public demonstration of displeasure, so we may perhaps be justified in assuming that the humane feelings which it is the object of Christianity to awaken and to strengthen, were beginning to influence many. As these feelings showed themselves in the form of insurrection against the orders of the constituted authorities, it is not unlikely that this out-break, whether really caused by the doctrine of the brotherhood of all mankind, or not, would be reckoned among the ill consequences of its promulgation; and might incline the tyrant to snatch at the first occasion for repressing a sect which seemed likely to be troublesome. The earnest exhortations of the apostles to avoid "all appearance of evil" — to submit themselves to the ruling powers — "to be peaceable, and to mind their own business," show that they had either seen, or at least apprehended a tendency in their converts to resist the iniquitous proceedings of the government.

Nero had already been upon the throne some years, and the first fair promise of his youth had been stifled in the most infamous debaucheries. The wide spread of the Christian doctrines, which gained a more ready audience probably, in consequence of the very excesses of the sovereign, disgusting even to his heathen subjects; seems to have given umbrage to the licentious emperor: — Christians were not tools to be used for the purposes of cruelty

and vice, and yet in his very household already many Christians were numbered. About A.D. 64, Rome was almost destroyed by a conflagration, and the conduct of Nero on this occasion gave rise to an opinion that he was himself the incendiary. Alarmed at the probable consequences to himself if this should gain general credence, he attempted to throw the blame of it on the new sect; and ordered all whom he could discover of that persuasion, "an immense multitude," says Tacitus, to be put to death by the most cruel tortures; till again a curb was put to these proceedings by the indignation of the people; for the punishment of the Christians was considered rather as another instance of the emperor's frantic cruelty, than as a penalty inflicted for any specific crime.*

(To be concluded in our next.)

MENTAL FREEDOM.

BY DR. CHANNING.

It has pleased the All-wise Disposer to encompass us from our birth by difficulty and allurements, to place us in a world where wrong-doing is often gainful and duty rough and perilous, where many vices oppose the dictates of the inward monitor, where the body presses as a weight on the mind, and matter, by its perpetual agency on the senses, becomes a barrier between us and the spiritual world. We are in the midst of influences which menace the intellect and heart; and to be free is to withstand and conquer these.

* Tacit. Ann. lib. xv. c. 45. According to the tradition of the church, both Peter and Paul suffered death during this persecution.

I call that mind free, which masters the senses, which protects itself against animal appetites, which contemns pleasure and pain in comparison with its own energy, which penetrates beneath the body and recognizes its own reality and greatness, which passes life, not in asking what it shall eat or drink, but in hungering, thirsting, and seeking after righteousness.

I call that mind free, which escapes the bondage of matter, which instead of stopping at the material universe and making it a prison-wall, passes beyond it to its Author, and finds in the radiant signatures which it everywhere bears of the Infinite Spirit, helps to its own spiritual enlargement.

I call that mind free, which jealously guards its intellectual rights and powers, which calls no man master, which does not content itself with a passive hereditary faith, which opens itself to light whensoever it may come, which receives new truth as an angel from heaven, which, whilst consulting others, inquires still more of the oracle within itself, and uses instructions from abroad, not to supersede but to quicken and exalt its own energies.

I call that mind free, which sets no bounds to its love, which is not imprisoned in itself, or in a sect, which recognizes in all human beings the image of God and the rights of his children, which delights in virtue and sympathizes with suffering wherever they are seen, which conquers pride, anger, and sloth, and offers itself up a willing victim to the cause of mankind.

I call that mind free, which is not passively framed by outward circumstances, which is not swept away by the torrent of events, which is not the creature of accidental impulse, but which bends events to its own improvement,

and acts from an inward spring, from immutable principles, which it has deliberately espoused.

I call that mind free, which protects itself against the usurpations of society, which does not cower to human opinion, which feels itself accountable to a higher tribunal than man's, which respects a higher law than fashion, which respects itself too much to be the slave or tool of the many or the few.

I call that mind free, which, through confidence in God and in the power of virtue, has cast off all fear but that of wrong-doing, which no menace or peril can enthrall, which is calm in the midst of tumults, and possesses itself though all else be lost.

I call that mind free, which resists the bondage of habit, which does not mechanically repeat itself and copy the past, which does not live on its old virtues, which does not enslave itself to precise rules, but which forgets what is behind, listens for new and higher monitions of conscience, and rejoices to pour itself forth in fresh and higher exertions.

I call that mind free, which is jealous of its own freedom, which guards itself from being merged in others, which guards its empire over itself as nobler than the empire of the world.

In fine. I call that mind free, which, conscious of its affinity with God, and confiding in his promises by Jesus Christ, devotes itself faithfully to the unfolding of all its powers, which passes the bounds of time and death, which hopes to advance for ever, and which finds inexhaustible power, both for action and suffering, in the prospect of immortality.

HISTORICAL IMPORTANCE OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

BY REV. S. G. BULFINCH.

THE Lord's Supper is an historical memorial of important transactions, — a perpetual witness to the truth of the Christian religion. That we may judge of its value in this respect, we must take a brief view of the nature of such memorials.

Monuments and commemorations of past events have been in use among almost every people. These have mostly taken the form either of some remarkable structure, as a heap of stones, an altar, or a column; or of some national observance, as a feast, or a pilgrimage.

The monumental structure bears witness through succeeding ages to the occasion on which it was erected, even if no inscription be engraved upon it; because they who witnessed its erection hand down the memory of that event, and the transactions connected with it, to their children, and they to theirs, and these to still following generations. True, the traditional account may by time be blended with error; but this is most likely to be the case in monuments of merely local interest. If we find substantially the same account given of any monument, the work of human hands, by the widely scattered descendants of those who witnessed its erection, we have strong reason to believe that this account is true.

A heap of stones, an altar, or a pillar, may crumble to decay. But the record engraven on the customs of a people cannot be destroyed, except by the destruction of

the nation itself. As an instance of such a record, we may select our own observance of our national anniversary. Let it be supposed that our nation should relapse into the deepest barbarism, — arts, letters, sciences, be extinguished, but our observance of the national anniversary still continuing. In that case, a thousand years hence, that anniversary would still furnish the information of our revolutionary struggle. The people would always necessarily connect with it the tradition of the Declaration of Independence, and of the war during which it was made. If at any time an attempt should be made to trace the observance of the Fourth of July to some other origin, the people would answer, ignorant as they might be in other respects, — “The account you give of our national feast is new to us; it cannot, therefore, be true. The account we give is that which has been handed down alike in all parts of our country, and has, therefore, evidently been the same through all ages since its origin. It therefore must be true.”

We return now to the ordinance of the Lord's Supper. The whole Christian world unite in receiving that ordinance as an institution of the Saviour, in which he distinctly foretold his own approaching death. In thousands of churches, throughout the world, among Oriental Christians, Catholics, and Protestants, the bread and wine are distributed, and accompanied with the words, “This is my body,” “That is my blood,” and “This do in remembrance of me.” Ask the Christian of America, of Russia, or of Spain, to say by whom this rite was established; and each will answer, By Jesus Christ. Nor does he gain his knowledge of this fact from books. It is from tradition. We all see the rite administered, or the preparations made

for it in our churches, and receive a general idea of its purpose and origin before we are old enough to read intelligently the accounts in the Gospels. The ordinance has always been thus administered. This is the account which we all have received from our fathers, and they from theirs; and it must, therefore, be true.

Could we, if we had never before heard of the Lord's Supper, or seen it administered, be induced by any assurances to believe that we had known and participated in such an ordinance, and had been familiar with it from our childhood? And is it more probable that our ancestors, two or ten generations since, were thus deceived? — that they could be made to believe that an altar which was raised in their very sight was a time-honored memorial-altar which they had known from infancy? At what time was this mighty fraud effected? History answers not. There is no trace in her records of any period, since the time of Christ, when an attempt was made to introduce, or to revive, the observance of the Supper. That observance, therefore, we conclude, has been held continually in the Christian Church, from the days of its Divine founder.

But could such an institution have been fraudulently introduced at a period soon after the death of the Saviour? Could the Christian community, ten or twenty years after that event, have been persuaded that their Master in a solemn manner instituted this rite, if they had never heard of it before? Or, to go back the single step that remains, could one of the Apostles have persuaded the rest that their Master had, in the presence of them all, established such an ordinance, when they had no remembrance of such a scene? If not, the conclusion irresistibly follows,

that the communion was instituted by Jesus of Nazareth the night before his death.

Let us now approach and read the inscription on this venerable altar ;— in other words, let us notice the language in which the Saviour established this ordinance. "Take, eat; this is my body, which is broken for you : this do in remembrance of me." "This cup is the new testament [or covenant] in my blood : this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me." 1 Cor. xi. 24, 25. These words, in substance, are inseparable from the ordinance. It would be nothing without them. We know, therefore, that these words were uttered by Jesus before he was put to death. What does this prove ?

It proves that Jesus, while banqueting with his disciples, foretold his own violent death, and with so much certainty of the fulfilment of his prophecy, that he instituted an ordinance in memory of the event.

It proves that his prophecy was fulfilled, and that he was violently put to death. Otherwise, the observance of the rite among his followers would have been but mockery.

It proves that his death was voluntary ; for it shows that he knew his danger, and that, instead of taking measures to escape or to resist, he remained where it was certain to come upon him, foretold the result, and even rendered it necessary to his own cause ; for he would have been proved a false prophet, if his enemies had not succeeded in their design against his life.

It proves that he acted from benevolent motives, and those of the most elevated kind ; for no others could be found to induce a man voluntarily to submit to a tormenting, and, as it was then regarded, a shameful death.

It proves, then, that he spoke what he believed to be the truth. Can we conceive of a man, whose whole life is one continued falsehood, becoming a voluntary martyr to the noblest principles of benevolence ?

It proves, then, that his religion is true ; for that religion presents claims respecting the truth of which he could not have been mistaken.

Thus have we reached this great conclusion, the truth of the Christian religion, plainly deducible from the existence throughout the world, at this day, of the ordinance of the Lord's Supper. If all the records of our faith were swept away, and there remained, besides this rite, only some traditions respecting the history of our Saviour's life and death, the argument we have now contemplated would not be overthrown. It does not depend on the authenticity of writings. It stands in its own strength, an immovable pillar, though comparatively an unnoticed one, among the thousand which support the temple of Gospel truth.

THE UNITARIAN CHURCH IN MONTREAL.*

WHERE wide St. Lawrence toward the main
 Rolls the swift tribute of his floods,—
 Where, swelling from the peopled plain,
 The Royal Mountain waves its woods.

* The stanzas here printed are from a pen not unknown to the lover of sacred lyrics. The writer came to Montreal to attend the Unitarian Convention; and the thought of these verses had its birth while he was ascending the hill leading to the Church, during one of those evenings when service was held, and the building fully lighted. Hence the allusion in the seventh stanza.—ED. L.C.

There many a stately temple stands
 To greet the heavens with dome and tower,
 The graceful work of zealous hands,
 The trophies of religion's power.

The Eternal City there maintains
 A higher than imperial sway,
 And daily to her pictured fanes
 The people turn to kneel and pray.

There towers aloft in grandeur calm,
 Of England's faith the sombre pile;
 And deep response and chanted psalm
 Resound along the vaulted aisle.

There, vying with those rivals proud,
 Geneva's creed uplifts its spire;
 And high themes thrill the thoughtful crowd,
 Atoning love — avenging ire.

There, shaded by each loftier fane,
 Unawed, though modest in its grace,
 "Love, Freedom, Holiness" retain
 A chosen, consecrated place.

The bright ray from its opened door,
 Far downward through the city streams;
 So may its doctrine's radiance pour
 O'er mart and home its hallowed beams!

God's favor on his churches rest,
 Of every land, and every creed!
 But chiefly, brethren, be ye blest,
 In blessing others, blest indeed!

S. G. B.

INTELLIGENCE.

AUTUMNAL UNITARIAN CONVENTION.

SINCE the issue of our last number, the Autumnal Convention of Unitarians assembled according to notice in this city. The assemblage on that occasion was quite numerous — more numerous than we had any good reason to expect, considering our distance from the geographical centre of the Unitarian faith. But our friends did not allow the distance to prevent them from coming to help us by their presence and sympathy. Not less than three hundred persons crossed the United States frontier on that occasion, and came into Canada on their fraternal Christian mission. There was a large array of ministers and delegates from Massachusetts, a goodly number from Maine, and several from New York, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New Hampshire, Vermont, and Pennsylvania. We happen to know also of two persons who came from Hamilton, C. W., to attend the meetings. The whole proceedings were sustained with a fair degree of interest, and the impression made upon all who attended was, so far as we have been able to learn, quite satisfactory. While making this statement we ought not, perhaps, omit notice of a criticism by a writer in the *Boston Christian Register*, who, while he affirms the meeting here to have been one of the most successful of the Autumnal gatherings, yet says “the discussions were not so valuable as in many preceding years. This was partly the result, as we think, of the nature of the subject which came up first for consideration. Speculations which divide opinion and alienate feeling are seldom found, we believe, to be the most profitable subjects for popular debate. Had the Convention opened by some topic relating to the religious life, it would have presented a more united front, and have done more to strengthen our brethren who so hospitably received us. At the same time it must be admitted that many important views were presented on a subject which

at this time, is of deepest interest to our body, and limitations were suggested, on both sides of closely defined views, which may serve to guard against extremes."

In presenting an account of the proceedings of the Convention, we are indebted largely to the reports already published in our religious newspapers. The Convention assembled in the Unitarian Church of this city, on Tuesday, 10th October, at 5 o'clock, P.M. The Rev. Dr. Farley, as Chairman of the Committee of Arrangements, called the meeting to order. Rev. Rufus Ellis of Boston opened the meeting with prayer. The following persons were nominated and appointed officers of the Convention. Rev. S. K. Lothrop, D.D., President; Benjamin Workman, M.D., of Montreal, Hon. Albert Fearing, of Boston, and Rev. Joseph Allen, D.D., of Northboro', Vice Presidents; Rev. Joshua Young, of Burlington, Vt., and Rev. E. Nute, of Chicopee, Mass., Secretaries.

Dr. Farley gave notice that the business which the Committee of Arrangements proposed was as follows:— That Wednesday and Thursday be devoted to the consideration of three topics to be introduced by Essays in this order. 1, The Limitations of Christian liberty — to be introduced by an Essay by Rev. John Morison of Milton; 2, The necessity of a more complete co-operation of the Laity with the Clergy in church action and general Christian effort — to be introduced by an Essay by Rev. Mr. Corder of Montreal; 3, The Church as a Social Power — to be introduced by an Essay by Rev. Mr. Allen of Bangor. He also gave notice that a sermon would be preached on Tuesday evening by Rev. Dr. Lothrop of Boston, and another on Wednesday evening by Rev. J. F. Clarke, of Boston, that the ordinance of the Lord's Supper would be administered on Thursday evening, Rev. Dr. Thompson, of Salem, officiating; and that a resolution commemorative of our brethren who have departed, during the past year, would be offered at the close of the discussions by Rev. Dr. Hill of Worcester.

When these announcements were made, the Convention adjourned until half-past 7 o'clock; when a large audience, entirely filling the church, assembled to join in religious services and hear a discourse by Rev. Dr. Lothrop of Boston. Rev. Dr. Farley of Brooklyn, read the fifty-fifth chapter of Isaiah, and conducted the other services before the sermon. Dr. Lothrop's text was from the twenty-second chapter of Matthew, forty-second verse, "*What think ye of Christ?*"

In the introduction it was shown what was the effect of our thought of Christ upon the character. Dr. Lothrop said that, speaking for himself, and not for others, he would attempt to give his thought of Christ, and in doing so, he should group what he had to say, around three central points, *the person, the character, and the office of Christ.*

Under the first head, he maintained that Christ was the Son of God, the only begotten Son of the Father; and this in a higher sense than the relation sustained by the rest of mankind to the Father. He believed that Christ was something more than a perfect development of humanity; that he existed, as a spiritual being before the foundation of the world; that he came on earth from a pre-existent state, and took on himself the form and the condition of our earthly existence; that he had a glory with the Father before the world was; that he was before Abraham; that his relation to God was more intimate than the rest of mankind; that he knew the will of God, and was the embodiment of his attributes; that he was the image and representative of God; that his *character* was superhuman, and without imperfection and sin; that he came down from heaven to lift mankind up to the Father, to redeem and save the world. He acknowledged that this view was not without mystery; but his own being was a mystery. He discarded the idea of those who would make religion devoid of mystery. He answered the objection that this view of Christ destroyed the influence and power of his example. His thought was just

the reverse of this, that it is because the *character* of Christ is superhuman, that it stands out from all others as *the moral standard* of the world.

Under the last head of his discourse, the office of Christ, he considered him in the three-fold relation of *Prophet, Priest, and King, or Teacher, Mediator, and Intercessor.*

He maintained the *authoritative* character of his instructions on the ground that he came from God, that he was the Son of God, and that his character and life were sinless and undefiled. He described his office as the great High Priest of the human race, who put an end to all sacrifices, by offering himself, once for all, a sacrifice for the sin of the world. He described his office as King, when he shall come again to judge the world, and to receive to heaven his faithful subjects and followers.

Between eight and nine o'clock on Wednesday morning a Conference and Prayer meeting was held in the vestry of the church. The opening and closing exercises were by Rev. A. B. Fuller, of Boston, and remarks and prayers were offered by Rev. George G. Channing, Rev. Dr. Hill, of Worcester, Rev. Mr. Gage, Rev. Mr. Bulfinch, and Mr. Fenno, of Augusta, Me. The power of the Christian life was the general theme of remark, and the spirit of the meeting was excellent.

At half-past 9 o'clock, Rev. Dr. Lothrop, the President, called the Convention to order, and invited Rev. Mr. Smith, of Deerfield, Mass., to open it with prayer. The President congratulated the assembly upon the return of another of those occasions, which are so full of many and sweet memories, and so fruitful of many precious influences. In the spirit of that faith which embraces all nationalities, we have left our own land, and have gathered here under a foreign power, and he hoped we should have that spirit of Jesus with us which may be present in all places. He then called upon Mr. Morison to read the essay on —

“ THE LIMITATIONS OF CHRISTIAN LIBERTY.”

Mr. Morison then read a paper of which the following is an abridgment :

If a revelation from God has been given to us, we are bound by its authority. In accepting it, we have liberty to act under it, but no liberty to overthrow or resist it. We receive Christianity as such a revelation. If a revelation from God has been given to man, except by a perpetual miracle, there is only one way of transmitting it from age to age, namely: by committing it to writing, and, in those written documents, handing it down, substantially unchanged, from generation to generation. No one, we believe, not even the Roman Catholic Church, pretends to the existence of a perpetual miracle of this kind. If, therefore, a Divine revelation has come down to us from any remote period, it must be through written documents, which documents are likely to be the only authentic records of the revelation.

Now we receive Christianity as a revelation from God, and we recognize in those who place themselves under it no right to call its authority in question.

But further than this we know nothing of Christianity as a revelation from God, except through certain written documents, transmitted to us from the times of the apostles, and professing to give an account of the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. These writings we accept as faithful records of what Jesus actually taught and did, and as the only authentic and original records of his words and acts. No one pretends that there are now in existence any other historical accounts of Jesus which are entitled to any consideration whatever. If, therefore, we give up these records as unworthy of credit, we give up the revelation itself; since it is only through the writings that we have any knowledge of the revelation. To be sure the records are not the revelation, and are not to be confounded with it. Neither is the cask, imported from a distant continent, to be confounded with the wine which it con-

tains ; but if, on that account, those having it in charge should think it of so little consequence as to have its hoops loosened and its seams opened, they, in the simplicity of their hearts, may exclaim, " It is only the cask that we are throwing away, but not the wine ; we would not waste a drop of that ;" but all their professions would hardly convince us of their discretion. The writings of the New Testament are not of themselves the revelation of God in Jesus Christ ; but they contain that revelation, and we cannot seriously impair *their* trust-worthiness without also impairing *its* authority. It is only through them that we can know of it as a revelation from God. If, therefore, we reject them as unworthy of credit, we, at the same time, reject it as a divine revelation.

When, therefore, we receive Christianity as a revelation from God, we must at the same time admit the authority of the New Testament writings as faithful records ; for it is only through those records that we can know either what Christianity would teach, or whether it is a revelation from God. We receive then these writings as truthful records. What they plainly declare that Jesus said and did, that we receive as said and done by him.

We bow before the authority of Christ and his religion, as we find them in the writings of the New Testament. Here, then, in this direction, are the limits of our Christian liberty. What Christ, in the Gospels, has taught for truth, or enjoined as duty, that we, as Christians, hold ourselves bound to accept and obey. Our Christian liberty, while it allows us to walk with perfect freedom through the wide domain of Christian truth and Christian duty, and through the whole realm of thought and life that does not interfere with them, here establishes its bounds and forbids us to go one step beyond. We know nothing of Christianity as a revelation from God, except what we learn from the Gospels. The Christianity that we have in them is the only Christianity, as a Divine revelation, that we can have. As far as that goes, so far our Chris-

tian liberty extends ; by one step farther we go beyond the limits of Christianity itself, and of course beyond the limits of Christian liberty.

We receive Christianity as a Divine revelation, and the Gospel as truthful records of that revelation. But who shall determine for us precisely what that revelation is ; precisely what it teaches respecting the nature of God and Christ, of man, his duties, and his destiny ? There are three ways in which written documents, like those which make up the New Testament, may be taught and enforced. There may be a distinct order of men, raised up from age to age, with a miraculous power to explain and enforce the doctrines and precepts of Christ, and to make such additional regulations as the altered circumstances of the world may require. The Roman Catholic hierarchy claim to be such an order, and the Mormon priests, I believe, make a similar claim.

Secondly, there might be a divinely instituted order of men, without any special, miraculous inspiration, set apart from time to time, like the judges of a court, as the only authorized expositors of Christian faith and practice.

In the third place, there are those who allow that Christ addresses himself to the individual soul ; that the Scriptures are the only external and sufficient rule of faith and practice, and that *every man*, in the best exercise of the faculties God has given him, and responsible to God alone for his fidelity, is to search the Scriptures *for himself*, and learn for himself what Christ has revealed. This, the ground nominally assumed by the early Protestants, is the ground on which we profess to stand.

“ You are perfectly free,” say many who profess to believe in the sufficiency of the Scriptures, and the right of private judgment, “ You are perfectly free to study the Scriptures for yourselves. It is your duty so to do. But then every man who reads the Scriptures with an unbiased and prayerful mind, will find in them the great doctrines of total depravity, the Trinity, and a vicarious

atonement. If you do not find them there, it is evident that you do not go to the Scriptures in a right spirit, and therefore you cannot be recognized by us as Christians." But what sort of liberty is this? We are perfectly at liberty, nay, it is our duty, to study the Scriptures for ourselves; but unless we find in them just what you find, then we are not entitled to the Christian name. You put into our hands, perhaps, the Westminster Catechism, and tell us to study the Bible, but tell us that, unless we find the Catechism in the Bible, we do not read the Bible right. Which is the master here, the Catechism or the Bible? The doctrines of the Catechism are enthroned as the doctrines of Christianity. Nothing is allowed to modify or repeal them. But if the Bible does not teach just those doctrines, then it is no Bible to us. We may accept every word in the New Testament, and say we believe them. "But how do you believe them?" is the question. "Do you believe them in the sense of the Westminster Catechism? If not, you do not believe them right, and cannot be recognized as Christians by us." What is this but to give the Westminster divines authority over the Bible, and while professing the profoundest reverence for it, to bind it down by their peculiar metaphysical opinions, as able men have sometimes got possession of the person of their sovereign, and with every outward mark of homage, have constrained him to affix his signature and seal to their decrees, and thus employed his very name and authority to annul or pervert his commands.

We have a right to study the Scriptures for ourselves, and to abide, in perfect simplicity and good faith, by the result of our investigations. But the moment we erect our views into a standard of faith to be proposed and enforced as a test of the faith of others, that moment we raise our own authority, or the authority of human councils, above the authority of Christ; we usurp a power which he never granted to any man or association of men,

in order to curtail the liberty which he has left to all his followers.

But there is danger, it is said, if we leave these matters of Christian doctrine open to every one. Very well. Suppose that there is danger. What then? If Christ has left this whole ground open, and not given, either to you, or me, or any body of men, any authority to build up walls around so much of truth as we can comprehend, mingled probably with our own individual errors, and to denounce as unchristian all who will not come within those limits; if Christ has delegated to us no such authority, then we are wanting in reverence to him, we are setting up our own individual or associated opinions over his Word, and substituting our limited and imperfect notions in the place of the glorious liberty of the children of God. While other denominations fall back on human instrumentalities, and submit to them, we, in the larger liberty that we claim, feel ourselves upheld and carried on by the ever-living power of Christ and His Word, the sanctifying presence of the Holy Spirit of God, and His almighty and perpetual care.

But there are those to whom even this seems a poor sort of liberty. "Why," they ask, "shall we submit to any authority but that of the human soul?" But the soul left to itself, with no authoritative instruction from abroad, would indeed be helpless and enslaved, though the whole universe should lie open before it. Its own powers and capabilities, its destiny, and the highest laws of its being, and the loftiest and most inspiring truths must be revealed to it, before it can enter on the enjoyment of the highest liberty for which it has been created.

There are strange ideas abroad respecting liberty of thought, as if it consisted in being set free from every species of restraint. The bird that obeys no law must flutter helplessly on the ground, the slave of its own extravagant ideas of liberty. But when it learns to obey the laws of ærostatic motion, and in obedience to them spreads

out its wings and poises itself in the air, it soars aloft ; it sails abroad through the unresisting element ; it faces the tempest and forces its way through, or soars above the storm, and moves almost with the freedom of an incorporeal spirit. So the human soul, not knowing or not obeying the great laws of spiritual thought and life, grovels helplessly upon the earth, the slave of its own ignorance or waywardness. But when it obeys those laws, it rises into higher realms of thought, it moves with a larger liberty, and spreads itself out into a wider and nobler sphere of being. Christianity, in revealing to us the highest laws of life and the highest truths on which the human mind can be engaged, prepares man for the largest liberty of which his nature is capable, if he will only submit to those laws and accept those truths. For here, as everywhere else, the maxim of the great master of modern thought holds true, "*parendo imperamus*" — "by obeying we govern."

We say that we must submit to the authority and the words of Christ as we find them in the New Testament. But there is a large field for free inquiry in determining what constitutes the genuine text of the New Testament. We cannot say precisely what amount of emendation and rejection in the received text will exceed the just limits of Christian liberty, and throw a man out of the pale of Christianity ; but we do know that there is all the difference in the world between one who rejects altogether the genuineness and the authority of the Constitution of the United States, and one who, admitting both, would correct certain obvious misprints in the copies of that instrument which he and his neighbors happen to have. So there is all the difference in the world between one who recognises the authority of Christ and of the Scriptures, while he doubts about the genuineness of particular passages, or the authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews, and one who denies altogether the authority both of Christ and the Scriptures. It is idle and dishonest to say that they oc-

copy the same position. They not only stand one within, and the other without, the limit of Christian liberty, but in regard to Christianity itself, they stand in an entirely different attitude.

The reading of this paper was followed by a discussion, in which the Revs. J. H. Allen, J. F. Clarke, S. J. May, Thomas Hill, John Pierpont; S. Greele, Esq., of Boston, Mr. Ausorge, of Dorchester, Mass., and others joined.

At the afternoon session, the Rev. Dr. Allen of Northboro², Mass., took the chair. Rev. Mr. Ellis, of Boston, moved that the discussion on the first topic should terminate within a specified time. This was agreed to; and at the close thereof, the chairman called on the Rev. Mr. Corder to read his paper introducing the second topic. Mr. Corder then read a paper, which we here abridge, on

“THE NECESSITY OF A MORE COMPLETE CO-OPERATION OF THE LAITY WITH THE CLERGY IN CHURCH ACTION AND GENERAL CHRISTIAN EFFORT.”

It cannot fail to strike any one who looks beneath the surface of things, that in Christendom there are two distinct and conflicting ideas at work concerning the Church and its organization. One of these we may indicate at once as the sacerdotal idea, which is exclusive and narrow. And for the other I know no more fitting term than the democratic idea, which is inclusive and comprehensive. The one has reference to a class, and would make that class the Church. The other has reference to the whole, and would make that whole the Church. Through the action and prevalence of the one idea the Church becomes a corporation of priests. Through the action and prevalence of the other idea the Church becomes a body of people. The sacerdotal and exclusive idea produces the limited Catholicism of Rome. The democratic and comprehensive idea produces the wider catholicism of Protestant Christianity.

In its relation to Christianity, sacerdotalism is traditional. It appeared in pagan forms of worship, and it was an essential part of the Hebrew ceremonial. And from these Christendom has inherited it as a tradition. The early converts, both Jewish and Gentile, were familiar with it, and though not authorized by the teaching of Christ or his Apostles, yet in the organization of the Christian ideas into an institution it came to be accepted, and was given a prominent place. Hence the priesthood of Christendom, considered as a separate and privileged class.

While sacerdotalism is traditional, that which I have called the democratic idea is essential to the Christian religion. This religion recognizes no respect of persons. In the overthrow of the Hebrew ritual it sees the overthrow of all privileged and authoritative human priest-hoods. The New Testament reveals Christ as the Prophet, Priest, and Prince of the Church. The Christianity of the New Testament levels all national and other outward and accidental peculiarities by which one man is raised or privileged above another. God is the Father, and all are his children. Jesus Christ is the Master, and all his disciples are brethren. In the great structure of the Christian Church every individual soul is, or may become, a living stone. Every Christian man is called on to become a priest before God, and offer up his own sacrifice.

Protestantism stands on what I have called the democratic or comprehensive idea. In its essence it is democratic and comprehensive, not sacerdotal and exclusive. It regards the Church as a body of people, a popular body, not a corporation of priests, or clergy. Anglican Episcopacy, I suppose, lies nearer Rome, and has stronger sacerdotal tendencies and tastes, than any other portion of Protestant Christendom. But its Protestant character is asserted in its constitution by the presence of the Crown, representing the nation at large. Presbyterianism has been styled the republicanism of Christianity, and in the

forms and usages of Congregationalism we find a still wider recognition of popular rights claimed and conceded.

The comprehensive idea which levels all class barriers in the Christian Church, and asserts the rights of all disciples to the highest privileges connected therewith, is held and cherished by us all in this body, and by far more besides. What an excitement we should have if any claims were seriously put forth for special Christian privileges on behalf of a priestly or clerical order! But the Christian medal, whereon we find stamped the charter of our rights, has its reverse, whereon is stamped the corresponding and correlated duties, and we cannot separate the one from the other. If we accept either, we must accept both.

Go into any, into the average of the Protestant congregations that met together on last Sunday, and what, think ye, was the prevailing feeling among the masses of the people? The Catholics, we know, gathered that they might see the visible sacrifice offered which none but priestly hands can touch. Within the rails of the altar stood the priest mediating between them and Heaven. They look upon him as apart from them, of a different order, and performing an office for them which they have no right to perform for themselves. And they witness his rites with what adoring thoughts they may, without feeling any responsibility for the service. It is his, not theirs. Now it would be instructive if we could discover to what extent the great mass of the Protestants differed from the Catholics in shifting the responsibility of the service on their minister. What multitudes come into the pews of all Protestant churches entirely passive, and waiting to be acted on by the pulpit. They do not feel any responsibility in having their own minds quickened by previous devotional thought, so that they might help themselves, and help the minister too, by their sober and devout presence. Then, again, in matters of church action and general Christian effort, which go beyond the fixed services of public worship, how are the pews commonly

represented? Does the minister find himself aided and sustained in such matters by the body of the congregation, as their common idea of a comprehensive church would properly require, and naturally lead him to expect? It is the rare exception when he does. Generally, if he finds the proportion of one layman in ten who shows a living and active interest in such affairs, he feels encouraged. Do I exaggerate the state of the case when I say that nine-tenths of the people show no real interest at all?

The Church is the grand want of the world—the Church as we understand it, inclusive and comprehensive—the Church as a living, spiritual body of people. It is expedient that we have pastors and teachers to-day, as in the early times. But such pastors and teachers do not stand in theory, and ought not to stand in practice, in the place and stead of the body of the people to do the work of the Church. The Christian rites and privileges of the people are on a par with those of the pastors. And in every department of Christian activity the *duties* also of the people are on a level with the duties of the pastors. The Church was active and aggressive at the first, and it requires to be active and aggressive still. There were error, ignorance, and sin, against which it waged war eighteen hundred years ago, and there are error, ignorance and sin against which it is called to wage war to-day. The existing state of society in the Old World and the New, shows its terrible want of the divine remedies of the Gospel. The Church has a great and pressing work to perform, as an agent of renovation and redemption. I need not remind you of its two-fold obligation to those within and those without its own pale. In every department of obligation, pastors and people, laity and clergy, are co-ordinately responsible. The minister is called on to be interested in the wants of the people whom he serves, and to meet such wants, temporal and spiritual, as best he can. But the people are equally called on to be interested in each other, and minister to mutual necessi-

ties. This must needs be involved in the idea of the Church as a fraternal communion. The wants, and woes, and wrongs of society around him demand the Christian minister's attention and exertion, but there is not an argument or appeal in such a case valid to him that is not equally valid to all Christian people.

If Protestant Christendom had been true to its ideal of a comprehensive Church, and practically recognized its duties as well as its privileges, another and a far higher order of things would now be visible in the world. Instead of having only a small section of the Church—a single member, so to speak, of the general body—actively interested in the Church's work, it would have had the whole body, and all the members thereof—head, feet, eyes, hands—earnestly and hopefully engaged. Such general co-operation as this would have kept the warmth and strength of a living body in the Church itself, and its effect upon the world of men and things outside its pale would have been with marked power in every generation. God would have worked visibly in it and through it; Christ would have been the animating soul thereof, and it would have accomplished greater works than miracles. I gladly concede and gratefully accept all that it has done. The Church has effected much even in its maimed and partial state of working, and here I see proof of the wonderful power of the divine ideas which it has in its keeping, and of the holy sympathies which its crucified Founder has awakened in human hearts. But if so much has been accomplished by the Church in its maimed and partially efficient state, what might have been accomplished if the whole body had been alive and at work—if every Christian disciple had felt himself in some sense a Christian missionary, and had worked for the promotion of the Gospel-spirit and life all around him?

On the subject of this paper remarks were then offered by Rev. Drs. Hill of Worcester and Farley of Brooklyn, N. Y.; Rev. Mr. Gage, Rev. G. G. Channing, Hon. Al-

bert Fearing, Mr. E. Fenno, and others. The Convention adjourned at half-past 5 o'clock.

At half-past 6 o'clock the church was filled to join in religious services, and hear a sermon by the Rev. J. F. Clarke of Boston. His text was from Mat. xvi. 18. *On this rock I will build my church.* What is the rock here alluded to? Three answers have been given. 1, Peter himself—Peter the priest—the office-bearer, who was commissioned to give authority to his subordinates and successors, just as a collector of revenue empowers his deputies. 2, Peter's creed, as if there was some saving power in this confession, or in any confession of words, drawn up into articles of faith. 3, The life of faith in the Son of God, of which Peter's words were the proof. This was the true rock on which the Church of Christ must be built—and the full meaning of a life of faith in Christ, the necessity and operation and results of this, formed the topics of a sermon which was rich in thought, and which quickened many hearts in the assembly, and secured the most profound attention and interest to the close.

At 8 o'clock a Soiree was given, in the St. Lawrence Hall, by the Montreal Unitarian Congregation to the Members of the Convention. The principal room was decorated with the flags of Great Britain and the United States, connected and surmounted by the Christian symbol of the Cross. The Hon. John Young, M.P.P., occupied the chair. After prayer by Rev. Dr. Hill of Worcester, there was sung an

OPENING HYMN FOR THE OCCASION.

HAIL! messengers of Truth divine,
 We bid you welcome here!
 Hail! brothers in the Gospel bond!
 Welcome from far and near.

To East and West we welcome give;
 The North the South doth greet;
 All landmarks fade, all barriers fall,
 When one in Christ we meet.

In cold, north climes warm hearts are found,
 And warm ours beat to you ;
 Your presence cheers us on our way—
 It cheers, and helps us too.

In Christ's dear name we meet you here ;
 In his dear name we'll part ;
 And may his love be perfected
 In every waiting heart.

The Chairman then welcomed the friends from a distance, and on the part of the Montreal Congregation, expressed high satisfaction at seeing so numerous a Convention. He alluded briefly to the history and growth of the Worshipping Society of Unitarians in Montreal, and spoke of the fraternal sympathy and material aid which they had received from their brethren in the United States.

Rev. Dr. Lothrop, the President of the Convention, responded in a felicitous manner, assuring the Society of Montreal of the friendly interest of the Unitarians of the United States in their position and welfare, and the sympathy felt in their prosperity.

Samuel Greele, Esq., of Boston, Rev. Dr. Farley of Brooklyn, N.Y., Father Taylor of Boston, Rev. Mr. May of Syracuse, N.Y., and Rev. Dr. Thompson of Salem, Mass., also addressed the meeting.

The company separated about 11 o'clock, after singing the doxology.

On Thursday morning the Conference and Prayer Meeting was well attended. Rev. Mr. Fuller, of Boston, presided, and introduced the meeting with a few brief remarks, suggesting for a subject, "The love of Christ constraineth us." Father Taylor offered prayer. Then Mr. Ansorge, a German exile, offered prayer, in which he spoke of his personal history in a very affecting manner. Other friends, Rev. Dr. Allen, of Northboro' Mass., Rev. Mr. Muzzey, of Concord, N. H., Rev. James Freeman Clarke, of Boston, and Father Taylor, uttered brief and earnest words, and Rev. Mr. Hassel, of Mendon,

Mass., gave a touching account of his experience in Montreal at the time he became a Unitarian.

At half-past 9 o'clock on Thursday morning, the Convention was called to order. Rev. Dr. Allen, of Northboro', in the chair.

Voted to close the discussions of the Convention at 1 o'clock, P.M.

Samuel Greele, Esq. of Boston, moved the thanks of the Convention to the friends in Montreal for their hospitality; to which Dr. Workman appropriately responded.

The Rev. Dr. Hill offered resolutions commemorative of brethren deceased during the past year.

A Committee of Arrangements was appointed for the next year, consisting of Rev. Rufus Ellis, of Boston, Rev. Thomas Hill, of Waltham, and George William Bond, Esq., of Boston.

Rev. Joseph H. Allen, of Bangor, read an essay, of which the following is an abstract, on the third topic before the Convention —

“THE CHURCH AS A SOCIAL POWER.”

The essay commenced with defining the true position of the Church to society as a “spiritual power,” i.e., “a power dealing *directly* with men’s motives, beliefs, principles, and moral discipline, and only *indirectly* with those external facts and institutions which make the domain of the temporal power, or the State.”

The need of such a power was next set forth, as “seen in the lamentable controversies that distract the morals of Christendom; in the existence of frightful social evils, which the State makes scarce an effort to remove; in the anarchy that prevails as to the first principles of morals, and the absence of any great common interest or faith, pervading the forms of our social life” — showing that “there is still lacking an intelligent, thorough, and commanding organization of the profoundest moral conviction of men, such as may correspond to our complete notion of the Church of Christ, with forces proportioned to its work.”

The phrase, "spiritual power," was further defined as including "not only the charge of worship, religious culture, and moral discipline, but also the organization of charities, the whole field of education, and the advance of truth, ethical, religious, scientific, and social; in a word, all the intellectual, moral, and religious interests of human society." The Roman Church of the Middle Ages being the most complete example of such a power, its foundation was exhibited as consisting in: 1. The Deity of Christ, with the derived dogmas of the Real Presence and Apostolical Succession; 2. The Augustinian religious fatalism, making men helplessly dependent on church offices; 3. The doctrines of Hell and Purgatory, which made the first of ecclesiastical discipline; as well as the great social services rendered by that Church.

The Church was next assumed as "even less a teacher of truth than a social fact and a social power;" and the conditions of that power were next alluded to, as adapted to the present age. The Church was further defined, as (in the mystical language of the Testament) "the spiritual body, corresponding to the exterior and visible body, whether of the parish, the State, or the Christian world;" or as "the aggregate of those living religious agencies which we methodize and incorporate in our associated religious life." Its office was next set forth: first, as dealing in personal spiritual culture, and next with needed charities and existing wrongs. And the first essential want in the construction of that power was stated to be, "a clearly recognized basis of authority on which it may rest—an authority as absolute and independent as that of the Roman Church, but suited to a set of conditions wholly different and new. . . . authority so broad, and clear, and firm as to redeem the mind from feebleness and fear; so generous as to win, by pure spiritual persuasion and the omnipotence of truth, the willing reverence of men; so strong as to hold in check an age of passionate and wayward liberty."

The authority of the Gospel among us "is a sentiment of personal loyalty felt in the sphere of personal religion ; but for social ethics, or the religion of humanity, it needs to be stated in another form... The last word of the scientific mind and social experiences of man must be its authentic exposition. The seat of the only authority to which an age like ours can appeal, is in the educated sense and conscience of men — generalized, indeed, in the ethical maxims of Christianity, but to be reconciled with the largest and latest experience, and freest mental tendencies, of the human race—science and faith to be perfectly blended into one."

For this we require first, "a more intellectual and scientific treatment of social wants and evils than has been prevalent hitherto. Social ethics, however earnest practically, must submit itself to the dictate of intellectual conditions as to the directions which it shall take. It is by a steady search for *truth* that we shall, by degrees, lay the foundation of that authority to which both ourselves and others must submit.

"Secondly, the Church has it in hand to organize the conscience and life, as well as utter the interpreting forms of thought. Every church within its limited sphere must realize, as it may, the full pattern of a true social life." And this, both by its general culture, and by its special agencies. "Christian charities present a field coequal, in grandeur and importance, with that of Christian culture ; a field that should be more thoroughly surveyed and occupied.

"It is not so much the change of present instruments, or the multiplication of them we need, as a clearer consciousness that, by means of them, we are working to so glorious issues, and with so goodly a fellowship ; that in proportion as a thought or a deed of ours corresponds with a real want, or is in league with an eternal truth, we are working towards the building up of the vast Christian structure of the future, which shall realize, to another age

the kingdom of God on earth, in a larger, and holier, and truer sense than the structures of the Christian civilization of the past.”

The Congregational body of New-England, and especially our own denomination, were then stated as standing nearest to a right apprehension and realization of such power. “The *Church feeling*, based on affectionate loyalty to God and Christ, is deepening among us year by year; let it be followed up by a larger and truer apprehension of the function of the Church as a consecrated divine agency in human life. Then it shall be our commission to lay deeply and broadly the foundations of that spiritual house which must embrace the cultured understanding, the disciplined conscience, and the rich fruits of religious experience, that in no single element it may fail to embody the purest and noblest life of humanity.”

Rev. Samuel J. May, of Syracuse, N. Y., offered the following resolutions, which embodied some remarks he had previously made, and which are given as amended by the Convention. After a brief discussion they passed *unanimously*:

Resolved, That while we deeply deplore the present inability of humane and Christian people in the United States to give shelter and protection to the poor fugitives from the most cruel and unchristian institution of slavery, we thank God that only an invisible line separates them from a country where these outcasts may be, as thousands of them have been, kindly received, and put under the protection of the most powerful Government upon earth.

Resolved, That we return our grateful acknowledgments to those persons in Canada who have generously co-operated with the friends of humanity in the United States, in providing homes for the fugitives who have succeeded in effecting their escape from American slavery.

Resolved, That we earnestly entreat the people of Canada, upon whom our words can make any impression, to use all the influence they may, in keeping alive that pub-

lic sentiment throughout these provinces which will withstand any attempt to open this fair land to the hunters of men, or to throw the least impediment in the way of those who are fleeing for liberty, dearer than life.

After the passage of these resolutions a brief discussion followed on the Church as a Social Power.

Hon. Albert Fearing, of Boston, made an appeal in behalf of the movement for the establishment of a Book Fund, to be used by the American Unitarian Association, as capital in the publication, sale, and distribution of Unitarian books.

Rev. Mr. Hassall, Rev. Mr. May and others spoke on this subject, after which the meeting adjourned.

The COMMUNION SERVICE was held in the evening at half-past 7 o'clock. The Rev. Dr. Thompson, of Salem, and Rev. Dr. Peabody, of Portsmouth, N.H., officiated. Although a large number of the delegates had left the city by the afternoon trains, a numerous congregation was present, and this closing service was one of solemn and tender interest.

ENGLAND.

UNITARIAN HOME MISSIONARY BOARD.—We cannot but regard with satisfaction and pleasure the effort which our friends and brethren of the Unitarian name in England are now making to supply a want which has long been felt among them. For many years past they have sustained ministries to the neglected classes, in the larger cities, after the manner of the ministry at large originated by the late Dr. Tuckerman, in Boston, Massachusetts. But they have never had any institution where suitable men might be prepared for such an office. Among the English Unitarians there is a lack of regularly trained ministers for the settled congregations, and the recently organized Board propose an establishment where suitable men may be trained to meet the two-fold want of the smaller settled congregations and the neglected population. It seems to us that such an institution is a needful and fitting supplement to Manchester New College, and University Hall. It is designed to meet a manifest and pressing want in England in some such way as the Mead-

ville School did in the United States. The following paragraphs are from the circular of the Committee:—

It is a duty evidently devolving on every denomination of professed Christians, to employ some organized instrumentality for spreading the knowledge and influence of Christianity among those multitudes of their fellow countrymen who are living in a state of practical heathenism. The number of such is stated, on good authority, to be nearly one-third of our whole population. It is generally acknowledged that the only method of successfully approaching this class, is by regular and systematic visits to their homes, and other ministrations peculiarly fitted to their condition and wants. Unitarians were among the first to recognize this truth, by the institution of "Home Missions;" but the increase of such institutions amongst us has often been delayed, and sometimes prevented, by the difficulty of meeting with the right men to carry them on. Among the men who are already laboring zealously and successfully in this field of Christian usefulness, there is scarcely one to be found who has been trained at any College for the ordinary ministry. It has been a subject of regret to such men, in some instances at least, that they had no opportunity of regular and systematic preparation, before entering on the work to which they are led by the love of it.

From these facts we may conclude:—1: That the work of the Home Missionary is one which can be engaged in successfully only by a man who has the tastes, feelings, and aptitudes it requires; therefore one to which no man can be destined in his youth, but which must be embraced by him at a comparatively mature age.

2. That it is a work which does not necessarily require a "classical training," and the various branches of a University education.

3. But that, nevertheless, a certain amount of previous training, and some branches of theological and general knowledge, will be found very useful in it.

To meet this state of things is one object for which the "Unitarian Home Missionary Board" is established. Its distinctive features are:—1. The limited course of instruction at which it aims, such as can be completed in three years. 2. The advanced age (comparatively) at which it receives its pupils. 3. The union, through their whole course, of active practical labors with daily study.

By such means it is attempted to send forth men who embrace the task of Christian Missionaries, *solely because they love it*,—who are practically acquainted with the wants of the humbler classes, and have some experience in meeting them,—who are prepared for their work, by suitable theological and general knowledge,—who are *popular* in their spirit, their style of preaching, and their general mode of operation,—and who, above all, are imbued with that deep love of God and Christ, which best displays itself in labors of love among mankind.