

Private and }
Confidential }

Having been informed of the recent arrival from our Brethren, "the friends of Unitarian Christianity in Boston" (U.S.), of an invitation to their brethren of like faith in the United Kingdom, to participate in their approaching religious Anniversaries in that City, — and having had our especial attention directed to that subject in an official communication from the Secretary of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association: —

We the members of the Western Unitarian Christian Union, assembled at our half-yearly meeting, in the City of Gloucester, have deemed it our duty to adopt on behalf of this Union, the following Reply.

To our Brethren the friends of Unitarian Christianity in Boston. U.S.

Reverend and Dear Brethren, We have heard of your fraternal invitation to the Unitarians of this United Kingdom, to join in the celebration of your religious and charitable Anniversaries about to take place in your City — towards the close of the ensuing month. We have been accustomed to regard those Annual Meetings with a deep and constantly increasing interest. The reports of their proceedings have filled us from year to year with delightful hopes for the future, and with enlarged admiration and affection for so many fervent fellow-labourers in a cause which is dear to us in proportion as we believe it to be, above all others upon earth, "the great power of God" for the true and enduring happiness of the whole family of man. To be permitted to share in such celebrations would be felt as a high privilege. To have done so in compliance with the cordial terms of the invitation you have sent us, would to ourselves have been a source of the purest pleasure, we might humbly hope of lasting impression and benefit. Nevertheless, the liberty wherewith the Gospel makes us free — together with the claims of that brotherly relation in which you permit us to hope we mutually stand, — entitles us to be frank in the expression of our thoughts, and to state that there are circumstances, as we are at present informed, — which impose on us the duty

of earnestly seeking a satisfactory solution, before we should feel that we were just to our most sacred convictions, or honestly bearing our testimony to the highest social truth, in availing ourselves of the kindness of your friendly invitation.

It is reported, Brethren, that among the officers of your body for the present year — among the fifteen Vice-Presidents of the American Unitarian Association — there is, at least, one individual in the unhappy predicament of being a holder of Slaves. It is unnecessary for us to name the person so referred to. It is enough for us to direct your attention to the alleged fact: — and to implore you, if possible, to enable us to wipe away from the body whose reputation is dear to us next our own, a charge so seriously affecting its religious position in the world, — and its power of accomplishing, through the agency of a purer faith, the great mission it has undertaken, as the herald of a higher civilization, and ^{more} humaner and more Christian forms of social life.

When we recollect, Brethren, the joyful tidings conveyed to us in that eloquent and burning Protest signed by 173 of the ministers of your faith, in what we would fain denote as your free and happy land, — we are furnished at once with arguments in reprobation of Slavery and its unnumbered horrors, which spare us the necessity of recurring to thoughts sufficiently familiar to your own minds, — and with justification in language we might easily draw from that memorable document, of the earnestness of our entreaty that you would guard your noble Institution from the dishonour of acquiescence in so grievous a wrong, — and reassure your fellow-believers in the land of your ancestors, that their Brethren of the West, in regard to Slavery and Slave-holders, have a name "above fear and above reproach".

It is possible we may be misinformed. None

would more truly rejoice if it should so turn out; -
None more deeply be concerned were the fact which is
reported, to be confirmed; - And above all, none
more bitterly grieve were those means of rectification
to be overlooked, which should encourage us in the
hope of going among you whether as humble helpers
or delighted witnesses of your deeds in the great
interests of humanity, - and quicken us as workers
together in the cause of our Common Lord, which your
Association has fitly denoted as the Cause of "Liberty,
Holiness, and Love" ↪

With-Cordial thanks for your kindness, and
earnest desires to reciprocate it, we remain,
Reverend and Dear Brethren, your faithful
servants in the Gospel, ↪

Signed,

Gloucester }
England. } ↪

April 29th. 1847 ↪

... of it should be turned to him out;
have more truth in conversation than the fact which is
elaborated to be confirmed; - but above all, more
more likely given were these means of verification
to be overlooked, which should be made as in the
case of going among your children as in the letter
or delightful winter papers which in the present
interest of humanity - are given as in the
together in the case of our common good, that you
of justice has felt the need as the cause of "obedience"
"obedience and love"

With cordial thanks for your kind
interest in the cause of the
Lovers and the people

Yours

Wm. Lloyd Garrison
Boston
April 29th 1847

Dr. William Christian

Ms. B. 1. 6 v. 3, p. 25