

ARTICLE III.

PROTESTANT CHRISTIANITY ADAPTED TO BE THE RELIGION OF THE WORLD.

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THERE are several systems, assuming to be religious, which have striven long and vigorously for universal ascendancy and dominion. Paganism, under numerous and various forms, already asserts supremacy over more than half of mankind. Islamism holds, under an unyielding sway, one hundred and twenty millions of the population of the earth. Papacy, claiming with great effrontery to be the only pure and true religion, is now struggling with vast zeal and unconquerable energy to plant itself over the whole of the habitable world. These schemes of religion are not at all well adapted to the nature and condition of mankind. They are strikingly inefficient, in creating an intelligent faith; in providing for the depressed and poor; in establishing a true and safe freedom; in meeting the great demand for mediation and mercy made by our moral nature; in raising man to the true grandeur of his being; in securing their own universal diffusion. Protestant Christianity seems capable of accomplishing all these grand ends. Well suited is it, therefore, we may safely allege, to be the religion of our race.

I. The first proof of this adaptation may be found in the fact that Christianity presents openly and intelligibly to all men the evidence of its own truth and divinity.

The unlettered and unthinking constitute a large portion of the population of the globe. Neither the Papal, Pagan nor Mohammedan religion has so much as designed or made the least attempt to present to the great masses of ignorance and depression any proofs whatever of its origin and authority. The priests and teachers of all the false systems have assumed arbitrarily to dictate to the faith of the multitude. Claiming to be the sole privileged depositaries and organs of the counsels and communications of superior beings, they have urged peremptorily the unhesitating reception of doctrines and services, on their own bare declaration of antiquity, divinity and authority. Thus under the management of a corrupt and cunning priesthood do these superstitions approach the uninstructed, credulous

multitude with a fore-front of concealment and darkness, and then challenge, on pain of eternal death, an unwavering, implicit assent to a mass of unexamined fables and absurdities. This unconditional submission of religious faith to the craftiness and depravity and tyranny of a fellow-man, humiliates, corrupts, prostrates and crushes most pitifully.

A religion for mankind, for the unlettered as well as for the learned, must bear upon itself visibly, unmistakably the proofs of a supernatural origin and a Divine authority. Christianity, I allege, does this, does actually come with God's own image and superscription, even to the common mind of the race, all marked upon it most distinctly, legibly and luminously. He that runneth may read; the way-farer of the world need not err. The divinity and authority of Christianity rest on this simple and intelligible foundation, the truth of the narrative found in the four evangelic histories. The proof that their account is most accurately true, lies upon the very surface, entirely visible to unlettered men. There is everywhere perceptible to such men, a frankness, a sincerity, a straight-forwardness, a total absence of all appearance of understatement, overstatement and concealment, a disinterestedness, a fulness of knowledge, an honest truthfulness, which almost compel belief. Assured that there is in the sacred record no coloring, embellishing, conjecturing or imagining, but an unvarnished, most veritable relation of supernatural events, heavenly teachings and undeniable miracles, precisely as they occurred, the uneducated readers perceive and acknowledge that Christianity emerges from this scene of Divine power and Divine wisdom, bearing heavenly attestations most clear and satisfying.

Divine revelation presents, both in bold outline and in graphic touches, such accurate, vivid and full pictures of the nature of the heart of man as to convince unstudious and common men, who have carefully turned their attention upon their own character, that the painter must be the Great Searcher of the heart. The Scriptural delineations of man present features which otherwise would never have been discovered, but which, once traced and painted, the mass of un instructed readers may instantly recognize.

Another evidence of Divinity, clear and open to the same description of persons, is a remarkable agreement between the teachings of Christianity and those of unperverted conscience. From both they hear the same stern, fearless, authoritative voices on all great moral questions. They perceive that the Gospel presents just the grand, pure objects to love, interests to pursue, treasures to obtain, which

conscience pronounces worthy of a rational, gifted, godlike and immortal being. As it is the Divinity confessedly which teaches in human conscience, they hesitate not a moment at the conclusion, that it is the Divinity which teaches in Christianity.

There is a class of precious Scriptural assurances to good men, which are so invariably fulfilled to the utmost as to leave no doubt on the minds of plain men, that it is God himself in very deed, who in the sacred Word speaketh these encouragements. Every day as they see that, while the righteous have adversity, they have also peace; while they have difficulties, they have also assistances; while they have extremities, they have also glorious deliverances; every day as they see them never forgotten, never forsaken of their Heavenly Father, they have fresh proof that the communications of love, of which these are the accomplishments, were certainly given by the good man's Almighty Friend above.

There is also a morality of inimitable sublimity and beauty everywhere inculcated by Christianity, very appreciable by the common mind as truly Divine. The Saviour's own pure, glorious life and character are a part of it. Throughout, there is to unlettered readers, a calm holiness, an angelic mercy, a frank sincerity, a supernatural wisdom, a rich grace, which cannot be of the earth, earthy. These qualities show the sweet purity of heaven, the pulsations of a Divine life. They evince the same superiority to all other moral lessons, which perfection does to imperfection, which Divinity does to humanity. To unlearned men the morality of Christianity bears a serene, lofty, uncorrupted and incorruptible spirit, which as indubitably indicates its origin to be from heaven, as the hues of sunset show that they come from the glorious orb which has just disappeared.

Some of the descriptions of the Bible have an august magnificence and power, which indicate to the same class of men a pen dipped in the light of heaven. The judgment day, as described in the 25th of Matthew, affords an illustration. The great scene opens, unfolds and closes with a simplicity, a graphicness, an apparent truthfulness, an awful grandeur, a hushed solemnity, which assure them it is the draft of a Divine intellect. Other illustrations are the representations of Jehovah, of the New Jerusalem, of the crucifixion, of the resurrection of the dead. They all bear a reality and consistency and simple majesty and serene divinity, which are evidently above all finite intellectual power. Unlettered readers doubt not that these delineations must have come down out of heaven. Were the apocalyptic angel, standing in the sun, to portray to us that luminary, there

would be evinced a clearness of view, a confidence of statement, an undisguised naturalness, a sublime simplicity, which would leave no doubt that the description was given by an eye-witness. So do these Scriptural delineations show the pen of the most near and present of all observers, the Omniscient himself.

These are some of the proofs of Divinity which lie on the face of Christianity, capable of being seen and read of all men. While it is matter of gratitude that history and philosophy and science have rendered faith in Christianity on the part of the learned totally and forever impregnable, it is a matter of far higher interest and value that God has made the Gospel its own witness, has written its heavenly origin palpably on the revelation itself, so that the great mass of mankind must unhesitatingly confess, as they read and mark and meditate, that Divinity shines out everywhere, that the traces of God's hand are no less clear and full and readable upon Christianity, than upon the great scene of nature where all have beheld them. Undoubtedly this is the religion for man; it is fit that we congratulate the race that it is presented in Christianity with a system which condemns not its votary to have the intellect and conscience bound and bridled. The New Testament, so far from enjoining such an intellectual humiliation; from wishing the consent of any human being to be so duped and degraded and wronged; from contributing in any way to reduce the high spirit of humanity to such an ignominious submission, does specially and earnestly summon every subject of God, as a self-responsible man in the use of his own independent powers, to scrutinize its credentials, sift its proofs, weigh its claims, unhesitatingly and fearlessly to the uttermost. It does, in addition, counsel him to construct his opinion and settle his duty according as his own clear reason and unperverted conscience shall dictate, irrespective of priest, precedent or authority. It is only on the condition, that its revelations are incontestibly Divine, that the Gospel expects man to bow with reverence to its great truths; only on condition, that its instructions are undoubtedly emanations from the Deity, that it expects him to walk in its light. Christianity thus bearing upon itself, to common minds as well as to others, a most visible Divinity, and asking credence and obedience only on its evident possession of that Divinity, is very eminently adapted to be the religion of all mankind.

II. Kindred to this intelligibleness of proofs, another feature of Christianity, adapting it to be the religion of the world, is its special sympathy and provision in behalf of the poor.

Its diffusion through all the lower walks of life is one great distinction of the Christian religion. Our Saviour assures us, that he had been anointed to preach the Gospel to the poor, to heal the broken hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives. This deep and active interest for all the destitute and depressed of the world, is but a continuation of the spirit of the Old Testament manifested by much kind and protective legislation. The great business of Christianity being to uplift the entire human family; if the vast mass of the depressed and poor, the great majority of the whole, were not reached and elevated, its mission on earth would be almost a failure. They are to be reached and elevated! The regenerations and blessings of the Gospel are fitted for the lower spheres of human society no less than for the higher. Narrow circumstances and external degradation are no discouragements to the warm, abounding charities and services of Christianity. It regards man as a creature possessing noble constitutional susceptibilities, rich inherent elements, of which no pressures, lapses, misfortunes, do ever despoil him. Upon all his precious, improvable and permanent qualities, though partially smothered and concealed underneath rubbish, rudeness and deformity, religion gathers an earnest and unextinguishable interest. It cares little about the earthly tabernacle lodged in it; it cares infinitely about the capabilities of the spirit which occupies it. Perceiving in the deep interior of the slave and serf no inferiority of original elements, it approaches them with the same sympathy and charity that it does the master and the monarch who hold them. If that being, clothed in rags and wretchedness, be but a man, with a man's immortal powers, with a man's immortal destinies, Christianity asks no more. It opens to him at once all its blessed ministries, its education and discipline, its gifts and graces, its holy motives and inspirations, its prospective glory and happiness, its heavenly crown and throne. Even more than this is true. Not merely an equal sympathy and care for men in humble condition, is manifested by the religion of the New Testament; it seems to bear a deeper kindness toward them and to proffer larger benefits, because they are in greater suffering and need. Fully aware that the homelier and poorer a population, the lower it is in most parts of the world in vice and ignorance, the Christian religion carries to its families illumination and disenfranchisement with greater assiduity and more unextinguishable zeal. Aware, also, that the lower orders are ofteneast injured and forsaken, Christianity looks after them with a specially tender and earnest assistance. Mark where among the poor and low, unmitigated, unsoled woes and

wants have most accumulated, where amid pains and sicknesses, human ministrations of soothing and relief are most rare — thither does religion repair to employ her highest vigilance, to offer her warmest sympathies, to unbosom her richest benefactions, to pour in the oil of her best consolations. It is another proof and illustration of a happy adaptation on the part of Christianity to visit the destitute and degraded, that its communications are to that class of mankind specially acceptable. When the scribes and doctors and rulers rejected Christ, the common people heard him gladly. Persons who roll in wealth and fare sumptuously every day, who receive the flatteries and deference of a constant crowd of admirers, who gather around themselves all the tasteful arrangements, all the conveniences and beautiful embellishments which their own hearts in their largest desires ask for — these gratified ones, dwelling and reposing in an earthly paradise, will not willingly and cordially listen to inculcations of humility and self-denial, of detachment from the world, of selling their goods to feed the poor, of looking and longing for a better country, even an heavenly. But the poor of this world, with no abiding place, with slender means of subsistence, painfully dependent, subject to exhausting labor, liable to injury and fraud and oppression — these homeless, destitute, disregarded, injured ones, are all ripe to hear the gracious words of eternal life. They that have no earthly spot which they can call their own, how will they exult in the offer of a title clear to an inheritance in the land of the blessed! They who have found that the world has promised only to disappoint, flattered only to deceive, how heartily will they welcome assurances from Heaven of joys substantial and sincere! They who have found little pity among men, how will they catch all joyously the full proposals of mercy from the throne of heavenly grace! Then there is a natural sympathy of all the oppressed and abused of the world with a religion which has also itself been “always subject to scoffs and vilifications.” Quickly and sensitively are such persons moved, when a Saviour comes to them, “not like Mohammed, a splendid conqueror,” but like themselves, poor, despised, not having where to lay his head. It is a confirmation of this adaptation to all the poor of the world, that Christ, according to the Gospel, tasted death for every man, low as well as high, subject as well as sovereign, despised as well as honored. No human being shall be found so insignificant, “so much a cipher in the vast sum of human existence,” as to be counted unworthy to hear the most earnest voice of mercy, to be presented with the richest blessings and hopes of religion here, and to be raised and welcomed into the purest glories

of Heaven. Always, as when personally on earth, Jesus will visit the poor and bereaved at Bethany, and weep with the afflicted; will stop the funeral procession to comfort and support the widow of Nain in her desolation; will show mercy to the blind sitting by the wayside and asking alms; will make whole the lame man at the pool of Bethesda, who has none to help him; will choose an apostle to the Gentiles from the craft of the tent-makers; will select his immediate disciples and witnesses from among the fishermen of the Lake of Galilee; will go to be guest with publicans and sinners and eat with them. "Blessed," will always be the voice of Christianity in the world, "blessed are the poor for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven. Hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which he has promised to them that love him!" The Gospel, with its instruction and love, its purification and pardon, its inheritance and honor, provided not specially and exclusively for "magistrates and counsellors and judges and lords and kings and scholars," but most freely for all the obscure and neglected and ignorant and degraded, is remarkably adapted certainly for a general diffusion among the nations. As the overspreading cloud that raineth upon all fields barren or fertile, is fitted for universal nature; and the sun, that shineth as warmly and brightly into abodes of poverty as abodes of wealth, for all the families of the earth; so is Christianity, with its blessings, even more undistinguishing and unlimited, singularly suited to all the world.

III. Christianity is fitted to be the religion of the world on account of its large and generous spirit of liberty.

True freedom is the privilege of feeling, projecting, enjoying and doing everything that is right, together with exemption from every source, form and action of wrong. What condition of human society will secure all this? What must be the government and what the governed? Nothing is plainer than that every man must possess what is his own; must have set up around him an irremovable, impassable barrier against all encroachments and all injustice. In other words, every man must be made just to every other man. Then, all around the rights of every individual, will be drawn a clear line of demarcation. Over that no intruder passes; within that, he, the sole occupant and possessor, has perfect freedom. None may interrupt him, none say, what doest thou! This unmarred liberty, civil government may do much to secure, if founded and administered on the pure principles of immutable righteousness. Far more may the community do voluntarily, by each citizen becoming a self-governor on

the same principles of immutable righteousness; by every citizen, of his own will, conceding to every other citizen carefully all his rights. As under law and magistracy, we can expect to realize this true idea of freedom only partially, we turn with special satisfaction to that which may be hoped for under a vivid sense of justice on the part of the people. When, through the dictations of a sensitive, instructed, clear, unperverted conscience, and the impulses of a pure love of all equity, citizens and families are all ready and prompt most punctiliously to keep within the boundary which includes their own possessions and rights, and out of the boundaries which enclose what belongs to all others, what unfearing, unrestrained liberty will reign! There will be no encroachments to be resisted, no civil injuries to be punished, and, therefore, no arrests, coercions, imprisonments or confiscations. Interfered with by none, interfering with none, every citizen becomes a wheel in a perfect machinery. He is free, unobstructed perfectly, because he keeps in place and fulfils his own proper functions. The moment he should leap out of his gudgeons and fall into some other portion of the appended mechanism, he would find himself caught, confined, torn and destroyed. Christianity is the grand producer of this conscientiousness and sense of justice, which keep each man in his own legitimate sphere, which constitute subjects true and just self-governors, which make their public officers peace and their exactors righteousness. The liberty of a State, therefore, depends not so much upon the form of its government, as upon the character of its government, as upon the extent to which it is permeated with the purity and rectitude of Christianity. Yet not so much upon its government, however excellent, as upon the right heart and right conscience of its general society. The celebrated ancient States, republican and free in name, were tyrannies in fact, swaying immense masses of crushed humanity, of menial servitude, of satisfied degradation, in consequence of the destitution, on the part of the rulers and the ruled, of that spirit of righteousness which pervades the New Testament.

Christianity has another influence in creating pure liberty, by teaching a doctrine of equality which is the very spirit and genius of republicanism. I refer to an equality of obligations and an equality of rights. The Gospel by no means authorizes agrarianism. It teaches no equality of condition. It makes no proposals to prostrate the high and impoverish the rich so as to level society. It recognizes inequality of talent, learning, wealth and happiness. But equality of obligations and of rights it solemnly sanctions. Under a government

which is free upon Christian principles, therefore, no man can be debarred from privileges which another is permitted to enjoy, or from claims which another is permitted to make. Office is accessible to all; influence to all; wealth to all; education to all; honor to all. Rank, form, color, occupation, constitute no distinction of obligations and rights in this system. The Author of Christianity permits every human being to claim the same relation to himself. To all he offers the same bounties, felicities and elevations. Not for a moment does it sanction the notion, that one part of mankind are born to govern, the other to be governed. It recognizes no kings, princes, nobles, save when the whole people whom they are to govern, have by a free consent admitted them to their places and titles. Assumption of them without this authority, it regards imposition, oppression and wrong. By the people and for the people, does Christianity ordain the powers that be. Governments and magistracies are a temporary, popular creation. When thus created they are divinely recognized and sanctioned, as wisely fitted to secure protection to individual life, liberty, conscience, property and happiness. The Christian religion, therefore, if allowed its own legitimate action and power, must overturn every despotism on earth. It must uncrown every king. It must prostrate every throne or make that throne the faithful, paternal guardian and dispenser of all human rights, of all the blessings of freedom and equality which are within its gift and influence.

There is another principle in the Christian religion which is a large source of the true freedom of communities and of governments; I mean its spirit of reciprocity. It is embodied in these words: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." With this, Christianity is permeated throughout. This is its essential life. An uncompelled obedience to a warm inner flow and overflow of fellow-feeling, will work most effectively to keep out those obstructions and injuries and collisions which are the destroyers of liberty. Fountains of mutual kindness and large philanthropy, welling up in all the hearts of a population, must be better to produce positive and careful respect to all personal rights and consequently to secure a large and general freedom, than the wisest possible lessons in jurisprudence and moral science, than any conceivable appliances of prescriptive and protective legislation.

The Christian religion secures true freedom to a community by its special sanctions of law. If the regulation of human society and maintenance of personal liberty by the principle of fellow-feeling just referred to, fails, as it will, in respect to the hardened and corrupt,

then Christianity falls back decidedly upon the stern authority and strong arm of legislative and executive authority. It sanctions political society as a Divine institution; it declares civil government an ordination of Heaven; it invests earthly rulers with the high character of God's own ministers, designated to speak terror to them that do evil, and praise to them that do well. So far as in communities depravity and vice still produce encroachment and overbearing and wicked violence, in defiance of all justice and humanity, the Christian system points most resolutely to this magistracy commissioned of Heaven; insists peremptorily on unconditional submission; utters loud condemnation in the ear of all despisers of law; raises the voice of retribution and denounces upon them the heaviest penalties, human and Divine. As such a law-establishing, law-enforcing power, Christianity is in a high degree the author of that observance of human rights and that consequent social order which are the essential elements of true liberty.

The adaptation of Christianity, as the bearer of this large, righteous and intelligent liberty, to be the religion of the world, cannot fail to be instantly admitted and appreciated. Mark the noble forms and privileges which that liberty introduces into the interior of human society. It reaches and advances man's physical condition. This it does by furnishing him two grand incentives and assistances to worldly thrift; first the privilege of employing his labor, secondly of appropriating its avails, entirely in the sphere and in the manner of his own independent choice. On these two immunities industry and prosperity will luxuriantly grow up and rejoice. Christian liberty disintralls the intellectual powers. It makes them all the individual's own. So he do not injure others, he may cultivate them when, where, by what means, to what extent he pleases. He may traverse for intellectual treasures any field of knowledge in any portion of the universe. He may study the heavens or the earth, man or God; he may discover or invent, imagine or demonstrate according to his own sovereign choice, responsible to Heaven alone.

The freedom introduced by Christianity includes a full emancipation of the conscience. With the single limitation just stated, that men inflict no injury on society, Christian freedom permits none but God to dictate in any respect their religious opinions, religious character, or religious rules of life. To him invested with that liberty with which Christ maketh free, rulers, ecclesiastical or civil, have nothing to prescribe or to forbid. He may think, speak, write, publish, or do neither, as his own uncontrolled sense of right and duty

shall prompt; he may worship God, as his conscience bids, in silence or in audible ascription; in the open air or in a desolate cave; in a humble cabin or in a splendid edifice; in written forms or in impromptu offerings, and no earthly power may question, hinder or rebuke. Such an unrestrained conscience is the most dear and sacred of all our privileges.

Such is the liberty of Christianity. It comprehends all the immunities contained in the largest conceivable bill of human rights, in the grand "Magna Charta" of universal humanity; it is the parent of the noblest virtues, the highest activities and the surest progress of the race. Introduced to its undimmed light, its free, healthful air, its unincumbered privileges; communities spring up as from underneath the deep night and suffocating slumber of ages. In the presence of true liberty, vitality becomes fresh and vigorous at the heart of the body politic; animation and hope and enterprise and accomplishment are upon the face of society. Everything awakens; everything thrives; everything rejoices; everything advances! The universal establishment of an intelligent and virtuous freedom on the principles of Christianity, would almost transform the face of the world. We love to follow its pathway abroad over the nations. The population of our globe is composed of one thousand millions of despots — the Gospel absent — tyrannized over and tyrannizing, every one! We see, wherever Christianity passes with its spirit and lessons of liberty, the burden uplifted from the crushed, the door opened to the pallid prisoner, the chains fall from the enslaved. We see the haughty official become a man, and the neglected serf a ruler of the people. We see general humanity emerge from disabilities and abuses and obscurities and contempts, like a luminous orb from the bosom of darkness. We see the great heart of piety escape the prescriptions and formalities of authority, mount in joyous freedom to the mercy-seat, throb and respond, without dictation, to the heart of the great infinite Father. We see humanity, unoppressed by humanity, become divinity. Christianity, thus bringing physical, intellectual and religious freedom, and a rich revenue of blessings along with it, is greatly adapted to be the religion of the world.

IV. Another element, which beyond every other adapts Christianity to be the religion of all mankind, is its great Divine method of mercy.

This is a scheme of salvation, which possesses a value, commensurate with the religious character, hopes and happiness of the whole family of man. So familiar is the subject, however, it is proposed

here to make only a brief reference to its general aspect and relation to our sinning race.

The moral constitution of man is such, that in no stage of civilization, in no degree of ignorance, is he long without a sense of ill-desert, a feeling of self-condemnation and fear, on account of many conscious delinquencies and sins. Fallen men may become so lamentably darkened and perverted, as often to call good evil and evil good. But God hath still in every human being remnant voices which have not bowed the knee to Baal; moral utterances which will sometimes arouse and terrify the soul by a declaration of its guilt and its liability to a dreadful doom. Such officious troublers does every man carry within. Under the convictions and solitudes which they create, the disquieted spirit of every human being inquires with deep earnestness: Can iniquity be forgiven? Can the offended Ruler be appeased? Can the Sovereign Governor make a public offer of pardon, without giving up his authority, without removing the barriers around virtue and permitting wickedness undiscouraged and unchecked to pour its tides of desolation and death, wave after wave, over the face of the community? These are the questions which anxious nature asks; but anxious nature itself makes no reply — from all the lessons of human wisdom hears no reply. On this question, from our original constitution, from the book of Providence, there is no voice, no teaching. A world has a deep and infinite concern in this matter, but without the Bible all is silent as the house of death. The New Testament revelation on this point is all that is known in the universe. This is clear, ample and satisfactory. The Gospel of Christ proposes a scheme of mercy, by which all the ends of punishment may be obtained without punishment. The grand element of this arrangement, is the mission of the Son of God, of the august and holy Divinity himself, into our world to teach, to suffer, to die, to rise from the dead, to ascend to heaven. By this, the express intention was to make Divine government just, without being inexorable, to uphold Divine law, without (in cases of penitence and faith) the enforcement of its penalty. It is not necessary to the value of this great interposition of Heaven, that men understand perfectly wherefore a proposal to remove away from contrite and believing transgressors their transgressions, and to cover as by a thick cloud their sins, should not be demoralizing by making the depraved more fearless and determined in courses of iniquity. As, however, in and through the Divine atoning sacrifice, government and grace, righteousness and mercy, justice and pardon, have evidently met and

kissed each other; and as the great Ruler and Judge of the universe hath proclaimed that, by means of that sacrifice, Heaven can be just and the justifier of him that believeth, the most thinking, convicted and solicitous, may banish disquietude and sit down in gratitude and joy.

This, therefore, is the great and satisfactory revelation; Christianity, in the mission of Jesus with the attending incidents, presents a Divine mediation and substitution, which the Almighty himself regards sufficient to hush the thunder of the law; to clothe the just God with infinite benignity and inexhaustible grace; to lay a grand platform of mercy broad enough for the reliance and hope of all the contrite and believing sinners of the world. Man constitutionally possesses a religious nature. He desires to stand in a favorable religious relation to some supposed or real Divinity. He is strongly preinclined, not to a pure spiritual worship, but to some form of Divine service. He desires to know how the Deity he tries to worship regards him; to what end, under his Providence, tends his present course, and what realities are reserved for him beyond, in the endless future. He loves to be assured that the supreme Deity, whoever, wherever he may be, will hear his addresses, accept his offerings, admit him to communion, attend upon his pathway, interpose aid in disaster and death. How satisfactorily, soothingly, perfectly, does the presentation by Christianity — of God through Christ reconciled and propitious; of man through contrition, emerged into the blessedness of forgiveness and heavenly favor — offer relief to his religious difficulties, remove his apprehensions, meet his desire for the Divine complacency and beneficence! That which makes so ample and needed a provision for the moral wants of all mankind, is certainly singularly adapted to be a universal religion. In respect to this interposition of Heaven in behalf of a guilty race, Christianity stands in perfect contrast to every other system of faith which has been proposed. The Koran has not one suggestion of an atonement by a vicarious sacrifice. Jesus it acknowledges a prophet, Moses a prophet, but declares Mohammed superior to both. The revelation made through the latter, it is insisted, rivals, eclipses and supersedes all that Moses and Jesus taught. Mohammed denies the crucifixion of Christ, affirming that God secretly took him up to heaven, and that another wearing his appearance was slain. Moslems, he teaches, after suffering all they deserve, will be received into paradise, not through the prevalent mercy of Jesus, but through the intercession of the Prophet Mohammed. Although a great portion of the Koran is drawn from the

Scriptures, yet of the great scheme of redemption no trace or feature or resemblance is to be discovered. Islamism in robbing the Bible found this central truth, this essential life and soul and power and crowning distinction and high glory of it all, too pure, too instructive, too illustrative of God, of heaven, of sin, of retribution, for its purposes of secular conquest and power.

In the Roman Catholic church, the doctrine of forgiveness through the merits and death of Jesus is not formally discarded, but the spirit and value and power of this sublime, momentous truth are greatly obscured, almost extinguished. The transgressor, in coming to the popish confessional, does not feel himself bowing at the cross of the crucified and glorious One. He is occupied with the maledictions which the priest may pour upon him, the severe penance he may impose. In all his worship, he is impressed with things external and visible, with the crucifix, the picture of Jesus, the holy water, the consecrated wafer, the image of the virgin, the pompous ceremonials. So absorbed and occupied is the worshipper with all these attractive and imposing things, that Christ crucified, Christ risen from the dead, Christ offering mercy to all the guilty, is overlooked and unappreciated. Romanism is a system of salvation by the priest and church. The church, it teaches, is the depository of a grand treasury of reserved righteousness procured by Christ and sufficient to cancel all the sins consequent on the fall of man. The priests are the sole dispensers of this fund to whomsoever they will; they always to be paid in cash for making the drafts. Grace and pardon through the great mediatorial sacrifice of Jesus, to papacy is almost as if it had never been announced to the world, except as it affords relics and rites and fasts and holy days. The great High Priest of our profession, the Author of eternal salvation to all that obey him, entered into the heavens, only Intercessor before the throne, has far less prominence and power in the Roman church than has his holiness, the Pope.

Heathenism, also, has nothing of the Divine scheme of mercy, and, what is more, no plausible substitute for it. The whole pagan idea of mediation is simply an intercourse, conducted by beings intermediate between humanity and Divinity, termed demons. Simply an intercourse it is, which conveys the addresses of men to the gods, and the benefits of the gods to men. There is here, it will be perceived, no conception of a Divine mediatorial sacrifice. So far as substitution for crime is concerned, when concerned at all, it is in the opinion of a pagan, his own self-torture, his own self-mortification, his own mendicant life, his own pilgrimage to the Ganges, or to the shrine of some

deity, which prevails and appeases. What, in the whole system of heathenism, is there to satisfy the anxieties of the human mind, when awaked to its own character and responsibilities, when writhing under the lashes of a guilty conscience? There is nothing sufficient for man, nothing adapted to him but Christ and him crucified, as presented to him in pure Protestantism. All else is utterly futile, painfully unsatisfactory to the moral fears and wants of our nature. This great sacrifice, this heavenly expedient is so fitting, comprehensive, munificent and effective, as to leave nothing to be desired.

Let us contemplate Christianity with its provisions and tidings of mercy on its way to a world lying in wickedness. To its prostrated millions, covered with thick clouds and darkness, there comes a message out of heaven: "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." All warm and urgent does this announcement sound in upon the ear of every family and every man, from the great infinite heart of love, out of whose fulness the universe is blest. What a lightening of oppressing anxiety and fear will succeed! What inquiry, aspiration, hope and struggle for deliverance! What commotion and thrill and awaking through the earth's great valleys of death! Let us enter a scene where, responsive to the tidings of Christ's salvation, men stir and rise up to meet and to welcome the proffers of heavenly grace. They gather to the mercy-seat, they repair to the fountain of life. They are forgiven; they hope; they are bursting away the bonds of iniquity; they are receiving likeness of character to the infinite Father; they are received into God's own family; they are walking the way to heaven. At home shall they arrive at length in perfect peace, in perfect holiness, in perfect glory. Let us imagine this scene of Divine interposition, of deliverance, of moral purification, of heavenly hope, extended even as far as sin has spread its ravages and its ruin. Let us mark the surprising changes everywhere the same — virtue for corruption, confidence for fear, hope for despair, life for death. Let us imagine all the world waking to the proclamations of grace from the throne of the Eternal, throwing off the gloom of ages and walking joyously in the favor of Heaven. This scene of universal redemption, that we have imagined, it is the great purpose and work of Christianity to accomplish. What can be more adapted to become the religion of the race! A bright bow of promise and of hope it spanneth over a perished world!

V. Christianity is adapted to be a universal religion, in consequence of its great power over the character of man.

Both intellectually and morally, man reaches his highest practicable

development and noblest structure under the favoring influence of the Christian religion. This system of truth is an important educator of the intellectual powers, in the first place by laying the axe at the root of intellectual pride and self-sufficiency. It begets the humility and modesty of true science. Whoever is inflated with his own present wisdom, is shut up against improvement. Nothing is or can be more adapted to sink one's lofty conceptions of himself, and to teach him his own ignorance and mental imbecility, than the studies to which Christianity calls him. This opens to him fields for survey which are without boundaries, and oceans for exploration which are without shores. Each step he takes in his religious inquiries, gives a fresh conviction of measureless tracts stretching on beyond him. Each new discovery actually introduces him to wide, unvisited realms of investigation. How will he feel himself, with all his attainments, actual and hoped for, but as the explorer and observer of only a pebble or an ant-hill of a whole universe; but as the intellectual occupant of only a single point, of all the glorious regions of thought. Pride of intellect must be crushed. In the midst of these vast and endless inquiries, the religious student can but shrink into a most humble and inquisitive docility.

Christianity has another happy influence in behalf of mental progress and eminence, by preventing waste of intellect. It directs investigation, keeping in view the limit of human ability, only to the intelligible and attainable. More energies of mind have been wasted in fruitless speculation, than have been employed in successful ones. Researches into the inexplicable, graspings after the incomprehensible, soundings for the unfathomable, struggles toward the inaccessible, have not been confined to Alchemy or the philosophy of the schools. This is the folly to some extent of nearly all minds, cultivated and uncultivated. The result is useless discussion without end; constant fluctuation and uncertainty of human opinions; the successive proposal and explosion of innumerable theories. The incomprehensible and unsearchable, Christianity teaches by authority and not by exposition. It utters not one word to induce speculation where speculation is hopeless; into undissolvable darkness, it opens not one step to allure the daring and curious. It discourages adventure where there are no guiding way-marks; exhausting search, where there are no practicable discoveries; laborious mining, where there is no obtainable ore, in order that the mental faculties may hold in reserve time undivided, and their powers unexhausted for study, acquisition and growth, in fields of truth which are open, clear, fertile and rewarding.

Christianity has no little influence on intellectual development and power, by its mode of teaching, in the way of great comprehensive truths. A man may spend half his life in filling his mind with items and isolations; he may be most successful too, and yet remain in a great degree intellectually uncultivated and imbecile. The Christian religion teaches its pupils to seize fundamental, wide-sweeping principles, under which may be included volumes of instructions, whole large classes of human rights, duties and interests. As instances of such principles, there may be a revealed fact, a Divine precept, a rule of government, a method of Providence. Jesus suffered, the just for the unjust, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, fear God, he that believeth shall be saved, these light afflictions shall work out a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. These are specimens of this favorite mode in which the spirit and lessons of Christianity are embodied and presented. The allegation is, that this manner of teaching gives the religious student an enlarged and scientific character of mind; withdraws his mental powers from elements to compounds, from what is simple to what is complex, from the small business of conversing with single, unconnected objects, one by one, to the grand process of classification, to the settlement and contemplation of great generic truths. The mind thus accustomed to radical, broad-reaching principles, to comprehensive generalizations, is healthily disciplined, is made discriminating, philosophic, far-seeing and wide-grasping.

Christianity also promotes the vigor and enlargement of the mind by proposing high and laborious intellectual employments. The intellect attains power much in proportion as it exercises power. This is evinced by the striking correspondence observed to exist generally between its energies in possession and its energies in requisition. If the mind be occupied with lifting the leaf, tossing the pebble and weaving the reed, these infantile efforts will be fair representatives of its ability. If it be accustomed to carry a weaver's beam, to bear off the gates of Gaza upon its shoulders, to pull down a tower by the muscles of its arm, it will be wrought into massive proportions and giant power. There are no mental labors conceivable, more fitted to put upon exertion and to aggrandize the intellectual faculties, than those which Christianity assigns to man. The sum of them is the acquisition, exposition and inculcation of all the religious truths and lessons, written and treasured in creation, Providence and the Bible. In them will be involved a discussion of the Divinity and mercy of the scheme of human redemption; the settlement of all religious opinions and all high questions of conscience; the declaration of those

principles which, infused into society, raise it to its noblest structure, largest usefulness and fullest happiness; the prostration of Satan's kingdom, and the establishment and maintenance of the government of the Almighty. Christianity assigns to them the solemn business of rescuing fellow-citizens from all the horrors of the second death, and also to the high duty of securing to them an inheritance in the heavens, devised in the last testament of Jesus, inalienable, immeasurable and infinite. These are truly august occupations. Both as incitements to the acquisition of appropriate and commensurate abilities, and as severe and protracted exertions, they must largely educate and augment the intellectual powers. If susceptible of being aroused at all, they must in these superior duties be wrought up to their highest enthusiasm; if capable of invigoration at all, they must be carried forward towards their greatest might; if ever able to learn how to sway other minds, they must attain their most commanding eloquence. As steam, by the laying of heavy pressures upon it, grows into a great and efficient force, so the mind, under the burdening services of Christianity, gains a power and energy never before attained.

Christianity gives strength and expansion to the human mind by means of the magnitude and grandeur of the objects which it presents for contemplation.

Religion having first produced a full faith in itself, next acts to enlarge the believing mind to the dimensions of the great Divine things offered to its attention. Unlike the telescope which narrows the field to its own capacity, the human intellect expands itself towards the amplest circumference which may be presented. In order to spread itself abroad to the comprehension of the mighty, eternal truths of Christianity, it must transcend all ordinary boundaries. Mark the grand transition effected by the Gospel, when it carries its pupil out of the petty affairs of the present state and beyond the bounds of space, and then plants him in the new heavens and new earth of prophetic revelation, even in the immeasurable regions of eternity. How have his powers swelled to the immensities which surround him! Christianity has opened to its disciple instead of one, two worlds to traverse; instead of the flitting moments of time, the ever evolving ages of an unbounded futurity. His mind struggles to fill out the vast range of thought, to move away from the limited and finite, and push and stretch on into the endless and infinite. Imagine him attracted specially to the great Eternal One. His mind turned upon Him, is turned upon the universe, for He filleth it; in walking with Him, he ascends into heaven, for God is there; takes the wings

of the morning and dwells in the uttermost parts of the sea, for He also is there; visits the darkness and the light, for they are both alike to God.

Such converse with the immense themes of Christianity, such intellectual attendance upon omniscience and omnipotence over the great fields of their exhibition, cannot fail to elevate and expand the mental powers into a sublime sphere, to accustom them to exalted conceptions, to inspire them with august designs, to train them to incalculable power.

Christianity acts upon the intellect by means of the fervors of spirit which it creates. The immaterial spirit of man being, as testified by consciousness, one and indivisible, the action or state of one portion of its susceptibilities must essentially affect every other. Mind is operated on by even extraneous senseless matter. Doubtless the sensibilities powerfully influence the intellects, both being associated conditions of the same inseparable essence. Warmth and wealth of heart are to the intellectual abilities, what genial sunbeams are to vegetation. A fire in the sensibilities will inevitably radiate brilliantly into the understanding above. True, the heart may be wrought into such a violence of passion, as to obstruct rather than assist the action of the intellectual powers, just as excessive combustion may embarrass rather than facilitate associated movements; just as sun-heat, so vivifying in ordinary degrees, may in augmented measures produce parched and stunted vegetation. But all strong excitement of the emotions, not extravagant, gives a more bold, more masculine, more vivacious character to the intellectual operations. It is in happy hours of rich enthusiasm and fervor, that the lofty conceptions and grand discoveries of the human mind have always been produced. The great passages of Milton, Homer, Shakspeare, so true to nature, that nature will never cease instinctively to recognize them as her own genuine inspirations, so surpassingly eloquent that one and the same hearty welcome and acknowledgments will be heard from every generation — these were lights from glowing fires underneath. The luminous intellects of the world are fed from warm hearts. Christianity, being itself the great nourisher of a calm, strong, ever-acting, vivid sensibility of the soul, must be the great awakener and inspirer of the intellectual powers.

The adaptation of Christianity to act favorably on the sensibilities of man, so as to elevate him to his highest possible moral position, may be more easily shown. This is its preëminent design. This is its own special, peculiar labor. This which Christianity has come to

effect, the interior renovation of man, it is precisely and wonderfully fitted to accomplish. Of no system of false religion can this be asserted. They are all sensual, corrupt and debasing. Mohammed pretended to a special communication from heaven, authorizing his unlimited licentiousness. In heathen worship, the grossest impurities are not only unforbidden, but constitute an authorized and required portion of sacred rites, an essential part of service due to the gods.

In delightful contrast to all other systems stands Christianity in respect to the purity of its heart and the consequent purity of its influence. It acts on human character, in the first place, by means of the high moral standard which it sets up. Christianity proposes to every man that he be spiritually perfect. It professes to have come from a perfect Being. It claims that it is itself as perfect as its great Author. It deems it derogatory to its asserted excellence to propose to man a character inferior to its own. It makes no compromise on this subject. It requires the heart to be clean every whit. It enjoins that its desires, aspirations and affections be all noble, all uncontaminated. All character beneath this, it pronounces essentially defective, seriously corrupt. This elevated standard will have the effect of a powerful upward attraction. It will produce a constant struggle for the more excellent, for the purer pulsations of an inner life hid with Christ in God, for an ascending progress into the holier and more heavenly. The eagle in its spiral, concentric circles, sweeping up into the clear heavens, is an image of the ascent of the soul under the influence of Christianity from glory to glory, ever towering higher, until it enters the sphere of the infinitely perfect.

Christianity effects a moral elevation by the purity of the objects which it presents to the affections. Heaven is one of these, Heaven with its people and its occupations. The Elysium of the Greeks and Romans, the Paradise of the Mohammedans, the Valhalla of the Scandinavians, the blissful spirit-abodes of the Hindûs, Chinese and Persians, are all essentially physical and sensual and impure. Corrupt deities and corrupt worshippers constitute the society; low, gross indulgencies the employments and happiness, supposed to be provided in these regions of the departed. Oh it is most gratifying to turn from these to the blessed Heaven of the New Testament! This is, indeed, the Heaven of heavens! Imagery is all exhausted to describe the unmingled purity, the unspeakable happiness, the Divine exaltation of its inhabitants. It is a city whose walls are jasper and whose streets are gold. It has the river of life, on whose banks are trees bearing twelve manner of fruits, also leaves for the healing of the

nations. And it hath no need of the sun, neither of the moon, for God is the light of it. Heaven of Christianity! Nothing that defileth shall ever enter there! Every word, thought, feeling, act, wish and prayer is perfectly pure! Our Saviour on earth was a perfect representation of what every character is in heaven. Every heart there is but the heart of Jesus transcribed. Hence is every principle and impulse and affection of that world in consenting harmony with eternal rectitude and purity. Hence are its meetings of friends, its transports of joy, its rapturous psalmody, its grand anthems of gratulation, all holy! No one revealed object of Christianity can exert a more bland and attractive influence to raise man to the highest moral nobility of his being, than this of a pure heaven! Imagine him by faith and hope habitually to dwell in this sanctuary of transcendent holiness, to walk in the light of it, to sing its seraphic jubilee, to kindle and commune with its just men made perfect. He has become a being more angelic than human!

Christianity has another purifying action by means of the Deity which it reveals. The Jehovah of the Scriptures, as an object of thought and adoration, is the highest moral power in the universe. There is opened to men from him, the purest and mightiest influence conceivable or possible. His character is a grand assemblage of infinite excellencies. It is one great, clear splendor. The several Divine attributes pour in their several pencils of glory to constitute it. He is the Infinite Father of the universe, possessed of unbounded, undivided and unrivalled moral perfection. He is a pure, embodied, universal and eternal intelligence. He is the source of all knowledge, all holiness, all sustenance, all mercy and all hope to the entire universe. Let this sublime conception of the Almighty dwell in men, let them feel themselves ever in his dread and glorious presence, and they are placed under the action of an infinite and sanctifying power. There will be first an influence to restrain depravity, to hush impiety; then to awe into reverence, to impel to obedience, to kindle into holy love, to uplift to heavenly halleluiahs.

It is almost an instinct of our moral as well as our intellectual nature, to receive an impress of that which is impressively presented to our hearts, to kindle at the exhibition of ardor, to sadden at the sight of gloom, to aspire to goodness in the presence of the pure in heart, to throb with noble charities in contact with large and liberal souls. This, which is so instinctive and natural between man and man, may exist in a higher degree between man and superior beings. The society of angels would tend to change men into the

likeness of angels. The larger the luminary above, the larger the imaged luminary in the waters below. The intensity of the light and heat, placed at one of the foci of opposite parabolic mirrors, will have an answering luminousness and warmth at the other. It is after this philosophy, that men can receive impressions even from the great, infinite God. With his high, perfect qualities, the human heart can commune, and have the same all luminously retraced upon itself. Very readily and deeply does the worshipper receive upon his character a warm, fresh reprint of the Deity, whom he trusts, adores, obeys and loves. Christianity, then, in revealing Jehovah to men, has opened in spiritual being an infinite fountain of purity. That spiritual being must in consequence hold and beam forth a rich holiness, as a planet shines brilliantly that drinks light out of the sun.

Another power of sanctification connected with Christianity, whose efficiency none will question, is that of the Divine Spirit. This agent adds to religious truth, published in its simplicity and fulness, a moral efficiency as great as human nature requires for its complete restoration. Let no one indulge doubts, that wherever there is a pure Christianity, there will be the influence of the Spirit of God, and a purification of the character of man. Every particle even of dull matter is moved and looked after by Omnipotence. For six thousand years, what action or result has there been in this whole outward universe and the Lord has not done it? What seed has germinated, what plant or tree has grown, what pearl has been wrought in unfathomed cave, what ephemeron passed its transient life, what planet swept its orbit, without the aid and presence of Divine Power? And has the great scene of intelligent spirits, the immense field of human character, no present Deity? Here are to be wrought labors involving moral changes, moral duties, moral destinies, of infinitely higher consequence and interest, than what pertains to the physical universe. And has the Almighty no concern with it? He has every conceivable concern with it! His own infinite wisdom and power, He makes to attend Christianity as it moves abroad for the regeneration of man. Before a transformer thus Divinely attended, how will moral defilement disappear and heavenly purity be superinduced upon the human character! What if the obstacles be formidable, the opposition violent, the corruption deep, the blindness total, the aggregate moral ruin radical, inveterate, complete and hopeless! The Gospel, instinct with the Spirit of the Lord, has power commensurate with the whole needed restoration and cleansing. Most grati-

fyng it is to those who love the redemption of man, that there are no prostrations of our moral nature so low, that this divinely-fraught agency cannot raise them all up again; no plague-spots so malignant and deep, that it cannot cleanse them all away; no wanderers so far gone from God, that it cannot bring them to his very throne, even to close and holy communion with his perfect purity.

The exertion of such renovating and exalting influences on our moral susceptibilities, is the highest practical achievement of the religion of the New Testament. This, added to its action before adverted to on the intellectual faculties, is able to raise man to the highest grandeur of his being. Decided results have already been produced upon the race. The most gifted intellects and the most august images of virtue, as a matter of history, have been found among the believers of a pure Gospel.

VI. Christianity is adapted to be the religion of all mankind by means of its elements of diffusion.

One of these, is the rare power of actually subjugating human passion. There is a large mass of propensities and tempers which are solid obstacles to the power and progress of the Gospel. A grand prerequisite labor, therefore, is to tame, exhaust and remove them. This, other religions effect but in the slightest degrees. They leave the moral spirit essentially uncleansed and unimproved; the bad passions still rankling, festering, corrupting and controlling chiefly as before. Christianity, valuing mere external ameliorations but little, goes down into the fountain of iniquity, the human heart, to assauge, to subdue. Its operation here shows a singular wisdom and success. As an illustration, mark how it prostrates the love of power and of rule. Every man, it has been already suggested, is born a despot. He loves his own superior aggrandizement. He would have nothing above himself. He would instruct and not be instructed, lead and not be led, govern and not be governed. He would maintain a lordly independence of all being. He revolts decidedly from subjection of any description whatsoever, of bowing the head to any power, Divine or human. Christianity cannot proceed at all, until this spirit is extirpated. Whatever the tide of its success and the ardor of its movements, it stops short, astounded and grieved, the moment it meets this personal exaltation. No, it does not stop; it is just the point of the present remark, that Christianity, instead of stopping, sweeps down this lofty vaunter against its injunctions, turns this assessor of irresponsible independence into a personification of humility and submission. This is its own peculiar work. Herein is the

greatness and the secret of its power. The process is not the surmounting a barrier, so much as the entire removal of it.

All the sensual passions are equally in opposition to the New Testament teaching. These must be placed under firm control, or Christianity can neither advance nor reign. There must be a repression of all the corrupt and evil affections. No compromise can be made with any of them; nor is incorporation of them into the body politic practicable. The ground is not gained while they continue to occupy it. Should their claims or their power be in any degree hushed or diminished temporarily, if they are not prostrated, thoroughly paralyzed, there is no real conquest. Precisely this is the legitimate accomplishment of the Christian religion. It casts down all the evil passions which oppose themselves, and thereby makes for itself a clear way for the whole tide of its blessings.

There is another feature in the conquests of Christianity, which largely facilitates its propagation. It makes all its subdued ones cordial and true friends. It leaves in the wake of its advances no murmuring discontent, no smothered revenge. It leaves no population behind, which, being overawed but not conquered, passive but not fraternized, is all ready to assume the offensive and rush to conflict on the slightest pretexes, on the first recurrence of opportunity. Its subjugations are of another character. The foes of Christianity are not simply discomfited, they are won; enmity is subdued; deep, pure friendship planted. The Gospel has united its conquered ones to itself in hearty and indissoluble bonds. The soldiers of Satan, in addition to laying down their arms, have put on a new panoply. It is not enough that Saul has given up his commission to Damascus and ceased to breathe out threatenings and slaughter. The religion of Christ has not done with him, until he is an ordained apostle of the Gentiles, with a new commission from the church at Jerusalem, and a sacred commendation to the grace of God; until, as a noble exemplification and powerful advocate of the Gospel, cities, governors and kings sit trembling, convinced and subdued under his announcements of Christ crucified. Christianity has no wish to effect a subjugation merely and alone. It would uprear on the same premises. It ploughs and roots up in order to plant. It breaks off the wild olive to insert the true; prunes away the thistle to graft in the figs the bramble, to put in the vine. This mode of conquest on the part of Christianity, which makes its vanquished ones not captives but friends, not the materials of a triumph, but its own true supporters and advocates, secures to itself, as it passes forth to men, a grand

augmentation of homogeneous power, and an irresistible advancement.

Christianity adds to its power of diffusion, by its care and sanctification of the domestic relations. The New Testament descends from its high revelations of Jehovah, of the impressive scenes of the eternal world, of the sacred mysteries of Divine mercy, of the precepts and sanctions of God's great moral law, and consents to attend and instruct us in our humble domestic duties, in our private responsibilities. Honored and consecrated are the names of husband, wife, parent and child, in the lessons of Christianity. Home, save heaven, the richest, sweetest word in our language, comprehends all these relations, and gives issue to all their blessed influences. It is under Christianity only, that the family fireside becomes emphatically a home; it is only then that it includes all its capable endearments, privileges and holy power. The benign and sanctifying influence, which the Christian religion loves to plant in the homes of society, can never be confined, however, to these nurseries. Morning and evening incense there, will, as a sure result, set up public altars, temples, churches, worship and ordinances. The graces of the Gospel living and growing there, will create external beneficence, civil virtues, general piety and social order. Christian sowing, engrafting and pruning there, will plant the trees of righteousness over wide communities. Let Christianity open its Christian homes to embosom and bless each generation as it enters upon the great scene of life, and the conquest of the world is well-nigh achieved.

Christian families are hiding places of power, which awake no suspicion, which alarm no fears, which systematize no opposition. We know not whether the missionary of the cross accomplishes more in a heathen land by his public ministrations of the Gospel of Christ, than by presenting a fair and beautiful illustration of that Gospel by means of a well-ordered, exemplary little community, his home. Christian families are pure lights in the depths of settled darkness. They are the diamonds that sparkle here and there on the deserts of this world. They are the blessed enclosures where the fetters of sin fall off, from whence the people of God take their departure to the land over Jordan. No one can measure their religious power on mankind. To create these holy sanctuaries on every territory of the earth, and then seat herself in them and issue forth her power and her blessings, is the favorite object and influence of the Christian religion. Herein is a large diffusive power.

The most important element of diffusion possessed by Christianity

is its benevolence. One character of this benevolence, important for the purposes of propagation, is an active sympathy with all humanity. This attribute is radical and characteristic. Without it, Christianity is Christianity destitute of life. In every heart which it wins to itself, the religion of Christ plants a warm, deep, unselfish interest in all the worth and good of which humanity is capable. Every heart which it wins, is made a congeries of human sympathies, a focus always radiating beams of kindness, a fountain always outpouring benedictions. To him, thoroughly imbued with the true fellow-feeling enjoined by our Saviour, all other men are but parts of himself. He is a possessor in their acquisitions; he is a rejoicer in their bliss; he is a laborer in their toils; he is crushed in their oppressions; he is emancipated in their disenthralments; he exults in their hopes. This benevolent sympathy of Christianity will set forward its converts unhesitatingly with messages of truth, duty and mercy to all within the boundary of a possible influence. Its perseverance in carrying its lessons and blessings abroad is the more certain from the fact, that it lies within, in the hearts of its friends. Christianity is not like Juggernaut, dragged with ropes by muscular force, liable to be fatigued, exhausted and remitted. It is pushed by the undying impulses of the deep spirit of man, impulses which grow in intensity and power the more and oftener they are called into action. There can be no remissions, therefore, no cessation at all. The warm, gushing heart of benevolence, which the Gospel carries within, hesitates at no difficulty, at no extraordinary labor. It pushes over mountains and deserts; pierces through rocky defiles and cavernous gorges; plants itself on inhospitable shores. It goes everywhere, it dares everything. Our Saviour's religion does not sit and wait in disguised repose, like our great luminary, for every portion of the earth to be rolled up underneath its beams. It pushes its journey abroad to every mass of darkness hanging over the people. Neither like our luminary, does it leave one half of the world in night, while it illumines the other. In penetrating new regions, it withholds not a ray from old ones. It has a kind of assiduous omnipresence. It settles its blessing, alike and at the same time, on both sides of the world. Christianity wastes not itself in sighs, idle aspirations, ideal schemes, but actively bears light and love and healing to those who need them; gives time and trouble to the work of beneficence; truly proffers education to the ignorant; lays spiritual food on the table of the hungry; bears God's proposal of regeneration and pardon to transgression and despair; not simply

conceives holy purposes, but carries holy purposes into execution. The Christian system is instinct with true, all-accomplishing and all-embracing benevolence. We have in nature many universal agents, which are appropriate images of its spirit of large-hearted love and universality. The dews of night distil on all the land. The juices of the earth find their way into every root, bulb and fibre below the surface, into every green and growing thing above, into all living nature. The clouds are universal carriers, bearing their watery freights all around the world to every needy field. They produce themselves the very currents by which they are swept on their way. The atmosphere invests the entire globe, supplying vital breath to all organic existence. The principles of heat, electricity and attraction pervade all material things. These are illustrations of the genius of Christianity. This bears the same grand comprehensiveness. This breathes a beneficence, which knows no boundary but the vast circumference of all human existence, all human interests, and which, in order to carry religious blessings abroad, will compass more land and seas than avarice for gold, than sensuality for pleasure, than ambition for glory.

Certainly the Christian religion possesses diffusive elements of immense efficiency. It has no attribute more remarkable than this interior constitution, through which it is able to bear its sacred influences, against all opposition, to every human family. We bow with reverence and gratitude before a system, which, besides being fraught with blessings enough for a world, has diffusive energies enough to distribute them to every human being.

The distinguished attributes of Christianity, which have now been referred to, sufficiently mark the design of its Author to make it the religion of the world. It carries upon its face its own intelligible proofs of Divinity; it preaches to the poor; it is the text-book of sound republican liberty; it raises man to the highest grandeur of his being; it proposes a method of Divine mercy to the entire race; it possesses all the needed powers of a universal propagation. These are truly illustrious attributes.

The Christian religion, fitted for the world, able to conquer the world, is in our hands as a grand instrumentality. Wherefore should we not stand up and use it with all its legitimate power. Let an earthly soldiery, which distrusts its ordnance, its fire-arms, its wet gunpowder, its ill-tempered swords and battle-axes, lie quiet and prostrate behind a good palisade. But the friends of Christianity, equipped and provided with the whole armor of God, girded about

with truth, having on the breastplate of righteousness, shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace, bearing the shield of faith, defended with the helmet of salvation, furnished with the sword of the Spirit,—let not these seek a covert, lie down behind a wall, loiter in luxurious quarters. We expect to see them abjure sloth, apathy and fear. We expect to see them close up to the great Captain of their salvation, charging on the kingdom of sin, entering strong-holds, scaling city walls, silencing opposition, taking possession of provinces and continents, going forth conquering and to conquer. As I live, saith the Lord, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord; and voices in heaven were heard saying, the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ. Here is set out the grand work to be done; to do it all expeditiously the Christian world is responsible.

Consider this magnificent enterprise of making a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness, of recovering and joining to God's family the population of this entire world. Take observation of Christianity as it proceeds on its mission to all the families of the earth. Imagine her work accomplished. Africa, at the voice of the heralds of salvation, has been waked and disenthralled. She has stretched out her hand unto God. There is not a slave-ship on her coast, or a slave-buyer on her soil. Over all her realms of death, reign spiritual life, religious activities, exalted virtues and a pure worship. Africa shines with orators, poets, philosophers and divines. Asia has become a land of schools and colleges and Bibles and Sabbaths. It has not one social desolation, not one pagan idol, altar, priest or worshipper. Indolence is turned into industry, superstition into true devotion, pagodas into holy sanctuaries. A grand regeneration has visited and redeemed her millions. Europe, enlightened, civilized Europe, has experienced changes scarcely less marked and impressive. Her false and dark philosophies have emerged into the daylight of the practical and the useful. Her subtle infidelity is turned into unsophisticated religious faith. Her cold formalities into the fervors and inspirations of a deep spiritual life. Her learning, her arts, her refinements, have been all joined in close and beautiful alliance with religion pure and undefiled before God. Europe presents the grand conjunction of the embellishments of life with the duties of life, of philosophy with purity, of intelligence with religion; a conjunction constituting the greatest known power below Omnipotence. Europe, with her exalted intellect, with her great, noble heart, stands consecrated, illustrious and mighty. America, North and South, cradled between two vast

oceans, has made the grand experiment of free institutions and solved the problem of ages — liberty without licentiousness, and self-government without misrule. The whole territory is occupied with a great brotherhood of republics. Religion, breathing here the healthful and invigorating air of freedom, shows her largest and freest soul; projects her sublimest enterprises; employs her grandest activities. The Western Continent has become the great moral standard for the world. The nations turn to reverence her example, to drink in her light. She opens her hand and her heart to them all.

The world has been saved. All the chains that bound its hundreds of millions are broken. All the darkness which has covered the nations is dispelled. Tyranny and war are no more. The Sabbath is a day of rest and worship all around the world. Every man, as he bows before Jehovah's throne, knows that a thousand millions are bowing with him. As the incense rises from his own humble altar, he sees it commingling with an immeasurable cloud, which, from all the families of the earth, is ascending up to the eternal One! Oh, a world redeemed! Heaven, never corrupted and lost, is not so inspiring a scene!

But stop, this has not yet come to pass! Heathenism has not ceased to bow down to wood and stone. The intellect of the world is not all unshrouded, all aroused, all honorably and sacredly employed. The heart of the world is not all holy and consecrated. Thrift, social order, civil government, competence and happiness have not all advanced to their best condition and their highest modifications. No! the world is a vast ruin. Seven-eighths of its intellect lies in deep sleep. A proportion no less of all its moral sensibility is perverted, palsied and corrupted. The blessed scene of light and life and holiness and peace just now described, it is the mission of evangelical philanthropy to create upon the whole face of the earth. During the present age all human rule ought to be made paternal; all armies be disbanded; all navies be dismantled; all the heart and intellect of the globe be warmed, enlivened, invigorated and expanded; the voice of them that bring glad tidings, that publish peace, be poured into the ear of the world; the names of the earth's whole population — ten hundred millions of brother spirits — be written in the book of life. And will the friends of truth and righteousness sleep! Sleep! when solemnly committed to this illustrious enterprise, in union with the power and sympathy of the whole heavenly world! Never! No, never! At such apathy the stones would cry out, the whole earth give signs of woe, the skies clothe them-

selves with sackcloth, wonder and silence spread through heaven itself.

Distrustful, disheartened and fearful are any? Courage, Christian Philanthropist! Almost can be seen now the incipient openings of that broad light, that shall beam in upon every family of the earth. The bright heralding star is already up; night is waning; the morning, the morning breaketh! Illustrious day! Let all the slumberers of the world awake to welcome thee!

ARTICLE IV.

ISLAMISM¹

By Rev. James M. Hoppin, Salem, Mass.

SEVEN centuries ago there existed between Christianity and Islamism an antagonism of temporal power, in which perhaps the preponderance of authority, and certainly the higher tone of outer refinement and elevation, belonged to the latter cause; now, the visible opposition has nearly passed away, and the moral antagonism remains. But this, though it may be as strong as ever, presents a far more favorable position of things in a religious view; for while absolute interdiction still closes the mind of the Mohammedan, he has nevertheless the opportunity of reflection, and therefore for a long time past he has manifested evident signs of intellectual curiosity, of looks directed toward a higher civilization, and even of moral and religious antipathies being softened by closer and quicker contact with Christian faith and intelligence. There are indications, also, of Christian attention being directed toward the Moslem world. The rapidly and ruthlessly encroaching vastness of adjacent European powers, the dangerous condition of the Mohammedan empire, held together chiefly

¹ Islamism is an older name than Mohammedanism. "Islam" signifies primarily entire devotion to another's will, especially that of God, and thereby the attainment of peace. Its relation to the Hebrew word "saalem" is evident. It stands in a secondary sense for all the tenets, doctrinal and practical, of the Mohammedan religion. From it are derived the terms "Moslem" and "Mussulman."