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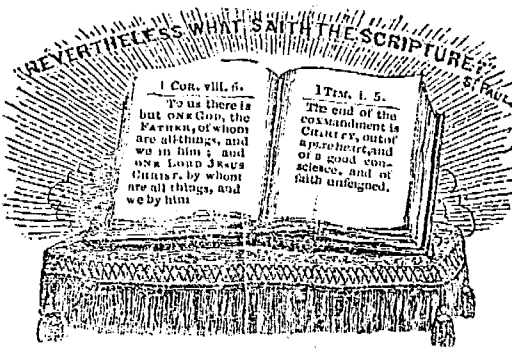
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THE BIBLE



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TRUTH, HOLINESS,

LIBERTY, LOVE.

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REMARKS ON THE GENUINENESS OF THE GOSPELS, AND ON MIRACLES.

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In regard to the direct historical evidence for the genuineness of the Gospels, the nature of the case is such, that no evidence of the same character, or of the same weight, can be produced for the genuineness of any other ancient work, which was not, like them, received as an undisputed book of the Christian Scriptures. It is the testimony of a great, widely-spread, and intelligent community to a fact about which they had full means of information, and in which they had the deepest interest. It is their testimony to the genuineness of books, the reception of which as authentic would change the whole complexion of their lives; and might, not improbably, put at hazard life itself, or all that they had before considered as rendering life desirable. It is the testimony of Gentiles to their belief of the genuineness and truth of books derived from Jews,—books regarded with strong dislike by a great majority of that nation; three of which were not in common use among those few Jews who, like them, were disciples of Christ; and all of which were so stamped throughout with a Jewish character, as to be likely, at first view, strongly to offend their prejudices and tastes.

But the peculiar nature and value of this testimony may be laid out of consideration. The fact alone, that the four Gospels were all received as genuine books, entitled to the highest credit, by the whole community of catholic Christians, dispersed throughout the world, admits of no explanation, except that they had always been so regarded. We have begun by reasoning from their reception during the last quarter of the second century; and their reception at that time affords, as we have seen, decisive proof of the estimation in which they must have been held during the whole preceding interval from their first appearance. But, though we may entitle this proof decisive, yet, like all other probable reasoning, it admits of confirmation; and we have seen the confirmation afforded by the evidence of Justin Martyr, who gives direct proof, that the authority of the Gospels was established among Christians before the middle of the second century. I say before the middle of the second century,—for though this was the precise time when he wrote his first Apology, yet his testimony must be considered as relating to a state of things with which he had been previously conversant. We have next remarked the express and particular testimony of Papias to the genuineness of two of the Gospels, and to the estimation in which they were held by Christians. Then, tracing the stream of evidence back to its very source, we have seen Luke's own attestation to the genuineness of his Gospel. And in connexion with this, and with the testimony of Papias, we have attended to the fact, that the acknowledged genuineness of any one of the gospels must have presented an insuperable barrier to the reception of any spurious gospels as a work of like authority. The testimony to the genuineness of any one of the Gospels is virtually a testimony to the genuineness of all; and the testimony to their genuineness is a testimony to their reception by all catholic Christians wherever they had become known.

But, in regard to our present argument, it is unimportant what period an objector may fix upon for the general reception of the Gospels as genuine. The later the period assigned for this event, the more obviously incredible does it become that it should have taken place, on the supposition that the Gospels were not received from the beginning in the character which they afterwards bore.—The longer the Christian community had existed without a knowledge of the Gospels, or without a belief in their genuineness, the more difficult must it have been to produce this belief, and to cause them to be recognized as books of the highest value and author-

ity. Let us suppose that they were not so regarded till the last quarter of the second century. Their general recognition at that period becomes a most remarkable phenomenon.—Some very effective cause or causes must be assigned for it, sufficient to explain how four spurious books, not before known, or known only to be rejected, should suddenly have obtained universal acceptance throughout the Christian world, as containing the truths fundamental to a Christian's belief. No trace of any causes capable of producing this result can be discovered or imagined. In the nature of things, it is impossible that such causes should have existed. The Christians of that age professed to receive the Gospels as genuine and authentic, on the ground that they had always been so regarded. The truth of this fact is the only explanation which can be given of the universal respect in which they were then held.

It appears, therefore, that the evidence of the genuineness of the Gospels is of a very different character from what we are able to produce for the genuineness of any ancient classical work. Very few readers, I presume, could at once recollect and state the grounds on which we believe the epistles to Atticus to have been written by Cicero, or the History of the Peloponnesian War by Thucydides. But should any writer undertake to impugn the genuineness of these, or of many other ancient works that might be named, in the manner in which attempts have been made to weaken the historical argument for the genuineness of the Gospels, he would hardly succeed even in gaining a discreditable notoriety.

But there are objections derived from the Gospels themselves, which are relied upon as doing away the whole force of the historical argument. It is urged that the contents of one Gospel are irreconcilable with those of another, and, therefore, that the Gospel could not be the work of well-informed narrators. By the opponents of Christianity, the errors of theologians are commonly confounded with the truths of our religion; and, so far as the objection just mentioned rests on any tenable grounds, it bears not against the authenticity and genuineness of the Gospels, but against the doctrine that they were written by miraculous inspiration. It would be an extraordinary fact, if these books presented on their face decisive objections to their own credibility which had been overlooked for eighteen centuries by intelligent Christians engaged in their study. To any one, indeed, who is capable of a just apprehension of the proof of the genuineness of the Gospels, afforded by the intrinsic character, nothing can appear more idle than such an attempt to prove from their contents, that they could not have been written by the authors to whom they are ascribed.

But there is another objection drawn from the essential character of the Gospels, which is, in fact, the root, and furnishes the sap and strength, of all others which have been urged against them. They contain the history of a miraculous dispensation; and a miracle, it is asserted is impossible.

This objection, if it can be maintained, is final, not merely in regard to the truth of the Gospels, and the truth of Christianity, but in regard to the truth of all religion.

The assertion, that a miracle is impossible, and, consequently, that such a miraculous intervention of the Deity as Christianity supposes is impossible, must rest for support solely on the doctrine, that there is no God; but that the universe has been formed and is controlled by physical powers essential to its elementary principles, which, always remaining the same, must always produce their effects uniformly according to their necessary laws of action. This being so, a miracle, which would be a change in these necessary laws, is, of course impossible.

But when we refer the powers operating throughout the universe to one Being, as the source of all power, and ascribe to this Being intelligence, design, and benevolence, that is, when we recognize the truth, that there is a God, it becomes the extravagance of presumptuous folly to pretend, that we may be assured, that this Being can or will act in no other way than according to what we call

the laws of nature; that he has no ability, or can have no purpose, to manifest himself to his creatures by any display of his power and goodness which they have not before witnessed, or do not ordinarily witness.

The assertion, therefore, that a miracle is impossible, can be maintained by no coherent reasoning, which does not assume for its basis, that all religion is false; that its fundamental doctrine, that there is a God, is untrue. The controversy respecting it is not between Christianity and atheism; it is between religion, in any form in which it may appear, and atheism.

One may, indeed, give the name of God to the physical powers operating throughout the universe, considered collectively, or to some abstraction, as the moral law of the universe, for example, or to some conception still more unsubstantial and unintelligible, and thus contend that he does not deny the existence of God. But there is but one view which an honest man can take of the deception which in this and other similar cases has been attempted through a gross abuse of words, by which their true meaning is razed out, and a false meaning forced upon them. In contending with irreligion, we have a right to demand that we shall not be mocked with the language of religion.

But the fact has been overlooked, that, supposing the proposition to be admitted, that a miraculous intervention of the Deity is impossible, it would have no bearing on our immediate subject. No inference could be drawn from it to show that the Gospels were not written by those to whom they are ascribed.

The first disciples of our Lord, the first preachers of his religion, whether their account was true or false, taught that he was a messenger from God, whose authority was continually attested by displays of divine power, superseding the common laws of nature. They represented Christianity only under the character of a dispensation wholly miraculous. It has come down to us bearing this character from the first accounts we have of its annunciation,—from the time when St. Paul wrote those Epistles, the genuineness of which cannot be questioned.—The fact that Christianity is a miraculous dispensation was the basis of his whole teaching, and equally of the teaching of the other Apostles. It cannot be pretended, that any indication is to be found of its having been presented to men under another character. The effects which followed its preaching are such as could have resulted only from such a conception of it. The hypothesis, therefore,—for such an hypothesis has actually been put forward,—that this was not the original character of Christianity,—that its first preachers did not announce it as a miraculous dispensation, but that some time during the lives of the Apostles, or immediately after, it assumed this character,—can be regarded only as one of the most extraordinary of those exhibitions of human folly which have lately been given to the world as speculations concerning our religion. There is no doubt, that the Apostles and their companions represented Christ as a messenger from God, whose divine authority was attested throughout his ministry by miracles. It can, therefore, be no objection to the genuineness of the Gospels, that such is the representation to be found in them.—Whether true or false, it is the only representation that was to be expected in histories of Jesus given by Apostles and their companions.

The Gospels, then, contain that view of Christianity which was presented by its first preachers. We have in these books that solemn attestation which was borne by them, and was confirmed by circumstances that exclude all doubt of its truth, to facts in the ministry and character of Christ which evince his divine mission. And to this nothing is objected but a speculation, which supposes that all religion must be false.

In regard to men's belief in Christianity, and their apprehension of its character, the present is an age of transition. We are leaving behind us the errors and superstitions of

former days, with all their deplorable consequences,—the dominion of a priesthood, tyranny over reason, persecution, false conceptions of morality by which its sanctions were often wholly prevented, and that disgust toward Christianity which the deformed image bearing its name, and set up for idol-worship, was so fitted to produce. But, through a revulsion of feeling, occasioned by this state of things, many of the clergy, particularly in England,—one is reluctant to say many priests, though this is a title which they readily assume,—have turned about, and are travelling back into the dark region of implicit faith, Jesuitical morality, and religious formalities, absurdities, and crimes. On the other hand, there is a multitude of speculators, who, in the abandonment of religious error, have abandoned religion itself, and whose only substitute for it, if they have any, is an unsubstantial spectre which they have decorated with its titles.—Meanwhile, very many enlightened men, who have been repelled from the study of Christianity by the imbecility or folly of those who have assumed to be its privileged expositors and defenders, regard it, at best, only with a certain degree of respect, as being, perhaps, a noble system, if properly understood, and one the belief of which, even under the forms that it has been made to assume, is, at all events, useful to the community:—*Magnifica quidem res cœlularis, si modo est ulla.*

In order that we may pass from this state of things to a better, it is necessary that the intellect of men should be awakened and brought to exercise itself on the most important subject that can be presented to its examination. The result would be a rational and firm faith in Christianity, with all the consequences that must flow from such a faith. The conviction which rests on reason are of very different efficacy from the impression produced through prejudice, imagination, or passion. The latter may lead to great evil; the former can produce only good. There is a sense of reality attending the convictions of reason, which makes it impossible that they should not penetrate into the character. Let any one, in the best exercise of his understanding, be persuaded that the history of Jesus Christ is true, that the miracle of his mission from God, which belongs to the order of events lying beyond the sphere of this world, and concerning the whole of man's existence, is as real as those facts which take place in this world, conformably to the narrow circle of its laws with which we are familiar, and he has become intellectually, and can hardly fail to become morally, a new being. In recognizing that fact, he recognizes his relation to God, or rather, if I may so speak, God's relation to him. Life assumes another character. It is not a short period of existence in which we are to confine our views and desires to what may be attained within its limits. It is a state of preparation for a life to come, which will continue into an infinity where the eye of the mind is wholly incapable of following its course. Viewed in the broad light which thus pours in upon us, their false coloring disappears from the objects of passion, and we perceive that there is nothing permanently good, but what tends to the moral and intellectual progress of the soul, and nothing to be dreaded as essentially evil, but what tends to impede it.

BE KIND.—How foolish it is to be anything else. Kindness to all God's creatures is like soft soap upon a ship's ways. It enables one to slide off into the great ocean of eternity without friction—without smoke or smell of fire. There is no excuse for unkindness, even to the 'vilest of the vile.' It is the bane of society, and yet all are more or less liable to indulge it. We may be determined, resolute, unyielding in what we believe to be duty, but still we may be kind. Indeed, firmness and decision in our treatment of wrong doers, are required by kindness, for one of the first dictates of a kind spirit is, that we should consult the good of an offender, and his good can be effectually promoted only by intercepting him in his evil way.

Eastern Times.

* By Strauss, in his *Leben Jesu* (Life of Jesus).

SLAVERY FROM WITHIN.

Let a word be said on the other kind of slavery; that which comes from a cause internal to ourselves. This is common to the North, and South, and East, and West. In this case the man is prevented from doing what is best for him, not by some other man who has bound him, but by some passion or prejudice, superstition or sin. Here the mischief is in his own heart. If you look around you, you find many that bear the mark of the beast; branded on the forehead and the right hand; branded as slaves. "He that committeth sin is the slave of sin."—The avaricious man is a slave. He cannot think a thought but as his master bids. He cannot see a truth, if a dollar intervene. He cannot relieve the poor, nor sympathize with the distressed, nor yield to the humane impulse of his natural heart. If he sees in the newspaper a sentence on the wastefulness or the idleness of the poor, he remembers it forever; but a word in the Bible to encourage charity,—he never finds that.

The passionate man is a slave; he lies at the mercy of the accidents of a day. If his affairs go well, he is calm and peaceful; but if some little mistake arise, he is filled with confusion, and the demon that rules him draws the chain. This master has many a slave under his yoke. He is more cruel than any planter in Cuba or Trinidad. He not only separates friend from friend, parent from child, and husband from wife, but what is worse yet, prevents their loving one another while they are together. This makes man a tyrant, not a husband; woman a fiend, not an angel, as God made her to be. This renders marriage a necessary evil, and housekeeping a perpetual curse, for it takes the little trifles which happen everywhere, except between angels, and makes them very great matters; it converts mistakes into faults; accidents into vices; errors into crimes; and so rends assunder the peace of families, and in a single twelvemonth disturbs more marriages than all the slaveholders of Carolina in a century.

So the peevish man is a slave. His ill humor watches him like a demon. Oft-times it casteth him into the fire, and often into the water. In the morning he complains that his caprice is not complied with; in the evening that it is. He is never peaceful, except when angry; never quiet, but in a storm. He is free to do nothing good; so he acts badly, thinks badly, feels badly,—three attributes of a Devil. A yoke of iron and fetters of brass were grievous to bear, no doubt; the whip of a task-master makes wounds in the flesh; but God save us from the tyranny of the peevish, both what they inflict and what they suffer.

The intemperate man also is a slave; one most totally subjugated. His vice exposes him to the contempt and insult of base men, as well as to the pity of the good. Not only this, but his master strips him of his understanding; takes away his common sense, conscience, his Reason, Religion,—qualities that make a man differ from a beast; on his garments, his face, his wife, and child, is written in great staring letters, so that he may read that runs—*This man also has sold his birth-right and become a slave.* The jealous planter forbids his slave to learn; but he cannot take from him the understanding he has got. This refinement of torture it was left for Intemperance to exercise, levelling at once the distinctions between rude and polished.—*Theodore Parker.*

RELIGIOUS INDIFFERENCE.

I know that there are men of general integrity and worth, who, with a sort of amiable ease or indolence of spirit, say, that "they are well enough as they are." I think, too, that I understand the meaning of this language, and I distinctly see, as I apprehend, that it does not go to the depth—no, nor any where near to the depth, of their nature and their wants. They are "well enough," in a worldly sort—well enough, because they are comfortable, and prosperous. But will all this meet the great, the general, and the urgent want of the human heart?—Does the heart never ask any thing that riches cannot give? Does it never sigh for a peace that the world cannot give? I know not what the worldly heart may answer; but this I know, that some of the most bitter complainers, that ever poured out the language of satire and scorn and disgust upon this world, are precisely the most worldly beings in it. No, the world does not satisfy the worldly; and they know it. How is it possible that it should do so, if the mind of a worldly man be still a mind;—if there be any thing in him that can be called a mind! Why, even the senses range far beyond this world. Fix thine eye upon a star, in the infinite distance and depth of heaven.—

What beam is that which visiteth thee from afar! If I were to pause now for the brief space of only eight minutes, a ray from the sun would, in that brief interval, have traversed almost an hundred millions of miles, to reach us! What beam, then, is that which visiteth thee from far, far beyond the precincts of solar day? Through the slow revolutions of years—I speak the astronomical fact;—for aught thou knowest, before thou wast created—I speak the astronomical doubt;—for aught thou knowest, before the world was created, that ray of light left its native seats, and through distances awful, and inconceivable, through the silent lapse and the slow revolution of years unknown, that ray of light has been travelling onward, and onward, till it has fallen on thy poor weak sense. Now follow it back, on the line of its immeasurable progress, to its original sphere, its home which it hath left to teach thee—and does thy mind stop there? No: nor there, nor anywhere does it stop, but beyond and beyond, to infinity, to eternity, it wanders. And can that mind say, that it is "well enough" in a little earthly comfort and a few worldly possessions? Can the soul, that spans the universe, and measures eges, be content with a grain of sand upon this shore of time? No. Hold thou the measureless ocean in the hollow of thy hand; and then, mayest thou curb the swellings of thought, passion, and desire, to that narrow compass. Garner up the treasures of infinite worlds in thy coffer; and then mayest thou look up in that coffer, the affections that are expanding to the grasp of infinity. No, mistaken soul! thine eye spans the arch of heaven—thy soaring thought riseth to the eternal stars; thine aim must be broad and boundless as those pathways of heaven. As surely as thou livest, thou must live righteously, virtuously, wisely. Life is an argument for piety. Sense is a guide to faith. Time should bear our thoughts, as it is bearing our souls, to eternity!

But there are other witnesses to be summoned in this argument, besides events, and their unavoidable impression. There are distinct wants in the mind. Amidst the cares and conflicts of this life, there are certain ultimate objects, in which all men are interested. One of these objects is happiness. I say, then—I may say to every man, however irreligious—thou wouldst be happy.

Thou wouldst be happy. When thou art happiest,—still something is wanting—and thou wouldst be happier. When thy thought is brightest, a shade like the shadow of a cloud upon the fairest landscape, cometh over thee, and thou wouldst, thy thought were brighter. When thy possessions are most abundant, there is yet a want in thy mind; and thou wouldst have a more satisfying fullness within. Is there any thing but what is all-perfect, and infinite, and immortal, that can satisfy thee? But the all-perfect and the infinite, and the immortal, belong to the province of religion; and if thou wouldst find them, thou must find them, in her glorious sphere.

But again I say; thou wouldst be happy. Thou wouldst be happy—ah, thou wouldst, indeed, be so, when thou art not happy; for what is so intolerable as misery? Thou wouldst be happy when thou art sick; when thou art sorrowful; when thou art bereaved. When thou art cast down, and almost crushed by some of the thousand, nameless, burdens of life, thou wouldst be happy. And dost thou know, canst thou conceive of any thing, that can make thee happy in these circumstances, but religion?

But again, in regard to this matter of happiness, I may say to every one,—something troubles you, at one time or another,—something is the matter with you. What is it?—What aileth thee, O never satisfied man!—What is it? What is it, that takes from the joy of life, when at the fullest; or disturbs the clear and overflowing fountain, or imbibers its waters? What is it? You tell me of events, of annoyances, of a troublesome world, of the vexations of life. Do you not know, that life and the world, are the reflection of yourself—the image without, of the reality within? What is it, then? Ah! it is evermore, some unholy passion—pride or envy, or sensual excess, or the workings of a selfish, ungenerous, ungrateful mind. A calm and self-governed temper, a benevolent gladness of spirit, the cheerfulness of a good conscience, the gentle affections of piety, would make every fountain of earthly good, a fountain of real peace and happiness. Does any man deny this? Does the most confirmed sceptic, or the boldest scorner, deny it? Religion, then, above all other things is commended to the desire of happiness.—It comes near, it is adjunct, to that great desire. It belongs to it;—as light to the eye that would see; as food to the hunger that would be satisfied. Deep, then, impatient, unquenched as that desire is, strongly, unceasingly, eternally as it beats, like the pulse

of existence, in the human heart, so deeply, so strongly, so unceasingly, should the human heart be interested about that which alone can give it happiness: interested not merely as in something future and far off, but as in something of present, pressing, instant concern. If the heart knew its own welfare it would be so interested. And the very soul of youth would not burn with a love of unholy pleasure, so intense, but it would be quenched in the holy tears of that supplication, "Oh! satisfy me early with thy mercy, that I may be glad and rejoice in thee all my days."

Once more and with regard to the wants of the mind, and the ultimate objects of life: if you are a reasonable being, you would improve. If you were a brute, you might neither know nor care anything for this.—But if you are a reasonable being you must desire to improve. You cannot stop at the point you have now reached, and be satisfied. You would, you must go onward; and you never will come to the point—it is not in your nature ever to come to the point—from which you would not go onward! A thousand ages of improvement would find you still asking to go forward. Can you then be indifferent to the religion whose sphere is eternity!—*Deucy.*

THE USES OF AFFLICTION.

There is, perhaps, no doctrine of the New Testament that must strike the ear of a heathen more strangely, than that the Infinite Father, though a being whose very essence is love, yet chasteneth those whom he most loveth, and scourgeth every soul that he receiveth. Even in the Christian Church this doctrine is little understood, or indeed received, if we may judge from the remarks continually made by otherwise intelligent persons, concerning the various dispensations of joy or sorrow which are continually going on around them. True, there are every where many souls who have been brought to feel its vital meaning, but as a doctrine of the Christian Church, it seems to be still but imperfectly received or understood, even in this nineteenth century of its promulgation. No stronger proof of the truth of this assertion is needed, than is offered by the common fact, that when sorrow or misfortune falls on those whom the world admits to be virtuous, or when the notoriously wicked pass their lives amid a continual succession of prosperity, we hear surprise expressed that an overruling Providence should allow such things to be. It would seem to be overlooked, that worldly honor, the insidious corrupter of virtue, is no fitting reward for piety, nor was ever held out as such by our Lord, to his followers; while equal blindness is shown to the truth that worldly honor is the appropriate and naturally to be expected reward of worldliness. It is but fair and just, humanly speaking, that he who sells his soul for gold, should receive his price, and that he who sacrifices honor and integrity to gain office and high station, should receive that for which he strives. To him who labors only for what this world can give, the good things of this world should not be grudged; while he who toils for the blessings of heaven should be content to wait for his reward until the hour comes when he shall be received into heavenly mansions.

When sorrow and disappointment fall to the lot of the evil, the cry is often raised, *Lo!* a judgment from heaven, and something of satisfaction is expressed. On such occasions let him who is without sin raise the first cry of joy. Let us consider what is the nature of a judgment.

God is love; therefore his judgments must be filled with tenderness towards his children, for they must bear the impress of his nature. Whether painful or joyous, they are full of benignant purposes for the health of the soul; even as the raging tempest, no less than the bland sunshine, is the beneficent and needful instrument whereby the insalubrious atmosphere is purified.

If we truly receive into our hearts the doctrine that the judgments of heaven are tender manifestations of parental love, the voice of triumph can never be raised when the wicked suffer. A gentle compassion would rather be awakened in our hearts, and we should look upon them in hope, earnestly desiring to do for them every thing in our power in order to encourage and promote the legitimate effect of the dispensation.

When affliction fall upon the pious, though it may seem dark and unintelligible to those who behold it, yet in most instances, the individual if he humbly looks into his own heart, can perceive its application; for every one who cares to read his own heart, knows in some degree, or may know if he will, his own sins, his own wants. Where, however, even the sufferer finds his trials unintelligible; when first they come upon him, if he but waits in humble faith, he will, even by

the work that they shall do in his own soul, so grow in wisdom that he will presently learn to comprehend their design. He may not recognize the seed when it is first sown, yet if he tend it in faith, God will water it, and the blade will appear, bearing in due time fruit, an hundred fold.

The acute suffering to which little children are often subjected previous to the development of any of their reasoning powers, is sufficient proof that the comprehension of grief is not necessary in order that it may work its purpose on the character. For surely we cannot doubt that infantile suffering has an end to be wrought upon the tender germ of life, however little we may be able to understand that end.

The providences of God are often like sweet music playing in the midst of a noisy crowd, whose clamor quite drowns its harmonies from the ear of him who stands near by. If, however, the listener will place himself far away, beyond the reach of the sounds of uproar, he will then hear with distinctness the tones of the music, which by their melodious qualities possess the power of penetrating the atmosphere to a distance far greater than the unmodulated clangor can reach. The thonging cares and passions of this life, will in the same manner, sometimes prevent the soul from perceiving the beautiful fitness and exquisite harmony of those dispensations of heaven, that crush the hopes and destroy the plans, which have perhaps been cherished inmates of the heart for years. But if the sufferer will go far away from those hopes and plans; that is, if he will rise above worldly considerations, and contemplate events in their eternal relations, he will perceive and feel the harmony and beauty in the ways of Providence, and know that the discordance was either in his own heart, or in the world around him.

New Jerusalem Magazine.

RELIGIOUS CONVERSATION.

A few sentences will be indulged to me here respecting Religious Conversation. I believe both that the proposition is true, and that it is expedient to set it down—that religious conversation is one of the banes of the religious world. There are many who are really attached to religion, and who sometimes feel its power, but who allow their better feelings to evaporate in an ebullition of words. They forget how much religion is an affair of the mind and how little of the tongue: they forget how possible it is to live under its power without talking of it to their friends; and some, it is to be feared, may forget how possible it is to talk without feeling its influence. Not that the good man's piety is to live in his breast like an anchorite in his cell. The evil does not consist in speaking of religion, but in speaking too much; not in manifesting our allegiance to God; not in encouraging by exhortation, and amending by our advice; not in placing the light upon a candlestick—but in making religion a common topic of discourse. Of all species of well intended religious conversation, that perhaps is the most exceptionable which consists in narrating our own religious feelings. Many thus intrude upon that religious quietude which is peculiarly favorable to the Christian character. The habit of communicating "experiences" I believe to be very prejudicial to the mind. It may sometimes be right to do this: in the great majority of instances I believe it is not beneficial, and not right. Men thus dissipate religious impressions, and therefore diminish their effects. Such observation as I have been enabled to make, has sufficed to convince me that, where the religious character is solid, there is but little religious talk; and that, where there is much talk, the religious character is superficial, and, like other superficial things, is easily destroyed. And if these be the attendants, and in part the consequences of general religious conversation, how peculiarly dangerous must that conversation be, which exposes those impressions that perhaps were designed exclusively for ourselves, and the use of which may be frustrated by communicating them to others.—Our solicitude should be directed to the invigoration of the religious character in our own minds; and we should be anxious that the plant of piety, if it had fewer branches might have a deeper root.—*Jonathan Dymond.*

VIRTUE.—The everlasting hills will crumble to dust, but the influence of a good act will never die. The earth will grow old and perish, but virtue in the heart will be ever green, and will flourish throughout eternity. The moon and stars will grow dim, and the sun roll from the heavens; but true and undefiled religion will grow brighter and brighter, and not cease to exist while God himself shall live.

The Bible Christian,

MONTREAL, AUGUST, 1847.

CREED BONDAGE.

There is slavery of body, and slavery of mind. But many persons who enjoy freedom of body, are held in sore bondage of mind.—The mind is the nobler part of the man, and if that be enslaved how deplorable is the slavery. The highest subject on which a man's mind can be engaged, is the subject of Religion. How doubly deplorable then to find men's minds fettered on this all-important topic. Yet notwithstanding all the enlightenment we boast of in this advanced and advancing age, we can still find churches and clergy eager to chain down the immortal mind with their humanly made creeds instead of leaving it free as God intended, and pointing it to the Bible as the only fountain of everlasting truth and bidding it drink its fill there. Freedom in body and in mind is the inalienable birthright of every human being. Yet, when certain religious systems are to be upheld, we find multitudes striving to strangle the intellect of man in the very cradle, by the coils of a worn-out, technical theology. How successful have been their efforts and how melancholy the consequences of that success he that runneth may read. If a voice is raised in defence of the rights of the human mind—if the fetters of the creed are cast aside and its authority renounced—if some truth-loving man in the spirit of Galileo assert and exhibit some great, neglected doctrine, in opposition to wide-spread popular error,—although the dungeons dare not now be resorted to as in his time, yet the very same spirit which broke the heart that exalted man, will be manifested in whatever form the age will admit of. In this age the man who sets himself in opposition to popular error in ever so trifling a degree, has his name cast out as evil, and himself stigmatized as a heretic and a dangerous person. If he differ from popular opinion on one point, be it ever so plain and intelligible, his whole system of opinions will be misrepresented—in many cases they will be so caricatured that it is almost impossible for himself to recognise the true distinguishing features. This will ever be the case until Education has done its perfect work in the world, and until Christ be firmly seated upon his throne in every heart; then will every man be brought to understand his own true value, and respect the mental rights of others; then will he permit no other man to interfere between God's voice and his own soul; then will he not submit to any human authority in matters of religion, unless the man presuming to interfere can show a special patent from Heaven, authorizing him to do so.

But this is not the whole extent of the injury brought on by creed-bondage. Here we have seen the evils it would inflict upon the man who escapes from its fetters. It would pursue him as the slave-holder would pursue a runaway slave; and who sees in the liberty gained by one, an additional reason to look more closely after those which remain.—Hence it is that in places where liberal churches have been planted, there has generally been a disposition amongst the leaders of creed-bound churches to enforce with greater stringency their peculiar creeds and articles of faith. This leads to the anomaly we so often witness, of multitudes holding fast to a bible belief with one hand, and grasping a creed belief with the other, fearing, as it were, that the Bible should bring them too far away from their favourite faith. In this condition thousands are perfectly satisfied to re-

main. Hence it is that we find men assenting to such a dogma as this—that all mankind are created with a nature totally corrupt—whereby they are "utterly indisposed, disabled and made opposite to all that is spiritually good, and wholly inclined to all evil, and that continually." Hence it is, I say, that we find men assenting to such a dogma as this, and at the same time professing a belief in the teaching of the wise King of Israel, who states as plainly as words can do, that "God made man upright, but they sought out many inventions." Why, if the former doctrine were true, man would be the only plague-spot in God's fair universe. And the christian mother, to be consistent, should loathe her little laughing babe and push it from her as a mass of moral corruption. And the christian man, to be consistent, should seek the deepest depths in the wildest wilderness he could find, and there bury his head in the dust, and be ashamed and afraid to look out upon the Sun. But the feelings of the mother and the reason of the man both revolt at it. Solomon is right, and the Westminster Catechism is wrong. Let us illustrate this matter by another example. Multitudes assent to this dogma, that God has, by an eternal decree, predestinated a certain and definite number of men and angels to everlasting life, and fore-ordained a certain and definite number to everlasting death; and all this without any reference whatever to the faith or actions of the creatures so predestinated and fore-ordained. They assent to such a dogma as this, and at the same time affirm that God is just and merciful, and that those Scriptures are true which teach that "God is no respecter of persons, but that in every nation he that worketh righteousness shall be accepted with him." and that every man shall be rewarded according to his works. Could doctrines be more opposed to each other than these are? Another example and we have done. Multitudes hold it as a fundamental article of faith, that "God the FATHER, and God the SON, and God the HOLY GHOST, are CO-ESSENTIAL and CO-ETERNAL;—THREE PERSONS EQUAL in POWER and GLORY." They hold this, I say, and at the same time regard those scriptures as true, which declare that there is but one God, and that "God is one;" they regard that Apostle as divinely inspired who asserts that "there is but one God, the Father;" and they profess a deep respect (and really have a deep respect) for the teachings of that Saviour who has himself declared, that the Father is "the only TRUE God." Now, how are these anomalies to be accounted for? On no other subject whatever, do we find men thinking and speaking as they do on the subject of Religion. On all other matters, they are generally consistently right, or consistently wrong. But on this, the highest of all subjects, all is anomalous. How, we ask again, is this to be accounted for? It is the creed system that has done it all. It has cramped men's minds and brought them into bondage. It has discouraged honest enquiry, by arrogating an authority to interfere between the honest enquirer and the Book of life. The indifferent and the feeble-minded will always rest contented enough under the shelter of a creed; they are thus saved the trouble of thinking for themselves, and persons of this description will not be likely to perceive their true position. But the man of unshackled thought and independent action can hardly remain so. He will make his choice of standards, and adhere to the standard which he selects. If the Bible; he will join us in our endeavour to raise that Book supreme over all mere human forms. Would it not be well for mankind, if all these were consigned to the dust, where their framers have gone long since? Then would the spirit

of Sectarianism soon sink after them, and the genius of pure and uncorrupted Christianity rise triumphant over all, and work out its great design, the elevation of mankind—the salvation of the world. Under its sway there would be no bondage, either of mind or body. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is perfect liberty."

ANNIVERSARY OF THE MEADVILLE THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL.

The order of services was as follows:—Prayer. MIDDLE CLASS: 1. "Advantages of the Study of Ecclesiastical History." By Charles M. Taggart, Ky. 2. "Martin Luther." By Rush H. Shippen, Pa. 3. "English Versions of the Bible." By Noah Michael, O. 4. "Christ a dependent being." By Samuel McKown, O. 5. "1 John v. 7." By Evans W. Humphrey, O. 6. "Samaritan Pentateuch." By James Elliot, O. 7. "Sunday Schools." By Wm. Cushing, Mass. 8. "The Character of Balaam." By Alvin Coburn, Vt. 9. "Peter's Sermon on the day of Pentecost." By Nathaniel O. Chaffer, Mass.—10. "Religious Liberty." By Liberty Billings, Me. 11. "Critical Editions of the Greek Testament." By Stillman Barber, Mass.—SENIOR CLASS: 12. "The Characteristics of Effective Preaching." By Daniel Boyer, Pa. 13. "Piety in a Minister." By Peter Petch, N. Y. 14. "Moral Reform and the Ministry." By George S. Ball, Mass. Prayer.

A correspondent of the New York "Christian Inquirer" writes the following letter:

"Meadville, Penn., July 1, 1847.

"MR. EDITOR—This has been to me an interesting day. Our Theological School in this place has reached the close of its third year. To-day I have witnessed its anniversary exercises; and since the public services, I have met the students of the School, the Professors, the visitors and friends, at the delightful mansion of H. J. Huidekoper, Esq. My hope for the progress of Liberal Christianity in this country was never so strong as now. The establishment of this School creates a new era in this good cause.

"But, first, let me tell you of the closing exercises. Yesterday there was an examination of all the classes in the studies of the year. Conclusive evidence was given that the year has been filled with hard work. The great principles of Theological Education were brought to view by the Professors, and the students in their answers evinced an acquaintance with them and their various applications which nothing but faithful study can give. After the examination, in the evening, the Anniversary Sermon was preached in the Unitarian Church, by Elder J. E. Church, of Spring, Penn. His subject was the coming of Christ.

"The anniversary exercises to-day have been excellent. Indeed, we have had a fine commencement here in Western Pennsylvania. The meeting was in Divinity Hall Chapel. A highly respectable audience were present, nearly filling the chapel, which might hold two hundred and fifty. A platform was erected, on which sat the Professors; and in front, upon a slightly raised platform, was a table at which the students read their dissertations. Mr. Stebbins, who is President of the Board of Instruction, presided with much dignity; and when he came forward and addressed the graduating Class, and gave them their certificates, the whole audience were moved to tears. The dissertations were all good, and some of them excellent. Some were plain and sensible, some were quite cogent and logical, and three or four I could mention, which were highly finished, beautiful compositions. All were both written and spoken in a remarkably earnest spirit. I am deeply interested in these young men. They come, some from the plough, some from the mechanic's shop, and some from the pulpit of the Christian Connection, in which they have begun to preach as they could, without theological education. They are here because they hunger and thirst for knowledge, that they may be useful ministers. They are right earnest, ready to turn any way, to live any how, to dress in any manner, ready to work, to save, to receive gifts, that they may be prepared to preach the Gospel effectually—truly. I heard of instances of self-sacrifice among the students, and of brave labour that surprised me. One man is to start at day-light tomorrow morning, travel on foot, carrying with him such clothes as he needs, through the whole length of Ohio. He goes to preach; and he has sent on his appointments before him, averaging one every day until the close of the vacation, when he will be here again for the study of another year. This case is not one alone; other students go in other directions. So they did last summer; and so they do every vacation. Here we have something of the spirit of the early Christians.

"I am interested too in the catholic spirit which fills this School. Here are young men from four or five different denominations, from every part of the northern half of our republic—their speech marked by the peculiar accent of many nations and tongues; but they all live in harmony—they are all one in Christ Jesus. The West and the

East, the Jew, the German, the Welchman, the Englishman, all are brothers. Such life is in Liberal Christianity. I believe that this School is to do much to draw together and unite the broken parts of the Church of Christ. I care not by what name these students call themselves when they shall go forth from this school of the Prophets. They may be Unitarians, they may be Christians. No matter what the name, if they go forth with the free spirit of Christ in their hearts, free themselves from the shackles of bigotry, and are earnest to make all others as free as themselves. This School is destined to diffuse theological learning in our country, and the learning it imbues with piety."

NOTICE.

The hours of Public Worship in the Montreal Unitarian Church are—ELEVEN o'clock a.m., and Half-past SEVEN, p.m.

Persons desirous of renting Pews or Sitings in the Unitarian Church are requested to make application to the Elders, after any of the public services.

BOOKS FOR SALE,

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

JUST RECEIVED,

A SUPPLY OF

"WARE ON THE FORMATION OF THE CHRISTIAN CHARACTER."

Books may be obtained on loan from the Unitarian Congregational Library, on application to the Librarian.

THE MOURNER.

Upon the ocean's wave-worn shore,
I mark'd a solitary form,
Whose brooding brow and features wore,
The darkness of the coming storm;
And from his lips the sigh that broke,
So long within his bosom nurs'd,
In deep and mournful accents spoke,
Like troubled waves that shiv'ring burst.

Then as he gaz'd on earth and sea,
Girt with the gath'ring night,
His soul, life-wearied, long'd to flee,
And rest within its final goal.
He thought of her whose love had beam'd,
The sunlight of his ripen'd years,
But now her gentle mem'ry seem'd
To brim his eye with bitter tears.

"Oh Thou Bless'd Spirit!"—thus he sigh'd—
"Smile on me from thy realm of rest!
My dark and doubting spirit guide,
By conflict torn and grief oppress'd;
Teach me in ev'ry sadd'ning care,
To see the chast'ning hand of Heav'n,
The soul's high culture to prepare,
Wisely and mercifully giv'n."

"Could I this sacred solace share,
I would still my struggling bosom's moan,
And the deep peacefulness of prayer,
Might for my heavy loss atone.
Earth in its wreath of summer flowers,
And all its varied scenes of joy,
Its festal halls and echoing bowers,
No more my darken'd thoughts employ."

"But here the billows' heaving breast,
And the low thunder's knelling tone,
Speak of the wearied soul's unrest,
Its murmurings and conflicts lone.
And yon sweet star, whose golden gleam
Pierces the tempest's gath'ring gloom,
In the rich radiance of its beam,
Tells me of light beyond the tomb!"

N. Y. Christian Inquirer.

UNITY OF GOD.

EXTRACT FROM A SERMON,

Delivered before one of the Universalist Associations in Connecticut,

BY REV. D. B. HALLOCK.

Striving together for the faith of the Gospel.—Phil. i. 27.

With this view, let us proceed, first, to notice the objects of faith; and, as the leading and most important one, stands the being of God. As the Apostle says, "they that come to God must believe that he is, and that he is the rewarder of all who diligently seek him." To us there is but one God; and in this aspect he is presented in the Gospel; and we think that we have the faith of the Gospel when we believe in the unity, the undivided oneness of Jehovah. This is an important point, one from which we would not be seduced by vain philosophy, or the denunciations of heresy. As the Gospel says nothing of a triune God, we reject the dogma of the Trinity, however it may be surrounded by Athanasian, Calvinian, Hopkinsian, or other ecclesiastical names. We have no sympathy with that hair splitting distinction between *being* and *person*, human nature and *divine* nature, which some theological sages have made. To us, if God is a *person*, he is a Being, one being, one mind, agent or Supreme, undivided, unconnected with, and independent of, any other being or person in the universe. When our Saviour said, "There is none good but one, and that is God;" when Paul said to us, "There is one God, even the Father;" we have no intimation given that they intended to be understood as meaning something different from the unity of any other person or being. There is no more reason to believe that they regarded the Deity as possessed of a three-fold nature, than we have that the sacred penman regarded Joseph as a triune being, when he said he was a "goodly person." The idea of three persons in one being, is a solecism. The meaning of *person* is just as obvious to ordinary minds as the sun, and it is no more necessary to enquire what is understood by personality, to ascertain what is meant by a person; than it is to find out the physical essence of the sun to know what object is called by that name. One person means one intelligent being, and two persons must mean two intelligent beings, and so on. To say, then, that the one self-existent God is three self-existent persons, is the same as to say that he is three self-existent intelligent beings, which involves a palpable contradiction.

The arguments employed to prove the doctrine of the Trinity, to my mind just as clearly prove that there are three Gods in one; as they do that there are three persons in one God. The Trinitarian will tell us that the Son is God; he creates; he is omniscient and omnipotent; he is Mediator.—the Father is not. The Holy Ghost is God; he convicts of sin, regenerates and sanctifies the sinner. Here we have three persons, or intelligent beings or agents, each acting in

his own sphere and office; each having his own will, consciousness and identity; and if they do not constitute three distinct and positive beings, we do not know how to express the idea of three intelligent beings. Is Christ a person, and not a being? Is the Holy Ghost a person, yet not a being? Or is the word person, when applied to God, so entirely different from its usual and natural sense? When we hear of three persons loving each other, and conversing with each other and performing separate and distinct offices, how can we come to any other rational conclusion, than that Father, Son and Holy Ghost are three different intelligent beings, minds, and agents? We can as easily see how three Washingtons can make one man, as three persons, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, can make one God. The object of our faith presented in the Gospel, is the Father. He alone is God. He is one person. No one is equal to him in the universe, nor can be; and we may challenge the whole Christian world to produce a single passage from the New Testament in which the term God means three persons. On the contrary, the word, as well as the term Father, is limited to one individual and undivided being. The doctrine of three persons in the Godhead is not a doctrine of the Gospel; hence a faith in this doctrine is not the faith of the Gospel.

So entirely do the Scriptures abstain from stating the Trinity, (says a distinguished divine,) that when men would insert it into their creeds and dogmologies, they are compelled to leave the Bible, and to invent forms of words altogether un sanctioned by Scriptural phraseology. That a doctrine so strange, so liable to misrepresentation, so fundamental as this is said to be, and requiring such careful exposition, should be left so undefined and unprotected, to be made out by inference, and to be hunted through distant and detached parts of Scripture, this is a difficulty which, we think, no ingenuity can explain."

It is well known that Christianity, from its first introduction into the world, has had to contend with all kinds of opposition.—More especially had Christ and the Apostles many objections to answer, much prejudice to overcome, and violent opponents to contend with. Now if the doctrine of the Trinity had been insisted on by the Apostles; if this had been a fundamental object of Christian faith, there can be no question but the Pharisees and Judaizing teachers, who held to the unity of God, would have raised their voice against it. They did oppose the doctrine of the resurrection, and that of salvation by grace; and why is it that in none of the Apostles' writings, not one word is said of there being any opposition to the Trinity? There can hardly be a doubt, it seems to me, that if the first preachers of the Gospel, beginning at Jerusalem, had proclaimed the doctrine of three infinite and equal persons in the Godhead, we should hardly have had a single epistle or book in the New Testament, that is destitute of defence and explanation, and strong arguments, in reference to it. But what is the fact? Not a word is uttered, not a hint dropped, of the controversies and reproaches and misapprehensions relative to the Trinity. If a man must be burned with a fire of green wood in the sixteenth century of the Christian Church, for denying this doctrine, can it be supposed that the doctrine of the Trinity could be preached and denied and controverted in the primitive days of Christianity, and not a trace of its history be found in all the New Testament? This, to us, is an unanswerable argument for the position that the Trinity, in the Apostles' times, was not regarded as any part or portion of the faith of the Gospel. Besides this, we may observe that not only our Saviour, but his Apostles, insisted on the duty of worshipping the true God, the Father.—Are we to suppose that they left their hearers in a divided, distracted state of mind in regard to the proper and real object of love and devotion and praise? If they presented three coequal, infinite persons, for their adoration, whom would they prefer—or must they worship them all? We think this is the manifest tendency of the doctrine, to distract and disturb that singleness of mind, that ardent veneration for the one only living and true God, which ought to pervade the mind of the worshipper. If, as is contended, that angels and men worshipped Christ, ought we not to worship him now? When we worship God, do we worship Christ and the Holy Ghost at the same time? If we do not, do we not withhold from them their due? If they are persons, equal in power, substance and glory, with the Father, shall we not render them divine homage? We regard the Trinity as unfriendly to that spirit of true devotion, that concentrated, undivided affection, and that supreme homage which God requires at our hands.

The faith of the Gospel, then, for which we are to strive together, has not, for one of its objects, a triune God; but the one God

who is above all, and Lord of all! Here is but one being, one person, one infinite Father, in whom all the temporal and spiritual blessings of the race meet as their source and centre! To him alone should we render the homage of our hearts; from him alone cometh down every good and perfect gift. We may say with Derzhavin:

"Thou from primeval nothingness didst call
First chaos, then existence—Lord! on thee
Eternity had its foundation; all
Sprung forth from thee;—of light, joy, harmony
Sole origin; all life, all beauty thine.
Yes! in thy spirit doth thy spirit shine,
As shines the sunbeam in a drop of dew!
Weak! yet I live, and on Hope's pinions fly
Eager toward thy presence; for in thee
I live, and breathe, and dwell, aspiring high,
Even to the throne of thy divinity,
I am, oh God, and surely thou must be!"

The faith of the Gospel, then, recognizes Jehovah as the one living and true God; there is none beside him. He is God alone, not as Mr. Emmons says, "there is something in the Divine Being which renders it necessary that he should exist in three persons." Not as Dr. Spring says, "His indivisible essence comprises three distinct persons." Not as Dr. Hopkins and others hold, that he is three in one. Not as the Presbyterian Confession of Faith says, "In unity of the Godhead there be three persons of one substance, power and eternity: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost." But as one being, one person, one supreme intelligent God, who is over all, and above all, and the Father of all.

Second, Jesus Christ is the object of the faith of the Gospel. The necessity and importance of believing in Christ can hardly be questioned, when we refer to his own language: "This is the work of God that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." "Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life; he that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst."—"This is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Lord, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day."—"Jesus saith unto Martha, I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall never die." When the jailor at Philippi asked Paul and Silas, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"—they said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." "It is the commandment of God, (says John,) that we should believe on the name of his Son, Jesus Christ." When Philip was about to baptize the eunuch, he said, "If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest be baptized." Believest what? He had just preached to him Jesus, and the eunuch's answer, shows the object of his faith: "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."

We need not continue these quotations; what have been cited are sufficient to show the importance of faith, and what is one of its prime objects. Now the question arises, and one of some consequence: what must we believe? Must we believe that Jesus Christ is the second person in the adorable Trinity? That he is the Creator of heaven and earth? Or that he is very and eternal God? Must we believe that he was sent of the Father to purchase the divine favor, and ward off the uplifted sword of his vengeance, that flashed over a guilty world? Must we believe with the Confession of Faith, that it was requisite that Christ should be God, that he might be sustained under the infinite wrath of God? that he suffered to satisfy divine justice, and received the punishment on his own innocent person that was due to transgressors? Must we believe with Calvin, that Christ actually descended into hell, and endured the torments of a soul damned to eternal fire?—Must we believe that our sins were imputed to him, and his righteousness is imputed to us? Are these, or is any one of these, what is meant by having faith in Christ, or what we are to understand by the faith of the Gospel? Is this the faith for which we are to strive together; which we are to encourage and promote among men; which is to work by love and purify the heart; which is to sustain us in sorrow, comfort us in tribulation, and give us the victory over death and the grave? We do not believe it is. The Scriptures as truly and as uniformly represent the oneness of Christ, his distinct and personal unity, as they do that of God. He is not a person of threefold being, but a person or being of himself—he was as truly one as one of you or myself is one.

We have objected to the doctrine of the Trinity, because it makes the Deity to consist of three intelligent beings; it also makes Christ to consist of two beings. When we produce the saying of Christ, "my Father is greater than I"—ah! that means we are told, his human nature! When we say God could not hunger, and suffer, and die,

we are told he had two natures—the human and the divinity; the one was weak, subject to death and pain as we are, the other was Almighty; the one was ignorant, and the other omniscient; the one was a man, and the other was a God. Then he was two beings, as much as man is one and God is one. We regard such a view as this not only repugnant to the plain dictates of common sense, but as unscriptural, and a corruption and deformity of Christianity. According to this hypothesis, Christ had two distinct, separate natures. One did not sympathize with the other—it had no congeniality or fellowship with it. One was a God, and therefore could not hunger nor thirst, nor suffer, nor die; the other was a man, and did all of these. There was the will of man, the mind of man, and the will and mind of God mysteriously combined in him. This seems to us a tax too great to lay on mortal credulity.

When our Lord asked Peter the question, "Whom say ye that I am?" and Simon Peter answered and said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," Jesus approved the reply, and gave him to understand that his faith was right; but in these days of theological light, it is rank heresy to believe that Christ is simply the Son of God; we must believe that he is God himself.

We have no intimation given in the sacred Scriptures, by the disciples and apostles who heard the gracious words of our Saviour, that some things which he said proceeded from the divine nature, and others from the human. Nor do we ever find him saying, this I speak as a man, that as a God; this I perform as a human being, and that I do as a divine being; this is the result of my human will, and that of my divine will. No, Christ was one being, one person, one mind, and as distinct and identical as Moses or Paul.

When our Saviour directed his disciples to pray to the Father, did he intend to have them pray to himself? When he told them that God had clothed the field, and provided for the birds of heaven, and caused his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sent his rain on the just and the unjust, did he mean to be understood that it was he himself, Christ, that did these? We are certain he did not. How then was Jesus Christ verily the eternal God? By a careful examination of the passages which define the identity and distinct personality of God and Christ, we find that they plainly represent him as another being besides the Father, as subordinate to the Father, as being sent, and anointed, and delegated, and empowered by the Father, and of himself able to do nothing. The Scriptures, especially the New Testament, abounds with such language. Who could have thought from this language that Christ was the Eternal God? That instead of being the Son, he was also the Father, instead of being the one sent, he was the very being who sent the Mediator; instead of being the dependent, suppliant and confiding Son, who prayed to the Almighty, he was himself that Almighty Creator and Jehovah!

I know that it will be said there are passages which ascribe to Christ creative power, omniscience, eternity, and other attributes of the Deity. We have not time, nor is it necessary to cite them and examine them, but this we may remark, they are comparatively very few in proportion to those that plainly define the supremacy of the Father and the inferiority of the Son; and we only ask our opposing brethren to put these passages to the same test that they do other passages whose literal and unqualified sense would involve an absurdity, or a contradiction. For example, we are commanded to eat the flesh and drink the blood of Christ. Our Trinitarian brethren can explain this so as to have it afford no evidence of the strange dogma of transubstantiation; and when it is said "The Lord revengeth," and is angry, and jealous, and that he has hands, and eyes, and feet, and wings and feathers; when it is said, "We must hate father and mother," &c., they can explain all such passages so as to accord with reason, and the general tenor of Scripture. The same rule of interpretation would bring the strongest texts employed by Trinitarians, in perfect harmony and keeping with the unity of God and of Christ; with the truth of the Scripture, "My Father is greater than I, my Father is greater than all." "One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." "To us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him."

N. Y. Christian Messenger.

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