

For the Baltimore Clipper. THE SABBATH AND ITS WORSHIP. The Sabbath morn—the Sabbath morn, In breaking into day; Oh! welcome is its rising dawn, 'Tis now I love to pray.

THE THREE RINGS. AN EASTERN TALE. In the reign of the Sultan Sal-ad-Deen, there lived in the city of Damascus a Jew called Nathaniel, who was pre-eminently distinguished among his fellow-citizens for his wisdom, his liberality of mind, the goodness of his disposition, and the urbanity of his manners.

Men talk highly of those, Nathaniel," said the Sultan, after he had commended the Jew to seat himself on the carpet; "they praise thy virtues by integrity, thy understanding, beyond those of the sons of Adam. Yet thou professed a false religion, and showed no sign of a disposition to embrace the true one. How is this obstinacy of mine reconcilable with the wisdom and moderation for which the true believers give thee credit."

"If I profess a false religion, your highness," returned the Jew modestly, "it is because I have never been able to distinguish infallibly between false religion and true. I adhere to the faith of my fathers."

"The idolaters do so no less than thou," said Sal-ad-Deen, "but their blindness is willful, and is thine. Dost thou mean to say that all religions are upon the same level in the sight of the God of Truth?"

"Not so, assuredly," answered Nathaniel; "Truth is but one; and there can be but one true religion. That is a simple and obvious axiom, the correctness of which I have never sought to controvert."

affection he bore them. Sometimes he thought the eldest the most deserving; anon his predilections varied in favor of the second; and by and by his heart was drawn towards the youngest. What added to his embarrassment was, that, yielding to a good-natured weakness, he had privately promised each of the youths to leave the ring to him, and he did not know matters, however, went on smoothly enough for a season; but at last death approached, and the worthy father became painfully perplexed. What was to be done? Loving his sons as he did, all alike, could he inflict so bitter a disappointment upon two of them as the loss of the ring would certainly prove to them? He was unable to bear the reflection.

"I am," said Sal-ad-Deen, "but to very little purpose, it would seem. Make an end of thy story quickly, that I may see the drift of it."

"No, your highness," said Nathaniel, "but I would have it serve as my apology for not giving such an answer. The father of these youths caused the three rings to be made expressly that examination might be able to detect any dissimilarity between them; and I will venture to assert, that not even the Sublime of Mankind, the Sultan Sal-ad-Deen himself, could, unless by accident, have placed his hand on the true one."

"Thou triflest with me, Nathaniel," said the Sultan; "a ring is not a religion. There are, it is true, many modes of worship on the earth; but not Islamism always remained a distinct system of faith from the false creeds? Look at its dogmas, its ceremonies, the modes of prayer, the habits, yea, the very food and raiment of its professors! What sayest thou of these?"

"Simply," returned the Jew, "that none of them are proofs of the truth of Islamism. Nay, be not wroth with me, your highness, for what I say of your religion I say equally of all others."

"Thou art a wise man," cried the Sultan, "as it is, 'if the religion to which thou adherest be Islamism, as it must be of course. Come, I know thou art favorably inclined towards the truth; thou hast an honest countenance; declare openly the conviction at which thou must have long since arrived, that they who believe in the Koran are the sole inheritors of Paradise. Is not that thy unhesitating persuasion?"

of men. By that test I am willing to try it, and so to pronounce judgment. Which of you three, then, is the greatest object of love to the other two. You are silent. What does this ring, which should awaken love in all, and with an inward influence only, not an outward? Dost each of you love only himself? Oh, got you are all alike deceivers or deceived: none of your rings is the true one. The true ring is probably lost; and to supply its place your father ordered three spurious ones for common use among you. If you will abide by a piece of advice instead of a formal decision, here is my counsel; you leave the matter where it stands. If each of you had a ring presented to him by his father, he could believe his own to be the real ring. Possibly your father might have grown disinclined to tolerate any longer the exclusiveness of the possession of a single ring by one member of a family; and, certainly, as he loved you all with the same affection it could not gratify him to appear the oppressor of two by favoring one in particular. Let each of you therefore feel honored by this all-embracing generosity of your parent; let each of you endeavor to outshine his brothers in the cultivation of every virtue which the ring is presumed to confer—assisting the mysterious influence supposed to reside in it by habits of benevolence and mutual tolerance; and by resignation in all things to the will of God; and if the virtues of the ring continue to manifest themselves in your children, and your children's children, and their descendants to the hundredth generation, then, after the lapse of thousands of years, appear again and for the last time before this judgment seat! A Greater than I will then occupy it, and He will decide this controversy for ever. So speak the upright judge, and broke up the court. Your highness now, I trust, thoroughly comprehends my reason for not answering your question in a direct manner?"

"If it please your highness," said the Jew, who had by this time arisen, and was gradually, though respectfully, proceeding to accomplish his retreat.

"By my beard," said the Sultan after a considerable pause, "if it is an ingenious apology that of thine, and there may be something in it too; but still it does not persuade me that thou art excusable in thy pertinacious rejection of Islamism. I own I tremble for thee after all. Go thy ways, however, for the present, with this purpose of to-morrow, by way of premium for thy mother-wit."

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