Common Sense Theology

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A SECOND SERIES OF

Tracts for the Times

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NOTE

The first series of 'Tracts for the Times,' issued last year under the title of '*Reasonable Religion*,' met with such favour, and proved so helpful to many earnest, inquiring minds, that it was thought well to publish the second series in this collected form.

It will be observed that each writer utters his own thought in his own way, and no attempt has been made to secure uniformity of presentation. But although Unitarians have no authoritative creed, the attentive reader will discover that there is general agreement in all the great essentials of religion. They are not afraid to reject views which science and criticism have rendered obsolete; for they find that free and reverent inquiry helps to bring them nearer to the Christianity of Christ, as it is summed up in the universal Fatherhood of God and the universal Brotherhood of Man.

London, October, 1893.

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THE UNITARIAN CHURCH
IN ENGLAND AND AMERICA.

By John W. Chadwick.

UNITARIANISM, as a doctrine of the unity of God, is much older than the Christian Church, not only in the direct line of development from Judaism, but in various subsidiary lines. This is true of the explicit doctrine, and it is much more widely true of that implied in many forms of primitive religion. The heroic company of scholars which has argued for a primitive Monotheism, from which the various polytheisms of the world were a decadence, has not been wholly given over to believe a lie. Their crude result has been the clumsy symbol of a striving after unity, or tendency to it, in the most primitive and polytheistic forms of worship and belief. Thanks to this tendency or striving, the Vedic Hymns elevate Indra or Varuna into a prominence that leaves the other deities of the pantheon with their occupations gone; behind the dualistic strife of Ahriman and Ahura-Mazda is conceived a power that reconciles their opposition: and in the Greek Mythology an ultimate fate to which the Olympian gods must yield. Underlying and overtopping all the different theological schemes, with their multiplicity of gods and goddesses, there was the sense of the divine, of that mysterious power which was at the heart of things, coming to clearer consciousness in the thought of philosophic minds, but seldom wholly absent from the most simple and untaught.

That the early Christian Church was Unitarian in the sense of being Monotheistic is evident from the fact that the early Christians were mainly Jews; the earliest, Jews without exception. Whatever Jesus might have thought as to

its being no robbery for him to be equal with God, to say nothing of identity, for him to have broached such an opinion would have brought his ministry to such a sudden termination that we should never have so much as heard his name. The fishermen of Galilee, equally with the scholars of Jerusalem, would have recoiled from such presumption with immeasurable contempt; and there would have been no need of any civil process to punish it: an outburst of spontaneous rage would have anticipated Pilate's acquiescence. The simple fact that the first theoretic conception of Jesus was as the Jewish Messiah makes the idea of his original deity absurd, for the idea of deity no more entered into the conception of the Messiah than the idea of comfort entered into the later doctrine of eternal hell.

The deification of Jesus was a very gradual process. To say that the beginnings can be found in the New Testament is not to claim for them a very primitive Christianity, for the New Testament books took just about a century to come full circle—from 75 to 175 A.D. Paul's Epistles represent a more developed form of the doctrine of Christ's nature than do the Synoptic Gospels; but this is only what we should expect from what we know of Paul and his relation to the early Church, and of the character of the Synoptics, as the last result of a long process of traditional aggregation. In general, the conception of Mark is more exalted than that of Matthew, and the highest point in either of the three is found in the idea of a dignity and office to be bestowed on Jesus as a reward of his faithfulness, and through the medium of his death and resurrection. That all the Epistles of Paul were written before the first of the Synoptics shows, when we consider how little the Epistles coloured them, how tenaciously the human side of Jesus held its ground. As the deification proceeded, the Jews were alienated more and more. In the Epistles of Paul, the process of exaltation is much further advanced than in the Synoptics; but it stops short of actual deification, as does the Fourth Gospel, also, though that goes a little beyond Paul. The nature of Christ was a matter of free speculation for the next two hundred years, and even further on. Midway of the third century, Sabellius advocated the doctrine that the Father, Son, and

Holy Spirit were all emanations of the Logos, which he identified with the Supreme God. For a time, this quaternity, this four-fold mystery of the divine nature, threatened to be the orthodox doctrine; but it was finally condemned as heretical, and in its place the doctrine of the Nicene Creed was set up: namely, that Christ was of the same substance with the Father, and was the product of His eternal generation. The great advocate of this doctrine at Nicæa, in 325 A.D., was Athanasius; and its great opponent was Arius. Time was when the majority of Unitarians cast in their lot with Arius, and those who were inclined to question his superiority to Athanasius were received with much suspicion and alarm. But the preference is now quite the other way, not as fully accepting the thought of Athanasius, but thinking that it had probably more philosophic truth in it than the Arian conception. This tendency has been interpreted by some orthodox critics, whose wish is father of their thought, as a retreat upon the orthodox position. But in truth, the attraction of Athanasius has been his teaching of the humanity of Jesus. If he affirmed his deity, he affirmed his humanity with equal energy; while Arius makes him a being *sui generis*, not a non-natural man, but a non-natural God; not quite so old as God, but so near to, that Arius would not say "there was a time when he was not," but "there was when he was not." The animating motive of both Arius and Athanasius was much the same—to steer clear of Ditheism—the affirmation of two gods—while still exalting Jesus to the highest possible degree. But dreading one and the same evil, the two parties took different methods of avoiding it, and in their hot insistence, each on its own way, made every corner of the Roman Empire ring with angry altercation.

From this time forward there was very little Unitarianism, as opposed to Trinitarianism, for some dozen centuries, though there was here and there a good deal of earnest criticism of the creed of our traditional orthodoxy, some of whose doctrines were slowly getting themselves established all along this weary time. The doctrine of the Atonement had to wait till the eleventh century for anything like its modern form.

Considered doctrinally, the Reformation was a reactionary movement, and its reaction was to those opinions and beliefs which were most horrible in the earlier centuries, which had most oppressed the mind and heart of Catholic Christendom, and which had been shorn of something of their hatefulness. As for the doctrine of the Trinity, Luther accepted it by sheer force of will; Melancthon would not consider it too seriously; Zwingli was sounder upon this point than Calvin himself, while he differed from him by the heavens' width in regard to total depravity, finding in every child a new-born Adam, thanks to the power of Jesus' death and resurrection, and matched the Free Religionists of our own time in his abundant sympathy with the religions of the heathen world. Castellio, one of the finest spirits of his age, at first befriended by Calvin, afterwards became the victim of his implacable enmity for his free handling of predestination, and was so beset that in his lonely banishment he was literally starved to death. The name of Servetus is much better known. With all his brilliant qualities he was somewhat crotchety, or, in more precise language, "one of those bold spirits who sometimes seize hold at once, and, as by instinct, of high and rich truths, but are wanting in the depth and sobriety of reasoning power necessary for the working out of a great system." His system has been described by M. Reville, a competent critic, as a crude mixture of rationalism, pantheism, materialism, and theosophy. Generally hailed by Unitarians as "one of themselves," if he had been, the shame of Calvin would have been less in putting him to death. In truth, he would have had him beheaded and not burned, but, as he had done his best to hand him over to the Roman Inquisition, which would have tortured him first and burned him afterwards, he should not be too much admired on this account. So far as a matter somewhat obscure and difficult can be made out, Servetus was a more orthodox Trinitarian than Calvin himself; i.e., his thought was closer to the Nicene theology. Both Servetus and Calvin were anxious to avoid tri-personality, but Calvin, in his extreme anxiety, got over on the Sabellian ground. A man is never sure of orthodoxy who does a little thinking

for himself. This was Bishop Huntington's trouble when he left the Unitarians; before he knew it, he had a quaternity upon his hands, as Dr. Hedge made clear enough. One thing is certain—that Servetus was no Arian. He said distinctly that Arius was "not equal to the glory of Christ," "*gloriæ Christi incapacimus.*" And as little Arian were the Socini, Lælius and Faustus, uncle and nephew, whose name has nicknamed Unitarians to the present time, though long since it ceased to indicate their opinions as obviously as the name Calvinism has ceased to indicate the opinions of the modern orthodox. But I do not know of any name upon their calendar of which Unitarians have more reason to be proud, not even Channing's, than the name Socinus, such a leap the uncle and nephew of this name made out of the darkness of the ancient and the mediæval, into the light and beauty of the modern world. It was no petty or equivocal arraignment that the younger brought against the orthodox creed; it was a sweeping one, without paltering or obscurantism; and the scope of it included the doctrines of the deity of Christ, the Trinity, the personality of the devil, total depravity, vicarious atonement, and eternal hell. Moreover, he had the social temper of Priestley and Channing; their hatred of oppression; their sacred passion for a kingdom of heaven upon earth.

Poland and Transylvania had been troubled with dissentients from the doctrine of the Trinity before the burning of Servetus in 1553, and in 1556, Georgio Blandrata went to Poland and heaped such fuel on the fire that in a little while there was a general conflagration and a schism in the Church, the year 1565 seeing the establishment of the first Unitarian Church that Christendom had seen since Constantine, throwing his sword into the Athanasian scale, had made the other kick the beam. The history of Polish Unitarianism is a history of efficient organization, and a success so positive that it drew upon itself the arm of persecution with its utmost strength, a decree of expulsion marking the first centennial of Blandrata's arrival in Poland. The exiles went in all directions; those that went to Transylvania finding there a goodly fellowship which had sprung into being almost simultaneously with the beginnings

of the Polish Church. To-day it nourishes a vigorous life, with more than a hundred congregations, and cherishes the name of Francis David as did the Polish Church that of Faustus Socinus above all names in its eventful history. It was Socinus who took up the work of Blandrata in Poland and carried it along to larger issues, while Blandrata went to Transylvania, first to establish the new faith and afterwards to desert it in its day of trial, even allowing himself to be made the instrument of David's imprisonment, which resulted in his death.

By this time (1579) certain Anabaptists had already borne their fagots to St. Paul's Cross, in London, and been burned there for the wrongfulness of their opinions and the glory of God, and among their opinions thus cruelly opposed were some strikingly Unitarian. For like opinions Joan Boucher perished at the stake in 1550, and because "the new man always hates the newest, and the seceder from the seceder is as damnable as the Pope himself," we have in the same reign (Bloody Mary's), from one John Philpot, Archdeacon of Winchester, an apology "written for Spittynge on an Arian; with an invective against the Arians, the veri naturall children of Antichrist." "Apology" must here be understood as justification. The ecclesiastical spitter and the Arian were both in the same prison for heresy. It was a very characteristic piece of business. The Progressive Orthodox of our own time are much given to spitting in a figurative but not agreeable manner upon those who are so unfortunate, or fortunate, as to be a little more progressive than themselves. That good Queen Bess might not be any whit behind her father and her sister in her disrespect for Arians, she burned one in 1580 and another in 1583; and in 1611 two others—Bartholomew Legate and Edward Wightman—had the distinction of being the last two persons burned for heresy on English soil. It was the very year in which John Robinson took up his residence in Leyden in the house which still attracts the feet of pilgrim sires and sons.

As yet, apparently, the Socinian influence had not been felt in England, but signs of it began soon after to appear. The Socinian books came in, and the Presbyterian Synods, which midway of the seventeenth century constituted the

established Church, forbade their sale and importation. The exclusion was imperfect, and many persons were infected with the dreadful taint. One of these was John Biddle (spelt Bidle at the time), who made a bad beginning at Oxford, in that, as we are told, he was "more determined by reason than by authority." Frankly antitrinitarian, in 1654 all his books, and they were many, were ordered to be burned by the common hangman, and but for the interposition of Cromwell he might have shared their fate. As it was, when Cromwell had concluded his great work, the doughty man had no defender, and was thrown into a loathsome prison, which soon ended his career. In 1655, the year following that in which Biddle's incendiary books were subjected to a homœopathic treatment, Dr. Owen, the rigidest, as Baxter was the most liberal, of dissenters, said there was "not a city, a town, and scarce a village in England, where some of this poison was not poured forth." Among those who took kindly to this poison were John Milton, John Locke, and Sir Isaac Newton, easily first among the leading intellects of their time, though their Unitarianism was more of the Arian than the Socinian type. They were no more Trinitarians than Dr. Lyman Abbott, and believed in the deity of Christ no more than he, but they believed much less in his humanity. Another sturdy Unitarian was William Penn, who stated his objections to the doctrine of the Trinity very forcibly in a tract entitled "The Sandy Foundation Shaken."

With the downfall of the Stuarts in 1688 the "era of toleration" succeeded to the era of persecution and disability. Baptists, Independents, and Presbyterians built their chapels east and west. But while the Baptists and the Independents seemed to have learned no lesson of religious breadth and toleration in the school of narrowness and persecution to which they had been sent so long, it was different with the Presbyterians. Their chapels generally were established upon what are known as "open trusts." That is, they were not tied down to any creed or articles. Left free to read the Bible at first hand, they very soon began to wander from the strictness of the Westminster Confession. One hundred and seventy years ago they had got along as

far as the Prof. Briggs contingent of American Presbyterians have got now (1894). They had had enough of predestination, whether as election or reprobation, and the doctrine of the Trinity fell into general neglect. The state of things was very similar to that in America at the beginning of this century, when hundreds of Congregationalists and many of their ministers had ceased to care for or to preach the traditional dogmas, yet had not broken with them openly, but with this difference: while in America the signal for a manlier attitude came from without, as we shall see, in England it came from one of the progressive Presbyterians, Joseph Priestley, the first great English Unitarian, a scholar, a scientist, a discoverer, a reformer, of whom English Unitarians have as good reason to be proud as American Unitarians of Channing, though Priestley was a man of as much less exalted spiritual genius than Channing as he was a man of more restless scientific curiosity and intellectual range. His theological position was the direct result of his philosophy, which was the materialistic, associational, necessarian philosophy of Hartley. His belief in supernatural revelation was intense. He had an absolute distrust of reason as qualified to furnish an adequate knowledge of religious things, and at the same time a perfect confidence in reason as qualified to prove this negative and to determine the contents of the revelation. The doctrines of traditional orthodoxy he exhibited as "Corruptions of Christianity," not finding them in the New Testament. He made nothing of the natural argument for immortality, basing his hope entirely on the resurrection of Jesus, and arguing with perfect logical consistency that the general bodily resurrection of the dead will be as miraculous in every case as the resurrection of Jesus. The Unitarianism of Priestley was in fact a reaction against the natural theology of the eighteenth century Deists. It was less rational and progressive than that. And it tended much more to the dogmatic hardness of a creed than the Presbyterianism of "the Bible only" from which it was evolved. It made religion as much a matter of belief as it has ever been made. The hand of Priestley has been heavy upon English Unitarianism. But nothing shows more clearly and impressively what libels labels

may become, and how wide the range of thought included in the Unitarian name, than a comparison of Priestley's Unitarianism with that of recent date. And nowhere else does this inclusion come out so strikingly as in a comparison of his thought with that of James Martineau, at whose birth in 1805, Priestley's death was as recent as the previous year. Martineau himself began with the materialistic philosophy and necessarian ethics of Priestley, but for forty years they have had no sterner opposition than from him, and while Priestley contended that belief in the Messiahship of Jesus was the only essential of the Christian religion, Martineau contended that Jesus neither was the Messiah nor conceived himself to be so; that the doctrine of his Messiahship was one of the "Corruptions of Christianity" which Priestley omitted from his catalogue.*

Three other names stand out with Priestley's as pre-eminent among the Unitarian founders of the eighteenth century. They are Price and Belsham and Lindsey. Price was not a Socinian, like Priestley and Belsham, in his theology, but an Arian, yet he was in thorough sympathy with Priestley's political ideas. He was an intimate and valued friend of Benjamin Franklin, to whom he introduced Priestley at the beginning of that scientific career of which the discovery of oxygen was the proudest incident. He was equally the valued friend of American independence, and, with Priestley, of the French Revolution, in its earlier manifestations. His public advocacy of the Revolution drew upon him Burke's celebrated "Reflections," while Priestley's drew upon him the mob which sacked his house in Birmingham, and scattered his papers and destroyed his philosophical instruments, where now his statue looks serenely down, as if he had forgotten or forgiven every wrong. But Unitarianism as a distinct organization in England, derives neither from Price nor Priestley, nor from Belsham, who was a loud echo of Priestley's materialistic, necessarian Christianity, but from Theophilus Lindsey. He was the solitary contribution of the Established Church to the new

* See *The Seat of Authority in Religion*,—Dr. Martineau's latest utterance on questions of Biblical Criticism and Religious Thought.

faith. There were hundreds in that Church who agreed with him, and a number of them got together and petitioned Parliament for some alteration of the creeds and articles that would enable them to use them without mental reservation. The petition was not even received, whereupon all except Lindsey fell back upon their livings, fat or lean, resolved to wait for better times, meantime to go on using the words which they did not believe. So could not he. He gave up his Yorkshire vicarage, and went up to London with £20, the proceeds of his furniture and books, and in an auction room in Essex Street, just off the Strand, he started the first Unitarian Church. There shortly after was built the Essex Street Chapel, which still remains, the Unitarian headquarters of to-day, and speaking there one morning in June, 1887, I felt myself to be on holy ground; not only because of the denominational association, but because Theophilus Lindsey was one of the holiest of men, one of the gentlest, purest, truest that the world has ever known. Belsham was his successor, and thereby hangs a tale. Priestley, homeless in England, came to America in 1794, and was instrumental in the organisation of a church in Philadelphia, which had lay-preaching till 1825, when Dr. Furness was installed its minister, and he is now, in 1892, its pastor emeritus, having brought his active ministry to an end in 1875. But this was not the first Unitarian Society in America. The first, like the first in England, and solitary as that in this respect, had an Episcopalian reformer for its minister, James Freeman, of King's Chapel, the grandfather, by marriage, of James Freeman Clarke. An English nobleman travelling in this country—Lord Stanley or Lord Amberley, I have forgotten which—speaking of the King's Chapel prayer-book, said to Dr. Bellows: "I understand it is our liturgy watered." "No," said Dr. Bellows, "washed." The washing, or watering, was done in 1785, by Dr., then young Mr. Freeman, who acknowledged his indebtedness to Theophilus Lindsey in his preface. In 1787 Mr. Freeman was installed —he had been a lay-reader before that—no bishop being willing to lay his apostolic hands upon a head so full of heresy. There were other Episcopal churches which the new wine made for a while somewhat unsteady in their gait,

but they all settled down at length into a sober acquiescence. It was very different in the Congregational churches. These furnished the Unitarian body with nearly all its early churches in America, as the Presbyterians furnished them with nearly all their churches in England.

Ecclesiastically speaking, the Unitarian Church in America is "the liberal wing of the great Congregational body which founded the first colonies of New England and gave the law to Church and State for more than two hundred years." Ten years ago 120 or more of our 366 Unitarian Churches were on a historical basis of Puritan Congregationalism. They had all descended from Puritan parishes, and thirty-eight of them ante-dated the year 1700, including the first church in Plymouth, that of the Pilgrim Fathers. For many years before the beginning of the present century, Calvinism had been undergoing a process of softening and abridgment in the New England churches. Since the beginning of the century this process had become more frequent, and more conspicuous in its manifestations. It especially characterized some of the ablest ministers in and around Boston. A class, thus formed to which the name "Liberal Christians" was applied. The meaning of this term was simply that they were disposed to put a liberal construction on the Calvinistic creed. Among the members of this class there was no organized sympathy. They were generally Arminians, but so predominantly intellectual rather than emotional, and so conservative in taste, that Arminian Methodism had for them no attractions. A smaller majority were dissenters from the Trinitarian dogma. In regard to the rank of Jesus and the nature of the atonement there was much less unanimity. Liberal Christian ministers exchanged pulpits freely with the so-called orthodox, and united with them in all the ecclesiastical relations of the time. Presently some of the more rigid of the orthodox party began to see that Liberal Christianity was silently but surely eating out the heart of Calvinism. The catastrophe would probably have come a few years sooner but for the War of 1812, which was of such absorbing interest that for the time the dangers to which Calvinism was subject were forgotten. But peace between America and England had

hardly been proclaimed when war between orthodoxy and liberalism was declared. The declaration came from the orthodox side—an article written in the "Panoplist" by Jeremiah Evarts, father of the Hon. William M. Evarts, written at the instance of Dr. Jedediah Morse, its editor, whose "Geography" was a famous book in the fore part of the century. It was, perhaps, some sharp reviews of that, in which he fancied "*odium theologicum*" was present, that stirred him up to make reprisals in a book called "American Unitarianism," which was based on Belsham's life of Lindsey; and now you have the tale which I said hung thereby, in speaking of Belsham's succession to Lindsey's place and work. Belsham's book was made up mainly of letters to Lindsey by Dr. Freeman, Buckminster and other Boston Liberals. Morse's book, and, still more vigorously and violently, Evarts' article, was bent on showing the sympathy and identity of the American Liberal Christians with the English Unitarians, and on convicting the former of dishonesty in covertly teaching or hypocritically concealing their opinions; finally the article was a call upon all orthodox Christians to come out from the Liberals and deny to them the Christian name and Christian fellowship.

Dr. Channing, who, in 1815, was 35 years old, had been for twelve years the beloved minister of the Federal Street Church, in Boston, wrote an elaborate letter in answer to Morse's article, denying the general sympathy of his party with Priestley and Belsham (they were not Socinians, but Arians, for the most part, in their theory of Christ), but claiming for the Socinian humanitarians the Christian name, and all the rights and courtesies of Christian fellowship. But it was his reply to Evarts' charge of dishonesty and hypocrisy that showed what a reserve of moral indignation his quiet modesty had long concealed. His disclaimer was entirely rational, but the event proved the mistakenness of the policy which the Liberals had pursued. In periods of transition, negation and affirmation should go hand in hand. The policy of the Boston minister, who was "mighty careful to tell no lies," always fails in the long run. It is not enough to preach that which you believe, as Channing and his party did, with passionate sincerity. The negations must come out. They had to, then and there.

In conclusion, Channing pleaded earnestly against the exclusive spirit which would deny the Christian name, and shut out from Christian fellowship, all those who could not take the Calvinistic shibboleth upon their lips. His pleading was in vain. The controversy which had been so vigorously begun went on for several years, and drew into it on either side men of great ability. Many things were said that showed how independent of each other are theological soundness and the Christian spirit. In the asperities of debate, in the injustice of parochial divisions, there was blame enough on either side. Scores of congregations were divided, and hundreds of the clergy and laity who should have been life-long friends were ranged in hostile camps and met each other with indifferent greetings or averted eyes.

Channing's contribution to the controversy was equally remarkable for the smallness of its bulk and the weight of each particular item of the count. There was one mighty sermon in Baltimore (1819) at Jared Sparks's ordination; and a few weeks ago I stood in the very church and pulpit in which it was preached and felt myself again on holy ground. The pulpit's shape is not unlike that of a mortar, and the sermon that was shot from it exploded like a bomb in the orthodox camp. There was another mighty sermon that was preached at the dedication of the Second Unitarian Church in New York, in which the sacred eloquence of Dewey was afterward a soaring flame. There were a few articles in the *Christian Examiner* and a few public letters to the same effect. But every sermon that he preached was interpenetrated with his Unitarian gospel of the dignity of human nature, the supremacy of reason, salvation by character, and the intellectual and moral unity of God and man. He had no liking for controversy, and the most of it fell into other hands, some of them mighty for the pulling down of strongholds of inveterate error, some of them plastic for the shaping of new forms of church organization and missionary work. Of the former, Andrew Norton, of the latter, Ezra Stiles Gannett, was easily the first. The elder Ware contended against Woods of Andover for the new interpretations; whence an imperfect pun—the "Wood'nd

Ware Controversy"—touched with a gleam of humour the too sombre spirits of a strenuous and baleful time.

My friend William Gannett reckons that few of the preachers who were over forty at the outbreak were ever anything but Arians. The younger men were more inclined to the Socinian interpretation, which was not inconsistent with an intense biblicism and supernaturalism. Jesus might be a man and still invested with miraculous powers, miraculously born and raised up from the dead, and the Bible might be the infallible record of his life and teaching and of much besides. But hardly had the Unitarian controversy, as between Liberals and Calvinists, reached its term, which may be roughly fixed at 1830, than the first signs began to appear of a new controversy within the limits of the Unitarian body, a controversy in which Channing was distinctly on the Liberal side, though others broke much more effectually than he with the Arian and supernaturalist tradition. But we find him lamenting the development of "a Unitarian orthodoxy," and deprecating "a swollen way of talking about Christ," and these signs are two of many that make clear in what direction he was going, and why the more conservative people viewed him with distrust; though it should not be forgotten that his anti-slavery sympathies also were intolerable to many. But the Unitarianism of Channing and those whose intellectual and spiritual temper was nearest akin to his contained from the outset of the denominational history a principle—the principle of reason in religion—which soon or late was sure to carry those obedient to it a great deal farther away from Arianism, which exalted Christ sometimes to a degree of inappreciable difference from God, than the Socinian doctrine of a miraculously-gifted man and an infallible book. It was inevitable, if reason was sufficient to determine the grounds and limits of a revelation, and, within those limits, to interpret what was written, that there should come the moment when it would dare to judge the revelation, and by such judgment assert its own superiority thereto. When Channing said: "The truth is, and it ought not to be denied, that our ultimate reliance is and must be on our own reason; I am surer that my rational nature is from God than that any book is an expression of His will," he

said that in which all our later developments were folded like the oak within the acorn's cup.

But the development would probably have been much slower if a new philosophy, quite different from that of Locke, which was unconsciously the philosophy of Channing, while unconsciously he anticipated a more spiritual rendering of the world, and very different from that of Hartley, which Priestley and Belsham had espoused, had not sprung up in Germany, and been illustrated by such names as Kant, Fichte and Schelling, and in England found such advocates as Coleridge and Carlyle. These last, it would appear, did much more than the Germans directly to foster the transcendental movement in New England, and Carlyle's "Sartor Resartus," with its one glorious chapter on "Natural Supernaturalism," the most of all. There were many touched with the new thought; pre-eminently Emerson and Hedge, and Ripley and Clarke, and Bartol and Parker; and to the first and last of these respectively it fell to give to it its loftiest expression, and its most thorough-going application to the religious questions of the hour. Emerson's withdrawal from the Hanover Street pulpit in 1832, because of his inability to use the forms of the Lord's Supper as they were then generally understood, was followed in 1836 by his little book called "Nature," and in 1838 by his "Divinity School Address," higher than which the wings of his religious aspiration never beat the upper heavens. Furness' "Remarks on the Four Gospels," a book of startling radicalism in its day, came out in 1836, and Strauss' "Life of Jesus," of the year before had consequences not to be measured by the degree to which his mythical theory might commend itself to an intelligent and earnest mind. It laid bare the countless inconsistencies of the miraculous stories and the insufficiency of naturalistic ingenuity to meet the case.

But it was a young man, who was one of the first American readers of Strauss' book, and who reviewed it for the "Christian Examiner" with more satire than appreciation, who had just finished a translation of De Wette's "Introduction to the Old Testament," who was to concentrate in himself to an unparalleled degree the influence of the New Criticism and New Philosophy on the Unitarian body. I

speak of Theodore Parker, who was born Aug. 24th, 1810, was settled at West Roxbury in 1837, and in Boston, where he had been preaching for some time, in 1846, and died in Italy, May 10th, 1860. What manner of preaching he did in West Roxbury we have just now a better opportunity for knowing than before, a volume of his sermons there being still warm from the press. They are much warmer from the impress of his spirit. They have a wonderful simplicity. The love of God, the love of man, the love of all things beautiful and sweet and true, blossoms on every page. I had hoped that his sermon on "The Temptations of Milkmen" would be there, but it is not.

Reading everything, three hundred and twenty volumes in fourteen months before he fairly got up steam, Parker read deep in all the philosophical and critical literature of the time, and skimmed from it the cream of cream. He heard Emerson in Cambridge and walked home to Roxbury with a stormy pulse, thinking unutterable things. At least, so far he had not uttered them; but now he felt he must, and soon he did, first to his own people, and then, one day—May 19th, 1841—in a South Boston sermon at the ordination of a friend; and now the sermon ranks with Channing's Baltimore sermon and Emerson's at Cambridge as one of the great epoch-making sermons of the Unitarian development. Its subject was "The Transient and Permanent in Christianity." The permanent was the spiritual truth of Jesus and his personality exalted to a degree which the most conservative Unitarian of the present time could not easily surpass. It was the transient part that was most permanent in the hearer's memories and the denominational consciousness. In this he included the New Testament miracles not as never having happened, but as being now more an incumbrance than a help. He also included the supernatural character of the Bible and Jesus; and the sacraments, not as invalid and unworthy, but as not essential to a Christian faith and life. Parker had not yet thought out his system to the end, but he had gone too far already for the brethren's peace, or for his own. For like some others, while he must speak frankly and strongly, he had a woman's heart, hated

to wound others, and was easily wounded himself. The South Boston sermon was followed up with a course of lectures, afterwards published in a book called "A Discourse on Matters Pertaining to Religion," which are the best expression of Parker's theological position. No more religious book has ever welled from the deep heart of man. His new philosophy united with the fundamental religiousness of his nature to produce this result. His interpretation of the philosophy was much more positive than that of its great German expounders. Compared with Schelling's or Fichte's, it was as a mountain to a cloud, and where Kant's "God and Immortality" were merely posited as convenience for the working of his "Categorical Imperative" of the Moral Law, with Parker, God, Immortality, the Moral Law were intuitional certainties of irrefragable stability. It was as if he had set aside a public supernatural revelation only to substitute for it a private one in each several mind and heart. At the same time, it must be said that in the general working of Parker's mind he was much more experimental than intuitional. His religious intuitionalism was very much the splendid symbol of his personal genius for religion and his own abiding faith. Channing, theoretically inductive, was practically deductive; while Parker, theoretically deductive, had such a stomach for facts as few men ever had, and his digestion of them gave the tone and vigour of his intellectual life.

The controversy growing out of Parker's theological position was both long and hard, and it was harder upon none than upon those who, honouring and loving him for his great gifts and noble spirit, felt that they could not walk with him because they were not agreed. He made no attempt to organise a party, and was left very much alone. To exchange with him was dangerous, and for daring so much on one occasion, James Freeman Clarke saw the secession of a large section of his congregation, and John T. Sargent lost his standing as a minister at large. The influence of the controversy on the life of the denomination was simply paralyzing for some twenty years. It alienated from its organized activities, if not from its name and its communion, many of the younger men, some of them, such

as Johnson, and Longfellow, and Higginson, and Weiss, and Frothingham, and Wasson, men of the rarest intellectual force and largest spiritual capacity, to lose whose furtherance and sympathy was almost a fatal blow. The bias of the anti-slavery conflict on the situation was such as to prevent an organized schism from the body. It was, moreover, of the essence of transcendentalism to be distrustful of organization, and the anti-slavery movement drew off a world of Parker's energy that might have made the theological controversy still more hot; while the ethical passion of the young abolitionists who followed the double lead of Parker and Garrison was for the time being the "one world at a time" which they could entertain, and furnished them with all the high and genial fellowship that they could ask.

The war of words came to an end at last on the political field, and the war of ships and armies followed; and in April, 1865, just as the tottering strength of the great rebellion was rushing down to final wreck, a Unitarian Convention met in New York to initiate the fourth period of our denominational life, the period of organization. We will call the other three the periods of controversy, internal division, and stagnation. It was a good year for such a meeting, the 300th anniversary of the first Unitarian Church established in the world, that of Georgia Blandrata, in Poland. The convention was the direct result of Dr. Bellows's personal application to himself of that great word of the spirit, "Thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things." He had been faithful over the few things of the Sanitary Commission—few relatively to the boundless energy of his organizing and inspiring genius. He had conceived and managed and inspired its glorious work, and all that he had done instead of exhausting his energy had stored up in him a fresh amount, which must have some new outlet or the man would spiritually burst. In advance of the convention, in response to his appeal, £20,000 was raised by subscription and turned over into the treasury of the Unitarian Association, four-fifths as much as had been given for denominational work through that channel during the preceding twenty-five years. A single year since then has seen £50,000

pouring through that channel, and the regular annual expenditure is about £20,000, which is very greatly increased by the work of the Western Conference, that of the State and the Local conferences, and that of the Women's National Alliance, while special objects often double the amount. From those whose wish is father to the thought we sometimes hear that Unitarianism is dying out, but in the light of these figures and with half a million of our publications scattered every year where it was a few thousand formerly, and with more churches west of the Rockies than we had west of the Hudson twenty years ago, scoring additions every year that will soon outnumber all we reckoned then—in the light of all these facts and many others of like character, it surely may be said, "As dying and behold we live"; and with such vigour and expansion as we never had before.

But I must have no one suppose that this period of organised activity has been troubled by no controversy whatever. Because we have freedom of inquiry and religious liberty, and because some hasten slowly and others a little faster in the revision of their opinions, I am inclined to think that we shall always have some differences of opinion and policy, and that we shall wax warm about them if we do not get red-hot. But I doubt if we are any worse on this account. Periods of difference in religious bodies are quite as often periods of prosperity and growth as periods of decadence. We have, in fact, had three somewhat memorable controversies in America during the last thirty years in our denomination. The formation of our National Conference in 1865 was the signal for the beginning of the first. Some wanted a creed of several articles as a banner for our organisation. That had no chance. The proposition was defeated by an overwhelming vote. It would have been perfectly easy to frame a constitution that would have been true to all and agreeable to both parties, under which we could have gone on conquering and to conquer from that time till now. But what some wanted was "a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence," and they had their way, incorporation in the preamble of the constitution a phrase describing Jesus as our "Lord and Master Jesus Christ," which, for a good many, carried with it a suggestion of

authority inimical to spiritual freedom and a suggestion of official dignity unwarranted by the historic facts. There was a great debate, and it was renewed at Syracuse at the second meeting of the conference, which was established in New York. Indeed, what has since been aptly called the "Battle of Syracuse" was one of the greatest meetings we ever had. I shall never forget the flaming eloquence of the abolitionist hero, Charles C. Burleigh, as he appealed "from you to your Master," pointing to the words of Jesus on the frescoed wall; nor how Dr. Bellows had to hold down the top of his dear shining head after such an extemporaneous speech as only he could make. The battle was a victory for the conservative party, and that night upon the home-bound train, the Free Religious Association was conceived, and duly born in Boston the next May. It detached many wholly from the Unitarian body and gave many others room for their wider sympathies, while they still kept up their connection with the parent body and tried time and again to bring the obnoxious preamble into better shape. As it now stands, there is an article of the constitution declaring that the preamble is only binding upon those who can agree to it. This miserable arrangement is likely to be done away with before long, a committee having been appointed at the last meeting of the conference to this end. Meantime, the broadening temper of the conference has drawn back every year a greater number of those who were alienated from it by its earlier course.

What is known in our annals as the "Year Book Controversy" was a pendant of the controversy in and about the National Conference. The question mooted was whether the names of those who could not conscienciously appropriate the Christian name should appear on the Year Book of the Unitarian Association. It may seem a petty question: but it involved the question, What is Christianity and What is Unitarianism? and the further question whether a man can be a Unitarian who is not a Christian. The personal centre of the controversy was the Rev. William J. Potter, of New Bedford, after the Rev. O. B. Frothingham the president of the Free Religious Association, a preacher of the loftiest moral temper and the rarest intellectual gifts, his published sermons

the best expression of our most characteristic thought to which we have yet attained, as calm as Channing's in their tone, but with an intellectual grasp which Channing never had, and a sweep of vision which was impossible before the orb of scientific truth had fairly risen and dispersed the misty exhalations of the dawn. The final outcome of the controversy was the admission to the Year Book, and by that sign to the denomination, in good standing, of all ministers who were in charge of Unitarian societies and of all who had been so and had not withdrawn from the ministry. And so again we took the broader road which leads to the destruction of all artificial barriers between men who, if not of one mind, are of one heart and one soul.

Lastly, we have had our "Western Controversy," and have it still, though it is agitating us much less than formerly, and seems in a fair way to follow the course of the "Year Book Controversy" to a happy end. It came about through the attempt of certain earnest spirits to limit the fellowship of the Western Conference by a "statement of purpose" committing the Conference as such to a belief in Christian Theism. In the great debate which followed, at its annual meeting, the Conference, refusing to limit its fellowship by any dogmatic test, welcomed all to come in and help who would fain build up the kingdom of righteousness and truth and love. This action known as "the Cincinnati Resolution" was the signal for the withdrawal of a strong and able party from the Western Conference, and for the extension of the controversy in ever-widening circles, until the East hardly less than the West was included in their sweep. There has been much more misunderstanding than real difference. The principal contestants for the broader way have been men pre-eminent for their theistic ardour and the tenderness of their devotion to the memory and example of the Man of Nazareth. What they have contended for has been simply a franker avowal of the National Conference position; putting first, however, the principle of generous inclusion, and then making a statement of "things commonly believed among us" wonderfully rich and strong, and expressly given as not covering all and binding none. I have no doubt in my own mind that we

shall ultimately come to this position, and that the wandering sheep will all come home at last, as those who went out on the other side have mainly done; and that there will be one flock, and one fold, open on every side to pastures new. Long since the spiritual genius of Dr. Martineau, whom the Messianic phrase of the National Conference preamble would exclude from our fellowship, if it were made a test, sounded the note of highest courage when he said: "The true religious life supplies grounds of sympathy and association deeper and wiser than can be expressed in any doctrinal names or formulas, and free play can never be given to these genuine spiritual affinities till all stipulation, direct or implied, for specified agreement in theological belief is discarded from the bases of Church union." Into the largeness of this liberty we are sure to come at length; nor is it now a distant city sparkling like a grain of salt, but near at hand, and beautiful with unimagined light.*

The fifty years which have gone by since Channing died in 1842 have seen great changes in the several worlds of politics and science and philosophy and criticism and theology. They have seen the anti-slavery conflict, in which Channing and Parker took conspicuous and noble parts, culminating in civil war and in the destruction of slavery. They have seen science advancing with a step ever more confident to discoveries ever more magnificent, the doctrine of evolution central to them all, and giving them organic unity and life. They have seen philosophy driven back by science from the transcendental ground, and compelled to base itself upon experience. They have seen theology

* The end was nearer than I thought when I wrote this about May 1st, 1892. A fortnight later, a resolution was presented by the seceding party and carried after a strong expression of opposing views. It pledged the Conference to religious work in harmony with the general import of the Cincinnati Resolution and the "Statement of things commonly believed among us." To many this appeared to be unnecessary because sufficiently implied before. Accepted by many of the staunchest friends of the Cincinnati Resolution as a complete surrender on the part of those who had left the Conference, by others and among these two of the most prominent, Messrs. J. L. Jones and W. C. Gannett, it was regarded as a backward step, partly, perhaps, because they feared the Danaans bringing gifts.

powerfully affected both by philosophy and science, and criticism in its treatment of the Bible making all things new with its discovery of the modern date of great portions of the Pentateuch and all the Psalms, if we take the Exile as the dividing line between ancient and modern in the Old Testament history.

And all of these changes have powerfully affected Unitarian thought and life. Nobody has been more sensitive to them than we; no sect has been less backward and more cordial in accepting the new ideas. But so it has happened that, while the philosophy for which Emerson and Parker were made anathema has passed into the keeping of the orthodox sects, the scientific philosophy which these have made anathema in its turn has become very generally the philosophy of Unitarian thought. So it happens that the critical results which Parker reached, and which his brother Unitarians could not endure, are now the common-places of the progressive orthodox. So it happens that the doctrine of the divine unity now resumes a wealth of meaning in which, at first, it had no part. Science is but another name for the discovered unity of the world, and the unity of the world reflects as in a mirror the Unity of the Universal Soul. If any doctrine was more central to the Unitarianism of Channing, than the unity of God, it was the Dignity of Human Nature. But, clearly, Channing's "one sublime idea," as he called it, has been vigorously challenged by the doctrine of heredity, and by the Darwinian theory of human origins. In the first particular, the gain of pity and compassion is much more than any loss entailed; while, as for the second, what seems the wreck of faith in human nature has been its grandest confirmation. For nothing argues the essential dignity of man more clearly than his triumph over the limitations of his brute inheritance, while the long way that he has come is prophecy of the novel heights undreamed of that await his tireless feet. As it is here, so it is everywhere. If that which was done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious.

It is through its inheritance from Priestley in the main that Unitarianism has been a movement of thought in sympathy with science. It is through its inheritance from Socinus and

Milton and Locke and Price and Priestley and Channing and Parker that it has been a movement of conscience in sympathy with reform. And as the former bind it to the religious interpretation of science, so does the latter bind it to intelligent co-operation with every movement that makes for the purification of our politics and the improvement of our social life. Common worship is beautiful, and mutual incitement to the highest moral thing is more than beautiful, but a church or body of churches, which is not persuaded that the field is the world, and does not shape its life conformably to that persuasion, is a thing that cumbereth the ground.

BISHOP COLENSO AND THE BIBLE.

By T. L. Marshall.

PREFATORY NOTE.

THE following short treatise is almost entirely founded on the 'Memoir of Bishop Colenso' by the Rev. Sir G. W. Cox, published in two large volumes in the year 1888. The present writer makes no pretension to originality, and has frequently adopted the very words of the biographer. There is little to be learned respecting the Bishop's career except from his own publications and the elaborate Memoir. The former are now but little known, and the latter from its unwieldly size, and bristling array of legal and ecclesiastical documents, effectually deterred the general reader. The excellent little 'Story of Bishop Colenso' by Miss Florence Gregg, professedly deals chiefly with his missionary work among the Zulus, and makes but slight reference to his Biblical inquiries which have formed a permanently valuable contribution to the critical study of the Old Testament. It would require another treatise longer than this to give even a rapid sketch of Bishop Colenso's noble missionary and political career, which showed that he was as deeply imbued with the enthusiasm of humanity as he was fearless and scholarly in his Biblical inquiries.

Bishop Colenso was great as a missionary who sought to gain justice for the oppressed races of South Africa, and thereby won the full love and confidence of their hearts. But more especially in regard to questions of Biblical criticism his biographer is amply justified in the statement that the Bishop's life has been, and will be, more momentous

in its issues than perhaps any other life in the present century. His was the noble career of a singularly honest, pure-minded and courageous man, who 'from first to last sought with a single heart for truth and righteousness as the pearl of great price.' Religious Liberals can hardly be expected to feel 'thankful that in the Divine uttering of things he had been enabled to search for this truth in a Church which encourages its members to seek it resolutely and to proclaim it manfully as the first of all duties.' As a simple matter of fact, the clergy of the established Church are pledged to Biblical and dogmatic conclusions almost exactly the reverse of those Dr. Colenso most deeply valued. The main lesson of his life is that the Church of England as at present constituted does *not* encourage its scholarly members to seek and proclaim the truth manfully as the first of all duties, for it begins by heaping upon them fetters of creeds and articles, and then practically expels them from its communion whenever they publish any conclusion that happens to vary from formularies fixed in their present shape three centuries ago. The Bishop's fearless Biblical criticisms have received the express sanction of some of the foremost scholars of Europe, who one after another have been brought to the necessity of revising their previous theories, and they are in no way impaired, but rather confirmed, by the singularly weak arguments of the whole bench of bishops, as well as by that unsatisfactory work known as 'The Speaker's Commentary,' which was written expressly to counteract Colenso's searching criticisms.

The main facts of the outer life of Bishop Colenso can be stated in very brief compass. He was born of respectable Cornish parentage at St. Austell, Jan. 24th, 1814. His father held the office of mineral agent for part of the Duchy of Cornwall, and while his son was still a boy the family fortunes were greatly impaired by the adverse results of mining speculations. His early youth, therefore, brought with it a hard experience of the difficulties of life. His biographer gives us no information respecting his school training, but very early in life he weighed the comparative advantages of ministry in the English Church and that among Nonconformists, to whom his mother's family belonged. Being orthodox in sentiment, we cannot feel surprised that he was

attracted to that Church by the superior independence of the Anglican clergyman over the so-called *Independent* minister, who 'must preach not what he likes, but what his congregation likes, as, for instance, in our free little meeting where all is riot and confusion.' Nevertheless, his judgment at the age of seventeen was in suspense, and he wrote that if nothing should occur to realise his wishes with respect to the Church, he was prepared for the Independents, in either case praying that the doctrine of the Gospel might be his 'unstained by the impious intrusion of man's own ignorant wishes and baneful speculations.' After teaching for a short time as assistant in a school kept by the incumbent of St. Petrox, Dartmouth, Colenso, with scanty help from his relatives, entered St. John's College, Cambridge—as a Sizar we are led to infer—obtained exhibitions and a scholarship, passed through that great ordeal with brilliant success; in 1836 was second wrangler, and second Smith's prizeman, and in March, 1857, was elected Fellow of St. John's. Two years later he was admitted to deacon's orders by the Bishop of Ely, and soon afterwards became a mathematical tutor at Harrow, then under Dr. Longley, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury. His sojourn here was marked by misfortunes occasioned by a fire which destroyed his newly-built house, and by subsequent financial difficulties. While at Harrow he published his popular 'Arithmetic,' and after his marriage to Miss Bunyon, in 1846, became incumbent of the little village of Forncett, in Norfolk, combining the preparation of young men for the Universities with his clerical duties.

His earliest religious publication was a small volume of 'Village Sermons' which he dedicated to his friend F. D. Maurice,—a brave act at the time when Maurice was under a cloud of Episcopal and popular censure. The volume was pronounced by the *Record* 'singularly deficient in the clear exposition of definite Christian doctrine,' that is doctrine of the *Record* stamp; and the biographer remarks that looking at it after an interval of more than thirty years, the sermons show an instinctive reluctance to the use of party Shibboleths, and point to the future growth of a wider theology. It is interesting to note that in these early years, the religious works which most deeply influenced Colenso were Maurice's

'Kingdom of Christ' and Martineau's 'Endeavours after the Christian Life.' To Maurice he was drawn by strong ties of friendship, but even Maurice, although himself subject through life to the ban of Ecclesiastical intolerance, turned bitterly against Colenso when he published his first volume on the Pentateuch, renounced his friendship, and sternly reproved a young Divinity student who had expressed admiration for the Bishop's outspoken courage. In the day of his unreasoning resentment against the Bishop's critical method, Maurice charged him with holding 'the accursed doctrine that God has nothing to do with nations and politics.' What was the ground of this charge? Because forsooth Colenso had expressed his firm conviction that a merciful Father could never have commanded some of the savage laws of the Levitical code, or have sanctioned the cruel massacres recorded in the legendary age of Hebrew history. But as his biographer,—himself a beneficed clergyman—well remarks: 'By a wonderful ordering, the man whom, because he showed that the narrative of Exodus was not history, Mr. Maurice accused of taking away from Englishmen all ground for looking to God for the destruction of tyranny, was the only Englishman who gave up time, rest—was ready to sacrifice everything—if he could but obtain bare justice, apart from Christian gentleness and mercy, for injured natives or tribes of Southern Africa.' But Broad Churchmen of the Maurice school have seldom faced the logical results of their own conclusions. Even Kingsley, after the appearance of Colenso's work on the Pentateuch, joined in the general outcry against the heretical Bishop, and in the most approved orthodox style feebly advocated the cause of the 'Gospel in the Pentateuch.' However liberal both these eminent men were up to a certain point, they were neither of them profound Biblical critics; and they were incapable of appreciating the real value of Colenso's work in destroying for ever—not the Gospel or any truth in the Pentateuch—but the superstitious figment of Biblical infallibility.

In the year 1853 Colenso accepted the newly-founded Bishopric of Natal, and in this apparently forlorn missionary post the whole of his subsequent life was passed with the

exception of brief visits to England. From the first the new missionary Bishop resolved that he would have nothing to do with arguments appealing to mere terror, which he believed greatly hindered the profession of Christianity. His one purpose throughout the whole of his subsequent career was to show the people that white men and black men, Englishmen and Zulus, were all children of one common Father who had one Law, and one Justice, the same discipline and the same love and blessed purpose for all.

From the moment the Bishop landed at Natal in May, 1855, his life was one of intense and varied activity, and Dean Stanley, with characteristic courage, told the members of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel many years later that he had gone through an amount of work which would keep alive his fame as a Missionary long after his persecutors were dead and buried. The 'Commentary on the Romans'—a book less known than it deserves to be—was one of the first results of his labours, and was written with a distinctly missionary purpose. It was published under the influence of a strong conviction that there was never a time in which it was more needful for those who wrap themselves in a traditional orthodoxy to face the fact that the religious thought of the age does not adapt itself readily to much of the phraseology current in the early centuries of the Christian era. His main contention was that on the great subjects of Sacrifice, Atonement, Justification, Redemption, the Apostle sought to convey a meaning the very opposite to that which he is supposed to express in the current dogmatic systems of theology, and yet a meaning perfectly natural and intelligible to those whom he was addressing. The book raised no such storm of controversy as the subsequent volumes on the Pentateuch, yet in reality it was more profoundly heterodox, more thoroughly subversive of all the cherished dogmas of orthodoxy, especially the cruel dogma of Eternal Punishment. The blows which both Maurice and Colenso struck at this horrible fetish caused an extraordinary outburst of clerical dogmatism. Even the amiable Primate of that day, Archbishop Longley,[1]

[1] One of the authors of 'The Brothers' Controversy,' a discussion on Trinitarianism and Unitarianism with his brother-in-law, the late Mr. Davenport, a well-known barrister.

declared that the endless punishment of individual sinners was our only warrant or assurance for the endless happiness of the righteous, and that the latter must stand or fall with the former. Colenso, even in his most orthodox days, was never a follower of Calvin. Looking at one of his own children in the innocence of her infancy, he asked a friend how any one could be a Calvinist and believe in the eternal damnation of the unregenerate.

Before the orthodox world had time to recover from the shock experienced by the publication of this book, it had a still greater shock in the publication about a year afterwards of the first part of the great work on the Pentateuch. Free religious thought,—and still more the free *expression* of religious thought,—and the science of Biblical criticism, have made such immense advances during the last quarter of a century, even in the strongholds of the old orthodoxy, that it is difficult to enter into the state of the theological mind which regarded the very foundations of religion and morality as shattered if a single error could be discovered in the chronology, the legendary narratives, or the Natural History of the books of the Pentateuch, written by unknown authors at an uncertain date. Even Unitarian divines of the older school of thought were greatly disturbed by the Bishop's free criticisms: their canon of faith was that whatever could be proved from that composite literature called the Bible, was to be implicitly believed, although happily for themselves they never carried out that principle to its strict logical conclusion. They had not then thoroughly learned the lesson taught by F. W. Newman, in one of his earliest works, 'The Soul, its Sorrows and Aspirations,' that Religion does not depend on questions of history and science, but relates solely to the spiritual life and its expression in practical righteousness. Bishop Thirlwall, the most learned and enlightened prelate of his time, saw this clearly, for in his Charge to his Clergy, published in 1863, he wrote:—'The history [in the Old Testament] so far as it is a narrative of civil and political transactions, has no essential connection with any religious truth; and if it had been lost, though we should have been left in ignorance of much that we desired to know, our treasure of Christian doctrine

would have remained unimpaired. The numbers, migrations, wars, battles, conquests, and reverses of Israel have nothing in common with the teachings of Christ, with the way of salvation, with the fruits of the Holy Spirit. They belong to a totally different order of subjects. They are not to be confounded with the spiritual revelation contained in the Old Testament, much less with the fulness of Grace and Truth which came by Jesus Christ. Whatever knowledge we may obtain of them is, in a religious point of view, a matter of absolute indifference to us, and if they were placed on a level with the saving truths of the Gospel they would gain nothing in intrinsic dignity, but would only degrade that with which they are thus associated.' In the storm of controversy which followed the publication of the successive treatises on the Pentateuch, theologians of all schools, the Bishops, with only two notable exceptions, Churchmen of both the great parties, orthodox dissenting divines of all sects, were united in a holy alliance against one whom they regarded as the common enemy of the faith. The controversy which ensued, is one of the least creditable in the singularly discreditable history of theological warfare. It was characterised on the part of Bishop Colenso with an imperturbable serenity, a firm grasp of the essential principles of religion, and an inexhaustible patience in dealing with the often wilful misrepresentations of unscrupulous opponents. It was characterised on the part of Bishops, Deans, Convocation, the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, and the great majority of the clergy, by a fierceness of bigotry and a recklessness of misrepresentation which can only be excused by their inconceivable ignorance of the elementary principles of Biblical criticism, and by crediting them with belief in their own amazing assumption that the fate of Christianity as a divine revelation, nay, belief in the reality of religion itself and in the very existence of a God, depend on the historical and scientific accuracy of every statement in the Pentateuch, including that of the author of Leviticus that the hare chews its cud, which every physicist knows to be not the fact. With good reason did some of the learned Hebraists of the Universities of Germany and Holland write, 'your Bishops

are making themselves the laughter of all Europe'; and the wits of the clubs expressed perhaps even a deeper truth than they themselves knew in the amusing epigram:—

> 'The Bishops all have sworn to shed their blood
> To prove 'tis true the Hare doth chew the cud;
> O Bishops, Doctors, and Divines, beware!
> Weak is the faith that hangs upon a Hair!'

And yet the critical conclusions that excited so much wrath and antagonism at the time are now accepted by nearly all scholars and by most divines of the moderate school capable of forming an opinion on the subject. The whirligig of Time brings about its revenges, and the brave Bishop is now justified in all his main conclusions and even in the *minutiæ* of his singularly minute and elaborate investigations. These critical conclusions may be summed up as follows:—

(1) That only a very small portion, if any, of the Pentateuch can have been composed or written by Moses, or in the Mosaic Age.

(2) That Moses may have been the real guide of the Israelites from Egypt to the land of Canaan, or a personage as shadowy and unhistorical as Æneas in the history of Rome or our own King Arthur.

(3) That Joshua seems to be an entirely mythical character.

(4) That there are two or more different and self-disproving accounts of the Creation, Deluge, and other events or incidents in the Book of Genesis.

(5) That the priestly legislation of the Books of Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers belongs to the time of, or to a period subsequent to, the Captivity in Babylon.

(6) That the Book of Deuteronomy was composed in the reign of Manasseh, or in that of Josiah.

(7) That the Books so-called, of the Chronicles, were written at a time later by some centuries than the Babylonish exile.

(8) That the history of these Books of Chronicles is not, as it professes or is supposed to be, a trustworthy narrative, but a fictitious story, put together for a special purpose.

The Bishop has conclusively shown in his remarkable series of volumes on the Pentateuch, that as a history it is untrustworthy from beginning to end; that throughout it bristles with impossibilities; that the Legislation which is set forth as applying to the wanderings in the wilderness must have been compiled long ages after the settlement in Canaan. He has shown also that the frightful massacres under the alleged sanction and direct command of Jehovah were historically impossible, and had their origin either in the extravagances of popular tradition or in the imagination of the unknown compilers. These and similar conclusions utterly break down the old theological figment of Biblical infallibility, but they relieve the thoughtful mind of immense moral difficulties. All the elements of truth and beauty in these old unhistorical books remain just the same as before; and the legends studied as legends are all the more interesting and valuable, as the student is relieved from the impossible task of reconciling them with the indubitable facts of history and science.

In reply to all assailants who charged him with sapping the very foundation of religion and morality, the Bishop maintained, always with imperturbable serenity, that he had only done his duty as a minister of the National Church in endeavouring to re-establish a permanent union between the teachings of religion and science, and to heal effectively that breach between them, which otherwise would assuredly widen day by day, with infinite injury to the Church itself and to the whole community. All but one of the Bishops united in a Round Robin asking him to resign, and eleven thousand of the clergy of the United Church of England and Ireland subscribed a declaration to the effect that the Bible from beginning to end is the Word of God, and that the punishments of the next world are everlasting.

The surviving members of the Episcopal Bench who took part in the shameful denunciation of Bishop Colenso for publishing the results of his scholarly inquiries must read with shame, one would imagine, the relentless exposure of their ignorance and intolerance in Sir G. W. Cox's Memoir. What can we say of the revered memory of Kingsley and Maurice, who ranked themselves in the ignoble herd of

assailants? Maurice, after some painful correspondence, broke off all intercourse with the heretical bishop, who had formerly been one of his dearest friends; and Kingsley wrote a series of sermons on 'The Gospel of the Pentateuch,' which are as weak as his once famous attack on Cardinal Newman, which is rescued from oblivion by the fact that it called forth the memorable *Apologia pro Vitâ suâ*. Maurice, who was himself an outcast from the religious world, 'insisted on regarding opinions antagonistic to his own as not merely erroneous, but immoral and corrupting; fatal, in short, to the first principles of faith in a living and righteous God.' But, as the biographer justly says, 'Great and good though he was, in Mr. Maurice the historical sense was very weak. He was but scantly capable of weighing the laws and applying the tests of historical credibility; hence it was that, in dealing with alleged records and statements of facts, his method assumed, in the eyes of men who wanted simply to know the truth of facts, very much the appearance of sophistry, although he expressed just indignation at "the race of quacks who can always prove what they are wanted to prove." It was, therefore, scarcely possible for him to do justice to the Bishop of Natal, who broached no theory, who put forth no hypothesis, propounded no solutions, but set himself sedulously to determine the historical value of certain professedly historical records.' In reviewing the whole controversy we cannot but acknowledge the truth of the brave bishop's melancholy plaint, 'Speaking generally, the cowardice of men in England is something amazing.' And in view of the attitude of many from whom better things might have been expected, who were themselves under a ban of heterodoxy, but were unwilling to face facts that went beyond their own conclusions, we may add the bishop's other words: 'The truth will prevail, I doubt not; but it is painful to me how little *love of truth* there is among those from whom one hoped most.' The present generation will be more disposed to acknowledge the great merit of Bishop Colenso's work, and to adopt the conclusions of his biographer, that 'from beginning to end it has strengthened the belief of those who will not suffer the letter to crush the spirit; but while strengthening their faith it has dealt the

death-blow to all traditional theories and superstitions, which first cramp and finally destroy the proper action of the human mind.'

It is needless now to dwell on the bitter clerical antagonism occasioned by the publication of the successive parts of Dr. Colenso's great work on the Pentateuch, and the mock trial before the Metropolitan Bishop of Capetown, with its unsound and illegal assumptions, and the constant conflicts with 'wild beasts of Ephesus,' both at home and in Natal. One of the more striking features in this melancholy story is the searching review of that pretentious work popularly termed 'The Speaker's Commentary,' some of the writers in which were compelled, almost against their will, to confirm many of the Bishop's most controverted conclusions. The greatest Biblical scholars of Europe were almost to a man on Colenso's side, even the orthodox Delitzsch renouncing his former traditional conclusions. It may well be affirmed that Bishop Colenso has dealt a blow at the old traditional doctrine of Biblical Infallibility which has involved far more momentous conclusions than those of the date and composite origin of the Pentateuch and the legendary character of the early Hebrew records. It is the battle between the superstitious use of sacred books and the direct eternal guidance of the ever-living God in the mind and conscience of his offspring in all ages, and it is hardly too much to say with the biographer in his concluding words:—'In every country the tyranny of sacred books, as such, has become a curse. It is our duty to fight with it until it be utterly put down, and when it has been destroyed it will be seen that no combatant in this internecine conflict has fought with more devotion or love of truth than the Bishop of Natal.' At the same time religious Liberals and Rationalists are in danger of undervaluing the Scriptures, especially those of the Old Testament. They will do well to remember that when Biblical criticism has done its needed destructive work the Scriptures remain, especially in the deepest spiritual utterances of the Psalmists and Prophets, the 'Oracles of God,' for as Colenso has said in one of his remarkable 'Natal Sermons'—'They teach us about God and his doings; they speak messages from God to the soul;

they are still profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, instruction in righteousness; they are a precious gift of God's providence that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.'

Dean Stanley, facing with a noble courage a hostile meeting of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, said of Bishop Colenso: 'Long after we are dead and buried, his memory will be treasured as that of the one Missionary Bishop of South Africa who translated the Scriptures into the language of the tribes to whom he was sent to minister; the one Bishop who by his researches and long and patient investigations has left a permanent mark upon English theology; the one Bishop who, assailed by scurrilous and unscrupulous invectives unexampled in the controversies of this country, and almost in the history, miserable as it is, of religious controversy itself, continued his researches in a manner in which he stood quite alone, and never returned one word of harshness to his accusers. As a propagator of the Gospel he will be remembered long after you are all dead and buried.'

Mr. Ruskin may not concur with all the critical conclusions of Bishop Colenso, but it is evident from frequent references to religion and the Bible that his sympathies are all on the side of a liberal and progressive theology. He has, at least, the rare power of appreciating nobleness of character even when it wears other forms than those which command his deepest homage. And it is not a little significant that Mr. Ruskin, after the Bishop's death, gave a large and valuable diamond to the museum he founded on condition that it should bear this inscription: '*In honour of his friend the loyal and patiently adamantine first Bishop of Natal.*' Yes! Loyal in his absolute devotion to what he believed, after careful inquiry, to be the truth of God: patiently adamantine in withstanding the hosts of bigotry and superstition. All honour to brave and good Bishop Colenso.

WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?

By Rev. Christopher J. Street, M.A., LL.B.

'Save thyself, O Soul; be and do what is holy, and just, and right, and true, and pure; then the Almighty Himself will save and absolve Thee. This is the only safety, the only absolution. We pray, but do not strive sufficiently; we grovel in the dust, instead of straining manfully; we clamour for some new revealing, as if the eternal revealing were not now, as ever, close to hand, at our doors, indeed, and in our very midst.'—*Dr. H. MacCormac*—'*Conversation of a Soul with God*,' p. 66.

THE question which the terrified gaoler asked of Paul and Silas (*Acts* xvi. 30) is asked with equal terror by many a timid soul to-day. Yet why this fear and trembling, this agonised beseeching? What cause is there for being afraid? Why do men view with dread the approaching hour of death and its accompanying judgment at the throne of God? What means the poor wretch who shivers at the thought of death, and wrings his hands as he despairingly cries—What must I do to be saved? Saved! Saved from what? Does he think he is lost; and if so, lost to what? What has he lost? How is he lost?—All these questions must first be answered before we can answer the question he puts to us—'What must I do to be saved?'

And the answer in most cases is—what? I have lost the hope of heaven. I want to be saved from an endless hell. What must I do to escape from this dreadful doom? How can I be saved from the wrath of God, and the terrible vengeance He will take on me? Archdeacon Farrar has told us what the popular notion of hell is. 'Many of us,' he says, 'were scared with it, horrified with it, perhaps almost maddened by it in our childhood. It is that, the moment a human being dies,—at whatever age, under whatever disadvantages—his fate is sealed finally and for ever;

and that, if he die in unrepented sin, that fate is a never-ending agony, amid physical tortures the most frightful that can be imagined; so that, when we think of the future of the human race, we must conceive of a vast and burning prison, in which the lost souls of millions and millions writhe and shriek for ever, tormented in a flame that never will be quenched. . . . Many true and loving Christians have, I know, held these views, and have mourned with aching hearts over what seemed to them the fatal necessity for believing them But others, less good and less pure, have *exulted* in them, and I know nothing more calculated to make the whole soul revolt with loathing from every doctrine of religion than the evil complacency with which some cheerfully accept the belief that they are living and moving in the midst of millions doomed irreversibly to everlasting perdition. . . . I repudiate these crude and glaring travesties of the awful and holy will of God; I arraign them as ignorantly merciless; I impeach them as a falsehood against Christ's universal and absolute redemption; I denounce them as a blasphemy against God's exceeding and eternal love!' (*Eternal Hope*, pp. 55-72.)

How then shall I answer the man, who, haunted by the dread of hell, asks me to show him a way of salvation? Break away from the superstition that enthralls you, my friend! Open your eyes to the love of God manifesting itself all around you. See the brightness and speaking beauty of Nature, all telling of the loving care of the Infinite God. Think of the blessings and mercies that have been showered on your life,—the hopes, the love, the sympathy, that have enriched you,—the merciful Providence that has sustained you in health and strength thus far in your earthly pilgrimage: and then go down on your knees and beg forgiveness from Him who is mercy, truth and love, for the slanders you have spoken against Him, for the terrible caricature you have drawn of Him, for the unworthy thoughts you have had about Him. Banish the 'old wives' fables' of gloomy theologians to the obscurity and contempt they deserve. Let the lake of fire and brimstone burn itself out, and be no more: let the stern frown of your angry God unbend into the winning smile of a God of unspeakable

tenderness; and learn that there is pardon for every sinner who will cast away his sin and seek after righteousness. If you come to me with your gloomy travesty upon religion and ask in terror 'What must I do to be saved,' I can only say that I deplore the injustice you are doing to God and your own nature, and hope devoutly that some day the rays of reason will light your path with smiles, and teach you to laugh at your former childish terror. You are already saved from what you dread, because that which you are afraid of is only a phantom, a ghost that will fade with the morning light.

So far as the story in the book of Acts is concerned, the interpretation of the gaoler's question seems to me to be this.—We are told that Paul and Silas were thrown into prison at Philippi, but while they were still there an earthquake took place, which shook the walls and loosened the bolts and chains that confined all the prisoners. There is no need to presume a miracle in this incident. In an Eastern country earthquakes are of more frequent occurrence than in our Western land; and the building used as a prison would be a much more flimsy structure than the substantial gaols of modern times. The gaoler in charge was naturally alarmed, and his first thought was that all the prisoners had escaped, and he would be held accountable for the affair. In his fear of the consequences, he was about to commit suicide, when Paul called out to him that all was right, and he need not be afraid. 'What must I do to be saved?' he asks,—saved, that is, from the anger and punishment of the magistrates. But Paul took up his question in a different way, and answered:—'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved,' and he and Silas proceeded to explain their gospel of Jesus Christ to him. So that it was no dread of hell or the wrath of God that prompted the question originally, but a gaoler's fear of losing his situation or his head in case any of the prisoners were missing in the morning.

Now the answer which Paul gave to the frightened gaoler has been perverted in later times in a way that would be ridiculous, if it were not so dangerous. The common cry of conventional Christianity is—'Believe, *only* believe, and you

will be saved.' Now though I think Paul's words were quite true if understood properly, I am quite sure they are foolish and untrue in the way they are commonly interpreted. Yet thousands of preachers, and infinitely more hearers, will tell you that the only requisite for salvation is a simple 'belief in the Lord Jesus Christ.' Works are but filthy rags: righteousness is a delusive show, under which the devil is often hidden; and all you have to do to be sure of eternal life is only to believe.

Common-sense rebels against such notions as these, and teaches us much better than some of these modern apostles. And outraged conscience stands as a living and perpetual protest against any so-called religion that professes to dispense with holy works and virtuous life.

When I am told that Christ has borne my sins and their consequences for me, and I have only to believe this in order to be saved, my reply is simply—I don't and can't believe it: nor do I wish to believe it: indeed I devoutly trust I never shall believe it. I want no scapegoat to bear my weight of sin: much less do I want my divinest brother to bear it, even if he could, which I deny. It is idle to say that we can shift our responsibilities on to the shoulders of others: we *cannot* and *ought not*. God holds each individual responsible for the sins he commits. No man can escape the consequences of his own acts, and God does not intend him to do so. Conscience is a living witness to the untruth. And I say further, that he who seeks to take the responsibility of his sins from his own shoulders, in order to lay it on his brother, is a *coward*,—nothing more nor less. Jesus had his own life to answer for: you have yours, and I have mine.

But there is a sense, as I have already hinted, in which Paul's answer was perfectly correct, and it was in that sense that he and the rest of the early disciples used the words 'Belief in Jesus Christ.' In the infancy of Christianity to be a believer in Jesus Christ meant something more. Anyone who became his disciple not only *believed* in his gospel but tried to *live* it. It was no time for half-hearted discipleship. To be a disciple in those early days meant more than a name. It required courage to stand by this new prophet

and own oneself to be a follower of his, and no one would care to stand the sacrifice and the contumely such a position involved, unless he was in earnest about it. He not only believed, but endeavoured to act up to his belief: he not only professed, but tried to practise, the gospel. Here we have the key to Paul's meaning when he urged the gaoler, as he did in so many other cases, to 'believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.' He did not mean that he was simply to believe that such a person had existed, or even to believe that what he taught was true. The 'belief' that Paul recommended was more than this: it was such "belief" as he himself had, a *faith* that *worked* in him and brought forth the fruit of righteousness. Such a faith did he recommend to others: not a dead, unreal faith, not a lifeless belief, not an idle profession, but a faith that showed its life in the works that resulted from it, a belief that quickened the whole nature and made it sweeter and holier, a profession that was only the outward appearance of a glorious inner reality.

Such a belief in Jesus Christ as this implied that a man saw the force and beauty of the new gospel proclaimed to men; that he recognised in God a Being of infinite tenderness and boundless love, who is full of pity and pardon, and is ever working for the amelioration of humanity; that he felt the claim of the Spirit of God upon him in the promptings and forbiddings of conscience and in the call for a higher and holier life; that he looked into the faces of the toiling, sinning and suffering humanity about him, and recognised in each a son of God and a brother to himself who claimed a brother's love and help, and had a right to his sympathy, forbearance and affection; that he determined to go through life in faithful obedience to the two noble principles of love to God and love to Man, and, by so doing, to win his way to a diviner life and the approval of God. All this was involved in such a belief as that which Paul urged; so that, as I said before, his answer to the question 'What must I do to be saved,' if properly understood, is the true one.

But as time rolls on, the use of language changes: old expressions lose their original meaning and become superseded. In this nineteenth century after Jesus Christ lived and died, the old answer to the question 'What must I do

to be saved' is apt to be misleading and even harmful. It is too late in the day now to answer a thoughtful self-reliant man in the old words 'Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.' Times and circumstances are altered, and though our answer will probably *mean* the same thing as Paul intended, it must be expressed in very different terms to suit the needs and tendencies of the age.

Suppose then that the question is put to me to-day; what will be my answer? First I must know what salvation means. If my questioner means that a great proportion of the human race is on the highroad to an eternal hell, and he wants to be told how to escape such a fate, I have no answer for him except that I don't believe in his theology at all, and, if he will not be guided by a rational faith, he had better go to some spiritual adviser who still teaches the old doctrines in the old way. Surely that must be a strange idea of God which makes Him into the creator of an endless hell. Is this the God whom Jesus spoke of as 'my Father and your Father, my God and your God'? Is this 'the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning'? Is this 'the Lord, merciful and gracious, slow to anger and plenteous in mercy'? Is this 'our Father in heaven' who forgives us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us? Is this the Father of the Prodigal Son, and the Good Samaritan? Why, what a travesty upon God we make when our hearts tremble at the thought of His eternal wrath! Souls cannot burn, and if they could, a good God would not desire to burn them. The Father who loves His children would not doom them to everlasting punishment, more especially as He has tolerated the blighting conditions which have in so many sad cases destroyed the possibility of noble character.

> 'Were it not thus, O King of my salvation,
> Many would curse to Thee, and I for one,
> Fling Thee Thy bliss and snatch at Thy damnation;
> Scorn and abhor the shining of the sun;
> Ring, with a reckless shivering of laughter,
> Wrath at the woe which Thou hast seen so long;
> Question if any recompense hereafter,
> Waits to atone the intolerable wrong.'

If, however, the enquirer comes to me, and tells me he has sinned and fallen short of his duty to God and to man; if he thinks not so much about a future punishment as about his present shame; if the salvation he is in search of is not salvation from *hell*, but from *sin;* if he seeks to be saved, not from the effects of his sin but from sin itself and the sinning spirit (and this is the only true salvation), then I can answer him gladly and with ease.

First, I ask him to be a brave man, and no coward. If a great work is to be done, we stand little chance of doing it well when we commence with shaking knees and a sinking heart. The soul must learn to be brave, courageous in all contingencies, and gaining its courage through a perfect trust in the love of God which passeth knowledge. These wretched dogmas of the man-made creeds hide from us the true light and keep us back from giving our own nature fair play. We are like children frightened of the dark. We are haunted by ghosts and nightmares which a degrading theology conjures up for our heated brain. 'More light!' is our cry, and the creeds rise like a thick curtain to hide God's sweet and comforting truth from us. All the manhood is stamped out of religion by this fear of ghosts that only exist in the creeds, and are laughed at by the healthy, vigorous mind which will not be emasculated by them. We want the courage to trust our own nature, to stand alone if need be in an unpopular conviction, and to fear no foe while we feel that truth is on our side. The night is the time for fear; ignorance is the cause of fear; when the morning comes, and we can look our enemy straight in the face, our fears will vanish. God hasten the coming of the morning that shall chase away the idle fears of men and their lack of faith in His boundless love!

In the next place, I bid my friend be ready to take the consequences of his own decisions and actions upon his own head. I warn him against trusting the specious promises and illusions about casting his sins on Christ or on anyone except himself. I remind him of the grand teaching of Paul to the Philippians 'Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.' Let him grasp the solid truth that it was he and no other that sinned, and as his conscience accuses

him of that sin, so he and no other (not even Christ) must take the penalty for it, and work his own way towards the salvation he seeks. It is unjust that any substitute should be allowed to stand in our place and take the whipping that we alone have deserved. If it comes to a cry of justice being satisfied, we ask of God no more than that 'justice tempered with mercy' to which He prompts us in our own souls. We will not come to Him with whining, begging petitions, trying to escape the unpleasant consequences of our wilful misdeeds and cast them upon an innocent person. Nay, if our souls realise their own dignity, we will *ask* Him to punish us for our sins, and we can trust Him not to make the punishment cruel and vindictive. We feel that, if we sin, we ought to suffer. Words cannot express the horror of a manly spirit at that most unmanly and unnatural doctrine which teaches that Jesus,—the purest soul the world has ever known—is to bear the burden of our sins and pay the penalty that we may go free. God takes care that sin and holiness shall carry with them their own rewards. The consequences are wrapped up in the choice we make. Do what we may, we cannot escape these consequences, and we have no right to try.

Then I point out to him that he has already taken the first step towards the goal he is seeking by owning his sin, by confessing that he knew he ought to have lived more nobly and purely than he has done, by acknowledging that he has heard but neglected the divine call to a better and more virtuous life. This is the first step towards salvation. If a man cries 'What must I do to be saved,' the first thing for him to do is to stop wringing his hands and giving way to despair, and to confess humbly and earnestly that he has sinned before God.

Next, I should ask him to think seriously what an awful thing sin is, so that, if possible, now that he has owned his sin, he may see its hideousness and deformity, and from very disgust at the old ways be induced to enter upon a new path of righteousness. I should remind him that all of us come to earth we know not how, and go we know not whither. I would ask him to consider *why* we are here at all; whether our existence is meant to be an aimless one

after all, a few years of tossing life and then eternal silence; or whether it does not seem infinitely truer that He who formed us knew what He was doing, and had a great purpose before Him; that in fact we have life at all in order that it may be used for the noblest purposes and directed to the highest ends. I would beg him to think of the meaning of conscience, that mysterious counsellor, whose voice we cannot shut out, and whose demands are often at variance with our own wishes; to hear in its claims the tones of Almighty God who chooses this method of communicating His constant will to His inconstant children. To disobey the Eternal God, to act in direct contempt of the High and Holy One that inhabiteth eternity, to snap our fingers in defiance of the Infinite God to whom we owe our life and all that we have, is indeed a daring and terrible thing. And then, by way of contrast, I would point out to him how excellent is the way of righteousness, how beautiful is simple obedience to the will of God, how delightful it is to know that one is trying to do the right, and to live a life of purity and progress. This perception of the ugliness of sin and the beauty of holiness is a long step in the way of salvation.

Then, with the dawning of a better disposition, I would urge him to use the glorious privilege of free-will which God has given us, banish for ever by a firm resolve the dark and sinning past, and with brave determination enter upon the path of righteousness and progress that leads to light and everlasting life. It will not do simply to confess our sin and own its ugliness: we must assert our manliness, and womanliness, turn our back upon sin and all its associations, and, at whatever sacrifice, resolve to be braver and truer,—make up our minds that, no matter who fails, *we* will prove worthy of our God,—and so, setting aside every temptation and fighting every darling sin, we must win our way to more faithful service and a higher life. Thank God for human will which enables us to control ourselves, and for its freedom which dignifies our nature by making us responsible for its condition. To those, then, who ask me 'What must I do to be saved,' I reply in the words of Thomson:

> Resolve, resolve! and to be *new* aspire;
> Exert that noblest privilege, alone
> Here to mankind indulged: control desire;
> Let God-like reason, from her sovereign throne,
> Speak the commanding word '*I will*,' and it is done.

There is no hope of any man's salvation from sin unless he rouses himself in determination against it. No man will be worth much, if Fate is his phantom. But show him his great capacities; make him understand how indomitable Will has conquered nature and overcome moral difficulties; convince him that no one is so hopelessly degraded as to have lost all force of will; and you do for him the greatest possible service: you teach him to stand upon his feet and be a man.

When once he has turned in the right direction, the man in earnest must be taught to banish selfishness from his plan. I would urge him to remember that no man can live for himself alone. He belongs not to himself, but to God and to Humanity. Let him put his own individuality as far as possible in the background, and find without delay some useful work to do for others. Was it not Samuel Wilberforce who, when asked whether he did not stop sometimes to think about his own salvation, answered that he was so busy working for the salvation of others that he had not time to stop and think about his own? Self-sacrifice and not self-seeking is the divine lesson for man. Two great world-religions at least are established upon it,—Christianity and Buddhism. The more we concentrate our attention upon ourselves the more faithless do we become to the great divine claims upon our life, and the less worthy, therefore, we are for participating in a higher life. Ask yourself—not, What must I do to be saved? but, What must I do to save? What can I do to make my life of service to the world? Those who best deserve salvation think least about it, but live the best they can. Salvation, like happiness, ought not to be made into an aim in itself. By directly seeking these ends, we are apt to miss them; but by simply going on our ordinary way and doing the right thing at the right time in the right way, they come to us of themselves.

But I would not ask my questioner to rely altogether on

his own efforts and his own will. It is true no progress can be effected unless a man takes the initiative for himself, and makes up his mind to effect a moral improvement in his own nature; but his strength is sometimes little better than weakness, and without divine assistance, he may work and fail. I do not here enter into the problem as to what this assistance really is: how God gives strength to our souls; whether it is some special gift sent in answer to our prayer, or whether the very act of prayer itself fills us with a deeper sense of responsibility, and by drawing our souls to God, reacts upon ourselves and makes us stronger. But this I do know,—that true and earnest prayer brings with it a blessing and an inspiration, come whence it may, that make the way of life less rough and lighten the tasks we have placed before us. And so to him who has made noble resolves for the future, and is making a new and higher departure in his life, I have this further advice to give,—Go down on your knees often, and pray for new strength to keep you right. When you are under temptation, even if it be in public gaze and in the open day, let your silent prayer go up to the Father of spirits, and He will answer it, though your head and knees were not bowed nor your eyes closed. And when you have fought and conquered your sin, go to Him with a thankful heart for having brought you thus far, and pray for grace to persevere. Often lay bare your soul before our Almighty Father in some such mood as this:

'Father, to us Thy children humbly kneeling,
Conscious of weakness, ignorance, sin and shame,
Give such a force of holy thought and feeling,
That we may live to glorify Thy name;
That we may conquer base desire and passion;
That we may rise from selfish thought and will,
O'ercome the world's allurement, threat and fashion,
Walk humbly, gently, leaning on Thee still.
Let all Thy goodness by our minds be seen;
Let all Thy mercy on our souls be sealed;
Lord! if Thou wilt, Thy power can make us clean;
Oh! speak the word! Thy servants shall be healed.'

And then, when you have recognised and owned your sin, seen its baseness and the beauty of holiness, resolved

henceforth to stand erect amongst your fellow-men and be a living example of love to God and Man, prayed for and obtained the grace of God and the new inspiration that accompanies it, you can go boldly and resolutely through the world, fighting your temptations and conquering your sins, earning the affection of your brethren and the loving approbation of the Heavenly Father, and thereby achieving the salvation you desire. No longer need you hesitate about what you must do to be saved, no longer waste your time in idle words and despairing questions, but bravely gird yourself for the spiritual battle of life, and win eternal salvation by your devotion to the cause of Truth and Right and Love and God.

Man, work out your own salvation!
Live, and not repeat, your creed;
God, who lends you priceless talents,
Gives you all the help you need.

Faith is idle, creed is barren,
If the heart be slow to love;
But a life of faithful service
Wins the smile of God above.

Heaven is his whose way is upright,
Doing all the good he can,
Pure in heart and self-denying,
Loving God and fellow-man.

This, the ever-blessed message,
Jesus ceased not to impart;
And to-day his word is ringing:—
'Blessed are the pure in heart.'

THE BLOOD OF CHRIST.

By Rev. Silas Farrington.

THERE is something about the idea of blood at once sacred and shocking to us. One revolts from the sight of it. It is painful; it is offensive. At the same time it represents to us the very life and energy of the living creature. Its swift pulsations bring renewal to all the tissues, maintain the bodily heat, restore the incessant expenditure of power. As the breath stands for the finer etherial essence of the spirit, so the blood stands for the life,—the full warm vitality of the human being. It is identified with that in all language and poetry. That is the way it is regarded long before anybody has found out its exact function in the animal economy,—before people know anything about its circulation,—or its constitution. They know it as the especial seat and agent of life. To shed a man's blood is equivalent to killing him. It can only be expiated by shedding the blood of the criminal in his turn. And though there are many ways of killing that do not require bloodshed,—yet are just as fatal and certain,—this primitive way of bloodshed still revolts our feeling the most, seems to imply the deepest brutality in the perpetrator,—the deepest outrage to the victim. Those of you who have read Zola's last terrible book 'The Downfall,' will recall involuntarily that most horrible of all the horrible pictures presented in it, of the death of the spy in the lonely farm-house. It is not the horror of death merely,—but the horror of such a ghastly, repugnant mode of death that so holds and violates our shuddering senses.

To a visitant say from another planet—who should

observe our modern sensibility to the shedding of blood—I mean, of course, to the shedding it in our actual presence and in our ordinary mood—(for, to the bloodshed which is at a distance, not within the range of our senses—we are by no means so sensitive), to such a visitant it would seem perplexing to find in our theological treatises, in our prayers and hymns, in our books of devotion, such frequent references to this idea of bloodshedding, such singular and exceptional efficacy ascribed to it. He would find it made the ground of the forgiveness of sins. He would find cleansing and purifying virtue attributed to it. He would find exhortations to drink it, to bathe in it, to wash one's garments in it; ideas which, in their literal and natural significance would be, in the highest degree, abhorrent to the very people that use them. He would find results attributed to these actions which would perplex him still more, from their being the very opposite of the natural results. Blood stains, defiles, disgusts. It does not purify. If the shedding of blood be a crime—how can it be the means of salvation? What would add still more to his perplexity, would be to see piety and devotion attach themselves with such zeal, such enthusiasm to precisely these phrases; to hear them rolled as a sweet morsel under the tongue; to find the Gospel of Jesus identified with them; to find the very sentiments and sentimentalities, to which he would have supposed them repulsive, revelling, so to speak, in them. How—he might ask—how have ideas and images so contradictory got entangled together? How has the one set passed over into the other? How much is real, and how much figurative in these constantly recurring phrases? What is their real meaning on the lips of those who use them? And this is substantially the answer he would receive.

The blood of Christ is literally that blood of his shed on the cross. It is his death, whereby he made a complete satisfaction and atonement to the Eternal Justice for the sins of the whole world; wherein he took upon himself the entire punishment due the sins of the human race, and bore it in our stead. Through this death we obtain full remission of our sins. They are blotted out—their consequences are turned aside—they are as though they had never been. God

does not recognise them any more. And the one condition on which we may appropriate this inestimable benefit is simply that we believe in it. Believe that this is so—believe that Jesus suffered and died for you, and that through this death all your sins are washed away, and it is so. His blood atones. It obliterates our offences. It becomes a torrent which bears them away, in which they sink out of sight—a tide vast enough to engulf them all. It washes us, cleanses, heals. 'Sinners plunged beneath that flood, lose all their guilty stains.'

Ah! we are dealing here with tropes and figures. The fancy takes up the thought and plays with it, applies it in a hundred lively ways, to bring out its sense of benefit more vividly, till it hardly distinguishes itself between metaphor and actual meaning. But they are all meant to converge upon Jesus; to attach the heart to him; to trace up our salvation to his death; to fix our thought on 'the innumerable benefits which by his precious blood-shedding he hath obtained for us.'—Something has been procured for us by this blood impossible without it. It has satisfied God—it has put him in a new relation to us. It has effected a change outside us, a change on us, a change for us; not merely a change in us.

Now, let us grant that there is a side on which this representation of the blood of Christ and its effects, appeals very strongly to human beings and touches some of their best emotions. Accepting it without question as the plan of salvation—as a mysterious solution of the situation, which God has at last triumphantly worked out, taking it as something not to be examined, or questioned, but simply received: not venturing to ask is it true?—is it just?—not troubling one's self about such inquiries, but taking it on the assertion of its believers as true, (and this is the way we are always told we must accept it; and, I may add, the only way we can accept it)—then in the profound sense of personal gratitude towards Jesus it ought to arouse, in the recognition of so tremendous a sacrifice borne for the love of us, and to extricate us from hopeless ruin; in realizing that it is for me individually all this was undergone, there is something to reach even the callous and hardened nature; something that,

if believed, may well waken a sorrow, an affection, a reverence for him who has done so much for us; and these are sources of new and nobler life. I do not doubt that this has been, and still may be, the effect produced by such representations in certain crises of the heart, and on certain natures. But I am equally sure, that on other natures they produce different and disastrous effects, blurring moral perceptions, intensifying selfishness, fixing the attention on morbid or self-indulgent emotions instead of on noble efforts, weakening and stunting character, instead of strengthening it.

But granting so much—surely, friends, it cannot be expected that we shall never stop to ask what grounds we have for believing this to be the plan of salvation at all? What grounds have we for believing that the blood of Christ has this mysterious efficacy in that region which transcends our experience: that it works this magical act of oblivion for the past, this cancelling of penalty, this appeasing of the divine majesty? Surely, considering the tremendous assumptions, and the equally tremendous issues involved, we must sometimes ask on what authority these statements rest? We must ask the simple question: are they true?

Well, we shall be referred to the Bible; and, more especially, to the New Testament. In fact, on turning to the New Testament we shall find in certain portions of it phrases that seem to bear out these ideas. We shall find a very strong emphasis laid on the blood of Christ. We shall find the identical figures of washing, sprinkling, cleansing employed; not indeed to the degree, or with the extravagance, that marks much modern religious literature; but still we shall find them there. And to some this will seem final.

But we wish to look closer. We, who understand that the Bible is not all of a piece; we, who understand that ideas got into the Bible because they were first in the minds of the writers of the Bible, shall find ourselves asking, how did this come into their minds? We, who know that the ideas of any writer can only be understood in relation to the intellectual atmosphere in which he writes, his education, his object in writing, do not find it enough to quote texts. One may transfer a text *en bloc* from the first century to the nineteenth, without in any way transferring its real meaning. As the

learned John Selden said two centuries ago, 'the text serves only to guess by. We must satisfy ourselves fully out of the authors that lived about those times.' That is, the true meaning of a text will only be known by the light contemporary modes of thinking throw upon it.

Bearing this in mind then, the first thing we shall observe is, that the phrases in question do not proceed from Jesus himself. Scarcely any traces of them are found in the earlier gospels. They are almost confined to the writings of Paul, and the unknown author of the epistle to the *Hebrews*. It is here that we must account for them. It is here we must try to understand them.

And to do this we must go back a long way in the growth of religious ideas. We must do this to realize the point of view of a devout Jew of the first century. As we cannot explain the point of view of the Christian of the nineteenth century without going back to that Jew, so we cannot explain him, without going back to a still remoter past behind him, the ideas of which, modified and developed, had entered into and shaped his ideas.

Back then, in the earliest remembrances of religious feelings and customs, lay the sense of gods who needed to be appeased, to be satisfied, to be made favourable to man. And the way of doing this was by sacrifices. The very best men had, must be offered to these gods to win their favour, or placate their wrath. Human sacrifice and human blood are everywhere seen to be what the gods require, and are everywhere offered. The blood of slaughtered enemies, the blood of chosen victims, sometimes the blood of the nearest and dearest, of wife, of daughter, of son. All nations of whom we know anything have gone through this stage; and it has lasted in some of the backward races down to the present. But with the advance of intelligence, of moral feeling, a softer idea of the gods arises, and of what they require. For human sacrifice, is substituted the sacrifice of animals, of sheep and oxen. The worshipper redeems, that is, buys himself free from the offering of a human victim, by offering these instead. He brings these to atone for offences he has committed, or his household have committed, even inadvertently; as you remember Job did 'continually.' He brings

them on the birth of a child. He buys it back from these awful powers by such offerings.

Israel emancipated itself early from this dreadful habit of human sacrifice. The story of Abraham, misunderstood as it has been in a later age, marks a transition point in its development. The father about to offer up his only son at the bidding of religious feeling, is saved from consummating the fearful sacrifice by the divine interposition, which commanded the ram to be slain in the place of Isaac. Henceforth human sacrifice is refused by the God of Israel. It is an abomination to him. It is a foul and cruel rite, a mark of heathendom held in growing detestation by his people. Any recurrence to it is denounced as idolatry, as a wandering after strange gods, by the prophets. Human blood becomes a defilement and a profanation of the holy place, which will bye and bye fill the pious Jew with horror, with fury.

The practice of animal sacrifice, however, grew firmly established. It was developed with elaborate precision. It was maintained with pomp and splendour at the magnificent temple which was the centre of the national life. It required the service of an hereditary priesthood. It was bound up with the religious feeling and habit of Israel for ages. The pious Jew was accustomed to think of it as the direct appointment of Jehovah. It went back into his farthest past. It was going to continue into the farthest future. We can have no idea of how this custom of sacrifice coloured all his religious thoughts, how mixed it was with his holiest associations, his deepest awe and reverence. Especially would this be true of the Jerusalem Jew, of the temple student of the law. A religion without sacrifice would seem as inconceivable to him as a religion without sacraments, without a prayer-book, without bishops, seems to many persons in our own day. We should find the morning and evening sacrifice of the temple painful and repulsive. It would seem to us to belong to the slaughter-house, not to the temple. We could not overcome our repugnance to the physical spectacle. Our senses would be shocked. We think of such rites as obsolete. But he thought of them as the visible link between him and God. He thought of them

as perpetual. He thought of the whole world at last coming to offer them. He could not think of religion without them.

It is very true that presentiments and openings of a still deeper view of God, and his requirements were, from time to time, affirmed by Israel's prophets. 'The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit.' 'I will offer to God sacrifices of thanksgiving.' Still bolder and more explicit: 'Thou desirest not sacrifice, else would I give it. Thou delightest not in burnt-offering.' 'Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire. Then said I: Lo, I come to do thy will, O God.' Yes, the great vision of One, not bought off, or propitiated by these paltry bribes to pardon, but loving and gracious in his inmost nature—forgiving because it is His essence to forgive, was again and again proclaimed by Israel's noblest voices. But Israel as a whole was not ready for so lofty, so refined a thought. It clung to its sacrifices. Do not blame it too severely. Here are we, nineteen centuries further on. These great thoughts are scattered thick along our Bibles. We read them. They are the very summit heights to which human thought has climbed in its perceptions of God, and we do not receive them yet. We stick to the idea of something extra, something interposed to make God placable. We must rely on something else than the inmost, eternally good and gracious essence of His very being: on something beside Himself. We still think it not enough to be continually bent on fulfilling His will in all appointed duty, and all tender services to our fellows; not enough to offer Him penitence and thanksgiving from sincere hearts; but must offer some one else's doings and sufferings in our stead for his acceptance, in order to be safe! No, do not let us blame the Jews for not having arrived at a stage of thought which the mass of Christians at this day repudiate, and will not recognise as Christian.

Well, now, an intense and strong nature, brought up in these ideas, to whom sacrifice is the culminating act of worship; passionately zealous for the law, not the moral law of the Ten Commandments merely, but this very law of ritual and sacrificial observances specially belonging to his people, a Jerusalem Jew, a student in the temple at the

feet of their great Rabbins; so moulded, so convinced, so devoted, he, after long struggle and opposition, yields to the fascination of a new teaching; to the wonderful impression of a new personality. He accepts Jesus; he is conquered, penetrated by the new faith, which he sees lifting impure men to such blameless life, to such patient suffering, to such heroic death. He abandons himself heart and soul to his new Master. Jesus becomes the centre of his life, his Lord and Leader. What repayment can he make for all that enmity, that outrage which he has poured on him so long? Undying gratitude, undying adoration, unwearied labours. To the Judo-Christian Church Jesus is already acknowledged as the Messiah, the deliverer promised by God to Israel. To Paul he is infinitely more than that. He is the deliverer of the whole world, sent to the whole world, Saviour of all.

Now do you think all Paul's past is going to count for nothing in this new development of his inner and outer life? That he is going to begin as from a blank table? It is never so. It never can be so. Paul's new life has to grow on the old life. He has got to reshape conceptions, that are really elemental to him, so that they will fit new feelings. He has got to make such a readjustment of ideas as will amount to revolution. But when the confusion and disorder subside, we shall recognise the familiar ideas, in new relations, expanded, reduced, redistributed; but he will use them still to hold his thought, just as he will use his native language.

Jesus is for all men, Jews and Gentiles alike. Jesus supersedes everything in the way of ordinance and ritual. Jesus comprehends everything. Whoso knows him has all the light, and truth, and grace man needs. Everything is found in him. All other revelations, all other ways of approach to God, are done away. Everything man wants for his guidance, his quickening, his peace, are found in Jesus. That is Paul's gospel. That is what he reiterates without weariness.

There are two sets of persons he wants to persuade of this. One is the Jews, so passionately attached to their law. Paul understood that: he has shared it. But now what he has found in Jesus so transcends that law, that it seems but

a shadowy, unsubstantial thing. Jesus has fulfilled it. He sums it all up. This law of Israel has been an education to him; a schoolmaster to bring him to Christ. It has fulfilled its function. It has led up to what is higher than itself. Now its work is done. No more slain victims; no more symbolical sprinkling; no more purifyings and atonements. Jesus is everything—victim, priest, sacrifice, cleansing, purification, sanctification. Why what have we here, but the asseveration under all the figures of their ancient ritual, that these were superseded, ended, finished. Jesus included everything, answered to everything. Every sacred office and symbol is transferred to him. That is the way the piety, cradled in the past, will find its way to the new faith. Not by breaking with its past, and dishonouring it: but by carrying it over, by using its language, by expanding its forms; just as we see piety transferring itself now from the ancient to the modern type. We have not got in Paul's expressions, what people make of them now, an elaborate, final system of theology. We have simply the natural transition from Judaism to Christianity. We have the line along which the devout Jew may pass with the least resistance into the new faith. Its summary will be, Christ has fulfilled the law.

But Paul has laid hold of the still greater idea, that Jesus is for the Gentiles too. What is the barrier between Jew and Gentile? What makes the Jew ridiculous to the enlightened Gentile? Why, this very ritual law, with its offerings, and sacrifices, and purifyings, and sanctifyings. The monotheism of the Jew, the moral law of the Jew, was acceptable to very many of the Gentiles. What prevented the Gentile who perceived clearly the superiority of the Jew in these points from becoming a Jew? Why this very ceremonial law the Jew declared indispensable; the thing, in fact, he was most attached to. The Gentile could not make up his mind to that. So, here again, Paul seized upon his great doctrine of the sufficiency of Jesus. He is now even bolder. Jesus, he says, has done away with the law altogether. It does not exist for the follower of Jesus. It is a kind of denial of Jesus to insist on it. In fact, by insisting on it, you really abolish Jesus. He is of no use to anybody

who lays stress on the law. Lay your 'beggarly traditions' aside, he exclaims in scorn to the Jewish Christians who are trying to impose their law on the Greek converts. Jesus has once for all blotted this out 'nailing it to the cross.' What daring, what magnificent imagery! Here is the road along which the Gentiles will pass. Christ has superseded the law.

The tenor and substance of it all, to both alike, will be simply: Jesus takes the place of everything. He realizes everything: rites, sacrifices, sacraments, revelations, systems. To believe him, to love him, to follow him is all. You don't need anything else. All this apparatus associated with religion is henceforth superfluous. It is a hindrance.

Now to men supposing that this shedding of blood is a divinely appointed ordinance of perpetual obligation, to whom it is consecrated by ancient custom, who do not find it repugnant, but rather venerable, Paul's applications of all these associations to Jesus must have seemed full of life, of meaning, of force. It must have been an immeasurable opening of light and freedom. While to men who had never accepted the Jewish law, the assurance that Jesus had once for all done away with that law, that he in sacrificing himself abolished all other sacrifice, that he purified us, not the priest with his sprinklings and lustrations—was full of life, and freedom, and meaning too. To both of these, the imagery was familiar and vivid. The great fact expressed by it was, that the sacrifices of victims on the altar to atone for sin was a thing ended. It did end.

Now to us, to whom all the sights and ideas involved in this practice are unknown; who only by study get any idea of what they were in those distant days, and even then only a feeble idea, who cannot reproduce the conception, nor the image once so vivid; to whom the slaying of a lamb, or a bull, as an act of worship would be as meaningless as it would be revolting; to us, you bring phrases and expressions from that distant age, phrases whose whole reason for existence lies in those notions, sentiments, and scenes quite irrecoverable by us; and you fancy you are going to convey the same meaning to us, that they gave to a man of the first century! The thing is impossible. Such phrases will be

so unnatural to us, so meaningless, so empty that you will have to force a meaning, to construct one. Their simple meaning will not be appreciated by us, because we have got to such a distance from the experience for which it was intended.

That is just where we are now. We see clearly enough that this idea of Jesus as a sacrifice was, at first, the fulcrum, so to speak, resting on which, the idea of animal sacrifice, and all the observances connected therewith, was finally thrown off. When it had accomplished this, its real work was done. And yet, the spiritual idea of sacrifice was a long way from being grasped. This death of Jesus was itself reinvested with supernatural significance. His blood became miraculous in its efficacy. Instead of abolishing the old idea it was so used as to revive and continue it.

For ourselves, we know that underneath this crude conception has germinated and gradually grown the true idea of sacrifice. Despite themselves, and all their phrases, the spiritual conception of sacrifice has impressed itself more and more distinctly on men. They have now a higher and better idea of the blood of Christ. We know that they are passing on from death unto life: that the sacrifices we are to offer are not of death but of life; pure thoughts and endeavours, high and holy affections, just deeds, purified souls; not substitutes, but ourselves!

'The blood of Christ' has stood long enough for his death. Henceforth it stands, when the phrase is used at all, for that warm, vital force of his inmost life—a quickening, humanizing, regenerative, energizing principle, that communicates itself to our lives and perfects our spirit.

The notion of sacrifice is not lost to us. It is only elevated. It is carried up to its purest meaning. All man's striving to please, to obey, to come into accord with the Higher Powers has risen from this crude beginning; from the bloody altar stone of the far past, and its hideous rites of death through successive transformations to this. Love, purity, trust, goodness, are what God requires of us: not bleeding victims; not atoning lambs.

'The blood of Christ,' in the sense so often, and so falsely attributed to it, as of something of material efficacy,

of vicarious value, is but the last of that long series of fictions, of symbols, which have so long interposed between man and the reality, the simplicity of things. It is the last. For, behind it there is nothing but the unadorned and solemn truth, the heart and kernel of all these wrappings, that nothing stands between us and God, nor can intercept, nor ward off, His justice. Our own lives conformed to His law, filled with His love, are the one offering He accepts and desires; that 'living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto Him, which is our reasonable service.'

THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS.

By Rev. Stopford A. Brooke, M.A.

'For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;

'And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures;

'And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve:

'After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep.

'After that he was seen of James; then of all the apostles.

'And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.'—*1 Cor.* xv. 3-8.

IT is assumed, in all I shall say to-day about the Resurrection of Jesus—of which the verses I have read to you are the only contemporary evidence—that there is a God and that we are His offspring. If, then, He be the absolute Goodness and Love—for that also comes into the hypothesis—He must communicate Himself to us, else we cannot grow into His likeness; the child cannot by itself understand or love the Father. It is this which we believe God has been doing from the beginning; and doing it in proportion as the minds of men could receive Him—the knowledge growing as the capability for receiving it developed. This is Revelation, and it may be called, in order to harmonize the thought of it with modern theory, the evolution of the Idea of God.

Only we say that this evolution is not due to Man alone; it is also and mainly due to the direct action of God Himself upon the living Thought of Man—Intelligence striking on Intelligence, Will on Will, Love on Love, Spirit on Spirit. There has been an actual, vivid, incessant, progressive

communication of God to Man, from age to age, which works as powerfully now as it has done in the past and will do in the future. This is not miraculous, that is, it is not something which occurs at intervals and intrudes itself into order, in contradiction of the course of nature. It is constant, and as connected with all its antecedents as any event in the physical world; it is part of the common order of the Universe; and its history might be co-ordinated with clearness. It belongs to law, not miracle.

Secondly, if this be true, and between God and Man this direct spiritual intercourse exists, through which each and all are drawn, or will finally be drawn, into perfection with God, then it is plainly impossible that men should cease to be when they die, or that personalities which God has taken infinite trouble to build up should cease to be persons. They continue their lives and continue their progress.

Therefore, thirdly, there must be what we call a spiritual world, that is, a world where those we call the dead are vividly alive, willing, loving, thinking, and creating as they did on earth. It was thus that Jesus Himself believed—'God is not the God of the dead, but of the living, for all live unto Him.' It was thus His followers believed—'Seeing, then, we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith.' All of them conceived of the dead, and of Jesus most of all, as feeling, acting, developing with tenfold more eagerness and force than they did on earth; and not forgetful but intensely memorial of those yet on earth whom they loved, and of the whole human race to which they belonged on earth, and to which they now belong in Heaven.

These are propositions, which, on the supposition of God as Goodness and Love and Life, and at the same time as the source of all human lives, are not possible to be refuted. They do not follow, of course, if the original supposition be denied; but given the supposition, they follow with absolute certainty.

Once more, granting this world in which the dead are alive, loving and thinking and willing as on earth, they will

certainly love us who are here, and think of us, and will concerning us; and the question which arises is—'Will they have power to make their love strike on our hearts, their thought touch our thought, their will make itself felt by ours?' I do not know—we cannot know. But it would seem to be rational—the previous supposition being granted—to think so; and it would seem to be specially rational to think that those who have been pure and noble characters here, and those filled with passionate love of men, should have this power of influencing—in the same kind of way as God Himself has influenced man, though in an infinitely less degree—the souls of those on earth; not, of course, sensibly, but spirit to spirit, ghost to ghost, imagination to imagination, love to love, character to character; so that, though we never see or hear them, nor are certainly conscious of their presence, yet we are being continually moved by them, vividly impressed by them. And though this statement has not the logical coherence of the others with the hypothesis of a loving God from whom men are derived as children from a parent—though it has more of the character of a speculation, yet, strange to say, we seem to have more phenomenal suggestion of it from the world around us, than we have for the others which depend entirely on faith. We are influenced by minds—through books and pictures and music—the possessors of which minds are dead hundreds of years ago. In dreams we often seem to receive deep impressions from those who have passed away. Thousands of people have declared that they have been conscious of spiritual direction from the dead. Over a vast range of history the belief has extended that prayers addressed to the dead are heard and answered by spiritual help. These beliefs are subject to material explanations; their analogies to the statement I offer are imperfect, they leave it still a speculation. But they have their weight; and they form a body of probabilities which strengthen the natural supposition that if there be a world where the dead are alive and loving, they will be able—and God will rejoice to allow them—to communicate themselves to us by impressing their thought on our thought, their love on our love. For me—the moment I believe in a

world of living beings beyond this world—I am forced, by my certainty of what love will do, to believe that if they are worthy of this power, they will seek to find us and to speak to us, not sensibly, but spirit to spirit, passion to passion.

Well, having put forward these propositions—the last of which I cannot call more than a speculation—let me apply them to the doctrine of the Resurrection of Jesus. God, communicating Himself to Man, communicates, at certain crises in the history of mankind, more of His spiritual thought and moral will to selected men whom we call Prophets, than to others; and such an idea is easily and naturally contained in the original hypothesis, and has, in fact, displayed itself in actual events upon this earth. Among these men we Christians hold that Jesus takes the highest place. We seem, as we listen to him, to listen to the very voice of the Father in our own hearts. He lived his life, unveiled the Father's true nature, God's true relation to Man, and Man's true relation to God; lived himself the true life that Man is bound to live, the divine life of sacrificing love; established the human religion; established the mighty truths on which the spiritual progress of the race is founded and sustained; united morality and religion into one; bound up with the right conduct of Man to Man the aspirations of Man to God and the personal union of Man with God; mingled into one perfect whole the Real and the Ideal in religion; and died to seal and confirm all that he had taught.

Where is he now—he in whom, most of the human race, God breathed and spoke, so much that men came to deify him? Is he dead altogether, dust and ashes, such as we strike up with our feet upon the common pathway? Then there is no God—none at least with whom we can have anything to do!

It is incredible, if Jesus be a man derived from God, that God has annihilated him. He must be, if there be a Father at all, alive now in the world beyond; and if he be alive, you may be sure that he is the same as he was on earth, loving, thinking, doing and willing the same things as he did of old. Will he be forgetful there of the humanity he loved so much? Will he, in the new world, forget the old?

Would you, if you died, cease to remember and to love your race? If *you* would not, could *he*, whose heart beat responsive to all the sorrows and joys of Man?

O, no, if he have the power to be with us, he will be with us. And for my part, I do not doubt that he has this power; nor, indeed, do I doubt that thousands and thousands of others also, according to Law, possess the same power—each according to their spiritual capacity for loving, and their spiritual reach of holiness. His is no isolated, no miraculous case, but he is the highest of those who love and are holy, and his power to be with us is the greatest. To us then he is always speaking in the voiceless speech of spirit to spirit, of thought to thought, of feeling to feeling, of heart to heart. There is, indeed, I believe, an actual, vital, loving communion of Jesus with mankind. It is one of the deepest grounds of the existence and daily life of the Christian Church. It is the very air which the spiritual being of Humanity breathes, and by which it moves forward incessantly into higher union with God. It is the joy, the comfort, the strength, the ardour, and the triumph of the personal life of the Christian man.

And, if this be so now, we may conceive still more easily what it was when Jesus died. He entered instantly into life, and with life into the power of communion with those he loved. He felt the rushing desire to make known to his friends that he was alive, their friend, their comforter, their own. 'They shall know that I am with them, that I have triumphed over death.' And it was that very thing, as I believe, which was done; and the doing of it was the source of the Apostolic belief in the Resurrection of Jesus. But how was that done?

Having spoken many times on the subject there is no need for me to state in detail my disagreement with the ordinary theories—both of the orthodox and unorthodox—of the resurrection. The subjective theory—that Mary Magdalene and many of the Apostles, extremely excited with the expectation of Jesus coming again to them after death, created out of this expectation in their own minds an image of Christ, and said that they saw him—I have rejected as at variance with the history, and with the extraordinary change

wrought in the Apostles. I have also rejected the statements of the re-animation of the body of Jesus laid in the grave which are made in the Gospels and in the Acts of the Apostles, first as unhistorical, from the critical point of view, and secondly as incredible, from the scientific point of view. The only thing which remains unaffected by criticism is the fact that the Apostles of Jesus and many others believed that they saw him after his death, and believed it so firmly that they founded all their teaching upon it, and recorded it while numbers who had seen him were still alive. Historical criticism cannot contradict that fact; and it explains the other fact that the Apostles were raised from a state of extreme depression to a state of high spiritual exaltation with regard to the life and teaching of their Master.

What explanation then may be given which will include the one fact which survives criticism—namely, the vision of the Apostles—and which will not demand a miracle—that is, will not be contradicted by science; and which will agree with all that is said of the resurrection in the Epistles of St. Paul, in whose writings there is not one single trace of any belief in, or any knowledge of a reanimation of the dead body of Jesus?

Well, this is my explanation. Jesus, having passed into the other world, and being filled with ardent desire to convince his disciples that he was alive, and having the power from God to impress his thought on their thought, his very being on their being—in the same manner, invisible, inaudible, as God had communicated Himself to man from the beginning, in accordance with the order of the spiritual universe—*did* flash his living soul on theirs; *did*, out of his intense will to make his life known to them, impress his living thought on theirs. He drove, from without, this livingness of himself into their minds: 'I who was dead am alive again, and will be with you for ever. I am raised again, and with the Father, and you shall be at one with me in my eternal life with God.' Again and again he made this impression upon them till it became the experience of daily life. But when it was first made, it lifted them into a state of lofty exaltation. They were swept out of the ordinary physical condition into an extraordinary one—that state in which mental impressions are naturally translated into apparently sensible forms.

That exalted condition, whatever be its physical explanation, is a common and well-known fact. There is not a physician living who has not come across this condition in his experience, and many treatises have been written upon it. If then, from without—that is, in a truly objective manner—Jesus wrought, directly but spiritually, on the minds of the Apostles as they were assembled together, on the minds of Peter and John, on the mind of St. Paul as he went to Damascus, forcing in upon them the truth that he was alive, and in forcing it, raising them, through the intensity of the impression, into the exalted condition in which the ordinary action of the senses is in abeyance—what would be the natural physiological result?

It would be the creation, through the passion of the soul, of the image of the person whose influence was at work. The impression of the spiritual personality would be thrown into apparent form, and the disciples would believe, as St. Paul believed, that they had actually seen the Lord.

It was that very thing they *did* believe: they were convinced of his life; and they were convinced of it, they believed, and I believe, by Jesus himself; not by the actual and visible appearance of the body laid in the grave; not by the visibility of a spiritual body to eyes unable to see it; but by Christ's will, and love, and thought, his very self in fact, so driven in upon their will and love and thought, that they felt him moving in every fibre of their intellectual, moral, spiritual, and emotional being; and raised by the spiritual contact into passionate and imaginative ecstasy, created themselves—in a manner absolutely unmiraculous—the vision of Jesus—seeing him as if he were visible to the eye, hearing him as if he were audible to the ear. There was not then a physical appearance, but there was an actual personal but spiritual impression on the disciples, out of which they could not help creating the appearance. That is the explanation.

It is no miracle. It is not an isolated event, injected into the body of the universe, never occurring again. The same thing happened continually, and happens now. Martyrs, Saints of God, thousands and thousands have recorded that in hours of high and uplifted faith and joy they have seen

Jesus as the Apostles saw him. Almost every clergyman, and, indeed, a great part of this congregation, must have heard dying Christians declare that Jesus was with them, that they beheld him. It is a common experience, and, therefore, not miraculous; and it is of the same kind as many others which have not to do with religion at all.

But is it not subjective, that is, created out of the inward desire of the persons? It is, of course, easy to say that, just as it has been said with regard to the Resurrection images of Christ; and those who have no faith in a spiritual world are certain to say it. But if we believe there is a world in which the unforgetting dead are alive, and able to make their love and thought spiritually active in us, then the appearances have an objective source, a cause outside of us, an actual reality behind them. It is Jesus himself—it is the dead themselves, alive again, who cause us to create their vision and to hear their voice, though not visibly to the physical eye, nor audibly to the physical ear.

This retains, you observe, the whole power of the doctrine of the Resurrection, and retains it without miracle, and falls in with all we can rely upon as historical. It agrees with the statement given by St. Paul of his seeing of Jesus, which he maintains to be of the same kind and manner as the seeing of Jesus by the Apostles. It asserts that Jesus himself, as St. Paul believed, was the cause of what St. Paul saw and heard in trance, of what thousands have seen and heard in exalted states of soul. It is the very opposite of the subjective theory, and as such, it keeps safe and unbroken the doctrine of the Resurrection, not, indeed, as the orthodox hold it, or as the later additions to the Gospels thought of it, but as St. Paul held it, as the Christians nearest to Christ held it, if the writings of St. Paul be a criterion of their faith. It keeps the doctrine safe, I say, for us. There is not one single spiritual truth of Christianity founded upon it, which is lost to us, but rather more firmly established, by this explanation of the Resurrection. And, beyond that, this explanation has the advantage of being free from the critical and scientific objections. It is not bound up with miracle, it has nothing whatever to do with the physical phenomena on

which alone scientific men work; and if it is true, those portions of the story which a critical historian would reject are the very ones which are contradictory of this explanation.

Nor does it fail at other points. It has a natural analogy—which the doctrine of the re-animated body of Jesus has not—with all the symbolic treatment of the Resurrection as a fact in history which had analogies in the spiritual history of the soul. All St. Paul's phrases with regard to the inward Resurrection are in harmony with this explanation of the outward Resurrection here given. They are not in harmony with the miraculous explanation.

But, lastly, while denying miracle—that is, an isolated violation of the course of Nature—this explanation asserts—and with far greater force than the orthodox miracle—a spiritual world for all; life after death for all; inter-communion of the dead with the living; continuance of actual thinking and loving personality for all. What Jesus was, after death, he was as Man, and not as God. We shall all rise as he arose; live as he lives now; and be able to use in proportion as we draw near to God's holiness, the same powers that he uses. What happened to Jesus, happened not by miracle, but is the constant, continuous, and lawful thing which happens to all of us when we die, and has happened from the very beginning of the world. It is in the course of Nature. That is not proved, of course, but that is what this explanation asserts, and its assertion is a matter of faith, as St. Paul declares.

Moreover, this belief keeps all that is most dear to the Christian heart, while it does not keep that which is untenable. It leaves to faith all that world which science cannot deny, and historical criticism cannot touch: all those glorious truths on which I dwelt at the beginning. It asserts a direct spiritual communion beyond the senses between God and Man, between the Father of Spirits and the personalities whom he is educating. It asserts a spiritual world in which those who have passed away from earth are living, and acting, and capable of acting upon us in the same way, though different in degree, as that in which God acts upon us. It asserts this especially of Jesus, the representative of

Humanity, the leader and comforter of his brethren. It asserts his ceaseless and intimate presence with mankind. It grasps the full meaning of that verse which translated the profound emotion of the Apostles into words—'Lo! I am with you always, even to the end of the world!' There is not a single, pure, faithful, and loving soul who will lose under this explanation one grain of the comfort, joy, and strength of the faithful, immediate, and loving presence of Christ in his soul through life and death; nor one grain of the joy of being with him consciously hereafter; and since it does not make Jesus so different from us as to be God, but leaves him as one of ourselves, it makes our future state like his in kind; and leaves to us the same power in kind as he possesses, of living in a spiritual way with those whom we have loved on earth.

Nothing then is lost, in this view of the Resurrection, of the ideas, and of the comfort of the ancient belief. Life, and the sublime element in it, breathing which we pass as pilgrims into another and a higher life, is fully illumined by this spiritual faith, and hope, and joy.

THE UNIVERSAL PENTECOST.

By Rev. Stopford A. Brooke, M.A.

ON the day called Whit-Sunday in the churches our belief in the Spirit of God in man is celebrated, but especially that part of the main belief which declares that God Himself, when any great and noble revolution in human thought takes form before the world, has breathed its ideas and powers into men, and has determined its outburst.

That part of our main belief is contained in the symbolic story which belongs to the day called the day of Pentecost. God, we infer from it, and we may infer the same from many stories belonging to other religions than the Christian—is the origin of great human movements, their Inspirer, the Spirit who fills their leaders, the Strengthener of their course, their inward Light of Life. And He is so, even when—as for example in Christianity—the selfish elements in man have led the movement into dreadful evil. Underneath the wickedness of those who turn good into wickedness by using good to gain worldly power, God still lives in the righteous and loving men and women who are the souls of the movement, who are true to its original conceptions.

All bodies in the Christian Church are agreed that this originating and immanent influence of the Spirit of God was in the Christian religion, even though no movement in the whole world has been so interwoven with evil by evil men as the movement of Christianity. It began to be a world-wide movement, they say, with the advent of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost; it has continued to live by the presence of the Spirit in it. True, indeed, as I think! But the Christian bodies have generally held that Christianity is the only

religion and the only movement which has had its Pentecost, or in which the Spirit of God abides and works. This is their limiting fashion. They take universal truths, and they make them particular. The Churches and orthodox sects, up to the present day, have been unable to conceive any doctrine without placing limitations upon it, just because they have always been unable to conceive illimitable Love. And they have been unable to conceive it because they wished to retain power in their hands over the bodies and souls of men. Priests and ministers lose that evil power when they allow that God's love is universal.

Orthodox churches and sects have limited this doctrine of the Spirit of God in man. They have first declared that man cannot be the natural recipient of the Spirit of God; secondly, that none of the great movements of the world, social, political, moral, imaginative, can be specially led by the Spirit of God, or can have had anything in their history which resembled Pentecost. These are the main limitations, and the misery and crime which they have produced ought to have been enough to have taught religious bodies, by this time, how deep a sin against humanity they have committed in making them. I do not impute this to them as a sin in the past; mankind was not educated enough in universal thought or in the Vastness of God to understand the evils of these limitations. They thought the limitations were right. But I do blame all churches and sects now—if they continue to enforce or to preach such limitations. The time for them has past. The world is sick of them; the conscience and the spirit of men are in revolt against them. God Himself is otherwise known now; and the only result of preaching them is the making and the propagation of atheism, and if not of atheism, of unbelief in, and indifference to religion. I lay the burden of far more than half of the present scepticism on the shoulders of the religious men who limit the love of God and the work of His Spirit; who shut out from the movements of humanity the influence and the immanence of the Spirit of God. I yield to none in my belief in the great doctrines of the Christian Church; but I believe in the universality of these doctrines and in their universal application, and I deny every one of the limitations which men, and

especially priesthoods and aristocracies, have imposed and encrusted on these doctrines for the sake of retaining power over the bodies and souls of men.

I believe in the Sovereignty of God; in His omnipotence and His presence in the whole physical and spiritual universe; I believe in His life being the only means by which anything or any being lives; but I wholly deny that his Sovereignty is limited, as it is if any beings of any kind exist independent of that goodness or love of His which are the very roots of His Sovereignty. The existence then of eternal evil or of eternal death is impossible, for both of them are limits to the goodness and the life of God.

I believe in the Fatherhood of God over all creatures that have being, and I believe that fatherhood to be perfect in goodness and love. I believe that it is wholly unlimited, as illimitable as He is Himself—and every doctrine of any religion which imposes any limit whatever on this fatherhood —and terribly numerous and cruel are such doctrines—I believe to be, so far as it is limited, absolutely false.

I believe in the Incarnation of God in Man, and therefore in Jesus Christ, my Master, in whom that truth is most clearly seen, and by whom it was most vividly declared. But I believe that it has no limitations. It is not only in Jesus Christ that God is incarnate, that he takes Being, that His word is spoken and His life seen; but in every spirit, even in the lowest and most degraded that has come into conscious being, not only on this earth, but in the myriad myriad worlds which encompass us in space. The evil which conscious beings may develop as they live, or the evil they are obliged to pass through, does not prevent the incarnation of God in them, but makes that more necessary. In the goodwill of His Sovereignty, God, when it belongs to His purpose, enables them to cast forth the evil, and to know with joy that it is by God alone in them that they live at all. Then shall they cry with Jesus, who knew through perfect goodness this truth of the Incarnation of God, 'I and the Father are one. At last, I know that truth.'

From the beginning of the world, then, God has incarnated Himself in Man, and man has been, by that indwelling, divine; and at every moment of the present time

God is now incarnating Himself in us; so that all that man has built up of the good and true and loving—all truth of every kind, all noble action of every kind, all the vast work of love, of imagination, of intellect, all that we know, all that we revere, all that we adore—is the revelation of God through His incarnation in every human being.

I believe also in the atonement, as it is called; that is, I believe that the sacrifice for the sake of Love of all selfish desires in behalf of the blessedness of others, which blessedness consists in their becoming righteous and loving; and in behalf of all those truths which make and secure the progress of the soul of man,—is the only means of salvation with which we are acquainted, the only way of redeeming men. To love others to the death, in absolute forgetfulness of self, is the only means, first, of becoming consciously at one with God, and secondly, of bringing others into that state of heart which in loving, loses self—that is, of bringing them into that state of heart which is salvation to them, and enables them to save others—for to love in that way is salvation, and extends salvation. I believe in that, and I believe that of all men who have ever lived on earth none fulfilled it so perfectly as Jesus Christ. He is the most human and the most complete of all the Atoners, Redeemers,and Saviours of the race.

But I believe in that without limitations. It is not only Jesus who redeems by loving and by kindling love, who reconciles men to God by bringing them to believe that God is love, and by making them at one with God when they love. He does not stand alone, save in the pre-eminence of his love. Every soul of man or woman who loves and lives and dies for love is a redeemer, a saviour, and an atoner. In every nation, whatever its religion, since the beginning of the world this work of redemption has been going on, and it has been done by all those who at any moment, or all through their lives, have given up their self, through love, for the sake of others. In national life, in the life of the smallest tribe, in societies, in parties, in war and peace, in the king's palace and the beggar's hut, in public life, in every household—those who have loved and forgotten self (for great causes or for the pleasure of a child) in order to help, comfort, succour,

bless, or strengthen others, have saved and redeemed the race, have been brothers and sisters of Christ Jesus, have done his work before him and after him, in his spirit; have reconciled men to God, have brought them into unity with God. This is the vast atonement which never ceases, which is universal, and of which the life and death of Jesus is the highest example that we know. And in the end its work will be completely done. Every soul will love, to the forgetfulness of self. All that we call the self, that is, the evil side of personality which desires to get and to keep, will be eradicated and destroyed. We shall love as God loves, and find in that love eternal life—the absolute joy of that supreme personality which is realised when we live out of ourselves in the life of all, through immortal and creative Love. As to sin, in such a world it cannot be at all. What we have done wrong is forgiven, that is, the wrong has been replaced by right in us. When we began to love like Jesus we began to cease from sin; when we arrived at a love like his, sin became impossible. It is not, then, the mere forgiveness of sin in which I believe, but in the arrival of us all at an incapability of sin. When our redemption is fully wrought, we shall not be able to do wrong. It is a glorious vision, and the faith in it makes the battle we have to wage here a continual triumph, and the suffering of it transient pain. The joy and righteousness of all humanity are before us.

And now, why shall I speak any farther of other beliefs? —of the universal Church of God, of the Brotherhood of all men in God, of their Communion in the Spirit, of Life Everlasting—for if we make these previous beliefs of which I have spoken without limitation, we must see that these also have universal and illimitable works and ends.

All the limits, exclusions, logical schemes, by which the love of God is confined, and his infinite righteousness disallowed, I reject at every point. I universalise every truth that the orthodox hold. That is the difference between my belief and theirs; but vast as it is, it will cease in the end. They will, by slow degrees, come over to those who believe in illimitable love and goodness, in the universality of all truth. Even now, much has been done. Light has broken upon them, the light is increasing; and the more that light of

boundless love increases, the less scepticism, the less unbelief in God, the greater the love mankind will give to Jesus the master of love; the more is the recovery of the truth of immortal life, the greater the hope for Man, the faith in Man, the love of Man, and therefore the greater the hope in God, the love of God, the faith in God.

And now, to wind up all this and enforce it by returning to the point and the story from which the statement started, look at the doctrine of the universality of Pentecost, of the coming of the Spirit, as applied to the event specialised in the story of this day. That story maintains that the origin of the Christian revolution was the work of the Spirit of God, and I believe in that with all my heart. What I do not believe is the limits that are placed upon it. Only the Christian religion was started by the Spirit of God—that is their limit! On the contrary, I maintain that this story is representative, not exclusive. It declares the truth that all religious movements in all lands, so far as they are in accordance with the love of man, and the worship of a Spirit who is conceived of as pure and true and just and merciful—are also initiated, directed, and filled by the spirit of the Father of men; and that Egyptian and Hindoo, barbarian and civilised, African and Persian, Greek and Roman, Arab and Christian European have, whenever they thought nobly and purely of God, spoken in heathen as in Christian times by the spirit of the living God—so that whenever a religious revival toward a higher righteousness took place, it was a Pentecost of the same kind as that which initiated the Christian Church.

And the same thing is true right through the history of Christianity itself. Wherever, whether among men called heretics or among the orthodox, whether in or outside of that which Priesthoods call the Church—any movement towards a truer or higher worship of the Father has been set on foot: whenever any great thoughts which have freed the souls of men have enlightened nations: whenever any great mission work for the greater love of men and for saving and comforting them has been set burning in the hearts of devoted men in any of the multitudinous churches and sects of Christianity—that revolution in human act or that

movement of human thought or love has been the work of the Spirit of God in men. Then the house of Humanity was shaken—then the mighty rushing wind began to blow, then tongues of fire lit on the brains of men, then the Spirit gave men utterance—then noble spiritual gifts were received and used by men; then they spoke the universal language—then a high and glorious excitement, leading to and thrilling through all action, sent men over the world to do the work of Love. Then there was a Pentecost. And now, in this century, and at this very day, there are such things—such movements, such re-awakenings—such 'descents of the Spirit.' It is not to Jerusalem that we look back for the unique advent of the Spirit, we expect it now, at any moment. Even now the wind is blowing and the fire falling, and the passion of Pentecost is among us. Even now men of different nations and tongues understand one another. The speech of great ideas is one. For the Spirit of our Father is not only in the Past—or only to be in the Future. He is always with us; and when the time is ripe, he concentrates himself in a revolution of religious thought, and a new world is born. This is the joyous, the exalting and the kindling faith, and I pray God it may be one of the foundation faiths of our daily life.

Once more, there is a further extension of this truth. Why should we isolate the work of the Spirit of God within the sphere of religion? Is Inspiration confined to the things of the soul in man? Is there no divine inbreathing for man's intellect, for his imagination, for that power of his by which societies and states are built into order and harmony? Is the realm of science, of the arts, of literature, of philosophy, of politics, of the social progress of man, shut out from the spirit of God?

There has been no folly greater than the isolation of the work of the Spirit of God to the realm of Religion. Hence arose that fatal division of the labours of the world into sacred and profane—which has excluded God from all that is called profane, and stamped with a native undivineness business and law, literature and art, poetry and science, politics and sociology. Nothing was ever more short-sighted than this, nor anything more untrue. It has been

the parent of a thousand evils in Church and State. It has isolated the Church into pride and intolerance and tyranny wherever it has unmixedly prevailed. It has separated the State from God, and law from justice, and politics from their true basis in morals and religion, and the work of the world from the one thing which could save it from selfishness. Again and again the progress of mankind has been made by it coincident with scepticism and irreligion, nay, with an attack on religion.

On the contrary, the other and the more universal view ought to be proclaimed day by day, incessantly. Every scientific truth and the intellectual change that follows it; every new impulse in the arts, and the new world of beauty and its emotions which it opens to men; every great political movement towards a higher justice among men, and a greater union of nations; every new development of the universal ideas of man as one nation and one people, such as took voice in the early days of the great Revolution; every social movement which has the bettering of the bodies and souls of men as its aim—these, too, have been initiated by the spirit of God in men. They are Pentecosts of the intellect, of the conscience, of the imagination of man. They are human movements which have behind them as their impelling force the advent of the Spirit. They move hand in hand with the religious Pentecosts; they are its brothers, and have as much necessity for man. In all world movements, then, in every nation, and of every kind, the fire of God breathes and burns, His mighty rushing wind is blowing, His impulse shakes the House of Humanity. There is a world-wide inspiration; and mighty and majestic is all human life and all the history of Mankind to us when once we have grasped this thought; and mighty also should be, if we believe it, its influence upon our lives. For at every point of life we too, as persons, touch the Universal Spirit. In every sphere of our daily life we look for His coming. In everything we think we feel His influence; at every hour of our inner being, and in every jot and tittle of our outward work, we know that our life is sacred, and that our labour must be sanctified. This is the universalising of Pentecost, and I recommend it to your souls.

WHAT HAS UNITARIANISM DONE FOR THE PEOPLE?

By Rev. S. Fletcher Williams.

SOME time ago an intelligent working man put to me a question which, though old, merits renewed consideration. It was this: 'What has Unitarianism done for the people?' He was familiar with its history. He described it as adorned with those gifts—graces, perhaps, they should be called—of 'sweetness and light,' the want of which in Mr. Matthew Arnold's estimation constitutes the characteristic failure and the crowning dishonour of Dissent. He acknowledged that it had addressed itself to cultivated minds: and granted that it had obtained a high intellectual influence which, he admitted, was increasing both in depth and extent among the thoughtful and inquiring. He confessed that it had contributed important services to the establishment, on its broadest foundations, of the great principle of Protestantism—the right of private judgment. But he failed to see that it had accomplished any good work among the masses.

At the moment I answered my querist that to the fields of social, political, and philanthropic reform Unitarianism had furnished numerous workers 'for the good time coming,' whose services, though they had not been sounded in the synagogues and in the streets, had ameliorated and enriched the social and civil condition of the people. I conceded that in its especially religious ministrations it had not come into direct relation with the masses—and it would appear from recent religious censuses, that in that respect it does not stand alone. But what if it had not come into immediate contact with the multitude? As religion grows more healthily

in an open atmosphere where *all* the faculties of man's nature have freest and fullest play, than in a close atmosphere where *some* of them are stifled, Unitarianism has done a priceless service towards the religious future of the masses; for it has powerfully aided in procuring for them a wider freedom of thought. It has helped to relieve them from the cramp of creeds. It has hastened their liberation from the bonds of sectarian theology; and, just now, having fulfilled the task which has fallen peculiarly upon it, of placing the intellect in the rightful position towards religious truth, it would address itself, and is now more than ever addressing itself, to the heart of the people.

Perhaps it cannot be denied that my questioner had formed, if not a perfectly true, yet a tolerably fair idea of the position which Unitarianism has occupied, and the work it has prosecuted. Unitarianism has vindicated and extended the right of liberty of mind. It has fought a long and earnest battle against those who have set up a frontier to investigation. It has lifted up a clear-toned and persistent voice against those who have said to the researches of science, to the deductions of reason, to the questionings and conclusions of enlightened moral sense: 'Thus far shalt thou go, but no further.' Vainly has that mandate been issued by ecclesiastical authorities, councils, synods, and conferences. The more it is attempted to confine the mind, the more strongly does the ruler within assert its authority. Put it in stocks, and it will wriggle a way out. Shut it up in a narrow room, and it will destroy the walls that impede its egress. It is as Emerson says of the child in church: insist that he shall sit in one particular part of the pew, and the little fellow will secretly determine to sit in another part. The Chinaman who was resolved to know what was beyond the boundaries of his country had his determination intensified by a royal edict forbidding all travelling out of the land. The human mind refuses to be circumscribed, and claims as its divine right to follow to their fullest extent the leadings of reason and the instincts of the soul. Unitarianism is based upon that divine right. Its fundamental principle is not simply that every man has a right to think for himself, but that every man has it laid upon him as

a solemn duty, as a high and precious obligation, to think for himself, holding responsibility for his opinions to none but the Supreme Judge. It is to the assertion and establishment of that principle, against the traditions and commandments of fallible authorities, the pretensions of ecclesiastical corporations, the despotic government of religious societies, that Unitarianism has had to devote most of its powers and energies. It has stood to that grand principle with noble fidelity, maintaining the rights and dignities of the human mind against bigotry and superstition, against the tyranny of tradition, and the arbitrary rule of ecclesiasticism. This work has been imposed upon it by its environment as the supremely important thing; and the fact that it has had to contend for the recognition and maintenance of the principle of freedom of thought may account for its not having as yet had much influence among the masses. *It has had to establish its right to be*, and, therefore, has not been surrounded by genial conditions to present to the multitude those simple truths of religion which are best adapted to meet the deepest wants of humanity. It has had to labour for the restoration of what was emphatically the religion of the people in the early ages of Christianity, but which became obscured by the subtilties of philosophic speculators, and corrupted by the jealousies and contentions of ambitious theologians. To the purification of theology its work has been mainly confined by the conditions of the case. Before it could scatter the nourishing fruits of a pure Christianity among the people, it has been compelled to employ its powers in clearing away the noxious herbs and weeds which have cumbered the ground and weakened the tree of life. With what result? As one of several influences or factors, it has aided in faithfully accomplishing this regenerating mission; for in churches outside of Unitarianism—in all the three Presbyterian churches of Scotland, in the Broad Church party in the English Establishment, in the Congregational Churches of England, among the younger men in the Wesleyan Church—there is a healthy departure from the traditions and superstitions which have accumulated since the third century, encrusting Christianity; and a healthy return to the pure light of the Gospel as Christ preached it, and to the

pure light of reason, which, as I think, are one light, for the truths of the Sermon on the Mount and the parables of Jesus have their beginning, their confirmation, and their only validity in the soul of man.

But, granting that we owe to Unitarianism, in conjunction with other liberal influences, the possession of entire mental freedom, the inquiry may be put—indeed it has been put—whether we have any new truths to proclaim to the people? I answer, none. God's truth is not new, but old as His creation. We have only walked upon its shore, and found some gems our brethren have buried under the accumulated sand of old traditions; and of these we have disentombed a few of priceless value. Here are five of them:—

(1.) The first is, the immanence of God in nature, in history, in the souls of all men—the presence in every atom of matter, and in every throb of spirit, of that all-encompassing Soul who fills the heavens with glory and the earth with bounty, who also, in gracious guidance, in kindling aspiration, in high command, and gentle leading, and healing rebuke of conscience, dwells in the human soul. It is the truth immortalised by Wordsworth, when he felt, as he says—

> A Presence that disturbs me with the joy
> Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
> Of something far more deeply interfused,
> Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
> And the round ocean, and the living air,
> And the blue sky, and in the mind of man.

(2.) The second is, that communion with God is possible to every individual soul. The deadness of much of the Christianity of the present day arises from the fact that it looks on inspiration as altogether a thing of the past; it treats revelation as only a historic fact, which occurred nearly nineteen hundred years ago, and of which we can study but the record. It says that God spoke to men of old, but speaks not to us—we to-day hear only the far-off echoes of his voice, and must be content to receive second-hand, through them, the word thus given. But Unitarianism has assisted in bringing again to life and light the truth that the roll of God's prophets was not closed when the walls of Jerusalem were levelled to the ground, but that God's spirit

informs human hearts in the living present, inspiration not being confined to any one age or race. Thus it gives reality to the teaching of ancient prophets, and links them in vital relation with the present; and it animates us to reproduce the life of Jesus by opening up to us the reality for every receptive soul of Christ-like communion with God.

(3.) The third is, that human nature is ever made capable of the life of God. Unitarianism has affirmed that human nature is imperfect, but not inherently evil; that it has been wisely appointed to man to rise out of low conditions, and find his way to the light above him, and not that we are the degenerate offspring of pure and spotless creatures in some remote past, by whose transgression we have been rendered incapable of doing any good and inevitably compelled to do all evil, and for whose transgression we are held guilty, and are doomed to eternal death—not that, because a man and a woman gave way at the first temptation, every infant at its mother's breast has within it a heart utterly vile, and impending over it a curse and a fate compared with which

> The weariest and most loathed worldly life
> That age, ache, penury, and imprisonment
> Can lay on nature, is a paradise.

No: Unitarianism has affirmed that all purity and moral courage, all wisdom and sanctity, all virtue and strength, are in the inherent possibilities of humanity. It has also affirmed that the true aim of life is not to escape a future condemnation, nor to ensure a future salvation, but to subdue the passions, to cultivate pure affections, to strengthen the moral will, to give to the noble powers of intellect with which we are endowed fitting culture and expansion, to work out our own salvation and enter into eternal life—which consists more in quality than in duration—here and now, even amid the cares and struggles of the present; and to attain this aim it has found its richest and strongest inspiration in the teaching and guidance of Jesus. Sitting at his feet and touched by his spirit, it has affirmed that we are not under the curse and wrath of God, but that the Infinite Heart is ever turned towards us in love and benediction; that the Divine Spirit is ever striving with the sons of men to lift them up and bring them more and more into accord with the Supreme Will.

It believes that humanity, as a whole, is stronger, wiser, purer, nobler to-day than ever before since it had existence here; and that because it bears within it the breath of divine life, it is destined to go on and on, casting off ignorance, overcoming evil passions, retrieving mistakes, correcting errors of opinion, and achieving ever grander victories in the world of matter and of mind.

(4.) The fourth is, that religion is not a substitute for right living, but the highest form of right living. While some have affirmed that there is a shorter and easier way to God's favour than by obeying His law, Unitarianism has affirmed that God's benediction is to be won only by the homage of the heart to perfect goodness, and the effort of the life to reach it. While some have affirmed that Christ has provided a perfect righteousness as a substitute for ours, that we can have it any moment if we will, for it is all ready, and we have only to accept it, Unitarianism has affirmed that he only is righteous who doeth righteousness: and, as to the work of Christ, that he lifts men into goodness, instead of saving them from the necessity of goodness; that in him is declared the Divine forgiveness, but always with the added message, go and sin no more; that he did not come bringing a signed and sealed pardon or title deed; that his work was to plant the kingdom of God within men; to kindle in them his own spirit; to touch them with a longing for goodness, an ardent love for men, a consciousness of their Father-God that would make them blossom and bear fruit in all the sweetness and glory of life; that the whole New Testament may be said to be a sublime expansion of this idea—the growth of the soul into likeness, and at last into absolute oneness, with Christ. Compared with this, how unspeakably poor and degrading is the view that we come into the benefit of his life and death by some mechanical transfer outside of our own character!

(5.) The fifth is, the persistent and immutable love of God to every soul, whether it be on earth, in heaven, or in hell; and His readiness to save it whenever it shall arise and go to Him with a yearning desire for reconciliation, whether in this state or the next. It is that, instead of sin and misery and woe obtaining an everlasting dominion over

millions of God's children, instead of the Infinite One Himself having His throne disputed by the perpetuity of rebellious evil, the Infinite Goodness will pursue the wandering, the lost, the friendless, the forlorn, and, at last, through whatever ordeal of shame and sorrow and remorse they may have to pass, to whatever 'powers that tend the soul to vex and plague it,' they may be subjected, will win them to a loving and beautiful obedience; so that by His healing chastisement God will banish sin and misery from the heart of all His creatures, and from every region of His universe, that He may be all-in-all—

> The one, far-off, divine event
> To which the whole creation moves.

What new truth has Unitarianism brought to the people? It is unveiling before the eyes of men the height and depth and length and breadth of these old truths. How is it possible for any one of us to do more than repeat the eternal realities? The spring comes back to us every year, and yet it comes with a charm of a perpetual novelty; and so it is through all the range of human thought. The truths Unitarianism has used its power to revivify are as old as religion.

The immanence of the Divine Presence in the world, filling all things with Life, Order, and Progress, and in humanity, glorifying the human soul by making it the temple of the Living God, was taught by Buddha and Plato, sung by Psalmist, and uttered richly by the lips of Jesus who saw God in the sparrow's fall, in the lily's beauty, in the little child's heavenly face, in the mother's tenderness, in the father's care. The inspiration of the Almighty given, not to Moses, Isaiah, and Paul alone, but to man; not to Judaism and Christianity alone, but in varying degree to all religions, teachers, and churches of every time and race, has been guiding and training the world from the beginning; and yet only now are men one by one confessing that God's revealing spirit has not been confined to the seed of Abraham, nor limited to those who bear the name of Christ. The essential and inextinguishable divineness of human nature has been felt from the beginning, and yet only now is it becoming powerful and effective in human life. The obligation of right living has been recognised, and yet our

Protestant churches have often presented systems of doctrine which put the essential condition of salvation not in what a man *is*, but in what he believes or feels, in some operation of the mind, in some emotion that is outside of and apart from the conduct of his daily life; and only now is it beginning to be realised that Christianity is a call to right living, to honesty, purity, truth, love, and whatever in character is morally lovely. The depth of the love of God, deeper than the abyss of death, and the breadth of it, encompassing all souls in this life and in all lives to come, has been a thought dear to the human family since the human family in the far-off ages, as Max Müller tells us, lifted their faces to the sky, and prayed, 'Our Father who art in heaven,' and yet even now the churches are almost afraid to believe in the final triumph of God's goodness, the essential need of this age, according to the late Mr. Baldwin Brown, being a theology the heart's core of which is the Divine love. These great truths, which beneath all varieties of form have been the same, are the essential substance of Unitarianism, and they have been repeated many times over by single voices here and there; but their still small utterance has been drowned by the multitudinous roar of ecclesiastical councils, synods, and assemblies. We have kept on repeating them, giving to them new forms, making for them new applications, with every day's dawn receiving them anew into our hearts as the best part of our lives. One part of our mission has been, and is, to unbury these old truths, too long interred, and to put into them a new spirit, to give to them a new power, and make a new application of them to all the ways and walks and conduct of our lives.

With what effect? Have we become a great and dominant ecclesiasticism in this country? No. And what matters it that we have not? If you measure religion by splendid and widespread organisation, what have you to say to the Roman Church? A single truth is mightier than the most perfect and powerful machinery. What have these truths of Unitarianism done for the people of this country? And in no spirit of boasting, but in the spirit of soberness and truth, I maintain that they have reconstructed for the people the theology of this country. They have not recon-

structed the theology of the Prayer Book, though Convocation could, in the broad light of day, permit the late Archbishop of Canterbury, the Primate of the Established Church of England, to declare, without contradiction then and there, that no one in the assembly really believed in the damnatory clauses of the Athanasian Creed. They have not reconstructed the theology of Declarations of Faith from the Congregational Union, though the Declaration passed at the Union in London, in 1877, is significantly silent on the Trinity, on the Infallibility of the Bible, and on Eternal Punishment. They have not reconstructed the theology of Watson's Institutes and Wesley's Sermons, though it is said that in Wesleyan pulpits the doctrine of the total depravity of every new-born babe on its mother's bosom is dropped out, and though it is known that many minds in the Wesleyan Communion are grievously troubled about endless punishment. They have not reconstructed the theology of the Westminster Confession, though the most popular preachers in the three churches of Scotland often hold up that document to scorn as a libel on God, and though several ministers of the Scottish Establishment and of the Free Church have published widely-read and heartily welcomed books of theology in which every one of its leading doctrines is questioned. When I say that the truths which are the essence of Unitarianism have reconstructed the theology of the country, I do not mean the theology of the written creeds; but I mean the theology of the leading preaching, and the theology of the popular consciousness. Many are the preachers now in the Evangelical churches, most famous too, to whom a Unitarian can habitually listen with little or no shock to his cherished convictions, because they press views which once were peculiar to him with an earnestness and an effect which bear witness that these views are mighty in the salvation of souls, and that all redeeming power is not fixed in the machinery of the old evangelical scheme.

Nor is this all. The movement, of which Unitarianism forms a part, is manifold. It has reconstructed the moral teaching of popular literature. The ablest religious journals of this country—notably the *Christian World*—are declared

to be propagators of something very near akin to Unitarianism, yet the cry does not frighten them into recantation. Confessing defections from the ancient faith, they have gone on farther than they know. You cannot read a journal of note that intimates it is conducted exactly on the lines of the old theology. Take up the three great monthly reviews—the *Nineteenth Century*, the *Contemporary*, the *Fortnightly*—and you will find them permeated by sympathies and convictions which have always characterised us, and which a century, nay, half-a-century ago, were ours almost alone. Read the leading journals—those especially of London, Edinburgh and Glasgow, Manchester and Liverpool, Sheffield, Birmingham, and Leeds—and you will not charge me with overstating the case when I say that they are fighting the battles of our time upon maxims, as the bases of civil constitutions and as formulas of practical virtue, which have ever been our ethical principles. The poetry of Alfred Tennyson, Robert Browning, Matthew Arnold, Edwin Arnold, Lewis Morris, Walter Smith, William Morris, is all in harmony with a liberal theology. The tone of every form of art approves the idea of universal Divine presence, human nobleness, and human brotherhood. The sermons which men will not come to hear in our churches are delivered in orthodox churches, and are readily accepted by those who are tired of the technicalities of salvation by creed and scheme. There are in England and Scotland whole files of learned, accomplished, and influential ministers who, in their own words and their own way, preach and defend essential Unitarianism with more or less distinctness. They shun the name, but they cannot shut out, and do not want to shut out, the thoughts included in it. There are more Unitarians—a thousand to one—outside of the Unitarian organisation than inside of it—that is, Unitarians essentially, in spirit and in principle, without the name, and without the technicality. In a word, Unitarianism has powerful allies, for literature, poetry, science, the free intellect of the age are almost universally on its side. 'Unitarianism,' writes Dr. George Putman, 'considered as a lump is very small; but considered as a leaven, it is vast and omnipresent. As an organism, it is feeble; as an

influence, it is irresistible. It is not on account of the superiority of its men, not from any great things they can do, but because it has been their fortune to take up certain great principles, which by their intrinsic divinity, and a power of their own, go forth almost unaided, conquering and to conquer, and win their silent victories without any visible assault.' What, then, if the name went out of existence? What if Unitarianism, as a direct sectarian work, were set aside? What if, as a distinct religious agency, it ceased to be at this moment? 'Its essential principles will go on rising higher and higher towards the ascendant, as long as God reigns, and man thinks, and loves, and worships.'

'But,' you say, 'you are speaking of what various liberal influences have done in reconstructing the theology of popular preachers, and in broadening the spirit and aim of popular literature. Come back to Unitarianism proper, and tell us what has it done amongst its own people?' Some years ago a man who had been listening to brave words in a lecture-hall about our Unitarian literature, our Unitarian doctrines, our Unitarian history, stood up and said: 'Show your men—that is the real test of theology and of religion.' During the autumn of 1877, while travelling in Scotland, I happened to meet with a minister of the Free Church of Scotland. In the course of our conversation he told me, with great earnestness, of the great obligation, the eternal obligation, he was under to the works of Channing, Theodore Parker, and Dr. Martineau. 'Much in those works,' he said, 'I have been hungering and thirsting for, and now I have it I will thank them for it with all my heart when I meet them in heaven. I acknowledge the work they have done for us all, and now,' he said, 'don't answer this question I put to you, if it is not a fair question. I know it is a delicate question. Here you have a theology which, I confess, impresses me as really a near approach to a true theology; you have a religious statement, which is clearly the simplest statement of the relation between God and man; many of you know how to put it with both clearness and power. *Where are the men it has made?* Tell me this. If it is not a fair question, say so. The men and women who are trained under this faith, are they, on the whole,

better men and women than those who grow up under other faiths?' I answered, 'You are quite right, of course, that is the question. We know it is the test question. "By their fruits ye shall know them," and we are willing to meet that question.' I said, thinking at the moment of one district, 'If you will go to Manchester or Liverpool, where the Unitarians of Lancashire are known, and go into any manufacturer's or merchant's house, and ask them what credit they would give to a man of whom the only thing they knew was that he had been a steadfast, faithful, and manly supporter of a Unitarian Church for twenty years, you will find that simple fact about him will be considered a good guarantee of his integrity and rectitude.' I tell you that story, because it is a story which shows what is the test that we have got to come to. It is not by the eloquence of our saints, not by the learning of our theologians, not by the brilliancy of our education we are to be judged; it is by the character of our men and women; and when another age comes to pass judgment upon the theology of to-day, I am not afraid to let it make its determination as to Unitarianism by the men and women of the Unitarian churches of this hour.

It may also be judged by its realised and admitted power to produce the work of godliness, to make Christian lives and Christian death. We have numerous stories, which none can gainsay, of men and women who were formed by this faith to virtue and holiness. These even the stigma of our name cannot take from us. We have lives as finished, as noble in all the elements of Christian heroism as any to be found in the records of the Reformed or Roman churches, names worthy to be joined to those of Melancthon and Baxter, of Borromeo and Xavier. We are able to show instances of every type of Christian philanthropy and Christian piety, not even falling short of literal martyrdom. All that any religious community has tried to realise in the lives of its members we have realised in the lives of some of our brethren. This is not our assertion merely; others acknowledge it. And when any complain of our faith that it is inadequate to the highest style of Christian life, we have the answer at hand in the treasures of our biography. Considering the number of our churches and the duration

of their existence, I unfeignedly believe that we could compile as fine a calendar of true saints as any church in Christendom. It is not in the world of letters alone that their labours of love are recorded, but from north to south, from east to west, in the memories of our town and village communities, as those of men and women who, whenever a good work had to be performed in which they were permitted by the intolerance of the sects to bear a part, were always among the foremost. If I am asked to mention names, I commend to you the biographies of Joseph Priestley, Theophilus Lindsey, Lant Carpenter, J. H. Hutton, William Ellery Channing, Henry Ware, C. Follen, O. B. W. Peabody, Samuel J. May, Theodore Parker, Ezra Stiles Gannett, George Armstrong, Samuel Greg, Edwin Field, John James Tayler, Thomas J. Mountford, Charles T. Brigham, Mary Carpenter, Dr. W. B. Carpenter, George William Curtis, Samuel Longfellow, James Freeman Clarke, Orville Dewey, Starr King, and many others. These are a few of those in the light of whose lives we rejoice, yea and will rejoice, as affording impregnable evidence that Unitarianism is not a system of negations, but a channel of divine life, full of the grace and truth that came by Jesus Christ from God our Father, quickening a holy spirit in those who receive it with the humility of children.

Another question often put to us is this: What philanthropies have we set on foot for the benefit of the people? I reply (1), the Sunday Schools, for the Rev. Theophilus Lindsey, Mrs. Lindsey, and Mrs. Cappe (then Miss Harrison), were in the field picking up the neglected little children some years before good Robert Raikes. I answer (2), the Ragged Schools, for John Pounds was indisputably the originator of those noble institutions. I answer (3), the Domestic Missions, for Henry Tuckerman was distinctively and unequivocally a Unitarian. I answer (4), the beneficent modern ambulance society in warfare, for though it was initiated by French officers under Napoleon I., it never entered into practical life till an angel of God, known on this earth as Florence Nightingale, born of Unitarian parents and reared amid Unitarian influences, consecrated her Christ-like being to its service; and the system was

organised and carried to its perfection during the American civil war by the Unitarian Rev. Dr. Henry W. Bellows, of New York, and his co-labourers. I answer (5), the Reformatories for criminal boys and girls, for they sprang from the large motherly heart and organising brain of Mary Carpenter, who also thrice sailed the seas to confer on the women of India the benefits of a freer life and a larger culture. I might add (6), the modern treatment of the blind, the deaf, and the dumb, after Dr. Howe's treatment of Laura Bridgman; and (7), of the insane, after the almost superhuman labours of Dorothea L. Dix, the tale of whose marvellous life, a life given as a ransom for many, has recently been told.

And what shall I say more? The time would fail me to mention the names of those famous in history for their noble contributions and eminent services to humanity, and the thousands of those less known to fame, whose beautiful lives, like fragrant flowers pressed between the leaves of some sacred volume, have sweetened the whole history of humanity.

These are some of the ripened fruits of Unitarian Christianity. Now, judging the tree by its matured fruits of manhood and womanhood, what must we say of it? Or, to change the figure, judging the school by the scholars it graduates, what shall we say of this Unitarian school of theology?

Surely this is a goodly fellowship. If men and women have any affinity for good company, can you wonder at what the Methodist Father Taylor said? The sailors' brave old chaplain, of Boston, had a personal acquaintance with several of the men and women whom I have mentioned, and when he was asked by some of his bigoted brethren if he thought it possible that any Unitarian could go to heaven, he replied out of his great heart, 'Well, if the Unitarians go to the hot place, I think they will change the temperature, and the tide of emigration will turn that way.'

But why are all these names of noble men and women brought before you? What of it all? Are there not hundreds and thousands of equally noble souls identified with other orders of faith? Have not our Catholic brethren

and our Protestant brethren of all denominations their calendar of saints? Certainly they have, and we rejoice in the fact. We crown them with our benediction. We are kindled by the fellowship of that Spirit which is within and beneath and yet above all creeds, and which alone makes the one universal church. We join hands with the fellow labourers with God of every name, and of no name, in every good word and work. We look for that city of God the vision of which cheered the heart of Socrates and of Augustine, into which shall be gathered the good of every race, every nation, every tongue, and every time. But I have brought before your minds this bright array of illustrious names, not to advertise a sect; not to boast of our fellowship, for this would be a shame; but, rather, that you may be informed of the character of some of the representative people of Unitarian Christianity, and that you may understand more clearly the position of those exclusive ecclesiastical bodies who first elect themselves to the privileges and honours of the Christian Church, and then by their terms of admission exclude such true and noble men and women as I have named.

And out of what have all these philanthropies come? Out of the faith which exalts practical religion above theoretical religion, and makes the principle of active virtue the ground and essence of salvation. It is in harmony here with all the teachings of Jesus, with all the clear teachings of Paul, with the Epistles of James and John, with the elder Scriptures of the Prophets, Psalmists and Proverbs. Sometimes it is objected to our faith that it is *mere morality*. The charge is *blame* only when morality is taken to mean formal and stinted legality, decent and compulsory social virtue, a low prescribed measure of good work. But the charge is *praise* if we consider that morality, as I maintain, means that love which the Apostle commends as the chief of graces. And when virtue means Christian righteousness and Christian brotherhood, when to be good is to be Christ-like, then we may count it all honour that we set before the people personal righteousness as the principal thing. And whatever theologians say against practical personal righteousness and goodness as the very essence of religion,

there is no other evidence of religion which the people so readily acknowledge and so universally yield to. A good man in any church gets the approval of reasonable men in all churches. The sober thought of the most rigid excepts from anathema any heretic who, by his uprightness, his honesty, his benevolence, has proved himself a true follower of Christ in active reality, whether he accepts or declines the name. In insisting therefore, upon the superiority of goodness and upon character, we have the sympathy of the world with us: we declare as our gospel for the people what the instinct and wisdom of all the churches endorse.

My final word, then, is that what Unitarianism presents to the people is practical Christianity. I would not undertake to define Christianity, except that it is visiting the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and keeping one's self unspotted from the world. No words can contain its fine, illimitable spirit. It can only shine in action. It can be crystallised only in self-sacrifice. Right moral action, the doing of some redemptive service, the movement of the soul towards universal goodness,—this is that masterful, commanding excellence in relation to which there is no controversy. Any motive, any knowledge, any glimpse of the universe in cloud or star that influences one to minister to others, forms a part of our gospel. Ransack all Bibles, and all literatures and all science; invoke the dead past; unfold the living present; flash out sweet pictures of the measureless future, that the world of to-day may be heroic, noble, and self-sacrificing; that honour may dwell in the high places of the earth; that love and purity may shine in happy homes; that the sick and the poor may be taken care of; that the wandering may be brought back, and the sorrowful consoled, and the stained cleansed;—no faith can do this so mightily as the faith in God's Fatherhood and Man's Brotherhood, rooted in the fibres of our being and manifesting itself through the strong heart in fruitful action; and this is the faith, this is the aim, and this, in a large measure, is the actual moral achievement of Unitarian Christianity.

THE MAIN LINES OF RELIGION AS HELD BY UNITARIANS.

By Rev. Brooke Herford, D.D.

I WANT to give a simple statement of religion as it is commonly held by Unitarians. Everybody knows something of it. People have a vague, general idea that Unitarianism differs considerably from the belief of most other churches, and they are perhaps more or less familiar with the Unitarian way of treating this or that point. But it may be interesting if I try to give a sort of bird's-eye view of the whole subject.

Of course I cannot do this either authoritatively or very precisely. I cannot set forth any authoritative 'Statement of Faith,' because we do not have any. Perhaps it would be more convenient if we had. It would be a convenience to have some neat little pocket-creed that we could produce at once, when any one asks 'What is Unitarianism?' But then we do not think religion to be a subject that can be treated in this fashion. These great thoughts which so intensely hold humanity—God, and immortality, and duty, and the marvellous influence of Christ,—these are not ideas that can be set down in little formal propositions, and learned off like the multiplication table. Our cardinal position on the whole subject is, to keep an open, reverent, thoughtful mind; to recognize that these are subjects on which, if men do think, there are sure to be differences of thought; and to leave free play for such differences of thought, not to cramp them by setting up formulas to which all must agree. Of course, with such freedom there is a great variety of religious opinion among us. I have never been in a Unitarian congregation yet, in which there was not almost every shade of belief, from some who are not

sure whether they believe anything, to others who are almost on the border-line of Orthodoxy. So some, when asked, 'What is Unitarianism?' simply point to the New Testament: 'That is our only creed,' they say. A terser description was that of an old friend of mine, who used to say, 'Unitarianism, sir, means, one God, and twenty shillings in the pound!' And not a bad creed either, as times go. Outsiders, indeed, fancy that with such varieties of opinion, and no fixed standard, there cannot be any real union among us; that we must be merely a rope of sand. But it is not so. The fact is, our churches hold together about as heartily as any. Our general sympathy on a few great religious truths, and in this broad practical way of looking at the subject, really holds us together quite as well as any profession of doctrinal agreement.

It is these few great religious truths,—the main lines of our religous faith,—which I have to describe as best I can. I shall not, however, shape them out just in the usual way. The common order in religious statements is, to speak first of 'God,' then of 'Christ,' then of 'the Atonement,' 'Heaven and Hell,' 'the Bible,' and so forth. That is the old technical, scholastic order. But it always seems to me like beginning at the far-away circumference of things. I think the natural order, in this great reaching-out of religious thought, is, to begin at the small, near, human end. So I might almost say that religion, as Unitarians hold it, begins with *Man*. It may not seem much to begin a religious statement with, 'We believe in Man;' and yet in reality this carries a great deal with it. Is not this, really, where Christ wanted men to let their religion begin? 'He that loveth not his brother, whom he hath seen, how can he love God, whom he hath not seen?' He was always teaching men to do their duty, man to man; to show love, man to man. He appealed to men's own common-sense: 'Why, even of yourselves, judge ye not what is right?' Along the line of human relations he led them up to Divine relations,—through man's fatherhood to the Infinite Fatherhood. Indeed, is it not true that the very thing most needed in the present day is, for the Churches to come back to a hearty, wholesome belief in man and manhood, in man's duty, and

man's reason and conscience? I think they are doing this. Our orthodox friends are finding out that human nature is not so utterly broken down and incapable as they used to make out. The old doctrine of the whole race being fallen and lost is not held as strongly as it used to be, even by those who still keep the old statements of it. But I think I may say that we Unitarians do not hold it at all. We stand utterly clear of it. We take man as he is; and it seems to us that, as in the case of the rest of God's creation, this must be about what the power that caused him to be, contemplated: that man is not so much fallen, as only slowly rising; not off the track of the Creator's purpose, but in it, though not so far along it as he might be. Sinful? Yes, but by no means all sinful; with original *goodness* in him as well as 'original sin,'—a goodness which we find in heathens and unconverted folk, and which is surely not worthless in God's sight, but is real goodness before Him. So we regard the world's various religions, not as mere misguiding deceits, but as all real upward strivings of human thought,—feeling after God. Thus the *Salvation* that man needs is not some divine substitution by which his punishment may be borne for him, but all the divine and human influence by which each one may be delivered from all that keeps him down, and helped upwards and onwards. This is what I mean by 'believing in man.' As it has been well said, 'No man can think too highly of his nature, or too lowly of himself.' That is about where we are, and along the line of this conviction lies the whole of religious faith.

Why, the very first thing we are led to, along this line of belief in man, is the very highest thing of all,—*faith in God.* I might almost say that we believe in God because we believe in man. Because, looking at man in all lands and ages, we find, ever coming out, this sense of mighty Divine Life in the universe; we find it ever growing up into systems of faith and worship, ever stirring man with the very strongest emotions he is capable of, ever lifting him up and helping him on. We find humanity blossoming into worship as universally and naturally as the plants blossom into flowers. And so, because we believe in the plant, we believe in the flower. It could not be that man's develop-

ment, so grand and orderly, should, when it comes to its highest point, in religion, deflect from reality to a blunder and a delusion. It cannot be that that which most has stirred man is an unreality; that that which has most helped man is a fiction or a dream. So we believe in God,—in that mighty, inscrutable Life which is back of all things. And we believe in the *Unity* of this mighty Life; we are *Unit*arians. Here comes in what I may claim, I think, as one of the leading characteristics of Unitarianism,—our dislike to and distrust of all fine definitions and speculative distinctions. A great part of the theology of the past consisted of the various efforts which men made to think out and define the inner mysteries of this mighty Divine Life. That was the real significance of the old world polytheisms; each idol form of Neptune or Apollo, each god-name of Brahm or Amun-Rá, was the attempt to bring out in sharp, clear outline some fancied distinction in the dimly discerned Deity. Against all of these stood out that little Jewish race with the sublime protest of their prophet leaders,—'Hear, O Israel! the Lord our God, the Lord is one.' It was only the same tendency, a little modified, which, when Christianity came in contact with these polytheisms, elaborated Christ's simple thought of one God into the mystic Trinity, in which the 'Father' was only one person out of three. That whole doctrine of the Trinity was a mere 'darkening of counsel by words without knowledge.' We point to Christ's thought of God, simply as the Heavenly Father,—'My Father and your Father, my God and your God.' We take with great delight and thankfulness those names he taught us to speak of him by,—'Our Heavenly Father,' and the 'Holy Spirit;' but these were not theological terms by which he was defining mysterious distinctions in the Godhead, but simply the great loving names by which he helped men to reach out in their thought to that close, infinite, gracious Presence. We stop where Christ did,—'One God, our Heavenly Father.'

Having thus stated the belief commonly held among Unitarians about Man and about God, we are naturally led to a third step: *These two, the human and the Divine, are in contact and communication.* This almost follows as a

matter of course. Could it be supposed that there should be these two intelligences in the universe,—the Divine and the human, and the human constantly impelled by its very nature to be seeking communion with the Divine,—and yet that the two should be forever and absolutely apart? What the exact nature of the communion between God and the soul is, one cannot dogmatize about. 'Does our worship really reach the heart of the Infinite God?' people ask. I do not believe there is a little bird's happy song that does not reach the Infinite heart; and how can we help believing that our worship does? I do not know *how;* and I do not know how His spirit touches and influences our life. We do not know how our spirits touch and influence each other! These are subjects of infinite wonder; but I think Unitarians universally do strongly feel that there is such contact between God and man, and that it somehow becomes clearer and intenser by purity of heart and by earnest seeking.

Now this belief in the contact between man and God opens out into a whole series of religious questions. *Prayer* is one of these questions; *Inspiration* is another; the *Bible* as the records of inspiration is a third; and *Christ* as the highest point of this divine and human contact is yet a fourth. 'What do Unitarians hold about *Prayer?*' I am often asked. 'Do you think that it can change God's plan, or arrest His laws, or procure any outward good?' No; I do not think Unitarians generally have much idea of that kind. Such things as praying for rain or for fine weather have almost passed away among us. The sense of the solemn order of God's laws, and of its being a blessed, beneficent thing for them to be so permanent and unchangeable, has taken away almost the very desire to ask for such things. But this has not done away with prayer. On the contrary, I think it has lifted it up, spiritualized it. It is simple communion of the heart with God; the seeking to

> 'Touch God's right hand in the darkness,
> And be lifted up and strengthened;'

And in that seeking we receive divine influences that are infinitely nobler than any mere outward gifts.

From this follows the true idea of *Inspiration*. It is

simply a higher grade of this contact and communication between the Divine and the human. The old mechanical theory of inspiration—that God dictated certain things to His prophets, which they wrote down, without any choice or possibility of error—is almost passed away. But it has passed away to make way not for a smaller, poorer idea, but for a nobler, purer, higher one. God's spirit works in the human soul in many ways and many degrees, and sometimes with an inflowing of light and truth which makes those so inspired, not indeed infallible,—'When God makes the prophet, he does not unmake the man,'—but still, very real revealers of Divine realities to the rest of us, whose lives are on a lower plane of experience.

This shows you the true idea of *the Bible*. In the Bible we have the scriptures of that line of holy souls among whom this inspiring influence of God has been most sought for, cherished, and believed in. Not an infallible book not a book to be taken, all or none; a book, or rather a long line of books, in which the human and the Divine are mingled just as they were in the prophet souls it tells us of; a book that has in it many a mistake,—which we are not troubled by,—but that is all alive and aglow in its best parts with the Spirit, and which brings out, and brings together, like no other scriptures in the world, that slowly developed thought of the Almighty Mind which He has revealed in His purest and holiest children. And do you not see how this larger idea of inspiration finds room for all that is noblest in the other religions of the world? Men used to think—some think so still—that everything inside the Bible is inspired, and nothing anywhere else. But that will not hold. What! Shall we call Solomon 'inspired,' and deny any real light from God in such great leaders of man's higher life as Zoroaster, Socrates, Confucius? I think very few Unitarians would say that. 'That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.' It lights them in different degrees, from the comfort or clearness which comes in answer to our simplest prayers, up through all high discerning of God's truth, up through the lofty visions of prophets, and coming to its very highest point in that most wonderful life and spirit of Jesus Christ.

What, then, of *Jesus Christ?* Simply, carrying out this thought I have been dwelling on,—of how the Divine Spirit works variously in man,—in Christ we have this contact and communion at its highest, finest, divinest point. To most souls, the consciousness of God is only an occasional uplifting; to him, it was a constant and indwelling presence, something that lifted him out of self, that exalted his being with strange tides of power, that made him feel it was the Father's word he was speaking, the Father's work he was doing, till, in his deep harmony with God, he could even say: 'I and my Father are one.' A wonderfully high word that, and yet not one which meant that he felt himself, in any sense, God. Indeed, it is the glory of that sense of his close relation to God, that he felt it as something which all God's children might share, that they all might come into that oneness with God, that they all might become the 'sons of God;' and it was the very object of his life to lead them to this. Here, in regard to Christ, is, I suppose, the subject on which there is the most variety of opinion among ourselves, and our greatest difference from other Churches. The old 'orthodox' belief is, that this Jesus of Nazareth was Almighty God, come down to earth, living in the world a little space in the form of man. I can speak for all Unitarians when I say that we do not hold this. We do not find anything like it in the accounts of Christ's life in the Gospels. It is a life of wonderful holiness and exaltation that the Gospels tell us of; a life all aglow with the consciousness of God,—so holy, so above the common life of man, that it is hardly wonderful that when the story of it spread among heathen peoples, who were familiar with the idea of Divine incarnations and demi-gods, the thought grew up and gathered strength, 'This must have been God.' But this was all an afterthought; and though it came of an exaggerating *reverence*, yet its real effect has been to disguise that simple yet majestic figure which lives forever in the Gospels. It has concentrated the attention of Christendom on Christ's supposed mysterious nature, rather than on his simple life and spirit and word; it has made Christianity consist in *adoring* Christ, while it does consist forever, really, in *following* him, in studying his teachings and trying to live them out.

If I am further asked, 'What, however, are the Unitarian ideas about Christ?' I have frankly to say, that they are very various. A few still hold the old Arian belief that he was a sort of angelic being, of miraculous birth; some, at the other extreme, simply revere him as a great religious reformer, the product of the highest religious tendencies of a remarkable age. But I think that most of us, while distinctly regarding him as *man*, and not being able to believe the stories of miraculous birth, which only two of the Gospels—not including *Mark*, the earliest—mention, do regard him as, above all others, inspired; the man of the Spirit; the Revealer and Teacher of the things of the Spirit; lifted by the Spirit into an authoritative wisdom, and, some think, into a sacred, immeasurable power. But then, mark *why* there are these differences among us in our explanations of how Christ came to be what he was; because it is our main position that such explanations are a secondary matter. We do not lay stress on them. That this was not God, indeed, who was tempted, and prayed, and suffered and died, and that it is an impiety to worship him as God,—this seems clear to all of us; but as to *how* exactly he came to be so above all others, we lay down no doctrine, but would have each read the Gospels and judge for himself. It is not the explanation of the life, but the life itself—the life and spirit and word of Christ as they stand forever in the Gospels,—*that* is what we hold to. That is the beautiful thing to study; there it is that the great realities of God's love and truth, and man's duty and destiny, are set forth in the clearest light and upon an immovable foundation. There are other points about Christ's work in the world, such as *Redemption* and *Atonement*, which it might be interesting to many to explain at length. But I may sum up the whole of these in saying that we regard Christ's work as simply a great work of influence upon the human heart. We have no part whatever in that idea so strongly insisted on by the orthodox creeds, of Christ having died as man's *substitute*; of his sufferings on the cross having, as it were, bought mankind off from hell; of his blood being a satisfaction to the wrath or justice of God. It is not that we shade off this a little,

while still using the language of it; we do not believe it at all! That doctrine of 'the Blood,' as it is called, as something 'to shelter behind,' seems to us a shocking perversion of the beautiful work which Christ lived and died to do. God never needed any such satisfaction. He never needed any reconciling. It was to turn—to reconcile—man to God, not God to man, that Christ lived and died. His whole blessed work was simply in human hearts, then and forever, to show them the infinite love of God waiting for their repentance; to help them to feel the awfulness of sin; to put a new striving after goodness and kindness in their hearts; to make mankind happier and better, the world the kingdom of God, and the life of earth an earnest beginning of the life eternal.

A closing word as to the *Life Eternal*. I think that that comes as the very crown and apex of this structure of faith, the lines of which I have been tracing. Believing in man not as fallen and ruined, but as a progressive being, only yet in the lower rounds of his progress; believing in God as the Infinite Life that is ever leading all things on in their beautiful development; believing in Christ as the Exemplar of what humanity has in it to become, and the teacher of the divinest truth about life, it is impossible to help believing that man's life has a destiny beyond this mere fragment of the earthly years. So among Unitarians there is a happy, trustful feeling about the future life. Here, too, we do not pretend to lay down any special, formal Unitarian doctrine. It is a great, grand hope and trust, about the details of which we do not profess to know; and I think we generally have a profound distrust of all detailed descriptions and mappings out of it,—all attempts to make out how many are saved, and who are lost, and how long they are going to be lost, and so forth. But the one thing which is clear to us, is, that there is no finality at the end of this life; that the destiny of human souls is not then closed up, but rather just opening. As far as hope goes, Unitarians are pretty much the same as Universalists,—*hoping* that even those who seem most lost will at last be reached by the influence of God and raised to the true and blessed life. But man must be free in the next world as in

this, and so we dare not lay down any doctrine that all *will* come to the blessed life beyond; but we are sure that all *may* do. Because, over all that is dim to us arches the infinite presence and power and love of God; and as we look to Him we feel that we can 'trust the larger hope,' and say with Whittier,—

> 'Father of all, thy erring child may be
> Lost to himself, but never lost to Thee.'

In conclusion, I can only say, in Paul's words, 'Prove all things, hold fast that which is good.' I do not set these things forth as something which men must believe in order to be saved. There is enough in every creed to save men, if only they live by the best in it. As Dr. Channing once said, 'It does not matter so much what a man believes, as how he believes it.' But still, these things are important. People are everywhere thinking about them, and they want to know the truth. Especially they want to know what those think who have shown that they are not afraid to think for themselves. Now, it is a significant fact, that these churches of ours, proving all things, searching the Scriptures with perfect freedom, investigating nature and science with perfect freedom also, have come to a solid agreement on the main lines of this broad, liberal faith which I have outlined to you, though they go different lengths along those lines. And it is another significant fact, which ought to be infinitely encouraging to us, that if we look at the freer thought and the newer statements of the other churches,—I do not say they are coming over to Unitarianism, but assuredly they are all tending to these same great, simple, trustful thoughts for which we Unitarians have so long had to bear our witness alone. And so, while we are still but seekers, not professing to have any perfect, final system, we feel that thus far we have the very faith and truth of our great Master, Christ; and we are sure that along these lines of thinking and living lie the light of God, and the strength of duty, and the progress of the world that is, and the great hope of the world that is to be.

STRONG POINTS OF UNITARIAN CHRISTIANITY.

By Rev. William Gaskell, M.A.

As some of my readers belong, most likely, to orthodox Churches, it may be desirable to say just a word or two on the motives and objects with which this Tract is written.

In the first place, we think, as Unitarian Christians, that a little regard for ourselves calls for some such step as this. As you must be well aware, in one respect at least we resemble the first disciples—we are 'a sect everywhere spoken against.' If I were to collect together some of the hard things which have been said of us, and the railing accusations which have been brought against us, it would only serve to show how unjust and uncharitable men professing to be actuated by the purest spirit of Christian love can be when they are under the influence of theological prejudice. This I would rather not do; both because it is sad to think that good and pious men, as numbers of those so treating us have been, should have done us this wrong, and because I believe that very often it was 'in ignorance they did it.' Enough to say that we are still regarded with something like suspicion and distrust; that an imaginary circle of terror is drawn around us, which keeps other religionists from ever approaching us, and learning what our faith really is; and makes them feel as an eminent Independent minister (Dr. Vaughan) once expressed it, that it would be 'an incoherence, a levity, a treason' in them to 'admit us to any sort of companionship' which would be a recognition of us as 'Christian brethren.' Now, if you were in our case what would you do? Believing that you

were grossly misrepresented and misunderstood, would you not try to put yourselves right? Seeing that through a false and injurious conception you were excluded from the fellowship of those with whom you would fain walk in sympathy and love, would you not endeavour to show them that they had read you wrongly, and were shunning you without a cause? Fully persuaded that you had as clear a right to sit at the Master's feet, and claim to be his disciples as they could have, would you not feel called upon to let them see that they were treating you unjustly in thrusting you aside and denying you his honoured name, and, as St. Paul had to do to certain zealots of his day, bid them, 'if they thought themselves Christ's, think this again, that as they were Christ's, even so were you Christ's'? In a word like the apostle, 'being defamed' would you not 'entreat'? Assuredly, you would. This, then, forms one motive for writing this tract. We, naturally, do not like to labour under unmerited opprobrium. We desire to stand fair with our fellow-Christians, and not have our name cast out as evil. We want to fight side by side with them, under the same holy banner, against the deadly foes which we see trampling down so many of our brethren. This, I think, you will admit to be right.

In the next place, a regard for our fellow-disciples calls us to the same course. We have constant occasion to see that they speak unkindly of us, and stand aloof from us, and refuse to co-operate with us, simply because they know so little what our faith really is. Representations are still continually made of it so utterly wide of the truth that they would be ridiculous if they were not mischievous, if they did not divide those who ought to be one, and keep up miserable wrangling where there should be Christian fellowship and love. It seems to us, therefore, that we are not doing our duty if we suffer this hindrance to stand in the way of that 'unity of spirit in the bond of peace' in which all friends of the gentle, meek, and merciful Saviour should be linked together. This makes us anxious to disperse the mists which the rancorous breath of theological hatred has raised around us, so that, instead of being viewed through this distorting medium, we may be seen more truly as we are.

We feel persuaded that both parties would gain by this, and Christ's holy Church be the better for it. It would, we believe, be a help towards the fulfilment of his prayer that all his disciples might be 'one,' as he and his Father were 'one.' This too, I am sure, is a motive which will approve itself to every one of you as right and good.

Further, a regard to Christian truth calls us to the same course. By doing as our Lord bids us—'searching the Scriptures,' and 'judging of our own selves what is right'—we have been brought to the conclusion that in the course of ages—many of them, we know, ages of grossest darkness and superstition—'the faith once delivered to the saints' has been obscured by the influences of a 'false philosophy' and a proud, usurping sacerdotalism, and that its original power has thereby been weakened, and prejudices have been excited against it in the minds of many who would have received it gladly if it had been presented to them in its native simplicity and beauty. We have met with not a few such; minds that after they had been driven out into the dreary wilderness of unbelief, and sought for a refuge in other forms of faith in vain, have found it in what seems to us the true Gospel of Christ. Put yourselves, then, in our place, and what would you do? Truckle to worldly expedience? let the fear of man take you in its snare? hold your peace, and let what you felt to be error go unchecked on its way? 'No!' you would say; 'the light which God has given us we dare not put under a bushel. We are followers of One who "came to bear witness to the truth," and for it died on the cross, and by our allegiance to him, come weal, come woe, we are bound to advance what we hold to be his truth as far as in us lies. This simple Christian faithfulness demands.' So would *you* say, and so say *we*. There is here a plain duty before us, and, by God's grace, we mean to fulfil it.

What we seek is, not so much to controvert the opinions of others as to set forth our own; not to display what is false and hurtful in the systems we reject, but to show what is true and good in that which we hold; not to take up the subject in a spirit of antagonism, but in the spirit of love.

Trusting, then, that there may be some among you who

have the love of justice which will lead you to look into the cause of the misrepresented, and the noble spirit of independence that characterised the Bereans of old, which will induce you to put away all idle fears, and search and see whether the things which we declare are so, I now proceed to the subject of this tract. And as a foundation for what I have to say, I would take the sixth verse of the eighth chapter of St. Paul's first Epistle to the Corinthians, where he writes:—

'To us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in *(for)* Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by *(through)* whom are all things, and we by *(through)* Him.'

These words embody the leading peculiarities of the Unitarian Christian's faith, and what I wish is to bring under your candid consideration one or two of the 'strong points,' as they appear to me, of that faith, and leave you to judge for yourselves what their argumentative and moral force really is.

(1) In the first place, then, it has the advantage over the systems to which it is opposed, of having *its fundamental principles set forth in the very words of Scripture.* Its distinguishing doctrine is that 'God is one,' without any distinction of parts or persons; and, as I need hardly say, it is from our belief in the strict and simple Unity of God that we derive our name. Now, this essential article of our faith can be expressed in the words of Scripture without the least straining or altering of any kind whatever. The passage just read from one of the great Apostle's letters is a case in point. Had it been his object to state distinctly what our views on this subject are, and to guard them as much as possible from misconception, he could hardly have used terms better suited to the purpose. As if bearing in mind the treachery of words, he employs them here with singular care and caution; and it so happens that he does this most in regard to those points of our faith which are most controverted. He might almost have had a prophetic foresight of the perversion which was hereafter to be made of the simple doctrine of the Divine Unity, and the pretensions which so-called orthodoxy would put forth, and

have been anxious to place on record his protest against them. Even Trinitarians avow that there is only 'one God,' but they endeavour to show that in this one God there are three Persons—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost—each separately, no less than altogether, that one God—a 'Trinity in Unity.' Such is the teaching of creeds and catechisms. But mark, now, the teaching of Paul, and observe the contrast. 'To us,' he says, 'there is but one God;' so far the Trinitarian agrees with him; but when he adds that this God is 'the Father,' and distinguishes Him from the 'one Lord, Jesus Christ,' he departs from what the Trinitarian holds to be true, and propounds exactly the same view that the Unitarian takes. Let any member of an orthodox Church, adopting that view, assert that, in the proper sense of the term, 'the Father' is the one only God whom he recognises, and he will soon find that he is set down as 'unsound in the faith.' And I conceive that if the Apostle himself were to re-appear, and affirm that doctrine in any other phraseology than that which he has used, he too would be shunned as tainted with heresy, and might, very likely, be denied, as we sometimes are, the Christian name. 'To us,' he says, 'there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things.' Not the faintest hint does he give of any Trinity being hidden in this Unity; nay, such a notion is effectually shut out by the terms he employs; 'to us there is but one God,' and that 'one God' is not the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost of the Trinitarian, but simply 'the Father,' as worshipped by the Unitarian. The 'one God' of the former is a Triune God, or a God consisting of three Persons; the 'one God' of the first Churches, and of modern Unitarian Christians, is 'the Father' only, one Person, supreme above all. He stands first and alone, and our 'Lord Jesus Christ,' the agent of His will in the reconstruction of all things, is separated and distinguished from Him as clearly as language can do it; and the Apostle could not have more positively informed us that the Son and the Holy Ghost are not God, in the true and highest sense of the term, if he had said this in so many words. Similar remarks would apply to the language of St. Peter in his address to the Jews on the day of Pentecost, where he says,

'Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs which God did by him.' Could we, if we were to try our utmost, more plainly discriminate between Jesus and God who worked by him; could we, that is, more clearly express the Unitarian view? I see not how. And so I might say of other apostolic statements. But if you have any doubt still left, turn to the Master of whom all Christians profess to learn, and listen to him. With just as much exactness as his apostles he distinguishes between himself and God, and as decisively asserts the unity and sole Deity of the Father. 'This,' he says, in the solemn prayer which he offered up a little while before his death—'this is life eternal, that they might know Thee,' his Father and our Father, 'the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.' Could words be plainer? According to them, 'the Father' is 'the only true God.' Observe, He is not merely spoken of as 'God,' but as 'the only true God,' and Jesus is distinguished from him as the sent is from the sender, the messenger from the one who employs him; and it is so important to 'know' God in this light that it is connected with 'eternal life.' Verily, if we were disposed to retaliate on our Trinitarian brethren for their harsh treatment of us, we might make out a strong and telling case against them for their clear departure from the plainest declarations of Scripture. But this we have no wish to do; to their own Master they stand or fall. They cannot, however, deny that the foundation-doctrine of our faith, that there is but one God, and that one God 'the Father,' is established in the express words of Jesus and his great apostles. This being the case, of course, if language is to retain its meaning, all that is said by our theological opponents respecting the existence of Three Persons in God, and the Deity of Christ and the Holy Ghost, falls to the ground; because if 'the Father' is 'the only true God,' unquestionably there can be no other God besides. Our Trinitarian brethren, I am bold to affirm, can make out no such case in their favour. They can find no passages of Scripture which even seem to state their doctrine. The single text (*1 John* v. 7) about the three Heavenly Witnesses, which most nearly amounts to such a statement,

is now, as you must be aware, given up by all Biblical critics as spurious, and having being inserted centuries after the Epistle was written. But even were it genuine, it says nothing about a Trinity of equal Persons. The words which have been added are these: 'there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one.' This no more necessarily implies that God is a Trinity of equal Persons, than the prayer of our Lord for his disciples, 'that they all may be one, as Thou, Father, art in me and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us,' implies a plurality of equal persons, or the deification of Christians. So that taking the Scriptures as they stand, without entertaining the question whether they have in any places been tampered with and altered, we shall find that, while Unitarian views can be expressed in their very words, no clear statement of the doctrine of the Trinity, or even plausible materials for such a statement, can be extracted from their pages. And the insertion of a spurious passage which might answer the purpose—if it did not arise from the mistake of some copyist, who carried a marginal note into the text—is not without its significance. Be this, however, as it may, the fact remains patent to all, that Unitarian Christianity is plainly and unequivocally taught in the language of Scripture. Without any straining or qualification whatever, our main doctrine, the distinguishing peculiarity of Unitarian Christianity, is expressed in the very words of Christ and his apostles; and therefore, unlike others, we have no creed but the Bible, and if any sect of Christians are entitled to be called 'Evangelical,' we certainly are.

(2) Another of our 'strong points' is to be found in *the faith of the universal Church*. It is an article in the creed of all Christians that 'God is one.' Without any exception, they profess to believe in the Divine Unity. In as far as they really do so, they are, of course, Unitarians. This is a testimony of great importance. It amounts to this, that in the opinion of Catholics and Protestants alike, there is truly and properly 'but one God.' On the strength of this, some Trinitarian theologians maintain that the term 'Unitarian' is not specially descriptive of our belief. They are Uni-

tarians as well as we, and in their own conception as much as we; and therefore, they contend, the name does not belong exclusively to us, and ought not to be appropriated exclusively by us. They do not allege that it is unsuitable to us, but that it belongs likewise to them, and consequently has nothing distinctive in it. This is a remarkable concession in our favour. It is an admission that the great doctrine to which we do homage is true. By the concurrent acknowledgment of all Christian Churches, there is 'but one God.' So far, therefore, according to the confession of our warmest opponents, we are right. We agree with every other denomination in holding the doctrine of the Divine Unity. In respect, also, to the person of Jesus we agree with most of them—with all of them indeed but the Swedenborgian—in believing him to have been a true human being —'very man.' They, as well as we, look upon him as one born of a woman, 'made in all things like unto his brethren,' 'tempted in all points even as we are,' who wept real tears, who endured real pains, and who shared in all the innocent feelings and infirmities of our nature; in a word, we believe, as they do, that the life he lived was a real human life, and the death he died a real human death. Here again, then, we have the suffrages of nearly all other Christians in our favour. We are right, it seems, in regarding our Saviour as a true and noble man: whom God sent into the world to do His will, to whom He gave power and authority, and whom He acknowledged as His beloved, because ever-obedient Son. Our Trinitarian brethren, I need hardly say, stop not in either of these cases where we do. They complicate the doctrine that God is One by attributing to Him a plurality of Persons, and they complicate the doctrine that Jesus was human by attributing to him a divine, that is a superhuman nature; and they expend a vast amount of subtle reasoning in trying to reconcile these contradictory views, and then, somewhat inconsistently, they charge us who take the simple Scripture teaching just as it stands, with 'pride of reason,' because we cannot bring our reason to bow to theirs. Still, they admit and sanction our fundamental principles. In fact, they cannot do otherwise. According to their own showing, as well as ours, God is One, and the Lord Jesus

Christ truly and properly a man. In these points, then, our faith, as far as it goes, is right. If it has any fault, it is that of defect; but its principles in themselves are good. This, evidently, must be granted. We reject nothing but what we deem inconsistent with these first, plain teachings of the gospel, or with others that are equally clear, and held with similar unanimity by all Christians alike. Our position among the Churches is well defined. It is the central ground where the lines of divine truth meet; yet, strange to say, it is assailed on every side as if it were the encampment of an enemy. We hold the great doctrines which are held by all the disciples of Christ in common; yet we are abused by all, because with these doctrines we will not blend the peculiarities which seem to us directly to contradict them, and not a little to lessen their power. We cannot, for instance, reconcile the doctrine that the Father is God, the Son God, and the Holy Ghost God, with the belief that 'there is but one God, the Father;' nor the doctrine that Christ is God, which makes him infinite, with the belief that he was a Man, which makes him finite. The two sets of ideas appear to us to be destructive of each other, and to lead only to confusion and perplexity. We have here, therefore, no alternative left us but to dissent from orthodox teaching. The case is the same in regard to the remaining articles of our faith. We agree with all other Christians in believing that the God who made us is kind and gracious, and in attributing to Him the bestowment of every good and perfect gift; but this prevents us from holding with them that He has attached to our nature the taint of original sin, the condition of moral helplessness, and the curse of eternal perdition. We agree with them in believing that a solemn responsibility attends whatever we do, and that we have a conscience to direct us to that which is right; but this prevents us from holding with them that we are naturally incapable of turning to what is good, utterly depraved, and hopelessly lost. We agree with them in believing, according to the plain declarations of our Lord, that our condition hereafter will be determined by our characters, not our creed or profession; but this prevents us from holding with them that unless a man thinks in a particular way on certain

points he must 'without doubt perish everlastingly.' We agree with them in believing that God is 'our Father,' full of love and compassion; but this prevents us from holding with them that He is the implacable enemy of countless myriads, and will torment them through ages without end, because they acted according to the nature which He himself had given them, and the grace was withheld that was essential to their salvation. In short, holding fast by the great central principles of faith which nearly all maintain, we reject only those extreme views which diverge on every side from the common ground of our profession, and are opposed to one or other of its great leading doctrines. For most of our views, therefore, we have the entire sanction of Christians of other persuasions. Our belief in the unity of God, and the humanity of Christ—our sense of duty and obligation—our trust in God as our Father—our hope of future blessedness—our feelings of veneration and worship—and all the acts of justice, kindness, and love that we render to our fellow-men have the approval of the whole Church of Christ. On these and various other grounds, we may appeal with confidence to every class of our fellow-Christians. By their own confession, Unitarian Christianity is true; for they, as well as we, declare that God is One, that Jesus was a 'man who told the truth which he had heard of God,' that those are his disciples who live in love and peace, that the true worshippers worship the Father in spirit and in truth, and that God will render to every man according to his works.—And here, as bearing on the charge often brought against our faith that it is a system of mere negations, we might ask, Is it a mere negation that in God we have a Father, whose care for us never slumbers, whose love to us never wearies, in whose almighty protection we feel that we are safe, whether we live or whether we die? Is not the negation rather with those who, raising up a cloud of inventions round this great central truth, cause it, instead of shining forth brightly as it does in the Gospels, to appear 'like the sun under dim eclipse'? Is it a mere negation to affirm, with the Psalmist, that God hath made us a little lower than the angels that are in heaven, and crowned us with glory and honour; that He has made us to know, and

love, and serve Him, and that in order to this end He has created us in His own image, and formed us for immortal blessedness? Is not the negation rather with those who represent Him as having made us even lower than the brutes, which at least are not born in sin, 'deserving His wrath and damnation;' made us, not in His own likeness, but as far as possible from it, *incapable* even of good, and fit only for perdition? And so I might go through all our positive views, in agreement with the plain teachings of Scripture, and show that the negation is not really with us, but most generally with those who condemn us. To express our belief, we take the very words of Christ and his apostles. Surely, no one will say there is negation in that!

(3) Another 'strong point' we have which seems to me impregnable. No amount of misrepresentation or abuse can dispossess us of it. *Our principles have their root in human nature.* They are more in harmony with reason and with conscience than those which are commonly preached as orthodox. The abettors of some religious systems seem to consider it a merit that they do violence to the faculties which the inspiration of the Almighty hath given us. Their idea would appear to be, that the farther they can diverge from human feeling and sentiment, the nearer will they approach to the divine. This arises from their believing that all men at their birth are thoroughly vile—corrupt in every power and affection they possess. It is perfectly consistent with such a belief that they should distrust their own hearts, and suspect the dictates of their understanding and conscience. There is, therefore, a sort of conflict perpetually going on between their natural sentiments and their artificial theology. Not holding any such doctrine, we take part with human nature in the struggle; and instead of pouring contempt on the reason and affections that God has given us, which seems very like impeaching His goodness, we think that they ought to be reverenced and honoured. As we have already seen, with regard to the great doctrine that 'God is One,' the Scriptures are clearly on our side. His unity, in opposition to the 'gods many' of heathenism, is distinctly set forth in the Old Testament, and, in opposition to any other claims, no less distinctly in the New.

Nature on this point is in harmony with the Bible. In all departments of science one plan, one purpose, one presiding mind is manifest. The laws in operation show that one Author framed them. The heavenly bodies move in one direction, and as one system; one principle of attraction governs all their motions; they are related to one great scheme; the same Spirit worketh in all. Our natural intelligence vouches for the same truth; repudiates the contradictory notions involved in the doctrine of a Trinity in Unity, 'at which,' as an eminent dignitary of the English Church once said, 'reason stands aghast,' and bears its testimony for One God only. There remains to contend for the former nothing but a perverted theology. And against all this light what has it to allege? Merely a heap of metaphysical refinements, and a few obscure passages of Scripture patched up into a plausible form, and imposed on men's souls by the forged authority of the Church. It is really amazing to consider the weakness of the case which Trinitarianism has to put. As if conscious of this, it has generally denounced reason, shrunk from light, and worked by fear; and what was wanting in evidence it has made up in confident assertion and vague appeals to authority. But all through the controversy the natural sentiments are in favour of Unitarian views. If you tell men that they come into the world with a depraved and ruined nature, utterly disinclined to good and bent on nothing but evil, their own consciousness testifies against your doctrine. They feel that it is neither just to their Maker nor true of themselves. Liable as they are to go astray, they know that they are not thus devilish and desperately wicked. Admitting, as they must, that they are not what they should be, they still feel that God has not left Himself without witness in their hearts, and that it is not His fault, nor Adam's fault, but their own fault that they are no better. It is vain to tell them that God is wroth with them, and dooms them to endless woe for being born in a condition which unfitted them altogether for duty, and necessitated them to do evil only; or that he would on no account be reconciled to a single one of them, though all His children, till His anger was appeased by the blood of His innocent and beloved Son. Violence must be

done to the natural sense of equity (which, remember, God has implanted) before such doctrines can be really believed. And the grievous result, in many instances, of demanding from men assent to what their reason tells them is false, and their moral sense tells them is wrong, is, to undermine their faith, and leave it little better than a hollow profession. Nor will any that are not mystified, or frightened into submission, admit that all who have not felt the utter ruin of their nature, and their need of an infinite atonement for their sins, must, however pure, devout, and loving, be punished with pains everlasting. In short, for nearly every doctrine of the Unitarian faith, and against those peculiar to the Trinitarian, we shall find a witness-bearer in the human heart; and the effect would be more evident than it is if there were not so many menaces and subterfuges employed to overawe and enslave the natural sentiments of the mind. It is obvious, however, to all impartial inquirers, that our views inspire a more generous confidence in human nature, and a greater reliance on its dictates.

This, I repeat, is one of our 'strong points.' We have no need to coerce and constrain the moral powers by force, or to trick and cajole them into submission; they are with us already; and we ask nothing for the faith we preach but a free and full examination of it. We say that God is one, not Three in One; we say that Christ was a true, real, noble man, not a person in the Trinity, equal with the Father, of whom he affirmed He 'is greater than I;' we say that we are born weak and fallible, but not tainted with sin, and ordained to depravity and hell: that we are created capable of good, and that our mission is to promote it; that no power in existence can defile our souls, or ruin our hopes, without our own concurrence: that freedom of thought and action is our birthright, and to 'prove all things, that we may hold fast that which is good,' our unquestionable privilege; we say that true religion is a matter of loving choice, not of fear and constraint; we say that all things, under the guidance of our Heavenly Father's care, are tending to fit us for the blessedness of a better world—we say this, and much more to the same effect; and the natural sentiments, which are of God, re-echo and confirm what we say.

Behold, then, the strength of Unitarian Christianity. It is expressly taught in Scripture, without any ambiguity or doubtfulness at all; it is concurred in, to a great extent, by its very opponents; it is rooted in the affections of our nature, and can only be eradicated thence by an act of violence. It is strong in authority: Paul is for it, Christ is for it, God is for it. It is strong in argument: reason approves it, and repudiates its opposite; the sciences bear witness for it; and the free and unsophisticated willingly receive it. It is strong in self-consistency and in natural testimonies and allies. Nay, we may affirm of it, as our Master did of the Kingdom of God, men need not say of it, 'Lo here, or lo there, for behold it is within you.' It contains, we believe, the great essential truths which underlie the many varying forms of Christianity, without their peculiar distinctions; all the vital principles, all the saving faith which they contain, without the bewildering speculations, and metaphysical puzzles, and unnatural conceptions which obscure their simple beauty, and weaken their native power. Unlike them, it has no dread whatever of reason, or the light of science, or the discoveries of philosophy, but is a friend to the freest thought, and courts the most searching examination. Unlike them, it lays comparatively little stress on rites, and forms, and creeds, but seeks supremely to bring out into action the spiritual elements of trust and love which made the Saviour's life divine. It leads us to honour and love him, 'the one Lord through whom are all things and we through him,' for his goodness and self-sacrifice on our behalf; but still, with his great Apostle, it leads us to say, 'To us there is but one God, the Father,'—to whom be glory in the highest for ever and ever!

THE NEW ORTHODOXY.[1]

By Rev. R. A. Armstrong, B.A.

THE movement summed up under the name of 'The New Theology' is a phenomenon profoundly interesting to Unitarians. The title has become current as descriptive of a remarkable simultaneous advance in theological thought and expression on the part of a quite considerable number of able men within many of the communions commonly accounted orthodox. The Church of England, the Presbyterians, the Congregationalists, the Baptists, all present numerous instances. In England, in Scotland, in the United States, 'The New Theology' is making its voice heard, and revolutionising the religious conceptions of large numbers of the intelligent laity. To many it has seemed that our own battle is already won, that essentially our message is being uttered from the best pulpits of the heretofore orthodox communities. Friends of mine, who are in this movement, helping to lead it, tell me this very thing. They say:—'You have done your work; you have infused your spirit into our churches; there is no need for you to maintain your protest.' Not a few of Unitarian training take the same view, and are infusing themselves contentedly into the Church of England, the Presbyterian bodies, and the congregations of the Baptists and Independents.

And indeed a very large part of that which we and our fathers have stood for, this New Theology does truly adopt into its own life. It abhors cant as much as we abhor it. It recognises that religion, Christianity, is not a creed, but a

[1] An Essay read before the British and Foreign Unitarian Association on May 25th, 1893.

life; not a sacrament, but a spirit. It takes joy in a wide and kindly tolerance. It stakes salvation on no dogma. It preaches freedom of thought and speech. It pleads for a brotherhood wide as humanity. It faces fearlessly the great new thought and knowledge of our time, and does in some degree weave these into its theological conceptions. It finds the true Christ-life in love, in the loving service of all whom we can help or lift up.

I have no words to express my delight that this is so. The men of this New Theology are lifting a nightmare from the bosom of the world. I thank God for their courage, their insight, their labour.

Yet I have to offer certain adverse but respectful and most earnest criticisms on their methods and their work. I have to lament that they are setting up, not a New Theology pure and simple, growing from the Old as a tree from its roots, but a New Orthodoxy with much of the weakness, much of the mischief in it which pertain to the old orthodoxies which it thrusts aside.

The weakness and the mischief spring from this: the New Theology, so far as I am acquainted with it, always appeals to *some* other authority besides a man's own reason and conscience, the only court to which Jesus of Nazareth ever made appeal. It gravely discusses the comparative authority of the Bible, the Church, and Reason. It might as well discuss the comparative authority of Sir Isaac Newton, the Royal Society, and Reason. The Royal Society and Sir Isaac Newton have precisely no authority at all save so far as their statements conform to Reason. The Church, the Bible, the Christ himself have no shred of legitimate authority over our beliefs save what authority is given them by the concurrence of their enunciations with the living voice of God in the intellect and conscience of each individual believer.

That I may make the nature of my criticism clear, it will be well that I should first state what it is that I prize the most in the methods of our own Unitarian thought. To me the peculiar value of that thought is that it moves *pari passu* with the contemporary thought travelling along the roads of critical and scientific investigation. No man values more

highly than I do the conception of the pure and simple humanity of Jesus, and the concentration of the personality of God in the Supreme Father whom he worshipped. But the discovery of these illuminating truths is to me incidental to that method of thought which so absolutely trusts God that it assimilates eagerly all that the man of criticism and the man of science present to it, provided it has stood the tests proper to its own sphere of truth. I value Unitarian thought chiefly for its absolute intellectual sincerity; and if there be a Unitarianism which, when considering purely critical or scientific inferences, casts a side glance at its theology before admitting those inferences, to see that that is in no danger of disturbance, that is not the Unitarianism for me. Unitarian Christianity is to me a pouring of the spiritual life into intellectual forms loyally true to the best that can be thought and the fullest that can be known in science or in criticism. It is the absolute harmony of the higher Unitarianism with critical and scientific results to-day, and still more, my sense that it will harmonise itself with whatsoever critical and scientific results may be revealed to-morrow and the day after, that makes me rejoice in Unitarianism, and trust absolutely that—under whatever name—it must command the future. Unitarianism, as I accept it, has no reserves. It is prepared for all possible outcomes of the investigation of planets or of books, a decade, a century, a millennium from to-day, and can change its form to meet them without disturbance to its essence.

Now the New Theology of which I speak makes the same professions. If it made them truly, then though its professors call themselves Trinitarian, and we call ourselves Unitarian, we should be essentially at one.

But my respectful charge against the New Theology is that, put to the test, it breaks down in this profession. It departs very widely from the orthodoxies of the past, but it does not free itself from all their limitations. It does still profess some tenets which are not the true result of free investigation, but are borrowed from systems resting on ecclesiastical authority, and have no basis other than that authority. Though it has crossed a wide sea to reach new territories, it has never burnt its ships. Though it has

thrown out skirmishers far afield, it has never cut off its communications. Though it adventures far in the ocean of truth, it is a swimmer with a rope tied round his body, by which, if the current prove too strong, he can haul himself back to land. There are swimmers among these New Theologians whose ropes are very long indeed, but I have met none who dare breast the waves without a rope.

If this be so, then the New Theology is not intellectually self-consistent.[1] There is an admixture of deference to past authority other than pure reason justifies. The New Theologians do not with a whole heart trust themselves to the Word of God *now*. They keep an eye upon past centuries. They do not always test the Word of God *then* by the Word of God *now*. They sometimes test the Word of God *now* by the Word of God *then*. They do not always measure the revelation of yesterday by the revelation of to-day. They sometimes measure the revelation of to-day by the revelation of yesterday. They give us no confidence that they will accept the revelation of to-morrow.

I shall illustrate this thesis of mine from three small books, very able, very brilliant, in some respects very noble, which are in great vogue,—three books by three thoroughly representative sons of the New Theology. They are Mr. Robert F. Horton's 'Inspiration and the Bible,' Dr. Lyman Abbott's 'Evolution of Christianity,' and Dr. James Morris Whiton's 'Gloria Patri.' It may excite some surprise that I do not turn to Dr. Fairbairn's new and important work, 'The Place of Christ in Modern Theology.' I can only say that I am so amazed at its extraordinary contents, at the confidence with which it discusses the internal economy of the Godhead, at its acceptance of the three Persons in the Godhead seemingly in the most literal sense of the English

[1] As originally written and read, this sentence stood, 'If this be so, then the New Theology is not in the true sense intellectually sincere'; and this was followed by two or three explanatory sentences. I have substituted the above form of expression at the suggestion of friends, who thought that the original statement would be understood to imply some moral charge against the New Theologians. My intention was to criticise their intellectual method only, as will be seen by reference to the letter to the *Christian World* printed in the present pamphlet as an appendix.

word 'Person,' at its absolute dogmatic orthodoxy in spite of the boldness of its critical research, that I am quite unable to regard it as in any way belonging to the New Theology as I have understood that term. I revert then to the three authors whom I have named.

These writers do not all maintain the same lines of communication with the rear. Each of them casts away much which the others retain. But each of them carefully guards at least one line of communication with orthodox Christianity. None of them seem to me to have ventured out to the open sea.

Mr. Horton proposes to go to the Bible with a free mind, and to put nothing into it which he does not really find there. His position is: The Bible is inspired, and inspired in a different sense from any other literature; to make it clear what we mean when we allege this unique inspiration of the Bible we must review it book by book, and note exactly what in each book that quality is which we designate inspiration.

Mr. Horton's volume is full of incidental truth and beauty, but its method is corrupted by the spirit of traditionalism. If Mr. Horton were not moved by unconscious desire to keep open his communication with orthodox Christianity, he could never draw so sharp and absolute a line between the Bible and the whole remaining contents of the world's literature. Some of that outside literature is marked by the very characteristics which in the Bible he claims as inspiration. Some portions of the Bible can only be brought under his rule by the most astonishing straining of his thesis.

'Inspiration,' says he, 'as applied to the Bible, is a term applicable only to the Bible.' 'We call our Bible inspired, by which we mean that by reading it and studying it we find our way to God, we find his will for us, and we find how we can conform ourselves to his will.' Does Mr. Horton really mean then, that no man has ever found these things by reading Augustine or à Kempis? Every individual book in the Bible fills 'its foreordained niche . . . in a large mosaic.' If Chronicles or Esther or Ecclesiastes or Jude had been left out and perished, would Mr. Horton have

discovered lacunæ in the mosaic? In the Pastoral Epistles of Paul, says Mr. Horton, 'it is difficult to trace the breath of inspiration.' Then why should he try, unless he has carried a foregone theory to the Bible? Of the Old Testament historical books he says, 'it is not the historical record so much as the history itself that is inspired.' Then why insist on the inspiration of the books? Yet he concludes, 'We shall not be left in much doubt concerning the inspiration of these books.' Of the Pentateuch he says that, when we speak of its inspiration, 'we can only mean that it played a part in the economy of God's education of the human race,' and must, therefore, be included in the Bible. Have then, no other histories played a part in God's education of the human race? 'The spiritual meaning of life's great drama,' says Dr. Lyman Abbott, 'is not really less in the history of the United States than in that of Palestine.' If someone then wrote the history of the United States with sympathetic insight, would Mr. Horton find a place for that in the inspired Bible? Mr. Horton rebukes such as find less inspiration in Esther, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Songs, than in Job, the Proverbs, and the Psalter. Yet the most he can say for Esther is 'That it throws a little light upon a point in the history of the Jewish people,' and that the whole history of that people is inspired. He is fully alive to the 'cynical pessimism' of Ecclesiastes; yet it finds its ideal place in the inspired Scriptures 'because it is suitable that the doubting spirit . . . . should find an utterance as a foil to the restful and trusting spirit.' 'Thus,' says he,' 'the book holds a place in the Inspired Volume just because it is not in the ordinary sense inspired itself.' Surely this is '*lucus a non lucendo*' with a vengeance! It is clear that if Paine's 'Age of Reason,' or an essay from the *Agnostic Annual* were found wedged in between Proverbs and the Song of Solomon, its place in 'the Inspired Volume' might be justified by precisely the same reasoning. Mr. Horton has to submit his theory to still greater strain, that, to use his own words, he may 'explain what we mean by calling the Song of Songs inspired.' Mr. Horton's book contains much admirable criticism, and grinds to powder all mechanical theories of inspiration; but it is impossible to

believe that a mind so acute, so truth-loving, and so devout, could have been betrayed to write a book of which the main argument is a vicious circle, and the details play fast and loose with the contents of the word 'inspiration,' were he not unconsciously biassed by a desire to keep open his communications with the orthodoxy he has left. Mr. Horton swims far from shore; but the rope is round his body.

Turning next to Abbott's 'Evolution of Christianity,' we find that he completely cuts the particular line of communication with the rear so carefully maintained by Mr. Horton. He knows nothing of an inspiration in the Bible other in kind than that which exists to-day. He proclaims that 'Inspiration is no remote phenomenon, once attested by miracles, now forever silenced in the grave of a dead God, but a universal and eternal communion between a living God and living souls.' Thus severing himself from the minister of Lyndhurst-road—and that in the very name of the New Theology—how does the eloquent preacher of the Brooklyn Tabernacle secure his own line of retreat?

His book is a very lucid argument for the recognition of evolution in the Christian religion itself. His thesis is 'that the Christian religion is itself an evolution; that is, that this life of God in humanity is one of continuous progressive change, according to certain divine laws, and by means of forces, or a force, resident in humanity.' And the bulk of his volume is occupied with tracing this orderly evolution in the Bible, in theology, in the Church, in Christian society, in the soul. Evolution embraces the phenomena of degeneration and decay as well as—though subordinately to—progress and expansion. And so the phenomena of the priestly element for a while superseding the prophetic in Israel and in Christendom causes no embarrassment. The whole is worked out with unshrinking faithfulness from the days of Moses to our own,—the whole save for one transcendent exception. Dr. Abbott's theory requires that as David and Isaiah are products of evolution, Jesus shall be so too. But such an admission would at once sever our author irrevocably from the company of the historic church; and when confronted with it he turns aside. Through all the rest of the story Dr. Abbott teaches that 'God is the cause; phenomena are

the product; evolution is the method.' God worked in prophet and in psalmist on spiritual organisms themselves evolved from the whole preparation of the past. The phenomena resulting were the 'Comfort ye, comfort ye,' the 'Bless the Lord, O my soul,' the whole character of the men who wrote these things, the whole literature which they delivered to the world. In philosophical consistency Dr. Abbott would be bound to explain in like manner the phenomena of the life and word of Christ, to see in him also the accumulated spiritual influences of the past giving birth to a soul on which God so worked that the manifestation of unspeakable love and the words of unspeakable grace were the phenomena produced,—a link in the chain of evolution in the same sense as Amos or Micah, as Paul or John, as Augustine or Luther. But Dr. Abbott boldly breaks his evolution. He lifts up Jesus and Jesus only in all the roll of history to be himself a true cause, 'the Infinite entering,' and entering, we must take it, for the first time, 'in human life.' I for my part believe that every man is in the measure of his free initiative, not merely a link in the evolution chain, but a new cause acting with free impact on society. But whether it be so or not, an evolutionist must be consistent. He must admit no exceptions. And when Dr. Abbott subjects the historic Christ to a radically different treatment to what he adjudges to every other bearer of the word of God, he breaks up his own argument and destroys the meaning of his book.

This inconsistency saves Dr. Abbott's line of communication with orthodox Christianity, but it costs him the rank he ought to take as a philosophical exponent of Christian history. Dr. Abbott proceeds to lay it down that in the case of all the prophets before Jesus Christ God spoke *to* man; that in him God spoke *in* man. I have tried to attach a meaning to these words. But I cannot understand how God can ever speak *to* his child save by speaking *in* him. I can recognise infinite degrees in the clearness and the fulness of his communication with humanity. I acknowledge to the full the vast expansion and brightening of the Divine Word in the Man of Nazareth. But I am persuaded that the endeavour to distinguish between God

speaking to us and God speaking in us, an external and an internal Word of God, is born of an unconscious and confused traditionalism and not of strong and clean-cut thinking.

Let us now glance at Dr. Whiton's very powerful 'Gloria Patri.' I am not sure that of the three volumes this one is not characterised by the greatest breadth and sweep of thought. It is instinct with the spirit of all that is best and strongest in the New Theology. Dr. Whiton, in vivid contrast to Dr. Abbott, knows no distinction between God speaking *to* man and God speaking *in* man. Christ, it is true, is, he alleges, God *in* man; but in the same way, in however inferior degree, God is in all men—whether before or after Christ.

And yet this bold champion of the newer light writes with the one object of re-establishing the doctrine of the Trinity. This is his line of communication with the rear. His thoughts concerning God, and Christ, and Man are hardly to be distinguished from those of the completest Unitarian. But he pours all the fervour of his thought into the hard mould of Trinitarian phraseology. His book is a detailed apology for Trinitarianism. It is true he uses the term Trinity for a conception of the Godhead such as never an early Father nor a sixteenth century Reformer would for a moment recognise. He reduces the distinction of the three Persons to a mere variation in the spheres of Divine influence. He rejects with scorn the doctrine of the two natures in Christ. Such a doctrine has a 'paralysing effect.' He confuses under the one name 'Christ' or 'the Son' the historic individual Jesus, the great company of good men, and the Deity 'in his revealed immanency in the life of the world.' He is hard put to it to find any place at all for the third member of the Trinity. But he stands manfully by the Trinity as the cardinal doctrine of Christianity, and so joins hands with that great mass of Christian believers to whom Unitarianism is a cold and lifeless abstraction.

And of all these New Theologians I have to say that, while in words they admit the modern criticism, in practice they abjure its most obvious results. Why does Mr. Horton say that 'of course' Acts does not contradict Galatians?

He may ingeniously persuade himself that it does not, but there is no 'of course' about it. Why does Dr. Whiton quote texts from the Fourth Gospel as if there could be no possible question that they are the *ipsissima verba* of Jesus? How can a critic, whether he do or do not hold the Johannine authorship, base 'claims' of Christ to such and such Divine rank on particular verses of the text? How can he cite a verse from a prophet to show what an apostle *must* have meant? All these are the bad habits of traditionalism, which a mind truly free would resolutely cast off.

The method then of the New Theology is essentially a method of compromise, and the method of compromise is never the method of truth. Men who are determined to go on believing some of the traditional theology cannot be veritable prophets. They who pray the prayer, 'Lead us into all truth,' must deliver themselves wholly into the hand of God to be guided only by the reason and conscience which he has given.

As it is, we Unitarians still stand alone,—outposts far away from the most advanced lines of the main body. I often feel it solitary. I long from the bottom of my heart for a free and generous religious fellowship with the men and women of these orthodox churches. I have no sympathy with those of my comrades who seem to rejoice in our isolation. But even the most progressive men in the orthodox communions shrink back from us. They dread to be suspected of our heresy. All else can be forgiven save that alone. They pass us by. They would that we were silent. They do not want our case argued. In the fulness of our freedom we are alone and lonely. Let us love God more. Let us follow the spirit of Christ more closely. Let us serve and help men better. And let us trust that the day will come when good men at last shall read our hearts aright, recognise the beauty of our faith, cease to fear our freedom, and mingle their prayers to God with ours.

THE NEW ORTHODOXY.

APPENDIX.

The Christian World of June 1, 1893, having subjected the foregoing essay to a severe criticism in a leading article under the heading, 'Is Orthodoxy Dishonest?' Mr. Armstrong replied as follows in the next issue of that journal.

'IS ORTHODOXY DISHONEST?'

(To the Editor of the Christian World.)

Sir,—You will, I am sure, permit me some reply to the criticism you have done me the honour of making on the essay on the New Theology, which I read at the recent meeting of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association. And in the first place I must complain that you have done me some unintentional injustice by heading your leader, 'Is Orthodoxy Dishonest?' Such a suggestion would imply moral defect; my argument dealt with what I deemed intellectual defects alone. I neither said nor thought that the writers whom I discussed were less truth-loving than I. On the contrary, I declared that 'I thank God for their courage, their insight, their labour.'

But I did deal, to the best of my ability, with their intellectual position. I did maintain that 'the New Theology is not in the true sense intellectually sincere.' I added—to guard against being supposed to impute any moral dereliction—that I was 'far from imputing any conscious insincerity to any one' of the writers whom I had in view. I explained that all that I meant was 'that their results are not reached by unalloyed reason, using the term reason to cover all the truth-finding faculties of man.'

What, then, do I mean by 'intellectual sincerity?' A thinker is, in my view, intellectually sincere if he is self-

consistent in his method of reasoning over all the area of the matter which he discusses. Hobbes was intellectually sincere in the application of his own hard and narrow canons of thought to the whole field of ethics. John Henry Newman was intellectually sincere in the application of his canons to the field of theology. I profoundly differ from them both. But I recognise the rigid self-consistency of their thought.

Thinkers thus self-consistent make real contributions to the progress of human thought. We see clearly whither their principles lead. But thinkers who over a large area accept one method and over another area violate it, confuse us and do not help us.

Whether I am right or wrong in thinking the New Theologians amenable to the charge of such mixing of methods, I do think them so. And therefore I think that they lead to confusion, and will not substantially help the evolution of the Theology that is to be.

I am far from thinking, as you appear to suppose, 'that a theologian gives away his case by showing that the conclusions arrived at by the Christian consciousness of to-day relate themselves organically to the evolution of Christian thought in past ages.' My complaint is that, while so much in the thought of the three writers whom I reviewed is indeed organically evolved from the religious thought of previous ages and is true to the best consciousness of our time, no one of these three writers is content with this organic development; but each one ties himself on by some one purely mechanical tie, neither organic nor evolved, to the orthodoxy of the past, and thus spoils his own work and withdraws from the position his main line of thought entitles him to hold in the true evolution of theology. I myself spoke with full sympathy of a New Theology 'growing from the Old as a tree from its roots.' My complaint of the New Theology I ventured to criticise is that it does not so grow.

You write, Sir, that 'to say in face of Mr. Horton's recently published "Verbum Dei" that he holds Inspiration to be confined to the Bible and not existent in the present day is incomprehensible.' Mr. Horton tells us as plainly as

words can tell it, on pages eleven and twelve of the book (sixth edition), that the word Inspiration as applied to the Bible is a word *sui generis*, that it means something quite distinct from what it means as applied to 'a great action,' or to 'great writers, poets, and preachers.' 'If we are strict with ourselves,' he continues, 'and insist on a rigorous use of words, we shall find more and more that Inspiration as applied to the Bible is a term applicable only to the Bible.' I am very glad indeed to gather from you that Mr. Horton has since written in a different sense. But my business was to deal with his specific work on Inspiration, which I was assured was a book which 'the New Theology' would gladly acknowledge as representative.

I must not too far presume upon your courtesy, though I should like nothing better than to be allowed to discuss in columns such as yours—so liberal, so hospitable to various schools of thought—the issues between Unitarian Christianity and the newer and broader Orthodoxy of the day. I will not therefore ask space for the justification of my specific criticism on Dr. Abbott and Dr. Whiton. Yet I cannot refrain from asking whether you really think that the men who framed 'the older Christian formulas,' by which I suppose you mean the three Creeds, would have thanked either Hegel or Dr. Whiton for giving us 'a more comprehensible view' of them. Would they not rather have said: 'Your conception of the relation of God to humanity is radically distinct from ours; it is a monstrous and horrible perversion; we refuse to lend you our formularies as vessels to contain your heresies; find language of your own in which to frame them, and do not purloin ours'?

I am sorely tempted to write more, Sir, but I forbear. Only I would ask those of your readers who have been impressed by your trenchant criticism of my utterance to do me and my Unitarian friends the justice to read my essay itself in *The Inquirer* of May 27, or when it presently appears in the series of 'Tracts for the Times,' issued by the Unitarian Association.

Finally, permit me to remind you that my essay was written for and read to Unitarians. I did not anticipate for it any wide attention. It was Unitarians that I wanted to

help. Many of them have heard vaguely of 'the New Theology.' Some of them did not know but what it was equivalent to that faith in the unbroken personality of God our Father, in the unequivocal Brotherhood of Jesus, in the perpetual flow of the Holy Spirit, even the Spirit of Truth, into the hearts of God's children, which is dear to us Unitarians, and for which we still suffer ostracism from the fellowship of the Christian Church at large. Some of them did not know but what the New Theology had entered into the full enfranchisement of perfect trust in the voice of God now speaking to his children, closer to them here and now than He can be through ancient Book or ancient Church. They thought that perhaps our work was finished, that perhaps our victory was won. It fell to me to tell them that this was not so. I spoke as I thought they, my friends, would best understand. If Presbyterians, Congregationalists, or Baptists would let me talk to them on the matters nearest my heart, I should approach my subject differently. But, for the most part, they prefer to go on representing Unitarianism as a cold and lifeless system of negations, remote from the heart of Christ. Even those who speak most politely of us hold us at arms length. The communion not infrequent in America is in England almost unknown. One solitary attempt at brotherhood by one brave man aroused consternation and vehement rebuke throughout his whole denomination. We Unitarians must go on our way alone. May God help us to think justly and feel kindly towards the great host of Christian men who hold us outcast; and may you, Sir, reap rich reward for your constant effort towards the realisation of a truer Christian brotherhood.—I am, &c.,

RICHARD A. ARMSTRONG.

Liverpool, June 3rd.

THINGS DOUBTFUL AND THINGS CERTAIN.

By Rev. George Batchelor.

THE mind of the modern world has been greatly disturbed by the discovery that in religion, as in everything else, there is nothing absolutely fixed and unchangeable. The discovery ought not to have excited fear, and will not when it is understood.

In human life nothing is fixed, nothing is permanent, nothing is unchangeable. But changes are of two kinds. There is the change of growth and the change of death. Some things change because they are passing; others change because they are coming. There is a melancholy text which is often wrongly applied: 'Strengthen the things that remain, that are ready to die.' That refers not to the great things of religion itself, but to the state of your own faith and hope. Of religion itself we should say: Strengthen in yourselves the things that remain, because they cannot die. The world was never so rich in faith as now. Faith never rested on a foundation so firm, and religion never before had such masterly power over the lives and fortunes of men and nations as it has to-day.

The modern world has indeed rebelled against the authority of priest and church and creed. It has done well. Ecclesiastical authority of every kind has lost its sanction and its terror for well-instructed men and women. They who fight to retain the authority of church and creed and priest fight a losing battle against the noblest instincts of the race. The old, formal, artificial authority of the Church has grown to its mighty proportions only to fade and fall away. But the authority of religion is rising into new forms of growth, and will not pass away.

'One accent of the Holy Ghost
The heedless world hath never lost.'

Great truths come first into the world as dreams. The dreams become hopes, the hopes strengthen into convictions, the convictions become commands, and thenceforth control the life of man. At first these truths are assisted by external authority. At last they become the basis of authority. The religious thought and feeling of the world have now reached that stage of growth in which as never before they begin on their own merits to command the lives of men; and, so doing, they enter upon a career in which religious authority will grow until the world is willingly obedient.

Having this in mind, it is time that liberal thinkers should show the new basis of authority and exercise it. If a church, in selecting a minister, does its duty, it is his fault or a sign of his unfitness if he speaks as a common man, uttering private opinions of his own which his hearers are at liberty to accept or to reject as they please. If they have done their duty and he has done his, he speaks to them as the voice of the common conviction, the common hope and the common conscience of the people. Faith, Hope, Charity,—these are his great subjects. Speaking upon them, as he has the right to speak, he speaks with authority,—an authority not his own. 'My doctrine is not mine. The word which ye hear is not mine.'

Now, in order to explain our doctrine of liberty, the right of private judgment, and the freedom which we all claim and practise, in thought, speech, and action, I must make a distinction between opinion and belief. Taken in the popular sense, opinion denotes a feebler form of conviction than belief. Opinion I shall use to denote the things which we consider probable; belief, to denote the things which we consider certain. Now, we encourage freedom of thought, private judgment, and opinion because we believe they lead up to certainty of belief and moral authority.

But this statement implies that the church and the minister have great certainties which they may confidently trust, that in this modern world of novelty, of doubt, of scepticism, of the destruction of old things, while creeds are passing and science is growing, we may still know and trust

the realities of the spiritual life, and, whatever changes and perishes, still keep close to the sanctuary where is the hiding of the power of God. This I affirm. There is a common faith, a common hope, a common duty, which are real because they represent the essential parts of human nature; which will endure because over them passes only the change of growth; which are accessible because they now furnish the noblest elements in the daily life of all right-thinking men.

It does not follow, however, that because these things are simple and certain they are always clearly seen, any more than the most active and permanent forces of our physical life are seen. The liberal minister of to-day must have many doubts, must face many difficulties, must submit to see many dearly loved fictions pass away. But, if he be modest, faithful, and sincere, all this pioneer work leads him up to the place where he can speak with the authority of which the people have made him the mouth-piece. He will speak the things which men know and confess, but fail to do. He will draw out of the hidden recesses of their own hearts the convictions they have never used, the beliefs they have never spoken, the hopes they have never recognized, the ideals they have never realized, the duties they have never done. He will call them back to themselves. He will speak, so that they will hear no mere opinions of his, but the voice of their own manhood speaking with divine authority. Where the people *so* listen and the minister so speaks, there the everlasting gospel is preached.

If, now, I should attempt to state this common faith and hope, time would fail me; for the grounds of religion are as wide as the whole field of human knowledge and life. I select, therefore, but one point, and that the one about which there is controversy everywhere; namely, the revelation of God in Christ.

Note the controversies going on now for years in all the leading magazines of Europe and America. Note, also, the names of the disputants,—several bishops of the Church of England, Gladstone, Huxley, Ingersoll, Mrs. Ward, and many others. Can there be any certainty where such giants disagree? I venture to say in all modesty that, noting the distinction I have made between opinion and belief, we may

arrive at substantial certainty even in these things. First, note the fact that the dispute is not, primarily, about the essentials of the teaching of Jesus, but as to the events of his life and death. Here I make the first distinction. In regard to the person, the nature of the office, the work, the miracles of Jesus, and as to the records which are the scanty memorial of his life, there exists, and will exist to the end of time, the utmost difference of opinion, because these things are not the truth itself, but circumstances alleged to explain the coming of the truth into the world.

We look back to the origin of Christianity as we look at a sunrise on a misty morning in June. We see light, colour, change, mystery, glory, the freshness of a new day. But no outline is fixed. No landmark is permanent. No clear vision is possible. The painter would fix the scene. But before he catches the secret of its glory it gives place to a new surprise of beauty. But mark this. The changes are two in kind,—the change of that which gleams in the morning mist as it passes, and the change of the sun behind the mist, as he puts off his garments of cloudy glory, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race. So is it with the origin of Christianity. In its records we have the mystery, the glory, and the uncertainty which always mark the beginnings of greatness. Of the birth of Jesus, the length and order of his ministry, and the place and form of his teaching, not a detail is known past a doubt. Each month gives us a new harmony and a final explanation. But no theory survives its author, and after eighteen centuries we are as far as ever from the possibility of writing an exactly true life of Jesus.

All this is the realm of opinion and the field of controversy. Dealing with such questions, wits are sharpened, superstition is banished, and interest in deeper questions is awakened. But these are not the essentials of Christianity, nor of the growing faith of mankind. These are not the grace, mercy, and truth that came by Jesus. No matter how the historical questions are settled, there need be no doubt as to the essential teachings of Jesus. Faith in God, belief in the immortal life, confidence that in all events and changes, in all powers and forces, in life and death, in joy

and sorrow, in peace and war, in pain and pleasure, in whatever has been and is and shall be for ever, here and everywhere, one purpose of goodness and wisdom is working toward glorious ends for man,—these are elements of the growing faith of the world, clearly taught in the glad tidings of Jesus, and found to-day in every church and nation.

Make all the deductions of the most extreme criticism, and the one essential fact remains beyond dispute,—out of Judea did shine this great and holy light. To-day it is shining still, because it was and is the natural and highest expression of human hope and longing. Jesus spoke with authority because he gave back to every man his own best thought in a form so perfect that the hearers were astonished at its sublimity. He spoke with authority because he announced the principles which explain the universal hopes. He spoke with authority because he uttered no mere opinions of his own, but convictions,—the convictions which come to the race out of its contact with realities. Opinions are important. But, so long as they are private and peculiar, they have no great value. One has a perfect right to his private judgment and opinion on all subjects. But, for instance, his private opinion as to the shape of the earth, as to whether it goes around the sun, or as to the existence of a law of gravitation, he had better keep to himself, if it contradicts the common faith of man.

Now, when we investigate the statements of men as to Christianity, we find that they may be separated into two classes. On the one side are opinions, with no agreement and no certainty; on the other, convictions about which there is no dispute.

Let me put before you a list of opinions on the one side, and of beliefs on the other, and see if the distinction does not justify itself. On the one side are things certain, on the other things uncertain, in the teaching of Jesus.

(1) What he taught as to citizenship, government, property, is in dispute. There is no doubt that he taught love, justice, liberty, and the equal right of every man to an inheritance as a child of God.

(2) What he taught as to the existence and power of a

personal devil is in dispute. That he believed in a God of love and power and wisdom no one doubts.

(3) Whether he himself expected to come in clouds of glory as the judge of all the earth is in question. No one doubts that he announced the principles of justice and judgment by which every man must stand or fall.

(4) Men differ as to whether he did or did not believe in a possible eternity of punishment. No one doubts that he taught that the laws of the good life and the certainties of retribution are the same in all worlds and for all sorts and conditions of men.

(5) Churches are founded in opposition to one another on diverse interpretations of his claim to authority and demand of personal loyalty to himself. But no one need doubt that first of all he put allegiance to the law of duty, and made the human conscience the throne of the divine authority.

(6) Opinions are divided as to whether he did or did not rise from the dead in his flesh and blood, and did or did not teach the resurrection of our bodies. No one ever dreamed of doubting that he taught the immortality of the soul.

Here now are six particulars in which the teaching of the founder of our religion stands out clear and plain. I submit that they are the important and essential things.

(1) A living God; (2) Man his offspring; (3) Justice the supreme law; (4) Retribution for every man according to his works; (5) Duty the test of conduct; (6) Immortality the outlook.

But, in perfect fairness, now another question must have attention. Admitting that the world agrees that Jesus taught these things, does the world agree that they are true? First, I answer that more agree on this point than on any other subject of religious belief. Second, and what to me is vastly more important, these are the growing convictions of the world of men. The drift of enlightenment sets that way. Third, and still more convincing to me, is the fact which, so far as I know, has no exception,—that all men of knowledge, Jew and Gentile, agnostic and Christian, deist and doubter, scientific expert and plain man of affairs, all agree that, if this universe was the best kind of a universe, these teachings would be true. All agree that they express the natural and universal hopes of men. All agree hat they

would be happier, and that this would be a better world if all men lived according to these plain teachings of the gospel.

To me these considerations are conclusive without other evidence. If I can find out what ought to be true, I am content to believe that it is true. For this universe is the production of sanity, and not of disorder. It is too great and glorious and orderly and beautiful in all its mighty sweep of power to allow any exception in the case of man, who, if he were not provided for, would be the one blot on the universe, the one element of disorder in a system of things which from everlasting to everlasting proclaims power working forever under the forms of law majestic, beautiful, and unchanging. If these doctrines would be true in the best conceivable universe, then they are true in the actual universe,—unless, indeed, we have reached the top of things, can look off into depths of wisdom greater than were needed for the evolution of this visible world set in this system of suns and stars. To me it seems a pitiful thing when a man comes fairly up face to face with these essential doctrines, on which confessedly the highest happiness and progress of the race depend, and says: These things are good, they are rational, they ought to be true; but, alas! I have learned to depend upon proof, and you give no proof to which a witness could add his oath in a court of law, and therefore, I cannot believe. That seems a pitiful thing, because it implies the giving up of the best part of his moral nature to the dominion of his logical faculty, and almost justifies De Quincey's remark that the understanding is the meanest faculty in man.

On these great affirmations of the moral convictions and universal hope of man, I believe the preacher of Christianity may fearlessly take his stand, and speak with authority, commending himself, as Paul did, to every man's conscience. He may not be able to offer *proof* to every doubter, but, better than that, he will have upon his side the heart, the conscience, and the hope of every hearer. He will not timidly offer the suggestion that you may hope if you can. But he will say: You must hope if you are a man. You must believe, if you are a woman, and give all parts of your nature due opportunity to speak. When the minister affirms

that love ought to rule in this world, he is speaking no private opinion of his own. And, when he says it will, he makes an assertion for which there is a million times more proof than there is that the sun will rise to-morrow morning or that the grass will come after rain. Therefore, I say, when you know that you are thinking in the right direction, when you know that your hopes are worthy, when you know that what you wish to be true ought to be true, when you are in the stream of the common hope and desire and conscientious expectation of mankind, then do not hesitate to let yourself go in that direction with all your power. That is the way of moral growth. It is the highway of gladness. It is the way which grows brighter and brighter unto the perfect day. Upon that royal highway you will meet the elect sons and daughters of men. The poets are there. The prophets, the seers, the heroes, the men and women who have made human life illustrious,—all are there. The sane, the sound, the whole-hearted, the well-rounded, the full-grown, they who are to lead the progress of the future, you will find upon this highway of faith and hope. And this I say not as a Christian believer alone. For it is the plainest conclusion of the most modern discovery and foresight that the future evolution of the human race must be along the line of its highest hopes. The hopeful men and nations will survive. The laggards, the down-hearted, the hopeless, will be left behind, trodden down and exterminated in the struggle for existence and the competitions of progress. For by hope are ye saved. "The grass withereth, the flower fadeth; but the word of our God shall stand forever."

All the doctrines I have mentioned as certainly parts of the teaching of Jesus may be summed up in the two phrases—the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man. These two phrases are destined to play a great part in the future. They will yet become watchwords and battle-cries. They already indicate the lines on which society will rearrange itself. He who from his heart, with consent of his reason and the re-enforcement of his conscience, can put his enthusiasm into these watchwords of liberty and progress, will be on the winning side, and have a cause than which none was ever more glorious and inspiring.

THE UNSHAKEN.

By Rev. James de Normandie.

AN old parable relates that a company of mariners once sailed over an unexplored ocean. Their pilot's compass, a peculiarly fine one, and well-nigh unique at that time, guided their course in safety. But the pilot died; and the frightened mariners, ignorant of the true use of the compass, bethought themselves how they could safely pursue the course he was steering, and nailed down the magnet at the precise point it held at his death. Of course, the needle moved no more, and soon the men began to congratulate themselves on the possession of so fixed and infallible a guide. True, they steered by degrees far out of their course; but the ocean was wide, and for a long time no shores appeared to warn them of mistake. At this period some of the younger sailors began to suggest doubts whether the compass ought to be nailed down: it was evidently made, they said, to swing freely. In the days of the old pilot it was free. 'What audacity!' exclaimed the older mariners. 'We have been providentially enabled to fasten it just where the great pilot left it. He who tampers with it will cause the wreck of the ship!' Nevertheless, one after another, sometimes timidly and reverently, sometimes roughly and rudely, the sailors touched the compass, till at last the nail was drawn out, and the needle set free. At that instant the ship was borne among rocks and breakers. Nobody knew whereabouts they were; and, when they tried to consult the compass, the needle, suddenly released, was found swinging east and west, many degrees on either side the pole, so that one said it pointed in one direction, and another in another. Meanwhile the ship was in the utmost peril. 'We told you how it would be if

you meddled with the compass!' cried the older mariners in despair. 'Here we are among the rocks, with nothing to guide us.' But, after a little time, the magnetic needle ceased to swing backward and forward, and its oscillations became so small that it was easy to note which point was the true pole. Then it became evident that, owing to the fixed compass, they had long been sailing out of their course, and had got among the dangerous reefs. So, as quickly as might be after this was ascertained, the sailors put the helm right, and worked their way as best they could, through the rocks, to the happy end of their voyage, in the harbour of the Fortunate Isles.

In theological matters, and simply because we fail to distinguish between theology and religion, between dogmas which may be helpful and principles which are eternal, there come periods when we find ourselves like the mariners who did not know how to use their compass. In spite of the example, right before us, of the way the true Pilot was safely guided, in spite of the possibility of learning the true use of the same magnet by which he went on in security and peace, we never find any statement of truth which has been saving to one generation but we try to nail it down in the precise terms it was then developed and expressed. Nobody ever acted thus, no matter how wide the expanse of God's truth, no matter how peaceful the breath of heaven then was, without sooner or later coming upon rocks and breakers. And, for this very simple reason,—that, while there are certain great principles of soul-life which are unshaken through the ages, the statement of these must be varied, period after period, to suit and stimulate and sanctify a new and changing condition of life and thought. In government, in education, in society, in religion, these changes constantly come; and yet government, education, society, religion, remain, and not only remain, but, by various conceptions, modifications, and interpretations constantly improve.

When Moses was law-giver and leader of the Israelites, great doubt arose, and contentions and turnings back, lest he led them astray. They were ready for any idolatry, ready to worship a golden calf for their god, rather than

to accept Moses as infallible. They had fastened their faith down to its literal expression by Abraham, in the day when the soul was free, as it ought to be, and in the struggles and wanderings of the wilderness they found their help only in the way he found faith. When Christ came, antiquity and reverential esteem had made Moses pre-eminent in the Jewish worship. And they came with their murmurings and threatenings to Jesus, saying, with angry brows and contemptuous terms: 'We know that God spake unto Moses. As for this fellow, we know not whence he is.' They had nailed their faith down precisely according to its expression by Moses, who followed the magnet of his own soul; and, by overthrows, persecutions, and dispersions, they found they could escape destruction only in the way Moses had found faith. So the pagans said all things went on well before Christ came; but, since he had been accepted, the neglected gods had let in evils of every kind upon the world.

This is the universal history of creeds. They are shaken by every changing phase of human life and thought. No statement of belief ever has met, or ever will meet, all the requirements of another generation. But faith is unshaken. Aspiration is unshaken. The soul is unshaken. I cannot understand how any thoughtful, earnest, true mortal can ever be the least disturbed by any fear or suggestion lest, after everything has been shaken that the daring mind or far-reaching soul can shake, there will not remain all that one wants to give assurance of rest to the soul. I confess to an amazement which strikes me dumb when I hear persons say they are not quite sure whether they have enough to rest upon; that, in the theories and discussions and overturnings of a most active age, they are not quite sure that enough will be unshaken in the strife for their peace; when I hear persons speak of their religious views as not being fixed or deep or satisfying, and it can be accounted for upon only one supposition,—that they have nailed this magnet of the soul, which, free to move, points always to the Infinite, down to the point at which it was left by some other watching, trusting soul; that they have mistaken the miserable theories and dogmas about religion, which are

shaken to pieces every few years, for principles of religion which are as fair and perfect as creation, as comprehensive and eternal as the Infinite.

In a period of great theological unrest, when society finds itself in the rocks and breakers, because it has been following with unquestioning indolence some confined magnet of another's creed, it is most common to exaggerate the disturbances and the views which are irrevocably shaken. Suppose we set before us the opposite plan, and consider for a little while those things which cannot be shaken.

(1) *Religion will always be unshaken.* There never was so much religion, there never was so true religion, as now. And religion has ever been. As long ago as the age of Plutarch, we find him writing: 'If we traverse the world over, it is possible to find cities without walls, without letters, without kings, without wealth, without coin, without schools and theatres; but a city without a temple, or that practiseth not worship, prayers, and the like, no one ever saw.' One of the heathen says: 'Religion is a likeness of God according to our ability.' A Christian writer says: 'Religion is the union of the finite and the Infinite.' Another says: 'Religion is faith in a moral government of the world.' Dr. Channing says: 'Religion is human nature acting in obedience to its chief laws.' And Robertson says: 'To be religious is to feel that God is the Ever-near.' We might add that to be religious is to have the thought of God present all the time; that it is a constant growth toward him. Religion, we often think, is only for the troubles or burdens or partings of life. But it is just as well for the heat of passion or the strife of trade or the pursuits of literature or the dawn of joy or the evening of hope. No form of religion is permanent; but the spirit is not transient. Men have never, unless in some moments of revolt from the claims of bigotry, agreed in any neglect of worship. They have never laid aside the consideration of the great problems of the origin, nature, and destiny of man, and the existence and attributes of the Eternal. Changes may come, doctrines may be modified, men set apart to teach them may prove faithless. But all history establishes the fact that religion remains unshaken.

(1) *Revelation is unshaken.* It is as old as religion, as old as humanity. As soon as the idea of God dawned upon the soul came also the idea of some communion with Him; and therein lies the deepest thought of revelation. It is just the unfolding of the thought of God and of his laws for man. Sometimes we call the light and truth gained by others revelation, sometimes the light and truth gained by ourselves revelation. But what we want to bear in mind is the belief in revelation, not confined to this or that person, to this or that age, but as an ever-present possibility of the religious life. 'Let not Moses speak to me,' says Thomas à Kempis, 'or any of the prophets; but speak thou, O God, the inspirer and enlightener of all the prophets!' 'The highest revelation,' says Robertson, 'is not made by Christ. It comes directly from the Universal Mind to our mind.' And all through the vast system of Hindu worship and theology we find a view of revelation more elaborate, more minute, and stricter than any defender of plenary inspiration has ever claimed for the Christian Scripture. The world has never been without the thought of this possibility of communion with God, and the world will never let it go. As long as there remain the world and God, the confidence in this relationship will be unshaken. It is the same thing under every varying manifestation. It helps the teacher to train good men, the statesman to make good laws. It came to Socrates in the dungeon on the Acropolis. It leads the astronomer along the heavenly pathway; it inspired the great artists; it gave one poet to sing the songs of consolation, another the sweetness of love, and another the power of faith. That is something which remains unshaken through the ages.

(2) *Jesus remains unshaken.* No two sects and no two generations have ever interpreted this august life precisely the same. No two ever will. Athanasius once made Christendom a vast battle-ground in regard to a certain conception of the nature of Jesus, which, after studying the Latin language for years, he found could not possibly be translated from the original Greek. Christendom was divided by the smallest letter of the Greek alphabet. It is a strange but significant fact that, if Jesus were to appear

among his so-called followers to-day, holding and teaching the views he held in Judea, and were measured by those views, there is not a sect in all Christendom which has a creed that by that creed could admit him to full communion as a Christian. Jesus is unshaken still as an example, to be made a reality in our own lives,—an example of the perfect and harmonious development of those spiritual capacities we all possess, of soul-struggles we all sometimes experience, of soul-victories we may all some time obtain, an example of a holiness which befits, adorns, and is possible to this earthly life, an example with which we can go before our fellow-men in their grief, hope, strife, love, temptation, sin, and trust, with lingering accents of his last prayer, 'that they all may be one.' Jesus remains unshaken, as the type of the highest consciousness of God the human soul has attained, the unfailing witness that the divine manifestation is no myth, and that human perfection is no idle dream, the perpetual prophecy and invitation to the human soul.

(4) *Immortality is unshaken.* Sometimes we are troubled because more is not revealed to us about the future. Jesus says very little about it, not nearly so much as Plato and Socrates, but everywhere takes it for granted, and goes forth with its impulse to the consecration of life. 'Without a belief in immortality,' says one, 'religion surely is like an arch resting on one pillar, like a bridge ending in an abyss;' but it is not for us to know more than the simple fact, which the heart has always cherished, and will never let go. I am concerned about to-day and to-morrow, and about this life, about my duty and the uplifting of my fellow-men; but I am not at all concerned about eternity, or that God will not do what is best for every one in the future. That belongs to God. Immortality, I take it, is a universal law of being: we rest in that. To go farther is to dream in the thick darkness. But the kind, the degree, of immortality, will depend upon the efforts of each soul. A noble immortality, like a noble life, will not be gained without a struggle. The life which now is, we may well believe, reaches on to the life which is to come. But with how little may that life begin, and how slowly work its way to the higher! Though the malefactor and Jesus entered Paradise together, they must have still been

worlds apart; for Paradise, immortality, can be only the godliness we bear away with us.

(5) *God is unshaken.* And not only unshaken, but, generation after generation, God draws nearer to man, and man to God. For the reason that, in times when God was held to be capricious or anthropomorphic or revengeful, or by jealousy or partiality interfering in human affairs, there could be none of the highest relationship, no near consciousness, no tranquil trust in his Infinite Providence. But as, age after age, we have been learning that, instead of a broken, fragmentary, and abandoned universe, a law of unity runs through it all; and beneath, over, and within and around the innumerable phenomena of Nature is the one spirit of God, for ever the same, revealing himself to-day just as he has ever done, just in proportion as man bends his search toward him,—then man has a refuge and a help which all the world beside cannot give and cannot take away. The thought of God begins with man, and it cannot depart while he exists. There is nothing in man's history which fills us with such peaceful assurance as the growth of this thought of God which man has already made. These persons who are all the time saying they do not know what we are coming to in every crisis of religion have no high idea of the Eternal God. Talk about an unsettled faith, an uncertain belief, about troubled times and shaken foundations! When this earth, so firm-set and safely balanced in the hand of God; when these skies, arched in beauty and studded with glory, shall depart like a scroll; when yonder sea forgets its tides or its deep hidden currents; when the seasons forget their rounds or the years cease; when justice is beyond man's aim, and love turns cold in his heart; when childhood forgets its hope and age its refuge, because the Infinite Love has withdrawn from our mortal life.—then, indeed, may we think that the foundations are shaken. Until then there is no reasonable fear for a reasonable man.

We began by expressing our amazement that any thoughtful or devout person should feel any insecurity as to his religious views. We have named five of the conditions or relations of the religious life which, amid all the changes, cannot be shaken. It seems to me that, no matter what

might be the conflict of opinion, had I either one of these, I could know no doubt and no disturbance. But I cannot see how we can be deprived of any one of them. It is quite time we placed religion upon its everlasting and satisfying basis. Fling away the semblance, the profession: deepen day by day the reality. No statement about religion can ever be interpreted the same by any two thoughtful minds. If there is any plan in having a mind, it is that that mind should look at the truths of God in its own way, and interpret them to its own liking and help. The magnet of the soul points ever to God, and every great pilot of humanity has followed its pointing. It was made to be free. In the days of the great pilots it was free. Keep it free. And from the rocks and breakers, whither we have been driven, by ignorance, by fear, and by sin, it will turn our course unerringly to the harbour of the Fortunate Isles. Fling away for ever the hindrances, the unrealities: deepen day by day the few principles which cannot be shaken. Go down to the rock of religious rest, upon which the rains and floods and winds of sensationalism and superficiality and faithlessness may beat, but beat in vain.

> 'Each age must worship its own thought of God.
> To-day's eternal truth to-morrow proves
> Frail as frost landscapes on a window-pane.
> Idle who hopes with prophets to be snatched
> By virtue in their mantles left below.
> Shall the soul live on other men's report?
> Herself a pleasing fable of herself?
> Man cannot be God's outlaw if he would,
> Nor so abscond him in the caves of sense
> But Nature still shall search some crevice out
> With messages of splendour from that Source
> Which, dive, soar he, baffles still, and lures.
> Let us be thankful when
> We can read Bethel on a pile of stones,
> And, seeing where God has been, trust in him.'

THE SON OF MAN IN HIS DAY.

By Rev. Horatio Stebbins, D.D.

'And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for behold, the kingdom of God is within you. And he said unto the disciples, The days will come, when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of man, and ye shall not see it. And they shall say to you, See here; or, see there: go not after them, nor follow them. For as the lightning that lighteneth out of the one part under heaven shineth unto the other part under heaven, so shall also the Son of man be in his day.'—*Luke* xvii. 20-24.

THE friends of God have great cause for gratitude and joy in the ever-renewed tokens that his mercy is from everlasting to everlasting, and that his truth endureth to all generations. There have been times of distress when God's people looked with fear and trembling lest He had become weary or his heart had failed. But from age to age a light gleams from one part under heaven, even unto the other part under heaven, and God seems nearer and nearer his beloved race, while man's heart and woman's tears win new victories of the soul.

Is there a God in history? Is there a Providence in the life of mankind? The ancient prophet had a vision of it through the rifted clouds of wonder and mystery, when humanity was young. The prophet conceived humanity in the relation of a child to his parent: the child's image is formed on the retina of the father's eye, and the father caresses him, the little man of his eye, and loves him for the tie of kindred blood and the beauty of his being.

Another prophet and apostle conceives humanity not in infancy, but in childhood, led by the pedagogue to school,—the young scholar brought to the master by the father's

servant, who guided and urged on the boy, carried his satchel, and saw him safe at the door, where the teacher received him to the hospitalities of a larger mind. 'The law was our pedagogue to bring us to Christ'—a conception of the provisional and progressive character of divine guidance, culminating at length in the fulness of light and life, when God shall be all in all.

And yet another, brooding over the mighty theme of God's ways, ascends the ages and æons, and catches a glimpse of the eternal method, which in our day is the sublime generalization of the patient love and judicial mind of science:—

> 'My frame was not hidden from Thee,
> When I was made in secret,
> And curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth.
> Thine eyes did see mine imperfect substance,
> And in thy book were all my members written,
> Which day by day were fashioned,
> When as yet there was none of them.'

Prophetic vision, spiritual genius, is ever seeing new worlds beyond the western horizon, and the setting sun of to-day is the dawn of to-morrow; while to the simply practical mind the present is a finality, the world is finished. God has fulfilled the contract he made with man: the work is done. Yet we hear much of progress. The air is full. It is with us wherever we go, importuning us for attention, admiration, or wonder. Progress in the material world is in the market-place,—a thing of length and breadth and thickness, that can be bought at a price. It comes home to our comfort, refinement, or luxury. No man in his senses will speak lightly of man's conquest over nature, as we call it, nor affect the conceit of indifference to the wonderful works of the hands and the brains of the children of men. Nor will he deny, but gratefully confess, the indirect influence of these upon morals and religion. There is a sense in which material comfort sweetens life and relieves the hardness of necessity. Though the sufferings of the world may be changed, they are not less, even as the increase of knowledge does not diminish the area of the unknown. So there is no patent right to make virtue and honour easy; nor is

the electric light to be confounded with 'the lightning that lighteneth out of the one part under heaven,' and 'shineth unto the other part under heaven.' There is no essential and eternal relation between righteousness and physical comfort, as there is no essential and eternal relation between the salary of a judge and the judicial mind. In war the science of attack is, in the long run, matched by the science of defence, and dynamite is as good for an anarchist, to tear a town into human agonies, as it is for an engineer to compel the sullen rocks or make the proud mountain bellow with pain. The conductor of a street-car, unless there is a sparkling gem of honour in his breast, can outwit the spring-punch; and trying to make a man honest, true, and pure by 'improvements' is like putting a fox to bed, and teaching him to lay his head on a pillow and sleep like a child.

Of course, it is a mere platitude of the village moralist to say that, if men were inspired with high and pure principles, the world's wrongs would be righted. But that is not what I am saying. Our notions of progress are often vague, and it is good to know what we mean. The world is a unit, and there is One Law-giver for starry heavens and soul of man. The virtues are many, but virtue is one: ten commandments, but one righteousness. The kingdom of God includes all the incidentals; but the natural centre and germ of the world, the idea of progress, is in morals and religion. There the responsible God meets responsible man; and all the conquered powers of nature follow, if haply they may render willing service. The kingdom of God—that kingdom which is the peculiar field of divine powers and operations—has its own methods of still and quiet coming. Its field is the mind of man, where results alone are manifest: the process is concealed. How fares it in this kingdom of God, in which results alone are manifest?

The great truth is now, ever has been, and ever shall be that man is the crown of the world; that the study of his nature and the conditions of his life is the focus of intellectual rays, and the ever-brightening way of all divine ambition. To this end of man's honour and advancement all institutions—science, art, philosophy, and religion—are subordinated. To increase the capacity and refine the

quality of human nature and human life, to raise man's powers to a height of vision and action where he discerns the nature and relation of things, sees truth, is not humiliated by ghostly superstition or mean fear, finds perennial fountains of thought and life within himself and the scenes in which he moves, acts amid the egotism of the senses and the impudence of social fallacies, under the guidance of enlightened conscience and responsible will, warmed by the genial beams of human love,—this is the kingdom of God within, and the lightning that flashes across the firmament. This goes behind economics, behind social solidarity, to the individual man on his own account, and as the medium of that inspiration that informs and guides the world. To us, in our bulky thought, this world of men often seems all solid; but to an Infinite Mind it is all individual. God inspires this world through individuals, never through crowds or corporations; and he reveals himself only to congenial souls, as they are able to receive the light and love.

We get a hint of this kingdom that comes without observation, or like a flash of light across the heavens, filling the mind with divine splendour, in the growth and development of a human being. What a distance is travelled from the life of a child to the life of a man! A distance of thought as great as that which divides the age of Pliny and his panthers, at the celebration of his friend's wife's funeral, and the sweet griefs of a Christian home, where that light that is not on land or sea is quenched to mortal eyes.

Look at the child in his mother's arms or prattling with his toys. He is innocent and lawless,—innocent because he has no conception of right and wrong. His will is wild and feline, and he has no more thought of obedience than the cat that he strangles in his unimaginative cruelty. He is a thief, and takes anything he can lay his hands on. His knowledge of cause and effect comes by getting hurt, and he has no idea of nature or of a law of nature more than of a bar of music or of the tides. Reason, conscience, reverence, love, lie folded like buds untouched by the sun.

But see this same creature again, when consciousness and personality have arisen, and distinguished him to himself from the world of things and creatures around. As the

ancient lyrist has it, he is but little lower than God, crowned with glory and honour. He has dominion over God's works, and all things are put under his feet. He tills the earth, conquers the sea, finds the law that holds atoms and worlds. Reason assumes sway over the senses, sends out her voice to far realms of speech and language, and gets reply in mother tongue, then turning to the world within finds lineaments of the inspiring God! Well might the modern seer translate into modern phrase what the ancient lyrist sung: 'O rich and various man! thou palace of sight and sound, carrying in thy senses the morning and the night and the unfathomable galaxy, in thy brain the geometry of the city of God, in thy heart the power of love and the realms of right and wrong!'

I am not indifferent to the splendours of scientific achievement or to the conquests of man's spiritual nature over the material world. But to me there is no wonder of man's empire over sea or land that so kindles imagination or flashes such streams of light into the future of man's possible destiny as this development of a human soul. That a child should ever become a Plato, a Milton, or a Darwin fills the mind with proud yet humble awe, more than all the grandeurs of the universe, as they sing the song of Eternal reason, and more than that sublime patience and skill that gather large masses of facts of the most varied kind, and bring them under the reign of known law.

> 'Thou gazest on the stars, my soul,
> Ah! gladly would I be on starry
> Sky, with thousand eyes,
> That I might gaze on thee!'

What is this marvellous development? What makes this growth, which seems not so much a growth as a burst of splendour from an unknown sphere? Do we guess backward from fact to principle, and say, Evolution; as in another sphere we guess backward from fact to principle and say, Gravitation? But gravitation and evolution are methods, not causes. Religion and reason, unmindful of method, as science is unmindful of cause, affirm that these are ways of God's working. Gravitation is the universal force,—reason and religion call it *will*, diffused through all realms, and of

the same nature and kind, whether displayed in the ball tossed from a boy's hand or 'in the process of the suns.' Gravitation unifies the universe in one Eternal Will. Evolution, in its strictly human sphere, is the unfolding in man of powers which recognise themselves and their own law, and reading the universe between the lines, find signatures of power like themselves, and, guessing back from fact to principle, affirm God in man, and humanity of the same nature with God. As the force that draws the ball tossed from the boy's hand is the same as that which leads forth the Mazzaroth in their season, so the feeblest bond of right or duty, or sigh or joy of human love, is of the same kind as in the Ever-living One. This thought as a divine insight, not as a scientific conclusion, culminated in the mind of Jesus, and makes him a fountain of truth for the education of the world, and gives him the unique and lovely grandeur of Teacher of mankind.

As it was in his day, so it is in the day of the Son of man for ever, with all the children of men,—thought, idea, vision of truth,—that is not here nor there, nor local nor provincial, nor for hell nor for heaven, but human and divine, filling the mind with light, and flashing across the world. All our inspirations come through men who have the insight of the Son of man in his day, who have seen truth as it is in eternal beauty, felt at home in the universe whenever night overtakes them, and at one with the eternal good will. Thus the consummate personality is the teacher, the medium of celestial fire, the Son of man in his day. His being, his presence, his word, awaken other beings like himself, and reason speaks a universal language, and faith flies on easy wing across the abyss too deep for human thought. This is revelation in its highest and purest sense, —the unveiling of truth to human vision, which has been going on from the beginning through saints and seers, and is still going on with the whole human race. It is no climax of time or occasion, no day of the Son of man surprising the world, and men crying, See here! see there! but the Son of man in his day, diffusing his mind and heart through other minds and hearts kindred to his own, increasing the capacity and refining the quality of human

nature and life. The Son of man in his day reveals other men to themselves, finds them in the recesses of their being, shines on their minds with celestial light, and sets their heart aglow with love. This is the teacher of men, the benefactor of his race, whose flashes of universal reason and common sense fill the sphere with light, telling men that all the heroism of the world, the greatness of history, and the loveliness of life are in the primal dictates of conscience and the primitive suggestions of the heart, and that the strength of wisdom and experience is in knowing how much we could have known without the experience if we had had the insight to discern and the courage to follow, at first, that which we find true at last. No amount of observation can take the place of insight. 'See here!' or 'See there!' is the surprise of the provincial mind or the cry of the quack that has got some new compound with which to medicine the credulous world.

Thought, idea, conception, changes the mind, renews the heart, plumes the imagination, and world and human life and destiny are changed, and knowledge is vitalized by reason. Who cannot call to mind some hint or suggestion that has unlocked his heart, voiced his common sense, and charged his intellect with cheerful courage without which truth was never won? I once knew a youth, a boy, whose heart was moved, as the trees of the wood are moved by the wind, by religious thoughts and musings of wonder, love, and fear. The walls of the chambers of destiny, painted in vivid colours, were the dwelling-place of imagination to him. Under the genial shade of an oak at noon-tide the patient oxen, released from the plough, refreshed their strength with sweet-scented hay, while he lay on the ground, reading from a little book of sermons by Dewey. The tender pathos, the kindling sympathy, the fine insight, sank into his heart and illumined his mind. The great impression that he got was that the world and life were the scene of moral and spiritual discipline for beings capable of divine society, and that all the scenery, providence, and experience of life are for the teaching of men. The thought gave the boy's heart the key-note of the world. It was like coming up out of a well, and climbing a lovely hillside to view the landscape.

The air was pure, the sky was clear, the river flowed gladly to the sea, trees laughed in the wind, and the jingling team threw their heads high, as if their yoke was easy and their burdens light. The Son of man in his day illumined the heavens of a boy's mind, and flashed celestial beams from horizon to horizon. Such as this is teaching, such as this is history,—a flash of reason, that lets the primal instincts out of the dark, and endows them with sight and power and courage of free speech in their own name. Thus every teacher is a Son of man in his day, lightening the heavens of thought and feeling, and kindling the fires of conscience and love on all the heights. The consummate personality is the teacher; and the consummate teacher is the Son of man, the knowing one, the seeing one, the loving one. He knows, as like knows like, he sees with the inner eye, and loves with the human heart. He is rare, more rare, it may be, than great men in other walks of life. And few follow him, it may be, because of dimness of vision; but those few hear his voice, and see the banner that he waves, and plant it at length on the war-worn walls of the world. Teaching of any kind is only moderately successful, and the teacher knows but little of his influence; but, if he is in love with human nature, he knows that God is in love with him, and that he treads the way by which man becomes immortal. The influence of truth is not clamorous or demonstrative, but

> 'As sunbeams stream through liberal space,
> And nothing jostle or displace.'

We hear much of our age, of its discontents, the dissolving of opinions and creeds. There is doubtless some exposure to melancholy croaking on the one hand and to feeble cant on the other,—the cant of progress and the croaking of decline. The chief cause of disturbance is the discordance of religion and knowledge arising in the sublime and world-atoning truth that, the more we know of nature, the finer is our conception of the supernatural, and, the more we know of man, the better we think of God. The Son of man in his day knows nothing of this disturbance, feels it not. There is no collision between old and new in his creative

thought. Let knowledge soar with eye undazzled toward the sun; the Son of man in his day, inspired by reason and sympathy with truth, is greater than knowledge; for he has power to master it, to appropriate it, and make all the past tributary to the present. He has charge of truth, the common inheritance of humanity and not one jot or one tittle shall fail or be forgotten. He has no conflict with the past, for he sees the truth that is interwoven with error, and his heart is in sympathy with the wisdom of mankind:—

> 'By heaven! there should not be a seer who left
> The world one doctrine, but I'd task his lore
> And commune with his spirit. All the truth
> Of all the tongues of earth,—I'd have them all,
> Had I the powerful spell to raise their ghosts!'

The conflict of religion with knowledge in minds that cannot appropriate the knowledge is the centre of the disturbance of our time. I had a friend in former years, well tried and faithful, in whom a fine conservative experience and true spirit of enterprise united to make what we call wisdom. He invested freely in coal mines, rich in that illuminating oil that has so transformed the evening hours in the homes of our land. He built ships for freight and wharves for landing and furnaces for purifying fires. In a night the mountains of Pennsylvania poured out rivers of oil, and superseded ships and wharves and fiery furnaces. My friend suffered a momentary shock; but his wisdom was supreme, mastering and appropriating the new knowledge.

The Son of man in his day is ever revealing new conceptions of the human and the divine; and, when Jesus says, 'I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now,' he shows the amazing force and comprehension of his character. He recognised the human-world fact of the conflict between past experience and new knowledge in the common mind,—that all growth has a history, and truth creates the circumstances that aid its progress, as the atmosphere diffuses the beams of the sun. He saw in his pure vision that high truth was at a disadvantage in low minds, and that, the baser the religion, the plainer the god. But the Son of man has no conflict in his mind or heart between old faith and new knowledge.

To him evolution is only another name for history, and history is the method in which God is ever manifesting himself in the flesh. He knows the difference between science and religion, that religion is concerned with cause, and science with method, and whatever science approves he adopts, always subjecting things to persons.

And here is the pinch to which the Son of man is put in his day—it is to teach men to recognise the divine order in the development of truth, to know that every doctrine that has gathered around it a body of believers has a germ of truth that can never perish, and that all true progress out of the past must carry with it into the future all the truth that the past has won. There is a timely and seasonal development of truth to different minds as they are prepared to receive it. As the discoveries and applications of science have come in a kind of providential order, according to the want and ability of the world to receive them, so Christianity has been unfolded according to the want and ability of human nature. Religion is the most flexible of all forms of thought; and, of all religions, Christianity is most supple, and adapts itself with tender sympathy to the humble devotee who bows before the cross on which God is stretched in pitying love and grief, or croons and kisses the picture of the mother that bore him, to him who with true angelic vision worships the Father neither in this mountain nor at Jerusalem, but in spirit and in truth. Consider the divisions of Christendom: the Greek Church, that quintessence of Orthodoxy; the Roman Catholic Church, the custodian of truth, that is promulgated by the vicegerent of Christ, as he 'looks from his throne of clouds o'er half the world'; the Protestant sects that have their little or great followings, and their little opinions and contradictions,—these are all Christians included in the divine hospitality of the mind of Christ. This is the liberality of Jesus and of his truth,—the recognition that different geologic eras of the mind are represented in society, and that Silurians are on the earth in every age. To understand this, to see it and feel it, to discover it in imagination, and to sympathize with it in the heart, is the climax of the liberal mind, as it is the glory and perfection of the

liberal God. This is the Son of man in his day, the child of the light, who speaks from the level of his mind, with all the sympathies of truth. It is the balance of judgment and insight, of conservatism and progress, of poetic faculty and plodding practicability. He says there are many things that cannot be received now, but he knows that the spirit of truth will yet unlock the treasures of human nature. He knows no landings on the 'stairs that lead through darkness up to God,' and he no more thinks of coming to a stand from which there is no advance than the scientific man thinks to conclude his discoveries. The Son of man in his day never thinks himself a finality.

It is nigh two thousand years that our religion has been on earth, bearing the name of its Founder; and yet the summits of Christendom are just beginning to be touched with the dayspring from on high. Man has been on this earth for tens of thousands of years, yet he is just beginning to get hold of the powers of the world, and learning to write Nature with a capital N. The true account of this is that truth is revealed to man only as there is historic preparation for it in his own mind, and it suggests the eternities that are required to reduce principles to practice. Man creates nothing; he only finds something that was already aforetime. The facts and laws, as we call them, were ever what they are now. The pendulum—that presiding judge over the times and distances of the universe—was in the Garden of Eden as truly as it is to-day in the national observatory. Electricity was as active when Abraham led his flocks and pitched his tents in Arabia as it is now. But primeval time had no preparation for an eight-day clock, and the magnetic telegraph would have increased Job's confusion.

Nothing so impresses me as this human breadth of sympathy and powerful space-piercing spiritual vision in Jesus which enabled him to speak to simple minds, yet to reveal truth far beyond them, and even then to tell them that this was not all, but that one should come, when they were prepared to receive him, with heavenly manners, who would lead them farther than he could, and help them to do greater things than he did. The mind of

Jesus is the encouragement of humanity, and the encouragement of that Church Universal which carries for ever the ideals of humanity in its breast. The progressive development of religion is concurrent with the life of the Son of man in his day.

We must confess that religious opinions, talents, insights, sensibilities, are very much matters of constitution and temperament. There are those to whom truly spiritual and ideal views are impossible. There is such a thing as truth that men cannot bear. Have we not seen a decent every-day character that has lost headway, and been thrown into the trough of the sea, by views that were quite true to a mind that could receive them? The fault is not in the truth, but in the man. We hear of such a thing as dangerous truth; but, if that means anything, it means dangerous as a spirited horse is dangerous to a timid and feeble rider. The great conservative instinct that makes men fear the influence of full-bloomed truth on the common mind is not all wrong, however it may be overdone by him who hugs the past. There is a great inertia in human character that inspires a sympathetic mind with wise caution and careful fear, and the son of man is no proselyter. Have we not, as moral and spiritual advisers, been compelled in all honesty to counsel some whose constitutional limitations were clearly marked to remain where they were? Have we not met those to whom to give what are to us most spiritual views of God and Christ and man were as useless as a sewing machine in the family Adam, or the North-western Railroad to Cæsar for the invasion of Gaul? This is not pearls before swine that I am speaking of now. It is that breadth of moral sympathy that was in Jesus, the poetic insight of the son of man, and the practical, plodding facts of human life and experience. It is a simple principle of common sense, but which has not had much recognition in religion. It is what makes Christianity the common law of human nature, including within itself every possible condition.

This is the way of history, the way of progress, the way of evolution, the way of the son of man, as I understand them. Happy are the men who have no conflict

with their past, but go forward out of their past, carrying into the future the wisdom and truth they have won.

The lively discussions in different quarters concerning the creed and the creeds, the revision or remodelling of them, are little more than the comparison of errors, and lack the creative spirit of the son of man. As the immoralities of our time are meannesses rather than great crimes, so in religious thought and life there is much 'See here!' and 'See there!' instead of the lightning that lighteneth out of one part under heaven and shineth to the other part under heaven. I once knew a man who boasted that he could agree to any contract if he could have the writing of it. I can sign all the creeds in Christendom if I can have the interpretation of them. I feel very much toward them and their meaning as Augustine did about time. If you ask me, I do not know: if you do not ask me, I do know. Yet men of honour do not write agreements to be read between the lines. I could not do business or hire a man to saw a cord of wood or have a faithful maid in the kitchen on that plan. But I charge no man with dishonesty or prevarication in this matter. When I reflect on the variety of things that an honest man can do, from the United States Land Office to the New Theology, showing a versatility of resource with which no other talent bears comparison, I am careful how I charge men with religious dishonesty. I think that I do often see what I am bound to call intellectual and moral cowardice, and I am bound to confess that intellectual honesty is much more rare than moral honesty, owing to what seems to me some weakness of vision. Yet I am careful about calling men dishonest, though they do and say and believe that which I could not believe or say or do, to save my soul from hell. Hawthorne's ancestor was as honest whipping a witch on the road from Boston to Salem as the genial writer of 'The House of the Seven Gables.' Honesty! Yes, let us have it. And let us believe in it, in ourselves and in our fellowmen. Let us be more than honest: let us be honourable. And let us remember that honesty, to be worthy of its name, to be worthy of anything above a kind of pitiful respect, must carry a light that flames upon its path like that light of

the Son of man in his day, that flashes from horizon to horizon, and no tallow dip. Progress, growth, spiritual life, —all acclaim of faith and victory and glory,—are in standing by the son of man in his day, giving blessing and honour and power to the past for what it has done for the present and the future. Then the past is venerable and reverend, and through all its cruelties and ignorances there is a gleam of tender, loving care,—the present is lovely, as the new-born of the race come forward to their great inheritance, and the future is crowned with hope and faith in the common destiny of man. Men weep over the venerable symbols that are passing away, as if truth were dead and buried, having no resurrection. Far be it from me to speak with levity of any illustrious sentiment in which the heart of man finds expression. I call men my brethren of whatever name; yet I do not intrude myself on them, nor hang around them as one who would waste their time in getting acquainted, neither as one of their poor relations; yet I do not allow anybody to turn me out of the family. But, when I read in the daily press how our brethren of the Presbyterians, in their assembly, fell upon each other's necks and wept over the fading glories of the creed, I should have been ashamed of my heart if I could not have been touched with that grief; yet we cannot always control the law of association. And I thought of the man in New Hampshire, ninety-three years old, who wept because his father and mother were dead and he was left an orphan. I am told by ancient records that my English ancestor was of respectable stock, and named for a Christian hero who suffered at the stake for his religious opinions. Some of my ancestor's descendants have been respectable men, I am told,—men of deep, religious convictions and bulky opinions. I am inclined to believe the tradition, and to be thankful for it. One of those men not far back held some public office, when it was the fashion for men of authority, when on public duty, to wear the town-boots. I have a sincere respect for this memory and tradition of creed and boots; and, if I had them, boots and creed, I would send them, with a touch of pathos in my heart, to the World's Fair. Why should I not? I could not wear either, but the

memory and the sentiment I would keep forever. In these times of old faith and new knowledge, times of disturbance, times of village surprises, and 'See here!' and 'See there!' how steady is the head and heart of the Son of man in his day! how high and how clear the light streams from east to west, from north to south! The Son of man, like the true poet that he is, shines and is content. The realms of reason are his; there only can his beams penetrate. The human heart is his: there only can love find its native clime. Fear not: be not afraid.

It cannot be doubted that this new knowledge that is coming in so steadily has some advantages. And some think that it has the whip-hand of religion. But they mistake the theme. Physical science is concerned with things, and works with its own tools. It has the great advantage of the physical origin of language, and can say exactly what it means and all it means. It starts at full speed. But in all our language about man, his nature and being, the words do not contain all the truth. No lover can put half his heart into his letters, but he can make a chemical formula that will include every item of the analysis. Thus the attempt to reduce religion to terms of scientific exactness—that is, to express it in forms that will mean the same thing to all minds—must always fail. Physical science starts at full speed; but, in this race, it is the long, hot, dusty road and dog-trot that win. Physical science is the helper of religion; and the Son of man in his day will find no controversy, nor will he have any conflict concerning the relative rank of persons and things.

We are moving forward, it is said, from liberty to unity. What is the centre of that unity? Has there a norm of organization been found? The dream of union and peace has been the vision of prophets and seers from age to age, and the vision is yet unfulfilled. Is there a church that offers honest and unselfish hospitality large enough for all? There is none, unless it be the realization of Renan's 'Apocalypse,' when the Roman Catholic Church shall rouse herself to say: My children, all here below is but symbol and dream. The only thing that is clear in this world is a tiny ray of azure light which gleams across the

darkness, and seems as if it were the reflection of a benevolent will. Come to my bosom: forgetfulness is there. For those who want fetishes, I have fetishes. To whomsoever desires good works, I offer good works. For those who wish the intoxication of the heart, I have the milk of my breasts which intoxicates. For whoso want love and hate also, I abound in both; and, if any one desires irony, I pour it from a full cup. Come one and all: the time of dogmatic sadness is past. I have music and incense for your burials, flowers for your weddings, the joyous welcome of my bells for your newly born.

But the Roman Catholic Church will not say so; and, if she should, the Protestant world would not accept her invitation. For no one can settle that question but the Son of man in his day. Our duty, then, is plain,—to stand by him until his light and truth shall fill the sphere.

October, 1893.

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