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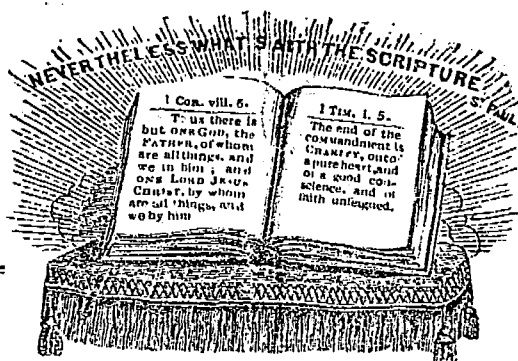
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# THE BIBLE

TRUTH, HOLINESS,



# CHRISTIAN

LIBERTY, LOVE.

Vol. V.]

MONTREAL, NOVEMBER, 1848.

[No. 11.]

## CREEDS SHOULD BE EXPRESSED IN THE LANGUAGE OF SCRIPTURE.

FROM WM. PENN'S ADDRESS TO PROTESTANTS.

Opinions pass for faith, and are made articles of faith, and are enjoined to be embraced as the bond of communion.

That this is so, let us take the most impartial view we can, and we shall find it to be true, both of the national and many other select societies. That I may be understood in the signification of the word *opinions*, I explain it thus; *Opinions are all those propositions, or conclusions, made by men doctrines of faith and articles of communion, which either are not expressly laid down in Scripture, or not so evidently deducible from Scripture, as to leave no occasion of doubt of the truth of them in their minds who sincerely and reverently believe the text; or, lastly, such as have no new or credible revelation to vouch them.*

That this is our case, let the several confessions of faith, published by almost every party in England, be perused, and you will find such propositions translated into doctrines of faith and articles of communion, as are, first, not only *not expressed* in Scripture, but, perhaps not well deducible from Scripture; and if one party may be but believed against another, we can want no evidence to prove what we say. And, in the next place, such as are, though not expressed, yet, it may be, deducible as to the matter of them, are either carried so high, spun so fine, or so disguised by barbarous school terms, that they are rather a bone of contention, than a bond of concord to religious societies. Yet this has been the unhappiness of this kingdom, after all the light of reformation, which God hath graciously sent amongst us, "Men are to be received or rejected for denying or owning such propositions." Wilt thou be a Presbyterian? Embrace and keep the covenant, subscribe the Westminster confession and directory; and so on to the end of every society that grounds communion upon conformity to such propositions and articles of faith.

What a stir have we had in England about the word *Episcopos*. He that says it signifies an higher office than *Presbuteros*, shall have no part or fellowship with us; on the other hand, they that will debase *Episcopos* to *Presbuteros*, and turn levellers or degraders of episcopal dignity, shall be excommunicated, silenced, punished. Is not this plain fact? Can any deny it, that love truth more than a party? The fire kindled by this contention hath warmed the hands of violence; it had been well if men had entertained equal zeal against impiety, and been but half as much enemies to sin, as they have been against one another on such accounts.

If we look a little back, we shall find that the debate of *freewill* and *unconditional reprobation* filled this kingdom with uncharitableness and division. In the archbishopric of Abbot, reputed in himself a good man, whosoever held, "that Christ so died for all men, that all men might be saved, if they would accept the means, and that none were absolutely decreed to eternal reprobation," was reputed a heretic, and excommunicated as an enemy to the free grace of God; which, it seems, at that time of day, lay in being *narrow*.

In the reign of archbishop Laud the tide turned; and those that held an *absolute election* and *reprobation*, without regard had to the good or evil actions of men and asserted that Christ only died for the *elect*, and not for *all*, must be discountenanced, displaced, and pointed at as men out of fashion, though at the same time conscientious, sober, and, at worst, mistaken; and to be pitied, rather than persecuted; and informed, not destroyed.

This controversy begat the Synod of Dort;

he that reads the epistles of that judicious man, J. Hales, of Eton College, upon the matter and conduct of that assembly, will find cause of being sad at heart; too many of them talking of religion without the spirit of it; men, perhaps, learned in books, but few of the sticklers gave any great testimony of their proficiency in that science, which is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated. This flame kindled between Arminius and Episcopius, &c. for the Remonstrants, and Gomarus, Sibrandus, &c. for the Predestinarians, distracted Holland not a little, and had an ill influence upon the affairs of England, at least so far as concerned the church. But the mournfullest part of that history is the ill usage Martinus Crocius, the bishop of Landaff, and others had; who, though they were acknowledged to be sound in the faith of those things, which generally followed the judgment of Calvin, as to the main points controverted, yet, if at any time they appeared moderate in their behaviour, gentle in their words, and for accommodation in some particulars, with the remonstrants, or freewillers, Gomarus and his followers, not observing the gravity due to the assembly, the rules of debate and least of all the meekness of christian communion, fell foul of their brethren, reproached their tenderness, and began to fix treachery upon their sober endeavours of accommodation; as if they intended to execute, as well as maintain their reprobation, and blow up their friends, rather than not destroy their adversaries.

But if we will rise higher in our inquiry, and view the mischiefs of earlier times, flowing from this practice, the fourth and fifth centuries after Christ will furnish us with instances enough. We cannot possibly forget the heavy life some men made about the observation of *Easter day*, as if their eternal happiness had been in jeopardy; for so far were they degenerated from the love and meekness of Christianity, that about keeping of a day, which perhaps was no part, but, to be sure, no essential part, of the christian religion, they fell to pieces; reproached, reviled, hated, and persecuted one another. "A DAY" was more to them, than "Christ," who was the Lord and end of days; and "victory over brethren," sweeter than the "Peace and concord of the church," the great command of Jesus, whom they called Lord.

But the remarkable and tragical story of Alexander, bishop of Alexandria, and Arius his priest, in their known debate about the "nature and existence of the Son of God," with the lamentable consequences thereof, as all writers upon that subject have related, witnesseth to the truth of what I say. The bishop's curiosity, and the strictness of Arius; the presumption of the one to expound beyond the evidence and simplicity of the text, and the captious humour of the other, that would not abate the bishop anything for his age, or the rank he held in the church, but logically exacted the utmost farthing of the reckoning from his old pastor, first began the fray, which as it became the perplexity of church and state for some ages, so it raged to blood; and those that had been persecuted like sheep by the heathen not long before, turned wolves against each other, and made sport for the infidels, doing their work to their own destruction. Nay, so much more christian was Themistius the philosopher, that he, in his oration, called *Consul*, commended the emperor Jovianus for his moderation, and advised him to give that liberty of conscience, which professed Christians refused to allow each other; who seemed to think they never did God better service, than in sacrificing one another for religion, even as soon as ever they had escaped the heathen's shambles.

Did we duly reflect upon the unnatural heats, divisions, and excommunications among them, the many councils that were called, the strong and tedious debates held, the translations of sees, the anathemas, the banishments, wars, sackings, fires, and bloodshed, that followed this unnatural division, that sprang from so nice a controversy, one would verily believe no less, than that religion itself had been in the utmost hazard;

that Judaism or Paganism were overrunning christianity; and not that all this stir had been made about an *Iota*. For the whole question was, whether *Homousia*, or *Homoiousia*, should be received for faith? In which the difference is but the single letter *I*; certainly, we must do violence to our understanding, if we can think that these men were followers of that Jesus, that "loved his enemies and gave his blood for the world," who hated their brethren, and shed one another's blood for *opinions*; the heathen philosophers never were so barbarous to one another, but maintained a better understanding and behaviour in their differences.

But how easily might all these confusions have been prevented, if their faith about Christ had been delivered in the words of the *Scripture*; since all sides pretend to believe the *text*; And why should any man presume to be wiser, or plainer in matters of faith, than the Holy Ghost? It is strange, that God and Christ should be wanting to express or discover their own mind; or that the words used by the Holy Ghost should have that shortness, ambiguity, or obliquity in them, that our frail capacities should be needed to make them more easy, proper, and intelligible. But that we should scarcely deliver any one article of faith in *scripture terms*, and yet make such acts the *rule and bond of christian communion*, is, in my judgment, an offence heinous against God and holy Scripture, and very injurious to christian charity and fellowship. Who can express any man's mind so fully as himself? And shall we allow that liberty to ourselves and refuse it to God? "The *Scriptures* came not in old time," said the apostle Peter, "by the will of man; but holy men of God spake, as they were moved by the *Holy Ghost*." Who can speak better, or express the mind of the Holy Ghost plainer, than the *Holy Ghost*? The *Scripture* is the great record of truth, that which all these parties in controversy agree to be the *declared mind and will of God*, and they unanimously say, it ought to be *believed* and *professed as such*. If this be true, in what language can we so safely and properly declare our belief of those truths, as in the very language of the *Scripture*?

And I cannot see how those persons can be excused in the day of God's judgment, who make men heterodox or heretical, for refusing to subscribe their articles of faith that are not in *scripture terms*, who in the same time offer to declare their belief of God, Christ, spirit, man's lapse or fall, repentance, sanctification, justification, salvation, resurrection, and eternal recompense, in the language of holy Scripture. I must say it is preposterous, and a contradiction, that those who desire to deliver their *faith* of truth, in the *language* of truth, shall not be reputed *true believers*, nor their *faith* admitted. This were to say, that their faith is not to be received, because it is declared in the *language* of that very *truth*, which is the *object* of that *faith*, for which it ought to be received, and which is; on all hands, concluded to be our duty to believe. It seems then, we must not express our belief of God in his words but our *own*; nor is the *Scripture* a creed plain or proper enough to declare a true believer, or an orthodox Christian, without our glosses.

Are not things come to a sad pass, that to refuse any other terms than those the Holy Ghost has given us, and which are confessed to be the "rule or form of sound words," is to expose a man to the censure of being unsound in the faith, and unfit for christian communion? Will nothing do but *man's consequences* and *conclusions*, in the room of *sacred revelation*? I cannot see how any man can be obliged to *receive*, or *believe* revealed truths in any other language than that of the revelation *itself*; especially if those that vary the expression have not the same spirit to lead them in doing so, or that it appears not to me that they have the guidance of that holy spirit. If the Holy Ghost had left *doubts* in Scripture, which is yet irreverent to believe, I see not how men can resolve them; it is the *work* of that *spirit*. And since men are so apt to err, doubts are

better left in *Scripture*, than made or left by us. But it is to cross that order of prudence and wisdom among men, who choose to conform their *expressions* to the thing they *believe*. If an honest man hath related a *story* to me, of something he hath seen, and I am to declare my *faith* about it, if I believe the *fact*, I will choose to deliver it in the *terms* of the *relator*, as being nearest to the truth.

Suppose a father dying, makes his *last will and testament*, and as he thinks so plain, that there can be no mistake made by the *executors*, but what is wilful; if they, instead of proving this will and acting according to the plainness of it, turn *commentators*, make more difficulties than they find, and perplex the whole matter to the children and legatees, and send them to the *law* for right; will we not esteem such executors *ill men*, and justify those persons concerned in their *refusal* of their *paraphrase*? "God hath at sundry times, and in diverse manners," by his prophets, his beloved Son, and his Apostles, Heb. i. 1., delivered to the world a *declaration* of his blessed *will*; but some have claimed and taken to themselves the *keeping, explanation* and *use* of it, so as those that choose to be concluded by the *letter* and *text* of *Christ's testament*, in its most *important* points, expose themselves to great prejudice for so doing; for they are excommunicated from all other share in it, than the punishment of the breakers of it; which is part of their *anathema*, who, of all others, are most guilty of *adding, or diminishing*, by undertaking to determine, for others as well as themselves, the *mind and intention* of the Holy Ghost in it.

But if it be true, as true it is, that few have writ of the divine authority of *Scripture*, who do not affirm that the very penmen of it were not only inspired by the Holy Ghost, but so extraordinarily acted by him, as that they were wholly asleep to their own will, desires or affections, like people taken out of themselves, and purely passive, as "clay in the hands of the potter," to the *revelation, will, and motion* of the *spirit*; and for this end, that nothing delivered by them might have the least possibility of mistake, error, or imperfection, but be a "complete declaration of the will of God to men," I cannot see which way such men excuse themselves from great presumption, that will, notwithstanding, have the *wording* of *creeds of communion*, and reject the declaration of faith as insufficient, which is delivered in the very terms of the Holy Ghost; and deny those persons to be members of Christ's church, that in conscience refuse to subscribe any other draught than that the Lord has given them.

Two things oppose themselves to this practice; the glory of God, and the honour of the *Scripture*; in that it naturally draws people from the regard due to God and the *Scripture*, and begets too much respect for men and their tradition. This was the difficulty Christ met with, and complained of, in his time; they had set up so many rabbies to teach them religion, that the Lord of the true religion could hardly find place amongst them. And what did they do? "They taught for doctrines the traditions of men;" they gave their own and their predecessors' apprehensions, constructions, and paraphrases upon *Scripture*, for the mind and will of God, the rule of the people's faith. They were near at this pass in the church of Corinth, when they cried out, "I am for Paul, I am for Apollos, and I am for Cephas," though they had not the same temptation.

And that which followed then, ever will follow in the like case, and that is distraction; which is the contrary to the second thing that opposeth itself to this practice, and that is the concord of Christians. For the sake of peace consider it; *Lo here, and lo there, always followed; one of this mind and another of that; as many sects as great men to make and head them.* This was the case of the Jews; and yet I do not hear that they devoured one another about their opinions and commentaries upon *Scripture*; but the Christians have done both; divided and persecuted too. First, they have divided; and

that mostly upon the score of opinions about religion. They have not been contented with the expressions of the *Holy Ghost*: they liked their *own* better. And when they were set up in the room of Scripture, and in the name of Scripture, submission was required, upon pain of worldly punishments. This dissatisfied curiosity, this unwarrantable,—what shall I say? This wanton search, has cost christendom dear, and poor England dearest of any part of it.

All this while, the head is set at work, not the heart; and that which Christ most insisted upon, is least concerned in this sort of faith and Christianity; and that is, "keeping his commandments." For it is opinion, not obedience; notion, and not regeneration, that such men pursue. This kind of religion leaveth them as bad as it findeth them, and worse; for they have something more to be proud of. Here is a *creed*, indeed, but of what? The *conclusions of men!* and what to do! To prove they believe in Christ, who, it seems, never made them. It had been happy for the world, that there had been no other *creeds*, than what he and his apostles gave and left; and it is not the least argument against their being needful to christian communion, that *Christ and his Apostles did not think so, who were not wanting to declare the whole counsel of God to the church.*

To conclude; if you desire peace, love truth, seek piety, and hate hypocrisy, lay by all those things called *articles of faith*, and *canons of the church*, that are not to be found in *express terms in Scripture*, or so plainly authorised by Scripture, as may with ease, be discerned by every honest and conscientious person. And in the room of those numerous and disputed opinions, made the bond of external communion, let some, *plain, general and necessary truths be laid down in Scripture terms, and let them be few.*

#### LIFE.

Solomon in his Ecclesiastes saith, that better "is the day of death than the day that one is born;" but no Christian must say it, for though it may be happier, man doth "not live by bread only," nor for happiness alone, but for probation. No! Life is not contemptible, is not odious; it is to be held as a trust, as a solemn gift, with the possession of which are linked high responsibilities. It is a greater thing to value, than to despise life; even as they are only the learned, who lament those inestimable manuscripts which the royal officers ignorantly burn for fuel, at that time when the abbey were suppressed. Life is no common-place matter; it may feel so, when we are disappointed, when we are wearied with labor, or are disgusted with meanness, and then we may say with the Jewish preacher, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity!" But myself how often in my more cheerful moments, and at those more thoughtful seasons, when my awakened faculties have made me most truly man, have I been awe-stricken and breathless, whilst the great mystery of life has occurred to my mind in sudden vividness! In such moments what a miracle have I felt myself! Excepting God himself, what is there more wondrous than the existence of the finite amid the infinite? than this birth of feeling, thinking, and active life in our bosoms, which, a short while since, were inanimate, insensate dust! What thought is there more wondrous than this, that we are living souls, abroad and active on the face of a world, which was once "without form and void!" Well might the sons of God shout for joy, when the first man of our race stood up erect amid the trees of Eden. It was the birth of mortal spirit; and that Paradaisical wonder is repeated in the growth of every infant, and throughout the life of every man.

Man is of such a nature, and the surrounding world of such a character, that human life is more than animal; it being necessarily intellectual, moral, and religious. Man is environed with hostile elements, but in resisting their power he acquires a wisdom, which makes him mightier than they. Whilst discharging the duties, and enjoying the delights of childhood, neighborhood, friendship, and marriage, feelings are awakened in the human breast of such a character, affections are elicited of such purity, and modes of thinking are formed of such a noble nature, as in their aggregate are spirit. Also existence is religious. The loves and losses, the happy, the hard, and the awful experiences of life dispose men to religion. There is no savage but has some form of faith; blindly, but strongly does his heart urge him to seek the Lord, if so he may grope after him and find him.—Every man that stands in God's presence, doth feel a mysterious affinity with it. Into every human heart which God submits to the discipline of this life, there is inwrought a yearning what is life's purpose. Even in

the most sadly sullied spirit, there is a dim consciousness of its imprisoned state in this flesh. Whether ignorant or learned, there is in all men a constitutional conviction, that their lives are a scene, in which good and evil powers are struggling together for the mastery. There are necessitating causes for faith, there are the beginnings of religion in every created soul; and these religious beginnings, the circumstances of life are so adapted as to develope, and with evangelic help, to perfect.

Life is not to be lightly, but most solemnly esteemed. And the effect of "pure religion and undefiled" is to endear all participants of life, to make us love them, not grossly, but with a pure, reverential affection, such as readily passes into thanksgiving to the God and Father of all. Christianity saith to us, "the temple of God is holy, which ye are." The serf may be despicable in the esteem of the baron; nevertheless he is a truer tabernacle of the Godhead, than a church, a minister, or other temple made with hands; and from his heart there may ascend more welcome incense than was offered on the altar at Jerusalem. Done as under God's eye, the lowliest duty of a servant to her master, assumes then the character of a heavenly service; discharged religiously, the humblest office doth exalt the spirit like a high priesthood. Such power has religion to make the wilderness of life "glad and flourish as the rose; to put us on the side of God, thereby making our fight in the world a celestial service, instead of a selfish struggle; and by revealing their relation to heaven, thus beautifully doth the gospel transfigure in our eyes and glorify all earthly things.

Religion doth make us revere life, and rightly. For consider how the mind is formed. Is it not by the discipline of life; by our bodily necessities, and our social relations? An infant, secluded in a dark, closet, and duly fed, would grow up to manhood, but would be as helpless and simple as a babe. Every object a child sees doth increase its knowledge; and every accident which it bemoans doth correct its experience.—It is thus the knowledge, principles and character are formed. Even were our capacities to remain the same, and were the Almighty to diminish the facts and events which befall us, our knowledge and our worth would be diminished proportionately. By merely blinding us to the lessons of nature, could God reduce mankind to the ignorance of brutes. Nay! In a certain sense, this life is one long conference with the Deity, prior to our admittance into heaven. We, on our parts, pray; and God, on his, doth instruct, warn, remonstrate, and encourage us perpetually. The Gospel is his word; and the movements of nature, divine signs and symbols are they all for human instruction: the most trifling of them are solemn paragraphs of some providential lesson since not a sparrow even, "shall fall to the ground without your Father." Verily, the most impatient to quit life are the least fitted; since it is little experience they can have had of its moral design. Men would not be so hasty to abandon the world, either as monks or as suicides, did they but see the jewels of wisdom and faith which are scattered so plentifully along its paths; and lacking which, no soul can come again from beyond the grave to gather.—*Martyria.*

#### THE CHILD'S GOSPEL.

Beautiful is the form of the gospel considered as the religion of a child. To him Christianity is the tale of one who was once a child himself; who was nurtured on a mother's lap; whose increasing strength was exercised in a father's occupation; who had brethren after the flesh as well as after the spirit, the kindred of blood as well as of benevolence; who lived in a cottage-home, and was taken to worship in a metropolitan temple: who asked pertinent questions of the wise and aged, and made himself beloved of all, so that he grew in knowledge, and increased in stature and in favor both with God and man; of one who in maturity never disdained childhood, but had ever ready for it his smile, his blessing and his heart; who rebuked those that prevented children coming to him; who told his disciples to be like little children, in their simplicity, their innocence, and their docility; who was their protector, teacher and friend: who wrought wonders which the child has experience enough to know are wonderful; who took the little girl by the hand when she laid dead upon the couch, and said, Arise, and she did arise; whose miracles cannot but lay hold of the youthful imagination, while there is that in them which must sink into the youthful heart; a tale of one who was sent by the Great Being whom we cannot see, but who made us all; who was instructed by him to tell mankind of his love, and care, and kindness, to all his creatures; who showed that

Being in the beauty of the flower, and the brightness of the sun, and grandeur of sovereignty, and the affection of a Father; who told those touching parables, over which young eyes may weep, and young minds may wonder; who made that prayer to our Father in heaven, in which the child learns to pray; whom wicked men killed, but whom God made to live again; whom the good shall be made alive to meet and be happy with forever. This is Christian truth. This is the basis and substance of revealed theology. This is the child's gospel; this is a plain story for his comprehension; the world of divine knowledge, just as it looks when the first beams of intellect dawn upon it, with their new, and faint, but increasing light.—*W. J. Fox.*

#### DIFFERENCE OF OPINION BENEFICIAL.

Since I have more closely observed differences of opinion in the world, and have become acquainted with excellent men of great dissimilarity of views in religion, politics, and science, I have arrived at the conviction, that these differences, which often are merely like different boughs of the same tree, have their foundation in the designs of the Almighty with regard to us and life. He allows people to be born with dissimilar organs and under dissimilar influences, in order that they may take hold of the dissimilar sides of life and truth, and thus, by means of them, the whole manifold substance of truth may be developed, like links in the great chain of thought, like preparatory theses and anti-theses to the great synthesis. And it is precisely these differences which ought rightly to embrace, to advance, and to develope the only unity in which we all can fully become one, and become one with God. People say so much about unity; but I do not trouble myself with respect to any unbounded unity of form or appearance. Let us in Heaven's name be different. The combat is not the evil. It arouses and causes development. Bitterness and dishonesty in the combat are evil; and they must be done away with. The important thing is that we are honest, and in earnest in our search after truth; honest and chivalrous towards one another. Thus may we hope, upon whatever side of the question or the conviction we may find ourselves, that we may be instrumental in the hands of Providence for the advancement of the world-plan.

It is for the rest very difficult now-a-days to say who is a Christian and who is not, I know no better proof of this than the disposition and the fruit. Christian life has so penetrated the life of the world, that we are in the midst of its current, driven on by its knowledge even without our own consciousness of it. In manners, in laws, in social life, in literature, everywhere do we meet with its light, and its spirit. And he who loves this light, this spirit, and is guided by it, he is a Christian, although he should mistake its origin. And the voice which cried through the world, "Blessed are the pure in heart! the merciful! the peacemakers! they who hunger and thirst after righteousness!" has likewise pronounced a blessing on those nameless worshippers; yes, on all who, from the beginning of the world, have lived in love to truth and virtue. Why should we separate the beams of the sun from the sun, and deny that they are a part of his life? The word of God does not do so. It shows clearly how they are connected. Man as separated what God united. But if man universally acknowledged this divine connection, there would be a universal church established, and the scattered heaps would be assembled upon earth. Then would the invisible church, which was and which is, be made visible, and many would acknowledge themselves to be Christians, who now do not so. But wherever I see a man who lives in purity, and who labors in true love, there I see a member of that universal, eternal church, because I believe with the apostle, that "all they who are impelled by the Spirit of God are his children.—*Miss Bremer.*

#### PERSECUTION FOR NEW IDEAS.

Hervey, who first discovered the circulation of the blood, was styled, "vagabond or quack," and persecuted through life. Ambrose Pare, in the time of Francis I., introduced the *ligature* as a substitute for the painful mode of stanching the blood after the amputation of a limb—namely, by applying boiling pitch to the surface of the stump. He was, in consequence, persecuted with the most remorseless rancor by the Faculty of Physic, who ridiculed the idea of putting the life of a man upon a thread, when boiling pitch had stood the test for centuries. Paracelsus introduced antimony as a val-

uable medicine; he was persecuted for the innovation, and the French parliament passed an act, making it penal to prescribe it; whereas it is now one of the most important medicines in daily use.

The Jesuits of Peru introduced into Protestant England the Peruvian bark, (invaluable medicine,) but, being a remedy used by the Jesuits, the Protestant English at once rejected the drug as the invention of the devil.

In 1793, Dr. Greenvelt discovered the curative power of cantharides in dropsy. As soon as his cures began to be noised abroad, he was committed to Newgate by warrant of the President of the College of Physicians, for prescribing cantharides internally.

Lady Montague first introduced into England small pox inoculation, having seen its success in Turkey in greatly mitigating that terrible disease. The faculty all rose in arms against its introduction, foretelling the most disastrous consequences; yet it was in a few years generally adopted by the most eminent members of the profession.

Jenner, who introduced the still greater discovery of vaccination, was treated with ridicule and contempt, persecuted and oppressed by the Royal College of Physicians; yet he subsequently received large pecuniary grants from government for the benefit he had conferred on his country, by making known his valuable discovery; and at the present time its observance is very properly enjoined by the whole medical profession and the legislature.

It is a fact that the members of the House of Representatives of the United States in 1810, refused Robert Fulton the use of their Hall, to deliver a lecture on steam navigation, upon the ground that it was a visionary scheme.

### The Bible Christian.

MONTREAL, NOVEMBER, 1848.

#### COMMON OBSTACLES TO THE PROGRESS OF THE PROTESTANT PRINCIPLE.

In the two last numbers of this sheet, we felt called on to offer some remarks on Protestantism. At the close of those observations we alluded to the indications of religious freedom and independence, which in this age are so generally manifested. Men, as they advance in intelligence and culture, naturally and properly become impatient of the authority of ecclesiastical organisations, and dogmatic creeds. They learn to reverence truth in itself, and on its own account. They come to understand more fully, the true value of the Protestant principle of the right of private judgment, and to insist more distinctly on its practical application.

It is only by the faithful, practical application of this principle, that the work commenced at the Reformation can be adequately carried out, and brought to produce its proper fruits. Every humanly written creed, authoritatively imposed on men, is an infraction of the fundamental Protestant principle. It follows, therefore, that the work of religious reform can be carried on effectually only by those churches which are free—that is untrammelled by human creeds. The denomination of Christians to which we belong is free. We have not cast off one form of bondage to adopt another; we have not merely cast off the authority of the pope to place ourselves in subjection to a creed of any man's forming. The only creed, or authoritative rule of faith which we acknowledge, is the sacred writings of the Prophets, Evangelists, and Apostles of the Lord. To these we appeal, and to these we urge and implore all to go, and read, and "judge for themselves what is right." Too long was the progress of religious reform cramped in the world after it was commenced. Some were satisfied with the opinions of Luther—others with those of Calvin. One party collected round a form of faith drawn up by some men

in London, in the sixteenth century, called the thirty-nine Articles, and book of Common prayer. Another party vowed adhesion to a confession of faith, compiled at Westminster, by some other men, in the next century following. And thus it was, that at a period when the world was emerging from long mental darkness, many of the errors of the darkest ages found their way into those forms, to be preserved there, as well as the truths which they contained. Thus it was, that one authority was thrown off only to erect another to control the human mind in its free investigation of the sacred Scriptures. But as we have already said, in this age of advancing thought, the influence of human standards of faith is fading away. It is a fact, every where quite notorious, that many parts of the thirty-nine Articles, and of the book of Common prayer, and of the Westminster confession, are not really believed by some who profess them, and disbelieved to a large extent by many who nominally adhere to the churches founded on them. And this is one of the crying evils of the system; that on the most solemn of all subjects, which can engage the human mind, it brings men into this false, dangerous, and indefensible position.

And it is a false, and indefensible position for any one to occupy—to adhere to a church, openly and publicly founded on a specific creed, when he does not believe that creed. If men should be thoroughly and solemnly in earnest about anything, it should be about religion. If they should be simple, and truthful, and straightforward about anything, it should be about this. If our church were founded on any specific human creed (which it is not) and any person connected with it come to us, and say, "I find I cannot in conscience assent to the creed which is publicly set forth as our ecclesiastical bond of union; nor can I in honesty appear before the world as doing so, by remaining in connection with your church;" what should be our answer to such an one? It should, and it would be this—"Go in peace, my friend, be loyal to conscience." How commonly do we hear it said of some one that he cannot make a right movement in such a matter lest he should offend or disoblige friends. But we never hear such a thing said of any man, that we do not think what a cruel testimony he bears against those friends. For is it not just saying that they would be the persecutors of an honest conscience? And what harder testimony could be borne against them than this? Surely, if a man's friends are enlightened with the light, and warmed by the charity of the Gospel, they will rejoice to see him paying difference to conscience, and think none the less of him, though he differ from them in opinion. We know, however, that there are thousands in the world who have neither this light nor this charity, but would look darkly and coldly on a brother man on account of honest manifestation of difference of opinion. We know, too, that it is one of the evils of the creed system, thus to contract men's minds, and chill men's hearts. But the generous and enlightened Christian, will always be ready to say to his fellow Christian—"Respect conscience; though you should be put under social ban for your honest opinion—though social denunciation should follow you from street to street, and from house to house,—be not dismayed. Though friends the nearest and dearest, should shun and look coldly on you, as they did on many of the first disciples of the Lord, and many of the first adherents of the reformation; still persevere, for in giving steady difference to your conscience you are rendering most acceptable worship to your God. Though you should be placed in

a position the most painful, or in circumstances the most trying, on account of your conscientious convictions, be ready to say, in any position or circumstances, as Martin Luther said before the diet at Worms, when his life was in their hands;—"Here I am, I cannot say otherwise. God help me."

In the extension of religious liberality, in various parts of the world, and the increase of Christian Societies based on freedom of thought, we should see reason for encouragement and hope. Christianity is a divine religion. It fell fresh from heaven to quicken and purify the earth, to elevate and sanctify mankind, to give new life to a race, dead in trespasses and sins. How deplorable it is that it should ever have been so grossly corrupted! How doubly deplorable, that when light did break in on the darkness of the world, it should have been sought to perpetuate many of those corruptions by embodying them in human forms which are vainly said to be unchanging and unchangeable! What task can be more honorable and inspiring! What effort more worthy of men or angels, than the endeavour to disturb the stagnant pool of religious indifference—to remind men of the importance of religious opinion—to impress them with the supreme claims of the sacred Scriptures as a standard of faith and practice—to rouse them to a consideration of what they believe, and why they believe it—to press them to an examination of the creeds and formulas of faith of the churches to which they belong;—in a word, to excite them to a free, earnest, and reverent enquiry concerning religion, and thus effectually shake every system of stereotyped popular error? In the name of God, then, and for the sake of man, let this be done, that Christianity may be freed from the theological riddles with which it is invested, and speedily restored to its scriptural foundation, its original simplicity, and its primitive loveliness.

#### UNITARIAN CONVENTION AT NEW BEDFORD.

The usual Autumnal Convention of Unitarian Christians was held this year at New Bedford, Mass. The first meeting took place on Tuesday, the 17th ult., in the evening of which, a discourse was preached by Rev. W. H. Furness, D. D., of Philadelphia, from Acts xvi. 31—"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." The subject of the preacher was "The facts in the life of the Lord Jesus Christ, as proof, embodiment, and illustration of Christianity."

Next day the Convention reassembled in the first Unitarian Church; when the following resolutions were submitted by the committee, for the consideration of the meeting:

1. Resolved, that the practical workings of Protestantism as shown in the collision of opinion, and in the prevailing indifference to religious truth, render it the special duty of Christian ministers, now as ever, to make frequent inculcations of Christian doctrine, and of all Christians to become familiar with Christian truth.
2. Resolved, that as the energies of other sects are especially devoted to the diffusion of Christianity abroad, it is incumbent upon Unitarian Christians, who have aided so little in this mode of Christian benevolence, to be foremost in the promotion of freedom, peace, temperance, purity, and piety at home.
3. Resolved, that in an age remarkable for its physical developments and devoted in an unexampled degree to a physical good, the peculiar peril of the times is to be averted only by the spirit of profound reverence, and fervent devotion.
4. Resolved, that the worship of the Sanctuary, the ordinances of Christianity, the religion of the closet and the household, are to be employed and urged more than ever as the paramount means by which to promote the spirit of devotion.
5. Resolved, that in the death of Kay of Northumberland, Ripley of Waltham, Whit-

man of Lexington, and Peabody of Burlington, while we cheerfully acknowledge the dispensations of a wise and benignant Providence, we mourn the loss of able and devoted fellow-labourers.

These resolutions underwent discussion during Wednesday and Thursday, the speakers being, for the most part, clerical. On Wednesday evening another discourse was preached before the convention, by Rev. C. Robbins of Boston, from Matt. vi. 6—"But thou, when thou prayest enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly." There was a Conference and Prayer Meeting on Thursday Morning.

During the stay of the Convention at New Bedford, the members were invited to a Social Festival at the City Hall, got up in a very elegant style, by the ladies connected with the Unitarian Societies of the place. The Hon. Judge Elliott of New Bedford, presided.

#### THE PEACE CONVENTION AT BRUSSELS.

The first sitting of the Congress was held at one o'clock, at the *Salle de la Societe de la Grande Harmonie*, on Wednesday, with great splendour and taste. At the further end of the hall, behind the platform, was placed an allegorical statue of Industry, holding a bee-hive in her hand; at her feet were grouped the different emblems of the sciences, arts, agriculture and commerce. The whole was surrounded with evergreens, garlands of flowers, and flags, with the national colours of Belgium; in front was placed the bust of the King. All around the hall were hung the banners of Holland, England, Germany, France, the United States, and Young Italy.

M. Visschers, as chairman of the provisional committee, occupied the president's chair, assisted by MM. Bourson and Lehardy de Beaulieu, as secretaries.

M. Scoble read a list of the English and American delegates, and announced that the following members of the British Parliament, though unable personally to attend, had expressed their cordial concurrence in the object of the congress:—Joseph Brotherton, Esq., Lawrence Heywood, Esq., Wm. Brown Esq., Charles Pearson, Esq., Reginald Blowitt, Esq., John Ellis, Esq., Dr. Bowring, R. Cobden, Esq., and Joseph Hume, Esq.

M. Scoble proposed, and Mr. Elihu Burritt seconded, the nomination of M. Visschers as president of the congress.

M. Rousset proposed the following gentlemen as vice-presidents:—W. Ewart, Esq., M.P., for England; M. Francisque Bouvet, member of the French National Assembly, for France; Mr. Elihu Burritt, for America; and M. Siringar, for Holland. This was seconded by M. E. Banvanhovecheke, member of the Chamber of Representatives.

Mr. J. S. Ruckingham proposed as secretaries MM. Bourson and Lehardy de Beaulieu, for Belgium; Mr. Edmund Fry, for England; and Mr. Henry Clapp, for the United States. Mr. Alvin seconded this motion.

The President then delivered his inaugural address, in which he gave a rapid historical sketch of the rise, progress, and operations of various societies formed in England and America for the diffusion of the principles of permanent and universal peace. He adverted also to the various forms in which, during former times, it had been attempted to embody the same principles as the Amphictyonic council in Greece; the league between the Achians, and the Teutonic league and the Helvetic union, as well as the vast projects entertained by Henry IV. of France, to unite all European States into one great federation. He then passed in review the history of some of the leading European nations in relation to the wars they had waged, and compared the results they had obtained from their wars with those they had realised from the progress and triumph of the peaceful arts. He concluded with an elegant peroration in favour of universal peace, and resumed his seat amid the loud plaudits of the assembly.

The Congress resumed on Wednesday evening. The President (M. Visschers) announced the resolution on the order of the day for the forenoon sitting, "That an appeal to arms for the purpose of settling disputes among the nations, is a usage condemned alike by reason, humanity, and religion; and that it is the duty of the civilised world to adopt immediate measures to secure its total abolition." This proposition met with but one exception to its unanimous adoption. The order of the day for the sitting was then announced; "The utility and necessity of adopting a clause in all international treaties; binding the parties to refer all disputes to arbitration, that war may be avoided, and the way thus prepared for a permanent appeal to the principles of justice

as consolidated in a congress of nations." The discussion on this proposition was introduced by an extended paper by Mr. W. Stokes, of the London Peace Society; after which speeches were delivered by M. Rousset, professor at the University at Brussels; M. Panchand, evangelical pastor at Brussels; M. Rastral de Mongert; M. Ramon de la Sagra, M. Madrid (who controverted the question); Mr. J. Sturge, of Birmingham; and Mr. J. S. Buckingham of London. A desultory conversation then ensued, and the Congress adjourned at ten o'clock.

On the 21st the president announced the resolution as founded on the preceding discussion, which having been put was adopted unanimously with but two exception. The congress then passed to the order of the day. "The utility and practicality of a Congress of Nations, for the formation of a code of international law, by an appeal to which all national disputes may be amicably adjusted without an appeal to war." This discussion was introduced by a lengthened paper on the subject by Mr. E. Burritt, after the reading of which the following gentlemen addressed the congress:—M. Burtinatti, of Turin, Mr. H. Vincent, M. Ramon de la Sagra, of Madrid (who again controverted the question), Mr. Ewart, M.P., who ably replied to the Spaniard, Mr. Scheld, the king's librarian; Mr. H. Clapp, of America; and Messrs. Bouvet, Ewart, and Burritt, who avowed on behalf of their respective nations, an ardent desire for permanent peace.

In the evening sitting several new converts to the cause were named, among whom, M. de Tracy, member of the French National Assembly, appeared conspicuously. The resolution founded on the morning's discussion was then read, and carried unanimously with one exception. The congress immediately proceeded to the order of the day, "to call the attention of governments to a measure of general disarmament, as tending to the removal of national jealousies, and the promotion of those mutual good offices which would prove a guarantee for perpetual peace." An elaborate paper on this subject by Mr. W. Stokes of the London Peace Society was read, and introduced the discussion. Speeches were delivered during the debate on the question by M. Alvin, Director of Public Instruction; M. Siringa, of Amsterdam; M. l'Abbe Louis, of Brussels; M. Rousset, the advocate; M. Huet, Professor at Ghent University; and the Rev. T. Spencer, of Bath. After a discussion in which M. Ramon de la Sagra failed to obtain a hearing, and consequently withdrew, the president put the resolution based on the question of the evening, which was adopted with one dissentient voice.

On the 22nd a *soiree* was given to the congress by the Belgian committee, at which a considerable proportion of the *elite* of Brussels were present. Several speeches were delivered at intervals, chiefly by Belgian gentlemen. At half-past ten in the evening the English delegates withdrew, to prepare for their return to England. A special train having been generously furnished by the Belgian government, the delegates took their places at twelve at night, and amidst hearty cheers from a considerable number of gentlemen who had accompanied them to the train, departed for Ostend, where they safely arrived soon after five on Saturday morning. Here they embarked on board the Giraffe steamer, which landed them safely at Blackwall at about ten at night. After entering the Thames a public meeting was held on deck, and several speeches were delivered by various gentlemen, in which the assembled friends were exhorted to persevere in a cause whose commencement had proved so truly auspicious.

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Poetry.

GOD'S CARE.

BY LEOPOLD SCHEFER.

All that God owns, he constantly is healing,  
Quietly, gently, softly, but most surely;—  
He helps the lowliest herb, with wounded stalk,  
To rise again. See! from the heavens fly down  
All gentle powers to cure the blinded lamb,  
Deep in the treasure-house of wealthy Nature,  
A ready instinct wakes and moves,  
To clothe the naked sparrow in the West,  
Or trim the plumage of an aged raven;  
Yes, in the slow decaying of a rose,  
God works as in the unfolding bud;  
He works with gentleness unspeakable  
In death itself; a thousand times more careful  
Than even the mother, by her sick child watching.

A VISION.

BY M. F. TUPPER.

I went heavily forecast, and fell into the trance of sorrow;  
And behold, a vision in my trance, and my ministering  
angel brought it,  
There stood a mountain huge and steep, the awful Rock of  
Ages;  
The sun upon its summit, and storms midway, and deep  
ravines at foot.  
And, as I looked, a dense black cloud, suddenly dropping  
from the thunder,  
Filled, like a cataract, with yeasty foam, a narrow smiling  
valley:  
Close and hard that vaporous mass seemed to press the  
ground.  
And lamentable sounds came up as of some that were  
smothering beneath.  
Then, as I walked upon the mountain, clear in summer's  
noon,  
For charity I called aloud, Ho! climb up hither to the  
sunshine.  
And even like a stream of light my voice had pierced the  
mist:  
I saw below two families of men, and knew their names  
of old:  
Courage, struggling through the darkness, stout of heart  
and gladsome,  
Ran up the shining ladder which the voice of hope had  
made;  
And tripping lightly by his side, a sweet-eyed helpmate  
with him,  
I looked upon her face to welcome pleasant Cheerfulness;  
And a babe was cradled in her bosom, a laughing little  
pratler,  
The child of Cheerfulness and Courage,—could his name  
be other than success?  
So, from his happy wife, when they both stood behind me  
on the mountain,  
The fond father took that babe, and set him on his shoulder  
in the sunshine.

AGAIN I peered into the valley, for I heard a gasping  
moan,  
A desolate weak cry, as muffled in the vapours.  
So down that crystal shaft into the poisonous mine  
I sped for charity to seek and save,—and those I sought  
led from me.  
At length, I spied far distant, a trembling withered  
dwarf  
Who crouched beneath the cloak of a tall and spectral  
mourner:  
Then I knew Covardice and Gloom, and followed them on  
in darkness  
Guided by their rustling robes and moans and muffled  
cries.  
Until in a suffocating pit the wretched pair had perished,  
And lo, their whitening bones were shaping out an epitaph  
of Failure.  
So I saw that despondency was death, and flung my  
burdens from me,  
And, lightened by that effort, I was raised above the  
world;  
Yea, in the strangeness of my vision I seemed to soar on  
wings,  
And the names they called my wings were Cheerfulness  
and Wisdom.

HUMAN PROGRESS.

Let us look in upon man while engaged in  
the very act of adding to his natural strength  
these gigantic faculties. See him yonder,  
bending over his stone mortar, and pounding,  
and thumping and sweating to pulverise his  
stony grain into a more esculent form. He  
stops and looks a moment into the precipitous  
torrent, thundering down its rocky channel.  
There! a thought has struck him. He begins  
to whistle; he whittles some, for he learned  
to whistle soon after he learned to breathe.  
He gears together, some horizontally and  
others perpendicularly, a score of little wood-  
en wheels. He sets them a-going, and claps  
his hands in triumph to see what they would  
do if a thousand times larger. Look at him  
again. How proudly he stands, with folded  
arms, looking at the huge things that are  
working for him! He has made that wild  
raging torrent as tame as his horse. He has  
taught it to walk backwards and forward;  
he has given it hands, and put the crank of  
his big wheel into them, and made it turn his  
ponderous grindstone. What a taskmaster!  
Look at him again. He is standing on the

ocean beach, watching the crested billows as  
they move in martial squadrons over the deep.  
He has conceived or heard that richer pro-  
ductions, more delicious fruits and flowers,  
may be found on yonder invisible shore. In  
an instant his mind sympathises with the  
yearnings of his physical nature. See! there  
is a new thought in his eye. He remembers  
how he first saddled the horse; he now bits  
and saddles the mountain wave. Not satis-  
fied with ruling this proud element, he  
breaks another into his service. Remember-  
ing his mill-dam, he constructs a floating dam  
of canvass in the air, to harness the winds to  
his ocean-wagon. Thus, with his water-  
horse and air-horse harnessed in tandem, he  
drives across the wilderness of waters, with  
a team that would make old Neptune hide  
his diminished head for envy, and sink his  
clumsy chariot beneath the waves. See  
now! he wants something else; his appetite  
for something better than he has, grows upon  
what it feeds upon. The fact is, he has  
plodded about in his one-horse wagon till he  
is disgusted with his poor capacity of loco-  
motion. The wings of Mercury, modern eagles,  
and paper kites, are all too impracticable  
models. He settles down upon the persua-  
sion that he can make a great Iron Horse,  
with bones of steel, and muscles of brass,  
that will run against time with Mercury or  
any other winged messenger of Jove. The  
daring man! He brings out his huge levi-  
athan heaped upon the track. How the  
giant creature struts forth from his stable,  
panting to begone! His great heart is a  
furnace of glowing coals; his lymphatic blood  
is boiling in his veins; the strength of a  
thousand horses is nerving his iron sinews.  
But his master reins him in with one finger,  
till the whole of some western village,  
men, women, children, and half their horned  
cattle, sheep, poultry, wheat, cheese, and  
potatoes, have been stowed away in that long  
train of wagons he has harnessed to his foam-  
ing steam horse. And now he shouts inter-  
rogatively—All right? and applying a burn-  
ing goad to the huge creature, away it thun-  
ders over the iron road, breathing forth fire  
and smoke in its indignant haste to outstrip  
the wind. More terrible than the war horse  
in scripture, clothed with louder thunder,  
and emitting a cloud of flame and burning coals  
from his iron nostrils, he dashes on through  
dark mountain passes, over jutting precipices,  
and deep ravines. His tread shakes the earth  
like a travelling Niagara, and the sound of  
his chariot wheels warn the people of distant  
towns that he is coming.—*E. Burritt.*

CHRISTIAN SUBMISSION.

Let us confess, then, that in all the trying  
circumstances of this changeful scene, there  
is something infinitely soothing to the feelings  
of a Christian, something inexpressibly tran-  
quillizing to his mind, to know that he has  
nothing to do with events but to submit to  
them; that he has nothing to do with revolu-  
tions of life but to acquiesce in them, as the  
dispensation of eternal wisdom; that he has  
not to take the management out of the hands  
of Providence, but submissively to follow the  
divine leading; that he has not to contrive  
for to-morrow, but to acquiesce to-day; not  
to condition about events yet to come, but  
to meet those which are present with cheerful  
resignation. Let him be thankful that as he  
could not, by foreseeing, prevent them, so he  
was not permitted to foresee them; thankful  
for ignorance where knowledge would only  
prolong, without preventing suffering; thank-  
ful for that grace which has promised that  
our strength shall be proportioned to our day;  
thankful that, as he is not responsible for  
trials which he has not brought on himself, so  
by the goodness of God, these trials may be  
improved to the noblest purposes. The quiet  
acquiescence of the heart, the annihilation  
of the will under actual circumstances, be  
the trial great or small, is more acceptable  
to God, more indicative of true piety, than  
the strongest general resolutions of firm act-  
ing and deep submission under the most try-  
ing unborn events. In the remote case it is  
the imagination which submits; in the actual  
case it is the will. We are too ready to  
imagine that there is no other way of serving  
God but by active exertions; exertions  
which are often made because they indulge  
our natural taste and gratify our own in-  
clinations. But it is an error to imagine that  
God, by putting us into any supposable  
situation, puts it out of our power to glorify  
him; that he can place us under any cir-  
cumstances which may not be turned to  
some account, either for ourselves or for  
others. Joseph in his prison, under the  
strongest disqualifications, loss of liberty and  
a blasted reputation, made way for both his  
own high advancement and for the deliver-  
ance of Israel. Daniel in his dungeon, not  
only the destined prey, but in the very jaws  
of furious beasts, converted the king of Baby-  
lon, and brought him to the knowledge  
of the true God. Could prosperity have

effected the former? Would not prosperity  
have prevented the latter.—*More.*

THE IDOL OF THE EXCHANGE.

BY REV. J. MARTINEAU OF LIVERPOOL.

In every society, and especially in a country  
like our own, there are those who derive their  
chief characteristic from what they have:  
who are always spoken of in terms of re-  
venue; and of whom you would not be likely  
to think much, but for the large account that  
stands on the world's ledger in their name.  
In themselves, detached from their favourite  
sphere, you would notice nothing wise or  
winning. At home, possibly, a dry and  
withered heart; among associates a selfish  
and mistrustful talk; in the council, a style  
of low ignoble sentiment; at church, a formal,  
perhaps an irreverent, dullness; betray a  
barren nature, and offer you only points of  
repulsion, so far as the humanities are con-  
cerned; and you are amazed to think that  
you are looking on the idols of the exchange.  
Their greatness comes out in the affairs of  
bargain and sale, to which their faculties  
seem fairly apprenticed for life. If they speak  
of the past, it is in memory of its losses and  
its gains; if of the future, it is to anticipate  
its incomings and investments. The whole  
chronology of their life is divided according  
to the stages of their fortunes, and the pro-  
gress of their dignities. Their children are  
interesting to them principally as their heirs;  
and the making of their will fulfils their main  
conception of being ready for their death.  
And so completely do they paint the grand  
idea of their life on the imagination of all  
who know them, that when they die, the  
Mammon-image cannot be removed, and it  
is the fate of the money, not of the man, of  
which we are most apt to think. Having  
put vast prizes in the funds, but only unprofit-  
able blanks in the admiration and the  
hearts of us, they leave behind them nothing  
but their property; or, as it is expressively  
termed their "effects,"—the thing which they  
caused, the main result of their having been  
alive. How plain is it that we regard them  
merely as instruments of acquisition; centres  
of attraction for the drifting of capital; that  
they are important only as indications of  
commodities; and that their human person-  
ality hangs as a mere label upon a mass of  
treasure! Every one must have met with  
a few instances in which this character is  
realized, and with many in which, notwith-  
standing the relief of some redeeming and  
delightful features, it is at least approached.  
In proportion as this aim, of possession, is  
taken to be paramount in life, length of days  
must no doubt be deemed indispensable to  
the human destination. The longer a man  
lies out at interest, the greater must be the  
accumulation. If he is unexpectedly recalled,  
every end which he suggested is disap-  
pointed: the only thing he seemed fit for  
cannot go on: he is a power lost from this  
sphere, an incapacity thrust upon the other;  
missed from the markets here, thrown away  
among sainted spirits there. For himself,  
and for both worlds, the event seems deplora-  
ble enough: and it is difficult to make any-  
thing but confusion out of it. An imagina-  
tion tacitly filled with this conception of life,  
as a stage prepared for enjoyment and pos-  
session, must look on a term that is unful-  
filled as on a broken tool, dropping in failure  
to the earth.

BOOKS.

Books are not only the friends of individual  
solitude, but also of the family circle. They  
contribute to bind it together, to fill up defi-  
ciencies, to cover flaws, to make it closer and  
brighter and firmer. By engaging the  
thoughts, improving the taste, and exciting  
the kindly feelings of the members of a  
household, they render each one more con-  
siderate and gentle, and more useful and  
agreeable to the rest. They insensibly in-  
troduce mental grace and refinement, and  
not only so, but refinement and grace of  
manners, wherever they become favorites.  
Show us a family in which the best and  
purest authors are loved and read, and we  
care not in what nominal rank of society  
they are stationed, or what may be their  
wealth, or want of it, or what may be their  
daily avocations; but we will answer for  
them, that vulgarity and coarseness have  
no place at their meetings, and that domes-  
tic peace is a dweller among them.

The domestic services which books are  
qualified to perform, are particularly valu-  
able when the business and bustle of day-  
light are over, and the active interests of life  
are hushed into slumber under the brooding  
wings of night. The master of the house  
comes home from his office, counting-room,  
or workshop, the children come home from  
their schools, or places of employment, the  
mother's household duties are done, and  
they sit down together. What shall they

do with the impending hours to keep them  
from hanging heavily. We suppose that  
there are some families, in town and country,  
who find, if there is no party to go to, or no  
place of public amusement to offer its attrac-  
tions, such as they may be, or nothing partic-  
ularly interesting to discuss in the events  
of the day, or the character or fortunes of  
their neighbours, that the long winter even-  
ings, by which we mean the evenings of  
six months in our year, are apt to move off  
rather slowly and wearily. This would not  
be so, we are persuaded, if they would just  
call in to their assistance one or two of the  
friends which they would find in good books.  
How much more swiftly and pleasantly, not  
to say profitably, the hours would then glide  
away! . . . What honest friends, what  
sympathising companions, what excellent  
instructors they are! How can a man be  
really solitary when these and nature are  
with him and around him? How can it be  
said of him, that he is without society, even  
though no being of flesh and blood should be  
near him, when he can sit down in his closet  
with the best and brightest minds which ever  
dwelt, and beamed in residences of clay;  
with the master spirits of all time; with the  
souls of the mighty living and the mighty  
dead, the dead who are yet living; with an-  
cient and modern lawgivers, philosophers,  
and bards; with moralists and satirists; with  
civilians and divines; with navigators and  
travellers; with the explorers of nature and  
the professors of art; with patriots; with  
saints; with martyrs; with Apostles of  
Christ; with prophets of God? Who shall  
say, that with these he is alone? Who shall  
say that in his sorrow he is without cons-  
olers; that in his trials and perplexities, and  
the various conditions of his mind and feel-  
ings, he is without spiritual advisers?—  
*Greenwood.*

GREATNESS OF LITTLE THINGS.

The size of a wheel in any mechanism is  
the test of its importance; and the demon-  
stration is continually before us, that what  
is insignificant in man's little day, is stu-  
pendous when viewed in connexion with the  
great year of Providence. "Behold," says  
St. James, "what a great matter a little fire  
kindleth!" but this is not only true in  
reference to the slight causes which kindle  
wrathful speech and set on fire national in-  
terests, consuming vast treasures in its flames,  
but it is also true in reference to good results.  
When the prairies are on fire and the floods  
of flame sweep with terrific fury, like the  
stormy waves of the sea when the setting sun  
flashes them with red, the hunter builds a  
back fire, and thereby diverts the wind and  
makes an open space where the fury of the  
sweeping ocean of flame is bounded and  
hushes itself to sleep. A little fire kindled  
the latter as the former, and so we are re-  
minded of the slight causes of preservative as  
well as of destructive results. The meatest  
form of humanity cannot be safely overlooked  
or despised. The wandering beggar may bring  
the pestilence into the city, and he that is  
scorned as nothing worth may be the pre-  
server of the nation. It was but the voice of a  
common mechanic that cried in the French  
Chamber of Deputies, "It is too late!" but  
the word was fraught with tremendous power.  
God holds in his own hands the springs of  
revolutions, and he is continually teaching  
us not to despise any form of humanity by  
giving the grandest influence to those who  
were uncounted in the summing up of mighty  
agencies. Let us learn from this; for the  
linch-pin in the axle-tree is a small thing, but  
what a crash sometimes follows its departure  
from the place in which it was put.—*Rev.*  
*Henry Bacon.*

Too TRUE.—A dark feature in the pre-  
sent age, said the late Dr. Channing, is the  
spirit of collision, contention, and discord  
which breaks forth in religion, politics and  
private affairs—a result and necessary issue  
of selfishness which prompts the endless ac-  
tivity of life. The mighty forces which are  
at this moment acting in society are not and  
cannot be in harmony, for they cannot be  
governed by love. They are discordant.—  
Life has now little music in it. It is not  
only on the field of battle that men fight.—  
They fight on the exchange. Business is  
war, is conflict of skill, management, too of-  
ten fraud. Christians forsaking their one  
Lord, gather under various standards to gain  
victory for their sects. Politics is war, break-  
ing the people into fierce and unscrupulous  
parties, which forget their country in conflict  
for office and power. The age needs noth-  
ing more than peace-makers, men of serene,  
commanding virtue, to preach in life and  
word the Gospel of human brotherhood, to  
allay the fires of jealousy and hate.

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