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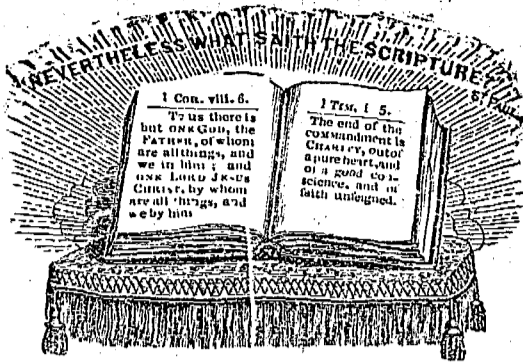
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THE BIBLE



CHRISTIAN

TRUTH, HOLINESS,

LIBERTY, LOVE.

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No. 1.

CHRIST THE FOUNDATION OF THE BELIEVER'S HOPE.

BY REV. HENRY WARE.

We may say once more, Christ is the only foundation of the believer's hope. It is from him and his gospel, that we learn those truths concerning the mercy and placability of God, which gave hope of pardon on repentance, and of acceptance in our imperfect attempts to please him;—from him alone, also, that we derive sufficient assurance of a future life, and an existence of eternal purity and peace. Upon these points the understanding might speculate, and sometimes plausibly conjecture; but what could it ever know? What did it ever know in the uninstructed lands of heathenism? The whole history of the world teaches us, that on these points, so interesting to man's heart, so essential to man's happiness, there has been nothing but superstition and dim conjecture, except where the gospel has been revealed. It is the message of Jesus Christ, which has taught the grace of Almighty God; which has proclaimed his long suffering and compassion; which has encouraged sinners to repent and return by invitations of forgiving love; which has declared the kind allowance of our Father for unavoidable imperfection, and thus given courage to human weakness. It is this only, which proclaims to a world lying in wickedness, that "God hath not appointed it to wrath, but to obtain salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ;" and "hath sent his Son into the world not to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved." Man—doubting, frail, tempted, fearful—hears the voice of love, and looks up in the humble assurance of faith. No longer an alien, but a son, he seizes the outstretched hand of his blessed Lord, and goes on his way rejoicing.

There is another hope which he finds on the same rock—the hope of coming immortality. Once he was in bondage through the fear of death. But now, his Saviour hath abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light. The bitterness of death is past. There is light within the tomb. There is a visible region of glory beyond it. And the child of earth, who once shuddered and was wretched in the dread of everlasting extinction, is now able to smile upon the dreary pathway to the grave, and triumph over the terrors of corruption.

What an inestimable privilege is this! With his open bible, before him, and the image of his gracious Saviour in his mind, how does the conscience-stricken penitent rejoice amid his tears, in the hope of offered pardon! How does the humble and self-distrusting believer, who stands trembling and abashed in the presence of infinite purity—find comfort in the encouraging accents of Christ's soothing voice, and the hope of acceptance at the throne of grace. How does the dying offspring of the dust—to whom existence, and friendship, and virtue are dear—rejoice with holy gratitude in the hope, that his existence shall be renewed, and his desires satisfied, in heaven. Thanks be to God for this unspeakable gift—this glorious hope, which, in every season of trial and every stormy strait of sorrow and fear, is "an anchor to the soul, sure and steadfast."

It is not necessary to go further than this. We perceive that the foundation of the Christian church, and of all true religion in the world; and of individual faith, knowledge, virtue, and hope, is laid in Jesus Christ. All our religious light, security, and peace rest upon this rock. Other we have none, and can have none. Let us have this, and where shall we go? who will teach us the words of eternal life? who instruct us in the things which pertain to our everlasting peace? who guide us to the Father of love; and open to us the gate of heaven? Every other guide is uncertain; every other path is dark. Men have followed them; and gone astray; have walked in them and stumbled; have sought rest in them, and found none. There is none other commissioned from heaven, but the Son of the Virgin. "There is no name given among men whereby we can be saved, but that of Jesus Christ."

TRUE GLORY.

There is another and a higher company, who thought little of praise or power, but whose lives shine before men with those good works which truly glorify their authors. There is Milton, poor and blind, but "bating not a jot of heart or hope,"—in an age of ignorance, the friend of education,—in an age of servility and vice, the pure and uncontaminated friend of freedom,—tuning his harp to those magnificent melodies which angels might stoop to hear,—confessing his supreme duties to Humanity in words of simplicity and power. "I am long since persuaded," was his declaration, "that to say or do ought worth memory and imitation, no purpose or respect should sooner move us than love of God and mankind. There is Vincent de St. Paul, of France, once in captivity at Algiers. Obtaining his freedom by a happy escape, this fugitive slave devoted himself with divine success to labors of Christian benevolence, to the establishment of hospitals, to visiting those who were in prison, to the spread of amity and peace. Unknown, he repaired to the galleys at Marseilles, and, touched by the story of a poor convict, personally assumed his heavy chains, that he might be excused to visit his wife and children. And when France was bleeding with war, he appeared in a different scene. Presenting himself to her powerful minister, the Cardinal Richelieu, on his knees he said,—"Give us peace; have pity upon us; give peace to France." There is Howard, the benefactor of those on whom the world has placed its brand, whose charity—like that of the Frenchman, inspired by the single desire of doing good—penetrated the gloom of the dungeon, as with angelic presence. "A person of more ability," he says, with sweet simplicity, "with my knowledge of facts, would have written better, but the object of my ambition was not the Fame of an author. Hearing the cry of the miserable, I devoted my time to their relief." And, lastly, there is Clarkson, who, while yet a pupil of the University, commenced those life-long labors against slavery and the slave-trade, which have embalmed his memory. Writing an essay on the subject as a college exercise, his soul warmed with the task, and, at a period when even the horrors of the middle passage had not excited condemnation, he entered the lists, the stripling champion of the Right. He has left a record of the moment when his duty seemed to flash upon him. He was on horseback, on his way from Cambridge to London. "Coming in sight of Wade's Mill, in Hertfordshire," he says, "I sat down disconsolate on the turf by the road-side, and held my horse. Here a thought came over my mind, that, if the contents of my Essay were true, it was time some person should see these colonies to their end." Pure and noble impulse to a beautiful career!

Such are some of the exemplars of True Glory. Without rank, office, or the sword, they accomplished immortal good. While on earth, they labored for their fellow men; and now, sleeping in death,—by their example and their works,—they continue the same sacred office. To all, in whatever sphere or condition of life, they teach the same commanding lessons of magnanimous duty. From the heights of their virtue, they call upon us to cast out the lust of power, of office, of wealth, of praise, of a fleeting popular favor, which "a breath can make, as a breath has made,"—to subdue the constant, ever-present suggestions of self, in disregard of those neighbors, near or remote, whose happiness should never be absent from our mind,—to check the madness of party, which so often, for the sake of success, renounces the very objects of success,—and, finally, to introduce into our lives those lofty sentiments of Conscience and Charity which animated them to such godlike labors. Nor should these be mere holiday virtues, to be marshalled only on great occasions. They must become a part of us, and of our existence,—ever present, in season and out of season, in all the amenities of life,—in those daily offices of conduct and manner which add so much to its charm, as also in those grander duties, whose performance evinces an ennobling self sacrifice. The first are as the flowers, whose odor is pleasant, though fleeting—the latter are like the precious ointment from the box of alabaster poured upon the head of the Lord.

To the supremacy of these principles let us all consecrate our best purposes and strength. In so doing, let us reverse the very poles of the worship of past ages. Men have thus far bowed down before stocks, stones, insects, crocodiles, golden calves,—graven images, often of cunning workmanship, wrought with Phidian skill, of ivory, of ebony, of marble,—but all false gods. Let them worship in future the true God, our Father as he is heaven, and in the beneficent labors of his children, on earth. Then farewell to the Syren song of a worldly ambition! Farewell to the vain desire of mere literary success or oratorical display! Farewell to the dismal, blood-red phantom of martial renown! Fame and Glory may then continue, as in times past, the reflection of public opinion; but of an opinion, sure and steadfast, without change or fickleness, enlightened by those two suns of Christian truth, love to God and love to man. From the serene illumination of these duties, all the forms of selfishness shall retreat, like evil spirits at the dawn of day. Then shall the happiness of the poor and lowly, and the education of the ignorant have uncounted friends. The cause of those who are in prison shall find fresh voices,—the majesty of Peace other vindicators,—the sufferings of the slave new and gushing floods of sympathy. Then, at last, shall the Brotherhood of Mankind stand confessed,—ever filling the souls of all with a more generous life,—ever prompting to deeds of Beneficence,—conquering the Heathen prejudices of country, color, and race,—guiding the judgment of the historian,—animating the verse of the poet and the eloquence of the orator,—ennobling human thought and conduct, and inspiring those good works by which alone we may attain to the heights of True Glory. Good Works! Such even now is the Heavenly Ladder on which angels are ascending and descending, while weary Humanity, on pillows of stone, slumbers heavily at its feet.—*Sumner's "Fame and Glory."*

DR. FRANKLIN ON INFIDELITY.

The following letter of Dr. Franklin, found in his works, edited by his grandson, William Temple Franklin, (London edition, vol. 3, p. 279,) addressed to the author of an infidel publication, submitted to him in manuscript, (probably Paine,) claims the attention of every member of the community.

DEAR SIR,—I have read your manuscript with some attention. By the argument it contains against a particular Providence, though you allow a general Providence, you can strike at the foundations of all religion. For, without the belief of a Providence, that takes cognizance of, guards, and guides, and may favor particular persons, there is no motive to worship a Deity, to fear its displeasure, or to pray for its protection. I will not enter into any discussion of your principles, though you seem to desire it. At present I shall only give you my opinion; and though your reasonings are subtle, and may prevail with some readers, you will not succeed so as to change the general sentiments of mankind on that subject; and the consequence of printing this piece will be, a great deal of odium drawn upon yourself, mischief to you, and no benefit to others. He that spits against the wind, spits in his own face. But were you to succeed, do you imagine any good will be done by it? You yourself may find it easy to lead a virtuous life without the assistance afforded by religion; you having a clear perception of the advantages of virtue and the disadvantages of vice, and possessing a strength of resolution sufficient to enable you to resist common temptations. But think how great a portion of mankind consists of ignorant men and women, and of inexperienced, inconsiderate youth of both sexes, who have need of the motives of religion to restrain them from vice, support their virtue, and retain them in the practice of it till it becomes habitual, which is the great point of its security. And perhaps you are indebted to her originally, that is, to your religious education, for the habits of virtue upon which you now justly value yourself. You might easily display your excellent talents of reasoning upon a less hazardous subject, and thereby obtain a rank with our most distinguished authors. For among us it is not ne-

cessary, as among the Hottentots, that a youth, to be raised into the company of men, should prove his manhood by beating his mother. I would advise you, therefore, not to attempt unchaining the tiger, but to burn this piece before it is seen by any other person, whereby you will save yourself a great deal of mortification from the enemies it may raise against you, and perhaps a good deal of regret and repentance.

If men are so wicked with religion, what would they be without it? I intend this letter itself as a proof of my friendship, and therefore add no professions to it, but subscribe simply.

Yours, B. FRANKLIN.

A GOOD HEARER.

We hear much said about good preachers, but the text above named is worthy of a discourse.

1. A good hearer will come to the sanctuary to hear. He is hungry and thirsty, and wants living bread and drink. Other people come there for divers other purposes than that of hearing; but that is his errand. Therefore he will have ears to hear.

2. And he will come promptly. He is interested, and in earnest, and he feels that he has something to do with the Alpha as well as the Omega of divine service; and he cannot interrupt other people's hearing by a late arrival. You will find the good hearer in his place in good time.

3. And he must hear with much prayer. He did not forget that before he left home, but warmed up his heart into a fit state to receive the Word ere the hour of public worship arrived; and he kept on keeping his heart warm, by frequently lifting it up to the throne of grace. "These frequent looks of the heart to heaven," says Leighton, "exceedingly sweeten and sanctify our other employments, and diffuse somewhat of heaven through all our actions." So the good hearer thinks, and his own practice eminently sanctifies the employment of hearing the Word, and makes it profitable.

4. The good hearer hears for himself. There are a plenty of people, who turn all the arrows of divine truth to the souls of other people, and apply the discourse, most carefully and faithfully, to the cases of those about them. But the good hearer ventures to suppose that the being addressed by the speaker is himself, and acts accordingly.

5. The good hearer is a doer of what he hears. Some go on swimmingly with most other matters about hearing, till they come to this; but here they fetch up. Hearing is one thing, and a pretty easy and comfortable thing. But doing is another thing, and quite often, a very uncomfortable affair. People are not very fond of putting them together. But the good hearer will not suffer them to be separated.

Besides all the good they do to themselves, good hearers accomplish another most important object; they make good preachers. How it sets a speaker on fire to see hearers wide awake; all eyes and ears are drinking in his words, as if life hung upon them. The sight kindles him wonderfully. The warm blood shoots rapidly along his veins. There is a powerful stimulus to increased energy and zeal. He preaches a hundred fold better for having those good hearers.

I have heard of "preachers preaching people to sleep;" but I have seen hearers hearing preachers to sleep. They heard so stupidly, languidly, sleepily, that they put all the fire out there was in the speaker's heart. Their indifference disheartened him. How could he preach zealously and fervently when those who had not gone already to sleep were nodding around him, or on the verge of it, in all directions!

"But it is his business to keep us awake by his zeal and energy." But so it is your business to keep him awake by your felt and manifested intense interest in his preaching.—Such attention would rouse, comfort and animate him. Why not give it to him? If you wish him to be a good preacher, be a good hearer. It will do more toward that object than all the other things together which you can do. Try it.—N. E. Puritan.

THE RELATION OF THE INFLUENTIAL CLASSES OF SOCIETY TO THE TEMPERANCE REFORM.

It is the duty of the influential classes to give their countenance and aid to the temperance cause. They owe the performance of this duty to themselves. For no man, be he of high or low estate, can practice or encourage drinking, however moderately, without being in danger of becoming a drunkard. We have heretofore spoken chiefly of their influence upon others; but it is too fearfully evident that they themselves are not exempt from the curse they so strongly assist in perpetuating. Unto them is there no special privilege granted that they may indulge in temptation and in no manner be injured thereby. On the contrary, experience assures us that, in very many instances, the high and the influential have sipped too often the social bowl, and sunk to utter degradation. And why should not this be the case? Have not they the same appetites as their fellow beings? are not their opportunities of indulgence far better? does not the same rule of cause and effect govern all men? They also must find poison and death in the wine-cup; and life, from intemperance, must be alike to them a scene of ruined health, wasted talents, degradation, perhaps insanity. In sorrowful silence their fall is concealed by their friends, but if the whole truth were known, the picture of woe would embrace a member of almost every family. Many a son has caused the agony of a father, who was too well convinced that he alone was to blame. For, from the infancy of the boy, he was accustomed to consider wine-drinking as a necessary accomplishment; upon going forth into society, the intoxicating cup was given him with the sanction—almost recommendation, of his parent. From a natural and implanted prejudice, from a constant leaning upon and looking up to his father, the son's mind imperceptibly takes the tinge of his opinions and feelings, and may be moulded by him in almost any manner; too soon, then, does he obey this virtual command to go forth and be a drunkard—too soon he needs no teacher in this point of etiquette, and scorns the efforts of those who would win him from his infatuation. And hence arises this most solemn duty of giving to their children, the representatives of themselves, far different passports into life—of allowing the light of reform to have access to their hearts, ere they become wholly hardened and incorrigible.

The influential classes owe the performance of this duty to society. For, in the first place, they have no right to injure their fellow citizens by a persistence in this custom. It would be useless at this time to go into an argument upon the benefits resulting from our social connections, or upon the abstract question as to how much of his natural rights were given up by the individual, in order to secure such benefits. Sufficient to state the truism that upon his entry into society, or continuance in it, every individual virtually contracts, in consideration of the protection given to his person and property, to abstain from injuring the body politic, and to give it his support. Such duties are not and cannot all be laid down in the statute-book; yet, though less specific, they are as fully implied and equally binding as positive laws. However much men may neglect such an obligation, it ever exists, though it cannot be legally enforced. Part and parcel of it is the demand of the temperance reform to cease from further injury—to be no longer an obstacle to this scheme for the elevation of society. That her demand is founded upon truth, no one who has looked into the history of temperance movements can fail to perceive. Every one will remember with what a full tide of enthusiastic success the Washingtonian principles spread through this country. But upon a large majority of those called the influential classes, these principles did not act; coldly and unsympathizingly they held themselves aloof from any participation. Now, in such an effort as this, nothing causes so much discouragement as the withdrawal of the countenance of any portion of the community. The temperance movement is essentially one of mutual encouragement and assistance; and, like religion, requires for its promotion the temporary forgetfulness of all social ranks and divisions. At such a time, when the strong electric current of sympathy and endeavour is broken by the secession of any class, the warmth and zeal of effort is checked, and coldness and apathy ensue. The erring ones, however softened by contrition and ready to forsake the enslaving custom, when they see the number who hang back, and look with cold indifference and scorn upon the cause, are discouraged from continuing their efforts for reform. The more hardened, who from very shame might have yielded, are encouraged by this secession to persist in their evil courses. Particularly is this the case when this disconnecting class is prominent; for the more respectable a man is in other respects, the more frequently is his name cited and his example noticed. Thus, perhaps, without intending it, the influential moderate drinker, not only refuses his own name, but prevents many others from the performance of right.

Again, the influential moderate drinkers constantly keep alive in society a custom which but for them, would in a great measure cease, and die like many other kindred habits of darker times; for we cannot believe that there is sufficient fascination in the drinking of the drugged and dirty concoctions of the bar-room and groggery, to offer much temptation to the inexperienced youth. With principles not fully developed, and a will not firmly established, he comes forth and mingles in the crowd. At first view, such scenes of dissipation, accompanied as they usually are by vulgar exhibitions of the most repulsive qualities of humanity, shock the natural feelings, and do not greatly charm the mind. But in a far more potent manner the temptation presents itself. He could easily withstand the merely animal appetite, but the custom of society is quoted to him; he looks into the world of literature, and finds drinking recommended as the very source of good-fellowship, and the first glass is wreathed for him with the smiles of the fair, or the almost equally powerful gushings forth of friendship and sociality. Initiated into the vile habit, step by step he descends the scale, until he becomes a constant visitant of the haunts he once abhorred, and he falls a victim to the example of the influential classes. This is no uncommon case; it is thus the list of the drunkards is kept full, and hence we say that no one has a right to injure society by his evil example or influence.

A second clause in the social engagement we have adverted to, is the obligation to support this movement and give it aid and influence, because thus men are doing their part in aid of society. And the greater the benefits arising from society, the greater are the consequent obligations. Wealth, fashion, talent, religion, owe their development (almost their existence) to this social protection; and hence their more powerful duties. True, the man of wealth has obtained it by his own skill and fortune; the man of talent owes his success to his own mind; the fashionable world became so from circumstances, perhaps, of its own creating. But be it remembered that in a disorganized and anarchical state of association, no opportunity for such acquisitions would be offered. Amid the confusions of bad government, such sources of influence yield to the overshadowing power of brute strength, or military tact. Unto society, then, are men under an obligation which they can only discharge by reciprocal endeavours. And if they would long enjoy these privileges, they must come forward and assist in this temperance reform. For it is only by the suppression of this great social evil, this disorganizing element which enters into the popular head and arouses riots and mobs, that any security can be given to the body politic. The riots and excitements attendant upon our elections, and jeopardizing the purity of the ballot-box, are mainly owing to intemperance. Men are not naturally fond of confusion and tumult, and require a stimulus before their usual good will for each other can be conquered. And it behoves the influential classes to look about them, and prevent the too powerful working of these influences of disorganization. Fair as everything at present seems, and much as we may praise our country, it requires the protection of every good principle to insure its future and permanent security. In the prosecution of this experiment of self-government, in the example she affords to the world, America calls upon every citizen to lend his aid in removing from her this fearful element of destruction. For ours is a government vested in the people, directly dependent upon popular opinion, and it requires that this opinion be cool and healthy, if we would have this delicate affair of government well administered. Hence we say to all men of influence, if ye would transmit your privileges securely to your children, you must not refuse to aid and assist society in this reform.

The performance of this duty we owe to our God. Thus alone can men fulfil the main objects of their creation, and well perform their part in the great scheme of Omnipotence. This scheme is of a two-fold nature, involving, firstly, the progressive advance of human nature; and, secondly, the preparation for a future and higher state of being. To do his assigned part in each, is the privilege and duty of every man. From the creation up to the present time, step by step, sometimes checked by the opposing forces of superstition and ignorance, at times buried beneath a cloud of formalisms and priestcraft, or sunk in the sluggish slough of apathy, painfully and gradually, human civilization has ever moved slowly onward. Thus must it ever be, but it is in the power of each generation to accelerate or retard its course. Upon every age and nation, and upon every individual member of a nation, is devolved the duty of helping on the car of progress. They especially who wield the largest influence are called upon for the greatest aid. The Scriptural motto, "unto whom much is given, from him much shall be required," is, in its deepest sense, appropriate to this subject. And in no better way can it be fulfilled than by assisting a scheme which clears the head, gladdens the heart, and warms the feelings of humanity, thus opening the universal mind for the reception and proper appreciation of new and advanced

truths. With all our fancied superiority over antiquity, very much of improvement is yet needed, very much of human agony might yet be spared. Unto us the Past comes with its vast experiences and instructions, and the Future demands the improvement of them. Though no command from Heaven may be stamped upon tablets of stone, yet the reasonableness and truth of this obligation to help on every good word and work, is evident to every true soul, and consciousness attests the authority. Many of ancient prejudices and ignorances have vanished before the light of civilization, still we are bound down to a habit as pernicious as the worst of them. In our inability to imitate the Past, even in this vice, we guzzle noxious mixtures, and call them the wines of inspiration. Away with all talk about progress, until intemperance shall flee an age to which she does not lawfully belong! Let other ages point to their achievements in arts or in arms: be it the crowning glory of this century, that it purged from earth this universal poison! This is just the work for our age, a most practical and at the same time sublime work, worthy its highest efforts and noblest endeavors. And nobly can this work be accomplished, if the influential classes will but recognize their obligations and perform them—will but hearken to the voices of the Past, the Present, and the Future, calling on them to lead on in the progressive march of humanity.

And immediately connected with this part of our duty to God, is that of preparation for a higher state of being. Were this earth the theatre of our whole existence, were death the end of our being, even then it would devolve upon all to aid and assist in every true means for the attainment of present happiness to the community. Even then, we should struggle to oust an evil, through which, sin, agony, and death are largely increased, and which is the cause of so many tears. But when the truth is that this earth is the mere preparation for an eternity, how do present considerations merge themselves in this great responsibility—how do earthly influences seem only intended to produce these results. The brief journey of three score years and ten would seem far too short to allow man to fulfil the obligations due to his God, by assisting his fellow-men in their efforts, by encouraging their endeavours, by correcting their failings, in a word, by assisting and being assisted in the preparation for heaven. But such is not yet the state of society. Poor human nature has never yet arrived at such a stage of advance. But thank God, men have in this temperance reform, an opportunity to assist each other in a great degree in this preparation. By engaging in this great work, by cheering this purifier of society, by the power of a good example, much, very much, may even now be accomplished. Thus may the men of influence fulfil, in part, their obligations to their God, and lend their aid to the grand scheme of creative providence.—G. F. Noyes.

"BE A BUILDER."

(From Rev. J. T. Clarke's Charge at the Ordination of Rev. T. W. Higginson.)

I charge you again, my brother, to be a builder. You might make more noise, and acquire more notoriety, by pulling down, but you will do the most good by building up. He who criticises does but half the work; he who announces the truth does the whole. While he states the truth he also removes error. Dwell, then, in position rather than negation, for positive truth is the food of the soul. It is sometimes necessary, I know, to weed before we plant, but wherever you pull out a weed, plant a flower in its place. The pioneer with his axe is doubtless wanted, but how much more the husbandman who shall plough and sow the ground, newly opened to the light of heaven! The one is but a means, while the other is the end—the one is but the preparation for the other. Consider, then, logic as little better than a necessary evil, but the manifestation of truth the great blessing.

Strive to build up an individual religious life in all these souls, a social religious life in this whole community. To change a body of church-goers into church-members, to change hearers into doers, to cause those who now come together and sit side by side, in these pews, to come into a real communion of sympathy and co-operation, to lead them to work together in works of benevolence and charity, to seek the truth in company, helping each other into greater breadth and depth of religious insight, to inspire them with the spirit of a true Christian brotherhood—would it not be well for you to work here ten, twenty, thirty years, to accomplish such a result as this?—to build up a model-church here, not a clergy-church, but a people-church, a church of active and not nominal Christians, not professors only of religion, but practisers also? One who looks on human accomplishments, not as men, but as God and the angels' look upon them, might well be satisfied with this result of life, be his ambition ever so exalted.

OBJECTIONS TO FAMILY WORSHIP ANSWERED.

It would be more honest for people frankly to own that they have no heart for it, and that this is the real cause of their neglecting it, and not any valid objections they have against it; but since they will torture their invention to discover some pleas to excuse themselves, we must answer them.

First objection.—"I have no time, and my secular business would suffer by family religion."

Were you formed for this world only, there would be some force in the objection; but how strange does such an objection sound from the heir of eternity! What is your time given to you for? Is it not principally that you may prepare for eternity? And have you no time for the great business of your life? Why do you not plead, too, that you have no time for your daily meals? Is food more necessary for your body than religion for your soul? May you not redeem sufficient time for family worship from idle conversation, or even from your sleep? May you not order your family worship so that your domestics may attend upon it, either before they go to work or when they come to their meals?

Second objection.—"I have not ability to pray."

Did you ever hear a beggar, however ignorant, make this objection? A sense of his necessities is an unfailing fountain of his eloquence. Further, how strange does this objection sound from you! What! have you enjoyed preaching, Bibles, and good books so long, and yet do not know what to ask of God? Again, is neglecting prayer the way to qualify you to perform it?

Third objection.—"I am ashamed."

But is this shame well grounded? Are sinners ashamed to serve their Master? A little practice will easily free you from all this difficulty.

Fourth objection.—"But, alas, I know not how to begin it."

Here, indeed, the difficulty lies; but why will you not own that you were hitherto mistaken, and that you would rather reform than persist obstinately in the omission of an evident duty?

Fifth objection.—"But my family will not join in them."

How do you know? Have you tried? Are you not master of your own family? Exert that authority in this which you claim in other cases.

Sixth objection.—"But I shall be ridiculed and laughed at."

Are you more afraid of a laugh or a jeer than the displeasure of God? Would you rather please men than Him? Therefore, let God have an altar in your dwelling, and then let morning and evening prayers and praises be presented, till ye are called to worship Him in His temple above, when your prayers and praises shall be swallowed up in everlasting praise.—Samuel Davies.

THE CLIMAX OF BENEVOLENCE; OR, THE GOLDEN LADDER OF CHARITY.

(From Matmonides, after the Talmud.)

There are eight degrees or steps, says Matmonides, in the duty of charity.

The first and lowest degree is to give,—but with reluctance or regret. This is the gift of the hand, but not of the heart.

The second is, to give cheerfully, but not proportionately to the distress of the sufferer.

The third is, to give cheerfully and proportionately, but not until we are solicited.

The fourth is, to give cheerfully, proportionably, and even unsolicited; but to put it in the poor man's hand—thereby exciting in him the painful emotion of shame.

The fifth is, to give charity in such a way that the distressed may receive the bounty, and know their benefactor, without their being known to him. Such was the conduct of some of our ancestors, who used to tie up money in the hind-corners of their cloaks, so that the poor might take it unperceived.

The sixth, which rises still higher, is to know the objects of our bounty, but remain unknown to them. Such was the conduct of those of our ancestors who used to convey their charitable gifts into poor people's dwellings; taking care that their own persons and names should remain unknown.

The seventh is still more meritorious, namely, to bestow charity in such a way that the benefactor may not know the relieved objects, nor they the name of their benefactors; as was done by our charitable forefathers during the existence of the Temple. For there was in that holy building a place called the Chamber of Silence and Unostentation, wherein the good deposited secretly whatever their generous hearts suggested, and from which the most respectable poor families were maintained with equal secrecy.

Lastly, the eighth and most meritorious of all, is to anticipate charity, by preventing poverty; namely, to assist the reduced brother, either by a considerable gift, or a loan of

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money, or by teaching him a trade, or by putting him in the way of business, so that he may earn an honest livelihood; and not be forced to the dreadful alternative of holding up his hand for charity. And to this scripture alludes, when it says, 'And if thy brother be waxen poor and fallen in decay with thee, then thou shalt support him; yea, though he be a stranger and a sojourner; that he may live with thee.'—Levit. xxv. 35. This is the highest step, and the summit of Charity's Golden Ladder.

The Bible Christian.

MONTREAL, JANUARY, 1848.

PUBLIC OPINION IN MONTREAL.

In the recently contested election for this city, one of the four gentlemen who presented themselves as candidates, was a member of the Unitarian denomination. This was Mr. Benj. Holmes. His fellow candidate on the Reform interest was Mr. LaFontaine, a lawyer and politician of some note in the Province, and connected with the Roman Catholic Church.

We notice the religious opinions of these gentlemen because the attempt was made by certain parties to influence the minds of some of the electors by sectarian considerations. One individual—a member, as we have been informed, of the Wesleyan body, and a relative of one of the Conservative candidates—was so inconsiderate as to stigmatize Mr. Holmes by the opprobrious name of Infidel, and to make an appeal to one of the Baptist Clergymen of the city, and ask him how he could, as a Christian Minister, support the pretensions of such a man. The Rev. Dr. Davies, the clergyman thus addressed, resisted the blind and ill-judged appeal, and expressed his opinion of the impropriety of dragging religious opinion in such a manner into the arena of political strife. He also, with a degree of candour and independence which does him credit, informed Mr. Holmes of the improper influence thus attempted to be exercised against him. When public reference was made to the transaction, an apology was drawn from the party who originally used the improper and offensive expression. This apology appears in the public prints in the form of a letter to Dr. Davies. The writer expresses his regret at having used such language; and he should, therefore, as we think, be freely forgiven.

We notice the circumstance as an indication of the state of public opinion in this community. There is, we know, much vulgar bigotry and narrow sectarianism around us; but it is equally evident that there is also a sound vein of public opinion with regard to religious rights, to which it gives us pleasure to make reference. We call public opinion sound in this matter when every individual, be his religious convictions what they may, is generously protected in his exercise of them from any insult, opprobrium, misrepresentation, or violation of social or civil privileges. We only repeat a truism when we say that a man's religious opinions should be left between himself and his Creator. It is obviously an affair in which each individual has the strongest personal interest at stake. No man can have any conceivable motive for remaining in dangerous error. Every motive should lead him to avoid it. It can only be the blindest and the most unreflecting bigotry, therefore, which can lead one man to abuse and vilify another on account of religious opinion. In the late contest we do not believe that the bulk of Mr. Holmes' opponents sympathized at all with such feelings and expressions. Certainly no portion of the press which we have seen has done so. To whatever extent vulgar sectarian influence was exercised, it was rather in a covert and underhand way. Even in the case now before the public, the writer of the apology to Dr. Davies, referring to that gentleman's honest and straightforward course, in communicating with Mr. Holmes, alludes to it as an "unhandsome use" which he made of his expressions; thus intimating clearly that he considered his very improper appeal and very objectionable language should have been kept, and permitted to work

their results, entirely "under the rose." Now we are of those who profess at least to admire uniformity and consistency in the character of a Christian. And in the imperfection of our Christian faith we consider that a man should neither do nor say any thing in private which he would be ashamed of in public. We certainly think that to apply opprobrious epithets concerning a man in his absence, which would cause shame or fear to the speaker when made known in his presence, is not exactly characteristic of a Christian. Our confessed heterodoxy, however, may have betrayed us into error in this respect, and we may be wrong in our conception of the Christian ideal.

We have no intention—not the slightest—of entering on a defence of Mr. Holmes's Christianity against the attacks of any ill-informed or inconsiderate persons who may exhibit their weakness and rashness by charging him with infidelity. He can afford to overlook such attacks, and so can we, and all Unitarians.—We have too much personal respect for Mr. Holmes to make any public remarks on his personal religion. For the sake of our friends at a distance, however, who may read this column and feel some interest in the matter, we may state that the gentleman who was thus charged gives a constant respect to the services and ordinances of Christian worship: That he is a Unitarian—a believer in one God in one Person: That he claims the name of Christian as a believer in Jesus Christ as the Son of God. How far he would lay claim to the character of Christian we could not undertake to assert. In this respect he would probably say what we should say if the question were proposed concerning ourselves—that we felt that we came far short of the pure and exalted ideal of Christian perfection.

Having been led in this way to make reference to the late election for this city, we may as well put on record our satisfaction at the successful return of Messrs. LaFontaine and Holmes. And if we are asked why? we shall state the reason very briefly. To us the long vexed University question possesses great interest. During the past year we saw that magnificent endowment for the education of the people of Canada placed in jeopardy. A scheme was openly promulgated, and extensively supported by the interested parties, to parcel it out to four influential sects, and in this way defraud all others. So daring an act of injustice and public plunder has rarely been attempted. In Messrs. Holmes and LaFontaine we see the conservators of this great public property, men who will do their utmost to have it faithfully applied to its original purpose—the education of the people of Canada, entirely irrespective of sectarian partialities and considerations. And here we add our hope that the Reform party will lose no time in bringing this most important question to a crisis. We do trust that they will not leave it in the power of any future politicians to offer a glittering bait of £1500 a-year to any body of ambitious or grasping religionists. Besides ruining all present prospect of a great national university, it would tend materially to unsettle the religious equality at present existing in Canada. And to do this, as every reasonable man knows, would be to inflict a lasting injury on the country.

PEWS IN THE UNITARIAN CHURCH.

From some expressions which we have heard, we find that an impression is abroad that it is difficult to obtain pews or sittings in the Unitarian Church. On enquiry, we find that this is not the case; and we think it of some importance that the mistake should be rectified. When the church was opened, about two years and a half since, the committee of management resolved not to let any pews on the gallery until the lower part of the building was fully occupied. At present, we believe that all the pews below are rented, either wholly or in part. For persons requiring a limited number of sittings, there is ample accommodation; and for those who should require entire pews, satisfactory arrangements could be immediately made.—We believe we only state the simple truth

when we say that the most generous feeling prevails among those who now hold pews. In many cases there are holders of pews whose families are not sufficiently large to occupy them fully; and several of these, we know, have placed their extra room at the disposal of the committee. Indeed, we have heard more than one of these parties declare that they did not consider their annual payment of pew rent in the light of an absolute purchase, for the time being, of so many square feet of the floor's surface, but rather simply as a contribution to the support of the Gospel as presented by liberal Christianity, and that they should be gratified to see other and kindred worshippers occupying their spare pew-room. This is a proper feeling, and we may add, the only proper feeling. For our own part, we could never very clearly see the use of doors on pews at all; certain it is they should never be fast bolted, or closed against a stranger; and as for having them locked, as in some churches, we regard it as entirely out of harmony with the spirit of Christianity. In the house of Christian worship, if any where, the largest hospitality should be exercised. Not even the appearance or shadow of exclusiveness should be seen there. Humility, generosity, and love, are the cardinal Christian graces; and if we are to look for their manifestation any where, we should certainly find it in the House of God, and among the congregation of His worshippers.

For the greater convenience of those who may require pews or sittings in the Montreal Unitarian Church, we are instructed to say that a plan of the pews may be seen at the office of Mr. Benjamin Workman, Druggist, St. Paul street, corner of Custom House Square, to whom application may, at any time, be made.

LECTURES IN THE UNITARIAN CHURCH.—

The course of lectures on topics connected with social and moral reform, as already announced and noticed in this paper, is still in progress of delivery, in the Unitarian Church of this city. On the Sunday evening immediately subsequent to the issue of this sheet, a discourse will be delivered on *Intemperance*. Service at the usual hour—Seven o'clock.—Seats free.

From the subjoined advertisement, which we take from the current secular papers, it will appear that some useful improvements are contemplated in the external appearance of the Montreal Unitarian Church:—

TENDERS will be received by the undersigned, until NOON of SATURDAY, the FIFTH of FEBRUARY, for the ERECTION and COMPLETION of a

PARSONAGE HOUSE,
to be built adjoining the UNITARIAN CHURCH.

—ALSO—
For ENCLOSING the CHURCH with a Wall with Cut Stone Coping, Cut Stone Piers, and Ornamental Iron Railing, with Gates to the same.

Plans and Specifications of the above may be seen on and after MONDAY, the 17th instant, at the Offices of

GOODLATTE R. BROWNE,
WILLIAM KINGSFORD,
Architects and Surveyors.
1, ST. LAWRENCE HILL, }
January 14, 1847. } 536

CORRESPONDENCE.

We have received a communication from New Glasgow, containing the following remarks on the meaning of the terms "immortal" and "immortality," as they are used in the scriptures. A letter accompanied them, in which the writer requested their insertion in the *Bible Christian*; and, as from its tenor we are led to believe that he is a serious student of the sacred volume, we will willingly make room for them. On the remarks themselves, we offer no opinion. In his letter he tells us he became a subscriber to the *Bible Christian* because he saw that it advocated the simple Unity of God. On one expression contained in his letter, we feel bound to offer an observation. He says that if refused a place for his remarks, he will not take our paper any more. From this it is evident that he quite misapprehends the na-

ture of the relation which subsists between us. It is only justice to himself, therefore, to inform him that we do not consider ourselves under any peculiar obligation by his taking the paper. The *Bible Christian* is sustained at some expense, and with some exertion, by a few friends of liberal Christianity, who are highly gratified in being able to furnish the believers in the simple Unity of God, scattered over this Province, with a periodical sheet giving expression to their views. Our subscription list, we are happy to say, is gradually increasing throughout the country; but we should hope that none of our subscribers would suppose for a moment that the threat of withdrawing his trifling annual subscription could influence us in any degree in the insertion of matter in our columns.

"IMMORTAL"—"IMMORTALITY."

Some speak as if all men were immortal; but I do not consider this a proper form of expression. Let us "hold fast the form of sound words." The word "immortal" is nowhere used in the Bible to denote merely eternal existence. Immortality implies, in addition to that, an existence in glory. Those who will never enter there, have no right to that term. It should never be applied to the wicked; and, therefore, we should never speak of the immortal soul, as such, because not all souls will ever attain to it: it is merely the portion of the righteous. The term immortal is used but once in the Bible, and is applied to God—"Unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God" (1 Tim. i. 17). The word "immortality" is applied four times:—1. It is applied to Christ—"Our Lord Jesus Christ, who only hath immortality" (1 Tim. vi. 14, 16). 2. It is mentioned as a blessing, for which we are to seek—"Seek for glory, and honor, and immortality" (Rom. ii. 7). 3. It is presented as something offered in the Gospel—"Hath brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel" (2 Tim. i. 10). 4. It is applied to the change which the saints will undergo at the sounding of the last trumpet—"This mortal must put on immortality" (1 Chro. xv. 53, 54). These are these only passages in which the term "immortal" or "immortality" occurs, and therefore the above are the only senses in which it is used. The sum of the whole is, the term is applied to God, to Christ, and to the Saints, when made like him at his coming, but never in the sense in which it obtains in the doctrinal creeds of the present day. The heirs of the Kingdom of Heaven are of two classes—the dead saints, and the mortal saints; and the Gospel discovers "life" for the former, and "immortality" for the latter, which they will actually receive at the appearing and Kingdom of Jesus Christ.

J. M.

BOOKS FOR SALE,

AT

C. 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.

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.

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. Board, D.D., of Manchester, England.

HOW THE SCRIPTURES ARE REGARDED BY UNITARIANS.
BY DR. CHANNING.

I. We regard the Scriptures as the records of God's successive revelations to mankind, and particularly of the last and most perfect revelation of his will by Jesus Christ. Whatever doctrines seem to us to be clearly taught in the Scriptures, we receive without reserve or exception. We do not, however, attach equal importance to all the books in this collection. Our religion, we believe, lies chiefly in the New Testament. The dispensation of Moses, compared with that of Jesus, we consider as adapted to the childhood of the human race, a preparation for a nobler system, and chiefly useful now as serving to confirm and illustrate the Christian Scriptures. Jesus Christ is the only master of Christians, and whatever he taught, either during his personal ministry, or by his inspired Apostles, we regard as of divine authority, and profess to make the rules of our lives.

This authority, which we give to the Scriptures, is a reason, we conceive, for studying them with peculiar care, and for inquiring anxiously into the principles of interpretation, by which their true meaning may be ascertained. The principles adopted by the class of Christians in whose name I speak, need to be explained, because they are often misunderstood. We are particularly accused of making an unwarrantable use of reason in the interpretation of Scripture. We are said to exalt reason above revelation, to prefer our own wisdom to God's. Loose and undefined charges of this kind are circulated so freely, that we think it due to ourselves, and to the cause of truth, to express our views with some particularity.

Our leading principle in interpreting Scripture is this, that the Bible is a book written for men, in the language of men, and that its meaning is to be sought in the same manner as that of other books. We believe that God, when he speaks to the human race, conforms, if we may so say, to the established rules of speaking and writing. How else would the Scriptures avail us more, than if communicated in an unknown tongue?

Now, all books, and all conversation, require in the reader or hearer the constant exercise of reason; for their true import is only to be obtained by continual comparison and inference. Human language, you well know, admits various interpretations; and every word and every sentence must be modified and explained according to the subject which is discussed, according to the purposes, feelings, circumstances, and principles of the writer, and according to the genius and idioms of the language which he uses. These are acknowledged principles in the interpretation of human writings; and a man, whose words we should explain without reference to these principles, would reproach us justly with a criminal want of candor, and an intention of obscuring or distorting his meaning.

Were the Bible written in a language and style of its own, did it consist of words, which admit but a single sense, and of sentences wholly detached from each other, there would be no place for the principles now laid down. We could not reason about it, as about other writings. But such a book would be of little worth; and perhaps, of all books, the Scriptures correspond least to this description. The Word of God bears the stamp of the same hand, which we see in his works. It has infinite connexions and dependences. Every proposition is linked with others, and is to be compared with others; that its full and precise import may be understood. Nothing stands alone. The New Testament is built on the Old. The Christian dispensation is a continuation of the Jewish, the completion of a vast scheme of providence, requiring great extent of view in the reader. Still more, the Bible treats of subjects on which we receive ideas from other sources besides itself; such subjects as the nature, passions, relations, and duties of man; and it expects us to restrain and modify its language by the known truths which observation and experience furnish on these topics.

We profess not to know a book which demands more frequent exercise of reason than the Bible. In addition to the remarks now made on its infinite connexions, we may observe that its style nowhere affects the precision of science, or the accuracy of definition. Its language is singularly glowing, bold, and figurative, demanding more frequent departures from the literal sense, than that of our own age and country, and consequently demanding more continued exercise of judgment. We find, too, that the different portions of this book, instead of being confined to general truths, refer perpetually to the times when they were written, to state of society, to modes of thinking, to controversies in the church, to feelings and usages which have passed away, and without the knowledge of which we are constantly in danger of extending to all times, and places, what was of temporary and local application. We find, too, that some of these books are strongly marked by the genius and character of their respective writers, that the Holy Spirit did not so guide the Apostles as to suspend the peculiarities or their minds, and that a knowledge of their feelings, and of the

influences under which they are placed, is one of the preparations for understanding their writings. With these views of the Bible, we feel it our bounden duty to exercise our reason upon it perpetually, to compare, to infer, to look beyond the letter to the spirit, to seek in the nature of the subject, and the aim of the writer, his true meaning; and, in general, to make use of what is known, for explaining what is difficult, and for discovering new truths.

Need I descend to particulars, to prove that the Scriptures demand the exercise of reason? Take, for example, the style in which they generally speak of God, and how habitually they apply to him human passions and organs. Recollect the declaration of Christ, that he came not to send peace, but a sword; that unless we eat his flesh, and drink his blood, we have no life in us; that we must hate father and mother, and pluck out the right eye; and a vast number of passages equally bold and unlimited. Recollect the unqualified manner in which it is said of Christians, that they possess all things, know all things, and can do all things. Recollect the verbal contradiction between Paul and James, and the apparent clashing of some parts of Paul's writings with the general doctrines and end of Christianity. I might extend the enumeration indefinitely; and who does not see, that we must limit all these passages by the known attributes of God, of Jesus Christ, and of human nature, and by the circumstances under which they were written, so as to give the language a quite different import from what it would require, had it been applied to different beings, or used in different connexions.

Enough has been said to show in what sense we make use of reason in interpreting Scripture. From a variety of possible interpretations, we select that which accords with the nature of the subject and the state of the writer, with the connexion of the passage, with the general strain of Scripture, with the known character and will of God, and with the obvious and acknowledged laws of nature. In other words, we believe that God never contradicts, in one part of the Scripture, what he teaches in another; and never contradicts, in revelation, what he teaches in his works and providence. And we therefore distrust every interpretation, which, after deliberate attention, seems repugnant to any established truth. We reason about the Bible precisely as civilians do about the constitution under which we live; who, you know, are accustomed to limit our provision of that venerable instrument by others, and to fix the precise import of its parts, by inquiring into its general spirit, into the intentions of its authors, and into the prevalent feelings, impressions, and circumstances of the time when it was framed. Without these principles of interpretation, we frankly acknowledge, that we cannot defend the divine authority of the Scriptures. Deny us this latitude, and we must abandon this book to its enemies.

We do not announce these principles as original, or peculiar to ourselves. All Christians occasionally adopt them, not excepting those who most vehemently decry them, when they happen to menace some favorite article of their creed. All Christians are compelled to use them in their controversies with infidels. All sects employ them in their warfare with one another. All willingly avail themselves of reason, when it can be pressed into the service of their own party, and only complain of it, when its weapons wound themselves. None reason more frequently than those from whom we differ. It is astonishing what a fabric they rear from a few slight hints about the fall of our first parents; and how ingeniously they extract, from detached passages, mysterious doctrines about the divine nature. We do not blame them for reasoning so abundantly, but for violating the fundamental rules of reasoning, for sacrificing the plain to the obscure, and the general strain of Scripture to a scanty number of insulated texts.

We object strongly to the contemptuous manner in which human reason is often spoken of by our adversaries, because it leads, we believe, to universal skepticism. It reason be so dreadfully darkened by the fall, that its most decisive judgments on religion are unworthy of trust, then Christianity, and even natural theology, must be abandoned; for the existence and veracity of God, and the divine original of Christianity, are conclusions of reason, and must stand or fall with it. If revelation be at war with this faculty, it subverts itself, for the great question of its truth is left by God to be decided at the bar of reason. It is worthy of remark, how nearly the bigot and the skeptic approach. Both would annihilate our confidence in our faculties, and both throw doubt and confusion over every truth. We honour revelation too highly to make it the antagonist of reason, or to believe that it calls us to renounce our highest powers.

We indeed grant, that the use of reason in religion is accompanied with danger. But we ask any honest man to look back on the history of the church, and say, whether the renunciation of it be not still more dangerous. Besides, it is a plain fact, that men reason as erroneously on all subjects, as on religion. Who does not know the wild and groundless theories which have been framed in physical and political science? But who ever supposed that

we must cease to exercise reason on nature and society, because men have erred for ages in explaining them? We grant that the passions continually, and sometimes fatally, disturb the rational faculty in its inquiries into revelation. The ambitious contrive to find doctrines in the Bible, which favour their love of dominion. The timid and dejected discover there a gloomy system, and the mystical and fanatical, a visionary theology. The vicious can find examples or assertions on which to build the hope of a late repentance, or of acceptance on easy terms. The falsely refined contrive to light on doctrines which have not been soiled by vulgar handling. But the passions do not distract the reason in religious, any more than in other inquiries, which excite strong and general interest; and this faculty, of consequence, is not to be renounced in religion, unless we are prepared to discard it universally. The true inference from the almost endless errors, which have darkened theology, is, not that we are to neglect and disparage our powers, but to exert them more patiently, circumspectly, and uprightly. The worst errors, after all, having sprung up in that church, which proscribes reason, and demands from its members implicit faith. The most pernicious doctrines have been the growth of the darkest times, when the general credulity encouraged bad men and enthusiasts to broach their dreams and inventions, and to stifle the faint remonstrances of reason, by the menaces of everlasting perdition. Say what we may, God has given a rational nature, and will call us to account for it. We may let it sleep, but we do so at our peril. Revelation is addressed to us as rational beings. We may wish, in our sloth, that God had given us a system, demanding no labour of comparing, limiting, and inferring. But such a system would be at variance with the whole character of our present existence; and it is the part of wisdom to take revelation as it is given to us, and to interpret it by the help of the faculties, which it everywhere supplies, and on which it is founded.

To the views now given, an objection is commonly urged from the character of God. We are told, that God being infinitely wiser than men, his discoveries will surpass human reason. In a revelation from such a teacher, we ought to expect propositions, which we cannot reconcile with one another, and which may seem to contradict established truths; and it becomes us not to question or explain them away, but to believe, and adore, and to submit our weak and carnal reason to the Divine Word. To this objection, we have two short answers. We say, first, that it is impossible that a teacher of infinite wisdom should expose those, whom he would teach, to infinite error. But if once we admit that propositions, which in their literal sense appear plainly repugnant to one another, or to any known truth, are still to be literally understood and received, what possible limit can we set to the belief of contradictions? What shelter have we from the wildest fanaticism, which can always quote passages, that, in their literal and obvious sense, give support to its extravagances? How can the Protestant escape from transubstantiation, a doctrine most clearly taught us, if the admission of reason, now contended for, be a duty? How can we even hold fast the truth of revelation, for if one apparent contradiction may be true, so may another, and the proposition, that Christianity is false, though involving inconsistency, may still be a truth?

II. Having thus stated the principles according to which we interpret Scripture, I now proceed to the second great head of this discourse, which is, to state some of the views which we derive from that sacred book, particularly those which distinguish us from other Christians.

1. In the first place, we believe in the doctrine of God's unity, or that there is one God, and one only. To this truth we give infinite importance, and we feel ourselves bound to take heed, lest any man spoil us of it by vain philosophy. The proposition, that there is one God, seems to us exceedingly plain. We understand by it, that there is one being, one mind, one person, one intelligent agent, and one only, to whom undivided and infinite perfection and dominion belong. We conceive that these words could have conveyed no other meaning to the simple and uncultivated people, who were set apart to be the depositaries of this great truth, and who were utterly incapable of understanding those hair-breadth distinctions between being and person, which the sagacity of later ages has discovered. We find no intimation that this language was to be taken in an unusual sense, or that God's unity was a quite different thing from the oneness of other intelligent beings.

We object to the doctrine of the Trinity, that, whilst acknowledging in words, it subverts in effect, the unity of God. According to this doctrine, there are three infinite and equal persons, possessing supreme divinity, called the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Each of these persons, as described by theologians, has his own particular consciousness, will, and perception. They love each other, converse with each other, and delight in each other's society. They perform different parts in man's redemption, each having his appropriate office, and neither doing the work of the other. The

Father sends the Son, and is not himself sent; nor is he conscious, like the Son, of taking flesh. Here, then, we have three intelligent agents, possessed of different consciousnesses, different wills, and different perceptions, performing different acts; and sustaining different relations; and if these things do not imply and constitute three minds or beings, we are utterly at a loss to know how three minds or beings are to be formed. It is difference of properties, and acts, and consciousness, which leads us to the belief of different intelligent beings, and, if this mark fails us, our whole knowledge fails; and we have no proof, that all the agents and persons in the universe are, not one and the same mind. When we attempt to conceive of three Gods, we can do nothing more than represent to ourselves three agents; distinguished from each other by similar marks and peculiarities to those which separate the persons of the Trinity; and when common Christians hear these persons spoken of as conversing with each other, loving each other, and performing different acts, how can they help regarding them as different beings, different minds?

We do, then, with all earnestness, though without reproaching our brethren, protest against the irrational and unscriptural doctrine of the Trinity. "To us," as to the Apostle and the primitive Christians, "there is one God, even the Father." With Jesus, we worship the Father, as the only living and true God. We are astonished, that any man can read the New Testament, and avoid the conviction, that the Father alone is God. We hear our Saviour continually appropriating this character to the Father. We find the Father continually distinguished from Jesus by this title. "God sent his Son." "God anointed Jesus." Now, how singular and inexplicable is this phraseology, which fills the New Testament, if this title belong equally to Jesus, and if a principal object of this book is to reveal to him as God, as partaking equally with the Father in supreme divinity! We challenge our opponents to adduce one passage in the New Testament, where the word of God means three persons, where it is not limited to one person, and where, unless turned from its usual sense by the connexion, it does not mean the Father. Can stronger proof be given, that the doctrine of three persons in the Godhead is not a fundamental doctrine of Christianity?

This doctrine, were it true, must, from its difficulty, singularity, and importance, have been laid down with great clearness, guarded with great care, and stated with all possible precision. But where does this statement appear? From the many passages which treat of God, we ask for one, one only, in which we are told, that he is a threelfold being, or that he is three persons, or that he is Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. On the contrary, in the New Testament, where, at least, we might expect many express assertions of this nature, God is declared to be one, without the least attempt to prevent the accession of the words in their common sense; and he is always spoken of and addressed in the singular number, that is, in language which was universally understood to intend a single person, and to which no other idea could have been attached, without an express admonition. So entirely do the Scriptures abstain from stating the Trinity, that when our opponents would insert it into their creeds and doxologies, they are compelled to leave the Bible, and to invent forms of words altogether unsanctioned by Scriptural phraseology. That a doctrine so strange, so liable to misapprehension, 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.

We have another difficulty. Christianity, it must be remembered, was planted and grew up amidst sharp-sighted enemies, who overlooked no objectionable part of the system, and who must have fastened with great earnestness on a doctrine involving such apparent contradictions as the Trinity. We cannot conceive an opinion, against which the Jews, who prided themselves on an adherence to God's unity, would have raised an equal clamor. Now, how happens it, that in the apostolic writings, which relate so much to objections against Christianity, and in the controversies which grew out of this religion, not one word is said, implying that objections were brought against the Gospel from the doctrine of the Trinity, not one word is uttered in its defence and explanation, not a word to rescue it from reproach and mistake? This argument has almost the force of demonstration. We are persuaded, that had three divine persons been announced by the first preachers of Christianity, all equal, and all infinite, one of whom was the very Jesus who had lately died on a cross, this peculiarity of Christianity would have almost absorbed every other, and the great labor of the Apostles would have been to repel the continual assaults, which it would have awakened. But the fact is, that not a whisper of objection to Christianity, on that account, reaches our ears from the apostolic age. In the Epistles we see not a trace of controversy called forth by the Trinity.