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Free Religious Association.

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PROCEEDINGS

AT THE

First Annual Meeting

OF THE

FREE RELIGIOUS ASSOCIATION,

HELD IN BOSTON,

MAY 28th and 29th, 1868.

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# REPORT.

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The First Annual Meeting of the Free Religious Association was held in the city of Boston, on the 28th and 29th of May, 1868.

The meeting began with a session for business in the Parker Fraternity Hall, on Thursday, the 28th, at 3 P. M. The assembly was called to order by the President, O. B. Frothingham, who made a few remarks on the arrangements made for the meeting, and the objects of the present session.

John T. Sargent moved the appointment of a Committee of three persons to nominate officers for the ensuing year. The motion was adopted; and John T. Sargent, Francis Tiffany, and Mrs. Martha Goddard were appointed a Nominating Committee.

On motion of Richard P. Hallowell it was voted that a Committee on Finance be appointed to make collections for the Association at the meeting in Tremont Temple to-morrow; and R. P. Hallowell, J. J. Locke, Frank Stearns, and James E. Nowell were appointed for that service.

The Nominating Committee reported the following list of officers, which was voted on by ballot, and unanimously elected.

## OFFICERS.

*President*,—OCTAVIUS B. FROTHINGHAM, New York City.

*Vice Presidents*,—ROBERT DALE OWEN, New Harmony, Ind. ; THOMAS W. HIGGINSON, Newport, R. I. ; CAROLINE M. SEVERANCE, West Newton, Mass.

*Secretary*,—WILLIAM J. POTTER, New Bedford, Mass.

*Assistant Secretary*,—ROWLAND CONNOR, Boston, Mass.

*Treasurer*,—RICHARD P. HALLOWELL, 98 Federal Street, Boston, Mass.

*Directors*,—ISAAC M. WISE, Cincinnati, Ohio ; CHARLES K. WHIPPLE, Boston, Mass. ; FRANK B. SANBORN, Springfield, Mass. ; HANNAH E. STEVENSON, Boston, Mass. ; EDNAH D. CHENEY, Jamaica Plain, Mass. ; and FRANCIS E. ABBOT, Dover, N. H.

Voted, that the Committee on Nominations be continued, with authority to report a list of officers at the annual meeting next year.

The Secretary of the Association, W. J. Potter, read the Report of the Executive Committee, as follows :

FIRST ANNUAL REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE  
FREE RELIGIOUS ASSOCIATION.

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THE Executive Committee of the Free Religious Association, in presenting their first Annual Report, have little to recount in the way of visible practical work, either accomplished or projected. Nor was it to be expected that from an organization so novel in its idea and purpose, so large and inclusive in its scope, and so designedly free and spontaneous in its plan, any very definite and tangible results should be manifest in a single year. It were better even that the Association should appear to have done nothing, than that anything should have been done through a natural impatience to produce some immediate and visible effect, that would have tended to narrow its basis and injure its capacity for a larger and grander work in the future.

And, as one who from the outset was especially interested in the formation of this new Association, the Secretary may here be allowed to put on record the statement, that, so far as he is aware, there was on the part of no one of those having the like interest any desire or thought of forcing into a compact organization, and into a strict community of purpose and action, the various representative religious elements to which they made their appeal for a public meeting; much less did they presume to control, through any formal, mechanical contrivance, the progressive religious spirit of the age, and think to turn it into some special channel. On the contrary, the first premise of all their thinking and acting was, that this spirit must be left perfectly free and untrammelled in order to work out its proper results; and their sole aim was to form some simple plan of association which should represent and give expression to this perfect religious freedom; not prematurely to hasten, nor artificially to shape any natural religious movements that are in progress, but to provide an organism — itself a natural result of these movements — for religious elements that are spontaneously attracted more or less strongly to each other, and that are already prepared for some kind of combination and fellowship, — an organism that should enable these elements the better to define and express themselves in public sentiment in their united force, and at the same time leave the largest liberty to individual opinion and utterance. There was such entire trust to this general and spontaneous spirit of unity, and such entire freedom from any desire to have an organization that should specially represent the peculiar opinions of any clique or faction of religious believers, that of the Executive

Committee, chosen at the convention in Horticultural Hall last May, only a small minority had been present at any of the preliminary meetings for consultation, or knew precisely what was in the minds of those who had most desired organization. The Committee were selected from those who were supposed to have a general and entirely unsectarian interest in religious enlightenment, liberty, and progress, and who would be willing to stand on the broad platform of the Association, which did not stop with the limits of the "Christian" religion. They were, to a considerable extent, personally unacquainted with each other; and before their first official meeting no one of them probably knew definitely what was the opinion of any other concerning the nature and method of the work which had been intrusted to their joint hands.

It seemed necessary to make this statement both to show how unforced and unplanned a movement this organization was, and to explain why no very extensive visible results were to be expected of it in the first year of its existence.

Yet, though your Committee are not able to report any great scheme of work completed or undertaken, they have not been idle; nor have they been unmindful of the important responsibility of the trust committed to them. Though having no head-quarters, no regular place or time of meeting, they have had, during the year, ten sessions; and though the residences of the members are much scattered (the thirteen living in five different States), at seven of these sessions a majority of them have been present. It was evident on their first coming together that the only thing they could do at once was to compare opinions as to what they were appointed to do, — to consult together on the specific objects and means of the Association, and to reach on both these points the best possible judgment they were capable of making before taking any definite action. And to this end the Committee have bestowed individually and collectively much thought and labor. They have sought carefully to survey the field of work before hastily entering it with any newly-contrived machinery. The problem has been, What are the religious wants and aims which this Association has come into existence to supply, and what the best method of supplying them? And though the Committee may not be able to give, at this time, a full and satisfactory solution of this problem, they may yet claim to have done something towards a future solution. They have been thoughtful observers of public religious events and tendencies, and quite an extensive correspondence has been begun, which must every year increase, with persons interested in the general objects of the Association in all sections of the United States, and also to some extent with persons in England and in India.

And this last remark indicates what has been a main part of the practical work of the Association during this first year. Through this in-

strumentality of private correspondence, enough has already been learned to justify, to the mind of your Secretary at least, the opinion of those who held that an Association like this was needed. And through the same instrumentality something very real has been done, though not visible to the public eye nor measurable by any common scale of practicality, towards forwarding one of the chief objects of the Association, — that of fraternal communion and fellowship. Persons widely separated in space, and previously wholly unknown to each other, have thus been brought into friendly acquaintance to find themselves of one spiritual brotherhood. And much has been learned in this way of religious tendencies and movements in American society. Last autumn your Secretary, having become much interested in the accounts of the native religious and moral reform in India, which is known as Brahmoism, and which without embracing Christianity, attempts to convert the religion of India into pure Theism, determined to write, on behalf of the Free Religious Association, to one of the chief present leaders of that movement, Keshub Chunder Sen, of Calcutta. His letter was most cordially and even enthusiastically, received by that eminent man, — was regarded as a right hand of fellowship, and its fraternal grasp most affectionately returned. A response recently came from him, which, for breadth and quickness of intelligence, for purity of religious aspiration and aim, for moral sincerity and courage, and for warmth and heartiness of human brotherly love, can have seldom had its equal in the record of Christian epistles. If this Association shall do nothing more than to have called forth such a letter from the world popularly called heathen, and regarded as morally and spiritually lost unless converted to Christianity, it will have done a good service for human brotherhood. Your Secretary's letter, without any expectation on his part, was published in some of the native religious journals of the Theistic sect, which fact brought another reply, mainly a letter of inquiry, from a native citizen, a member of a Theistic society in Bombay; so that we are now in communication with both the east and the west sides of native India. We have also a valuable letter from our American brother, Moncure D. Conway, for several years a resident in England, concerning religious tendencies and movements in that country, which will be read probably at some period of the meeting, and printed among the Proceedings.

The Committee, at their first session, voted to print a pamphlet report of the Proceedings of the Convention in Horticultural Hall, at which the Free Religious Association was organized. They had no funds to do this with, the voluntary collection taken at the door of Horticultural Hall at the close of the meeting there, not having been sufficient to defray the expenses of that meeting. Such a printed report, however, seemed the most direct way for acquainting the public with the existence

and objects of the Association ; and the Committee of Arrangements for the Convention had provided the materials for it in securing phonographic reports of the addresses in the long session. These were accordingly published together with the Constitution of the Association, the Committee trusting mainly to donations to pay the cost. An edition of twenty-five hundred copies was printed, of which about fifteen hundred have been distributed gratuitously, three hundred sold, and seven hundred remain on hand. The copies remaining will be presented to those who may want them at this meeting.

At the session of the Committee in September, the Secretary was directed to make inquiries with regard to the feasibility of providing a course of free religious lectures in Cambridge, to be repeated, if found desirable, in part or wholly, in some other places. This duty the Secretary attended to, and was prepared to report favorably on the proposition at the meeting of the Committee in October. But only a small minority of the Committee was present at that meeting, and no action could be taken. It was necessary, however, if the lectures were to be given in Cambridge, and the course completed within the limits of the college term (which was desirable), that the arrangements should be made for them at once. The Secretary took, therefore, the entire responsibility in the matter, and provided for a course of ten lectures by persons representing progressive and rationalistic views in religion. He did this in his private rather than official capacity ; and the Association became in no way responsible for the lectures. The course was free to the public, — the expense being met by private donations. The audiences, though not large, were interested and attentive, and the main object — that of opening such a course of lectures to the students of theology in Cambridge — was successfully reached. Some of the lectures, with the addition of other speakers, were afterwards given in Boston, though by no action of this Association.

In November, the Committee directed the Secretary to prepare a brief circular letter, expressing their desire to publish essays and discourses for popular distribution, in furtherance of the objects of the Association as expressed in its constitution, and making an appeal for funds for this purpose. The immediate object of this vote was to meet a want in religious publication which none of the existing religious organizations seemed to meet. The Committee desired to provide (in tract form, or otherwise) a series of essays which should consider religious questions from a purely rational, scientific, unsectarian, and undogmatic point of view, though in a thoroughly reverent spirit. This circular was prepared — a small edition of five hundred copies only being printed — and sent to persons supposed to be interested in the object it aimed to set forth. Considering the narrow circulation of this appeal, and that it went mainly among those not



largely endowed with material riches, a good response to it was made. A part of the funds thus received were used for printing the "Report" of the meeting in Horticultural Hall last year, a part have been used for printing discourses in tract form, which are now ready for distribution, and a balance remains on hand for future use.

A Sub-committee has also been appointed by the Executive Committee to consider the feasibility of procuring the publication of a volume of essays (somewhat after the manner of the English "Essays and Reviews") which should represent the progressive and advanced religious thought in this country. This Committee found a publisher who, on easy conditions, would undertake the issue of such a volume. But a sufficient number of essays of the right character could not be obtained for the publication of the book this spring. The project, however, is not abandoned, and with perhaps some modification may be carried into execution before another annual meeting. It might be well for this meeting to take some action in the matter, — perhaps by appointing a Committee who should publicly solicit essays, bearing on a certain stated theme, from any persons willing to embrace such an opportunity for setting forth their views, — the same Committee, or another, to be the judge of the fitness for the proposed volume of the essays offered.

And this, with the addition of providing for the Convention in Tremont Temple to-morrow, completes the record of the doings of your Executive Committee for this year. The work may be regarded as merely tentative, and in no wise, either in what has been accomplished or projected, as fixing a standard for future action. The Committee are, indeed, convinced that what has been actually done in this first year bears no measurable proportion to what the Free Religious Association is capable of doing. And since we have so little of *achievement* to record, it may be well in this first report to speak somewhat of *capabilities*; and thereby we bring up the question of both the objects and the methods of the Association.

The *objects* of the Association are succinctly stated in the first Article of the Constitution. We are organized, according to that Article, "to promote the interests of pure religion, to encourage the scientific study of theology, and to increase fellowship in the spirit." But we fail to perceive the full bearing of this language, unless we note that this statement of purpose is introduced by the title of the Association, which is "Free Religious," and is followed by an invitation to "*all persons* interested in these objects" to become members. The basis of the Association, therefore, is broader than anything before attempted in the way of organization in religious history. It goes below any one specific form of religion, and seeks to find the common ground on which all religions, or more properly religion itself, rests, and plants itself there. It contem-

plates the ultimate union, not simply of all sects in Christendom, but of all religions, Christian and non-Christian, in one. It looks beyond "Christian" limits for its fellowship. Nor is this aim, even thus early, only ideal. As the meetings last year and this both testify, it is in a measure already realized. And this fact, with what it involves, is the most distinguishing feature of the Association. "With what it involves;" for the important thing is not so much the fact that the Association brings different sects and religions together on one platform, as the principle underlying that fact. This principle is, that in this Association these various religious opinions and faiths meet and mingle *on perfectly equal terms*, no one claiming for itself what it does not cordially accord, by courtesy and by right, to every other. For the first time in religious history, not only representatives of differing Christian sects, but people of all religious names and of no religious name, are invited to come together as equal brothers, and confer with one another on the highest interests of mankind. Most of us here are probably, by reason of birth and education, counted in the census of the world's population as "Christian," whether we make any other claim to the name or not. But on the platform of this Association we do not obtrude that title. We agree here to listen to what our Hebrew friend may have to utter, or to what our India brother may write to us of their respective religious faiths, with the same candor and the same integrity and openness of judgment that we accord to a "Christian" speaker. A believer in the Christian system of religion may, if his conscience so dictate, use his right to speak on the platform of this Association with the purpose of proving the claims of his particular faith paramount to all others, and of converting non-believers to his views; but if he does so, that very act commits him to hear impartially the same claims made for any other faith. One who should come here simply to speak with dogmatic and sectarian arrogance for his own belief, and not cordially to listen to what might be said in behalf of another belief, would not come certainly in the spirit of the constitution of this Association.

Yet this is not to say that the Free Religious Association takes the ground that one form of religion or of faith is as true and good as another. It simply does not determine the claims of any specific form of faith, or assume the claims of any to be determined. It declines to consider it a closed question that the claims of any religion are to be regarded as finally established, and gives a fair, open field for the establishing of any religion, or of so much of any religion as can prove itself to be true. Christianity, thus far, has attempted to convert all other religions to itself. The Christian missionary goes to India and says to the natives there, "You must be converted to my faith, or there is no hope of your progress to anything better in this world, or of your happiness in

the world to come." This Association says to these native religious devotees, "Let us see what is true in your religion, and what is true in this and that other form of faith, and be ready to accept the true from any quarter: and, meantime, let us put our heads together and see if we cannot contrive some better and worthier ways of living." The Free Religious Association simply does not accept any instituted form of religion as necessarily a finality. It admits the possibility of advance in religious truth beyond any present religious system. It plants itself on *Truth-seeking*, and does not claim to have found a finality in religious faith and practice.

On this broad basis, with this declaration of equal religious liberty and rights, the Free Religious Association is organized; and it is evident that the specific objects of the Association, as stated in its constitution, must take direction and shape from these fundamental principles. The Association aims "to promote the interests of pure religion," without stamping those interests with any special name, or seeking to build up any sectarian form of faith and worship. It aims "to encourage the scientific study of theology," not fearing to trust reason and free inquiry on all fields of thought, not recalling them when they reach the limits of the "Christian," or any other special confession of faith, but striving to apply a more truly rational and scientific method of investigation to all problems of religious experience and history. It aims "to increase fellowship in the spirit,"—defining that fellowship as nothing narrower than the brotherhood of man, and making it rest on the aspirations and strivings of our common humanity after higher truth and life.

Now the *instrumentalities* which the Association might legitimately use for accomplishing these objects are not few nor small: though it is evident that in adjusting them much wisdom will be needed in order not to violate on either hand the principles on which the Association is organized. But certainly it should not be deemed impracticable for the Association to find any means to accomplish its objects, except the agency of an annual meeting like that to be held to-morrow. Such a meeting, bringing together for perfectly free speech and conference the representatives of various religious opinions and organizations, will doubtless do something towards effecting each of the objects which the Association has in view. It seems impossible that these persons, however variant in belief, should thus come together for a few hours on equal grounds, each honestly to utter his own conviction, and honestly to hear another's equally sincere conviction, and go away again without having for each other's position and faith more of toleration and respect, and without discovering that there may be other points and ties of religious fellowship than unity of creed. The practical influence of the Association need not, therefore, necessarily be small, even though its work

should be confined to providing, and printing the proceedings of, one meeting a year. But if one meeting can be held, and is so useful, why not more? And if a meeting can be held in Boston, why not in other places? This instrumentality of public meetings, like or similar to this annual convention, though perhaps in general with less of formality and arrangement, may certainly legitimately be multiplied.

But the public meeting as a means of reaching public opinion, especially in large cities, is becoming of less and less importance, as the modern agency of the printing-press develops its gigantic power. And it would be strange if an organization so modern in its conception, and so progressive in its aims, as the Free Religious Association should not avail itself of this peculiar instrumentality of the nineteenth century. On adopting this instrumentality, the question, it is true, would immediately arise, "What shall the Association print? Shall it publish without any attempt at discrimination or selection, a conglomerate of all the religious opinions and speculations that might be found both in and out of Christendom?" The *theoretical* answer to this question is ready at hand, being given in the principles just discussed, on which the Association is organized. The Association may legitimately print anything that comes within the aim and scope of those fundamental principles, — that seeks to promote the interests of pure religion, unadulterated with any sectarian or dogmatic purpose; that applies rational and scholarly methods to religious problems; and that endeavors to effect a religious fellowship, combined with the largest individual liberty, on the ground of common aspirations after truth and righteousness rather than of common theological opinions. Though the Association has no system of truth to promulgate as a finality, no *fixed set* of opinions to propagate, yet there are truths which it may publish, inquiries and meditations of deeply thoughtful and religious men which it may give to the world, results of scholarly investigation which it may be the medium of presenting to the people. The test in this matter of publication which the constitution establishes, is, in fine, not that a writing should harmonize with a certain standard of opinion, but that it should proceed from a reverent religious purpose, — a *religious and not a sectarian* purpose, — and that it should show ability and fairness of treatment. And it should not be impossible to find persons so thoroughly imbued with the spirit of these principles on which the Association is based, as to be able *practically* to answer the question, "What to print?" whenever it arises, without violating that spirit; to solve it so as to preserve the large liberty and free opportunity which the Association offers, and at the same time to protect it both from obsolete dogmatic speculations on the one hand, and crude, ill-digested speculations on the other.

But aside from questions of theological belief, on which there is most

dispute, and would be, therefore, the most difficulty in the adjustment of practical methods, there is much other matter which this Association might appropriately publish. The subject which is to be discussed in our Convention to-morrow evening — “The Relations of Religion to Philanthropy and Social Reform” — is a subject which needs in its various aspects to be presented directly to the people through the agency of the printing-press. And there is another vast field of thought and labor, as yet but little explored, — connected with that of philanthropy and social reform, yet hardly lying within it, contiguous also to the field occupied by the Social Science Association, yet involving more directly and individually than that the obligations and sanctities of religion, — concerning which this Association might properly endeavor both to get light and to give light. The field referred to is that of home and social life. What can be done to lift our homes off of the plane of mere material provision and physical drudgery, where so many of them now are, and to infuse into them a stronger element of intellectual and moral purpose? What can be done to elevate society above its present intellectual and moral barrenness, and make it fruitful in stimulus to mental effort and to higher achievements in character and life? The question may be extended to ask, What can be done to consecrate material enterprise and to purify trade, so that they shall be made to subserve the intellectual and spiritual destiny of man? If any one can say anything to help solve these questions, the First Religious Association can do no fitter work than scatter the answer broadcast, so that it may go into every home and every shop and counting-room in America. The Association might properly ask for careful reports on these subjects from persons competent to the task, the reports to be made a part of its public meetings, and afterwards printed. And it might, also, publicly solicit essays bearing on the solution of these questions, — *prize essays*, if funds for the purpose should be put into its hands.

The suggestion that the devising of methods for elevating the tone of home and social life is one of the legitimate works of this Association, gives hint of another of its possible practical agencies, which, for want of a better title, may here be called the *social instrumentality*. In every community and neighborhood where there are persons, few or many, who are interested in the principles and objects of this association, let such persons be encouraged to come together, in their parlors or in a hall, for free conference and consultation on all questions involved in these principles and objects. Especially could such groups do good service in forwarding the aim last mentioned, — that of improving the condition of domestic and social life. And these groups would naturally seek to put themselves into communication with the Executive Committee of this Association, as a central bureau for both collecting and imparting in-

formation. The Association might furnish them, so far as they should wish, with its published reports and essays, and they in turn would furnish it with the results of their own efforts and experience, which would become a valuable element in the preparation of other reports and documents. And so in the freest way, with the least possible machinery, and yet in perfect accord with scientific methods, these scattered social groups would become active centres of influence in sustaining and carrying forward the work of the Association.

Such is a summary of the agencies through which the Free Religious Association may appropriately attempt to accomplish its objects. Others may be developed in the progress of time, for its methods must be left as free as are its principles. But these — the public meeting, the printing-press, and the social instrumentality as above defined — seem to be in accord with present demands, and to grow naturally out of the principles on which the Association is based. It is not proposed to set up or to use any ecclesiastical machinery; for it is not the object of the Association to build up a new sect, nor will it compromise itself with any existing sect.

And as a special argument in favor of the immediate and zealous adoption of these measures for practical work, in addition to what has been said above on general principles — an argument which it would seem should have weight with all religious people of whatever name, — let it here be stated that there are vast numbers of people who will listen to moral and religious appeals coming from this free Association, but whose ears are closed against all appeals that come with the stamp of any specific religious name, whether “Christian” or other. Justly or unjustly, they have decided so firmly against the claims of the “Christian” system of religion that there is no breaking through that decision. Their reason and self-respect have been so offended by common methods and assumptions of the Christian Church, that they are suspicious of every approach that is made under the countersign of that name, and throw themselves at once into an attitude of resistance. Now must not every person who sincerely desires the moral and spiritual good of his fellows, admit, that for this class of people, at least, the claims of the name, even though capable of proof, may be held in abeyance, while an attempt is made to reach and develop in some way the natural spiritual instincts and aspirations? Many of these people are longing, not to say suffering, for the gospel of free truth and light and love. Many of them, through no help outside of their own souls, have found that gospel; and though no church owns them, and the popular creeds brand them as heretic and infidel, they feel themselves owned of God, and are full of trust and peace. But many are wandering, groping in the dark, feeling themselves alone, needing moral and intellectual help, and still more, needing brotherly sympathy and encouragement; while their energies, for the want of being

directed to some high moral purpose, are likely to run to waste and corruption in material and sordid pursuits. American society is suffering from this cause more than the religious community seems to be conscious of, — from this secret, deep-seated scepticism in respect to the instituted beliefs and forms of religion, and want of a fixed and earnest religious faith in the place of that which has gone. And some other appliances appear to be needed to reach the disease than those in use among the established sects, — appliances as free and elastic and progressive as is American society itself. The Free Religious Association, with its principles and objects, so large and spontaneous and democratic, should be able to do something to supply this need. Its foremost and constant aim should be to help develop a religion in America commensurate with America's boundless political and material opportunities, — a religion that should thoroughly penetrate and mold all civil institutions, consecrate and spiritualize material enterprise and wealth, and produce a faith in ideas, and a fidelity to moral conviction, and a practical love and charity, which, manifested in the daily life and character of millions of human beings, should outvie in grandeur the majesty and power of the continent itself.

Now whether the Association shall attempt much or little of this practical work, will depend on the amount of financial support which it shall receive. Something very useful may be done even with small means; but if the Association is to take the position and use the opportunities indicated in this report, then it will need a great increase of funds over what it has received, or was expected to receive, the past year. And since it has been intimated that there are persons of wealth who are interested in the general objects of the Association, and are ready to contribute to its funds, if some definite and practical measures, of which they can see the utility, can be proposed, it may be well to close this Report with a concise statement of certain things that need to be done and may be done as soon as the means are provided.

First, — rooms are needed in Boston for head-quarters of the Association. This need has been felt even with the small operations of the past year; and if the Association is going to increase its activities much, a place for head-quarters will be absolutely necessary. A Free Religious Reading-room — free in every sense, especially in being open on Sunday — might be advantageously connected with such place; and the rooms not only be open for the meetings of the Executive Committee of the Association, but furnish a convenient place for any persons interested in similar objects to meet and consult together.

Second, — a publication-fund is needed for the printing and distribution of such matter as the Association may appropriately circulate in furtherance of its aim.

Third, — a system of permanent lectures, on the basis of the principles

of this Association, might advantageously be established in Boston, open and free to all comers, but designed especially for the students of the various theological schools situated in Boston and vicinity. The lectures should be by the ablest men to be found for the purpose, and the arrangement of them might be somewhat after the manner of the Lowell Institute.

Fourth,—a weekly religious newspaper—religious in the broad significance of the word as defined by this Association—is greatly needed; a paper for the people, yet able and scholarly in its editorship, perfectly free, candid, reverent, and progressive. Such an enterprise, however, is not to be set on foot hastily. Its financial as well as intellectual basis should first be well assured.

So much for specific practical measures that may be undertaken in addition to the general work previously mentioned, if the requisite funds be furnished. Yet it is not desirable, perhaps, that all these and kindred enterprises should be concentrated in the one agency of this Association. Its principles, indeed, would rather oppose an extreme system of concentration, and favor individual enterprise. The Association does not care so much to have a paper under its control as its organ, as that a paper should be published by somebody as the organ of its ideas and objects; nor is it so desirous to have the direction of a free religious Institute, as that such an Institute be established. It need not shrink from an attempt to help inaugurate these enterprises, if its aid be asked. But it will be content if it can do anything to stimulate individual minds to such undertakings, and to provide a constituency in public opinion for their support. Indeed, whether the direct, practical agencies of this Association are many or few, it will not fail entirely of its objects, if it shall help mankind in any way to more faithful thinking, to higher aspiration, and to purer living.

Brothers and friends, we are banded together in a cause worthy not only to command our devotion but to enlist our enthusiasm. We are aiming at nothing less than the moral and spiritual brotherhood of humanity. The aim is sublime. We know full well that it is not to be reached at once,—that its full accomplishment is far distant. Yet none of us can now foresee what this Association, though it seem to-day so small and feeble a beginning, may become, and may achieve, if we and our successors shall remain true to its ideas. From this germ may grow that perfect fellowship of souls in which all mankind, of all nations and races, are to be cemented together under the divine sovereignty and power of one law and one faith and one aspiration. But no Association can effect any good save by individual consecration and effort. This association, certainly, having such an object, and capable of such a destiny, appeals for our highest personal fealty. It demands our truest thought, our purest purpose, our bravest act and sacrifice.



THE Report of the Executive Committee was accepted, and some discussion followed on the general subjects treated therein.

Francis E. Abbot moved that the report be printed with funds now in the Treasury, and circulated as a presentation of the principles and objects of this Association. The motion was amended, so as to refer the Report to the Executive Committee with a recommendation to print it in such way as by them shall be judged best, and thus passed. R. P. Hallowell, Treasurer of the Association, reported that the receipts of the Treasury the past year had been \$741.45; expenditures (for meeting in Horticultural Hall last year, for printing, and for correspondence), \$505.96; leaving a balance in the Treasury of \$235.49.

The account was accepted.

The Treasurer appended to his report the following statement:—

In connection with the report herewith presented, it may not be improper to state, that, when soliciting donations to our treasury, I am frequently met with the question, "What do you propose to *do*? What is the work you have in hand?" Men are willing and ready to give if we can convince them that their money will be profitably expended. What reply to this very pertinent question have we to make? What is our work? Our constitution indicates it by a general statement, too broad, however, to avail in the matter of contributions. If it is possible, I trust our meeting this year will develop some plans by which our good intentions can be carried out. In the words of our constitution, we propose to "promote the interests of pure religion, and to increase fellowship in the spirit." Now, if we stop right here, putting our heads and hearts into *this* work, I believe we shall succeed. But we propose to do one thing more; we propose to "encourage the scientific study of theology;" and, unfortunately, this occupation is sufficiently attractive to absorb the attention of most radical writers, to the neglect of almost every other thought. Under cover of the term "scientific," theology, that old enemy of pure and undefiled religion, that foe to harmony, to "fellowship in the spirit," creeps into our camp, and threatens to reduce us to the level of Christian churches. We employ new phraseology, but we retain the old substance, the contest over creeds and dogmas. If we can resolve to ignore such discussions, we take one great step toward increasing fellowship in the spirit, and we present to the world a religious society, not only without a

creed, but totally indifferent to all creeds. The study of theology is to me, I confess, if not the lowest, the least profitable form of study. Our children are better teachers than the theology-mongers. God with them is a living presence; with the theologian he is a creation of the human intellect, or, if not a creation, purely an intellectual conception, varying according to the brains and temperament of the man. "Except ye become as little children, ye cannot enter the kingdom of heaven." By insisting upon the brotherhood of man, we best teach men to believe in the Fatherhood of God. We are on the earth; why *play* we are in heaven? Let us adopt the inductive method, at least, in our lives; let us work from the human up to the divine; and while we aspire, let us not pretend to anything above humanity. So shall we the sooner become gods or angels, or what you will, and meantime you may be very sure God will take care of himself, — will attend to his own interests and assert his own prerogatives. From the persistency and the manner of clergymen, conservative and radical, in the discussion of Deity, one might suppose him to be a public patient, ill with some unknown disease, and given over to the doctors for empirical treatment. I suppose the "Radical," published in this city, is the best expression of what is styled Radicalism we have yet had. As a specimen of writing and of thought indulged in by some of our "scientific" students of theology, let me quote a single sentence from a recent issue of this magazine. "The fatal error of Calvin's theory consisted in simply forgetting that the equation must be freed from the anthropocentric parallax." Now, I doubt the ability of any member of this Association to give us an intelligent explanation of that sentence. Yet there it is, printed, published, and circulated in a periodical representing the highest order of radicalism, and conducted by one of the wisest, the most earnest and best of reformers. Friends, it is time to lay aside such drivel, and to begin the work we are set to perform. Divorce religion from theology, if you wish to become in truth a *free* religious association; take up the work involved in the effort to "promote the interests of pure religion;" appeal to the conscience, to the hearts, the sympathies, the common intelligence of the masses; Let men understand that we mean work, that we mean action, that we have a purpose above and beyond the mere airing of our speculative theories about God, and our treasury will receive ten dollars where it now receives one, while our influence upon the community will be greatly and deservedly extended.

Voted, that the programme for the sessions of the Convention in Tremont Temple to-morrow be carried out as proposed by the Committee of Arrangements.

Adjourned to Friday, the 29th, to meet at 10 A. M., in Tremont Temple.

### FRIDAY'S SESSION IN TREMONT TEMPLE.

#### MORNING.

THE meeting in Tremont Temple, a large audience being present, was called to order at a quarter past ten by the President of the Association, OCTAVIUS B. FROTHINGHAM, of New York, who made the following remarks: —

#### ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT.

*Ladies and Gentlemen,* — At this first public meeting of the Free Religious Association, which was organized a year ago, it seems proper that the Chairman should say a few words in explanation of the objects and purposes of the Society. Indeed, it is not only proper that he should do this, but it is also required of him that he should do it, owing to the uncertainty that exists in many minds in regard to the aims we have in view and the actual misapprehension and misrepresentation of those aims by the press.

According to our Constitution, this Association is called "The Free Religious Association," — its objects being "to promote the interests of pure religion, to encourage the scientific study of theology, and to increase fellowship in the spirit; and to this end all persons interested in these objects are cordially invited to its membership." This is a

tians." A young English friend of mine tells me that in London, ninety-nine out of a hundred of the working people are not to be included in any "Christian" church; they are not Christians, — in the accepted sense. We use the term "religious." That is a term which cannot be made sectarian, — which cannot be reduced, in the least, to the dimensions of any denomination. Religious emotion is as wide as humanity. We simply assume that all men are religious, or have the possibility of becoming religious, and are designed to be religious, and to find, in being religious, the completeness, the grace, and the beauty of their character. Therefore, we call ourselves a *religious* association, — the simplest term. Christianity, moreover, is a complex term. You must define very closely and very much at length, if you would see exactly what the term means in any one of its accepted senses. We must ask what is a Unitarian? what is a Calvinist? what is an Episcopalian? what is an Arminian? But when you say "Religion," you utter a perfectly simple term. It is easier to say what a religious man is than what a "Christian" man is. It is easier to say what religion is than what "Christianity" is. Up in the north of England somewhere, where it is the custom for the older dominies to take in a few of the country boys to study the rudiments of theology, it happened on a time that one of these boys came in to his instructor, and was asked this question: "How many commandments are there?" The boy looked blank, as divinity students sometimes do when close questions are put, and said, "Twenty." "Oh, no!" "Aiblins fifty." "Oh, no, — oh, no!"

the world was a very small place, when it was supposed that the earth was a little platform where two or three tribes of men might arrange their mutual affairs to their mutual satisfaction or dissatisfaction, covered with a brass coping, with holes for the light and the rain to stream through, it was very easy to believe that God made the world in six days. One would think he might have made such a world in six days. But when we understand what the world is, when we have got into the firmament above us and the deeps below us and the elements around us, — now, when we have the science of chemistry, of astronomy, of geology, of biology, of sociology, and all the rest, — when we are beginning to see what a vast complicated, balanced, harmonious, beautiful Cosmos this is, we know that it must have taken Infinite power hundreds of thousands of years to bring it into the shape that it has thus far attained; and now we say such a universe as we have cannot have dropped, ready made, from the hand of a mechanic above the stars; it must have been evolved out of a mist. The nebular hypothesis is the only hypothesis that explains our world. The Cosmos begins in mists and darkness; and so we are satisfied with laying broad principles, ideas, thoughts, feelings, aspirations, believing that our Cosmos will ultimately be evolved from these.

One word more in regard to the special object of this meeting. Last year, the purpose was to give full voice to all the thoughts that were burning in the minds of the men of our time. It was a gathering especially of come-outers. That was the purpose, — *to give expression*. Our purpose this morning is different; it is more concentrated. We assume this: that the age is thinking; that people are asking questions; that the world is full of unrest and dissatisfaction; that people are feeling about after the guiding clew to the blessed life; and we solicit answers to these questions. We are not here to give our own answers, specifically. As a society, we have none to give; as individuals, we have. We offer a platform on which men may stand, of different names, to give honestly their answers to these questions. We invited a Catholic to come here. He declined. Why? "Because," he said, "that is not my opportunity. The future is mine. I do not want to go to Boston at your invitation, under your auspices, to address an audience that you call together, whom you magnetize and polarize with your influence, and whom I am to address only for a few moments. When I go to Boston (as I shall some years hence — and I wait patiently the hour), I shall go as a Catholic; and I shall have open to me the largest hall in the city, and I shall have it crowded, every seat of it, for as long as I ask the audience to stay there; for the future is mine. That is my opportunity. I wait for

it." Events must decide the truth of his prophecy. We have asked an Episcopalian, and he is here, and will give you his answer to the questions of the age. We have asked, also, some of our Orthodox friends who have got so far along as this, to believe that the age is an age of unrest, that there are questions to be answered, that there are aspirations to be met, and they will offer you their solution of the questions. And it is much to bring men to this point, — to admit that there are questions that must be answered *to-day*. No traditions will serve; the old things will not do. It is no question of what answered the wants of men a thousand years ago, or two hundred years ago. Every creed that is to justify itself in this hour must justify itself *to* this hour. It must be a *present* faith or it is nothing. And we care not where a man stands, or what he calls himself, or what he professes; if he will undertake to answer this question — the needs of the hour — honestly and fairly, he is our brother; he has a place by our side on this platform, and on any other platform that we may occupy.

I will not detain you longer with any desultory remarks of mine, but will proceed to introduce to you the speakers whom you were to hear this morning. I now have the pleasure of introducing to you the Rev. James Freeman Clarke, of Boston.

#### ADDRESS OF JAMES FREEMAN CLARKE.

Some years ago, I had a very pleasant conversation at my house with Harriet Tubman, the so-called "Moses," the colored woman who carried away from slavery hundreds of men and women into freedom. She told us how she did it, and the fertility of resource and the imagination and invention displayed in her methods interested us through the whole evening. But one particular thing which she said, to-day has brought to my mind. She said that when she had arranged for a party of fugitives to set out, she always took Saturday night for the time of departure, because the masters and owners would not be able to advertise on Sunday, as they could not get their placards struck off on that day, and so she got twenty-four hours ahead of them. She said, moreover, that she always engaged a man (generally a white man, for white men could be bought to do anything down there) to follow, on Monday morning, the men who went round to put up the placards advertising the fugitives, and gave him five dollars to pull down the placards as fast as they were put up. Now it struck me that perhaps we might be operating on a somewhat similar principle here. A man gets up and says something, and another man comes after him, and

perhaps he will pull it down. It is not the intention, as I understand, that we shall pull down each other's placards; but I cannot help thinking that the man who comes last will have the best chance of any of us, for he will pull them all down.

I do not know exactly why I am invited here. I am a radical in one sense, but I am not a radical in another sense. I am a radical in this, — that I like to go to the root of everything if I can. If there is any bad thing to be taken out, I like to have it taken out, roots and all. When we take out slavery, for example, I like to have it taken out root and all, — with all that prejudice of race which makes the root of it. And when there is any good thing to be planted, I like to see it planted, roots and all. So, as I believe freedom is a good thing, and benevolence is a good thing, and progress is a good thing, and as I believe that Christianity is the root of them all, I come here to ask that these things may be planted with their root, and not without it. I come, therefore, to this platform as a Christian, most decidedly, as an Orthodox Unitarian, if there is any such thing; and I will tell you why I come standing upon that ground.

Ever so many years ago, — so long ago that I do not like to say exactly how many, — when I left the Divinity School at Cambridge, I said to myself, "I don't want to go into one of these Unitarian societies round here, where they believe all that I believe, and all that I have got to do is just to tell them what they know already, for I can't tell whether my opinions are good for anything, if I do that. I don't want to build on any other man's foundation, and so I will go out to the farthest place I can go, where I can find a people who never heard anything about Unitarianism, and then, if there is anything true and real in it, it will take hold of them, and then I shall know that there is something real in it, and not that I am merely repeating to them what they already believe, and so they accept it." So, I went out to Kentucky, which was a great ways off in those days, and when I got out there, I felt utterly out of place. I did not seem to myself to know what in the world to say. Here were people who did not care a copper about Unitarianism, or about Orthodoxy either. They did not care a copper about Christianity. They were in a perfectly independent state of mind; and if I got up and said, "I am a Unitarian, not a Trinitarian," they said, "That's all the same to us. What do we care about that?" So I found that I must get hold of something deeper than I had, if I was going to do anything with them; and I looked round, and I looked within, and sometimes in my helplessness I looked up, to see if I could not get something to say that would reach these people; and I tell you there was never such an unhappy man as I was

for two or three months out there, feeling, as I did, that there was an immense work to be done, — feeling the pressure of daily responsibility, and not knowing how to meet it. I thought I would go round among people, and I went into the Presbyterian meetings, and the Methodist meetings, and the Baptist meetings, and all round to see what they were doing; and somehow I got drawn towards the Methodists. It seemed to me that there was a good deal of liberality and freedom among them, and at the same time, there was a real work that they were doing. Such a thing as this, for instance, I found. There would be a place grown up like a mushroom in that part of the country, where there would be, perhaps, a thousand or fifteen hundred inhabitants, and there would be no Christian church at all in it, no religious society of any kind in it; but there would be plenty of gambling and fighting and drinking, and it would be a sort of hell on earth. I remember stopping over Sunday once at one of these places, — Smithland, at the mouth of the Cumberland River. All day Sunday I went through the place. There was not a religious word or anything like it spoken, but there was no end to the villany and rascality of all sorts that were going on. Some few months after that, I saw a man from Smithland, and said I, “How are you getting on there?” “We are getting on very well there now.” “How is it?” “Why,” said he, “a Methodist preacher came along on a horse, with a Bible in his saddle-bag, and he began to preach at the corner of the streets, and some of them came round him, and they said, ‘We like that. When we lived at the East, we used to believe something in Christianity.’ They got a few together, and they got more together, and by and by they built a church, and formed a Temperance Society, and got up a library, and so they went on.” Said he, “We have got over those rowdy times you used to know.” I tried to find out what it was that did this, and I found that it was not speculation that did it. It seemed to me that it was not any particular system of doctrine that did it. As far as I could see, when I went into the churches of the Methodists, and their other meetings, it seemed to me it was the love of God going out into the love of man, and mediated to them through the life of Jesus Christ. It was the Lord Jesus Christ, who was just as much alive and present as he was in Judea, because all these eighteen hundred years he has been above, he has been down here too, and has been growing with all the rest of us, and his power has been increasing all the time.

Now, I do not want to get into any preaching vein, because this is no place for preaching, I know; but I want to say simply how it was that I came to be an Orthodox Unitarian. I said, “I am a Unitarian.”







magistrate. He proclaimed that there should be full, free, and absolute liberty of soul in the colony; and afterwards, when the "pestilent Quakers," — I do not call them such to-day, I call them blessed and beloved; but the government of the Massachusetts colony called them so then, — when the "pestilent Quakers" escaped from death in Massachusetts into the Narraganset country, Roger Williams gave them a home and a refuge; and when there came to him a message from the civil authority of this colony, demanding that he should refuse to give them protection and homes, and threatening, if he persisted in doing so, that it might produce a war, though knowing that his own colony was feeble and helpless in such a case, what reply did he make? "The liberty of conscience hath been

So I became a sort of Orthodox man; and one Orthodox man said to me one day, "Clarke, you are so Orthodox, why don't you join us, — belong to our church?" I thought a moment, and said, "I will tell you what it is, brother; when I have sucked an orange, I don't swallow the skin, I throw it away." Well, that is it; I do not want to swallow the skin, or rind of anything, but I do like to suck the sweet, healthy juice out of all this fruit. And so I come here, because I see these men are full of juice. Some of them seem to think they don't want to be Christian; but what of that? I want to be Christian; and if they have got any life in them, I want to get it from them; and because they think they have got something perhaps larger, deeper, higher, than Christianity, I will not quarrel with them about it; I will only say, "Show it!" If they can show it, I shall be glad to have it. That is fair. I have not found it. I have not found anything larger, deeper, higher, than Christianity yet; but if they can show it, I am ready to take it. I promise Brother Frothingham I will give up my Christianity to-day, if he will show me anything larger, deeper higher; but I have not seen it.

Brother Frothingham says that Christianity is a sect, because it does not include Mohammedans, and does not include men of science, etc. Now, science is a good thing, but we are not all men of science yet. Is science only a sect because it does not include all men yet? Christianity is a sect in this sense, that it does not yet include all men; but as far as I can see and know of it, it is a system which is to include all mankind one day. And I do not say that merely as a matter of conjecture. I say that as the result of twenty years' study of the religions of humanity. I study the religions of humanity, and I find in every one something divine. I find something divine in Brahminism. I find the tendency of the soul to the Infinite and Eternal in Brahminism, and I find that in Christianity. I find some-

with flesh and blood, but with "principalities and powers," and is ready to "put on the whole armor of God," and fight to the end against evil. I find that Christianity accepts the essential beauty and divinity there was in the religion of the Greeks, — in those "fair humanities of old religion," — the gods coming down to earth, and dwelling with us here. If there is one thing in Christianity more essential than anything else, it is that it teaches us that Jesus Christ is "God with us;" that God comes into men, and dwells in men, and shows us, through the soul of one Man who has risen to that loftiness and that beauty and power, the best thing that we can know of God. Not *all* of God. We know God also in nature, in our own souls, and in a multitude of ways; but in that relation of God to man by which, no matter how low or mean or sinful we are, no matter how far down we are, we know that God loves us because we are down there, and because we need it so much, — if there is anything in this world that has ever taught that doctrine on which all human progress rests, it is taught in Christianity.

That is the reason why it seems to me that Christianity is not a sect. It is inclusive. It has largeness enough to take all in. I do not say that Christians have been inclusive, or that sects have been inclusive. I do not say that any one Christian sect or denomination now existing is going to be the future Church. I do not suppose that Unitarianism or Catholicism is to be the future Church. It is pleasant to hear men who think they are going to sweep the country before them; but we have a little too much history of the Catholic Church behind us to believe that story. We know that when they had the whole world in their hands, one man was able to shake the thing half to the ground; and when the time comes, we know the rest must go. And yet I see where they have done good; and I should be glad to learn anything from them that they have to teach.

I say, then, that Christianity is just as broad as religion, — just as broad *to me*, I mean to say, as religion. It is just as universal as anything there is. Our brother says, "Religion" is a larger word than "Christianity," because all men are either religious or have the possibility of becoming religious. So I say all men are either Christians or have the possibility of becoming Christians. Well, men of science, he says, are not Christians. I know it. A great many are not; a great many are. But I know that there are a great many people who are not scientific men; and yet I believe that in the progress of the race, science is going to sweep everything into its bosom just as Christianity is.

Now, I have said my little word in behalf of that which I believe, as I was requested to do. I believe in religion, I believe in freedom, I believe in progress, and I believe in humanity; and, therefore, I believe in Christianity, because I believe it is the root of them all. That is all I have to say.

THE PRESIDENT. Now, let us have a bright little song from our friends, the Hutchinsons.

These popular vocalists favored the audience with one of their

tian to the end of the chapter; and as men do not generally change much, radically, in their souls, after they are forty-four or forty-five, the probabilities are that now I shall stay put, after the devious wanderings through which I have passed to get to the place where I now stay. But this fact, that I am as I am, and want to stay so, does not, I think, in any sense or measure, interfere with the welcome that I am glad to give this new child of God, as I hope and trust it is, that is now born into the world, that does not seem to know much about itself as yet, and is getting very thoroughly spanked by one and another. I gladly believe that by and by, when it has got through the whooping-cough and the measles and the scarlet fever, if it gets it, and all the various ailments of little children, it may grow up a strong, grand, noble embodiment of the truth of God, and a blessing to humanity. That, friends, is the deep, true wish of my soul.

When Brother Clarke was speaking, somebody near me whispered, "Brother Clarke is going to give us his autobiography." I felt bad about that, for it seemed that the gentleman on the platform did not want to hear any autobiography, and as I wanted to say something to you, and did not have much of a speech except what was autobiographical, I was afraid I should have to sit down without saying any-







magistrate. He proclaimed that there should be full, free, and absolute liberty of soul in the colony; and afterwards, when the "pestilent Quakers," — I do not call them such to-day, I call them blessed and beloved; but the government of the Massachusetts colony called them so then, — when the "pestilent Quakers" escaped from death in Massachusetts into the Narraganset country, Roger Williams gave them a home and a refuge; and when there came to him a message from the civil authority of this colony, demanding that he should refuse to give them protection and homes, and threatening, if he persisted in doing so, that it might produce a war, though knowing that his own colony was feeble and helpless in such a case, what reply did he make? "The liberty of conscience hath been very dear to my heart, and shall not now be denied to any at whatever expenditure or peril to myself." So his watchword, his battle-cry, became, "Soul-liberty!"

It is instructive to the student of history to mark the successive steps of that way along which his feet walked from the commencement to the end of his glorious career. Born in the State Church, the Anglican communion of England, and resisting there the despotism of that sect, he fled to Massachusetts for liberty, where he became a Puritan. Suffering here because of his broader catholicity, and afterwards planting his colony in Rhode Island, he there became a Baptist; so that one Sunday morning he was dipped in Narraganset Bay, by Ezekiel Holliman, a layman; and four months afterwards, — in the brief period of four months only, — he in turn walked beyond the enclosures of the sect and of the church which he had just established, and became, as he continued ever after to his dying hour, a "seeker." Now, he thought the earth had no true church, and his mind opened to all the illuminations of God's Spirit; and studying all the dispensations of God's providence, he sought for a higher and a holier standard of personal soul-liberty than the world then had.

So we who are here this morning come here, I think, as seekers. We leave behind us, for this brief hour, at least, all ecclesiastical barriers and hindrances, and with honest hearts open our souls to the whisperings of the Divine Spirit, and our eyes to the illuminations of that Deity who in every age and in every land reveals himself to the devout and hungry soul. Yes, we are seeking for everything that is beautiful and good, everything that is just and true, everything that shall be for the glory of God and for the brotherhood of mankind. When we find it, and as we find it, and wherever we find it, we will lay hold of it as an inestimable prize, as a precious legacy, never more to part with it. Therefore it is that all of us who are here this morning have our

faces turned towards one common goal. We may not be walking in the same literal pathway, but are we not surely advancing parallel to one another, and, indeed, do not our steps approach nearer and nearer to each other? And though for a season now encompassed by different scenes and landscapes, we lift up our eyes and see the fair and glorious domes and radiant battlements of that city of our God, beyond the threshold of whose glorious gate we hope some day to pass. Therefore, let hand join with hand, and let heart pulse warmly to heart, whenever by unison of spirit there may be this common object sought and promoted. And I have a truer and profounder sympathy with the object of this meeting, as far as I am capable of understanding its object, because I believe it to be for the free, honest, brave discussion of all statements of opinion, with the great purpose and aim in view of seeking that which shall promote morality, justice, brotherhood, and love among mankind.

For myself I belong to a sect. I love it and I honor it. I believe its history to be one of transcendent glory. I believe that the brave men and women, who have belonged to it in different ages and in different lands, have stood in the front rank of those who have demanded "soul-liberty;" and at the stake, at the whipping-post, in the prison, everywhere by their blood they have sealed this precious testimony. But I am sometimes afraid that my sect, having passed out from under the harrow of persecution, being no longer a scorned and outcast people, and having grown to magnificent proportions of strength, of culture, of education, of wealth, and of power, are beginning to forget the glorious lessons of the past, and are tempted to build up simply an ecclesiastical structure, and to put their hand of power upon those who to-day wish only to repeat the announcements which our ancestors so gloriously and so bravely made. All church history is but a repetition of this experience, and, therefore, it comes to pass that in every age this battle must be fought over again. Through eighteen long centuries, now in this land and now in that, now by this people, now by that people, now by a resistance to civil tyranny, now by a protest against ecclesiastical despotism, this assertion of the liberty of every man to believe for himself, answering only to God, and not to human tribunals, has been made again and again. I believe that it is made here to-day, not in any spirit of wild enthusiasm or distorted fanaticism, but in a calm, earnest, studious, and honest way.

Now, in this land, which we call free, in this age which we call glorious, we need, not so much, perhaps, for our own sakes as for the sake of those who shall come after us, to assert the principle which more than two long centuries ago was the very axiom of Protestant-

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sin to be pardoned. That to my soul is a profound, deep, earnest, and absorbing belief. But if any other man judge differently, I am not constituted an ecclesiastical tribunal to try him, or to pronounce a verdict of condemnation against him. I think of what Jesus himself said, "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? To his own master he standeth or falleth." I recollect that the severest and bitterest rebukes which passed the lips of the gentle Nazarene were those which were hurled at the scribes and pharisees who sat in Moses' seat, who wore broad phylacteries, who loved the uppermost seats in the synagogue, who paid tithes of mint, anise, and cummin, and yet who devoured widows' houses, and forgot the wider law of justice and of love. I transfer that lesson to to-day, and think that it is not the outward ecclesiastical relationships which men hold that will save them, or cause them

Do you recollect what Garibaldi, the apostle of Italian liberty and unity, said, just before he made his memorable attack upon Rome? He called his soldiers together, and said, "Let those who choose hunger and wounds and death follow me." To-day I seem to hear the voice of the Captain of our salvation, calling out to us and saying, "Let those who choose self-denial, let those who choose crucifixion to the world and to self-indulgence, walk after my steps!" We are not to climb some giddy height of ecclesiastical preferment; we are not to win for ourselves fortune; but we are to do justly and to do well, in God's name, and with God's help, trusting that the day may speedily come when differences in the interpretation and apprehension of truth may be changed into unity of spirit, in that better and perfect creed of our Lord, where clouds and shadows come not, and where every soul is filled with immaculate purity and love.

The PRESIDENT. Mr. Malcom has hit the spirit of the occasion exactly.

In my opening remarks I stated that we had invited an Episcopal minister to be present, and that he was here. I referred to Rev. J. P. HUBBARD, of Westerly, R. I., who has taken an independent stand in his denomination. Knowing that we should not compromise him, and knowing that we should not be compromised by him, we have cordially invited him here ; he has cordially accepted, and you will give him a cordial welcome now.

ADDRESS OF JOHN. P. HUBBARD.

I cannot but be well aware, my friends, that my presence here this morning is owing to the fact that certain questions are agitating my own church, in the discussion of which I have been called, in the providence of God, to take a prominent part. But I feel that the questions which are agitating my own church, and other denominations also, are as nothing in comparison to those deeper questions which are dividing us who are gathered here to-day. I have felt the responsibility, as God only knows, of appearing here, in your midst to-day. It has been weighing upon me ever since I accepted the invitation to address you ; for, as I stand here, I do not think of any of these minor questions in reference to my own church, and in reference to other Orthodox churches. We are all agreed as to what we consider substantial truths. We are all glad to acknowledge our allegiance to the Lord Jesus Christ as our Teacher and Master and Lord and Saviour. All the questions which divide us are comparatively unimportant. But I have come to address myself to these other questions, and I feel the responsibility of this occasion. I look back through the centuries of the past ; I think not merely of our common brotherhood, — how we are all one in a common humanity, — but also how we are all one in what I consider the central fact of this world's history, — the mission, the incarnation and the death of Christ ; and I cannot but look forward, also, to that time which is speeding on so rapidly, when we shall all be gathered, as I believe, before the judgment-seat of Christ.

Now there are these deep questions, which the very fact of our gathering together here shows are questions ; questions growing out of our common experiences and our common needs. These questions force themselves upon us, — Whence have we come ? Whither are we going ? and, above all, What is truth ? Who shall

answer for us these questions? Is there no voice coming out of the unseen and the eternal world? Is there no way in which we can find access to Him who has made us? Is there no solution of all these problems which are pressing upon our humanity? We look around, and, oh, what a world of suffering this is! The one prominent fact in human history is man's selfishness. This selfishness, coming into collision with itself, produces the rivalry and strife and bloodshed which we everywhere behold. And then, when we look within us, we find the same unrest in our own spirits; and so this question presses home upon our souls, — What is truth?

Where can we get the answer to this question? If we inquire of nature, there are times when she speaks to us in softened tones; there are influences of nature which steal over us like an insensible voice, calming our spirits, and speaking to us of the love and beneficence of the Creator. But then, again, nature has her sterner moods, her sterner aspects; there are times when she speaks to us in the crashing of the tempest and in the tornado's voice; there are times when she is all sterile, and cold, and barren. And then, in regard to these very milder aspects of nature, who has not known times in his own history, — times of sore trial or bereavement, — when, as he has looked up to the blue vault above, with the shining sun and the white, fleecy clouds, he has felt the utter want of sympathy between the world without and the tried and racked spirit within, — when the peacefulness and smiling beauty of nature seemed to mock his own agony of soul? Nature then gives no uniform, no reliable answer to our question; we are still reaching beyond nature up to nature's God.

Again, if we turn to the intellect, if we look into our own minds, or if we ask what other men have thought upon these questions, we may, either in giving rein to our own fancy, and scope to our own imagination, or in following out the imaginations of other and abler men than ourselves, be led out of ourselves and above ourselves and our own miseries, for the time being. But, after all, none of these speculations of men bring rest to the soul. They do not, they cannot, answer these deeper wants of our being; and if it may be some intellectual and gifted men do thus find rest for their souls, it is not so with the multitudes of men. And is there no one voice that speaks to us all alike?

If we turn to the phenomena of modern Spiritualism, we find that Spiritualism professes to give us an answer to these questions. But allowing that the phenomena of Spiritualism are true, allowing that it is possible to question the spirits of the other world, and to receive from them intelligible answers, do they give to us any uniform

answer? Can we trust to this testimony? It is a well-known fact, that the testimony coming from this source is a conflicting testimony; and if we are told that we must weigh this testimony for ourselves, and trust only that which is worthy of our confidence, how are we to know what is worthy of our confidence? Here in this world we are accustomed to say that it is not so much the preaching of the lips as the preaching of the life which tells. We do not trust what men say to us, unless what they say is backed up by their lives; and how, then, can we trust these voices that come to us from the spirit world? We want to know what is the character of those who speak to us. I do not, therefore, find any solution to these questions which try my own soul by asking of the spirits of the other world.

For myself, the only answer which I find to these questions is in the Bible. When I open the pages of the Bible, I find the history of our race narrated in an artless and simple way. It is not, you will observe, designed to teach us philosophy or science. I also believe in the nebular hypothesis, to which reference has already been made. I believe that God was millions of ages in creating this universe. I do not see any conflict between this hypothesis and the simple record of creation given in Genesis. However, to pass this by, I find in the Bible the history of man, and my own heart answers to the delineation of human character as I find it there portrayed. I do not find any words of flattery; I find there only words of simple truth. I seem to be looking into a mirror, as I look into the Bible. And there I find also that there is a divine interposition in the history of our race. I follow that history along, I come to the book of Psalms, and there I find that "the heart of man answereth to the heart of man," though many centuries roll between the periods in which they live. My own soul answers to the words of the Psalmist. I feel as though I also were dwelling in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is; and my soul also panteth for the living God, "as the hart panteth for the water brooks." I find no contentment, no rest in anything around me; and there are times, too, when I feel as though all the billows of his wrath were passing over me. There are times when "I call, but he does not answer;" and then again there are times when I can affirm that "this poor man hath cried, and the Lord hath heard and answered his petition." There are times of spiritual darkness and there are times of joy; there are times when God reveals himself; so I find and the history of my own heart delineated in the book of Psalms.

I pass on to Prophecy; and there I find dimly foreshadowed what I believe to be, after all, the answer to these great questions which try

our nature. I find in the prophet Isaiah that there is One who is foretold, who is coming, — “a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief,” — a man who is to “take upon himself our infirmities, and by whose stripes we are to be healed.” I find, also, in close connection with that chapter an invitation, — and, oh! how it appeals to *my* soul, at least! — “Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk, without money and without price.” And how my own experience responds as it goes on: “Wherefore do ye spend your money for that which is not bread? and your labor for that which satisfieth not?”

And so I pass through prophecy, until at last I reach the gospel of Jesus; and here I find unfolded what is, indeed, a revelation to my soul. Hitherto, as I have looked over the history of man, and as I have looked around me in search of one in whom I may trust, in whose wisdom and goodness I may confide, I have found my search unavailing; but as I read the record of the life of Jesus, I say, “Here is One who appeals to my whole heart, to my whole soul, to my whole human nature; here is One whose life is a life of the purest and most unselfish beneficence; here is one who could stand up before his accusers and say, “Which of you convinceth me of sin?” What other mortal lips could ever utter those words? Here is One whose life of beneficent devotion is crowned and consummated by his death upon the cross; and, oh! when I think of that scene, when I put myself among the number of those who were gazing upon the crucified Jesus, when I hear these words from his lips, in reply to the mockeries from the crowd beneath his cross, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!” as I listen to their taunts, “Ah, thou that savest others save thyself! Come down from the cross, that we may see and believe!” — as I hear these words, I ask myself, “Why does he not come down from the cross? Why is it that he who has saved others does not, or cannot, or will not, save himself?” That is the question that presses home upon me. And then, when I think of his previous life, of his unbroken communion with his Father; how he had dwelt constantly, as it were, in the bosom of the Father, even while here upon the earth; how, of all men, he alone had maintained this unbroken communion, never interrupted by sin, I ask myself, what is the meaning of this mighty mystery when, hanging upon the cross, there burst from his lips that cry, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” I find nothing like this in the death of other martyrs for the truth. I find that they always testify that there is a presence with them that sustains them, so that the very cross or the flames are to them unfelt, while they realize only the presence of Him who



thus sustains them; and yet, here is the Founder of their faith, who is himself deserted! Now, my friends, as I study into this mystery, there presses home upon me what I believe to be the only solution to it: that here is One who is atoning for the sins of others, — that the heavenly countenance is withdrawn because he is passing through an experience which none of us can ever fathom. He is suffering in our stead. I know not how. I care not to ask the philosophy of this thing. It satisfies my soul in my own hours of trial. When my own sins press heavily upon my conscience, when I feel my own need, it satisfies my soul to look unto Him who was suffering and dying upon the cross, and to believe that he is suffering in my stead, and that the “handwriting of ordinances” which was against me, has been nailed to his cross. Oh! there is to me infinite consolation in the belief that the sins that have been forgiven for Jesus’ sake can nevermore be brought into remembrance against me.

And not only do I find in my own experience, that what is thus recorded of the life of Jesus answers to the wants of my own soul, but I find that it meets the wants of others. I find it so among the sick and the dying, among the poor and the ignorant. I find that there is no other name like that of Jesus of Nazareth, — that there is no other name that reaches the heart, that calls forth the sympathies, that gives peace to the conscience, that gives triumph over death, like this name of Jesus. Here, for my own part, I find the solution of all these questions which try my own soul; and, my friends, my one wish is, that all of us who are gathered here to-day might be partakers of this same faith in Jesus; that we might also all be glad to lay down whatever we may conceive we have of liberty at the cross of Christ, and there take up that liberty wherewith Christ alone can make us free. This is, indeed, freedom. It is when we sit at the feet of Jesus, it is when we drink his words of truth, it is when we trust in the deeds of his life, when we trust in his death, it is then we find that the answer to this question has been given, What is truth? — the very question that was propounded in the presence of Him who was the living embodiment of truth. As a disciple of Jesus, I believe that I have found the truth. I believe in Jesus. I believe in Him who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

And now, if any persons question in regard to these alleged facts in the life of Christ, if we are asked what is our proof that these things are so, to my own mind, while the argument based upon the outward evidences of Christianity has all the conclusiveness of a mathematical demonstration, yet a still more convincing proof is what Jesus has done for my own soul. And so, I believe, the answer, the *best* answer to be

given to this question is what Jesus has done, and is still doing for the souls of our fellow-men. As we look over the history of the world, since the time that Jesus came and suffered and died, we find that Christianity has been a mighty power in the world; and if we analyze this, we find that it has not been mere faith in certain dogmas, — it has not been a mere intellectual belief; it has been the power of faith in these alleged facts over the hearts of men, — faith in a risen and ascended and ever-living Saviour. If we go back to the apostles' times, this phenomenon meets us and demands explanation from us: the men who deserted Jesus in his death, after his death standing forth as the witnesses of his resurrection, in the face of persecution and death, ready and eager to proclaim him as their Lord and Saviour. How can we explain this phenomenon? What has wrought so great change in these men? We can answer these questions satisfactorily only in this way: it was the certain knowledge they had of the resurrection; it was that they had again held converse with him; that they had with their own eyes beheld him ascending to the heavenly world. It was faith in these *known facts* which inspired them, and gave them power; it was the abiding presence and aid of their risen Lord.

If you will allow me, I will close what I have to say by bringing the testimony of one who certainly is an impartial witness in reference to this subject. It is the testimony of Napoleon.

“What a proof it is of the divinity of Christ, that with so absolute an empire, his single aim is the spiritual amelioration of individuals, their purity of conscience, their union to the truth, their holiness of soul!” . . . “How, then, should a Jew, the particulars of whose history are better attested than that of any of his contemporaries, — how should he alone, the son of a carpenter, give out all at once that he was God, the Creator of all things. He arrogates to himself the highest adoration. He constructs his worship with his own hands, — not with stones, but with men. You are amazed at the conquests of Alexander, but here is a conqueror who appropriates to his own advantage, who incorporates with himself, not a nation, but the human race. And how? By a prodigy surpassing all other prodigies, he seeks the love of men, — the most difficult thing in the world to attain. . . . Christ speaks, and at once generations become his by stricter, closer ties than those of blood, — by the most sacred, most indissoluble of all unions. He lights up the flame of a love which consumes self-love, which prevails over every other love. Alexander, Cæsar, Charlemagne, and myself founded empires, but upon what did we rest the creations of our genius? Upon force. Jesus Christ alone

founded his empire upon love: and at this hour, millions of men would die for him." And now, my friends, I am glad to believe that while many of us differ in the *intellectual* definition of our faith, yet in our real faith of heart we are substantially one. I am glad to believe that there are even those who in theory deny the divinity of Christ, who yet in heart love and adore him. He speaks this word to us all. He bids us trust him; he bids us love him. And those of us who do trust him and love him are paying to him one common homage; we are rendering to him the best, the truest allegiance, — the allegiance of our hearts and our lives. For those of you whose souls are still tried by doubts and questionings, who still are asking what is truth, I have the most intense sympathy. I also have passed through these doubts and questionings; but, amid all the storms of doubt and unbelief which have surged through my soul, faith in Jesus has been the anchor which has held me fast. Amid all the doubt and darkness which have gathered over me, the life of Jesus has been the one radiant light, the guiding star leading me onward to the coming day. My earnest desire and hope is that so it may be also with you.

Another song was then sung by the Hutchinsons, which was heartily applauded, after which the President said, —

"In Jesus Christ there is neither male nor female," said that great radical, St. Paul. We prove it here this morning. I introduce to you the Rev. OLYMPIA BROWN.

#### ADDRESS OF OLYMPIA BROWN.

I saw, friends, in the notice which was given of this meeting, that it was advertised that we should meet here to "consider the religious aspects and needs of the age." It seems to me that the great need of this age is the spirit of the song that has just been sung, — the spirit that is embodied in the idea of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of man; in other words, that most excellent way which St. Paul told us was the way, *Charity*, — that test of discipleship which Jesus Christ established eighteen hundred years ago, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one toward another;" and I hail this meeting to-day, a coming together of people of varying views and different opinions, to compare notes, to interchange words of friendship and sympathy with one another, as an omen that there is a time coming when there shall be this spirit of Christian love, this fellowship of the spirit, which shall overleap the gulfs which separate the denominations from each other, and enable them to feel that

they are, indeed, all one great family, working for one common object, journeying toward one common home. We may need advanced thought, we may need more scientific investigation, and profounder inquiry in regard to religious subjects; but it seems to me that, more than all this, we need the spirit of Christian love permeating all these different sects and denominations. We need it more, perhaps, in an age like this than in any other, although it is necessary in all ages. In an age in which there is so much inquiry, so much conflict, so many different opinions put forward, so many different persons clamoring to present their ideas, and establish their views, we need especially this spirit of charity and Christian love.

Wherever there is great liberty of thought, there will always be great conflict of opinion. When I was at the West last summer, in those parts of the country where there is necessarily more freedom of thought than here, where people are coming from every part of the nation, with every diversity of opinion, I was surprised to find that there the greatest antagonism of the sects was manifest, — a warring and struggling for the mastery. An age like this which gives liberty of thought, and awakens intellect, always leads to conflict; and hence the need, especially, pre-eminently, of charity in this age and time, in which we have, as the President of the meeting told us, all the *ologies*, in which Christian denominations are bringing forth every variety of opinion, and in which we see so much want of this Christian charity, each sect shutting its sympathies up within its own boundaries, and warring upon all outside. Not only those whom we may call conservative and narrow, but even those who profess to be liberal, are found wanting in that broad catholicity of spirit which will be willing to co-operate with those of different opinions and modes of work. We often find a radical covenanter folding his arms and looking contemptuously upon the work of the different denominations, refusing to co-operate with any. The Spiritualists absolutely refuse to work with anybody, or hear anybody, who does not swear that he brings a telegraphic despatch directly from the world of spirits. This want of charity, of catholicity of spirit, is not confined to long-established or conservative denominations, but it is to be found in them all. In the midst of this struggle for pre-eminence, for power, for influence, there is, as I have remarked, the greatest need of Christian love. We cannot gain this by doing away with all Christian denominations. Because we see that they conflict with one another sometimes, — because we see that there is contention and discussion and a certain kind of warfare, we shall not, therefore, say, “all denominationalism is bad; we will have no organization.” We cannot afford to do that, because

we have *work* to do in this world. We are here to do battle with the powers of evil, — with intemperance and injustice and oppression, and wrong of all kinds. We have something to do here. There are a great many places like that which Brother Clarke described to you, which he found in Kentucky, where there is a vast deal to be done, and but little power to oppose the influences of evil. We are not to sit down and simply learn “how not to do it;” we have a work to accomplish, and these various denominations, these different denominationalists, are a part of the means which we are to use. A denomination is an instrument which a man is to use to advance the interests of truth. It is a power in his hand; and because some one man of great overpowering intellect and moral force can accomplish his work without the aid of a denomination, we are not, therefore, to say that there is no need of denominations. As well say that because a giant can hurl a mighty rock from its base unassisted, we will have no pulleys, no wedges, no instrumentalities. Because Weston can walk a hundred miles a day, we will do away with steam-cars and all other modes of public conveyance. These denominations are tools, and we are to take them and use them for the upbuilding and elevation of humanity. There is not one of them that we can dispense with. Every one of them represents some great truth of God; if it did not, it could not live. I contend that no denomination could live a week that did not represent a great truth to a certain class of people. These denominations are all useful, because they all stand for something and mean something. Truth is like a great polygon, with a side toward everybody; each person sees the side that is towards him, and must work in that direction; and, thus working, they all approach the one Infinite Centre of all truth. Not one of these denominations could you do without. We look back to the Congregationalists, — shall we speak against them? New England owes its downright integrity, its firmness, its straightforward march in progress, to the Congregationalists. Shall we speak against the Methodists? What a wondrous work they have done! Go far out west, and before civilization has gone there, before the store or the railroad-car has gone there, the Methodist circuit-rider has been there, speaking those truths that are dear to his soul, stirring up the people, calling them to truth. Well did Abraham Lincoln say, “God bless the Methodist Church!” It has sent more soldiers to the army, more nurses to the hospital, more prayers to God than any other. God bless it! And then there is the Universalist Church, to which I have the pleasure, the honor, I might say, to belong. What a glorious work that Church has wrought! As I look back into the past and see those men, the Universalist fathers,

going up and down the length of this land, bearing all persecution, all opprobrium, all toil and poverty, for the sake of this great idea, so sweetly sung to you to-day, "the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man," shall I not rejoice in the work these men have accomplished? And their work has not ended yet. We find Universalists everywhere uttering strong words in opposition to intemperance, speaking out boldly and freely against the evils of the land, coming forward almost the first to acknowledge the right of woman and to welcome her to its ministry, opening to her its colleges, its professional schools, and all its institutions of learning. All honor, I say, to the Universalist Church! I glory in being a Universalist. Although it may have, as all denominations have, a diversity of spirit within its limits, although it may have, like the cherubim in Ezekiel's vision, the four faces, — the face of a man, a lion, an ox, and an eagle, — yet I believe that the face of the eagle is looking upward and onward. The progressive element which reaches upward and onward toward God is the governing element in that denomination. And, indeed, all churches have their merits. Something has been said to-day of the Catholic Church. I believe it represents a great truth to multitudes of people who cannot come to our common systems of religion. It has a meaning and power to ignorant minds that are not able to grasp an abstract idea. I am not afraid of its influence in a land of free schools, a land of liberty, a land in which these radical ideas represented upon this platform are abroad. I am not afraid of its overruling power. I say, God bless every one of these Christian denominations! but give us that Christian charity, that spirit of love toward one another that shall permeate them all, and enable us to feel, that while we are working, perhaps, in different directions, we are all members of one great household of faith.

If you would ask me how we shall attain this love, this charity, how we shall spread it abroad among our fellows, how we shall permeate all these denominations with this spirit, I should refer you to Him who long ago established *love* as the test of discipleship, — to Jesus of Nazareth, who called Pharisees and Sadducees, Jews and Gentiles, to this Gospel of Love. I believe that through the instrumentalities of his Gospel, through his teachings, shall we call men to the truest charity, the largest love for their kind. Theodore Parker said, speaking of Jesus, "Measuring him by those of any time and any age, remember that the strongest minds have thought no further, and added nothing to the doctrine of religion, the richest hearts have felt no deeper, and added nothing to the sentiment of religion, have presented no loftier aim, no truer method than his, — the principle of love to

God and man." How shall we best promote charity? how shall we best awaken sentiments of love, except by declaring Him whose gospel was one of love, who declared to us that our God, the Infinite Father, is a God of love, and revealed him as such to us, who knew no distinction of nations or conditions, but found himself with the lowly and the great, with the uneducated and the refined, and had a word of sympathy, a word of kindness and love for them all? Oh, we need Jesus Christ to-day, a living reality in our hearts! The denominations of this land will work effectually, nobly, and grandly in proportion as they have Jesus Christ in their midst; each individual will advance toward truth just in proportion as he advances toward and abides in him, and you will be strong for labor, you will be able to rise above the conflicts and strifes of the world in proportion as your hearts are filled with that spirit which animated him. When I am weary in the conflict of life, when I tremble as I go forth into the world to engage in stern duties, it is then that I feel the need of Jesus of Nazareth, — of his spirit to inspire me, of his example to instruct me. Then it is that a voice calls upon me in the silent hours saying, "I who died for thee, all thy strength shall be; come up hither!"

We cannot afford to do away with denominationalism, we cannot afford to do away with Jesus Christ; but we must reach up and seek to attain unto that large charity which animated him, and which is revealed to the world in his gospel. Seek to be like him, in that we can love our enemies, even when they persecute us, and pray, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." I know that all this variety of people of differing opinions belong to the Church of Christ. Where, indeed, are the limits of that Church? They are not with any of these denominations; but it embraces them all and a great multitude more, who have not yet declared his name, but who are earnest souls, looking for the truth. They are all the friends of Jesus, and he loves them, too; not only those in this world, but all beyond, in that other world, the great company of spirits who there with voices sweet continually declare that sin shall be no more, and death shall be swallowed up in victory.

The practical question, friends, for us to-day is, How shall we attain more of that spirit of love, of charity, of good-will to man, which characterized Jesus of Nazareth? When he came on earth, the angels sang in the high heavens, "Peace on earth, good-will toward men." Let us go forth, then, and declare the same Gospel of Love. Let us go forth and declare, "Peace on earth, good-will toward men," — the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of man; and while

working in our own direction, in our own way, according to the gifts that are ours, let us remember that they are, indeed, different operations, but it is the same spirit which animates them all; and thus bless God for every noble word spoken, for every brave deed done, in behalf of truth and humanity.

Rev. John Weiss, of Watertown, was then introduced, and spoke as follows:—

ADDRESS OF JOHN WEISS.

I was severely pitied by an old friend this morning, because I was coming here to take my stand upon "that rickety platform of radicalism." Now that I am here, it seems to me that I am as safe as I am in any place in God's universe. Underneath the platform of radicalism on which I stand this morning, I find the whole of past time, I find all the great natures of all the great men who have ever lived, who have ever spoken or sung a word for God or for humanity. There is such a phrase as the "Rock of Ages," as applied to the infinite wisdom and strength. Underneath the platform of these religious ideas, I feel the Rock of Ages; because I find that every age has contributed its stratum and deposit to build it, and that, standing here to-day, I stand upon the most positive place I can find upon the earth, since I stand in the last moment of time, upon the last deposit that God has made in it, mixed, as it is, with the human nature of the present, and all its needs and contingencies, and growing, as it does, out of the human nature of the past, with all its circumstances and its prophecies, as the tree grows from a root, for the express purpose that it may free itself from the ground beneath, where it is dark, and spread its full mass of foliage into the light and air and rain of the ever-present God. And if I undertake to scrape off from that tree its bark and tetter of supernaturalism, if I venture to say that the grain of the tree is supremely good and sound and sweet, without taking with it every accretion and parasite of the past which has made its home upon the outside of it, I do so, that in my way, with these my brethren who believe in Radicalism, I may be able to show you what a grain, capable of what a polish, what an exquisite beauty and durability, has been concealed underneath that bark and the thin crust of mythologizing that has gathered around it.

I never felt in such a positive place in all my life as I do now. I never felt a plank beneath my feet that was so thick, so deep. Thousands of years deep is the wood of which this plank is made; hundreds of thousands of years, with their rings of daily pleasure and of daily



sweetness, and the presence of the Divine Mind, and the smiles and tears of all the men and women who have ever lived, have gone into the depth of the plank of this platform; and you are called here this morning, that we may come to meet you, and to look you in the face and say to you, that nowhere else can you find a work so positive, upon material so durable, with thoughts and feelings so far-sighted and so prophesying. For we have beneath us the idea of the Infinite God, Father of all men and women, the infinite, ever-present, ever-creating Providence, who works for our behoof, and for the cause of his laws and of his truths, by laws. I feel beneath me that vital and irresistible tendency which no denomination, no creed, no man, no sect can stifle or can put aside, — the mighty desire that lives in all hearts to know how it is that God, the infinite Father, brings his truths to pass, and makes every day, and day after day, a perpetual revelation and expression of his presence. Beneath me, I feel your desire, and the desire of all mankind, to understand God's presence upon the earth, in every righteous cause, in every central truth, in every tendency that sweetens and harmonizes, in all social and philanthropic science, in that which drains and irrigates and defecates infected districts, in that which saves men and women from miasma and cholera, that brings pure air, clean quarters, and a great margin of space for comfort to all mankind, however miserable they may seem to us to be to-day. I feel beneath me the irresistible desire of all men's hearts for permanence and continuance of living, either within or without a body, — the old, primeval rock of personal immortality. Is there anything more positive than that? What will you bring me? What will you bring into this hall to-day that will compare with the positiveness of the presence of the infinite God and of his truths in the heart of mankind, and the desire of all men and women for personal continuance of existence for the sake of the infinite truths of God?

Somebody said to me, also, as I came here, "Your ideas are very fine, and we can detect them scattered all over the world, like gold which, the most widely distributed of minerals, crops out upon the surface everywhere. Your ideas are beautiful; they may be what you call central and organizing ideas, but you have left all the heart out of the concern. You have got a few very superfine speculations about the Divine Mind and human nature, but you have omitted all the tenderness and pathos, all the sweet smiles and delights of human existence, all the yearning, all the longing, all the filial clutching for the Divine Hand, all the trust in Providence, and all the sweet content which makes one day succeed another, keeps all men and women alive

and prevents them from committing suicide. It has all gone overboard. You have emptied the baby out with the bath."

I should like to know what is meant by the word "heart." It seems to me when people use the word "heart" in this connection, that they want to have a monopoly of Providence; that they would like to have a channel of Divine Providence within their house, on tap, where they can turn it on like gas or water. They are not content with trusting to the infinite laws which are inevitable and irrepressible, whatsoever we may say or think about it; and every one of them is constructed for our supremest good, and with reference to our best advantage; so that, as the Scripture says, not even a sparrow falls to the ground without his care. But it falls, and it cannot help falling. It is hard for the sparrow to drop; perhaps it twitters a continual dread of falling, or desire that it may be saved from falling. But shall a man twitter too, and try to bribe the Infinite Law with prayers, and to besiege the Infinite Presence with supplications that this thing or that thing may come to pass, that this or that may not occur, or that he may be saved from anything, whether more or less piteous and grievous, while all the time one thing is pleasure and another thing is pain, that is joy and this is grief, all the time there is law, Providence, the Infinite Presence? The manliest heartfulness that I can conceive of is that of the person who throws himself directly into the bosom of the Infinite Presence, and says to it, "Come what may, let what will happen to my house, to my family, to my children, to my office, to my future, I will not be so mean as to expect from thee comfort merely, to derive from thee immunity, to claim a share in providence. I want to be built by thy providence; to be organized by that which thou shalt send me. Here I am. Take me; take the whole of me, — my heart, my soul, my emotions, my intelligence, — take my soul and body into thyself, and let me be, in deed and in truth, the gentle and filial and trusting subject of thy law." That is what I mean by having a heart towards God.

And we have a heart towards man. Do you tell me that when Radicalism takes its stand upon the platforms of America, by the side of the negro, and insists upon his rights, upon his suffrage, upon his immunities, and upon the opportunities that we ourselves so love and enjoy, and so confide and place our future in, — that we have no heart? Do you tell me that when we take up the cause of woman, and desire to see her educated like ourselves, and standing, if she can, where we stand, and doing, if she can, what we do, — at any rate, *doing what she can*, — when we seek to give her that greatest of all boons that can be given to God's children, *opportunity*, that we have

no heart? I tell you, my radical friends and listeners, that in America, *heart* is belief in the moral law. Yes, it is belief in justice, it is belief in equality. *Heart?* It is the brotherhood of man! Heart sings the song to which heart responds. Heart first composed the song that all hearts listen to so eagerly. It is heart, in this country, all heart, and nothing else but heart, that stands up for the oppressed. It is the heart that has subsidized the mind of America, and that goes forth upon the platforms, and deserts the pulpits and churches, and glories in taking the hand of the negro, and of any oppressed man in any country, be he Italian, Cretan, or Irish. ●

Yes; but another thing is said, another fatal thing: "You appear

ers shall be spread by the gratitude of a country that was saved by their blood. That is the living, that is the present proof of immortality. Do not talk to me of people dead centuries ago, who shed their blood a ransom for others! Talk to me of men of my own age, of my own race, of my own country, whom I have seen do it, and whose atonement I enjoy! Bid me carry flowers that are ~~not~~ dead and pressed between the covers of a Bible, as proofs of immortality! No; rather say I, the flowers that are to be spread to-morrow are confirmations of an immortality that we have seen in action, — amaranths every one of them, whose sweet scent and savor speak <sup>ill</sup> expressive living senses now; and they are the breath of our nostrils.

THE PRESIDENT. One word, ladies and gentleman. Our moments for this morning's meeting are almost gone. I wish there were more than twenty-four hours in a day, or more than sixty minutes in an hour. We have tried to be very hospitable. There are numbers of our friends on the platform whom we should delight to hear if there were time. We have invited a Spiritualist to be present, but have not succeeded in finding the speaker we sent for. We have invited a Hebrew to be present.

The Secretary of the Association, Wm. J. Potter, then read the following report on

PRESENT TENDENCIES OF SOCIETY IN REGARD TO RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATION AND WORSHIP.

The Committee of Arrangements for this Convention have desired to devote the session this afternoon to the subject of Religious Organization and Worship, and to introduce the topic by a report on the present condition and tendencies of society, especially in America, in this regard. It not being easy to find a person ready to prepare such a

report, this duty, at a late day for so important a work, was requested of the Secretary of the Association. I felt too great an interest in the success of the Convention to allow any of its plans to fail, if any labor of mine could prevent, and consented, therefore, to do what I could in the short space of time allotted, and in the midst of a multiplicity of other duties, to supply the place of the desired report. But what I am about to read must not be regarded as an attempt at a complete and elaborate paper on this large and difficult theme; though I have striven to make it accurate in fact and careful in thought, so far as it goes. If it shall serve to draw forth, in the discussion that will follow, reports of the observations and conclusions of other persons present on the same subject, its most immediate purpose will be accomplished.

No one who is at all conversant with religious affairs can doubt that we are living at a time when great religious changes are in progress. It is by no means a time of religious stagnation, but a time of very marked religious activity. The churches may not show this activity by much increase of life or numbers. Increased interest in the instituted forms of worship and sacrament may not show it. The activity, nevertheless, exists. It manifests itself in various ways, — in the thinking and acting of people who are outside of churches as well as in them; in the popularity of certain classes of religious books; in the many inquiries into religious problems, old and new, that are rife; in the varied religious enterprises that are undertaken apart from supporting public worship; in the new zeal and efficiency that all the leading denominations are giving to home missionary work; in the greatly increased amount of money raised for religious purposes under the head of "charity;" in the largely augmented interest shown among all sects in the cause of Sunday-schools; and the religious education of the young; and especially in the extended system of mission schools for the religious training of poor and neglected children. Indeed, all the leading sects in America, and we might add, in the world, seem to be unusually stirred with some kind of life. They are in movement, — apparently in the current of a common movement. There are elements of vital force at work in them evidently tending to some marked result. And the question for the observer is, What is this result to be? Whither do these moving elements tend? Is this new life which is manifest of a kind to build up the sects still stronger as sects, and to vitalize and make more solid and permanent old religious organizations and forms? or is it of a kind that is to break through these old lines and moulds, and organize religion into new shapes and combinations? The answer to this question is not to be given by mere conjecture, nor by any deduction from our theories, but by a close

study of facts and observation of actual tendencies. We may have a firm faith in the ultimate triumph of certain ideas and principles; but whether society at this present moment is really moving by direct lines towards the triumph of those ideas and principles is a matter of *fact* and not of *faith*. It is a question to be determined by observation of what is actually taking place, and not by opinions and hopes of what by and by may take place. This report, at least, is not the place for conjectural prophecy, nor even for a mere statement of probabilities; and when, therefore, I venture the opinion, as I do, that the present activity in religious thought and enterprise is the harbinger of vast changes in religious organization, and of important modifications in the *cultus* of Christendom, — not to say of mankind, — so that the religious historian a hundred years hence will regard this period as the beginning of a new epoch in religious development, I must show that this opinion has a substantial basis in actual facts.

First, then, the statistics of the several sects in the United States do not exhibit an increase in the number of members at all corresponding to this general religious activity. There is increase in all the leading denominations. In some of them the rate of increase is greatly in advance of the rate at which the population is increasing; in others it falls below the advance of population. From the official reports of some of the principal sects, I have prepared the following statement of their rates of increase as compared with the growth of population in this country between the years 1850–60.

Rate of increase of population	. . . . .	35½ per cent.
“ “ “ { Methodist Episcopal Ch. }	. . . . .	48 per cent.,
“ “ “ { North and South }	. . . . .	12½ in excess of inc. of pop.
“ “ “ Regular Baptists	. . . . .	35 per cent., ½ less than inc. of pop.
“ “ “ { Presbyterians, . . . }	. . . . .	28 per cent.,
“ “ “ { including 3 chief div. }	. . . . .	7½ less than inc. of pop.
“ “ “ Orthodox Cong’l,	. . . . .	29½ per cent., 6 less than inc. of pop.
“ “ “ Protestant Episcopal	. . . . .	75 per cent.,
	. . . . .	39½ in excess of inc. of pop.
“ “ “ Free Will Baptists	. . . . .	20 per cent., 15½ less than inc. of pop.
“ “ “ { Unitarian Cong’l, . . . }	. . . . .	5 per cent.,
“ “ “ { estimated from inc. of churches, }	. . . . .	30½ less than inc. of
	. . . . .	pop.
“ “ “ Protestant Sects above	. . . . .	40½ per cent.,
“ “ “ given in the aggregate	. . . . .	5 in excess of inc. of pop.



The ratio of increase, therefore, in all the foregoing sects together is not much in advance of the growth of population. And in order to make this comparison in the aggregate more accurate as an exhibition of the condition of the Protestant sects in the United States, there are several other denominations that should be included, but whose progress can only be reached approximately. The Universalists number some one hundred thousand members; but I could find no statistics of their body for the years 1850-60. They report in 1860, as their number of churches, 1,267; in 1867 only 814, a decrease in churches of thirty-five per cent. But this is explained by the fact that the former return is not so accurate as the latter, and that a considerable number of small mission churches have been abandoned. This denomination, however, has not latterly kept pace with the population in growth, even if it has not actually lost in numbers. Then there are the "German Reformed" and "Reformed Dutch" Churches, the Wesleyan connection, and three or four other bodies of Methodists, the United Brethren in Christ, the Christian connection, the Campbellites, and three or four other divisions of Baptists, the two divisions of Friends, the Lutherans, the Swedenborgians, and several other sects and fragments of sects, — in the aggregate, numbering probably one and a half million of members. But excepting the Lutherans, who have been largely increased by German emigration, the rate of increase among these other bodies does not appear to be high. Some of them seem to be stationary, or are actually losing numbers. Some allowance is also to be made for the fact that the period chosen for the foregoing computations is the most favorable that could have been selected from the last twenty-five or thirty years for showing a high rate of increase in the so-called Evangelical sects. It includes the great revival excitement of 1857-8, and takes in, therefore, the large increments that came to these denominations at that time. Had we taken the decade 1840-50, the ratio of increase would have been considerably less. That seems to have been a period of general dearth in the churches, — a time of discord and separation, and the advance in numbers was comparatively small. Had we taken the time since 1860, it would have included the period of the war, when the churches quite generally reported an actual diminution in membership. Since the close of the war, the rate of increase in the denominations, so far as can yet be determined, has been restored to about what it was immediately before, — in some of them has risen above that point. *Taking all things into account, it may be safely asserted, on the strength of statistical calculations, that the rate of*

*increase, in the aggregate, of the Protestant sects in this country, exceeds very little, if at all, the rate at which the population increases.*

If we will take the trouble to find the average increase of each individual church in a single year, the inadequacy of the increase of the Protestant sects to explain the whole religious activity of the time will be still more apparent. Even the large per cent. of increase in the Episcopal Church only gives an addition of about six members yearly to each church, — these coming more from other sects than from the outside, unchurched world. In the large Baptist denomination the average net increase of church-members for the last twenty-five years has only been 1.8 to each church annually. In the Presbyterian body for the ten years between '50 and '60, the average net gain was two members a year to each church; in the Orthodox Congregational, one and a half members. Among the Free Will Baptists the net gain for the last twenty-seven years has only been one-third of a member to each church yearly. The Unitarians in the decade between '50 and '60 gained even less than a third of a member to each church yearly. It ought to be said, however, that the Unitarians, since 1860, have more than trebled their rate of increase, though it is still below most of the other sects.

But while the Protestant sects in this country, in the aggregate, do little more than keep even pace with the growth of population, — which is the first important point to note in the religious condition of the times, — the Roman Catholic Church is increasing much more rapidly than the population. It claims to have increased, between '40 and '50, one hundred and twenty-five per cent., or three and a half times the rate of increase of population; and now to include one-sixth of the whole population of the country. We may deduct something from this claim (which does not appear to rest entirely on official calculation), and yet must allow that it represents a very substantial and important fact. And this rapid increase of the Catholic Church will, of course, bring up the entire increase of the Christian Church in this country to a rate considerably in advance of the growth of population. This fact, however, though to be taken into account in considering the religious aspects of society in the United States, is not to be regarded as indicating the increase of Catholicism in the world; since the increase in the United States is greatly enlarged by emigration, and to that extent deducts from the Romish Church on the other side of the Atlantic what is added on this side.

But it will be asked, How does this fact, that the Christian Church in this country is not actually losing in numbers, — that, counting Catholicism and Protestantism together, it is even gaining in num-

bers at a rate in advance of the increase of population, and that even Protestantism alone keeps about equal pace with the growth of population, — how does this fact tally with the popular belief, which seems to rest on ocular demonstration every Sunday, that the Church is losing ground with the people, and public worship much less observed than in former years? This popular impression is undoubtedly correct. The churches themselves admit it. They see and acknowledge that, though they thus seem to hold their own in numbers, the outside world is yet steadily gaining on them. The apparent discrepancy between this admission and their statistical returns is explained in this way: the statistics which the sects report, and which are the basis of the foregoing calculations, are the returns of the number of *communicants or church-members*, and not of those who are in the habit of attending public worship with these denominations. If we could get at the number of people who make up the *congregations* of the churches, or are connected with religious societies, we should find among most of the Protestant sects, it is admitted, a rate of increase much below that which their statistics now show; while the number of those who do not attend church anywhere, and are not connected with any religious society, — the number of the *unchurched*, — is growing at a rate much above the increase of population. Almost any one's observation may confirm this statement, whether he look to country or city. If you live in the country, count the people among your townsmen and neighbors who are not accustomed to attend church and are connected with none, and you will be surprised, probably, to find how large the number is. In the city there is the same condition of things. It has been estimated that in the city of New York, with a resident population of over eight hundred thousand, the total of both regular and occasional church-goers is about two hundred thousand, — leaving three-quarters of the whole population, or six hundred thousand people in that city, who never go to church. There are church accommodations for less than three hundred thousand. I have had no time nor means for verifying this estimate. It would seem as if in a city with so large a Catholic population as New York, the proportion of church-goers must be larger than this statement allows, since the Catholics are generally faithful in this respect. Nor does church attendance among them depend so much as among other sects on "church-accommodations," that is, on the number of "sittings," for they provide church-accommodations by increasing the number of services so that all may be accommodated at some part of the day. And a Catholic who only goes to a mass at five o'clock in the morning, and spends the rest of Sunday where and as he pleases, must yet be counted as attending

public worship. Still the estimated proportion of church-goers in New York compares very nearly with similar estimates made in other cities, and is probably not far from correct. In the cities of puritanic New England, the churches might make a better show. But in the cities west and south of New York the ratio of non-church-going people would be found, it is probable, greater rather than less than even in that city. And this is the second point to note: *the number of people in this country outside of the churches, and having no connection with them, is very great and increasing. And it is not the vicious and ignorant classes alone who make up this number. There is a growing proportion of scholarly, refined, thoughtful, and good people in it.*

But there is religious activity outside of the churches and sects, — religious activity among the “unchurched.” And this is one of the most marked features of the times. Religion seems to have a strong tendency to get out of churches and ecclesiastic organizations, and to get into the thought and life of common people. People are reading and inquiring for themselves on religious subjects, and are not so ready as formerly to take their belief from the pulpit, or from the established creeds. The peculiar authority of priest, and the special sanctity of the Church are evidently waning. The democratic idea of equal rights and privileges has penetrated the precincts of religion, and a desire is manifest for some more democratic form of religious service. The wonderful success of the “Theatre-meetings,” in Boston, and other cities where the experiment has been tried, is one indication of this desire. The large attendance at these meetings, of people who do not go to the churches, shows that very many of the “unchurched” have no hostility to religion, — that they are willing and even desirous to hear preaching, willing to join in religious services, though they will not go into the churches for the preaching and the service. A man in a neighboring city, an intelligent mechanic, who was seen to attend the theatre meeting constantly, though he never went to any other religious service, was asked why it was that he, and others like him, would go there Sunday after Sunday, and yet never go to this or that church, where they might hear the same preachers whom they heard in the hall. His answer was, “When I go to that hall, I know that I have as good a right as any other man, if I get there in season, to go up and take the front seat.” And this answer, doubtless, expresses one of the secrets of the success of the theatre, or hall, movement. The movement meets the desire for more of democratic freedom and equality in religious service. There is religious thought and aspiration among these masses of the “unchurched,” but it was n’t

a democratic form of utterance. And many persons who are habitual attendants of church are also drawn to the hall meetings, because of an instinctive desire for a broader and more equal basis of fellowship.

And there are some signs that the churches and sects are beginning to be conscious of this demand, and the more liberal and sagacious among their leaders are considering how to meet it. The expedient of declaring the seats free for a part of the day is being tried in some of the churches; and now and then even a strictly denominational man is heard to question the religious propriety of the whole system of pri-

better to meet the needs of the great world outside. I thought from his phraseology that he must be thinking of open communion, free seats, hall-preaching, less stringent covenants, more concessions to individual liberty, and less of reliance on Sabbath observances and other outward forms of religion. He was a neighbor of our brother Malcom, who spoke to us this morning with such a strong word for religious liberty, and possibly had felt the influence of his arguments and acts. These may be little things, — mere straws in the great currents of denominational activity, — yet they indicate a power outside of the churches which tends to shape and  
f themselves to new forms and methods.

try where the elements of such societies exist, and are gradually shaping themselves towards some visible, practical form. There is, moreover, a vast amount of unecclesiastical religious activity manifest in general literature and philanthropy; and the more rationalistic sects, the Unitarians, for instance, make the claim, probably with justice, that their peculiar ideas have tended rather to mould the general public thought and literature and philanthropy of the country than to make church-members and organize churches.

*This increasing religious activity, in the various ways just mentioned, outside of the recognized churches and sects, is the third point to be noted in the religious tendencies of the times. And all this extra-ecclesiastical religious activity is of course of the freest kind.*

Now, from the statistics of the sects heretofore given, and from this tendency of religion, just spoken of, to get outside of the churches, we may detect a very interesting fact. *All the sects in this country that are increasing faster than the growth of population represent some kind of religious freedom; while the sects that have been most rigid, both in matters of doctrine and observance, are falling behind the rate of increase of population.*

Another, and perhaps the most marked, feature in the religious tendencies of the times, is the tendency to concentration and co-operation among the sects, — the leaving out of sight their points of difference, the finding their points of union. While I was preparing the statistics for this report, the telegraph brought to my table the platform of union just proposed at Albany for re-uniting the Old School and New School Presbyterians. And yesterday the newspapers had a telegraphic item to the effect that deputations from smaller divisions of the Presbyterian Church, and also from the Dutch Reformed and Evangelical Lutheran churches, were most cordially received by the Old School Presbyterian Assembly now in session at Albany, and a desire was expressed on the part of both guests and hosts that all churches organized on the Presbyte-

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co-operation with all the Christian sects that essentially agree with them in doctrine. So, in what is known as the Radical movement in the Unitarian and Universalist bodies, the cause is not so much an impulse towards division and isolation as a desire for a broader basis of fellowship.

And this leads us to note, that this general tendency to concentration and co-operation does not, as yet, manifest itself to any great extent toward a *single* combination and unity,—though there may be some slight evidences of that. But the general tendency, at present, is taking three special directions. The movement for religious union in this country is toward three centres: First, toward a concentration of religious sentiment and activity around *form and ritual*; this is represented by the rapidly increas-



ing Roman Catholic Church and the ritualistic party in the Episcopal church. 2d, toward a concentration of religious sentiment and activity around a general and loosely interpreted system of *Evangelical belief*; this is represented by the so-called Evangelical sects that are holding out the right-hand of fellowship to each other, by the Evangelical party in the Episcopal church, and by what may be called the Evangelical party in the so-called Liberal Christian denominations. 3d, for a concentration of religious sentiment and activity around *free thought and a common spiritual aspiration and effort*; this is represented by the rationalistic party in the churches, and by the exhibitions of religious activity, of which I have spoken, outside of the churches. Some persons may be inclined to claim another centre of attraction whereby the Christian sects, sometimes called Liberal, but not regarded as Evangelical, are to be drawn together. A loose temporary conjunction of this kind there may be; but the members of these bodies are under the control of attractions that are stronger to one or the other of two of the prime centres above named. Their real attraction is either toward free thought, or toward evangelical belief, and time must determine which will draw the most. They stand midway between the two centres of *authoritative belief* and *free inquiry*, and must ultimately divide between the two; just as the Episcopal body on the other side stands midway between the two centres of *belief* and *ritual*, and must in the course of time, it would seem, be divided between those two attractions. Indeed, it is not, I believe, going beyond what present facts and tendencies seem to warrant, to assert that the movement towards these three centres of religious union is setting so strongly, that we may expect to see in this country before very long, (some of us here may live to witness it), a combination of all the religious activity and thought of the country into three grand divisions,—into three churches, so to speak, each the representative of a special idea, and having a special mode of expression: the church that centres on *ritual*; the church that centres on *Evangelical belief*; and the church that centres on *freedom for the natural religious instincts and aspirations*. And this is the fifth point to be noted,—*this tendency to combination and union among the religious elements of society, the tendency being manifested at present in a convergence towards three centres.*

But, if you will give your patience a moment longer, there is still one other point to be noted,—the sixth and final one. *And this is a tendency in all the sects, even in the strictest, towards freedom.* Not all the members, not all the movements, in the sects are for freedom; by no means can we say that. In some of them we see evidences still of

amazing narrowness and bigotry;\* in most of them there is a reactionary party. But in every sect, from Unitarian to the Roman Catholic inclusive, there is a progressive party,— a party claiming the right to think independently of ecclesiastical authority, and striving for more expression of religious liberty.

And usually this party is a very active and live portion of the sect, and is everywhere increasing in numbers and strength. We may expect therefore, that it will ultimately prevail, and mould the shape and methods of these religious movements that are in progress, and these combinations that are to come. And when these three grand divisions of religious thought and activity, of which I have just spoken, shall appear, we may not expect that this free and progressive spirit will then disappear. On the contrary, it will then find doubtless some other point of attraction and convergence, — *a single centre* still in advance, and towards which the three grand armies must then take up their march. For the two characteristic features which mark most strongly all these prevailing tendencies in religious thought and organization that have been noted, are *freedom and fellowship*,— the securing of perfect freedom for the individual, and the uniting of free individual souls in perfect spiritual fellowship. And from the joint action of this spirit of freedom and this spirit of fellowship, which may be safely trusted with the work, are to be evolved the forms and methods and contents of the future religion of America.

I have considered the tendencies in American society and in Christian sects particularly, because we here are most immediately concerned with these. But the same tendencies, with certain modifications according to differences of government, race, and civilization, appear in other countries, and to some extent in other religions. We all know how the English church is being agitated this moment by the very movement in three directions of which I have spoken; how religious freedom is struggling for life against the falling Papacy in Italy and Austria; how all through Europe it is gaining conquests and making progress. And out of Europe, in religions not Christian, there is a progressive party. There is a young and progressive Judaism,— mingling with the world, abandoning isolating peculiarities of belief and observance, and looking for the advance of Truth as the Messiah that is to come and redeem mankind. There is even a young and progressive Mohammedanism germinating, — which is striving to revive the spirit of science and culture and heroic enthusiasm that in early days distinguished the faith of Islam, and which, re-awakened, may solve the problems of regenerating

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\* For instance, the recent suspension from membership of Mr. Geo. H. Stuart, of Philadelphia, by the Presbyterian Synod, for singing unauthorized hymns with other Christian congregations!

Egypt, and prescribing a remedy for the "sick man" of Turkey. There is a young and progressive India,—which, without accepting Christianity, is proclaiming a reform of Hinduism, abolishing its errors and idolatries, and preaching the truths of pure absolute religion. And even China is beginning to feel the spirit of the age, and commercially, politically, and religiously, is preparing for advance. And the words everywhere uttered by this stirring, living spirit all round the world are the same that we hear in America,—*freedom and fellowship*. There is a *solidarity of religions*, as Kossuth used to declare there was of nations. And the time seems to be near at hand, if it be not already here, when all the chief religions of the world will begin to move forward, in and through the spirit of perfect freedom, to find the spirit and the practical bond of perfect fellowship.

The assavist then said:

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rather relates to what seemed to me a slight misstatement (or rather only of a *probability*.) in our Secretary's words — his very kindly words — for the Baptist clergy of Rhode Island. He hinted that a certain Baptist clergyman was probably somewhat comprehensive in his views, because he was a near neighbor of our friend, Mr. Malcom, who spoke this morning. Mr. Chairman, that is not the way in which theological controversies are carried on. The nearer a man's neighbors are, the worse for him. Theological antipathies are, as the mathematicians say, inversely as the squares of the distance. A man's foes are they of his own household. If there is a Baptist minister in Newport or Rhode Island who stands by the side of that brave young man who stood before you this morning; I do not know it. If there is a Baptist there who will exchange pulpits with him, if there is a man of the denomination who will recognize him as a Baptist or a Christian, I do not know it. The

\* The speeches in the afternoon session are shortened from the phonographic reports, according to their bearing on the subject of the essay, which was intended to be the topic of discussion.

love that the Unitarian clergy of Boston used to bear Theodore Parker, was a flattering and tender emotion compared with the feeling exhibited toward Mr. Malcom. In all the United States, there is not, at this moment, one fighting the battle of freedom, single handed, so nobly as that modest young man. The position of my friend and relative, Mr. Tyng, in the Episcopal church, is not to be compared with his. Stephen Tyng has around him a powerful minority, if not a majority, of the clergy of his own body; he has to sustain him almost an acknowledged majority of the laity, and has several of the bishops. He has his own father, who carries as many guns as a dozen average bishops. All this has Stephen Tyng to sustain him; but Mr. Malcom stands alone, and meets the opposition which comes around him as calmly and as simply as he stood before you to-day, and is as unchanged among his own immediate sectarian associates as here

*And a singular link unites the*

Mr. Chairman, these facts I have thought due to the assembly, after hearing the speeches of those two brave men this morning; and it will readily occur to you how easy is the position even of acknowledged radicals here; how easy the position, even of the representatives of the more lenient denominations, compared with that of those who, already in the midst of a conflict which taxes all their energies, were willing to bring new reproach upon themselves, to entangle themselves in new complications, to subject themselves to inevitable misconstruction, for the words they speak here this morning. Your gratitude ought to go out to them for the manhood they have shown; for more than any words of comprehensiveness they uttered, was the actual development of courage which it needed to stand here and say those words.

Mr. Higginson closed his remarks by relating the efforts of the Committee of Arrangements for the Convention, to procure representative speakers of other religious opinions and denominations. They had invited Rev. Merrill Richardson, of Worcester, Orthodox Congregationalist, Prof. Denton and Mrs. Cora

Daniels, Spiritualists, and Ralph Waldo Emerson; but though all these persons made friendly and cordial replies, they were unable to make engagements to address the Convention.

REMARKS OF CAROLINE C. H. DALL.

Mrs. Dall began with speaking of the courage which had brought such men as Mr. Hubbard and Mr. Malcom to this platform. Nothing in the morning meeting had impressed her so much as this fact; and this courage, in her opinion, was a type of the general movement of the time in religious matters. After a few remarks on this point, she continued as follows :

Mr. Potter, in the report which he has read to you, has given you the statistics of movements that show you how true this all is; but where he left off in regard to one or two of his statements, I want permission to begin. For example, he spoke to you of that noble band of Theists who constitute the congregations of the Brahmo Somaj. I want words to characterize my own husband's work in India, for, in this connection, I have to speak a word of his work. I hate the phrase "Liberal Christians;" I think it is an insult to common sense and charity; and so I do not want to say that the Liberal Christians sent him out there. I do not want to use the word "Unitarians," (but Unitarians did send him,) because it is not strictly Unitarian work he is doing, and his work could never be denominational in any form; but I want to say that these congregations of the Brahmo Somaj, which penetrates the whole of Indian life, and is making the channels through which the new currents of thought and life are to flow into all the institutions of the country, — these congregations constantly recognize his work; and nowhere within a thousand miles of Calcutta is a convention of that body held that he is not requested to come to them and set forth, in his own language, the views he entertains of humanity, and of the providential bearing of thought and religion, in this age of the world. The correspondent, whose letter Mr. Potter partly read to you, is a correspondent from whom Mr. Dall has constant letters, some of which have been sent to me.

I have spoken of India; and now I am going to speak of China, as I would speak of the distant mountains through which the vital forces of the spring freshets are drained. They feel there the current of the world's life just as much as we feel it here; and certainly, the movement now going on in China is not due to Christian influences. When the Christian missionaries first began to work in China, they found it impossible to put an end to the worship of the dead; they had to try to compromise with it, or thought they had; at all events, they *did* compromise with it. But in course of time, the Chinese have rejected what the

Christians permitted. There is now a very strong movement in China in behalf of freedom, and against the old formularies which have bound the people so long. Within three years, the Emperor of China has decided that he would have a foreign university established at Peking. His Prime Minister came to him and said: "Sire, your people are in rebellion. In ancient times, nobody could teach the celestials." "In ancient times," returned the Emperor, "nobody questioned the will of the sovereign." The will of the sovereign was carried out, the university was established, and some of the finest German savants, some of the best German professors of history and science, have gone out there to help him do his work. But the seed of that movement, and of the religious movement corresponding to it, was laid five hundred years before Christ, by a contemporary of Confucius, who looked forward as well as back, which Confucius said he never did. La-ot-se, the mystic, laid the foundations of this movement, which is now prevailing through an entire class of the Chinese Empire.

I do not know that it was worth while I should tell you this, but it seemed desirable that we should understand that the world is in movement everywhere; that it is not in any particular country, or any denomination, or any form of religious faith, that the stirring of the great heart of humanity is manifest; it is everywhere; and it is prophetic of the grand result, without the hope of which we could not look forward and live.

#### REMARKS OF CHARLES C. BUBLEIGH.

Why should not religious organization be based upon the very idea on which the action of this meeting has been based to-day? Why not every religious organization welcome to its pulpit, to its platform, or to whatsoever may be the place where its teacher stands, the representatives of any class of thought who may choose to come there and be willing to speak a word? We have been told here this afternoon, that our Baptist and Episcopalian brothers who addressed us this morning, in daring to address such a congregation, under such circumstances, manifested courage of a high order. To the disgrace of Christendom, it is true. To the disgrace of that which calls itself the religion of him who said, "Why even of your own selves judge ye not what is right," it is true. Why is it so? Because that which calls itself Christianity has drifted far away from the central ideas of the teachings of Christ. Because he who said concerning those whom his disciples would have had him silence, "Forbid them not," is practically rejected by those, as a general rule, who hold up his name to be revered, and profess to regard him as the very God. I say, whatever constitutes the vital

essence of Christianity is in perfect harmony with the spirit of this platform to-day ; is in perfect harmony with that basis of organization which it seems to me this Association stands to recommend. Scattered here and there throughout the country you see small religious organizations based upon this idea of freedom ; this idea which excludes all theological tests ; which says, " If you have a true word to speak, or a word which is to you truth, come and speak it in our hearing, and we welcome it. If you have a duty to recommend to us, come and recommend it, and we listen. You may speak that which we do not believe ; let us have the opportunity to judge between you and our former opinions. You may recommend that which we are not willing to do ; let us have the opportunity to judge between your recommendations and our former theories of moral action. Be you as Orthodox as orthodox itself, be you as Radical as the rankest heresy, come, and let us hear from you, and judge of the value of that which you come to offer us." It is upon that basis that our little organization at Florence is founded, and we believe we have built upon the everlasting rock.

Here, then, as I understand it, is the right basis of religious organization. Leave every man to decide for himself what is true. Leave every man at liberty to speak that which he believes to be true, and give a kind and patient and respectful hearing to that which proceeds out of any man's honest and earnest conviction. When we shall have achieved this result in the religious organizations of the country, we shall find no need of sect, no need of denominational instrumentalities, to which allusion was made by one of the speakers this morning. We shall have organization, — that is, a mechanical combination of the forces necessary to the material part of the work of religious instruction, and the maintenance of religious institutions, but there will be no sectarian organizations. We shall not need to call ourselves Baptists, or Methodists, or Episcopalians, or Presbyterians, or Congregationalists, as terms distinctive of forms of faith, but we shall all be *Universalists*, in the best and broadest meaning of that word — in no sectarian sense ; believers in the universal brotherhood, believers in the universal right of humanity to make itself seen and felt, to have its word uttered and heard.

If it be said that we are claiming too large a principle for any practical utility, I answer, that it seems to me we are taking the very best course to secure practical utility. Then we give opportunity to every congregation to listen to the exposition of every doctrine which has exponents in the country. Then we give opportunity to every expounder of whatever doctrine, to bring his opinions before all classes and varieties of mind, and thus we secure the very most favorable condition possible for the progress of the truth and the triumph of the right. If truth

has a fair field, then everything depends upon the power of the argument, the clearness of the statement, and the intrinsic power of the doctrine which is stated and argued. Now, so much depends upon the pre-conceptions of the hearers, so much depends upon the interests of sectarian organizations, so much depends upon the relation which we maintain to this, that, or the other object, that really it is the rarest of events that truth has a fair field. How can you call it a fair field for truth, when the preacher comes only to those who are actually longing to be convinced of what they believe? How can it be said that truth has a fair field, when, as we have been told here, it is really evidence of high courage for a man to stand before an unsympathizing audience and speak an unwelcome doctrine? Certainly not. We were told here this morning, that liberty may be too large for efficiency, and some illustrations were given us to impress the conviction of the truth of that statement upon our minds. We were told, for example, that steam is never powerful until it is confined. We should have been told, also, that it is never efficient as long as it is confined, and that it is only when it is rushing for liberty that it begins to be effective, only when struggling to be free, that it ever does anything. We were told that the air which resists the wings of the mountain bird, is necessary to sustain them. Aye; but the air which sustains them yields on every side to every impulse of the will which is driving the wing through it. That is the kind of law which we recognize as coincident with liberty; a law which is pliant and flexible to the impulse of the mighty powers of free will, using whatsoever is around it, at once to sustain and give vigor to its force, and enable it to give right direction to that vigor.

REMARKS OF J. M. PEEBLES.

I rise, not to make a speech, but simply to make a remark in regard to the body called Spiritualists, on one point of the very able and candid report which was read in your hearing,—especially as the essayist called for information on this point. I am from the West, where I have lived twelve years, and will simply state that in Battle Creek, a place of about six thousand inhabitants, we have what is called a free church, organized according to the laws of the State; and yet, those who support that congregation are nearly all Spiritualists. They are preparing to build a church edifice. The correction I wished to make is this. The essayist said: "I am not aware that the Spiritualists have built, as yet, any church edifices." Those were the words, I think, or nearly so. In Maple Grove, twelve miles from Battle Creek, they have built an edifice themselves. In Coldwater, forty miles from there, they have built a brick church edifice. In Sturgis, they have erected a very fine church



edifice, the largest and most expensive in the place. And this is true, also, of several localities in Indiana and Ohio. And yet, Mr. Chairman, as a general thing, the great body of Spiritualists are rather opposed to the building of expensive church edifices. They prefer the hall or the grove. They feel greater freedom there, and their souls seem to go out more freely to mingle with the inspirations of truth. As a matter of course, they are no sect; they have no creed. I have no creed. True, I believe in God and in man, and know of the immortal life, and I rejoice to work with these workers. I rejoice to be able to work with every true worker. Wherever I come across a new thought, or a broad idea, or a great truth, I rejoice to welcome it; and wherever I find a human soul who is laboring to liberate the human mind from error, to elevate the human race, and to baptize souls on earth more deeply with that Divine love that is being unfolded to us from the immortal world, I love to work with him; and whenever Spiritualists tend towards becoming a sect or forming a creed, they must count me, at least, out. Our platform must always be free, and we must labor as one great band of co-workers for the freedom and redemption of men now, — preparing them for this life, and then they are prepared for death.

MR. CALEB PINK, of Brooklyn, N. Y., then addressed the audience. He began by saying that he did not appear there as a Christian or a religionist of any character, but simply as a man; and not until they recognized the dignity of humanity would they realize the brotherhood of man and the fatherhood of God. He then proceeded to argue, at some length, in support of the theory of the perfect equality of all the natural organs and faculties, maintaining that it was because of the absence of this equality, that there was no such thing as equality or fraternity in the church or the world.

#### REMARKS OF AARON M. POWELL.

MR. POWELL began with speaking of the mission of Quakerism, with which he was connected by birth, in favor of moral and religious freedom. The Quakers had anticipated in early days many of the reforms now working in other sects, and deserved great credit for the influence they had exerted on public opinion towards emancipation of the individual soul from priestly and ecclesiastical tyranny. And though the old Quaker organizations had lost much of their vitality, the movement known as that of the "Progressive Friends" had come from them in direct succession, and had, for a dozen years or more, a platform as broad and free as this. He continued:

There are some features of the Friends' organization which I would specially commend to the consideration of those who may be most inter-

ested in the projects of this association the coming year. The Friends have made their religion practical in good works, in many ways. The Indian for many years has had no friendly voice, or scarcely a friendly voice, except that which the "Friends," as a people, have uttered in his behalf; and to-day he has hardly a word spoken in his behalf, except the feeble and enfeebled utterances of the "Friends," — for they are not as vigorous as they were.

Another, and a still more important feature of the Friends' organization, is this: that in the administration of their affairs, — though I believe it would not do to say that there is absolute equality between men and women, — it is to their credit to be said of them, that they have always recognised, and do to-day, to a greater extent than any organization I know of, the right of woman to equal voice with the men in church matters. I only need to refer you to the progress of the principle of the full and equal recognition of woman "in the State, in the Church, in the College, and in the Mart," as our friend, Mrs. Dall, phrases it in the title of her book, — I only need to refer you to the progress that has been made in this direction, for you to see the connection between the principle and practice of Friends, and the gratifying growth of this most desirable and important reform.

But we are not, in religious enterprise, at this day, to look to organizations to do very much for us. We are too apt to forget, in the creation of an organization, the individual responsibility; and there can be no real and continued progress which does not have its root in the individual soul, and that soul led and guided by the inner light, which comes through the medium of the natural organization given by the Creator of all. The doctrine of regeneration which is everywhere preached in the popular churches of this country, ought to be measurably, if not altogether, displaced by that other doctrine of proper education and right generation. We cannot expect the stream to rise higher than the fountain; and we shall have a faulty religion and a faulty government until we have a nobler type of manhood and womanhood, and a generation born under better conditions than it is possible for the present generation to afford. Then let us look rather to right generation and right education than to regeneration, for the progress and the advancement of the interests of humanity; and the religion which shall teach this lesson, by the aid of co-operation, by concentrating the individual thought constantly upon the soul of the one man and the one woman, and by growing large enough and catholic enough to meet on one platform and to have perfect independence of thought, — that religion must be the religion of to-day and of the future, for the salvation and the growth of humanity.





## REMARKS OF A. B. ALCOTT.

I MEET you, my friends, at a late hour, and myself, perhaps (what remains of me), somewhat spent. Nevertheless, I accept, with great pleasure, the invitation of the President to speak a word to you. But I am utterly at a loss, after hearing so many admirable thoughts, and seeing such hospitality given to all thoughts and to all aspirations, what to say to you. I would like, if I could, to present to you the thought and the aspiration which I find in my own heart. That, I fear, I shall not be able to do. Let me picture, if you please, the practical side of all that we have been saying to-day.

I believe that the highest thought is most easily carried into practice, and that, the more transcendent our ideas, the more perfect our action. Therefore let me say, that I wish to see all these fine thoughts, these admirable hopes, which we have had to-day from all varieties of the American mind, carried into action. I wish to see them organized. I wait to see the first movement which looks beyond thought to action. I wish to have the head married to the hand; I wish to have the heart move head and hand. Let me speak, then, about the instrumentalities. Let us avail ourselves of all of them. Let not any suggestion from any sect pass by us unheeded. Do you not see how Catholics, how conservative Unitarians, are stealing our thunder?—that they are watching us, and getting in advance of us, in their movements? Do you not see that the theatre movement is ours? Do you not see that the Roman Catholics' hope to make all our country Catholic is stolen from us? The highest thought drives the world. And do you not see that those who come up here to-day come with the belief that here is the altar and here is the Divine fire at which our hearts are to be lighted? Therefore, I say, accept every suggestion from all sides. Begin with music,—the highest instrumentality there is. Were we not touched to-day by the strains we heard? Did the eloquence of my friend, even, who closed the morning session, thrill us more than the simple strains of this choir? Begin with music, and charm the heart to divinity. Then take conversation. Do not look to the platform and to large audiences alone. Do not look to the convention and to eloquent speeches. If you will have work done, begin at home. Speak the simple, earnest, transcendent, precious thought in the parlor. Begin with small circles,—your families, your neighbors, your friends,—and give utterance. Then take the larger circle of the convention; then take the broader anniversary, like this. Then have your newspaper, your periodical. Let not any one of these instrumentalities be let alone. Seize them all. Take them

in advance of all, inspire new life into all, and then something will be done.

I have seen many charmed days, and shared a sublime hope; but this, of all days which I have yet seen, is the most sublime; because it not only speculates in the most transcendent way, and absorbs all thought, and all peoples, and all races, and all bibles, but it looks to practice; and you will all be disappointed if it end merely in convention after convention, annual meeting, like this, after annual meeting. You say: "Work, work, work! Work lovingly, work deliberately, not willfully." You say that. Therefore I shall look for the next step to be declared hereafter for action. Let not the accusation be made any longer, my friends, that we are mystics, that we speculate, that we have delicious and delightful thoughts, but we do nothing. A friend said to me to-day: "Mr. Emerson! Oh, yes, a lovely man, but what has he done?" *Who brought us here?* Who is the father, or, if not the father, the cousin, at least, of the thought that brought us here? You know who, so far as any one person is concerned. This meeting is transcendentalism. This is the fruit of forty years of earnest, private, self-respecting modest thought. Therefore, I say, the more modest we are, and the less we say about our religion, the more we shall possess. It is too fine a thing to talk about; it is a precious thing to live by, and to show in action. That is the jewel, is it not? Therefore, I say, not until this thing is incarnated, not only in one man, but in all of us, and we can say: "I and my Father are one;" "he that hath seen me, hath seen the Father also;" — not until we say that, not in egotism, but in the sublime, and delightful, and beautiful personality which makes us one with Him, is the word really spoken. So, in my judgment, my friends, we have had almost enough of talk, we want action; and as I have now but a little while to stay on any platform in this world, perhaps it will delight me as much as any one to take part in the action which must follow. So fine, so sublime a religion as ours, older than Christ, old as the God-head, old as the soul, eternal as the heavens, solid as the rock, *is, and only is*; nothing else is but that; and it is in us, and is us; and nothing is our real selves but that in the breast. That is *the* religion, and nothing else; not in the flesh, but speaking and acting through the flesh; that is it.

The convention then adjourned, to meet at half-past seven in the evening.

tion for the honors conferred, and my regret that I could not attend to the official duties to which I was appointed, since my other engagements were of too pressing a nature. Nevertheless, I am with the Free Religious Association; and as a proof thereof I have devoted and respectfully inscribed to the same the last volume which I wrote, viz., "The Origin of Christianity," which I request you to bring to the notice of the Association, with the expression of my sincerest regards, and my prayers for the speedy success of truth. There is but one common centre for the human family in all these tumultuous upheavings of diverging opinions and views, and this common centre is truth. It is every good man's first duty to approach this centre as well and as rapidly as he can. Therefore I wrote this volume, and therefore I am with the Free Religious Association.

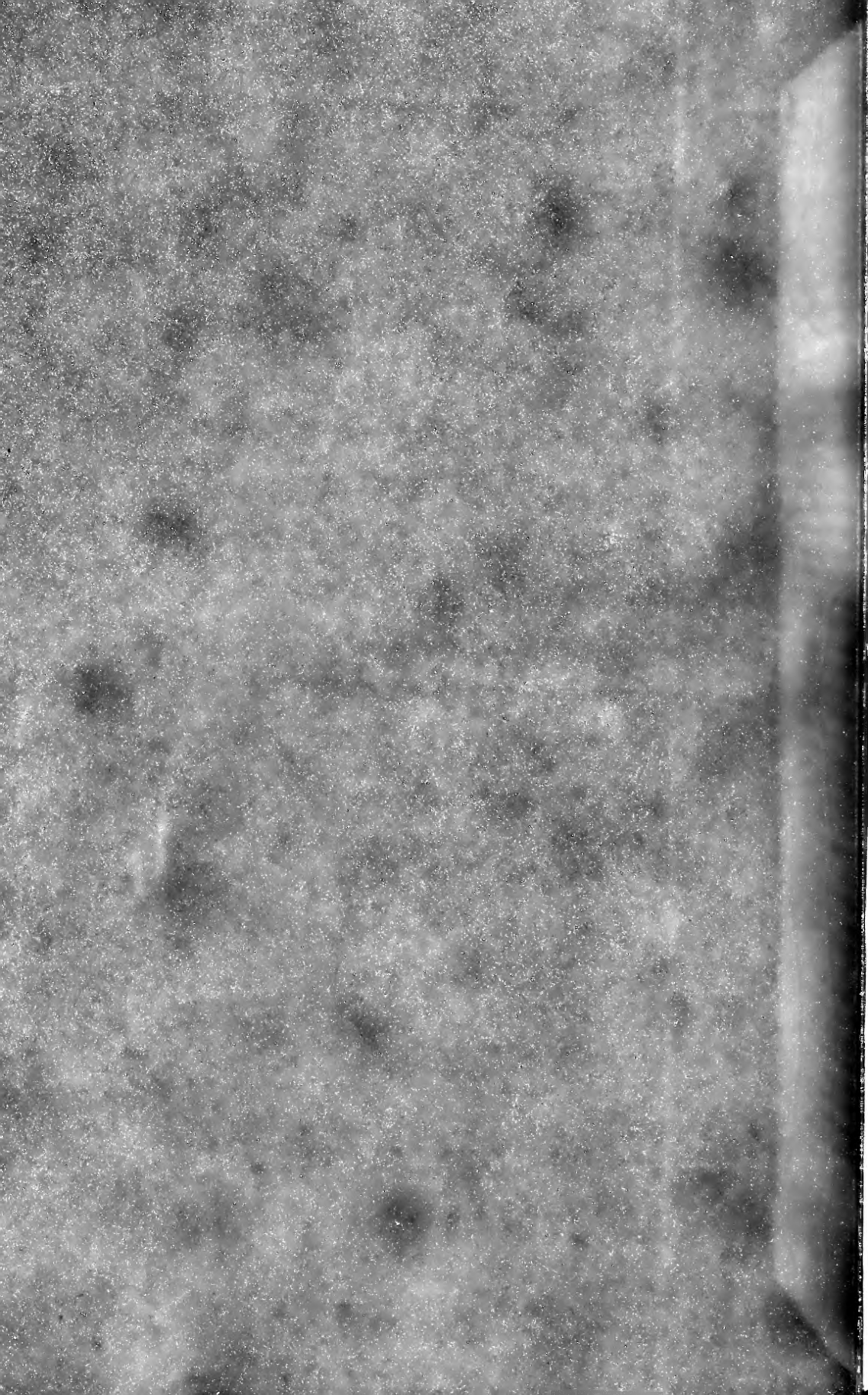
The civil and religious liberty with which God has blessed us in this country, is not efficient enough to guard an unbiassed writer against the wrath and scorn of the prejudiced millions, who treat and denounce the results of free reason and free research as infidelity and impiety. I cannot think or write otherwise than free, whatever the consequences may be, and place my book under the protection of the enlightened and thinking men of the age, whom I believe to have discovered among the Free Religious Association.

With this volume I hoped to open a new channel of research to historians, no less than to theological students, viz., the comparison of the New Testament with the Talmud, and especially with passages from the very time of Jesus and the apostles. This is a new field, from which I have produced some results.

I beg you to bring my fraternal feelings and my highest regards to the members of the Free Religious Association, and to accept my sentiments of friendship and respect for yourself personally, whose broad principles and liberal sentiments I truly admire.

Your most obedient servant,

ISAAC M. WISE.





## EVENING SESSION.

THE Convention met at the hour appointed, the president in the chair. At the opening of the meeting the following paper was read by FRANK B. SANBORN, Esq., Secretary of the "Massachusetts Board of State Charities": —

A REPORT ON THE RELIGIOUS DUTY OF PHILANTHROPY AND SOCIAL REFORM.

*Mr. President and Brethren of the Association:* —By the assignment of your Executive Committee, it falls to my lot to open the discussion of one of the most important questions which can present itself in a religious conference. The question, namely, how far, and in what degree of magnitude, we shall recognize among our religious duties the claims of active philanthropy and of social reform?

We might answer this question, so far as this Association is concerned, by pointing to the fact that its most honored representatives, and the great majority of its members are known, wherever they are known, as the early, steadfast, and self-devoted friends of the poor and the unfortunate, the sworn and constant foes of oppression and wrong. There needs no argument to show what view has been taken of philanthropy by a Phillips, an Emerson, a Frothingham, a Higginson, or by the devout women who in this city and elsewhere have for so many years befriended the fugitive slave, the sick soldier, the untaught freedman, and the poor of every class. But it may be worth while to point out the nature of the duty thus fulfilled, and its paramount claims on all who are drawn together by the tie of a common religion. Nor will it be wholly superfluous, even in this assembly, to indicate some of the most pressing demands for social reform that come to our attention, when we consider the community in which we live.

Whatever may now be our speculative opinions concerning the Trinity, the atonement, the divinity of Jesus, the authority of the Bible, or the future condition of the soul; whatever change these opinions may hereafter undergo, it is certain that the teachings of Jesus concerning love to God and love to man will never be falsified or antiquated, since they are the expression of a sentiment inborn and natural to the human heart. The sympathetic feeling of mankind responded to them when first uttered, and will always do so. They do not require the support of logic, nor of infallible authority, for they furnish their own evidence, and no miracle could make them more impressive. There have been disputes about doctrines; but these are

not doctrines : they are practical statements, perceived by the intellect, but accepted by the heart. I never heard the Good Samaritan's claim to goodness denied, even by the most orthodox Hebrews.

And yet there is something peculiarly religious in this portion of the teachings of Jesus. It is not only the most undoubted, but the most affecting part of the Christian religion. It is hard to persuade ourselves, perhaps, that there is not something particularly religious in the maintenance of an opinion, though nothing can be more absurd ; and so we are in the habit of speaking of a man's " religious opinions." But it is in the heart and life alone that religion manifests itself ; the intellectual convictions are as nothing in comparison.

Reasoning in some such way as this, and resolutely overlooking the fact that it is opinions rather than modes of life that have been the source of religious dissensions, I have fancied that the time might come when persons of all shades of religious belief would cordially unite in works of charity and reform. And I have interpreted the word " Free," in the name of our Association as implying this liberation from the tyrannies of sectarian jealousy and dislike, rather than as indicating a particular form of belief on the part of our associates. Let us welcome to our work, as we invite to our platform, the champions of every opinion provided they are willing to labor with us for the elevation of mankind. Let the Catholic who loves God more than his creed be as welcome in our assemblies as the Jew who does the same. Let us extend to Calvinists and Churchmen, to the disciples of Wesley, of Murray, and of Channing, the same invitation ; and, whether they join us or not, let us proceed to the labors before us.

It is one of the most encouraging signs of the times, that the tendency of all our religious organizations is now very strongly towards works of charity and social reform. The oldest and the newest churches feel the same impulse and obey it. This is partly because the moral evils of the time are seen to be great and growing, while the remedies which the Church has been wont to apply have ceased to be efficacious. In civilized countries enormous changes are taking place in the material condition and way of life of the people. The concentration of population in cities on the one hand, and on the other, the dispersive movement of colonizing millions who go forth, year by year, to new and waste regions, is fast subverting the old order of society. The population is here too crowded and there too scattered to benefit, as it once did, by the religious influences of church and school and family. The separation of class from class in London, Paris, New York, is frightful, and almost complete. Whole districts in those cities are given up to pau-

perism, while others are as exclusively the abode of luxury. Mr. Gladstone in a speech lately made, laments that the dwellers in the West End of London "are in danger of one of the greatest misfortunes that can befall a man, that of living in habitual blindness and ignorance of the necessities and claims of his fellow-creatures, and consequently of leaving them unacknowledged and unsatisfied," while in Eastern London the poor have been starving in spite of the poor-laws. In our own cities the same contrast is seen; and if not yet so appalling, it is on the way to become so; while on the broad Western prairies and plains, and throughout the rural districts of the South, the danger is of relapsing into primitive barbarism, such as lies in wait for the Spanish Americans, and in which the life of man is what Hobbes described it among savages, — "solitary, poor, cruel, nasty, brutish, and short.

Observing this centripetal and centrifugal tendency towards depravity, the quarrelsome churches and sects of Christendom have taken the alarm, and, forgetting their feuds for a time, are making great efforts to counteract it. Foreign missions are less considered. Home missions are the order of the day. The ministry at large under various names, the Sunday school, the evening school, are all very modern, but very powerful, auxiliaries in the good cause of the poor. And not only do the Protestant churches avail themselves of these instrumentalities, but the Catholics also, particularly in America, are doing the same thing. One does not need to read Mr. Parton's panegyric of the Catholics to become aware of this; it is an obvious fact in all our cities. And not only are the churches doing this ecclesiastical work, but they are also founding hospitals, opening dispensaries, starting employment societies, training young delinquents in reformatories, caring for orphans and unfortunate women, and in all ways putting their hands to the work of philanthropy. Nay, we may go farther, and say that it is this philanthropic activity which is greatest among the churches. Whoever visits (as many in this audience doubtless have done) the great mission Sabbath schools of our Western cities — of Detroit, Chicago, St Louis — will find that those wonderful institutions are for something more than to teach Bible texts, sing hymns, and make childish proselytes. The teachers, the superintendents, do not confine themselves to their Sunday labors, nor to the limits of their parish. They go about on week days, visiting the homes of the poor, observing their necessities, their temptations, their aspirations; they carry among the swarming children of poverty the means of material, and the incentives of spiritual, life. Work for some, amusement for others, sympathy and encouragement for all, are the

attractions which bring thousands of ragged boys and girls into the schools, and which overcome the opposition of the drunken or the ignorant parents. And these schools do teach, along with certain theological tenets which most of us would find it hard to accept, the lessons of cheerful piety, industry, good-sense, and good-will; and these outweigh, many times over, the doubtful, or the pernicious, theology.

Now, unless all signs deceive us, this good work will continue, and will gather strength and show great results. He would be very unwise who should either dread or hope for the supremacy, throughout America, of the Catholic Church or any of the Protestant Churches. No such ecclesiastical unity or control is possible. The religious opinions and the religious observances of our countrymen tend to a greater diversity, not to a more uniform type. Every church and sect has, at least, two "schools" of faith, and some have twenty, and each of these schools is on the way to become a separate organization. We have seen, within the last thirty years two very powerful sects — the Mormons and the Spiritualists — grow up among us, while two others, less numerous, but in reality more important, the Theists and the Positivites, have also become firmly established. But while this separation has been going on, a constant movement towards unity, in matters of philanthropy and reform, is equally manifest. There is less and less inquiry every year, among reformers, about the religious affinities of their associates. Men and women from the opposite poles of the ecclesiastical world meet and fraternize, and scarcely suspect each other's differences. I conceive this to be the best test of true religion, that it shall manifest itself without drawing attention to its special form; just as those persons are said to be well dressed whose attire causes no special remark. The *provincialities* of religious belief are passing away like the other provincialities of our people. It is even possible to anticipate a time when churchmen will not be contentious; when they will not be what a Parisian editor says the French people have always been, — "Christian, agricultural, and warlike." In that millennium when Christian shall not lift up the sword against Christian, neither shall they learn war any more, the labors of the philanthropist would lose half their difficulty, and more than half their necessity.

In the meantime, the most active reformer need not fear that he will lack occasion for his activity. The harvest will always be plenteous and the laborers few; let us therefore pray the Lord of the harvest that he will send forth laborers into his harvest. Every age encounters its own evils, its own ghosts. *Quisque suos patimur manès*; the un-laid spirit of some past age always torments us. Even if fanatics read

the New York "Nation," — perhaps some are compelled to for their sins, — they need not take any hints from its pages about a "new field for fanaticism." While New York exists, God will not suffer the race of fanatics to die out; for nothing short of fanaticism can enable a man to live honestly in that city. Yet New York is only the focus of our concentrated civilization, and what is needed there is partially needed everywhere else. The Labor Question, the Woman Question, the Question of Education for the poorest, of reclaiming the thief and the prostitute, of suppressing intemperance, of dealing with insanity, of diminishing pauperism, — these and a hundred other questions, derived from these or related thereto, press upon us for decision and we cannot escape them. If we have a true religious feeling, we shall not try to escape them; we shall entertain them all, and devote ourselves to those with which we can best deal. One person will teach the freedmen, others will secure them the right to vote, will visit prisons, found hospitals, open new avocations for women, proclaim a truce between labor and capital, diminish poverty, and banish drunkenness; and at every step of every reform, Religion will be present to give her sanction. She will not always wear the vestments of the Church, nor speak the voice of tradition, but sometimes she will do both; and she will never fail to attest the truth of Pliny's saying, "To benefit mankind is worthy of a God."

In this glorious work, this task which has been signally and providentially laid upon our country to accomplish, there is a duty, humble, but at the present time most needful, which our Association can perform, at least in part. What philanthropy now requires more than all things else — for it is the key to all future progress — is to be reported, and made known, from country to country, and throughout the several regions of each country. Whatever courage has achieved, or science has invented, or patience has overcome, or charity has won, in this never-ending contest with wrong and suffering is to be promulgated beyond the narrow limits of the hamlet, the city, or the State where it took place. The handicraftsmen of Rochdale, — English spinners and weavers, — who planned and established the first co-operative movement among the English working-men, have now thousands of imitators, because what they had done, and how they succeeded, became known throughout England and the world. The Irish system of dealing with convicts is slowly coming to the knowledge of other communities, and inciting imitation of its excellent results elsewhere. The model lodging-houses of Boston, New York, and London only need to have their success made known to the world, to secure their increase a hundred or a thousand fold, where the evils which they guard

against are flagrant. The methods of teaching the blind, the deaf and dumb, and the idiotic; the best system for rearing motherless infants, and for training neglected boys and girls, and all the other approved appliances of modern benevolence ought to be communicated from land to land and from town to town; and when this is done, they will take root, thrive as do the groves whose seeds are borne through the air by nimble winds, or the wings of wandering birds, and planted in lands remote from the parent tree. For the processes of nature are the same in the moral as in physical events; and, if we would gather her fruits, we must obey her hints.

If I might venture to advise the Association in such a matter, I would say, then: Let every one of us, and the Association as a body, devote some time to learning and spreading abroad the last results of philanthropic activity. Let us, when we can have the privilege, aid in works of charity and reform by direct exertions; but when that is denied us, let us remember that we can do much (and sometimes much more) by the indirect method of publishing abroad what has been done. In the pamphlets and volumes which we may issue from the press, let us give a place to essays and appeals which deal with these topics; and in all our gatherings, let us assign a portion of time to the cause of the poor and the remedy of wrongs. In no other way, I am confident, can we so well advance the progress of true religion, and promote the interests of mankind.

Col. T. W. Higginson of Newport, R. I., was then introduced and spoke as follows:—

ADDRESS OF T. W. HIGGINSON.

*Mr. Chairman, and Ladies and Gentlemen,*—It may add one of the few remaining facts necessary to complete the report just read, on “the connection between religion and reform,” if I remind you that its author is the Secretary of the Board of State Charities of Massachusetts, and that he has devoted the last three years to testing, by practice, the truths he has here offered. He has for that time been doing for our philanthropic institutions what Horace Mann did for our schools; and his judgment is, therefore, to be received with the same weight, on the connection between religion and reform, as if we had heard the verdict of Horace Mann on the connection between religion and education. It adds another to the many proofs which all history has given of the superiority of that philanthropic method which takes natural religion for its basis.

We heard much said this morning of the need of organized Christianity, for the world's reformation. Yet, look back on the long experience of that world, as it toiled out of darkness; deduct from that experience what has been done by men outside of organized Christianity, and how vast the diminution! What are the reforms which now stand foremost before our people? Years ago, Mr. Chairman, when you and I were privileged to sit at the feet of the great teachers of those reforms, of whom did we learn the lesson? Was it from the darlings of the Church, the pet clergymen of city parishes? We know too well that we learned our anti-slavery lessons from men outside of the Church, and the objects of its denunciations. We learned them of William Lloyd Garrison, who sits yonder. We learned them from Theodore Parker, who sits — YONDER. From whom did we learn the new problem of the rights of woman, which has begun to drive its plowshare through our society and its laws, and never will cease its action, until man and woman stand before man, as they stand before God, equal and independent? We learned it from Lucretia Mott, whom no Quaker organization could hold; we learned it from Abby Kelley Foster, cast out from the churches; we learned it from Lucy Stone, whose sweet persuasive voice gave to us the great teachings for which we looked in vain to eminent judges and learned divines. Far back of that period, as we trace that little stream of great philanthropy, we find it beginning among the infidels; and it was Frances Wright, that branded among women, who first preached it throughout this land. 'No eminent divine recognized it, no church convention admitted it, until these women had taught them.

Thus we had to turn aside from all that the Church accepted as its teachings before we could learn these first lessons of reform. So far was this carried, so profound, only some fifteen years ago, was this separation between the church speculative and the church actual, that I remember an eccentric scion of the House of Beecher, who, at Williamsburg, New York, systematically organized them as separate things in his church. He had, as he himself proclaimed, a set of "Infidel *Christians*," to preach the right doctrine to his people on Sunday, and an entirely distinct set of "*Christian Infidels*," Garrison, Parker, and the rest, to teach the right practice, in a course of lectures on week days.

It is a mistake for any of us believers in natural religion to allow ourselves to be betrayed, for a moment, into a negative position; to allow, for an instant, that the burden of proof is on our side. The burden of proof is on the other side. It is we who have the positive, and the sects the negative; it is we who have the affirmation, and the

sects the denial. Each little sect builds its little wall, and encloses its special atom of God's truth. It denies all outside of the wall, and then when we sweep that wall away, charges us with denial. Our answer to them all must be that the church of freedom and philanthropy is older, larger, and grander than they. As Luther said, we say, but in a wider spirit, "We are the Church," because we represent no platform narrower than humanity itself. Religion is the natural instinct of the human soul; this and this only lies behind all these petty organizations, and gives them their being; and when we push them away, and come down to God's solid foundation, it is no denial, but affirmation. That is the only assertion; it is that which gives the believer in natural religion strength, not alone for himself, but to labor for others; because he represents, not this or that conventicle, but the central spirit which they all embody, the love of God and man, by which alone they live. Take away from them what is superficial, and they are all alike. Take away a few ceremonies from the Catholic and the Protestant, a few technical phrases from the Trinitarian and the Unitarian, and they are one and the same. Take away from the Jew and the Mohammedan these separating forms and dogmas, bring back each one to what makes his manhood, and they are all the same. Behind the highest utterances of the world, of the Vedas, of Epictetus, of Marcus Antoninus, and of Jesus, — behind them all, and greater than them all, is the eternal aspiration of humanity to the absolute truth of God. It is that truth to which the radical is pledged, because it is natural religion which he recognizes. He it is who affirms, and leaves each little sect of each little religion to do its own denying.

Look into your books of piety, and see the unity of the great expressions among all peoples! Look into your hymn-books, and you see that the hymns which comes nearest to every religious soul are the hymns which are not sectarian, which were not written by sectarians, which were written, in many cases, by persons cast out by the churches. Those hymns which are most immortal in the hymn-books are often those which the churches borrowed from poets whom they left outside. Who wrote, "While thee I seek, protecting Power," that perfect utterance of the last triumph of religious trust? Helen Maria Williams, the friend and imitator of Mary Wollstonecraft. You may still find her branded as a heretic in the biographical dictionaries. Who wrote, "Nearer, my God, to thee"? It was Sarah Flower Adams, the friend and disciple of William J. Fox. In her lifetime, she would have been disowned by the very churches which now cannot draw near to their God without borrowing her wings to fly with. And so, through piety as through morality, you find that all forms are super-



ficial, and all souls are saved by that simple religious sentiment which lies behind all creeds.

Bred in this simple faith, I confess to a sadness in hearing clergyman after clergyman, like even our brave and sympathetic friends of this morning, dwelling only on the sorrows of the world, its need of mediation and atonement, its hopeless diseases, and the impossibility of rescuing it from its despair. Is there never to be a gospel of health? Is man never to dare to stand before his brother-man and say, "Saintship is not to be found in borrowing an atonement for our sins, but in leaving them behind us?" Is there to be no personal relation with God? Is the dream of the whole line of saints all a dream, and is there to be no inward illumination, nothing to save the soul of one living man, unless he renounces his own instincts, and all the real experience of his life, and goes into churches to seek medicine for diseases he never had? We teach our children that they are depraved, and make them depraved in the teaching. We rouse in their young souls artificial repinings and self-tortures, and then prescribe for them some remedy that is worse than the disease. Why not have something simpler? Why give your child medicine for the whooping cough, when he never had it? Why treat him for scarlet-fever, when his flesh is cool and his pulse is calm? So systematic do we make this treatment, that a man hardly dares to stand up before his fellow-men, and frankly say, "Let others talk about atonement; for my own part, I ask for none." What is this desire for a mediator? Cannot I go straight to God with my prayer? Why attempt to teach me that my simplest actions are sinful, when I know that I am honest; that on the whole, with whatever inconsistency or ignorance, I am trying to do right, and God, if he is just, will say so?

It is said that the late Chancellor Kent, a man of admirable character, always declined to join the Church, on the ground that he did not feel himself to be wilfully a sinner, and would not therefore say that he was. (Applause.) Give me one piece of honest truth like that, rather than the artificial panics of a revival. Let a man begin simply, manfully, to look the facts of life in the face, and see if he needs anything more to take him through its struggles than faith in God, and love to man. If he had a mother, it is to be hoped she taught him that much before he knew that there was a scheme of atonement in the creed. Knowing that much, he needs no atonement. If you wish to bring your children up in the "nurture and admonition of the Lord," clear away these mythologies, and let the Lord have a chance to reach them. Give them the sunshine and the air. I speak what I know; because, thanks to God's mercy and a wise mother, these agonies of

others' experience pass by me like the rain that now beats on yonder sky-light, and leaves you and me untouched. I know that all this sad experience is not needful. I know that one can be healthier, stronger, and happier without it.

It is the positive affirmations of religion, it is the simple principle of love and truth that are needed to guide us. These are the essence of the religions that seem most complex and artificial. No doubt, the most artificial forms of religion have done good in their day, and are still doing it. Is that a reason why those of us who have attained to something simpler should still cling to their forms? I go on board an emigrant-ship, at New York; and if the passengers be all Mormons, I see in their careful organization, their order, their sobriety, the controlling influences of their Church. Because I am grateful for it, must I therefore become a Mormon? Who does not sometimes feel grateful to the Roman Catholic Church, which folds the wide arm of the confessional around the wandering outcast girl in the streets of the great city? Must one therefore become a Roman Catholic? If we join all the churches that ever do good to anybody, we shall have time for nothing else. As we cannot join them all, what can we do? Join that which is common to them all, and sustains them all. The true Church is but a poorer name for humanity; let us join that; be all brothers in that. Finding the true basis of unity to lie in absolute religion, in love to God, and love to men, why not take simply that religion, and live by it, and let the machinery go? That makes men strong; and we who are radicals are strongest by doing our appointed work as such, and leaving the sects to do theirs.

Several speakers this morning urged that we should recognize the need of denominationalism; but there are plenty to act inside of every denomination. A thousand influences are at work to encourage it: worldly position, sympathy, love of companionship, the love of having some place to go on Sunday, the love of having a pew with a nice button on the door, where a man can put in his children, and keep them out of mischief, — all these things make people denominationalists. But when those who find themselves honestly radicals become mere denominationalists, then those who were appointed by God for the pioneers of religion are shrinking from their work, and lazily lingering with the main body. If God and nature put you in the advance guard, stay there, and do your duty. The Church goes across this vast wilderness of the world like a caravan across the desert. The departure of an Arabian caravan is the great event of the region; and a thousand persons join it from a thousand different motives. The rich bring their wealth for safety; the poor come to it with their pover-

ty and their prayers. All are needed. Each counts one, and each must find his place in the organization, if he would be safely guarded.

But who keeps it safe? Who conducts that caravan across the desert? Who are its guards and its guides? Who, but the wild Bedouin Arabs, whom it fears, while it must still trust to them? They guide the caravan. Their wild wanderings have taught them where safety lies; they know the oases where you may rest, and the dangerous passes where you must hasten. The Bedouins of the desert, the most constant and desperate of enemies, become instantly the most faithful friends when you once confide in them.

The radicals who are represented in this convention are the Bedouin Arabs of the Church. They guide it; they also guard it. Without them, it does not know its way. They must go first, and tread that dangerous pathway of progress before the time when great church organizations shall follow, and doctors of divinity shall stand where only these wild pioneers went first. We are armed with perilous opinions, are we? Well, the Bedouins carry spears. The swift thrust of truth is to the radical what that of the spear is to the Arab. It does its work. God has created him for that purpose. When God sends some souls into this world, he stamps upon them the necessity of being radical. As long as they look forward, they are safe; when they look backward, they are doomed. While the Bedouins trust themselves to His sun and His sky, to their own good horses and their own sharp spears, they can be of use to the advance of the main army. Take us, conservative friends, and use us. Do not expect to tame us; if you should, our special usefulness will be gone. Treat us not as enemies, treat us as friends. We walk with bleeding feet, perhaps where you, safely shod, will come one day. We, with our necessary contests, are preparing that great epoch when men will cease to contend; when the great caravan will find the desert blossoming all around it, and need no guides; and in that good day "nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall there be war any more."

THE PRESIDENT. There can be no sweeter connection between Wentworth Higginson and Wendell Phillips than a strain of music. Our friends, the Hutchinsons, are here; I call for a song.

The Hutchinsons then sang their favorite song, "One Hundred Years Hence," which was received with great applause. At the conclusion of the song, Wendell Phillips, Esq., was introduced.

## ADDRESS OF WENDELL PHILLIPS.

*Mr. Chairman,* — The question this evening is "The Relation of Religion to Philanthropy and to Social Science." It is comparatively a new question. I do not profess to understand it. It is certainly a new question to me. I have no such mature thought upon it as gives me any right to stand on this platform as a teacher. I have only obeyed the order of the Committee to stand here and offer some suggestions, something that will at least stir thought in this direction.

In the first place, as a little, perhaps, hyper-criticism on the report of our friend, Mr. Sanborn, I would ask him to add to the disciples of Channing, and the rest whom he catalogued, the disciples of Swedenborg. Let us fill the whole circle. We welcome everything on this platform. And then in regard to what our friend, Mr. Higginson, has submitted to us, I cannot go beyond that. My own life is a comment upon that text. I began life with a most profound faith in the honesty and in the efficiency of church organization. I had the most entire belief (which I did not inherit) that the Church contained all the sincere religious feeling and purpose that existed. I was bayoneted out of that conviction by experience. My eyes were opened by the facts about me; and when I began to look back, with eyes annointed by the facts of my own life, into the history of church organization, my experience seemed natural enough. For instance, the Church, as such, gave us no help in the anti-slavery effort or in any other radical movement. I do not believe that the philosophy of organization allows the possibility of a church ever helping in such an onward movement. We are not to be exacting. We are to allow, exactly, to every phase of opinion, level of purpose, organized representative of conviction, its actual value. It seems to me that organization is a millstone which represents how far opinion had travelled when it crystallized into an organization. You cannot expect of that organization, necessarily in its shape as an organization, an acceptance of any new idea. It will discharge, unexpectedly, its full duty if it even maintains life enough bravely to represent the opinion which created it; which in seven cases out of ten it never does. It seems to me that every organization is the representation of an idea, but never can go beyond it. It never has been, or rarely has been, faithful to the application of an idea. It has fallen back into the worship of the fathers. It has limited itself by the application made by its own saints. For instance, Luther claimed the right for bodies of men to go out and represent Catholicism; but Luther did not reach the point of allowing the individual to do that; and when some of his own followers went to that

extent, the public sentiment of the era being unable to bear them up, they were surged and swamped in the age, and forgotten. The age was not ready for such individuals. It could not hold them up. Succeeding them came Congregationalism, having the idea that a church, a small collection, could assert the right of individual judgment as against a large body. That was another gain. Then came the Brownists, the Independents, and the Baptists, asserting the right of individual judgment, within the line of what was considered the inspired rule of the Scriptures. That was another gain. But when the Quaker went out beyond that, and claimed the right of individual judgment, not subject to the inspiration of a book, they cried out "heretic;" they repudiated him, inevitably. Were they not all good? Yes, undoubtedly. Did not Luther do a great deal of good? Certainly. Did not the Congregationalists? Indubitably. Does not the Church of to-day do a great deal of good? Certainly it does. It takes up the admitted truths, the respectable truths; it gathers them into shape, applies them to admitted evils; cheap soup and the primer, giving away money, perhaps the tenth of your income; the duty of not allowing your neighbors in the next street to starve; the duty of sending the truth you have got to somebody else, — all good, excellent! The only weakness you find in organization is when you demand of it to walk. The fluid is a force; the solid is a weight. While the river is a fluid, it moves. You must not expect motion of that which is crystallized; but it has its use. When I was on the Mississippi's banks lately, we walked across the river. The ice was useful. It was church organization. The fluid of the last summer crystallizes into a useful bridge; but if the river subsides, and leaves ten feet of vacancy below, the bridge will fall. If, with the advancing spring, the water rises, it will carry the whole Church into the ocean of absolute truth; it will carry the ice away. But you must not expect motion of the crystallized sentiment which has become a church. There was great truth in what the old Italian said in the fifteenth century: "There has not been a Christian die in his bed for two hundred years," — that is, there had not been a real Christian man who looked about him, saw the needs and met the lessons of the actual day, with nothing in his own soul between him and God, who led a comfortable life. He must always go out with the Baptist into the wilderness. He need not, perhaps, always reproach the Church that staid at home and did its own business, — acted up to its light. It has its uses. His duty is, as it seems to me, to confess the light God gives him. As was beautifully said as I stood by the coffin of a deceased friend this week, "Her right never rebuked another's wrong." Perhaps I should vary the statement a little; but

what I mean is, there is no need, necessarily, of rebuking short-coming until it passes into dishonest antagonism; until it seeks to throw a net under your feet, and trip you up; until it thunders after you misrepresentation and scandal, and cries out, "schismatic!" "fanatic!" "infidel!" As long as it can recognize its own place, and let you take yours, it is to be fellowshipped, not as a force in the movement of society, but as a breakwater and anchor to keep what we have gained. That is my idea. In the meantime, we are all to set to work and preach whatever God or man has taught us of the finest laws of the religious sentiment, and each age will see more and more of it. Luther was honest; but Carlstadt was necessary, in a certain sense, because he saw more. The other day, I heard Fanny Butler read Scott's description in *Marmion* of Constance's execution. I had never heard it before, although I had read it a hundred times, because she had seen more in it than I could see, a hundred fold. Now, in that light, I take Christianity, — the highest type, revelation, and representation of religion.

Let me say, in passing, we have no evidence that church organization is any better to-day than it was in 1835, when it was "the bulwark of slavery, and a brotherhood of thieves." Because it has been lifted up to the level of the eye does not prove inherent power, does not prove it inspired by its own virtue. Go and stand on the Brooklyn ferry, and you will find the float at the edge is always ready to receive you; but it does not float itself; the water underneath floats it. And what has lifted the Church into an anti-slavery position is not its own vigor. Gettysburg, Atlanta, Lincoln's Proclamation, Andersonville, floated it there. It will be just as wanting on the next trial; exactly as wanting. But that criticism does not lie against the great first movement of Christianity itself.

The records of Christianity hold, it seems to me, a very large measure of the lessons that social science needs. In the first place, the Christian records are principles. The Church is an alleviative. It approaches evils to alleviate them, not to cure them. That is not the New Testament method. There are two ways of touching evils. If the gas was escaping in this room, we should open the ventilators and relieve ourselves. That is *relief*. To-morrow, the superintendent would send for a gasfitter, and he would stop the leak. That is *cure*. Now, as I look at it, all action of the Church approaches poverty to make it comfortable; it approaches crime to endeavor to soften it; it approaches prostitution to shield it from temptation. That is *relief*. That is opening the windows to get rid of the leaking gas. But social science and the religious philosophy of the New Testament, while

they attempt all that, prescribe that the really religious intellect shall seek, not relief, but cure. Take, for instance, the benevolence of this city. We have very many benevolent institutions. We have some very beautiful ones. We have some that take children from their parents, and put them into better families; put them into watchful institutions; surround them with fine influences. That is good. That is a benefit. That saves a score of children. The father and the mother, perhaps, were victims of the rum-shop. They worked fifteen hours a day, and went home so weather-beaten, so foot-sore, and so tired, that they had no moral or intellectual energy left; they could only sleep, and get up the next day. The child was either neglected, or left an orphan, by over-toil; and he wandered in the streets. Philanthropy, benevolence, got hold of him, and shielded him. That is good. But you never work any final cure, as I think, in the idea of the New Testament, until you get into the line of God's laws, and act with them. Parents are an institution; you cannot abolish parents. You must co-operate with an institution; you must go behind, and search out the causes which produced that forlorn orphan child of drunken parents; that boy "dragged up," as Charles Lamb said, and not "brought up." In other words, you must make your streets safe for a man of weak resolution to walk in. Prohibition! As I said the other day in a kindred meeting, a man out in Illinois, in one of its largest cities, the greatest landholder in the country, said to a friend who told me the story, "Look at yonder rum-shop. I will give you a deed of half I own if you will give me the power to pass that door without going in." Benevolence would have set to work to try to give him the power. Philanthropy would have shut the door. There is just the difference. Philanthropy would endeavor not only to save him, but all similar weak resolutions. That is prohibition. If you pick up a child in the streets, and trace it back to the father and mother, you find the cause of its desertion in too much toil, — fourteen hours' work each day, we will suppose. Benevolence takes the child, brings it up, clothes it, educates it, tries to shield it from the influence of its home. Philanthropy, in the service of social science, grapples the great problem of capital and labor, and tries — with co-operation in one hand and eight hours in the other, a better currency, a lower rate of interest, fairer relation of capital to labor — to make a home that children can grow up safely in. That is social science; that is my idea of it. What is the relation of religion to it? Well, the relation of religion to it, is this: It seems to me that religion covers the principles, and our allegiance to the principles, that underlie things. For instance, there is prostitution. It cor-

rupts one sex. How will you meet it? You will meet it by Houses of Refuge; you will meet it by sympathy; you will meet it by domestic shelter for the fallen girls. That is one way. You will meet it better in the spirit of the New Testament. When the seven devils went out, what was the next event? Why did they come back again? Because it was empty! If the chamber had been filled with angels, they could not have got back again. That is what makes the higher powers control the lower. What makes the man of twenty-eight smother the vices of a boy of eighteen? A career, ambition, hope of the great rewards of society wake him up, lift him into sunshine. Control of his fellow-men, all the crowns and rewards of life, summon him to be a man; and he treads out his vices under his feet. He has not time for them. His higher powers waken, and, according to the law of our nature, control the lower. From my class in college went a boy, poisoned with drink, to Paris. You would have thought it was the very place to swamp him forever; but, no, it was the place to cure him. He was rich, and Paris gave him art to study; it gave him pictures and statuary, history and languages, and all sorts of excitement, to fill up the vacant hours that tempted him, having nothing to do here, to resort to the stimulus of his stomach; it gave him a better stimulus, and he came back, not a teetotaller, but a sober man. So with woman. She craves what her brother craves, — comforts, luxuries, amusements, travels, books, theatres, fine house and furniture, — all that makes life delightful. Give her the means to earn them honestly. Ninety-nine men out of a hundred will spurn theft, if you will give them an honest means of gaining what fairly belongs to them in this life; and ninety-nine women out of a hundred will escape the streets, if you will give them the same opportunity their brothers have for a fair share of this world's goods. Not only that, but a career fills up the mind. You have not time for temptation; you despise it. Business is pleasanter than pleasure to a wholesome soul. That is viewing prostitution as social science does. So of theft, so of vice, so of degradation, so of position in life.

Men tell me when I go down into Faneuil Hall to address three or four thousand laboring men, "What do you go there for? They hated the negro." I know they did. "They mobbed you." Of course they did. "They were the tools with which men filled that Temple in January, 1861." I know it; more's the pity! I am sorry they were in such a mood of mind, such a depth of ignorance, and such a degree of social isolation, that they were all so shut out from the best influences of society, that they were approachable or impressible by such mean men. How am I going to help them? Give this man a dollar, and another



a pass to go to Worcester, and a third a ticket to hear Fanny Butler? Not a bit of it. My plan is to educate capital so that it shall know its responsibilities and duties. I am going to equalize wealth. I am going to make the profits of reserved wealth less, and the profits of growing wealth, *i. e.*, labor, greater. I am going to get back as nearly as possible to that dream of Franklin's, when he said, Every human being laboring four hours a day, the world would have done enough to answer all its needs. In other words, I plan to inaugurate *co-operation* instead of *competition*, and enact eight hours as a laboring day.

Now, what does Christianity say? Christianity is my great authority. I think all the essence of the New Testament is in one line: "Bear ye one another's burdens." This, I know, is not a new thought. But one of the best sermons dealing with it that has ever fallen in my way, is by Rev. Mr. Jones of Antwerp, New York; one that I hope soon to see in print in some of our religious journals. My eloquent friend who preceded me has published an edition of Epictetus; and he knows a great deal more of Antoninus, Confucius, and the oriental and classic writers in the twilight that preceded the full noon of the gospel, than I do. I do not know how far, in words, they anticipated the maxims of the New Testament. All I know is, that to me, looking at history in its great facts, there is nothing in the ancient world that gives you the cardinal principle, as I look at it, of Christianity. Confucius said a great many things anticipating the Sermon on the Mount; so did Socrates, of the classic era; and many of the great saints, if we may call them so. But the society that grew up under them was a corrupt society. Society is the body of which the religion of the age is the soul, — I do not mean the Church, but the religion, of the age is the soul; and the reason why I maintain that the religion of this age is in a corrupt and hide-bound and marvellously decrepit state, is because society, which forms its body here, is a capital-punishment, pro-slavery, fourteen-hours-a-day, woman-under-the-heel society; and, as long as it is, the soul that dwells in that body must be a soul dwelling in darkness, — half developed. I do not need any other proof. But, as I said, Thomas Carlyle is a pagan. He represents the philosophy of every thing outside of Christianity; which is, that the strong have a right to use and absorb the weak, — aristocracy in its essence. I am an educated man, I am a wealthy man, I am a healthy man; and my vocation is just to enjoy the world, pluck all its sweets, and grind up the lower classes into the materials of my enjoyment. That is my right. The same principle in morals that Darwin teaches in nature; the strongest survives, and crowds the weaker out of life. That is paganism; that is classic ethics as it flowered out into institutions. Christianity's

protest is, "The smoking flax shall he not quench;" "He that will be chief among you, let him be your servant." If there is any strength, God gave it in order that it might hold up weakness, supplement weakness. If there is any knowledge, God gave it that it might sit down side by side with ignorance, and put its arm around its neck, and divide. If there is any wealth, it is only a trust, and the poorest man you can find in the neighborhood is your co-trustee. That is Christianity, as I read it. That is Christianity; and, singularly enough, we generally leap right off, and say, that is the Church. But take the amelioration of punishment, for instance, as an illustration of my meaning, — the old vindictive theory of the Jews, and the European idea, that hangs a man to satisfy the passions of society. That lived a great while. Then came the exemplary idea, that I must be hung to make you better; which sacrificed me to your welfare. That held its own a great while. Those two were the pet ideas of the Christian Church. We have got a new idea now, and it is this: that the moment society has seized a man, society owes him education, moral development, protection, emolument. Having put him within stone walls for its own defence, it shall thereupon begin the duty it owed to him in his cradle, and neglected; that is, begin to educate him. Prisons are moral hospitals. God let that man commit a murder in order that society might get the right to take hold of him, and do what God holds it guilty for not doing before, — educate him. Where did you get that idea? Got it from Beccaria, got it from Voltaire, got it from Romilly, got it from Dumont, got it from Bentham, — men who, if they ever were inside of a church door, would be held as heretics, — got it from Brougham, whom the Church denounced as an infidel. Never has there been a man in advance of the age, on this question or in any other way, who has not been driven into the wilderness by the Church of the day. But whence really came this idea of the treatment of persons, for instance? It came from the great normal root of Christianity, the sacredness of the individual. Religion, having taken hold of a man, no longer deems him a chip of a block, a part of the government, a unit that goes to make up the State; it no longer looks at him in the mass, a hierarchy, an aristocracy. That single unit of a soul and God, — these are the only two things in the universe, in the contemplation of religious principle. The sacredness of the individual! What right have you to hang me? Stuart Mill is the only infidel who ever failed to see this, but he is followed by nine hundred and ninety-nine out of a thousand Christians, so called. But those men called infidels studied social science; they studied philanthropy; they studied principle; they studied it in human instincts. Called infidels,

men calling themselves Christians, who really are Infidels, without suspecting it. I have met in my day many specimens of both these classes. That man is a Christian whose life and ethics grow out of the central root of Christianity; no matter, if in his ignorance or his prejudice he disowns the name. That man is an Infidel who is not, with his whole heart, willing to bear his brother's burden; no matter how broad his phylactery, how regular his Church-membership papers, or how loud his profession of Liberalism or Radicalism.

Now come to methods a moment. The Church would say to you, if you have an idea, submit it, go before the brotherhood, and see whether they approve. Do not dare arraign this sacred or civil authority; that is schismatic, that is faction, that is monomaniacal, that is fanatical.' The best sermon that Lyman Beecher ever preached was to prove that Paul's doctrines were just like his, because the men of that day brought the same objection against them that the men of his day brought against him. It was a pretty good argument. Now, what did the Jews call the Saviour? Schismatic! Infidel! Fanatic! Blasphemer! Why, with all reverence, if Jesus himself should stand up literally in these streets, and preach at the corners, trying to do exactly what he did, that is, create among the masses, by moral agitation, a public sentiment that would undermine the Hierarchy and tear the State to pieces, he would be in jail a week, and the church would approve it. But that is what he did. What did Christianity do? Christianity did not go to the Pharisees, did not go to the Sanhedrim, did not go to the lawyers, to the educated classes. "To the poor, the gospel is preached." Christianity exhibits the utmost friendliness and respect for the untutored instinct of the masses; it endeavors to reach and fold them in its own bosom. Christianity appealed friendlily, and respectfully, with all honor and trust, to the natural instinct of the masses of mankind against the *education* of its day. It has been described as "the loftiest wisdom condescending to the lowest ignorance." But that is not a full statement. *The loftiest wisdom trusted its lessons*, not to the schools, but to what the world considered *the lowest ignorance*. It made this ignorance its partner and colaborer in revolutionizing the moral condition of the race. It was the great agitator of that day, and ours is the same. That agitation, eighteen hundred years ago, used such "harsh language," bidding "rich men howl," styling the leaders in Church and State, "hypocrites," "vipers," "children of hell," "extortioners," that it was called "seditious," "blasphemous," "heretic," and "pestilent,"—just the same epithets that a corrupt Church and State visit us with to-day. These things point to a common law, one that underlies all progress, all movement, and shows the inevitable strife between organization and growth. If you want to

get a new truth, of course you find that the institutions of society which have grown out of the old truths are opposed to you. For instance, take eight hours,— the great question that looms over the horizon, sure to come in its time, preliminary only, and supplementary to the greater question of co-operation, which looks over its shoulder. Capital, to-day, that commands the world, the press, the church, public opinion, looks, *ignorantly*, at the attacks as its own ruin ; and of course any man who undertakes to carry out that idea, on social science principles, must meet with opposition, must expect to meet, not only opposition, but malignant misrepresentation from all that class whose selfishness and whose interests are all wrapped up in existing institutions. What are we to do under such circumstances? We are to say, "Eight hours is not simply giving a man an evening to go to school." What is Christianity? The sacredness of the individual. What does it teach us? That God's sole object in creation is not government, not railroad depots, not ships, not colleges, not wealth, not commerce, not literature, but as Humboldt says, "all these are the scaffolding to build a man." The noblest fruit the earth offers to her Maker is man. Why do I, as a religious man, care that that man should have eight hours for labor, eight hours for rest, and eight hours for sleep? Because Christianity tells me he has got a soul, religion tells me that for that soul it is necessary that he should have leisure, and the influences which will unfold it. This is the period of his existence in which God meant it should be unfolded, to a certain extent. As the old Bishop said, "A king is a very unfortunate man ; surrounded with wealth, every wish gratified, every thought anticipated, there is a barrier all around him, and truth cannot get in. He would not know it if it entered ; it is almost an impossibility that he should be a Christian." What did the Bishop say? He said, "Kings, should be very careful." That was natural for a Bishop. What would a religious man say? "Abolish Kings ! It is an abnormal condition ; God never intended to put man's soul into that condition ; society should not ask any soul to remain in that condition." So I say of the laborer. You work him until his body is tired to death, until there is no energy left in his mind. (I am speaking of men in the mass, not of the Cobbetts, who take the world with thirty minutes leisure, and one farthing of wealth a day, and carve out for themselves an education better than the university of Oxford gives to ninety-nine out of a hundred of its students.) I take the average laboring man, and I say you do not leave him the means of getting his soul into relations with God in this world ; and therefore religion, as it endeavors to inspire social science, says to me, "You have no right, in order to make cotton cheap, in order to have sugar upon every table, in order that railroads shall make twelve per

cent. dividends, — you have no right to use up four-fifths of the souls that God sends into New England. The first duty of this community, religiously considered, is so to arrange its industrial affairs that *souls* shall have a fair chance." Therefore, I say, woman has a right to an equal chance to all the opportunities that man has, and labor has a right to a larger share of the leisure and profits that result from the combined industry of capital and labor.

A VOICE. How are you going to accomplish that end?

MR. PHILLIPS. I am going to accomplish it exactly as Christianity mounted the throne of the Cæsars. Not by concealing one-third of what God tells me, in order not to frighten my neighbor behind me, but by telling all that God tells me. That is the service he calls me to. We cannot expect that service from organizations. Here is the Temperance Society — an excellent thing, a useful thing. It is the magnificent result of thirty years labor. It represents the average of the church of America. Its mile-stone is an ecclesiastical one. You may enter this hall, as I did twelve months ago, at a temperance convention, and find this platform, from corner to corner, covered with white cravats. That is where the temperance organization stands. To-day, alarmed and vigilant, radicalism says: "Are we going to have a President who cannot stand when he sees a filled cup of whiskey before him?" Few men can answer the question. I am not going to answer it to-night. But here is the point. The temperance organization, representing the respectability of the nation, the church of the nation (not its religion), refuses to investigate the question. It dare not create that ripple on the availability of admitted Republicanism which inquiry in the line of its own duty would bring about. It dare not face the duty of rebuking the most popular man in the nation to-day, if it should find him weak in that particular. Temperance obeys the same law that the church obeys. It is *organization*; it is the ice. But religion underlies temperance, as the Mississippi the ice. The duty that underlies temperance is the fluid allegiance to the light that God gives you on that question. A few of us, therefore, temperance men, but not members of temperance organizations, John the Baptists, but not of the Sanhedrim, have undertaken to investigate the question; duty-bound to investigate it, and fling all the light we can upon it. We are not obliged to prevent the access of an individual to the White House. All men who knew Andrew Johnson to be a drunkard in 1864 were not bound to prevent his being chosen Vice-President; but if they had been temperance men, obeying the principles of social science, of philanthropy and religion, which I am laying down to you, they would have investigated the question, and written up the verdict where all the people might read

it, and then left us to act upon our own responsibility. What the anti-slavery men did when Garrison first waked the note of distrust and watchfulness in regard to slavery, was to claim of the American people that they should probe their own civil and religious soil; and the church said to them: "Fanatics, go you out! We shall do no such thing. We hide all respectable sins under our mantles!" Garrison went out, and in thirty years, aided by the great events of Providence, God enabled him to strike off three millions of fetters, and make it indecent for organized religion not to be in at the death. Then the church hurried up, and almost crowded him out of sight, crying out: "Did n't I always tell you so? Did n't you find it on my records, laid down in this principle and that, that anti-slavery is religion, and slavery is sin?" "Yes, we did; we found the *principle*; the difficulty was, you were not willing to *apply the principle*." The mistake we made at first was in imagining that there was any vigor in the church that could apply the principle. The duty that God laid before us, to show that religion is applied social science, did not necessarily bid us rebuke the church, but it did bid us to take that principle, come out, and do as they do at Lowell, where great prongs tear the cotton, clean it, and let the air in; and that is what we did. That is what religion says is the province of social science. It is to take principles, fearless of all interests, and apply them to the cure, not to the relief of evils. The well-fed alderman, the respectable Episcopalian, throws enough into his poor-box on Sunday to relieve the poverty of the next street. Chadwick will tell you, and everybody else, in many a blue book, of the most exquisite methods of relieving the poverty of Great Britain. No man could investigate it more ingeniously. Up to the light which he has, he is a master of social science, of philanthropy informed by religion; but you and I know well enough, brought up in New England, that a school, robbed of its sectarianism and free to everybody; that a ballot-box, which takes bonds of wealth and culture to make every voter intelligent because he is powerful, and he will not be safe unless you educate him; that a society which throws open a career for every individual, and, by feeding his higher powers, makes him a man, — you and I know that these are infinitely better than the poor-box. God's method of education is to lay responsibility on the human soul. The doctors say there is electricity enough in the brain to cure any disease, if you could only rouse it. So there is moral power enough in every man to make him a man, if you could only rouse it; and responsibility rouses it. Take a girl, a mere popinjay, a toy; she gets married, and people say; "What a mere child that is to have children!" She has one or two children, and then her husband is taken from her side. How wisely she plans; how patiently she watches; how

she opens careers for them; how she guards her children's interests; how she begs from one and from another, and earns from a third, the means to give that boy an education, sheltering the girl meanwhile! What a wonderful being! We never knew her. Where were all those powers hidden? How did she get them? Necessity brought them out; God created them. If you had given her a career before, you would have seen them all. You were beginning to move in the line of God's law when you found her a widow, with those two children on her brain and heart. You had got into the line of the great necessity which God meant should unfold, educate, and lift up every human being. You did not need the magnet that a mechanic came and filled up with electricity — that is, a benevolent society — for her; the great natural magnetism of the earth that is, God's law, made her gravitate towards a career, and a success.

But I have talked longer than I intended. All I want to say is, that the value of social science to men of radical faith and purpose is, that it digs down to the root of principle. It does not seek alleviation merely; it does not seek what the church can give; it faces the great problems of the hour. Negro slavery was a very great question, but still, to a certain extent, it was a limited one; it applied to a race. Its value was that it forced us, in the conflict with the Church, in the conflict with the State, to dig down to the principles, which, when they grew up, covered all kindred interests. You know the story told of Ben Wade, when Giddings, in the days of his darkness, went in with a clergyman to see him, and protest against an anti-slavery lecture. They had formed a society and held meetings to prove that the Bible sanctioned slavery, and they went in to see Ben Wade. He was an "infidel;" and it is singular how "infidels" seem to get into closer relation with God than the other set. Said they: "Mr. Wade, won't you join the Society?" "Yes," said he, "I would if I wanted to kill the Bible. If I wanted to kill the Bible, I should not do anything sooner than to prove that it sanctioned slavery." "Well," said the minister, "I never thought of that," — and they dissolved the Society. So slavery forces every question upon us. "Do the duty that lies next to you." You first go down and try to save the drunkard, and when he has fallen forty times, and you cannot hold him up; when you have found that every tenth door in the city is a pit-fall into which he can but tumble; when you have found that, make him sign the pledge again and again, you cannot make it safe for him to walk in these streets, then you will begin to ask why. And then, when you see a great man come up to the State House, and argue that drink is not poison, that it is as good diet as a piece of beef-steak, you will shake your head, and say, "Well, it may be so; I won't dispute Liebig;

I won't put one chemist against another ; all I know is, that if beef-steak causes four-fifths of the crime and nine-tenths of the poverty of the country, then let beef-steak be banished !” You will travel off to your principle, and you will say : “ Bear ye one another's burdens.” What is my duty ? To hold that man up. How shall I do it ? Not by lying down with him, but, first, by making my life a strength to him ; and, secondly, by so shaping my civil life that, weak as he is, he can walk up and down the streets. So of every other question. You go to work with your eyes open, in a cheap soup society, in distributing primers, — go and buy a tract of the American Tract Society, that has not an idea in it less than a century old. I do not care what it is, but go and distribute it honestly, with a faithful and conscientious intention to help your neighbor, keep your eyes open, and you will find yourself close against a wall, that you will be obliged to penetrate or beat down. You will find your feet at last planted on a principle, on an idea, and as you stand there, you will look back and find the church has floated away from you. Have the courage to stand ! There is where God meant you should stand. Do not let any man come to you and say : “ If you tell of this, you will injure your weaker neighbor.” Say to him : “ God told me, and that is the best evidence that He meant I should tell somebody else.” “ Let the dead bury their dead ;” which means, let every man whose level is just behind me, stand on his level ; but I am neither to conceal, nor to equivocate, nor to trim down. I am not for availability ; I am not for the idea that because these great institutions will do a certain amount of good, I am not to display the light that welcomes me and beckons me forward. I believe that the church, the organized religion of the day, stands very close up the people of the day. It has accepted the war, but that is not the cross of to-day. The war has gone by. The cross of to-day is, will you shut out from the statute book, all the continent over, the idea of race ? Have you got to that level that you have forgotten caste ? Have you risen to that absolute brotherhood that can tear up by the roots the distinction between black and white, which has poisoned our history for ninety years ? The Republican party says : “ We dare not risk it ! It is a good thing, but it is not available. Shut your mouth, brother, while we elect General Grant !” But God says : “ Do not shut your mouth !” “ Let the dead bury their dead ” — in the White House, if they please. But in the meantime, cry you out, like the voice of one in the wilderness, to the American people : “ The message of God in this epoch is, Rise up, gird your loins, and stand so far forward that American law shall not know color !”

Seek out, publish, and, as fast as possible, bring society into harmony



with, the laws of *justice*. This is social science. All Labor asks is *justice*, not charity; all woman asks is *justice*, not pity; all the negro asks is *justice*, not humanity. Indeed, where is the treasury full enough to pay that debt? All crime asks is *justice*, not sympathy. Who shall teach us the full meaning of this great word, JUSTICE? "Owe no man anything." When that command is obeyed, Social Science will be dazzled out of sight by the millennium.

COL. HIGGINSON. I hope that we shall not only have a song now, but that the platform shall have a voice in saying what that song shall be. I, for one, never knew what rolled up nine thousand votes for equal suffrage, without distinction of caste or sex in Kansas, until I heard the campaign song which the Hutchinsons sung all across the Kansas prairies to bring it about. I call for that song.

The Hutchinsons very kindly responded to this call, and sung their "Campaign Song" with thrilling and inspiring effect. The audience testified their appreciation of the music by the most enthusiastic applause.

Miss Lizzie Doten was then called for, and coming upon the platform, spoke as follows:

#### ADDRESS OF MISS LIZZIE DOTEN.

I only stand upon this platform to-night to ask to be excused from speaking. You were informed this afternoon that I would appear here to represent Spiritualists and Spiritualism; but when I look down deep into my soul, I feel that at any time or in any place, I can only represent myself and my own ideas. Not that I would by any means ignore Spiritualism. I am a Spiritualist, and a believer in that form of faith; but I perceive this one great fact, that we stand as individuals before the everlasting truth, and we must hear the word that it speaks to our own souls, and to none other. If I am to represent the Spiritualists in any way, it is in this sense, that they are individuals — each one speaking and thinking for himself and herself. And I rejoice that Spiritualists occupy that position to-day. They can only agree upon one fundamental fact, that spirits communicate; and outside of that, every man and every woman is free to think for himself or herself, to accept the doctrines and dogmas of the church, or reject them, as they please. When Spiritualism is considered in its relation to the reforms of the day, I can only say for it, that it is as yet but a tender child. When Christianity was only twenty years old, I do not think it had done much in the way of general reform. It was only presenting a new phase of truth which it did not fully understand itself. And so Spiritualism, with its eye

fixed on the signs of the times, is defining its position as far as it can; earnestly endeavoring to understand itself. As for myself, an individual, standing alone, although I am a little woman, I never yet found a church big enough to hold me! I never found an *ism* with arms long enough to retain me in its embrace. I feel that the truth is so vast, and stretches forward into such an infinity, and that my immortal soul is so closely allied to that truth, that I must go upward and onward with it; and I say to the Spiritualists, and to the Universalists, (with whom I formerly belonged,) and to the radicals, (with whom I sympathize,) do not take hold of my skirts to hold me back! Let me go upward, where the great attraction of this largest and most comprehensive truth is drawing me! When I consider the signs of the times, I feel as though I would like to shut my mouth and remain silent until I could finish thinking. That, I know, never will be done, but the signs of the times are so significant, that I tremble before them. I know that there is to come a greater revelation of the truth than we have known in the past, and it is to be born out of the great heart of humanity. Not of Christianity, not of any *ism*, but to be born of human needs, and to lead forward, by that great law of spiritual progression which shall elevate the whole human race; not bring the spiritual world down lower, but bring humanity up nearer to the angels, and to all the blessed revelations that Heaven can give to human hearts. I know that

Deeper than all sense of seeing  
Lies the secret source of being,  
And the soul with truth agreeing,  
Learns to live in thoughts and deeds.  
For the life is more than raiment,  
And the earth is pledged for payment,  
Unto man for all his needs.

Nature is our common mother,  
Every living man our brother,  
Therefore let us serve each other,  
Not to meet the law's behests,  
But because through cheerful giving  
We shall learn the art of living,  
And to live and serve is best.

Life is more than what man fancies,  
Not a game of idle chances,  
But it steadily advances  
Up the rugged heights of time,  
Till each complex web of trouble,  
Every sad hope's broken bubble,  
Hath a meaning most sublime.

More of practice, less profession,  
 More of firmness, less concession,  
 More of freedom, less oppression  
     In the church and in the state,  
 More of life, and less of fashion,  
 More of love and less of passion,  
     That will make us good and great.

When true hearts, divinely gifted,  
 From the chaff of error sifted,  
 On their crosses are uplifted,  
     Shall the world most clearly see,  
 That earth's greatest time of trial,  
 Calls for holy self-denial,  
     Calls on men to do and be.

But forever and forever,  
 Let it be the soul's endeavor  
 Love from hatred to dis sever,  
     And in whatsoe'er we do,  
 Won by truth's eternal beauty,  
 To our highest sense of duty  
     Evermore be firm and true.

#### CLOSING ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, — DEAR FRIENDS, — The hour has come at which we ought to break up our meeting; and yet it seems a pity that the strain should not be prolonged into the night. I, for one, have never sat for so many hours so entranced as I have to-day; and yet I have not the heart to detain the Convention a moment, to add any thought of mine to all the noble thoughts that have been given you this evening — more than our minds and hearts can contain. Only let me say this, that the Association under whose auspices this meeting was called to-day, must feel satisfied now that they have an idea, a truth, a position, and a work to do, which they would be entirely unjustified in leaving undone. I came here this morning with certain misgivings, such as we all have who are launching on a new enterprise; uncertain a little about the speakers, about what was to be said; certain only of this — that my purpose, and the purpose of those gentlemen and ladies who called this meeting together, and would animate it as far as they might with their spirit, would be generous, hospitable, large, free, confiding, hopeful of the result, and not be disappointed whatever the fate of the meeting might be. We are more than justified in our hope, more than justified in our anticipation. The words that have been spoken here to-

day, though coming from such various lips and such diversified experience, have nevertheless proved, by the ring that they had in your ears, and the echo that they awakened in your hearts, that they all came from a deep and earnest experience, which looked onward to a noble future of attainment. Those who spoke from the inside of the church, and those who spoke from the outside of the church, the evangelicals and the non-evangelicals, those who professed a great deal, and those who dare not profess anything, have all stood here as believers, positive, profound believers, and believers in the same thing: believers in man, believers in man's destiny on the planet, in the Fatherhood of the Great Spirit that placed man on the planet, in the brotherhood of all men together, in the necessity that all should work out their salvation together, in the need that is laid upon each soul to utter its word with perfect freedom, without fear, and without favor. I say, that achievement alone, the opening a hall, the supplying a platform, where so many men, speaking so many tongues, shall speak out of one heart, and speak freely one word, is no small achievement in these days. I felt when I came in as if there might be possibly something a little visionary in this dream of ours of a perfectly free religious association. For my part, I am a dreamer, I am used to dreaming, and I often think that dreams are more solid things than fact. I can live on an idea: and when I find a principle, it is to me no inane, void, ephemeral, ethereal matter of the air; it has in it the essence of all the souls who have ever felt it, who have ever lived in it, who have ever worked from it; and the moment it comes before my mental eye, all that great company of noble believers and workers whom it has animated in their day, gather about me in the air, and I am in their companionship. But when I have sat this morning, this afternoon, and this evening, and looked in your faces, as the speaking went on, I have felt that it was not a company of disembodied souls; I have felt that the real men and women of to-day, the men and women of Boston, and of other cities far away, of other lands, far distant, were here, either in body or in spirit; at any rate, with a large and earnest sympathy, and that this great association to which we belong, — we few men and women, — was larger than any church, was larger than all churches, and that we had the finest material surrounding that any company could boast. I feel that we, a little scattered band, are not a scattered band: that we are bound together by firmer bonds than any ecclesiastical association can furnish. Those bonds are a common faith in goodness, a common love for goodness, a common purpose to promote goodness by our teaching and living in the world.

One thing has stood out clearly to-day. Those very men who have used the evangelical speech, who have spoken so tenderly, as they did,

of Jesus, so lovingly, as they did, of the cross, so earnestly, as they did, out of their own free souls of the salvation that cross brought, have used those sweet names as symbols, — not as powers, not as charms, not as talismans any more, — but as symbols of the faith that was new and fresh in their minds. I knew it was so, because it kindled and awakened the faith that was latent in you.

And now, friends, it only remains to say the closing word. and to pray that you will carry away from this meeting the belief that an association is possible for thought, and feeling, and work, between men and women whose opinions differ, whose experiences are unlike, whose lines of life do not run parallel, whose conditions of life are of all sorts and descriptions, whose experiences have been of that manifold kind which the dear God so liberally assigns to all ; an association based on sympathy between minds that think the truth, hearts that love the truth, and souls that are consecrated only to the spirit of truth.

I have but to pronounce this meeting adjourned, and bid you Good-night.

## A P P E N D I X .

### I.

RABBI I. S. NATHANS has kindly offered the following, as the substance of the address which he would have made to the Convention :

It would give me great pleasure to offer a few remarks on the Science of Religion. This expression, as applied to religion, is not new. There was a time when science, no matter in what garment, was called religion, and it was expected that every scientific man should be also a religious advocate. But all this is changed, and we have become accustomed to speak of science as connected with Physics, Language, Music, &c., but seldom in conjunction with religion, until the progressive scholars of later times have begun to apply it again with propriety. There was a time when the discovery made by science that our planet revolved around the sun, and not the sun around the earth, was very difficult to understand by the religious leaders of the age. This new discovery by science was so dangerous to teach, that the man who taught it was excommunicated and sentenced to death. Why was this? It was because *religion* stood still, as the earth was thought to do, and science, her sun, was obscured by the mists of superstition: it could not break through the dense darkness, and so religion was ignorance, and not light. But when the thick fogs of superstition began to break away, and the great eternal centre of true revelation shone on the horizon of religion, then science gave heat and light, and true faith appeared. The dead and putrid bodies of Dogma and Ceremony now lie shrivelling beneath its rays; and from their ashes, as a Phœnix, will rise rejuvenated the spirit of pure religion, when the false power of creed and priest will pass away.

But let me trace somewhat this line of progress among the Hebrew people, since I am asked to represent that progress in this meeting.

If we will look back to the orthodox Jewish church, we shall see that her whole fabric of religion was based on the spiritless letter of Scripture. In accordance with this there was a time when Moses was recognized only as an individual, and his corporeal presence as necessary to encourage his people, to lead them through the wilderness, to give them the ten commandments, and to teach them the law. When this Moses absented himself for a time, his brother, the highest priest among this people, made a god in the image of a calf. When Moses returned, enriched with the tables, ornamented with the everlasting words of the Eternal, he was obliged to cast away this great treasure, for which he had waited forty days and forty nights, and to take this false god, this calf, and burn and grind and scatter it on the waters, and give this mixture to his people to drink. Instead, too, of teaching them the exalted

commandments, he was obliged to pray God for forgiveness of the great error Israel had committed. After a long time of praying, judging his people, and exhorting them to do better, he received the call again to hew two tables of stone, and to prepare for another acceptance of the commandments.

And again, a time came when Moses was spiritually understood, — about four hundred years after his death, or still better, by his resurrection through Ezra, — and he was acknowledged according to the meaning of his name, *Mosheh*, advance, and science and research became the leaders of Israel. The spirit and not the letter made the commandments, and the law was framed not to the literal, but according to experimental tests.

This *mosheh*, this *advance* in religion, this exaltation in worshipping the Most High, by not merely bringing an animal alone as a sacrifice to the priest, but also bringing the feelings of the heart in thanks and prayer to the Creator, was indeed a great fortune to this people. It was an enormous progress for the age. And so long as this *mosheh*, advance, remained among the people, and was the only precept for their movements, they were regarded as the sage and wise nation abroad. In time *mosheh*, the advance, departed, and in his absence the people made an error again — another molten calf.

In the first instance, the masses, just after deliverance from Egyptian slavery, poor in experience, impracticable in science, utterly idealess in research, changed their god, believing he should be a material substance, and to be manufactured by each and every nation for themselves. In the second instance, though they had more knowledge, they again degenerated by losing love for each other. Hatred and ruin, murder and robbery, became common in Palestine.

Then came another change. But this could not be a mere advance; it had to be something more. The people, who had more experience, more independence and liberty of thought, were no longer satisfied with a *mosheh*, with advancing alone. They required a higher, a more exalted person, a Redeemer. Thus this epoch of religious progress was symbolized with the name of Jesus, *Salvator*, instead of *Mosheh*, advance.

All men, I think, are happy with the idea of redemption. All men desire an advance. Moses was first merely an individual, and then the idea of advance, to the Jews. Jesus was first merely an individual, and then the idea of Redeemer, to the Christians. But in the beginning, in fact for a very long while in the history of both of these ideas, Moses and Jesus were mysteries; blindly believed in by those who had no good ideas of what their leaders taught. And so it came to pass, that if you should meet an orthodox Jew, and speak of religion, his first and last question would be, "Do you believe the Messiah will come?" If you deny or doubt this, the Jew calls you infidel, unbeliever, no Jew. Or if you meet a Christian, his first and last question would be, "Do you believe in Christ?" and if you deny or doubt, he calls you infidel, or perhaps, now-a-days, a radical. You may be the strongest advocate for religion, a true believer; or more, you may be one who knows how to prove his faith, to prove how God exists; still you remain ever infidel to this orthodox questioner of Jewish or Christian faith. So God

the Father is unrecognized, and the teaching proclaimed by Jesus that the kingdom of Heaven began on earth, is set at naught.

But the times begin to change. What! the times begin? Oh, the times have already begun to change. Since liberal Christianity began to appear, a higher, clearer spirit has breathed life over the dry bones of all religious sects, as Hezekiah did of old; and a spiritual Moses, or advance, and a spiritual Jesus, or true redemption, have also begun to take the place of idolatry and bigotry. Let me illustrate my idea by recent Jewish history. Some thirty-five years ago, a Hungarian Rabbi, named Aaron Chorin, saw a plague of leprosy in the house of Judaism; and according to the law of Moses, he consulted with the college of Rabbis, saying to them, "It seemeth to me there is, as it were, a plague in our house." "What!" says the assembly, "a plague in the house which God gave to us? It is impertinent; an insult to God; it cannot be." Then replied Rabbi Chorin, "Know you not that the Torah declares, 'I will put plagues in your house?'" Whereupon the Rabbis called him infidel, a demolisher of the house of God.

But it happened pretty soon that the enlightened and liberal Rabbis, Dr. Schwab, Dr. Lowe, Dr. Zunze, Dr. Geiger, and Dr. Samuel, in Europe, together with Rabbis Dr. Wise and Dr. Einhorn and others, in America, were called to visit the house, because it seemed that there was a plague in the Synagogue. Like upright and honest priests, they were happy to offer their services for God and man. They commanded, according to the Bible, that the house should be emptied of all the strange articles of belief, and unusual furniture of creeds, before they would go into it to see the plague. The watchful proprietors of Judaism were evidently willing to obey the advice of these high-priests; but the tenants-at-will, or the ignorant and unenlightened class, having no interest in the premises beyond the term of their occupancy, cared little what distractions might come upon the tenement after their own convenience and interests were suited. They would not remove the articles of creeds, nor the furniture of belief, lest they should become scratched or soiled by contact with outside obstructions. Moreover, it would be a great inconvenience to them to have the household disturbed, even for the purpose of purification. The owners, afraid the whole house would be ruined by this careless action and these great plagues, applied again and again to the priests to perform their rites, but without avail, the priests being prohibited from entering, on account of the unclean things which encumbered the habitation. After many years of constant and steady exhortation, the premises began to be examined; the plague in the walls was found; the impure stones in many synagogues were ordered to be removed; and the places of worship swept of corrupting beliefs and practices. So a few Jewish congregations have a clean religious house, free from the damage and obstruction of religious superstitions.

This is a short statement of the origin, progress, and means, by which a great reformation has been made in the old Jewish church. These learned and liberal Rabbis whom I have just named, under the influence of books, sermons, and teachings that have appeared in this century, and inspired by our prayers and light from on high, have persevered in looking up the leprous spots in some of the Jewish synagogues, just as



Unitarians and others have done in the Christian church. They have read Channing, Parker, Hedge, Clarke, Norton, and others. They have re-read the Talmud, and have given profound thought to religion, and in consequence they have been able to overcome the orthodox Jewish prejudices, and have given wiser and more sensible interpretation to old allegories, which have been nothing but stumbling blocks to both Jews and Gentiles. They have established in Arad, Pesth, Vienna, Berlin, Bonne, and Hamburg, a reformed and liberal synagogue, without golden calves, or any creeds of superstition, or unmeaning ceremonies. In America, too, at New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, Cincinnati, San Francisco, but not in Boston, better synagogues have been built, purification exists, unclean creeds have gone by, and in their place love to God the Father, and love to all men, are taught and preached to God's people. Such Jews will hearken. Leaving off the old orthodoxy, they are taught not to look any more for a Messiah, nor to set up another Jerusalem, but rather to look for a Messiah and a New Jerusalem, in the freedom, and union, and peace of America.

We are living in a *United States*; may we not live, all too, in a united religion? Certainly, Union is our motto; in union our strength; in union our salvation. As in union there is strength, I therefore say, a combination of Jews, liberal Unitarians, and rationalistic thinkers would enable us to disseminate throughout the world those truths in religion which are advocated by all rational men, and welcome to all the children of God. These should be in the form of tracts, pamphlets, and books, which we find written by Spinoza, Mendelssohn, Chorin, Phillipsohn, Jelinek, Einhorn, Channing, Norton, Clarke, Parker, and others. Judaism has always been a true vindicator of pure, clear Unitarianism, and will, under a scientific and rational reform, join to fulfil the closing of the prayer, "On this day may the Lord be one, and his name (which exists in his people) be one."

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## II.

LETTER FROM KESHUB CHUNDER SEN, OF THE THEISTIC CHURCH  
IN INDIA.

THE BRAHMO SOMAJ OF INDIA, }  
21st February, 1868. }

TO REV. WM. J. POTTER,

*Secretary of the "Free Religious Association," United States of America.*

BROTHER:

Gladly do I accept your kind and affectionate greeting, and the sentiments of true love and sympathy contained in your welcome message of the 24th of October last. I forget the great distance between us, and feel that our hearts are near each other, bound in the ties of spiritual fellowship. Your brotherly call has found a response in the hearts of thousands in this part of the world, and cordially do we join our hands

with yours, as children of the same Father, to co-operate in the blessed work of advancing the cause of true religion. How consoling, how encouraging to us is the thought that the great movement of religious reformation, which we have humbly carried on in India for more than a quarter of a century, has met the sympathy and support of an associated body of our brethren on the other side of the globe, and that India and America, the East and the West, are to sing henceforth with united hearts, and in one harmonious and swelling chorus, the glory of the Supreme Creator!

In compliance with your request, I beg to give below, for the information of the "Free Religious Association," a brief sketch of the gradual development of our church, its aims and achievements.

Thirty-eight years ago, when English education had just opened the minds of some of my countrymen to the errors of Hindu idolatry, the late Rajah Ram Mohun Roy, the great religious reformer of India, whose name is probably known to you, established a church in Calcutta for the worship of the Supreme Being, under the name of the "*Brahmo*\* *Somaj*," † or the Assembly of the worshippers of God. His direct object in founding this church was to persuade his countrymen to forsake idolatry and become monotheists; and the more successfully to accomplish this object he made the Vedas, the earliest scriptures of the Hindus, the basis of all his teachings. In other words, he professed simply to effect a revival of the Unitarian faith and worship of ancient Hinduism. But he had also a higher and more comprehensive object. He invited "all sorts and discriptions of people without distinction," to unite in the worship of their common Father, the Supreme God of all nations; and to this end he proved by appeals to the texts of the Bible and Koran, as he did in the case of Hinduism, that Christianity and Mohammedanism were both essentially monotheistic. He accordingly directed that the service to be held in his church should always be of such a catholic character as to "strengthen the bonds of union between men of all religious persuasions and creeds." Practically, however, the *Brahmo Somaj* became simply a Hindu Unitarian church, and the latter object was altogether lost sight of. The congregation slowly increased in number, till the *Somaj* fell into the hands of my respected friend and coadjutor, Babu Debendro Nath Tagore, who gave it a new life, and immensely extended its operations. He converted this body of mere worshippers into an association of believers, by binding them to a few articles of belief, and to a covenant enjoining moral purity of life. He also started a religious journal, appointed teachers, and published several doctrinal and devotional treatises; and he succeeded in the course of a few years in enrolling hundreds of followers, and helping the formation of several branch *Somajes* in different parts of Bengal, on the model of that founded by Rajah Ram Mohun Roy. All this time, however, the Vedas were regarded as the sole foundation of faith, and the members of the *Brahmo Somaj* were known as Vedantists. It was not till about twenty years ago that the Vedas ceased to be viewed in the light of infallible scriptures, and made room for a more catholic and unexceptionable basis of faith, viz: God's revelation in nature and the religious instincts of man.

\* Worshipper of (Brahma) God.

† Assembly.

The Brahma Somaj since became a purely Theistic church, and now stands precisely in the same relation to its old creed as the "Free Religious Association" does to Unitarian Christianity. But its progress did not stop here. It is true, its fundamental principles of belief were then definitely settled, and have continued unchanged hitherto. But in their application to life and in the practical development of their catholic and pure spirit, great struggles and movements have gone on for some years past. It was found that as most of the social and domestic customs of the Hindus were interwoven with the evils of idolatry and caste, it was incumbent on every true and sincere Brahma to discountenance such customs, even at the risk of being excommunicated and otherwise persecuted. The majority kept aloof from this bold undertaking, effecting a safe but unconscientious compromise between the enlightened convictions of a Theist and the idolatrous social life of a Hindu. A small number however came forward at last, and began the great work of reforming the social and domestic economy of Hindu society on the basis of true religion, which has been developed more fully year after year, and has lately resulted in a variety of practical reforms, such as the abolition of caste distinctions, the marriage of widows, intermarriage (between members of different castes,) the education and emancipation of women, &c. With a view to render our church wholly free from the narrow spirit of Hindu sectarianism and the evils of Hindu social life, and to establish it firmly on a catholic and pure basis, by incorporating into its theology the truths of all scriptures, and admitting into its membership theists of all nations, and bringing its social life into harmony with the pure dictates of conscience, the advanced Brahmans organized themselves into a society, in November, 1866, under the name of the "Brahma Somaj of India." This society also seeks to establish closer intercourse and more active co-operation than hitherto existed among all the Brahma Somajes in India, and to propagate our faith more extensively and systematically throughout the country. Our church is thus at present an organized Theistic church, Indian in its origin, but universal in its scope, which aims to destroy idolatry, superstition, and sectarianism, and propagate the saving truths of absolute religion and the spiritual worship of the one true God, and likewise to promote the intellectual, moral, and social reformation of individuals and nations, and thus make Theism the religion of life.

It is impossible to calculate the exact number of the members of our church, as there is no ceremony of initiation amongst us; nor is such ceremony possible or desirable in so rational and spiritual a faith. Nearly two thousand have subscribed to the covenant above alluded to, or have signed some other simpler form of declaration; the names of such have been registered. But there are many thousands more among my countrymen who in their hearts deny Hinduism and believe in the fundamental doctrines of our creed, but who do not care to join formally the membership of our church. The fact is, the tendency of the age here, as I believe it is in other parts of the civilized world, is towards Theism. All who receive liberal English education renounce idolatry; of these some embrace Orthodox Christianity, some become skeptics, the rest glide into the Brahma Somaj, and become Theists in some form or other.

There are at present upwards of sixty Brahma churches in the differ

ent presidencies and provinces of India, where the local Brahmos assemble once every week for the purpose of worship, divine service being conducted in the vernacular language by persons previously selected from among them for their superior wisdom and piety. Hymns, sermons, prayers, meditation, and the reading of theistic texts from the Hindu and sometimes from other scriptures, compose the service held in our churches. On special occasions service is conducted in English.

For the more extensive diffusion of our religion several books in speculative and practical theism have been published from time to time in the vernacular language, as well as in English, and also some periodicals which have a large number of subscribers and readers all over the country. A fortnightly English paper, "*The Indian Mirror*," is published in connection with our mission, which discusses political, social, and religious subjects. We have also about a dozen Missionaries, men who have of their own accord given up worldly pursuits, and, depending upon the voluntary contributions of the Brahmo community for the bare necessities of life, go about the country visiting the Brahmo Somajes, and preaching the truths of our holy faith to the educated natives, and sometimes also to the lower orders of the people. The disinterested and zealous exertions of these missionary brethren exert a very powerful and living influence, both in sustaining and quickening the moral life of the Brahmos scattered over the country, and in increasing the number of our adherents.

For a full exposition of the doctrines of our creed, I beg to refer you to the two sets of our English publications which I have already forwarded to your address. I may, however, only observe here that, professing as we do the universal and absolute religion, whose cardinal doctrines are the "Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man," and which accepts the truths of all scriptures and honors the prophets of all nations, we heartily sympathize with you and the other members of the "Free Religious Association" as brethren in common faith and co-workers in the same holy cause.

Therefore with the deepest joy, and with all the fervor of brotherly love, do I welcome your kind message, and, in the name of thousands of fellow-theists in India, reciprocate the affectionate regards of the "Free Religious Association." Believe me, it is no mere formal exchange of compliments. To India, at this moment, such sympathy of the American nation is inestimably valuable, and she receives it with the enthusiasm of national rejoicings. Long and anxiously had we labored and prayed for the light of truth amidst the awful darkness of idolatry and corruption, struggling with hardships and difficulties, and encountering opposition and persecution of no ordinary kind, the Merciful God alone helping us onward. And now that we are rejoicing in the light vouchsafed by Him, we have begun to feel the heavy responsibility attached to it of extending its blessings to other lands. At such a time, the cheering intelligence communicated by you of similar labors and achievements in America serves to strengthen our hands, and increase our joy and faith and hope a hundred fold. We now feel, as we never felt before, that God's religion shall spread throughout the length and breadth of the world, destroying all false creeds and sects, and uniting all nations in one universal brotherhood; and it affords us inexpressible delight that

the noble American people have come forward to co-operate with us in paving the way for the future Church of the world. May God help us in carrying out this great work.

Trusting you will kindly keep us informed of the proceedings of the Free Religious Association, and offering our best wishes and prayers for its welfare and success,

I remain heartily yours in Theistic fellowship,

KESHUB CHUNDER SEN,

*Sec'y Brahma Somaj of India.*

### III.

#### LETTER FROM MONCURE D. CONWAY, WITH REGARD TO RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS IN ENGLAND.

14 MILLBORNE GROVE, BROMPTON, LONDON, ENGLAND, }  
April 13, 1868. }

MY DEAR MR. POTTER :

In complying with your request that I should write you as one of the representatives of the Free Religious Association, some account of the religious movements in this country of related interest, I find some difficulty arising from the fact that nearly everything here is historical. Every project is a wave of a general tide of effort in the direction of religious liberation, which has a remote date, and which can only be fully explained by its history. I may, however, say that however it may be with you in America, all the religious movements that have occurred here within recent years seem to me to be portions and manifestations of the great tendency to co-operation, which is now the leading one of every department of human concern. The spirit of England to-day is more fully expressed by that word, co-operation, than by any other. The ascertained fact that by it the consumer is able to save a large percentage of what hitherto has been paid to the tradesman who mediated between him and the producer, exactly corresponds to the discovery in the higher sphere that people's own hearts and brains may be made available without the costly intervention of priests and parsons; and the first fruits of this discovery have been swelling and maturing before our eyes to an extent very alarming to the hereditary keepers of the Anglo-Saxon conscience.

After five or six years of residence in England, I have become convinced that there is more unutilized free thought here than in any country with which I am acquainted. Mr. Congreve, the leading Communist, expressed the opinion a few years ago that the mind of England was much more emancipated from the superstitions of the past than that of America. I was inclined at the time to demur from his statement; but I now think he was right. It is almost impossible to meet in good society here a really Orthodox person. There are exceptions, but their notoriety proves the rule. I once expressed to a Church Clergyman my surprise that there is no Universalist denomination in England such as

we have in America. He replied, "It is because all respectable churches here are Universalist." It may have been an extreme statement, but it is certainly true that the doctrine of eternal torment is one that it would be difficult to hear preached from any pulpit beneath which sit people of the middle classes. Since Lord Westbury made his famous decision in favor of the writers of the "Essays and Reviews,"—a decision by which, as the epigram runs, he "dismissed hell with costs,"—the English Church may be regarded as virtually a Universalist church; and even among the dissenters that once formidable place is now rather an empty display of fireworks than a region of terror. You may wonder how the authorized guardians of the Church manage to hold themselves through this general falling away of thoughtful people from their creed. I cannot explain that better than restate an account recently given by Thomas Carlyle to a friend of a discussion he had with some one during the great Pan-Anglican Convention of Bishops which was held last year. The conversation took place in the presence of Dr. Trench, the Archbishop of Dublin. "We finally agreed," said Carlyle, "that these doctrines and fables had seen their day, and must henceforth, when mentioned, excite compassion or ridicule." "But," inquired his friend, "what did the Archbishop say or do during this dangerous talk?" "Oh,"—said Carlyle—"he did about the only thing left to him under the circumstances—he went to sleep. That is to say, he seemed to be asleep, but he heard all that passed." Now what Archbishop Trench did on this occasion, the whole convocation of his church does all the time; amid all the discussion of great problems and principles, it can only slumber,—most of its members really and stertorously, some others in a way suggestive of the natural history of the opossum.

Across the street from where Guy Fawkes prepared his unsuccessful attempt to blow up the Houses of Parliament, there is a gentle, pious, and highly artistic Guy Fawkes exploding legendary Christianity. Fifty years from now people will see as the most dramatic and significant thing in the England of this time, the radical heretic, Arthur Stanley, presiding as Dean over Westminster Abbey. Such is the latest century-blossom of that old stem whose roots pierce the whole substratum of Great Britain. I have heard Parker, Emerson, Martineau, Colenso; but by far the most radical discourses I have ever heard were preached by Dean Stanley in Westminster Abbey.

The best testimony to the extent to which what is here called rationalism has gone in the Church of England is to be found in the revival of ritualism,—which is the condensation of the negative electricity at the other pole. The tendency to a Holy Alliance between one wing of the Church and Romanism is a direct result of the alarm which is felt at the rapid strides of heresy. As Napoleon predicted that all Europe would become Cossack or Republican, we can safely predict now that Great Britain certainly will be divided between Rome and Reason,—and which of these will ultimately replace the other it is not difficult to prophesy.

This grand and inevitable result is clearly traceable to the influence of the scientific men, all of whom here, without exception, are alienated from the old beliefs. So pronounced is the English scientific mind that Sir Charles Lyell did not hesitate to say in an address which I heard

Theism,

Portland Chapel, where Martineau is leading the Unitarians by strange ways to a high table-land of Thought and Faith. Each and all of these places are now marked by an activity and interest indicative of the general revival of free thought now going on throughout this country. As yet the perfect combination of the elements of free thought has not taken place, and, consequently, the practical results are not yet generally palpable. We all know that it is difficult to unite independent minds, because of the essential jealousy of independence. How to combine and co-operate without impairing the individuality of any is the great, and as yet but imperfectly comprehended problem before us. It is certain that if all the elements of liberal thought and feeling could be combined, nothing so lifeless as the hereditary mass of superstitions labelled Christianity could withstand the force that would be thus generated. But people, each of whom has escaped from a prison, are suspicious of the most innocent and many-gated walls that can be built.

Nevertheless two efforts that have been made in London within the past year, to concentrate the liberal forces, are deserving of particular attention, especially with the Free Religious Association, the wisdom of whose catholicity and method they both illustrate. The first of these efforts originated among the Unitarians, and had James Martineau for its leading spirit.

But it is easy to prophesy that to outbid Westminster Abbey and its new oracle, the new Church must build something more than a chapel in which the dullness of Aspland shall alternate with the eloquence of Martineau. But why shall not the Free Religious Association of America act upon this hint, and build in New York, or Washington, a great American — that is, Human — Temple, in which every thinker of the world, Chinese, Parsee, Jewish, Christian, shall be heard in due time? We underrate the importance to us of the modern religious thoughts of the non-christian countries. The scriptures of theirs which we occasionally get hold of are their *Old Testaments*, and we think them more folded up in ancient forms and symbols than they are. We have just heard here that a great prophet has arisen in the North of India, whom the people are following with such enthusiasm as to occasion alarm to the English Governor of that immense province. How do we know that this Hindu has not the secret, withheld for ages, on his tongue?

But I must now return to mention the second of the two movements to which I have alluded. A number of old freethinkers in London came together in a synod about the same time that the English, American, and Colonial Bishops gathered here to utter their grand Pan-Anglican anathema on Bishop Colenso. These freethinkers held their consultation  
ure and



Again, some of these men and women doubted whether freethinkers were not repeating an old routine of negation, and whether they were living up to the advantages of their age in the direction of affirmative belief. So they came together, these scarred warriors, humble, strong-headed, stout-hearted men and women — almost none of them from the high ranks of social life; very distant in this respect, from the Pan-Anglican Bishops sitting at the same time in Lambeth Palace. And although not one in that dining-room at Radley's Hotel would have named himself a Christian, I doubt not that if Jesus had been in London streets that night, seeking out his true brothers, he would hardly have knocked at the Lambeth palace door, but might well have entered among the humble freethinkers, and said — "These are my brothers. They also have suffered under Pilates, and borne heavy crosses."

At this meeting there was a spirit, a unity, a feeling, which at times almost vented itself in tears. These infidels grasped each other's hands, as we might imagine a small band of primitive apostles doing. They formed an Association to be called "The Freethinkers' Union," the basis of which was entire individual independence, limited only by a common rejection of every form of supernaturalism. By this word, however, it was stated that only such supernaturalism as plainly believed in an interference with the chain of natural cause and effect was meant. It was generally held that a union between freethinkers and the superstitious could produce only discord. On this basis, then, these united to form an Association. Atheists, Theists, and some Christian radicals have since given in their adhesion to the movement. It was decided that there should be an entire equality between men and women in the conduct of the movement, and an equal number of each were appointed to its Executive Committee. It has, I rejoice to say, been thus far as signal a success as the Unitarian affair was a signal failure. It is about to found a central London Institution, with library, reading-room, and lectures; to which there is to be added a club for conversation. It means to publish and circulate good books.

I have thus, my dear friend, written you in a somewhat rambling way, a few notes concerning liberal movements in London. Next year, should I remain here so long, I shall hope to send you a better and fuller report. Meantime, with cordial sympathy, I am your friend,

M. D. CONWAY.

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#### IV.

Rev. ISAAC M. WISE, D.D., Rabbi of one of the Jewish synagogues in Cincinnati, and a Director of the Association, has, since the Convention, sent the following letter to the President.

CINCINNATI, OHIO, June 5, 1868.

REV. O. B. FROTHINGHAM, *President Free Religious Association.*

DEAR SIR AND BROTHER:

I beg to express through you my thanks to the Free Religious Asso-

ciation for the honors conferred, and my regret that I could not attend to the official duties to which I was appointed, since my other engagements were of too pressing a nature. Nevertheless, I am with the Free Religious Association; and as a proof thereof I have devoted and respectfully inscribed to the same the last volume which I wrote, viz., "The Origin of Christianity," which I request you to bring to the notice of the Association, with the expression of my sincerest regards, and my prayers for the speedy success of truth. There is but one common centre for the human family in all these tumultuous upheavings of diverging opinions and views, and this common centre is truth. It is every good man's first duty to approach this centre as well and as rapidly as he can. Therefore I wrote this volume, and therefore I am with the Free Religious Association.

The civil and religious liberty with which God has blessed us in this country, is not efficient enough to guard an unbiassed writer against the wrath and scorn of the prejudiced millions, who treat and denounce the results of free reason and free research as infidelity and impiety. I cannot think or write otherwise than free, whatever the consequences may be, and place my book under the protection of the enlightened and thinking men of the age, whom I believe to have discovered among the Free Religious Association.

With this volume I hoped to open a new channel of research to historians, no less than to theological students, viz., the comparison of the New Testament with the Talmud, and especially with passages from the very time of Jesus and the apostles. This is a new field, from which I have produced some results.

I beg you to bring my fraternal feelings and my highest regards to the members of the Free Religious Association, and to accept my sentiments of friendship and respect for yourself personally, whose broad principles and liberal sentiments I truly admire.

Your most obedient servant,

ISAAC M. WISE.