

# The Christian Sun.

Devoted to Religion, Morality, the diffusion of useful Knowledge, General Intelligence, and the support of the Principles of the Christian Church.

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"THE LORD GOD IS A SUN AND SHIELD."

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**EVILS OF CREEDS.**  
(Concluded.)

I am here reminded of the following circumstance.

A certain community has long been divided into party factions, and were unsocial, unfriendly, and unhappy; and all their misery came upon them in consequence of each family retaining in their dwelling some articles of useless furniture, which were very obnoxious to their neighbors. They desired and labored for union; met in council, and devised many plans, but as no one would destroy his useless furniture, the union could not be effected. They, therefore, resolved on leaving the field of strife, and on taking up their march for a distant city where all would be peace and harmony, and where their old useless furniture, which had caused them so much trouble could not be admitted nor wanted. But strange as it may appear, with these facts fresh in their minds, not one of the numerous families could be prevailed upon to leave the useless and obnoxious articles behind. They went on, sweating and toiling under their enormous and deformed burthens, frequently stopping to quarrel with each other by the way, until covered with disgrace, they reach the gates of the city. Here every man's bundle of rubbish was thrown off without receiving thanks or reward for his lugging it so far.

The application is easy. The community is their wrangling sects, the obnoxious furniture is their worse than useless creeds, no one will give his up, all will admit that they will not be wanted nor admitted in the millennial city, but still they lug them along without any profit to themselves, and to the great annoyance of their neighbors. They serve as a bone of contention on our pilgrimage. Therefore, wisdom would dictate to leave these worse than useless appendages in the land of strife where they were produced, and bearing no other burthen than the yoke of Christ, to join in Christian friendship, and march with joy to the holy city.

Having shown that all ecclesiastical rules of church polity should be rejected from the fact that they are imperfect in origin and character, by the indulgence of my attentive brother, I will, in the spirit of true friendship, now endeavor to convince you that they should be rejected from the consideration that

## THEIR DEMANDS ARE UNJUST.

My good brother will take no offence at this declaration, though it prefers a serious charge against his favorite creed. Your better judgment has taught you to hear my reasons before you decide on a case of this importance. I will give them without preliminaries. That creeds are unjust in their demands is evident from the fact that they

1st. Require implicit faith in their abstract propositions. They command us to believe without evidence, which is as impossible as to create a new world, or breathe without air, hear without sound, and see without light. God does not demand faith in his word without the strongest and most clear evidence of its truth. It would be unjust for him to do otherwise. Thousands would believe in human creeds, who are now denounced for rejecting them, if they could; but they cannot. They can see no evidence of their divine authenticity. They cannot stretch their honest souls to believe that to be gospel which is an acknowledged mystery, made up of absurd and contradictory propositions. It is impossible to believe that three infinite beings make but one infinite being; that the immortal Jehovah actually died; that God is impartial, and still has created some men for misery and others for bliss, and many other similar propositions which creeds demand us to believe.

We may call them profound mysteries, but this will not help the case. No man ever believed in a mystery. As soon as it is a subject of faith it ceases to be a mystery. He may believe there are mysteries, but to tell how they exist he cannot. If creeds simply required us to believe that the existence of God and all his works are a mystery, their demands would be just; but they do more—they attempt to explain and define these inexplicable mysteries in a few abstract propositions, and then brand us with heresy if we do not subscribe to their contradictory conclusions. As the unjust laws of Egypt required brick without

giving straw, so creeds call for our faith without furnishing the necessary evidence to produce it.

2nd. They demand uniformity of faith. This requirement is unjust, for the natural endowments of the human mind render it impossible for all to see and believe alike on all points. To one man is given ten talents, to some five, two, and to others one talent. The wide disparity between the mind possessed of ten talents and that of but one is satisfactory evidence that many of the most sublime truths and stupendous works of God, by the two, must necessarily be viewed in a very different light. In short, the difference in their comprehension and powers of faith are as ten is to one; yet both can have faith and a full faith; they can believe according to their ability. And what can be more unjust than to attempt to circumscribe the capacious mind, and cramp the exalted faith of the man of ten talents down to the narrow limits of him who has only one. To reverse the case would be equally unjust.

Creeds make no provision for the diversity of the human intellect. They try the weak and the strong in the faith by the same rigid rule. Deal out the same meat, and in equal portions to babes and men in Christ. The high and low of stature are chained to the same iron bedstead, "and if too short they must be stretched, and cut off if too long." And O, what mangled limbs and distorted features has this unholty work produced! How many a pure but weak Christian has suffered his tortured mind to be stretched until every holy sensibility of the soul was lost, in order to comprehend and believe the dark mysteries of a creed. How many, naturally endowed with the highest gifts, have been stunned in their growth, and their usefulness forever lost by suffering their master minds, like the galley slave, to be cramped and fettered, and chained to the narrow limits of a human creed. The heart mourns at the sight, and the eye turns to weep in sorrow when it beholds the past and present divisions of Christians with all their consequent evils, which have been caused and are still perpetuated by the unjust demands of creeds upon the free-born mind.

What else, my brother, but the unjust demands of theologians on the faith of others has contributed to divide the saints more than their vain attempts to coerce a uniformity of sentiments? To compel all to believe in a few abstract and contradictory propositions, presented in a form of a creed? Nothing. And it is a matter of surprise that this fruitless work has not long since been abandoned. We are expressly taught to "receive the weak in the faith, without regard to difference of opinions," and to "keep the unity of the spirit in bonds of peace."

3rd. They prevent the increase of Christian knowledge. There is no truth more clearly revealed than this, viz: "Knowledge shall increase;" if we follow on then shall we know, &c. But do not creeds prevent this, and keep those whom they fetter in bondage in ignorance? My brother will admit this is the case with the Catholics. Their wretched condition can never be improved for the better until the yoke of iron upon their necks is broken off. Well, can you offer one good reason why your own and all protestant creeds do not produce the same effect, in kind if not in degree? Are members of any of the protestant sects permitted to look beyond the narrow limits of the reflected light of their creeds for Christian knowledge and faith? If they are, why then are these human and dark lines drawn around their atmosphere? Why the necessity of looking at all to these wandering stars for light? And why my brother, have so many honest enquirers after truth been cut off from the church and branded with heresy, when their only crime has been they had seen and embraced some new light from the sun of righteousness, which had never shown upon the dark pages of their creed?

These human obstructions must be removed out of the way before all Christians can "run to and fro, and the true knowledge of God be increased." Gross darkness will continue to reign over the people, and divisions, as a matter of course, will continue while the unjust demands of creeds are submitted to. Assume your right, then, my brother, and aid in removing the cause which separates the flock of Christ. But hear me further, for I have more to say on the baneful effects of human creeds.

## THEY ARE YOKES OF BONDAGE.

My brother's actual knowledge and observation are sufficient to prove the truth of this position. So far as you have a knowledge, you know that all true Christians have once believed alike on the fundamentals of Christianity. Before forgiveness they believed in God, his Son, the spirit, the word, that they must repent of their sins, and obtain a pardon through the blood of Christ, or be lost. When the sealing evidence was given of their acceptance with God, they all told the same happy story. Those opinions of men, which, by the different creeds, are made tests of Christian communion, were not received as a part of the faith of the convert until some time after God had forgiven his sins. And when he was called to take a party name, and bow his neck to a spiritual yoke of bondage, he did not do it from any conviction of his own that it was right, but because his spiritual guides told him it was his duty.

Thousands have been deceived in this manner. In the heat of an excitement, when nothing but the gospel is preached, when the deformities of creeds are kept out of sight, when the mind is unformed, but full of love, and loves all Christians, it is then the shackles of bondage are fastened upon it. The converts are born free, are made to believe their liberty will not be taken from them if they join the church. But alas! they are deceived, and

soon begin to see and feel their sore bondage. They find themselves bound to believe and defend a rule of faith which clashes with the truths of the Bible, and denied the privilege of holding communion with all Christians. To freely divulge their honest sentiments will expose them to church labor, and exclusion from the body. To join in communion and holy worship with the saints of another creed will give offence to their own brethren, and bring upon them the chastisement of their avenging rod. But to deny themselves these heaven-bought blessings in sacrificing their dearest rights. And now they must either obtain their liberty against fearful odds, and to the loss of their Christian reputation, or tamely submit to wear the fetters with which they are bound. By entreaties, fair promises, and threats, thousands are induced to take the latter course. But while they continue in their first love, they sigh for the liberty of the sons of God. They want the privilege of freely expressing the honest sentiments of their hearts, and would gladly join in full communion with all the dear saints. But while shut up within the cold walls of a human creed, and lashed into submission to the dogmas of men by those who hold the rod of their oppression, they sigh for these blessings in vain.

You know, my brother, that many, very many, in your own church, do not believe in all that your creed says, and that they dare not express their sentiments only in secret. You know very well that the great majority of the members of different churches would gladly leave their party distinctions and unite in all the work and worship of God if their creeds were not in their way, or did not bind them asunder. And you must admit these yokes of ecclesiastical bondage will never be broken and the saints united until those who wear them assert their rights, throw off their yokes, and submit to the easy yoke of Christ. Then why not begin the work now? Wait not until another leads the way. If you would be free you must labor for the inestimable blessing. Are you now free? never sacrifice your liberty for all the promised blessings which a human creed can offer. Give yourself to Christ, join with those who bear his name, wear his yoke, believe and obey his word, possess his spirit, and then you will enjoy the true liberty, and full blessings of the sons of God.

But does my brother doubt the justness of my remarks? Does not he call for further evidence to convince him that human compositions, to govern the church of God, serve to divide rather than to unite the saints? Then I will call your attention to another familiar yet painful fact, which can only be traced in its origin to the doctrines and commandments of men. It is

## THE SPIRIT THEY INSPIRE.

Who, my brother, can fully delineate the character of the spirit of sectarianism—the spirit of creeds. We may, however, know something of its depravity by following it in some of its paths of strife and blood since the commencement of the gospel era. It is that spirit which met the Saviour at his birth with jealousy and murder, moved against him the tongue of slander, persecution from city to city, and nailed him to the painful cross. It prompted the disciples to forbid devils being cast out by any but those who followed with them, and filled their hearts with the unmerciful principle to call fire from heaven on their opposers. It caluminated and martyred the holy apostles for their work of philanthropy,—has been the accuser of the saints, and the instigator of all their persecution, tortures and death to the present time. It has given life to the man of sin, and birth to every division in the fold of Christ. It has fired with a false zeal the leaders of party names, creeds, and churches, to build a temple to their old fame, and to carry on a war of calumny and carnal strife with each other. And it has made the nations of the earth drunk with its intoxicating influence, and led deceived thousands from the path of love and peace, blindfolded to bow at the shrine of their temples of worldly honor, ambition and unholy strife.

Where do we see the spirit of brotherly love and true Christian affection manifested between churches of different creeds that characterized the primitive saints? No where. It is true there may be times of revival when the spirit of creeds are not suffered to show their cold and dividing influence; but then it only slumbers for a while that it may awake with fresh vigor to the work of discord—its legitimate fruits. Mark that company of converts. At first their souls are deeply imbued with the spirit of Christ. And how humble, how unassuming. What pure friendship and holy love for each other. What heavenly smiles on their countenance when they give the warm hand of Christian friendship. How harmonious and sweet their worship, and how pleasant the sight to witness their holy communions. See them again, and Oh, how changed is the character of the once holy brotherhood! The spirit of creeds has chilled the warm affections of their souls. They meet each other now with coldness—spend their short interviews in contending about the opinions, doctrines and commandments of men—brand each other with heresy, and turn away with scorn, each thanking God, like the proud Pharisee, that he is more holy than his deceived brother! Is this change, this unholty work, caused by the spirit of Christ or his gospel? or has the spirit of sectarianism of creeds done it? You know, my brother, the latter is guilty of the change. How can you then longer sustain them?

Again, look at the apostles and first ministers of Christ. How freely their own opinions, prejudices, and honor, were sacrificed for the cause of

their Master. What holy love united them in the great work of redemption. When divisions threatened the flock, and offered an opportunity for each to head a party, how true then, to their trust. Hear their solemn and benighted rebuke against the spirit that would divide the saints under worldly leaders. And when you hear, O ye who profess to be their successors and imitators, are supporters of divisions, tremble at your doom,—*'Ye are carnal and walk as men.'*

Where at present can be found, among the ministers of different creeds, the spirit of love and union, which inspired the apostles of Christ? No where. And I speak it with sorrow, and to their shame. The spirit of their creed fires their hearts with party feeling, and moves them to contend with each other, and each for his own sect. How jealous of their sectarian rights. How zealous to proselyte to their parties. How rarely two of different creeds are seen together in the same sacred desk, lifting up their voices in sweet harmony in proclaiming the gospel of love and mercy. Still they all profess to be ministers of Christ, to possess his spirit! But are they what they profess? or are they deceived? Have you, my brother, so learned Christ? You have not. The spirit by which they are guided cannot be that spirit which so united the primitive servants of Christ as to cause the beholder to exclaim, *'Behold how they love one another.'* But the spirit of creeds so divides them as to cause an astonished world to say to their confusion, *'See how they hate each other!!!'*

Turn your attention for a moment to that friendly neighborhood, where religion is not professed. All is harmony, kindness and good feeling. But soon a different scene is witnessed. God, at first, has visited the people in mercy—sinners have been saved and made happy. Different creeds in the second place have been urged upon the credulity of the neighbors; they become divided in name, sentiment, and spirit, and soon manifest less brotherly kindness than when in their sins. The spirit of creeds has not only destroyed their first Christian love, but has chilled with the blast of death, the natural sensibilities and affections of the soul! As Paul said, *'They are without natural affection.'* I have never witnessed an exception to this case. It is true I have seen many members of different churches on the most friendly terms, but then they were not under the influence of their creeds.

See that lovely family, once bound together with the strongest ties of kindred affection, but now they are divided. They have all professed faith in Christ, but it has been at different times, and under the ministry of different professions. The husband cannot commune with the partner of his bosom, nor with his own children. Brothers and sisters cannot eat the Lord's supper together. Yet they all profess to be children of the same heavenly parent. Why, my brother, this alienation of feeling? Why this division in the praying family circle? I have witnessed many similar cases; and you know it is not a fiction. And I ask, has the uniting spirit of the gospel separated those whom its author has said are one? or has the dividing influence of creeds been the cause of this unrighteous work? I leave you to answer the question before your God. If you decide against creeds, then as an honest man, as a true friend of Christ, abandon at once these systems of division and strife, and defend the law of your Master, which makes all who obey it of one heart and one mind. Hear me a moment longer and I will take my leave of the subject for a while. I wish to cite your mind, however, to another objection to creeds—it is

## THEIR OPPOSITION TO THE GOSPEL.

Where, my brother, does the sceptic obtain what to him is his most fatal weapon against Christianity? The collisions and absurdities of creeds place it in his hand. He looks at their unreasonable and conflicting doctrines; their unmeaning ceremonies: their oppressive laws: but more especially to the carnal spirit they inspire, and to the work of division, persecution and death they have wrought; and attributes the whole to the gospel of Christ. The different partisans say their creed is founded on the Bible. The sceptic believes it, and therefore raises his impious hand against the truth of God, which to him is the root of all sectarian evil. Remove creeds out of his way, let the simplicity of the gospel of truth be presented to his mind, and he has not an objection to offer against it. Instead of defending the gospel against infidelity, creeds prevent the infidel from embracing it, and are the prolific soil from which infidelity springs.

What stronger objection has the nominal believer against confessing Christ than the divisions of Christians? He is at peace with his neighbors, thinks to profess religion he must take a party stand under some sectarian banner, and fight against those who are marshalled under opposing colors. He does not love contention, therefore concludes to neglect religion in all its forms, live in peace with all, and trust his eternal interest on cold morality. Creeds, or the divisions of Christians, their legitimate fruits form an impassable barrier between him and the Saviour. Thousands are standing in this position, and they must perish forever unless they come to Christ. And shall Christians throw the greatest obstacle in their way, and be the last to make an effort to remove them? Let those stumbling blocks be taken out of the way of Zion and scores whom they now prevent would soon crowd the gates of salvation.

How many reformations have been checked in their heavenly progress, how many seeking peni-

tents have had conviction driven from their minds and they turned back into sin, and perhaps forever lost, by the influence of creeds. All was harmony at first, the gospel was the only theme of the prayer, the sermon, the song, and exhortation. But, O what a chill of death is felt on every mind when the work of proselyting and preaching the commandments of men commences. You know, by brother, the strongest sticklers for party churches think it not good policy, when they wish to 'get up' a reformation, to preach their creed. Hence, they will form a union, for the time being with their 'Orthodox' brethren, with the understanding that nothing but the gospel shall be preached to the sinner. This practice is becoming very common among the 'Orthodox' churches; and it is a tacit acknowledgment that my position is true. For if a reformation cannot be commenced by the influence of creeds, most surely their introduction would stop its progress when it had commenced.

Finally, creeds not only stand opposed to the influence of the gospel in the conversion of the sceptic, the moralist, and sinner but they prevent a universal submission of the saints to the law of Christ. For it is impossible for the divided churches to submit to the perfect law while they are governed by human laws, all different from it, and opposite in character to each other. They cannot serve two masters whose requirements are so diverse. Hence the conclusion is irresistible that a gospel union cannot be formed, by all professed Christians, while a large number are governed by creeds.

You know, my brother, that the apostolical church was governed by no other than the law of love, the perfect law of liberty—that the saints were then all of one heart and one mind; and the work of God prospered in their hands. But now they are divided, and wasting their strength in building up their sectarian parties, and contending with each other. And as creeds have failed, after a long experiment, in gathering into one fold the scattered flock, does not wisdom dictate that we should no longer listen to these false guides? Should we not now hear their voice of the true Shepherd, under whose guidance his sheep and lambs were once united and happy? Is not the same foundation on which the church first rested sufficient to build upon now? And is there any other foundation on which we can agree to build? Is there any other leader than Christ whom all will or can consent to follow? Will any other law than his ever be acknowledged by all who profess to love him! Can all be made cheerfully to bear any other name than the one he has given! Will any other doctrine be universally believed, and ordinances uniformly submitted to, than those taught in his word? And will any other principle, policy, or device, than that which at first united the saints unite them now? Certainly not. For the ways of God are as unchangeable as he is immutable. We must therefore, abandon every false way, and humbly yield implicit obedience to his divine will. Then the union for which the Saviour prayed, which the primitive saints enjoyed and which all true Christians now most ardently desire, will again be restored to the church.

But I must take my leave of you for a while. Have I succeeded in convincing my brother that creeds prevent the union of God's people? If so, how can you longer give them your influence and support? And should you not, as a true friend to the Saviour, lend your aid to that cause which aims to free the church from their baneful influence, and to unite the good of every clime in one harmonious body? Remember that he who is not for Christ is against him. Then, O then! beware how you longer support the opposing laws to his government; for you must soon render a strict account for your doings, when every pretended friend and enemy of the rightful Law-giver together with every doctrine, law, and commandment of men, will meet their everlasting doom.

J. MARSH.

## PRINTERS AND PRINTING.

J. T. Buckingham, in his series of remembrances, in course of publication in the Boston Courier, speaks of the importance for the printer to authors, as follows:

"Many who condescend to illumine the dark world with the fire of their genius, through the columns of a newspaper, little think of the lot of the printer, who, almost suffocated by the smoke of a lamp sits up till midnight to correct his false grammar, bad orthography, and worse punctuation. I have seen the arguments of lawyers, in high repute as scholars, sent to the printer in their own hand writing, many words—and especially technical and foreign terms—abbreviated, words misspelled, and a few or no points, and those few, if any, were entirely out of place. I have seen the sermons of divines sent to the press without points or capitals to designate the division of sentences; sermons which, if published with the imperfections of the manuscript, would disgrace the printer's devil if he were the author. Suppose they had been so printed. The printer would have been treated with scorn and contempt as an illustrate blockhead—as a fellow better fitted to be a wood-sawyer than a printer. Nobody would have believed that such gross and palpable faults were owing to the ignorance and carelessness of the author and no one but the practical printer knows how many hours the compositor, and after him the proof-reader, is compelled to spend in reducing to a readable condition manuscripts that the writer himself would be puzzled to read."