LIBERTY AND RELIGION

LIBERTY AND RELIGION

THE FIRST CENTURY OF THE
BRITISH & FOREIGN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION

BY

SYDNEY HERBERT MELLONE

M.A., D.Sc.

Secretary of the Association

THE LINDSEY PRESS

5 ESSEX STREET, STRAND, LONDON, W.C. 2

1925

Printed in Great Britain by
ELSOM & CO. LTD., HULL

CONTENTS

PREFACE

This book dealing with the first century of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association, has been prepared by authority of the Executive Committee of the Association. It is based on an exhaustive study of the successive Annual Reports of the Association since its foundation in 1825, and of other relevant documents. The author wishes to make cordial acknowledgement of the assistance given by the Rev. W. G. Tarrant, B.A., member of the Executive Committee since 1887, and the Rev. W. Copeland Bowie, D.D., Secretary from 1892 to 1921, who have read the whole of the proofs and made many valuable suggestions which have been embodied in the book.

S. H. MELLONE.

ESSEX HALL,
LONDON.
May, 1925.

Chapter I

ENGLAND IN 1825

THE condition of England during the first quarter of the nineteenth century, regarded from the outside, gave little ground for any hopeful view of the coming years.

Neither the political nor the economic order was adapted to the changes which were taking place under the eyes of men. The industrial revolution was not half way through. Since Watt's final elaboration of his steam-engine in 1785, the new power was harnessed to the making of all kinds of other machines, which were slowly improved, and slowly won their way; and the agony of the change was long. Thus when the wealth and population of the country were increasing, the people were miserable and poor. The progressive elements in Parliament and elsewhere were in the grip of an economic creed which blessed the struggle of all with all, and for the sake of that struggle temporized with the constant waste of life through accident and excessive hours of work, and with the nameless horrors of child slavery.

The redeeming influence of the higher literature was indirect, and its results were not apparent until the next generation. Keats died in 1821, Shelley in 1822, and Byron in 1824. In 1825 Hazlett was forty-seven years old, Charles Lamb fifty, and Coleridge fifty-three; of the two greatest names in the literature of that time, Scott, aged fifty-four, had already written most of his Waverley Novels, and Wordsworth, aged fifty-five, had already done most of his influential work. Criticism, of the kind which proves everyone wrong but the critic and his friends—the criticism which drove Shelley and Keats out of the country—was plentiful. There was little forward-looking hope or faith in the bettering of the world, and no consciousness of an ideal aim before Society as a whole. Philosophers analysed human nature, or what they supposed to be such; but there was scarcely any new literature moved by love of human nature, or by imaginative penetration into the passionate aspirations of mankind.

During the eighteenth century most of the provision made for the education of the poor in England, was provided by an organization of Anglican churchmen—the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge, founded in 1699. At the close of the eighteenth century, Andrew Bell and Joseph Lancaster started a new movement for primary education; but it was much weakened

by its division into two societies—Bell enlisting in the National Society, representing the Church, and Lancaster in the British and Foreign School Society, representing the Dissenters. The Dissenters were poor, and their schools few. In many districts they had to choose between leaving their children untaught and sending them to be instructed in Anglican principles. Churchmen were of opinion that to impart knowledge without mixing it with Anglican doctrine, was an intolerable neglect of duty. The result was that in most of their schools the children were drilled to repeat the Catechism and Creed without understanding, and half of them left the schools unable to read or write.[1]

The currents of the time were bearing England forward rapidly into a future then undiscerned. In the few years of the Napoleonic wars the old order had gone to pieces, and the fabric of society needed rebuilding. Organized government, central and local, the franchise, the civil and commercial order, the main provisions of a modern State for a modern people—were yet to be called into being; and the profound misery of millions of men and women gave the upper classes short respite for reform. Fortunately, the statesmen of the time found to their hands a great volume of charity and social beneficence. It was the day of the Evangelical Crusades against

[1] Henry Craik, *The State in Relation to Education*, Ch. i.

slavery, brutal sports, cruelty to children and to animals. Such crusades were sometimes capricious and erratic, and drew from Ebenezer Elliott (born 1781, died 1849) the caustic lines:—

> Their lofty souls have telescopic eyes,
> Which see the smallest speck of distant pain,
> While at their feet a world of agonies
> Unseen, unheard, unheeded, writhes in vain.

The battle for the factory children and the ten hours day was fought by a small party of independent men of different creeds, moved not by care for any party but by the impulse of mercy. Among these, the Unitarian John Fielden (1784-1849) holds an honorable place. In 1833 Lord Ashley (afterwards Earl of Shaftesbury) took up the leadership of the group, and began his long career of service in the struggle for humanizing conditions in the factories and mines.

In later years Charles Dickens (1812-1870) did much to sway the emotions of the philanthropists to genuinely humanitarian ends; and with all its caprice, their enthusiasm was accompanied by an energy of thought and imagination which broadened and vivified the social consciousness of the time.

The reputation of the Church at the time when our story begins is indicated in the simple words of Thomas Arnold, written a few years after 1825: "The Church, *as she now is*, no human

power can save." A storm was about to break on the Church, which "stunned and bewildered" her leaders and friends and ended her slumbers.[1]

John Henry Newman, in 1839, wrote of the reaction against "the dry and superficial character of the religious teaching and literature of the last generation" and of "the need felt both by the hearts and intellects of the nation for a deeper philosophy." It was, he said, "not so much a movement as a spirit afloat, rising up in hearts where it was least suspected, and working itself, though not in secret, yet so subtly and impalpably as hardly to admit of encounter on any ordinary human modes of opposition."[2] The truth of this statement goes further and deeper than its author dreamt of. Already the great German thinker Hegel (born 1770), through the historical spirit of his teaching had stirred up many of the ablest Continental scholars to read the history of the past in the light of the idea of Development, and among these were the founders of modern Biblical criticism. The influence of their work was being felt by open-minded religious thinkers—chiefly Unitarians—in England and America. But Newman truly discerned the beginnings of a new religious movement, fed by a host of new emotions stirring the hearts of men. It divided into two rivers of thought: the Anglo-

[1] Dean Church, *The Oxford Movement*, Ch. i.
[2] *History of my Religious Opinions*, Ch. iii.

Catholic movement and the Liberal movement in theology were born at the same time as the political movement for reform.

If in 1825 the question of questions had been set forth in the familiar words "Watchman, what of the night?" the best men of that time could have given only a hesitating and partial answer. But the promise of a full and final answer was present with them, though unknown. It lay in the lives of those who in that year were only in their childhood, boyhood, or early manhood, but were destined to mould the thought and life of the age. It is of much interest to recall their names. When the British and Foreign Unitarian Association was founded, on May 26th, 1825, John Ruskin was a child of six; Charles Dickens and Robert Browning were boys of thirteen; Charles Darwin, Alfred Tennyson, and William Ewart Gladstone, boys of sixteen; John Stuart Mill was nineteen; James Martineau was a young man of twenty, as was Richard Cobden, and Ashley (Earl of Shaftesbury) and John Henry Newman were young men of twenty-four. Carlyle, aged thirty-one, was beginning to feel that he had a message to deliver to mankind. It was in 1825 that Thomas Campbell, the Scottish poet, pleaded that "all the friends of liberal views" should unite in establishing a University in London.

There was no Atlantic cable until many years later. So the remarkable coincidence of the birth of the American Unitarian Association a few hours earlier than its British sister was not prearranged. Emerson was then a young man of twenty-two, and Longfellow of eighteen. Abraham Lincoln was a boy of sixteen, and Theodore Parker of fifteen. William Ellery Channing, six years before, had delivered his famous exposition and defence of Unitarian Christianity in Baltimore.

Before proceeding to tell the story of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association and its work from 1825 onwards, we must indicate the place of the Unitarian movement in the English Nonconformity of the early nineteenth century; and this involves a brief reference to its earlier history.

CHAPTER II

MOVEMENTS BEFORE 1825

(i). *Two types of Christianity*

THE faith in God which is the basis of Unitarian Christianity is as old as the Hebrew Prophets, and neither Jesus nor Paul departed from this fundamental Theism. The Trinitarian doctrine of God held no place in the religious faith of the early Christians. It was a later growth. Its formulation as a dogma of the Church was later even than the official definition of the Deity of Jesus Christ, which was not arrived at until A.D. 325. The doctrine of the Trinity took shape because theologians allowed themselves to believe that the Spirit of God was a third "Person" distinct from "God the Father" and "God the Son"; but the religious importance attached to the doctrine has always been based on its connection with the belief that "Jesus is God." As a matter of historical fact, the Trinity and the Deity of Christ have been regarded as inseparable conceptions; and it has always been taken for granted that *a rejection of the Trinitarian doctrine*

means a denial of the Deity of Christ. And the question, "What think ye of Christ?" was the real issue in the "anti-Trinitarian" controversies of our fathers a century ago.

This is indeed an understatement of the historic facts. We find that the liberal Christians of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries often spoke of *the Trinitarian scheme*, and with justice. Not only the Deity of Christ, but Original Sin, Eternal Punishment, and Vicarious Atonement were essential parts of the Trinitarianism which confronted them. Without these, the doctrine of the Trinity becomes at the best a matter of philosophical speculation; but these doctrines together constitute a religion—namely Trinitarian Christianity.

Unitarian Christianity, in one form or another, has existed from the time when Trinitarianism was shaped into a dogmatic creed. Ecclesiastical and legal restrictions, as well as the slow development of freedom in religious thought, made it difficult if not impossible to organize a definite Unitarian movement until comparatively modern times. All through the Christian centuries, however, there have been individuals and groups who have taken part in the great struggle for truth and freedom in religion; and to this company of seekers for truth and freedom, more numerous at the present day than at any previous period in history, Unitarians have always belonged.

(ii). *Demand for spiritual freedom*

Unitarian Christianity cannot, therefore, be traced to any single teacher or any specific date. It had its sources in the thoughts of many minds in many lands. But its fountain-head was the study and interpretation of the Bible. Protestants rejected papal authority, but they did not dethrone the Bible from its position of assumed infallibility. The Bible was read in accordance with the ancient creeds. Bigotry and intolerance were not exorcised at the Reformation. The heretics of the Reformation period were chiefly those who insisted on reading the Bible in the light of conscience and reason alone; and this led especially to heretical views about the Trinity, and therefore also about the Deity of Christ. By the middle of the seventeenth century these divergencies, with those that arose concerning ecclesiastical organization and forms of worship, had created serious conflicts within the Church of England; and to silence them the Act of Uniformity was passed and received the Royal Assent May 16th, 1662.

In addition to the imposition of episcopal Ordination, it insisted on "assent and consent" to everything contained in and prescribed by the Anglican Book of Common Prayer. The Prayer Book itself had been hastily revised, immediately before the passing of the Act, and many of the six hundred alterations made appear to have been

devised with the express purpose of driving the Puritans out. The result was that over two thousand beneficed clergymen and a number of endowed schoolmasters were deprived of their livings. By far the most famous among them was Richard Baxter, who represents the spirit of the Ejected at its best.[1] He stood for pure Christianity against sects and parties. He adopted an ancient maxim "In things essential unity; in things not essential, liberty; in all things, charity." He had indeed no idea of complete toleration. Socinians and Papists were regarded by him as "intolerable." But his outlook widened. His intellectual keenness, honesty, and self-criticism, his desire for comprehension, his recognition of degrees of certainty, and of the difference between essentials and non-essentials, all led further, and went on working after his death. He stood for the attempt *to find a basis of agreement by reducing the number of essentials and fundamentals;* and this was the first step on a great adventure. In Baxter and all the best of the Ejected Ministers, there were germs of enlightened conviction, which time and experience have since fructified to greater issues than were dreamt of in their day.

They were called "Presbyterian," but the

[1] For an admirable account of Baxter see Gordon's *Heads of English Unitarian History* (sections forty to eighty-six): London, The Lindsey Press.

name has no proper application to them. Baxter used it mostly as a vague negative term meaning "non-episcopalian." By many others it was often used as a political rather than an ecclesiastical designation: "Exit Jack Presbyter," wrote a courtly Anglican after the Act of 1662. The ejected ministers were essentially Puritans, but Puritans at their best. On the other hand, they are not to be confused with the Independents, who, agreeing largely with them in religious belief, voluntarily stood aloof from any National Church: though eventually they made common cause with the Independents.[1] They were excluded from the National Church by the setting up of new, arbitrary, and tyrannical terms of conformity. As Gordon has put it, "they wanted elbow room."

Among the various influences forming the tradition of our Churches, there are two which stand out as equally characteristic, distinctive and essential: the demand for *personal spiritual freedom*, and the demand for *clear, definite, and coherent religious thought and teaching*. The demand for personal spiritual freedom can be traced directly to the great upheaval of 1662. Indeed the actual history of a considerable number of

[1] It was well said by the late Professor Henry Morley, of University College, London, that Baxter was the ideal Anglican Puritan of the time, Jeremy Tayler the ideal Anglican Episcopalian, and *Milton the ideal Independent.*

Unitarian Churches in England is linked to the passing of the Act of Uniformity. But in order to create these Churches, it was necessary for another tributary stream to bring another influence into the main current of the river: leading to the demand for clear, definite, and coherent religious thought and teaching.

(iii). *Demand for lucid and definite thought and teaching*

Many of the ejected clergy were hopeful that the National Church might become comprehensive enough to include them once more. But some of them in the exercise of their freedom and independence were giving up their allegiance to the ancient creeds. They were coming to regard "the Trinitarian scheme" as a corruption of primitive Christianity. They perceived the harm that was being done to Christianity by the orthodox theology still maintained in the great bodies around them: and this prepared the way for a more human Christ, for a more rational view of the Bible, and for a larger hope of salvation for all mankind. Meanwhile, whether they spoke or remained quiet, their views were attacked, and they were excluded from Christian fellowship.

The demand for lucid and definite religious thought and teaching took shape under these circumstances during the course of the eighteenth century, and gained in strength towards its close.

It came from the minds of men who had been influenced by the almost too logical and sharply reasoned theology of the famous Polish Unitarian thinkers. There were many among the Liberal Dissenters who felt the need for a *definite and coherent theology* plainly stated. The powerful advocacy of Unitarian Christianity by Joseph Priestley, himself brought up as an Independent, and the withdrawal of Theophilus Lindsey from the Church of England to establish a Unitarian Church in London (Essex Street, 1774), aroused the Liberal Dissenters to consider their position, and to a large extent they found that they had grown into Unitarian Christianity. The pamphlets and letters of the time show a deep sense of duty to make their views known. Moreover, there were various interests that they had in common, in which they were threatened with serious injury, and were obliged to organize for mutual support. They were thus compelled to work together if they would work at all, for no others would work with them. Societies were formed for the organization and support of literary propaganda and missionary endeavour, and for the protection of civil rights. The three most important of these societies were formed respectively in 1791, 1806, and 1819: and with these three the British and Foreign Unitarian Association is historically linked. Some further information regarding them is therefore required.

(iv). *The Book Society*

"The Unitarian Society for promoting Christian Knowledge and the Practice of Virtue by the Distribution of Books" was founded on February 9th, 1791, at a meeting held in London, when the Revs. Theophilus Lindsey, Thomas Belsham, Dr. Kippis, Dr. Disney, and several leading laymen were present. Every book or tract, proposed to be issued, had first to be recommended by three members of the Society; its admission or rejection was subsequently determined by ballot. Books were placed at the disposal of members for distribution according to the amount of their subscriptions. Members who "resided within the district of the threepenny post" were summoned to the general meetings of the Society.

Among the publications recommended at the first meeting as being "worthy of the patronage of the Society" were Dr. Lardner's "Letter concerning the question, whether the Logos took the place of a human soul in the Person of Jesus Christ";[1] Dr. Priestley's sermon on "The im-

[1] This forbidding title covers an able discussion of one of the most interesting of the attempts made, during the first four centuries, to rationalize the *deity* of Jesus by reducing his *humanity*. Apollinarius, Bishop of Laodicea (died A.D. 392) believed that a complete divine nature and a complete human nature joined together meant two persons joined together. To avoid this, and retain the full deity, he denied the full humanity of Jesus.

portance and extent of Free Inquiry in matters of Religion"; Mr. Lindsey's "Catechist, or inquiry into the doctrine of the Scriptures concerning the only true God and object of religious worship"; Dr. Disney's "Friendly Dialogue between a common Unitarian Christian and an Athanasian"; Dr. Watts' "Hymns and Moral Songs for the use of Children" (revised and altered); Mrs. Barbauld's "Hymns for the use of Children"; and "Advice from Farmer Trueman to his daughter Mary, upon her going to service" —this last an indication that the Society evinced early interest in practical religion.

The records of the Committee, preserved in a large Minute Book (1791 to 1826) show that there was a very considerable demand for the publications issued by the Society, especially during the first twenty-five years of its existence. In addition to the distribution of literature through members, grants were made to congregations in different parts of the country, beginning in 1800 with Dukinfield ("for the use of the Sunday School recently established by the Rev. James Hawkes"): and to the Committee of the Unitarian Fund and other Societies. In 1808 the high cost of paper made it necessary to increase the price of books and to give fewer books to members in return for their annual subscriptions.

From 1820 onwards there seems to have been some weakening of interest, and early in 1824 it

was decided to prepare a report as to the state of the Society and the best means of securing a revival. Later in the same year a resolution was submitted from the Unitarian Fund suggesting the appointment of a joint committee to consider the formation of a General Unitarian Association. At the Annual Meeting in April, 1826, it was unanimously resolved that the Book Society unite with the British and Foreign Unitarian Association, formed twelve months previously.

The Unitarians of that time were convinced that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments were the supreme authority for matters of faith and conduct: but for that very reason they could not regard the Authorized Version as final; and the publication of an improved version engaged the attention of the Book Society from an early period. After an unsuccessful endeavour to arrange for an edition of Gilbert Wakefield's translation (first published in 1792), a Committee was appointed in 1806 to consider the whole question afresh. They recommended that Archbishop Newcome's translation, published in Dublin in 1800, would form the best basis for a new version; and a special fund, vested in Trustees, was raised for the purpose. The Improved Version was ready for circulation in 1808.[1]

[1] *An Improved Version of the New Testament on the Basis of Archbishop Newcome's new Translation*: London, 1808. The Rev. Thomas Belsham was the principal Editor. The

In 1817 the Society purchased from the Trustees the whole impression of a new Edition, for which £500 was paid in instalments: the money to be applied for reprinting this work " or some other improved version of the New Testament." In 1826, the control of the circulation of the Improved Version passed to the British and Foreign Unitarian Association: the Trustees at that time being the Rev. Robert Aspland, the Rev. Dr. Thomas Rees, and Mr. Thomas Gibson.

The proceedings of the Book Society sometimes went far beyond the range of literary propaganda as ordinarily understood.

It is important to remember that the old penal laws against Unitarians remained unrepealed until 1813. Not only religious equality before the law but even religious liberty was unknown. The most important of the penal laws were the exceptive clauses of the " Toleration Act " of 1689, which not only deprived of legal toleration all who should deny in preaching or in writing the doctrine of the Trinity as declared in the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England, but com-

text adopted was that of Griesbach, i.e., it was the type of text underlying our Authorized Version. A Preface discussed such questions as the value of patristic quotations, the possibility of conjectural emendations, etc. Where the Editor's version differed from Newcome's, the latter was placed at the foot of the page. The Version was violently attacked by orthodox controversialists, e.g. in the *Quarterly Review* (Williams, *Memoirs of Belsham*, 1833, p. 590).

pelled all preachers to subscribe to those Articles (excepting only the parts relating to Church Government and ritual); so that Unitarians and Roman Catholics were alike excluded. Nine years later (1698) an Act was passed penalising those who " by writing, printing, teaching, or advised speaking shall deny any one of the persons in the Holy Trinity to be God, or shall maintain that there are more Gods than one." Such laws were not often enforced; but they were there, as an effective threat and a very present danger, until 1813; and the work of the Book Society from 1791, and of the Unitarian Fund from 1806, was carried on in face of them.[1]

The question of these enactments, and especially the Act of 1698, was considered at a meeting of the Book Society in April 1791, when a deputation was appointed to request the Rt. Hon. Charles James Fox, " who has at all times stood forth the manly asserter of the right of private judgment in matters of religion, to move in the House of Commons for the repeal of the said statute [of 1698] and other penal laws, or any of them, at such time as he shall think proper." In March, 1792, the Unitarians presented a petition to Parliament in which they declared their position by saying they conceived it to be " their duty to

[1] For a fuller account of the penal laws, see Alexander Gordon, *Heresy: its Ancient Wrongs and Modern Rights*: London, The Lindsey Press, 1913, pp. 31 ff

examine into and interpret the Holy Scriptures for themselves, and their right, publicly to declare the result of their inquiries." This striking declaration shows that the *supremacy and sufficiency of Scripture* was at that period consciously and deliberately accepted as the first principle of Unitarian Christianity, as against current Protestantism which read into the Bible the contents of the ecclesiastical creeds.

Nevertheless more than twenty years passed before the memorable Act "to relieve persons who impugn the doctrine of the Holy Trinity from certain penalties" became law. The Act received the Royal Assent on July 21st, 1813; and on July 30th[1] a special general meeting of the Book Society was held at Essex Street Chapel, London, when the following resolutions, among others, were adopted:—

(i). That the members of this Society view with great satisfaction the recent success of a measure which more than twenty years ago they solicited in vain, though supported by the transcendent abilities of the late Mr. Fox, and they congratulate each other and the friends of civil and religious liberty in general, that by the Bill which has lately passed for the "relief of those who impugn the Doctrine of the Trinity," persons who profess their dissent from that Article of the Established Creed are no longer exposed to severe and ruinous penalties, but are placed under the protection of the Law.

[1] For a fuller account of the circumstances, see Gordon, *op. cit.*, pp. 41 ff.

(ii). That the members of this Society hail the present measure, as an auspicious prelude to that happy day when all penal laws and political restrictions on religious grounds shall be for ever abolished; when an insidious and limited Toleration shall give way to universal religious Liberty; and when all, without distinction, shall be entitled by law to the possession of those civil and political privileges which are the birthright of Britons.

(v). *The Unitarian Fund*

The Book Society had been carrying on its activities for fifteen years; and there was a growing feeling that the valuable literary propaganda maintained by the Society on behalf of "scriptural and rational Christianity" required to be supplemented by direct personal appeals. Accordingly in February, 1806, a group of earnest Unitarians (chiefly laymen) met in London and resolved that it was desirable to establish a Fund *for promoting Unitarianism by means of popular preaching*. Unitarianism is defined as "that system of doctrines which is included in the belief and worship of one only God, the Creator and Governor of the world, in contradistinction to doctrines generally termed orthodox." The promoters of the Fund were persuaded that *the encouragement of Unitarian worship is one of the best means of disseminating Unitarian doctrine*. The Fund was to be applied (*a*) to enable poor Unitarian congregations to carry on

religious worship, (*b*) to the payment of the travelling and other expenses of preachers of the gospel on Unitarian principles, (*c*) to the relief of ministers who by embracing Unitarianism subjected themselves to poverty.

The Rules provided, among other necessary purposes, for an Annual General Meeting of the Society (i.e., the subscribers) on *Wednesday in Whitweek*, when "a report shall be made of the state of the Society"; for the election of Committee, Secretary, Treasurer, and Auditors; for the privilege of any subscriber to "recommend cases"; and for the appointment of corresponding members in different parts of the country, "to whom it shall be recommended to transmit to the Secretary an annual report of the state of Unitarianism in their several districts."

In the second Report of the Unitarian Fund, it is stated that the Committee found in the country a general disposition to co-operate with and promote their purposes. Measures were taken to make the Society more generally known and approved, by the distribution of the rules, by personal appeals, and by means of the *Monthly Repository*, "a publication whose pages are always open to the Society." Corresponding members, both ministers and laymen, in various parts of the country, including Scotland and Wales, were secured with little difficulty, and valuable information regarding the condition of

the Churches was obtained, "it being partly the object of the Society to collect and disseminate this important information." Advisory Committees are usually regarded as a recent innovation, but the Unitarian Fund exercised great care. A particular account of the moral character, the preaching abilities, and the probabilities of their usefulness was required of all ministers seeking assistance from the Fund; and then, if the references proved satisfactory, the minister's preaching powers were tested and reported upon by members of the Committee.

The successive reports of the Unitarian Fund show continuous and carefully organized helpful work extending to all parts of the United Kingdom, but rather difficult to summarize for the purposes of a brief historical survey. Speaking broadly, the work fell into two main divisions: sustentation work in the widest sense of the word, and special personal missionary work. Under the former head, we find a long list of congregations to whom help was given towards the maintenance of their ministers, or towards repairs and improvements to existing buildings, or towards special addresses, and similar propaganda work. In a number of cases new ground was opened up, and new movements inaugurated, assistance being sometimes given towards the purchase of land for the erection of buildings. Local needs were discovered through reports sent in by the

various local correspondents; and by this means intercourse was opened up between the Central Society and most parts of the United Kingdom, including Scotland, the North of Ireland, and South Wales.

Under the head of personal missionary work, we find that capable ministers are sent to Scotland, Ireland, Wales, as well as to different parts of England: but the great feature of the Society's work along these lines is seen in the activities of the Rev. Richard Wright, who resigned his ministry in Wisbech, January, 1811, to become the Missionary of the Unitarian Fund at a salary of £105 per year (increased in 1818 to £130) and his travelling expenses. A more enterprising and devoted missionary the denomination never had before or since. He visited nearly every part of England, and many places in Scotland; and delivered sermons, lectures, addresses incessantly from his appointment until his resignation in 1822. His "Journal," published in the *Monthly Repository* bore testimony to the popular gifts of the preacher, his generous labours, and his enthusiasm for the spread of Unitarian Christianity.

Among other activities of the Fund, it is interesting to find that in 1819 the proposal to form "a body of local preachers" was considered: and two years later, it was decided to "support and extend local preaching in the London district by instructing young men of

talent in the Greek Testament, and improving them in public speaking, without taking them from their secular concerns, so as to form a body of reputable supplies."

The volumes of the *Monthly Repository* show that for many years the Unitarians of Great Britain had taken a lively interest in *kindred movements abroad*, so far as the scanty information available admitted. In 1818 a correspondent had called attention to the necessity of contact with foreign Unitarians, and suggested a fund for forwarding the *Monthly Repository* to correspondents abroad. In 1820, on the recommendation of the Rev. Robert Aspland, the Committee of the Unitarian Fund decided to include foreign work within the scope of its operations; and in the following year a sub-committee on Foreign Purposes was appointed, and arrangements made for a delegate to visit the Continent.

It is not clear how early the existence of the ancient Unitarian Church in Transylvania was discovered in England.[1] But from 1812 onwards warm interest in these congregations was aroused among their English fellow-believers, and means were sought of entering into correspondence wth them. In 1821 the Committee of the Unitarian Fund circulated a communication in Latin which

[1] See an interesting article by Mr. Dionysius Lorinczy in the *Transactions* of the Unitarian Historical Society, volume iii, number 1.

drew an enthusiastic response from the authorities of the Transylvanian Church. In the last number of the *Unitarian Fund Register* there is a deeply interesting and instructive article on the Unitarian Church in Transylvania.

The importance of combining the existing Unitarian Societies in England had been evident for some time; and in May, 1824, Mr. Edgar Taylor moved, and the Rev. Robert Aspland seconded, that a resolution be prepared and submitted to the General Meeting on the expediency of forming a General Union of Unitarian Societies throughout the kingdom. This resolution was adopted in June 1824. And on the 23rd May, 1825, the Report of the Committee of the Unitarian Fund was submitted by the Secretary and adopted for presentation at the General Meeting, when it was resolved to unite in forming the British and Foreign Unitarian Association.

(vi). *The Civil Rights Association*

" The Unitarian Association for the Protection of the Civil Rights of Unitarians " held its first General Meeting in January, 1819. The founders of the Association stated that the Trinity Act of 1813 was understood to extend to Unitarians the privileges possessed by other denominations of Dissenters; but it was doubtful whether that object had been sufficiently secured, and it was

considered expedient to institute a society for the purpose of protecting the civil rights of Unitarians. The membership consisted of individual subscribers, and of representatives of congregations making an annual contribution. The Minute Books of the Association show that certain large questions, involving the amendment or repeal of laws oppressive to Dissenters in general, and particularly to Unitarians, occupied prolonged attention at many meetings of the Association. Among these were the Marriage Laws, under which marriages were legal only when solemnized in the Established Church; and the Corporation and Test Acts, excluding Dissenters from many offices solely on religious grounds. Complaint was made that the orthodox evangelical Dissenters rendered no help to the Unitarians, although the purposes in view were of equal importance to them all.

In addition to these large public questions, questions relating to endowments and trusts were dealt with from time to time, advice was given to individual congregations on the preparation of trust deeds, and similar documents. Cases of individual injustice were dealt with, as when a Leicester magistrate refused to bind an apprentice to a Unitarian tradesman.

With regard to education, the Association protested against any legislation which placed the management of schools in any other hands than

those from which contributions for their support were required. In 1824, the Association promoted a petition, which was signed by more than two thousand persons, including many ministers, and was presented to parliament, urging that prosecutions for offences against religion were worse than useless. There are some striking sentences in this petition showing a largeness of mind and temper still needed in the religious world. Religion, they declared, must be received not by force, but of free choice. "History testifies to the fatality of all prosecutions for mere opinion. It is neither wise nor safe to make the manner and temper of writing an object of legal visitation, inasmuch as it is impossible to define where argument ends and evil speaking begins."

On the 26th May, 1825, it was resolved to unite with the British and Foreign Unitarian Association, proposed to be formed later that day. Thus ended, as a separate organization, the Unitarian Association for the protection of the Civil Rights of Unitarians. Henceforth, it was to form a part of the operations of the larger Association.

Chapter III

THE BRITISH AND FOREIGN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION:

ITS FOUNDATION AND CONSTITUTION

(i). *Original Aims*

THE idea of a general union of Unitarians for the promotion of their common objects was suggested by the practical inconveniences experienced in conducting the business of the several Societies. A broader Society than had previously existed was required, in order to comprehend the various purposes for the promotion of which Unitarians had entered into association. The independence of the existing Societies was found to be confusing—none the less so because the custom had grown up of referring to them as "The Unitarian Society," "The Unitarian Fund," and "The Unitarian Association"—and weakening, especially in the case of the Book Society and the Unitarian Fund, whose aims in practice necessarily overlapped.

The prevalence of this view is indicated clearly in the proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the

Unitarian Fund, May 25th, 1825, when it was reported that the deputations appointed by the various Societies had prepared and published a plan for forming a General Unitarian Association, and the following statement was adopted:

The proposed plan seems well adapted to realize at no great distance of time, if not immediately, that closer union and more effective co-operation among the friends of Unitarian Christianity which have been so long desired and are so obviously desirable. It also provides for the junction, from time to time, of existing Unitarian Societies, without any compromise of the rights of their subscribers, or of the particular objects for which they were instituted. It comprehends, or is capable of comprehending, every object which it is expedient for us, as Unitarians, to aim at by combined exertion; and avoids the difficulty, trouble, and expense, which have been created by forming separate Societies for their independent accomplishment. It would afford greater facilities than at present exist for the diffusion throughout the Unitarian body, of information upon all topics of common interest. Your Committee, therefore, hope that it would obtain much more general support than any, or all, of our existing Societies; and that it may prove the means of making a powerful impression upon the public mind in favour of the doctrines and views of Unitarians.

Upon these grounds, the Committee have come to the unanimous resolution of recommending to this meeting that the title and objects of the Unitarian Fund be henceforth merged in those of The British and Foreign Unitarian Association, for the promotion of the principles of Unitarian Christianity at home and abroad, the support of its worship, the diffusion of Biblical, theological, and literary knowledge on topics connected with it, and the maintenance of the civil rights and interests of its professors. The Committee feel

assured that under such an arrangement, and with the immediate junction, on which they rely, of some Societies, and the not-long delayed accession of others, the peculiar objects of this institution, as well as all others of importance to our cause, will be more energetically and efficiently pursued than by the continuance of separate efforts.

(ii). *Constitution of* 1825

The decisive meeting, summoned as "A General Meeting of the Friends of Unitarian Christianity," was held in London on Thursday, May 26th, 1825, under the Chairmanship of Mr. Thomas Gibson. At this meeting it was resolved that "a General Society" be formed, to be "denominated the British and Foreign Unitarian Association," for the promotion of objects specified as in the statement adopted by the Unitarian Fund on the previous day. Until otherwise resolved, at a General Meeting of the Association, the following were to be considered "the leading divisions of its objects":—

(1). The promotion of Unitarian Christianity in Great Britain, by assisting poor congregations, and sending out or giving assistance to Missionary Preachers.

(2). The publication and distribution of books and tracts, controversial and practical, principally in a cheap and popular form.

(3). The pursuit of the two last-mentioned objects (as opportunity and the means of the Association may afford) in foreign countries, and the maintenance, in the meantime, of correspondence and general co-operation.

(4). The protection and extension of the civil rights of Unitarians.

This statement of the aims and objects of the Association was adhered to until June, 1898, when the following revised statement was adopted:—

(1). The diffusion of the principles of Unitarian Christianity by assisting congregations and missionary preachers, and by such other means as may seem advisable.

(2). The spread of Biblical, theological, and literary knowledge on topics connected with Unitarian Christianity by means of books and pamphlets, controversial or practical.

(3). The protection and extension of the civil rights of Unitarians.

The policy of the Association, as given in the successive Annual Reports, shows that the change is only verbal, and that the first clause of the revised statement covers the first and third of the original statement.

The substance of this statement is embodied in the Memorandum of Articles of Association prepared in accordance with the regulations of the Board of Trade, in order to obtain a Certificate of Incorporation under the regulations relating to bodies conducted not for profit. The official certificate is dated July 14th, 1915. The Incorporation of the Association was carried out in pursuance of a resolution adopted at the Annual Meeting, June 4th, 1914. The Incorporation has proved a great convenience in purchasing and

holding investments of the Association, and in saving the expense and trouble formerly required on the decease or appointment of individual trustees. Incorporation also enables the Association to be appointed a Trustee of church or other property, and this has already proved to be of considerable advantage to several congregations. The obvious distinction between a Trust Deed with its stated terms, and an individual Trustee administering the Trust according to these terms, shows the fallacy of the objection formerly made,—that an Association with a doctrinal name, becoming a Trustee, neutralizes the "open" character of the Trust.

In May, 1918, the following statement was adopted, and now stands at the head of the Rules which define the Constitution of the Association:

(1). The diffusion and support of the principles of Unitarian Christianity, including the formation and assistance of congregations which do not require for themselves or their ministers subscription to any doctrinal articles of belief.

(2). The publication and circulation of Biblical, theological, scientific, and literary knowledge, related to Unitarian Christianity.

(3). To do all such other lawful things as are incidental or conducive to the attainment of the above objects or any of them.

It must again be observed that the alteration in the wording of the statement is one of form not substance, inasmuch as no change of policy was involved.

The words referring to the formation and assistance of congregations which do not require for themselves or for their ministers subscription to any doctrinal articles of belief, were inserted in order to indicate explicitly what had been the policy of the Association throughout its history; and to bring the Rules into conformity with the model Trust Deed recommended to congregations.[1] The policy of what is called the Open Trust is one to which the Association has always been loyal.

Other verbal changes in reference to publications follow the Articles of Incorporation, and simply describe more clearly the practical work of the Association. Specific reference to Civil Rights is omitted, as Unitarians may now be said to be on a legal equality with other Dissenters.

In the original Rules of the Association, it is stated that the Association shall consist of "District Associations communicating with the central body and sending representatives thereto, —of Congregations or Fellowship Funds communicating in like manner,—of individual Subscribers,—and of Honorary Members":—

(*i.*) By District Associations are meant any Societies already formed, or hereafter to be formed in the Country (or in London, if thought advisable), whether of individuals or congregations, for whatever particular Unitarian object, and comprising more or less extent according to local convenience. They may have their own funds and particular class of objects to be determined by themselves; but uniting themselves to the Association to the extent of appointing Two Deputies (who will, in that character become Members of the Association and of all its Committees)—contributing not less than Five Pounds annually to the General Fund—appointing one of their officers the regular official correspondent with General Committee—communicating yearly reports to the General Meeting of the state of Unitarianism within their respective limits—and, generally, promoting the leading objects of the Association. Such District Associations to be styled, according to their respective localities, "The ( ) District Association."

(*ii.*) Congregations or Auxiliary Funds (which may either not form part of any District Association, or which may in addition thereto be desirous of being more immediately connected with the General Association, and of contributing directly to its funds) may unite with, and send two representatives Members to the General Public Meetings of the Association; such Congregations either to make an annual contribution to the General Fund of not less than Three Pounds, or a collection at least once in three years for its benefit. The officiating Ministers of such Societies to be considered, during their continuance as such, Honorary Members of the Association.

(*iii.*) The qualification of *individual members* for voting and holding offices shall be an annual subscription of not less than One Guinea, or a life donation of not less than Ten Guineas.

[1] See *The Essex Hall Year Book*, 1925, p. 122.

(iii). *Congregational Representatives*

The second clause of this Constitution expressly provides for direct congregational representation. We must briefly trace the policy of the Asso-

ciation on this question. The principle of such representation formed part of the original Constitution (1819) of the Civil Rights Association, whence it was adopted in a slightly modified form when this body was merged in the larger Association. In an Address printed with their first Report (May, 1826) the Committee of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association observe, in reference to independent Congregations, that "the union of these with the Association is considered by the General Committee as of the first importance. . . Associated Congregations would be entitled to send instructions by two representatives to the general meetings, and also to give their opinion or advice by correspondence on any questions affecting the general interests; and in case of need would receive all the advice, assistance and support which the general body in its different departments is able to supply." From the Report it appears that up to May, 1826, four District Associations, thirty-four Congregations, twenty-two life Subscribers, and one hundred and eighty annual Subscribers had joined the Association. In 1828, the number of contributing Congregations had increased to seventy-nine:—

Bath.
Battle.
Bessel's Green.
Birmingham:
  Old Meeting.
Bolton:
  Bank Street.
  Moor Lane.
Boston.
Bradford.
Bridgwater.
Bridport.
Brighton.
Bristol.
Capel-y-groes.

Chester.
Chesterfield.
Chichester.
Chowbent.
Crediton.
Crewkerne.
Cullompton.
Derby.
Devonport.
Diss.
Ditchling.
Dorchester.
Dukinfield.
Edinburgh.
Evesham.
Exeter.
Falmouth.
Framlingham.
Gloucester.
Godalming.
Halifax.
Honiton.
Kendal.
Kidderminster.
Leeds.
Leicester.
Lewes.
Lincoln.
Liverpool:
  Paradise Street.
  Renshaw Street.
London:
  Finsbury.
  Hackney.
  Worship Street.
Lynn.
Maidstone.
Manchester:
  Cross Street.
  Mosley Street.
  Salford.
Newcastle.
Newchurch.
Newport (I.W.).
Northampton.
Northiam.
Nottingham.
Park Lane.
Plymouth.
Portsmouth.
Prescot.
Rochdale.
Rolvenden.
Rotherham.
Sheffield.
Shrewsbury.
Stand.
Stockton.
Swansea.
Taunton.
Tenterden.
Thorne.
Trowbridge.
Warrington.
Warwick.
Wolverhampton.
Yarmouth.
Yeovil.
York.

At no period did the list of contributing Congregations exceed eighty. In 1844, there were only thirty-one Congregations on the list; in 1866 the number had declined to thirteen. No special measures had apparently been taken to interest Congregations in the work of the Association; and the efforts of the Committee were chiefly directed to increasing the number of individual Subscribers.

In the meantime a number of Ministers, led by

the Rev. James Martineau and the Rev. J. J. Tayler, had come to the conclusion that the time had arrived for the formation of some large and wide religious organization of liberal Christians to which our Churches might be prevailed upon to link themselves. Before proceeding, it was considered advisable to alter, if practicable, the constitution of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association. At the Annual Meeting of the Association held at Hackney, May, 1866, the following resolution, moved by the Rev. J. J. Tayler, was carried:—

That having regard to the constitution and history of the Presbyterian and other Non-subscribing Congregations, a Committee be appointed to consider how far the British and Foreign Unitarian Association can be modified so as more completely to meet the wants and acquire the confidence and support of all liberal Christian Churches, or to suggest a division of work between two agencies that should co-exist in friendly relation to each other, and to prepare a Report embodying the results of their inquiries, to be submitted to a General Meeting of the members of the Association.

In their Report the Committee refer to "a movement on the part of certain members of the Association and other friends," by which it was proposed to strike out of the Rules all that relates to the alliance of Congregations with the Association, and "so to take away from it that appearance of representation of our Churches generally which it is alleged has grown up of late years":—

On this point the Committee feel it a duty to state, that they have not intended or desired to put themselves into a general representative position—that they have never to their knowledge professed to act or speak save for such individuals and congregations as by their own act and deed enrolled themselves as members or otherwise expressed their wish to act with the Association.

Wide differences of opinion were found to exist; and a Special Committee was appointed to consider and report on Mr. Tayler's resolution. After full and frank discussion of different possible lines of policy, the Special Committee adopted the following resolution and comment:—

That of the two methods referred to their consideration for meeting the wants of Free Christian Churches—viz., a modification of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association, or the friendly co-existence of two Agencies with suitable distribution of functions—this Committee recommends the second; and that, in order to place the two agencies in harmony, it be recommended to the British and Foreign Unitarian Association, in retaining the functions to which Unitarian doctrine attaches as a permanent condition, to relinquish the principle of congregational representation. The Committee sincerely trust that the settlement of the question suggested by this resolution will tend to promote a harmony of spirit amidst some diversities of judgment, and that a large increase of zealous and united action among all classes of the friends of liberal Christianity in its various aspects.

At the Annual Meeting of the Association held at Brixton on June 12th, 1867, the recommendations of the Special Committee were adopted, and the necessary alterations in the Rules were made.

No serious change in the finances or work of the Association was involved.

The promoters of a larger religious organization of Liberal Christians held a meeting on June 14th, 1867, two days after the Annual Meeting of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association. There was a large attendance of Unitarians: a few Independents and one Baptist were also present. A Committee was appointed to prepare a scheme for the constitution of a "Free Christian Union," which was submitted at a meeting held November 21st, 1867. A further meeting was held June 26th, 1868, when the chair was occupied by Professor Goldwin Smith. The first Anniversary Meetings were held in June, 1869. Public interest was to some extent aroused, but the Committee of the Union met with very little practical support. The second Annual Meeting, held June 25th, 1870, was marked by a despondent tone, and the Rev. James Martineau himself proposed that the Free Christian Union be dissolved. At a special meeting held December 8th the Union came to an end.

Although the way was now open for the Association to revert to its former Rule, no action was taken; and during the twelve succeeding years the Association made few direct appeals to Congregations as such for financial aid.

After the action taken in 1867, the *second* clause of the original Constitution was retained

with the omission of any reference to Congregations, and adapted to cases where "Auxiliary Funds" might desire representation on the membership of the Association. A much needed simplification was introduced in 1874, when the first and second clauses were combined, and it is stated that the membership shall consist of "Deputies (Delegates) from District and Auxiliary Associations, and of Individual Members, Ordinary and Honorary:—"

> By District and Auxiliary Associations are meant any present or future Societies which shall for the time being be engaged in promoting the principles of Unitarian Christianity, and shall unite themselves with the Association by subscribing not less than five pounds annually to its funds. Any such Society may appoint two Deputies, who shall in that character be members of the Association and of its Council.

The substance of this rule remains unaltered, with the addition of a provision that a District Society subscribing not less than one pound annually may appoint one member of the Association and of its Council.

(iv). *Committee and Council*

The original Constitution of the Association provided that "at the Annual General Whitsuntide Meeting of members, a General Committee, consisting of fifteen persons, members of

the Association, shall be chosen to transact its general business for the ensuing year." The officers were to be a Treasurer (Mr. John Christie), a Deputy-Treasurer (Mr. Thomas Hornby), a Secretary for the Home Work (Rev. Robert Aspland), a Foreign Secretary (Rev. W. Johnson Fox), a Book and Tract Secretary (Rev. Dr. T. Rees, appointed in 1826), and a Solicitor (Mr. Edgar Taylor). The first Committee consisted of Revs. J. Gilchrist, Thomas Madge, Thomas Rees, Dr. Southwood Smith, and eleven influential laymen. Afterwards one Secretary, with an assistant, was found to be sufficient, and the membership of the Committee was reduced to twelve, until 1874, when it was enlarged to twenty, as at present. More recently, it was provided that the President, ex-President, and Treasurer be *ex officio* members of Committee in addition to the twenty elected members.

From the foundation of the Association up to 1874, it had been the custom to appoint Vice-Presidents as a complimentary recognition of personal position and service, and to appoint Home Correspondents in order to facilitate contact between the Committee and the groups of Churches in different parts of the country. At the Annual Meeting in 1874, it was decided to create a new body, standing, as it were, between the Executive Committee and the general body of the members, and consisting at first of the

Honorary Officers and Committee, Vice-Presidents, Home Correspondents, and Representatives of Societies. This was the Council of the Association. This change took effect at the fiftieth Annual Meeting of the Association. The need of such an intermediate body was felt at the time by many members of the Association, who considered that the Committee would by means of the Council be kept in closer touch with Unitarian opinion in different parts of the Country.

In the Rules as revised and adopted in 1874 the Constitution of the Council was thus defined:—

> The Management of the affairs of the Association shall vest in a Council and Executive Committee.
>
> The Council shall consist of the President, Vice-Presidents, Treasurer, Home Correspondents, the representatives of District and Auxiliary Associations, and the Executive Committee . . . Eleven members shall form a quorum.
>
> The Council shall have control of the business of the Association so far as it shall seem advisable to it to direct the action of the Executive Committee; but in the absence of special direction or action on the part of the Council, the Executive Committee shall have full control over the affairs of the Association in such and the same manner as if the Council did not exist.

Afterwards an official list of Vice-Presidents and Home Correspondents ceased to be drawn up, and the constitution of the Council was modified accordingly. Since 1918, the Council has consisted of the President, the Past Presidents, the Treasurer, the members of the Executive Com-

mittee, the Delegates of Societies, and not more than one hundred other members of the Association as elected at the various Annual Meetings. It is no longer stated that the management of the affairs of the Association "is vested in the Council and Committee," subject to resolutions of an Annual or Special Meeting. Since 1918 the Rule has stated that "subject to any resolution of an Annual or Special Meeting *or meeting of the Council directing or controlling its action*, the business of the Association shall be arranged and managed by the Executive Committee."

(v). *Individual Members*

The *last* clause of the Constitution of 1825, relating to individual members (other than *Honorary Members*), remained unaltered until 1867, when the principle of congregational repre sentation was abandoned. The following statement was then adopted:—

> The qualification of *individual members* for voting and holding offices shall be an annual subscription of not less than one guinea, or a life donation of not less than ten guineas; except in the case of Ministers of Unitarian and English Presbyterian Congregations; and in respect to them a subscription of Five Shillings per annum shall, after the first year's subscription, entitle them to be members of the Association and enjoy such privileges as belong to members.

In 1874 "English Presbyterian" was altered

to "Non-subscribing Presbyterian." Whatever may be thought of the historical appropriateness (or the reverse) of the term "Presbyterian" as thus used, its deliberate introduction shows a sincere recognition of what we have described above as the tradition of spiritual freedom going back to the Ejection of 1662. The clause remained in this form until 1889, when the Annual Meeting resolved "that membership of the Association shall be constituted by an annual subscription of any amount": an amendment "that the minimum subscription be five shillings" being lost. In 1918 the principle of this amendment was adopted and became part of the Constitution of the Association.

The principle that Life Membership is acquired by a donation of ten pounds has remained unaltered since 1825: so has the principle that ministers delivering the Sermons at the Annual Meetings become *ex-officio* Honorary Members. But since 1874, the scope of the Honorary Membership has been extended. Not only every Minister who has preached the Annual Sermon, but any other person who may be expressly elected as such at an Annual Meeting, is an Honorary Member and entitled to the privileges of membership.

There are, therefore, four classes of individual members: Delegates of Societies; Honorary Members; Annual Subscribers; and Life Members.

(vi). *Relation to Churches and District Societies*

The varied activities of the Association, especially in the Home Mission field, have, from time to time, inevitably raised again the question dealt with in 1867, of how the Association is related to the Churches with which it is in such close practical contact. It has never been true to say that the Association is only representative of a body of subscribers. The original constitution, as we have seen, provided for representatives of District Societies, Churches, and individuals. Gradually, however, the number of representatives of subscribing congregations (as such) diminished; and there appears to be no desire at the present time on the part of congregations to secure the right of appointing delegates who would possess the same power of voting as is now possessed by individual Subscribers to the Association.

In 1883 the well-known " Association Sunday " Collections were introduced; and every year a large number of our Churches take Collections on behalf of the funds of the Association. It may be taken for granted that the Congregational Collections are made in the same spirit and with the same object as collections for charitable purposes generally—as an evidence of sympathy and goodwill towards the Association and its work at home and abroad. The Congregations

do not necessarily hold themselves responsible for all the principles, aims, and methods of administration of the organizations and societies towards whose support they are willing to make a collection. If any considerable number of Congregations which take Collections were to request a more direct voice in the management of the Association, it would be incumbent on the members to consider the advisability of reverting to the former rule.

The case of the District Associations is somewhat different. Those which fulfil stated conditions have the right of appointing members of the Council of the Association, and these Delegates possess all the privileges enjoyed by individual subscribers. In so far as these District Associations represent Churches, it may reasonably be held that the British and Foreign Unitarian Association through these representatives also represents Churches; and it is therefore not accurate to say that it is " merely " representative of individuals. These considerations have never, however, weighed with the Association. The successive Committees have impartially devoted their energies to practical work; they have sought to co-operate with District Societies, whether they subscribed or did not subscribe to the funds of the Association.

Apart from theoretic symmetry in the organization, everything in the end depends on the living

thought and practical interest that lie at the back of it; and when a more directly representative relationship between the Churches and the Association is desired, it appears to be through the District Societies that it might be sought for, and through a development of the constitution and the functions (at present undefined) of the Council of the Association, the membership of which at present consists partly of persons elected at the Annual Meeting of subscribers, and partly of representatives of District Societies.

Chapter IV

WORK AMID ANXIETY

THE repeal of the statutes imposing penalties on all who denied the doctrine of the Trinity created a partial measure of religious *liberty* in England.[1] Until the Trinity Act received the Royal Assent on July 21st, 1813, the profession of Unitarianism in England was punishable by forfeiture of citizenship and by imprisonment; although, as pointed out before, the law had not been enforced for many years previous to 1813.

(i). *Religious Disabilities of Dissenters*

Religious *equality* on the other hand was still unknown. The Corporation Act (1661) and the Test Acts (1672 and 1678) were still in force. All members of Corporations were compelled within one year after election to receive the sacrament of the Lord's Supper according to the rites of the Church of England. All persons filling any office, civil or military, must subscribe a declara-

[1] See above, Chapter ii. § 1.

tion against transubstantiation, and receive the sacrament within three months after admittance to office. All peers and members of Parliament must make a declaration against transubstantiation and the invocation of saints. These measures were directed primarily against Roman Catholics, but their bearing on the position of Protestant Dissenters and of Jews is evident. As regards Marriage, it appears that from the time of the Reformation the ceremony, in order to be legal, must have been performed by a person "in holy orders," and from the Marriage Act of 1753 it must have been performed "in a consecrated building": and a Nonconformist minister was not "in holy orders," nor was his chapel a "consecrated building." The restriction of legal marriage to a place of worship belonging to the Church of England, while a hardship to all Dissenters, put upon Unitarians the severer strain of a service which in its very wording was an outrage upon their religious belief.

The great national Universities were closed against them: Oxford absolutely, while at Cambridge they might indeed enter as students but could receive no degree or fellowship. Moreover, at that time, Dissenters, in addition to having to support their own places of worship were compelled to pay "Church Rates"; and every year saw the furniture or other property of those who refused to pay distrained upon and

sold to maintain the neighbouring State Church. And every year brought up lesser cases of ecclesiastical oppression or annoyance, against which individuals were powerless.

Thus English Unitarians began their work of organized influence on the religious life of their time with generations of leeway to make up. Is it surprising that their progress was slow? For many years a large part of their effort had to be devoted to the struggle for "civil rights"; in other words, for religious liberty and equality. And in all this work the British and Foreign Unitarian Association had a most important and helpful part; and basing its appeal in all these matters, as it did from the beginning, on public right rather than on any mere denominational claim, it did much to rouse the conscience of England to the broad principles of religious liberty, on which it advocated the removal of the civil disabilities of Jews and of Roman Catholics as earnestly as those of Unitarians.

(ii). *The Corporation and Test Acts*

The general lines of policy to be followed in the struggle for liberty and equality had been laid down by the Civil Rights Association of 1819, and from 1825 the work was further organized and extended. It is set out in some detail in the second Annual Report of the British

and Foreign Unitarian Association (1827). At first the Committee considered the possibility of organizing a united appeal for the removal of the legal restrictions affecting the marriage ceremonial; but it was soon found that the most urgent need was for the repeal of the Corporation and Test Acts. It was therefore decided to address a communication to the "Society of Deputies,"—a body of representatives appointed to watch for every opportunity of securing and extending the civil rights of Dissenters in general. The Association was invited to send a deputation to this body. In their Report the Committee refer to "the impolicy and disgracefulness of the apathy manifested by Dissenters for so many years"; and in appointing the deputation, they "thought it proper to declare, by way of instruction, that a continuance in the present policy of the Dissenters was injurious alike to their character and their interests; and that the claims of the Dissenters should not be urged on selfish or exclusive grounds, but on the principle of denying to the civil magistrate the right or policy of making religious opinion or profession in any way a pretence for civil preference or exclusion."

The Committee pointed out certain facts which partly accounted for the "apathy" referred to. Hostility to Roman Catholicism was actually affirmed as a ground for avoiding any public

assertion of the claims of Dissenters for relief from their disabilities—lest a like relief should be granted to the Catholics; and the result was that there were "many decided advocates of the Emancipation of the Catholics who are either wholly indifferent or directly opposed to the relief of Protestant Dissenters." The Committee also refer to some persons "who have entertained the idea of urging the claims of one branch of Nonconformists to equal rights, while defending the proscription of another branch [evidently the Unitarians are meant]; and who must have learnt the utter hopelessness of such an attempt, in the unmeasured disgust and contempt which any manifestation of such a design has created in the mind of every individual in Parliament to whom they would look for assistance in the prosecution of their own claims."

It was found, however, that in the Dissenting communities in general there was a very considerable body of feeling in favour of the broader policy advocated by the Unitarians. A Joint Committee, representative of the different branches of Nonconformity, was appointed; active measures were taken for bringing the subject of the repeal of the Corporation and Test Acts before Parliament, and for securing the support and co-operation of members of the Legislature.

The result was that in the following year the imposition of the sacramental test as a qualifica-

tion for office was abolished (May, 1828). At the third Annual Meeting of the Association, a series of resolutions was passed in reference to this event, animated by the broadest and most generous spirit of toleration. The Act of Repeal is declared to be " a measure of relief, not merely to conscientious Protestant Dissenters . . . but also to the nation, which has been weakened by the divisions created by these intolerant Acts, and by the exclusion from the public service of a large part of the intelligent, virtuous, and efficient members of the community; and to the Christian Religion, which was wounded and dishonoured by the prostitution of the Lord's Supper, founded by the Saviour of the World for the promotion of humility and brotherly love, to the low and sordid uses of avarice and secular ambition, bigotry and faction."

Warm appreciation is expressed of the action of the Government for their withdrawal of opposition to Repeal; to the members of the Church of England (including a majority of the Bench of Bishops) who gave their support; to the Rt. Hon. Lord John Russell, the Rt. Hon. Lord Holland, Mr. John Smith, M.P., and Mr. William Smith, M.P., for their powerful and effective advocacy in Parliament, and to the Joint Committee for the Repeal of the Corporation and Test Acts, and especially the Unitarian members of it (Messrs. John Christie, John

Bowring, John Fisher, Thomas Hornby, Edgar Taylor, and Charles Richmond). Then follows this remarkable resolution (May, 1828):—

> That no difference of religious opinions, however wide, can lessen the sensibility of this meeting to the liberal and generous support which they received, in the late application to Parliament, from the Roman Catholics of the United Kingdom; and that common gratitude would compel them to make in return a tender of our best wishes on behalf of the claims of the Roman Catholics for unrestricted and equal religious freedom, even if we were not bound to aid, according to our means, the cause of these our fellow-subjects and fellow-Christians, by the still higher obligations of patriotism and of religion: believing as we do that the existing disqualifications which aggrieve the British and Irish Roman Catholic populations are in open hostility to the peace, union, and prosperity of the kingdom, and are at the same time a sure hindrance to the progress of, and a violation of, and dishonour to, our common Christianity, which establishes no point of morality more plainly, nor commands any duty more solemnly, than that one Christian shall not make the condition of another more wretched or less happy on account of his faithful adherence to the dictates of his conscience and the law of his God.

It must be added that in the next year (1829) all Acts requiring the taking of oaths against transubstantiation and kindred doctrines, were repealed by the Roman Catholic Relief Act (" Catholic Emancipation "). But the friendly feeling which had arisen between Unitarians and Roman Catholics—standing, as they do, at opposite poles of the theological diameter of Christendom—did not extend to the country as

a whole: because of the embittered relations with Ireland at the time, and the machinations of the ultramontane party in Rome.

We have dwelt thus on the attitude of the Association on the question of the repeal of these iniquitous Acts, because it shows the essential spirit in which public questions have been dealt with by the British and Foreign Unitarian Association throughout its history.

(iii). *The Marriage Acts*

With regard to the relief of Dissenters, and more especially of Unitarians, from the necessity of solemnizing their marriages by a temporary conformity to the Established Church, it was generally allowed that the Association had the merit of first exciting public attention to the question, and obtaining from leading members of successive Administrations, "expressions in favour of relief, as candid, ample, and explicit as could possibly be desired." The question occupied the attention of the Committee for several years, in frequent consultation with representatives of other nonconformist bodies. The difficulties were many, and the hostile influences evaded direct attack. During the period of the agitation for Parliamentary Reform (1832) the effort was suspended. In 1833 the Committee came to the conclusion that "the great and perhaps the only

material difficulty in obtaining the relief which they have so long sought, was the want of a good general system of Registration; and the Annual Meeting in that year adopted the following resolution:—

> That this meeting regards the present inquiry into the state of parochial registration as not the less interesting to Unitarians, because it may lead to great social advantages and most important legal securities for the nation at large: but that independently of these general and patriotic views, a plan for the universal registration of births, marriages, and deaths, by officers in their civil capacity, will be peculiarly serviceable in various ways to Dissenters from the Established Church; and in particular will facilitate the execution of that measure at which this Association has aimed from the beginning,—the relief of Dissenters from the operation of the existing Marriage Law.

The end desired was not attained until 1836, when Lord John Russell's Marriage Act became law concurrently with an Act prescribing a permanent General Registration of Births, Marriages, and Deaths. The Committee issued a "Circular Address to the Ministers and other Representatives of Churches in connection with the Association," explaining the provisions of the new Acts and the necessary methods of procedure under them.[1] In the Circular it is observed that the Law, passing over and disregarding all religious distinctions, provides for the record of the facts

[1] As a matter of fact, the Circular was sent "to the whole of our Congregations throughout England and Wales."

of birth, marriage, and death, as matters of civil regulation: "thus has been severed at once that connection between the Church and the State which practically interwove the ordinances of the former with all the leading relations of society; and the difficulties and prejudices that attended all interference with these matters, while on their former footing, being thus removed, it cannot be doubted that any improvements in the new system, which experience may show to be desirable, will easily be effected."

It has been observed that the requirement of the Registrar's attendance to see to the regularity of the proceedings, attaches a stigma of inferiority to the celebration of marriage in a dissenting place of worship; and yet it was doubtless a wise provision for securing accurate registration.

(iv). *Church Rates and University Tests*

It was hoped, in the year following the new Marriage Act, that the abolition of compulsory "Church Rates" would be passed, and the Annual Meeting of the Association in June, 1837, thanking Lord Melbourne and the members of the Government "for their wise, just and healing measure for the abolition of Church Rates, an impost which is injurious to the Church, degrading to Dissenters of all classes, and productive of animosity and dissension throughout the country."

Nevertheless a generation passed before these rates were abolished by a measure introduced into Parliament by W. E. Gladstone.

Religious tests remained in the English universities until 1871. To be a member of the Church of England was a necessary condition precedent for holding most university or college offices by the Act of Uniformity of 1662, and such offices were not affected by the Toleration Act of 1688, the repeal of the Corporation and Test Acts (1829), or the Roman Catholic Relief Act (1829). In 1871 the University Tests Act abolished subscription to the Articles of the Church of England, all declarations and oaths respecting religious belief, and all compulsory attendance at public worship in the Universities of Oxford, Cambridge, and Durham. In May, 1871, the Association passed a resolution rejoicing in the anticipated passing of the Universities Bill "which will throw open these national institutions to all, irrespective of creed"; and congratulating Mr. James Heywood, one of its Vice-Presidents, "on the approaching completion of a work which he commenced in the House of Commons a quarter of a century ago."

(v). *The Dissenters' Chapels Act*

We now take the story back to an earlier date in order to trace the rise and final defeat of an attack which, had it succeeded, would have

destroyed Unitarian Christianity as an organized force in the country.

The Trinity Act of 1813 was officially described as an Act, not for the relief of Unitarians in particular, but " to relieve persons, who impugn the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, from certain penalties." It enabled Unitarians to take their place as an influential factor in the larger whole of Protestant Dissent. But it was, in effect, a relief Act for Dissenters generally, since no Dissenter, professing Christianity, was now compelled by Law to be a Trinitarian ; and some Unitarians hoped for a large proclamation of Unitarian sentiments throughout the dissenting communities, encouraged by the Act of 1813.

They forgot the Trust Deeds. Within four years of the passing of the Trinity Act Unitarians were drawn into a struggle for the tenure of the meeting-houses which had descended to them from the period following the Toleration Act of 1689, and in some cases from the ejected Nonconformists of 1662. Their chief assailants were the Independents, then coming to be called Congregationalists. The older Chapel Trust Deeds of Dissenters—usually Calvinist in belief—rarely set out in detail schemes of doctrine; much more rarely than in the case of early *endowment* Trust Deeds. Without realizing what it would lead to, they were content to found their chapels simply for the worship of God. It was argued

that these Trusts could not legally be used for religious purposes which were not only contrary to the religious beliefs of the founders but were actually illegal at the time of foundation.

The first attack was begun in 1817 in connection with a Chapel in Wolverhampton whose Trust dated from 1700. The first result, however, was not satisfactory to orthodox Dissenters. It was laid down by Lord Eldon, giving judgment in the Court of Chancery, that a Trust for the worship of God pure and simple, is a trust for " maintaining and propagating the Established Religion of the country."[1] The foundations of other chapels were also attacked. Years of litigation ensued, the final issue of which was not determined until August, 1842, when the Hewley Trust, founded in 1705 by Lady Sarah Hewley, of York, for " poor and godly ministers of Christ's Holy Gospel," ministering north of the Trent, was removed from Unitarian management by judgment on Appeal given by the Lord Chancellor. This at once determined the issue in the Wolverhampton case and all similar claims,[2] and

[1] Compare Gordon's comments, *Heresy : its Ancient Wrongs and Modern Rights*, London, Lindsey Press, pp. 45 and 78.

[2] " The Trust was created for the benefit of congregations professing doctrines tolerated by the existing laws (at the time of foundation); which the preaching of Unitarian doctrines was not."—The Lord Chancellor on the Wolverhampton case, November, 1842.

established the fact that none of the older Dissenting Trust properties, even supposing them founded by Unitarians, were legally applicable to Unitarian uses. The Committee of the Association expressed no more than the truth when they observed in the eighteenth Annual Report (1843) that " the consequences of the decision to the property and interests of Unitarian Societies (congregations) throughout the kingdom, are most painful and momentous." The effect on denominational activity and enterprise is indicated in the following resolution, recorded in the same Report:—

> That in the present state of our Body, according to the general interpretation of the law as laid down in the Hewley and Wolverhampton cases, it is expedient that we make no further pecuniary grants to places of worship liable to the operation of the law aforesaid; and that all applications for such grants be postponed until, in the judgment of the Committee, our places of worship, etc., are legally secure.

The Committee perceived that the emergency required united action on a scale far wider than any contemplated in the ordinary operations of the Association. They therefore summoned a confidential meeting of Ministers and Laymen to consider the position; and at that meeting it was resolved that a larger meeting should be summoned, as a result of which a Society called " The Presbyterian Union " was formed, to guard the interests of the Chapels and Trusts, the confiscation of which was now threatened. The name " Presbyterian " was chosen in order to emphasize the fact that such property had been handed down, without any conscious violation of law or sudden change of principle or practice, from its founders, who were currently described by that name. It was felt by the legal adviser of the Unitarian body, Edwin Wilkins Field (1804-1871), that the only remedy was an Act of Parliament. Important political influences were available to promote the legislation required to secure these foundations. The result was the passing of the Dissenters' Chapels Act, July 1844. This Act secured Unitarians in their possession of trusts containing no doctrinal provision, when they could prove the undisputed usage of twenty-five years in favour of the opinions they held and taught.

The powerful advocacy of the Dissenters' Chapels Bill by W. E. Gladstone, always a convinced High Churchman, is as remarkable as his insight into the question at issue. " Here," he said, " were certain persons, who founded these chapels, entertaining one creed, and the present possessors of these chapels profess another creed. I admit that this sounds startling. But if you take the pains to follow the course of events from year to year, it is impossible to say that *at any given period* the transition from one doctrine to another was made. It was a gradual and

an imperceptible transition. The parties who effected it made a different use of the principle of inquiry by private judgment than those who had preceded them; but *they acted on a principle fundamentally the same.*"

A very serious effect of this long contest was not only to check dogmatic assertiveness and doctrinal propaganda by Unitarians, but also in some quarters, to discourage any endeavour to arrive at a clear consciousness of their position; save by dwelling on their historical affiliation with the so-called "Presbyterianism" of the early eighteenth century, and by the assertion of ideals which as soon as they were *defined* became "dogmatic" and therefore unacceptable. Gordon has observed that "after the ancient chapels were made safe, the Presbyterian idea was chiefly in evidence when denominational zeal was to be discountenanced."[1]

Underlying the situation thus briefly described, we can trace the interaction, and unfortunately the occasional opposition, of the two tendencies essential to the vitality of Unitarian Christianity[2]: a demand for spiritual *freedom*, and a demand for lucid and definite religious *teaching*. During the period following the Dissenters' Chapels Act, the consciousness of deliverance from a most formid-

[1] *Heads of English Unitarian History*, London, Lindsey Press, p. 53.

[2] See above, Ch. ii., sections ii. and iii.

able peril, and of the definite doctrinal propaganda which had led to this peril, created an exclusive emphasis on "freedom" as though this by itself were sufficient.

The attitude of the Association is indicated in the following resolution adopted at the Annual Meeting, May, 1844:—

> That we cannot but express our deep regret, however little may be our surprise, at the opposition to this Measure manifested by some ministers and members of the Established Church, and still more by various bodies of Dissenters, occasioned partly by misconceptions of its nature, partly by grievous and calumnious misrepresentations of those whom it is intended to protect; but while we lament the evidence which is thus furnished of intolerance and sectarian animosity, and even of desire to re-enact the penalties of obsolete persecuting statutes, in quarters where a different spirit might have been expected, we shall continue, through good report and through evil report, boldly and strenuously to uphold those great principles, *the sufficiency of Scripture, the right of private judgment, and the duty of free inquiry*, in the recognition of which our English Presbyterian forefathers founded their unfettered religious institutions, and under the influence of which so many of us have, with the blessing of God, been trained.

The legislation of 1844 constitutes a landmark in the history of organized Unitarian Christianity in England. Notwithstanding the "aftermath" of the great struggle, Unitarians entered on the new era with resolution though in a chastened spirit. It was marked by several prominent features. Among these was the re-building,

often in a handsome form, of many of the old chapels.[1] Another was the organization of District Societies, assisting locally the work in general supported by the British and Foreign Unitarian Association. The view taken by the Committee of the needs of the denomination for several years after 1844 is shown in the following extract from the twenty-fourth Annual Report (1849): "to strengthen the hands of those labouring in the vineyard of what we deem Scriptural truth,—to assist Societies (congregations) struggling with difficulties,—to keep their present Unitarian connection well and firmly together in these days of change,—to avail themselves of such opportunities as presented themselves for supplying ministers and others with means of information and usefulness by liberal grants from their stock of books and tracts,—this has been their chief and constant care; and they rejoice in having been the instruments on many occasions of great usefulness to the members of the churches dedicated to the worship of the One and only true God."

[1] A few of them, including Dukinfield and Bury, Lancashire, had been rebuilt before 1844.

Chapter V

WIDENING SYMPATHIES AND HOPES

(i). *Changing Bases of Belief*

AT the time when our story begins, Unitarian Christianity was, broadly speaking, a Biblical Religion, accepting miracles, and rejecting creeds, not as incredible, but as non-Biblical, resting its hopes on an external revelation, and attaching little importance to what it regarded as the uncertain inferences and promises of natural religion. Through the century a steady movement of doctrine can be traced, a movement inspired by influences springing from the personality and teaching of William Ellery Channing, Theodore Parker, John Hamilton Thom, and, above all, James Martineau. The result of that movement has been that the Seat of Authority in religion is no longer found within the covers even of the best and broadest of books, but in the reason and conscience of man, not of any individual man, but of mankind.

Unitarian thought has been deeply involved in

this "second Reformation" which has completely undermined the authority of the Bible as an infallible rule of faith and life. The early records show how those to whom the old scriptural Unitarianism was dear regarded the change with grave misgivings; and it will appear strange to Unitarians of the present generation to find that Martineau was once looked upon as a dangerous innovator.

The unique position which Martineau held in relation to the Unitarian Christian and Kindred Churches and to the British and Foreign Unitarian Association, was due not only to his commanding personal influence as a teacher and preacher, but also to the fact that the history of his own religious thought reflects almost point by point the changes which we have outlined in the preceding paragraphs. Martineau was an Honorary Member of the Association from 1834, when he delivered the Anniversary Sermon,—a service which he repeated in 1869. In this connection it is worth mentioning that on the occasion of his ninetieth birthday (April, 1894), when public attention was specially drawn to the distinguished position which he held among English thinkers and writers, paragraphs appeared in some newspapers stating or suggesting that he was "little of a Unitarian," and that in his later years "he had ceased to identify himself with the denomination." The following letter, written to the

Secretary of the Association in reply to the congratulations of its Council and Committee is therefore of historic interest:—

35 Gordon Square, London, W.C.,
April 23, 1894.

Dear Mr. Bowie,

If it has been a pleasant surprise to receive, on my recent anniversary, words of sympathy and benediction from many a stranger belonging to some communion other than our own, you give me a far more heartfelt satisfaction when you report the congratulations and good wishes of my fellows in an Association to which I have belonged from its commencement, and for which I have been permitted more than once to plead. That your Council and Committee so kindly and graciously remember me and note the steps of my retreat, now that my days of service are over, touches me deeply, and stirs in me a gratitude which I cannot adequately express.

Believe me always,
Yours affectionately,
JAMES MARTINEAU.

Martineau's complete severance from Orthodoxy could not be more effectively and dramatically stated than in the following passage from *The Seat of Authority in Religion*:

"Christianity, as defined or understood in all the Churches which formulate it, has been mainly evolved from what is transient and perishable in its sources: from what is unhistorical in its traditions, mythological in its preconceptions, and misapprehended in the oracles of its prophets. From the fable of Eden to the imagination of the last trumpet, the whole story of the Divine order of the world is dislocated and deformed. The blight of birth-sin with its involuntary perdition; the scheme of expiatory redemption with its vicarious

salvation; the incarnation with its low postulates of the relation between God and man, and its unworkable doctrine of two natures in one person; the official transmission of grace through material elements in the keeping of a consecrated corporation; the second coming of Christ to summon the dead and part the sheep from the goats at the general judgment;—all are the growth of a mythical literature, or Messianic dreams, or Pharisaic theology, or sacramental superstition, or apotheosis."

Lest any reader unfamiliar with the writings of Martineau should suppose from this extract that he was a mere iconoclast, the volumes of noble sermons, *Endeavours after the Christian Life*, and *Hours of Thought on Sacred Things*, should be carefully studied.

(ii). *Scriptural Unitarianism*

The early Reports and other records of the Association show how clearly its Committee recognized the theological and religious position of Unitarian Christianity at that period. The position is accurately summed up in the following striking statement from the twenty-sixth Annual Report (1851):—

The English Presbyterian Churches long ago pledged themselves to the great principle that *the Bible, and the Bible only, is the Religion of Protestants*. . . . Calmly, but perseveringly, it is the object of this Society to give strength and influence to that principle.

What was affirmed was not the plenary inspiration or infallibility of Holy Scripture, but its

supremacy and *sufficiency* as a rule of faith and life. Criticism had already distinguished different documents in Genesis. The narratives of the birth of Jesus were inconsistent with each other, and one or both might be rejected. But the Old Testament and the New Testament contained "authentic records of facts and of divine interpositions," and Charles Wellbeloved, Principal of Manchester College, York, could write in 1823:—

"Convince us that any tenet is authorized by the Bible, from that moment we receive it. Prove any doctrine to be a doctrine of Christ, emanating from that wisdom which was from above, and we take it for our own, and no power on earth shall wrest it from us."[1]

On this basis Jesus was presented as "a man constituted in all respects like other men, subject to the same infirmities, the same ignorance, prejudices and frailties,"[2] who was chosen by God to introduce a new moral dispensation into the world. For this end the Holy Spirit was communicated to him at his baptism, and he was endowed with supernatural capacities subject to the control of his own will. He was instructed in the nature of his mission during his sojourn in the wilderness, and, thus equipped as the Messiah,

[1] *Three Letters to Archdeacon Wrangham*, London, 1823, p. 51.

[2] Belsham, *A Calm Inquiry into the Scripture Doctrine concerning the Person of Christ*, London, 1811, p. 447.

was sent forth to reveal to all mankind without distinction the great doctrine of a future life in which men should be rewarded according to their works. Of this the supreme proof was found in the Resurrection, to which his death on the cross as a martyr for the Truth was a necessary preliminary; and he was destined to reappear to raise the dead and judge the world. This gospel left out much that was dear to the orthodox evangelical Christian; but, demanding as it did a constant conformity of the will of man to the will of God, it created a high moral tension in the lives of its serious advocates. Associated with the emphatic assertion of the Father's wisdom and beneficence, such views naturally anticipated the final victory of good. Thomas Southwood Smith (1788-1861) in his *Illustrations of the Divine Government*[1]—a book warmly admired by Byron and Wordsworth—powerfully impressed on Unitarian thought the doctrine of Universal restoration.

(iii). *Influence of James Martineau*

In 1834 Martineau, who had then been for two years minister of Paradise Street Chapel, Liverpool, was invited to deliver the Anniversary Sermon at the Annual Meeting of the Association

[1] Originally published at Glasgow, in 1816; now obtainable from the Lindsey Press, London.

held at South Place Chapel, Finsbury. In the Association's resolution of thanks, in the elaborate phraseology then customary, the Sermon was described as " eloquent, ingenious, philosophical, and animated." It anticipates some of the leading principles which have since been appropriated by theologians of various schools, and expresses sentiments which the religious world in England has scarcely yet attained; and as it is now not easily accessible, we may give a summary of its contents.

His subject is " The Existing State of Theology as an Intellectual Pursuit, and Religion as a Moral Influence." Taking for his text the account of the gift of tongues in Acts, he points out that " the ages are no less diversified than the countries of the world; and each, having a peculiar character, must be addressed in a peculiar language," and we are not to have " an inconsiderate passion for imitating the apostles." Animated by a wish to avoid this error, he proposes to enquire, " What are the means which we should now trust for the promotion of theological truth and the elevation of religious sentiment among the great body of the people ? " As ideas are " propagated downwards through the several gradations of minds," the first requisite is the cultivation of " theological science " by " men at once erudite and free, men who have the materials of knowledge with which to determine

the great problems of morals and religion, and a genius to think and imagine, and feel, without let or hindrance of hope or fear." This leads him to defend "the application of the word *science* to theology," against those who are justly repelled by the "leaden and soulless productions of the theological press," written by men who endeavour "to atone by microscopic accuracy for imbecility in fundamental principles," and who do not know "that true spirit of history, that sympathy with the soul of antiquity, which is essential to the interpreter of the venerable monuments of the past." This low condition of theology is partly due to the fact that the *right* of private judgement has been mistaken for the *power*, and grave and intricate questions have been submitted to incompetent arbitration; and "that sectarian democracy, which abandons exclusively to the suffrages of the multitude the decision of theological perplexities on which erudition and philosophy pause, needs an emphatic discouragement." The remedy for this, as for other social evils, is to be found in the "reduction of authority to its minimum, and the elevation of intelligence to its maximum." We must afford to the multitude "all needful knowledge." "Another cause of the poverty of theological science is found in the fatal association between mental error and moral turpitude," especially when "viewed in connection with

another mistake—the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures." Hence the alienation of thinking men from Christianity.

This, he proceeds to urge, is no time either for contentment or for despair. The fittest men to vindicate the gospel are "those who are not acted upon by the influences which have degraded it; those who see in it nothing to repress, but everything to stimulate, the intellect, the imagination, the affections." "When men of this kind are encouraged by public sentiment to devote themselves to a free search into the resources of religious science; when high powers of intellect, attracted by the mysteries of Nature, life, and miracle, can speculate on them without compromise of mental liberty, or loss of moral sympathy, there will be better hopes for Christianity. While, however, it is the business of theology to discover the great principles of faith and morals, it is that of religion to apply them; and this is the concern, not of the student, but of the preacher, and of all institutions which aim at the general diffusion of religious influences." But the attempts made in this country to bring controversy before popular tribunals while they have made theology superficial, have rendered religion sectarian. The evils of sectarianism, with "its cold and hard ministrations" and 'malignant exclusiveness" are exposed at length, and it is laid down that "the fundamental principle of one who would

administer religion to the minds of his fellow-men should be, that all that has ever been extensively venerated must possess ingredients that are venerable." The religious reformer must have "a deep and reverential sympathy with human feelings, a quick perception of the great and beautiful, a promptitude to cast himself into the minds of others, and gaze through their eyes at the objects which they love. . . . The precise logician may sit eternally in the centre of his own circle of correct ideas, and preach demonstrably the folly of the world's superstitions; yet he will never affect the thoughts of any but marble-minded beings like himself." The practical application of creeds would create "a new criterion of judgement between differing systems; *for that system must possess most truth, which creates the most intelligence and virtue.*" In conclusion he assumes that the objects of the Association are to distribute works which must redeem theology from contempt, and to establish "union and sympathy among those whose first principles are in direct contradiction to all that is sectarian, and who desire only to emancipate the understanding from all that enfeebles, and the heart from all that narrows it. Of the Association he says that *the triumph of its doctrines would be, not the ascendency of one sect but the harmony of all;* and he looks forward to the time when "our work will be done, our reward before us, and our

little community of reformers lost in the wide fraternity of enlightened and benevolent men."

Martineau's position at this time is indicated in his first published work, *The Rationale of Religious Inquiry* (1836). He cannot accept the position that the doctrines of the Trinity, the Atonement, and Eternal Punishment must be believed if they are to be found in the Scriptures. "No seeming inspiration," he affirms, "can establish anything contrary to reason." Nevertheless his positive conviction of the authority of the New Testament is clearly stated: "In no intelligible sense can anyone who denies the supernatural origin of the religion of Christ be termed a Christian," which term, he explained, was used not as "a name of praise" but simply as a "designation of belief."[1] From this point of view he censured the German critics for "having preferred, by convulsive efforts of interpretation, to compress the memoirs of Christ and his apostles into the dimensions of ordinary life."

Three years later, in the famous Liverpool controversy,[2] in a Sermon with the significant

[1] *Rationale*, second edition, Preface, p. vii.

[2] See the volume *Unitarianism Defended* (Liverpool, 1839), consisting of Lectures by Martineau, Henry Giles (1809-1882), and John Hamilton Thom (1808-1894), in reply to the attacks of thirteen Anglican clergymen. The book "raised controversial writing on this topic to a higher level of literary expression and intellectual eminence than it had previously attained" (Gordon).

title "The Bible as the great Autobiography of Human Nature from its Infancy to its Perfection," after claiming the right to discriminate between different parts of Scripture, and between a greater and a lesser " credibility " and " authenticity " in the documents of the New Testament, he observed:—

> With this qualification, we maintain with all other Christians, the ample credibility and the actual truth of the Gospel records, making no divorce between the natural and the miraculous, but taking both as inseparably woven together into the texture of the same faithful narrative.

Nevertheless in the same volume, in the midst of incisive criticisms of the evangelical scheme of salvation, he laid the foundations of a new view of Revelation, no longer as a communication of truth certified by miracles, but as an appeal to the conscience and affections, and a fresh interpretation of the moral life on the basis of Free Will instead of Necessity. Meanwhile Martineau was reading Strauss, and soon reached the conclusion that belief in miracles was not essential to Christianity. His first teacher, Charles Wellbeloved, had already insisted on the contemporary significance of many of the prophecies supposed to refer to Christ. When the miracles were disowned, the remaining guarantee of the supernatural character of Jesus fell away: the followers of Locke found themselves deprived of their " reasonable " Christianity, and the faith of

Christ seemed to become only a superior kind of natural religion.

Martineau then pursued a double line of study. In a group of articles in the *Westminster Review* he expounded the Tübingen reconstruction of the origins of Christianity on its *critical* side, while on the *philosophical* he vindicated the communion of the human spirit with the Divine, and presented Jesus as the expression, within the limits of our nature, of the righteousness and love of God. Revelation was thus transformed from supernatural instruction into the realization of more exalted Character; its medium was not a written word, but a higher Personality. To establish the principles of spiritual theism, and find a place in man's soul for that " dwelling in God and God in him " which Priestley had described as the highest type of personal devotion, was the aim of a long series of brilliant articles in the *Prospective* and *National Reviews*, which culminated in two great treatises, *Types of Ethical Theory* (1885) and *A Study of Religion* (1888), followed in 1890 by *The Seat of Authority in Religion*,—his final message, as a Unitarian Christian, to his age. The contrast between this message and that of 1839 is, however, in the form rather than in the substance of faith. He argued that in those portions of the Gospels which remain after legend and accretion have been cut away, we approach the central characteristics of the teaching and the

life of Christ. But the evidence of this is wholly internal, and has nothing to authenticate it except our sense of the inimitable beauty, the inexhaustible depth, the penetrating truth of the living words they preserve and the living form they present. Of our informants we know nothing, except that in such cases, what they tell us as reality it was plainly beyond them to construct as fiction.[1]

In setting religion free from servitude to the Church, the Protestant Reformation turned religion back on its sources in the soul. And in setting reason free to move in religious things within the limits of the written "Word of God," it forced to the front the further question of what those limits are, and prepared the way for another Reformation, quite equal in importance to the former one, though not attended with so many dramatic circumstances: a Reformation which has completely undermined the authority of the Bible as a "supreme and sufficient" rule of faith and life. The history of Martineau's religious thought reveals the working of this change in a man of powerful intellect and profound spiritual discernment; but the reactions of it were continually felt throughout the denomination, and are made evident from time to time in the history of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association.

[1] The critical conclusions on which these judgments are based are not here under discussion.

(iv). *A Critical Conference*

The twelfth Annual Report of the Committee (1837) contained the following paragraph:—

> One great defect in the present state of Unitarians, and one cause of the low condition of some of their Associations, is the want of union and co-operation. Few of the District Societies are connected with this Association or with one another. These institutions are highly useful and even indispensable, but their usefulness would be greatly increased by mutual and intimate communication; while by the same means both the zeal of the Unitarians as a body would be quickened and their power would be growingly heightened.

It will be observed that the need of *communication* is emphasised. There is no need to dwell on the physical and economic difficulties of intercommunication in the year 1837. But the Committee sought means of strengthening, and making more effective, the desire which actually existed for more and larger opportunities of free conference, for mutual information and encouragement, and practically for more co-operation. The Committee accordingly convened "an Aggregate Meeting of Unitarians" by circular addressed to "all Ministers and active Lay-members" throughout the denomination. It was held in Essex Street Chapel, London, on June 19th and (by adjournment) on June 22nd, 1838. A full report of the proceedings was made and is preserved in print. The report shows that the speakers were in touch with and concerned with the actual

realities of the situation. Although no programme of speakers had been arranged beforehand, there was no pre-occupation with small details or merely personal preferences or fancies. There is much in the report which is instructive for the problems of the present day. The range of topics suggested by the Committee for discussion was sufficiently vast:—

> The present state of the Unitarian Body in the United Kingdom, America, and the Continent of Europe; the expediency and practicability of a closer union and a more general co-operation between Unitarians at home and abroad; the desirableness of missionary exertions; the state of the Unitarian press, and the means of making it more available in the diffusion of Scriptural knowledge and pure Christianity; the necessities of the times in reference to academical education for the ministry; the means of training the youth of our congregations to take a deeper interest in our principles and institutions; the fittest plan of carrying the knowledge of pure and undefiled religion to the poor; the claims of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association upon the liberal support of the Unitarian public, and the changes in its plan and modifications in its measures required (if changes and modifications be required) to make it more fully answerable to the wants and wishes of the Unitarian body.

Several points of permanent interest, in the actual proceedings of the Meeting, may be recorded here. The discussion had not proceeded far before it was found necessary to affirm the principle of congregational independence, in the following resolution (moved by the Rev. William Turner of Halifax, seconded by the Rev. Hugh

Hutton of Birmingham, and carried with two dissentients):—

> That this meeting recognizes and acknowledges the complete and thorough independence of our separate Religious Societies, as to all matters of internal arrangement and discipline; and, while recommending Union, contemplates no measures which can interfere with this great and essential Principle.

This principle having been declared, the following resolution was carried respectively on the motion of the Rev. George Harris, of Glasgow, seconded by the Rev. William Turner:—

> That this meeting approves the general plan and constitution of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association, regards with great satisfaction the extensive and effective services rendered by it to the interests of Unitarian Christianity, and recognizes its claims to the respectful consideration and liberal support of the Unitarian public.

After these preliminaries, it was agreed, on the motion of the Rev. R. M. Montgomery, of Taunton, seconded by the Rev. Jerom Murch, of Bath, that it is expedient to adopt some effective plan of mutual co-operation and union among the Unitarians of the country. The question of the basis on which such co-operation was to be organized, if it was to be organized at all, then inevitably arose.

(v). *Modern Problems in an older Shape*

When we look back from this distance to the course of the discussion, we can discern a general

perception that the bases of belief were changing, and—closely connected with this—the need of reconciling the two tendencies which we have affirmed to be essential to the vitality of Unitarian Christianity: the one expressing itself in a demand for the widest spiritual freedom and fellowship; the other, in a demand for lucid and definite religious thought and teaching.

We may say that nearly all the specific practical measures discussed and recommended at this meeting have since been, at various times, and in various forms, adopted: as, for instance, a more businesslike management of the affairs of individual congregations; the strengthening and increase in the number of District Societies, enabling a group of congregations to hold periodic meetings for conference, and other business; the formation of regular ministers' societies, for conference on various aspects of pastoral and pulpit, work; the organization of sustentation and maintenance funds; and other similar matters. But the reports contain material of more than merely historical interest, and we have selected some illustrative extracts. At the opening of the meeting a communication was read from Rev. John James Tayler, of Manchester, containing the following paragraph:—

> The true change, I am persuaded, must come from within, from the awakening of a deeper and more earnest spirit of Religion in the heart of each separate congregation; and for the production of this effect, we can only look to increased exertion and zeal, in the true and loving spirit of the Gospel, on the part of our ministers and laymen, whom they can make fellow-labourers by inspiring them with the same deep religious life.
>
> Many other circumstances must concur to bring about this great spiritual reform in our church. Our ministers must be more carefully educated for their proper work as pastors and preachers. More pains must be taken to bring fit men into the ministry. Our laymen must be made to feel that if they attach any importance to the great cause of Truth and Freedom in which their fathers laboured,—if the toast of Civil and Religious Liberty, which they are so fond of giving at political dinners, is not to be regarded as an empty form of words,—they must join heartily with their ministers in the great work of religious renovation and improvement; they must cease to regard their churches and their ministers as a temporary make-shift and expedient till some future change has opened for them an access into the larger communion of the Establishment; but if they wish our churches to prosper and to do good, and even to bring about any such change as they contemplate, they must view them as possessing, in their particular time and place, an independent title to respect, and, by their countenance and sympathy, invest them with that moral worth and dignity, the sense of which does more for a cause than secular wealth and distinction, but which a man must feel, to labour in it with all his heart and all his soul.

At a later stage in the proceedings, Mr. John Fisher, of London, made the following observations, introducing a resolution which was defeated at the moment by moving the "Previous Question," but the substance of which was afterwards embodied in a resolution moved by the Rev. James Martineau, as noted below:—

We have also felt that with a strong conviction of the truth and purity of our views, we have not produced such large and influential effects on those without us as could be desired; we have not carried conviction as we could wish to the hearts and minds of those whose views are opposed to our own. Now this arises, in my opinion, in a great degree from the position in which we have been placed, as a sect emerging from other sects, and for the last fifty years debating and discussing doctrinal points and vindicating our secession. The confessors of our faith, who so nobly fought the great battle of religious freedom, were deeply and necessarily engaged in such controversies, and the result of their labours we are now reaping; but, as is the case with most human affairs, the benefit is not altogether without alloy. Their time and their attention were occupied in the removal of a vast deal of doctrinal error, the accumulation of ages, and their labours were crowned with success. The truths they so zealously fought to establish, appear to the minds of the junior branches of our congregations at the present day, in a great measure self-evident; and the ministers of our faith now have nothing to beat down of prepossession or prejudice in favour of early errors.

After dwelling on the genuine piety which the early confessors of Unitarianism brought with them from their former associations, Mr. Fisher proceeded:—

The inconvenience which has attended the battle they fought is, that our attention has been too much drawn to contests for our opinions; and this in some measure to the neglect of those vital principles of piety which ought to be the main object in every religious community. We have put our Unitarianism as an "ism," too much in advance, and the consequence is that the essence of Christianity, the soul of religion, has not held that pre-eminence in our community

which it ought to have done. It is the want of that evangelical spirit which we feel, and which leads our youth to attend services where it is found, though in connexion with doctrinal error. I am persuaded that the more attention is paid to this subject, the more effectively shall we promote Unitarian principles and Unitarian views—and let me add that, in my opinion, Unitarian principles and Unitarian views are of no value except as promotive of that higher, that vital principle, which is all, and for all.

These observations evidently reflected the desire for spiritual freedom and wider fellowship. On the other hand, the desire for definiteness, as it was then felt, is reflected in the following extracts from a speech by the Rev. Thomas Madge, in reference to the same resolution:—

I can only say for myself, that, whatever may have been the habits of my early days, controversial preaching is what I seldom indulge in at present: at the same time if I have to preach on the character of God, I must necessarily introduce what are called Unitarian views: if I have to preach on the love of God, on the character of Christ, and on several other topics, I must necessarily introduce Unitarian views, not controversially, but clearly and distinctly and intelligibly. I do not understand what is meant by faith on conviction, and other vague transcendental notions which have been expressed. I wish to have everything stated plainly and clearly, and I appeal to the ministers generally whether the mode of preaching among us is such as to call for the resolution and the remarks which accompanied it.

After referring to the importance and value of free inquiry in religion, by the exercise of which he himself had been led in early life to leave the Church and its creed, Mr. Madge proceeded:—

Just and enlightened views of the character of God, the nature of man, the principles of duty, and of the conditions of happiness here and hereafter,—these are the principal topics which should engage the preacher; and speaking for myself, I should be willing to forego altogether the discussion of any other and inferior topics, if I saw that such discussions were likely to operate as a bar to the success of those principles which are of the first and highest consequence. . . . All sorts of notions and opinions are constantly put forward with inconsiderate heedlessness, not so much to see how the great cause of Truth can be served, as to parade our own bravery and singularity. . . . People must entertain different opinions, and form different estimates of the value of those opinions, and everyone must act according to his own sense of the worth of the belief which is in him; but we must be on our guard not to throw additional obstacles in the way of what we believe to be important Christian truths, by connecting with them matters of a more doubtful and more questionable nature.

Mr. Madge evidently regarded the newer views as to the seat of authority in religion as matters of mere speculative curiosity:—

The great truths of pure Christianity are committed to our custody and guardianship, and we must take care that they are presented to our people as free from human alloy and admixture as we can make them. If we do this,—if it be generally seen that we are not sending forth the speculations of our own ingenuity, but what we solemnly believe to be the truth as it is in Jesus,—and if the language we use be the language of those we speak to, if it be simple and earnest,—and this is an indispensable condition, for the road to the heart is from the heart, and to reach the understanding we must take the circuit of the affections,—if we do this, we shall find that though we may not meet with all the success we could wish, yet that we shall have such a measure of success as will prove that we have not laboured in vain.

The point of view of conservative scriptural Unitarianism is very fairly represented in the following observations by the Rev. Benjamin Mardon:—

I have ever held it to be the distinguishing glory of Unitarians, that we are what we profess to be, a scriptural sect; and that, while we carry our intellectual faculties—faculties as highly cultivated as those of any other denomination—to the study and interpretation of the Holy Scriptures, we are fully prepared, should our reason meet with anything which it is inclined to question, but which we hold to be an express dictate of revelation, we are prepared to make our reason bow to it. . . . Is it intended to be affirmed that our opinions are first to be formed, our minds made up, and then that we are to come to the Scriptures merely for a confirmation of our opinions? This is just what the orthodox say of us: this is one of the great points on which they found their calumnies against us. No, Sir; we do not confirm the deductions of our reason by the Scriptures, but we make use of our reasoning faculties in the study of the Scriptures. If we once depart from this sacred principle, we shall inflict a wound on Unitarianism which it will not soon recover.

Near the close of the proceedings of the second day the Rev. James Martineau, of Liverpool, in proposing an important resolution[1], severely criticized what he regarded as the excessively controversial tone of the Unitarian propaganda of the previous generation, and pleaded energetically for

[1] The resolution is quoted in connection with the subject of our concluding chapter.

a more positive and constructive gospel, involving less negative criticism of Orthodoxy,[1] and more positive effort to revive religion among those who were losing hold of it. As a matter of historical fact, some of his judgements, taken at their face value, were less than just; but the following plea for progressive thought is of permanent interest:—

Our lapses from the mark of orthodoxy have no uniform direction, and reach to every gradation of distance, within the limits of Christianity. Some of us place the miracles at the very foundation of our religion; others esteem the distinction between the natural and the supernatural of slight account. Some affirm the entire consistency and partial inspiration of the Scriptures; others conceive that the several books teach a somewhat different theology, and that the true idea of their authority must be sought in something better than the intellectual infallibility of the contents. Some give their assent to the general scheme of interpretation by which our elder writers efface from the New Testament the traces of Calvinistic peculiarities; others esteem it fundamentally erroneous, and wholly incapable of producing the convictions expected to result from it. It is vain to conceal, and worse than vain to deplore, these inevitable differences—to reiterate lectures on the rashness of speculation, and demand submission to any one school of Unitarianism.

In reference to the observations of Mr. Madge and of Mr. Mardon, the speaker said:—

An open mind, intent an thoughtful progress, is more modest than a closed one; and veneration for our predecessors is most truly manifested, not by embalming their opinions,

[1] An example of his own later and powerful negative criticism is quoted above, p. 69.

but by taking up their vow of self-devotion to truth and humanity and God. To indulge in mutual theological distrust, under any desire to keep up an appearance of uniformity, I conceive to be treason against the intellectual liberty of which we are justly proud. It is wiser to give a frank reception to all well considered varieties of sentiment, and to acknowledge that they offer serious obstacles to any zealous and hearty sectarian co-operation. But independently of these actual differences, can it be expected that our present forms of opinion will continue uniform and permanent? Is it consistent with experience to suppose that a Church, however wise and however confident its members, is to be exempt from the laws of intellectual and social change? Some preceding speaker has expressed his undoubting belief that our existing Unitarianism is destined to be the world's universal and eternal faith. Happy and complacent belief—held and disappointed by every sect in turn, with respect to its own creed, yet living and fervent still—needful, perhaps, to maintain the zeal of successive generations, yet surely maintaining it on delusion! . . . I, too, doubt not that either our present Unitarianism, *or something far better*, will be the ultimate faith of men; but I conceive that we are obviously in a state of transition, that every mark which history ever affords of such a state is to be found among us—in one direction, a great ferment of ideas: in another, a determined stand upon old ones; and everywhere a consciousness of religious defect, exciting earnest but vague aspirations after improvement.

(vi). *Liberal Conservatism*

It is evident that the position of thought and feeling to which Martineau was moving would not be reached without a struggle. But the advocates of Biblical Unitarianism who resisted his "in-

novations" were generally much more liberal in their tone than is sometimes supposed. This is indicated in the quotations given above. Men like William Johnson Fox, of Finsbury Chapel, where the Association held its first Annual Meeting, suffered the penalty of being a generation in advance in casting off the "supernatural"; but the process of growth was really more regular and free from catastrophe than might be thought.

"Liberal Conservatism" is a fair description of the policy of the Association during the middle years of the century. The following extract from the thirty-second Annual Report (1857) implies a recognition of inevitable change together with an opinion (shared at the time by the denomination at large) that the common principles were still those of Scriptural Unitarianism:—

> Not the least significant proof that Unitarian theology encourages freedom and progress, and that the denomination is of all others least open to the charge of mental stagnation, is the fact that various shades of opinion are held by those amongst us, who are the most zealous promoters of religious inquiry. While, however, recognizing this important fact, your Committee would earnestly disclaim any attachment to any exclusive views or partial interpretation of the sacred records, and they hope that there will never exist in the body generally, any rivalry which is inconsistent with a desire for truth and a resolve to carry out the great principle of Christian love. In all their transactions they have not been influenced by any feeling of undue sympathy with any one class of men of Unitarian opinion. They conceive that the object which the founders of your Association had in view, can be heartily promoted by every Unitarian; and in rendering an account of their stewardship, your Committee claim to address themselves to the Christian brotherly feeling of all those who, whatever their opinions on minor theological points may be, are united in that simple Apostolic confession: "To us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him."

In the following year, in reference to a series of Sermons published by the Association under the title of *The Unitarian Pulpit*, the Report observes:

> One circumstance we would mention with a feeling of peculiar pleasure,—it is that the *Unitarian Pulpit* contains discourses contributed by ministers representing every variety of Unitarian opinion. We regard this circumstance as an evidence that the widest differences in the interpretation of our views of the Gospel need not prevent the kindliest and most hearty union in all Christian works.

Nine years later, when Martineau and John James Tayler were seeking to formulate a basis of Christian Fellowship which should avoid what seemed to them to be the too doctrinal implications of the Association's name, an effort in the opposite direction was initiated. In the summer of 1865, the Rev. Samuel Bache, of Birmingham, appealed to the Committee of the Association to "remove all ambiguity as to the acceptance of the special and immediate divine origin and authority of the Christian revelation." Shortly afterwards he issued an address in which he pointed out that at the time when the Association was founded, the

meaning of both the terms by which its objects were expressed,—" the promotion of the principles of Unitarian Christianity at home and abroad,"—was clear and undisputed. Christianity was universally maintained by Unitarians, equally with Trinitarians, as the distinctive designation of the belief in Jesus as the Christ, in his mission and inspiration and doctrine as immediately and specially divine and as carrying with them a direct divine authority.[1]

Accordingly, at the Annual Meeting in May, 1866, Mr. Bache moved:—

> That the following addition be made to Rule I: " These principles including the recognition of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ as the only God and the only proper Object of religious worship, and also the recognition of the special divine mission and authority, as a Religious Teacher, of Jesus Christ himself."

The motion was lost, the " Previous Question " being carried by a large majority (on the motion of Sir John Bowring, F.R.S., seconded by the Rev. T. L. Marshall). And then the action was taken which led to the abandonment of direct and official congregational representation in the membership of the Association.[2]

No further attempt, to induce the Association directly to formulate a dogmatic creed, are on

[1] See *The Inquirer*, June 10, August 12, and September 23, 1865.

[2] See ch. iii. p. 39.

record, but a decade later, an effort was made to secure the same result indirectly in connection with a detail of practical policy. The Council of the Association, at its meeting in September, 1875, issued instructions to publish the *Discourse on Matters pertaining to Religion*, by Theodore Parker. These were repeated, on re-consideration, at the Council Meeting in January, 1876. A number of members of the Association objected to the substance and the form of many of Parker's statements about the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures and the authority of Christ. Whatever may be thought of the form of some of these statements, the fundamental ground of objection was that Parker had frankly abandoned belief in the supremacy and sufficiency of Scripture and in the unique divine authority and supernatural character of the mission of Christ.

Quite apart from the personality of the individuals who were involved in the controversy of 1876, its effects were unfortunate. It was an attempt to force the Association into a position which was becoming more untenable with every year that passed. The interpretation of Unitarian Christianity which was historically the only possible one in 1825 was not the only possible interpretation, nor—in the view of many—was it the most rational interpretation, in 1875; in effect it would have tied the movement down to a narrow scripturalism and supernaturalism, and

made this the basis of an *Index expurgatorius* of books fit to be published by the Association.

It was found necessary to hold a Special General Meeting of the Association, March, 1876, in Essex Street Chapel; and at this meeting the following resolution was passed:—

> That the form of Unitarian Christianity represented in its general character by the works of Theodore Parker should be fairly recognized in the publications and operations of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association, in accordance with the same spirit of comprehensive liberality which has guided it in the publication of works of Channing and Priestley.

The resolution concluded by confirming the instruction of the Council for the issue of Parker's Sermons and Prayers; but it was not considered necessary to republish the *Discourse of Religion*, a cheap edition of which was still unexhausted. It is distinctly understood that a book may be published in the name of the Association as calculated to promote the principles of Unitarian Christianity, without involving the Association or any of its members in responsibility for every particular expression or statement of the writers. For a considerable period a statement to this effect was regularly inserted in all books and pamphlets issued by the Association; but for many years past it has been omitted as unnecessary. It is well known that writers are themselves responsible for what they write; and

that the publications of the Association and of the Lindsey Press which it controls are not confined to any one school or type of Unitarian thought.

In an earlier chapter we distinguished two different tendencies embodied in the tradition of the group of Churches which the Association represents: a demand for personal religious freedom, and a demand for clear and definite religious thought and teaching. The work of the Association has naturally had most to do with the second tendency; but its constitution and history show that, allowing for errors of individual judgement by which every human movement is affected, it has always been friendly to the former. The most striking fact in this connection is that Unitarian Christianity, the promotion of which is the primary object of the Association, has never been officially defined by the Association, and (as shown above) proposals for an official definition have been rejected. Unitarian Christianity, at any period, has meant for the Association what it has meant for the denomination at that period. This is true at the end of the century as at the beginning.

Chapter VI

ORGANIZED WORK

THE work of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association from its foundation was laid out in different departments. This was originally due to its historical connection with the earlier Societies. Its Book department was linked to the Book Society, and its Civil Rights Department to the Association bearing that name. And with regard to the Unitarian Fund, we have already observed that as early as 1820 the Rev. Brook Aspland, then Secretary of the Unitarian Fund, and afterwards the first Secretary of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association, had called attention to the need and the opportunity for entering into communication with kindred movements abroad. It is clear that in the designation of the Association, the word "Foreign" was deliberately inserted, and was intended to be taken seriously, and from the beginning of its history two of the most important departments of its work have been known by

the familiar titles of "Home Mission" and "Foreign Mission" (afterwards "Colonial and Foreign"). These two departments have never been regarded as rivals. On the contrary a wider outlook on the world movement of liberal religion ought to inspire and strengthen the Home Mission work, which, in its turn, reacts in favour of the work abroad. It has been said: "What do they know of England who only England know?" In like manner, it may be said: What do they know of Liberal Christianity, and above all of the Unitarian version of it, who know it or care for it only as it is within the bounds of their own parish or district?

In addition, therefore, to the Publications department and the Civil Rights department, we find from the beginning a practical recognition of the remaining field of work as falling into two main divisions,—the Home Mission and the Foreign Mission. In the original rules of the Association these departments were designated respectively, the "Book and Tract Fund," the "Civil Rights Fund," the "Congregational and Missionary Fund," and the "Foreign Fund,"—it being understood that subscriptions and donations might be earmarked for one or other of these Funds in particular. This practice, however, appears to have fallen into disuse after a few years. But the importance attached to the division of the field of work is seen in the appoint-

ment of the Rev. W. J. Fox, of Dalston, as "Foreign Secretary," and the Rev. Dr. Rees, of Kennington, as "Book and Tract Secretary," in addition to the appointment held by the Rev. Robert Aspland, described simply as "Secretary." These were honorary offices, held by eminent ministers in active service who gave part of their time and ability to the work of the Association. The salaried officer at that time was described as "Under-secretary and Collector." The Rev. Robert Aspland held the office of Honorary Secretary until 1830, when ill-health compelled him to relinquish it. The Rev. W. Johnson Fox acted as General Secretary for a year, after which the office was held by the Rev. James Yates until 1835, when Mr. Aspland resumed the work, retiring in 1841. By this date it had been perceived that departmental Secretaries were not required, although the departmental work was increasing. The Rev. Edward Tagart was Honorary Secretary from 1841 to 1859, being assisted during the last four years of this period by the Rev. T. L. Marshall. From 1859 to 1870 the Rev. R. Brook Aspland, son of Robert Aspland, was Honorary Secretary. His work was hindered at times by imperfect health; and for the last three years of his term of office he was assisted by the Rev. Robert Spears, who became General Secretary in 1870.

(i). *Early Resources*

The significance of the following figures will be evident even to readers not accustomed to dealing with statistical returns.

Year.	*Total Income.*	*Principal heads.*
1826 ..	£1594 ..	£395 Balance of *Unitarian Fund*; £60 ditto *Civil Rights Association*; £1138 Collections, Donations, Subscriptions.
1827 ..	£1430 ..	£360 Balance previous year; £992 Coll., Don., Sub.
1828 ..	£1904 ..	£451 Balance; £1176 Coll., Don., Sub.; £267 Sales publications.
1829 ..	£1475 ..	£455 Balance; £858 Coll., Don., Sub.; £118 Sales; £50 Legacy used as income.
1830 ..	£1267[1] ..	£140 Balance; £958 Coll., Don., Sub.; £105 Sales.
1831 ..	£1390 ..	£1304 Coll., Don., Sub.; £86 Sales.
1832 ..	£1441 ..	£284 Balance; £1038 Coll., Don., Sub.; £69 Sales.
1833 ..	£1357 ..	£332 Balance; £844 Coll., Don., Sub.
1834 ..	£1082 ..	£118 Balance; £894 Coll., Don., Sub.; £70 Sales.
1835 ..	£939[2] ..	£23 Balance; £818 Coll., Don., Sub.; £35 Sales.
1836 ..	£954[3] ..	£874 Coll., Don., Sub.; £52 Sales.
1837 ..	£871 ..	£19 Balance; £792 Coll., Don., Sub.; £60 Sales.

[1] Less £73 excess of expenditure.
[2] Less £63 excess of expenditure.
[3] Including £29 Legacies used.

In this year (1837) it was decided to arrange for the holding of a representative Conference in London to consider the position and prospects of the Unitarian Christian churches throughout the country. The Conference was held in the following year, and we have given an account of it in the previous chapter. In the financial year 1837, the Association only spent £53 on Home Grants, and £140 on Foreign Grants (Unitarian Christian Congregation, Madras).

Year.	*Total Income.*	*Principal heads.*
1838	£1153	£248 Balance; £866 Coll., Don., Sub.; £58 Sales.
1839	£1212[1]	£316 Balance; £756 Coll., Don., Sub.; £34 Sales.
1840	£1113[2]	£386 Balance; £677 Coll., Don., Sub.; £50 Sales.
1841	£902	£126 Balance; £724 Coll., Don., Sub.; £52 Sales.
1842	£1005[3]	£176 Balance; £705 Coll., Don., Sub.; £24 Sales.
1843	£1140	£95 Balance; £658 Coll., Don., Sub.; £91 Sales; £194 Calcutta Fund.

In 1843 the proceeds of the Calcutta Unitarian Church property, originally provided by the Association, began to be available; and under the wise advice of the Honorary Secretary, the Rev.

[1] Including Legacy £105 used.
[2] Including Legacies £138 used.
[3] Including Legacy £100 used.

Edward Tagart, it was decided to begin to form a Capital Fund for investments, and to treat Legacies, as a rule, as capital rather than as income.

Year.	*Total Income.*	*Principal heads.*
1834	£996	£265 Balance; £628 Coll., Don., Sub.; £52 Dividends; £50 Sales.
1845	£1010[1]	£119 Balance; £770 Coll., Don., Sub.; £57 Dividend; £35 Sales.
1846	£828	£694 Coll., Don., Sub.; £71 Sales; £63 Dividends.
1847	£1183[2]	£213 Balance; £696 Coll., Don., Sub.; £63 Dividends.
1848	£1065[3]	£246 Balance; £645 Coll., Don., Sub.; £63 Dividends.
1849	£1050	£245 Balance; £683 Coll., Don., Sub.; £63 Dividends.
1850	£1030[4]	£165 Balance; £595 Coll., Don., Sub.; £65 Dividends; £40 Sales.

The range and scope of the Association's operations were evidently restricted by the modest resources placed at the disposal of the Committee. Thus, in 1849 the sum of £245 was spent on grants to the following congregations: Alnwick, Battle, Bettws, Billingshurst, Chesterfield, Doncaster, Dorchester, Hinckley, Huddersfield, Ilminster, Lydgate, Lynn, Poole, Rolven-

[1] Less £27 excess of expenditure.
[2] Including £56 Legacies used and £115 Special Income.
[3] Including £69 Legacies used.
[4] Including £90 Legacy used, and Special Income £40.

den, Southampton, Strabane (Ireland), Thorne, Tipton, Welton, Wisbech, Yaxley, Yeovil, and to the Manchester Village Missionary Society; and out of a special Fund, temporarily administered by the Association, grants were made to the following congregations: Aberdeen, Battle, Canterbury, Cheltenham, Devonport, Huddersfield, Jersey, Malton, Southampton, Torquay.

When considering the history of Unitarian Christianity during the first half of the nineteenth century, we must always bear in mind the discouraging and depressing effect of the danger and uncertainty of the twenty-five years previous to the Dissenters' Chapels Act (1844). As long as the possession of the old Chapel Trusts by the Unitarians was threatened, there was a natural reluctance even to incur any considerable expense for maintenance and repair of the building. In his Jubilee Sermon at Cross Street Chapel in 1878, the Rev. William Gaskell said that when his ministry began in 1828, "the congregations at Sale, Platt, Dob Lane, and Blackley had fallen into so low a state that they threatened almost to become extinct, but are now in a sound and healthy condition." Platt Chapel, Manchester, is stated to have been in a state of disrepair, and the congregation had nearly disappeared. These cases are typical of what was taking place in many parts of the country during this period of danger and anxiety. When it ended, in 1844,

the lost ground began to be recovered in many cases; but by no means in all.

The fact is that among the places of worship which were called Presbyterian and afterwards became Unitarian, quite half were very small chapels in country places, dependent upon two or three influential families in the neighbourhood. It was their support which maintained the ministry, and their moral influence which kept together a little congregation of their neighbours in spite of the constant pressure of the Established Church. As long as the old legal penalties remained, these old families held to the traditional cause of Nonconformity. But gradually, as the days of persecution receded into the past, the social prestige of the Episcopal Church, enhanced, let it be said, by *a great revival of its religious life* drew away numbers of these old families, and the small country congregations were left weak and poor, to maintain a precarious struggle for existence by aid from the body at large. It speaks well for the patient fidelity to their faith on the part of these little groups of Unitarians that after this process of decay had been going on for a full generation, there were in the middle of the century about a hundred of these small country societies still holding together. The British and Foreign Unitarian Association from the beginning helped these struggling causes, especially where any growth of population held out some

hope of revival and living usefulness; but in many cases with all the younger life drifting into the cities and the older gradually passing away, the help which was given only prolonged the process of decay; and during the century a considerable number of such congregations became extinct. The names of some of them appear in the list given above. The following figures, however, are of some interest and significance in the present connection. *The British Unitarian Almanac*, published in the year 1848, records two hundred and thirty-eight Unitarian and kindred places of worship in England, thirty in Wales. The *Essex Hall Year Book* in its first issue (1890) records two hundred and sixty-two in England and twenty-six in Wales, and in its thirty-sixth issue (1925), two hundred and seventy-eight in England and thirty-three in Wales. These figures suggest that there is another side to the picture.

In the Home Mission field the constitution of the Association has from its beginning included two main purposes: (1) Maintenance work, in aid of existing churches, and (2) Propaganda work. These two aims have never been regarded as mutually exclusive. Financial and other aid to churches has frequently proved to be propaganda work of the highest order. In the original Rules of the Unitarian Fund it was stated that the best way of promoting Unitarian Christianity is to

support Unitarian worship; and in the eighth Annual Report of the Association it is affirmed that *the support of public worship on Unitarian principles is one of the chief and primary objects for which the Association was established.* Before following this narrative further, we must record an important enterprise initiated by the Committee of the Association in the earliest years of its history.

(ii). *Domestic Missions*

In June, 1830, the Anniversary meetings of the Association were held in London and continued in Manchester, and at the Manchester meeting the following recommendation, among others, was made: "That the Committee of the Association consider whether they cannot effect the establishment of City Missions, on a plan and for purposes similar to those detailed in the Reports of the Rev. Dr. Tuckerman, of Boston, U.S.A." In the Annual Report for 1831, it is observed:—

> This plan has largely occupied the attention of your Committee, and the result has been a general and deep conviction of the immense moral good which it is calculated to accomplish. A statement of their views of the nature and objects of such a Mission has already been laid before the Unitarian body, in a circular which has been extensively distributed, and to which they entreat the attention of all who have hearts to feel for the wretched condition of the poor and ignorant,

and who desire the extension to them of the blessings of pure religion. The pecuniary means for the support of a Mission to the poor have to be created. Its establishment would be alike an honour to the Unitarian name and a blessing to the community.

In their Report presented in 1832 the Committee observe that, while the response to the circular of appeal had not been as large as they had hoped, they were nevertheless justified in organizing a scheme for such work in one of the poorest districts of East London; and after due inquiry they had appointed the Rev. R. K. Philp, who "had resigned the pastorship of a congregation sincerely attached to him in the city of Lincoln, to devote himself to the painful labours and encounter the distressful scenes which await the poor's exclusive Missionary in this vast and chequered metropolis." A stipend of £150 per annum for three years was provided; and at the end of that period it would be possible to judge of the claims of the experiment to further encouragement, and to see "in what degree rational expectation, if not sanguine wishes, have been fulfilled."

In the Missionary's preliminary report, after surveying the ground, the following facts are emphasized:—

Your Missionary has had opportunity of observing that much misery exists amongst the poor, and that vice and wretchedness abound. To meet and correct these, he considers that *union, zeal, and co-operation are necessary on the part of the friends of virtue and of men*; and he is also persuaded that little can be done without funds to enable the visitor of the abode of wretchedness to afford some pecuniary relief to suffering humanity. The visitor's own feelings, which sympathy with the distressed will necessarily create, and the urgent necessities of the poor sufferers, render this indispensable. . . . Your Missionary is by no means sanguine as to any great degree of success that may attend his exertions; nor is he disposed to despair of effecting *some* good; of being the means of diffusing information, and, through the Divine blessing, of being instrumental in promoting the improvement and comfort of a small portion of the human family; and in order to do this, he would humbly but earnestly invite the union, the zeal, the co-operation, and the contribution of the friends of man, and the well-wishers to Missionary exertions.

In his second Report after more than a year's work, Mr. Philp spoke as follows, after describing some painful cases which had come under his observation:—

Experience has shown your Missionary that it is not only necessary to blend the wisdom of the serpent with the harmlessness of the dove, but to add to these a little of the fox's cunning with the daring of the lion. Ignorance, vice, depraved habits, and hypocrisy, array themselves against the moral reformer and the Christian philanthropist; and these are no trifling obstacles to his success. They have a tendency to try his faith, to damp his ardour, to exhaust his patience, and to destroy his hope. . . . He has had the opportunity of visiting the sick; of relieving the distressed; of consoling the sufferer; of attending the bed of the dying, and of sympathizing with the bereaved. One of the most, if not the most pleasing feature in the case, in his opinion, is the opening of a

place of worship for the poor, through the kindness of the Committee, and the supply of books and other necessaries for a Sunday school, which has been commenced and carried on in that place through the benevolence of private individuals and the valuable aid of gratuitous and active teachers. The school, which was commenced with a dozen children, now has on its books one hundred and thirty-six boys and girls, whose attendance is as regular, and whose general behaviour is as good, as could reasonably be expected in their circumstances.

The religious services of the chapel on Sunday evenings have been pretty well attended by some of the older children, and a few of their parents and others; and considering the district in which the chapel is situated, with very little interruption.

The building referred to by Mr. Philp was a chapel in Spicer Street which the Committee hired for the purpose. The present Mansford Street Church and Mission, Bethnal Green, is directly descended from this institution of 1832. In their Report for 1834 the Committee say that they have long and seriously considered the separation of the City Mission from the British and Foreign Unitarian Association, and have come to the opinion that such separation is desirable and would be advantageous both to the Association and the Mission. The result was the formation of Societies whose aim was to organize and superintend religious and philanthropic work on the same general lines as in Spicer Street, London. To emphasize its essential character, it was described as "Domestic Mission" work. The Manchester Domestic Mission was founded in

1863, the London Domestic Mission Society in 1835, and the Liverpool Domestic Mission Society in 1836. Similar institutions were started, later, in Belfast, Birmingham, Bristol, Leicester, and London (Carter Lane, 1863).

(iii). *Missionary and Publications Work to* 1850

We now return to the narrative of the organized work of the Association. In the early days of its history, the possibility of employing the services of travelling missionaries, "whenever the state of the public mind was deemed favourable to that method of proselytising them," was considered. It is evident from the records that the number of Ministers available was insufficient to provide for the needs of the existing congregations. Occasionally a Minister could be released for travelling missionary work; but more frequently the services of laymen, ungrudgingly given, were employed. Interest was aroused among many local groups of people; but *in the absence of local leadership* it was found very difficult to build up congregations with any prospects of permanent life. In the days of the Unitarian Fund, the services of a few men specially gifted for this kind of work were available, and among these the activities of Richard Wright and George Harris were extraordinarily successful; but it was realized that

special gifts are needed; and the attention of the Committee—so far as the small financial resources placed at their disposal admitted—was subsequently more concentrated on the strengthening of existing congregations, on the formation of new ones, and especially on the encouragement of district Societies and the promotion of a larger unity of co-operation.

With regard to the Publications department of the Association's work, it was perceived from the beginning that the Association does not exist in order to sell books and pamphlets, although sales may be an important source of income; but books and pamphlets are a valuable and indeed indispensable instrument of a propagandist Society. From this point of view, literary propaganda was carried on with a zeal which is remarkable when we bear in mind the limited resources at the disposal of the Association.

Statements of the principles of Unitarian Christianity were translated into most European languages and circulated wherever these languages were spoken. Tracts were prepared, adapted to the modes of thought of the Roman Catholic, the Jew, and the Mohammedan. Encouragement was afforded to individuals in various countries who were themselves enquiring, or stimulating others to enquire into religious truth. The reports show that the publications of the Association were finding their way already into most

civilized countries on the face of the earth. These words are almost quoted from the Annual Report for 1834; and they indicate what has always been, and still is, one of the principal aims of the Association.

For many years the list of publications bearing the imprint of, or sold by, the Association was described (not altogether by accident) as "A Catalogue of Books *distributed by* the British and Foreign Unitarian Association," and it was added that copies could be bought at the Office. For many years, also, no distinction was made in the list between "books" and "tracts," except in price. In 1852 the list contained 192 titles of publications on subjects practical and spiritual as well as doctrinal, including Athanase Coquerel's "Christianity adapted to the Mental, Moral, and Spiritual Nature of Man"; Cudworth's "Sermon preached before the House of Commons, March 31st, 1647"; Griesbach's Greek Testament; Martineau's Sermon of 1834 (previously analysed) and "Endeavours after the Christian Life"; Milton's "Last Thoughts on the Trinity," "Areopagitica," and "Treatise of Civil Power in Ecclesiastical Causes"; Dr. John Taylor's "Defence of the Common Rights of Christians," and Charles Wicksteed's "Law of Conscience." The spirit in which the literary propaganda was carried on, may be gathered from the following extracts from the Report for 1852:—

During this year there were books and tracts distributed as follows: by, or on suggestion of, the Rev. Hugh Hutton,[1] 5911 publications, representing a value of £77; by votes of your Committee, 6018 works, representing a sum of £78; twenty-four copies of the *Christian Reformer* to chapel libraries, total value £14, including four copies to the London Domestic Mission. There have been delivered to subscribers two hundred and eleven publications, value £27; and the sales to the public consist of 2298 works, value £69. The total number of works thus placed in circulation, by means of your Association, have been to the value of £265, and are in number 14,726. Your Committee believe that at no period in the history of your Association has the Book and Tract Department been more usefully employed than during the past year.

(iv). *Foreign Work to* 1850

In the Foreign (and Colonial) Department the references already made show that, though the Association was only occasionally able to give financial aid to kindred movements abroad, and in small amounts, still sympathetic intercourse was maintained, from the beginning, with America, with Canada (particularly Montreal), with India, with Hungary, and with a number of liberal Protestant workers in other parts of the Continent. By the middle of the century, the Committee were in correspondence with Unitarians in Sydney and Melbourne, and organized self-supporting congregations were formed in both these places.

[1] "Home Agent and Missionary," from 1852-55.

Special reference must be made to the early relations of the Association with India and also with America.

We have seen that the Managers of the Unitarian Fund had already interested themselves in missionary work in India, and for several years strenuous endeavours were made to promote and maintain work in Calcutta and Madras on the lines of Unitarian Christianity as then understood. It was not found possible, however, to establish permanent movements on the lines desired. The scriptural Unitarian Christianity which had grown up in Western Europe was not adapted to the spiritual environment of the Hindu. In the meantime the famous Indian and thinker and teacher, Rammohun Roy, had been engaged in work which resulted in the formation of the Brahmo Somaj, or Church of God, and a profound impression was produced by his presence and addresses at the Annual Meeting of the Association in 1831. It was realized that the spirit and methods of the Brahmo Somaj were more adapted to Liberal Religious missionary work in India; and the Association has continued in touch with this movement.

A happy result of the almost simultaneous formation of the two Associations is seen in the early growth of mutual intercourse and interest between Unitarian and kindred Churches in America and in England. This can be traced from the beginning.

In the second Report of the British Committee it is recorded that the American Committee had instructed their Secretary to forward copies of the Constitution of the American Unitarian Association and to invite the correspondence and as far as possible the co-operation of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association; and in the fourth Report of the American Unitarian Association it is said that "a more active correspondence has been maintained with England than in previous years; the letters of Unitarians in Great Britain contain expressions of strong interest in our affairs; the progress of religious sentiment in America is carefully observed by them: our writers are treated with respect, and a disposition is manifested to strengthen the ties of fraternal sympathy." Not only were such friendly relations deepened, but we find that the two Committees were in active co-operation in connection with the endeavour to promote Unitarian Christianity in India.

In the Constitution of the American Unitarian Association there is no reference to "the protection and extension of the Civil Rights of Unitarians." Such an expression would have been meaningless there. Our American friends began their work on a footing of absolute freedom and equality for all religious bodies. In their fifth Report (1830) the British Committee rightly referred to America as "a country which attaches

neither immunities nor disabilities to particular religious opinions and which offers no recompense to the professors of any one creed which it withholds from the professors of another."

(v). *The Home Mission Field*, 1850-1875

For a number of years after the Dissenters' Chapels Act (1844) the group of churches served by the Association, and the management of the Association itself, were only slowly recovering from the discouragement and distress of what we have rightly called the "danger period." This is reflected in the support given to the Association. Until 1868 the total of annual Subscriptions and yearly special donations remained under £700. In most years it was a little over or under £600. In 1855 the Committee's Report makes special reference to the bad effects of the Crimean War on religious and philanthropic enterprise generally. On the other hand, the number and value of the legacies bequeathed to the Association show that it was gradually winning confidence in quarters sometimes unknown until the testator's dispositions were declared.

The limited financial resources which were available caused serious embarrassment to the Committee, especially as it became more and more evident that wisely ordered but substantial grants of money were essential in a large pro-

portion of the cases which came under their consideration. In 1868 the Annual General Meeting empowered the Committee "to deal with all Legacies and Donations which may be bequeathed or made to the Association (without any special Trust attached to them) as they may think most desirable," and "to sell out the funds already invested (which have no special Trusts attached to them), such sales not to exceed £500 in any one year." This was evidently intended to meet special cases where grants of £100 or more were considered urgent; but as the total invested Capital of the Association at that time was only a little over £8,400, it is evident that the resolution was an important one.

The Rev. Hugh Hutton had been appointed to an office which we should now describe as that of Field Secretary and Missionary in 1852, and he carried on the work until 1856, when it was decided that the financial resources of the Association did not admit of the retention of this office. His visits to different parts of the country, obtaining information and giving encouragement and advice, were also productive of increased financial support, but not to the extent hoped for. For this he himself indicated the principal reason in "the avowed disinclination of a large number of the better educated and more wealthy members of our Churches, to give any part of their sympathy or support to efforts aiming at the diffusion

of a knowledge of our religious principles in a *doctrinal* form or under the *Unitarian* name: this difficulty has met me in various forms during the whole progress of my missionary work." The financial pressure about this time became more severe through the exhaustion of the "Cooke Fund," of £1152 and an annuity of £300 a year until 1850. The conditions of this Fund did not admit of its investment, and its exhaustion was only a matter of time. The strain on the General Fund became the more severe. Nevertheless at this period of discouragement the Committee were able to record the opening of new Churches "at Trowbridge, Swinton, Stratford, near London, and Idle, near Leeds."

We observe also the frequent and serious references made, at intervals, to "the want of approved ministers for English Presbyterian and Unitarian Churches." This statement is from the Annual Report for 1852. In that year the Rev. Hugh Hutton, Home Agent and Missionary, was urged to lose no opportunity of inquiry which might lead to the introduction of young men qualified to prepare for the work and willing to undertake it. In 1854 he was introduced to Mr. Charles C. Coe—a name which came to be well known in after years. Mr. Hutton refers appreciatively to plans formed for the establishment of the Unitarian Home Missionary Board in Manchester; and in 1855 he observed:—

Since our last Anniversary, the Unitarian Home Missionary Board, Manchester, has started into healthful and vigorous existence; and by its judicious operations, numerous congregations of Unitarians in the populous district around Manchester, including several of those whose chosen denominational title is that of " Christian Brethren," are regularly supplied with religious ministrations. . . . I avail myself of this opportunity, also, of bearing my most grateful testimony to the important assistance rendered towards the diminution of the evil of which we are speaking . . . by the Principal and the more advanced students of Manchester New College London: by their generous and zealous aid, several of our vacant pulpits have been supplied through the greater part of the year.

In a few years, however, with resources enlarged through increased subscriptions and legacies, the Committee were able to enter on new and enlarged work, on a modest scale, indeed, when compared with that of after years, but marking a distinct forward movement. Measures were soon taken to organize missionary propaganda in Kent, in the Potteries, in Northumberland, and in Scotland, in charge of specially appointed missionaries, and to offer facilities to enable competent ministers in settled charges to undertake such work in their own districts. In 1865 the position is fairly shown through the following figures. The principal heads of *Income* in that year were these: subscriptions £529; donations and collections £119; legacy £200; dividends £172; sales of publications £11. The principal heads of *Expenditure* were these: grants

to ten congregations to total £192; to Missions, Scotland £87, Northumberland £75, Kent £75; book and tract department £70; investment £230.

It was perceived, however, that there may be wise and unwise " missionary effort." In his Report to the Association in 1865, the Rev. James C. Street, then in Newcastle-on-Tyne, referred to " fitful missionary efforts in times past, growing out of individual earnestness rather than church life," out of which " originated operations which for a while succeeded and then failed," and named certain chapels which were closed or where congregational life was decaying, and he proceeded to observe:—

All these facts together reveal a state of things which at first sight seems disheartening; but they are not so bad as they seem. It is true these efforts were failures, but they were failures just where we should naturally look for them. . . . The effort was made in small unimportant places, where in the nature of things success could not be looked for. It was a mistake in the first instance to go there; and the attempt to sustain them in life was also a mistake. Then they were undertaken by a few zealous and faithful men who were willing to do everything in their power, but who were unable to sustain, through many years, a sporadic missionary agency like this. . . . The feeling is very strong that attention should be paid *first* and *mainly* to large and important towns where a Unitarian congregation seems to be a reasonable possibility.

Ten years earlier, the Rev. Hugh Hutton, in his Report to the Association in 1855, had thrown

another side-light on this question of "closed chapels" and "lost causes":—

> I must direct the attention of the friends of the Association, and of the Unitarian cause in general throughout the kingdom, to the necessity and duty of inquiring periodically into the condition, the terms, and the custody of the title-deeds of the property and other Trusts belonging to the various religious and charitable institutions with which they are connected. . . . Some properties are said to have been utterly lost to us, and appropriated to private purposes, owing in each case to the demise of the last Trustee and the absence of all well-advised and vigorous effort to secure them from spoliation. In other cases which have been represented to me, the properties do not seem to have been so completely diverted from their original purpose, but . . . their management has fallen into hands which have no legal or moral right to assume such authority: and this has led to such jealousies and contentions among the members, as to promote the disruption, and even threaten the total annihilation, of some congregations.

Such inquiries, advice, and persuasion as were urged by Mr. Hutton could not, however, really meet the dangers to which he refers. Sixty years later, as we have seen, the Incorporated Association was authorized to act as Trustee.

A discouraging episode at this time was the failure, or apparent failure, of the Kentish Mission. In 1866 it was decided to discontinue the engagement of the Rev. Richard Shelley as resident missionary for the Weald of Kent. This was done on the initiation of the Kent and Sussex Association (which itself afterwards expired). The

Committee of the Association concurred in the decision; but their Report, after commenting on Mr. Shelley's strenuous endeavours to build up the congregations at Cranbrook, Headcorn, and Rolvenden, observed:—

> Within the churches committed to his pastoral care, the flame of devotion, though feeble, has been kept alive, minds have been religiously instructed, and the charities as well as the piety of our houses of prayer has been carefully nourished. Outside these Churches, a kindlier feeling has grown up towards Unitarians; and in places which have been sometimes described as seats of the rankest bigotry, your Missionary has won the personal esteem and respect of many good men of differing households of faith. There need be no regret felt by the members of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association that this experiment in the Weald of Kent has been made.

The Committee at this time suggested that the wisest course is to "make defeat in one field a motive and a means to success in another," while "taking prudent counsel and exercising wise foresight of difficulties."

At this time also these was much unsettlement of opinion, owing to the rise of questions affecting the constitution and purpose of the Association. From one side a move was made for committing the Society to a dogmatic creed, and from another side, for transforming it into a theologically indefinite Christian Union, or for the formation of such a Union independently of it. The issue of these questions has already been described.[1] The

[1] See ch. III, p. 39, 40.

definite settlement of such questions left the Committee more free to develop the proper work of the Association on the lines of its constitution. The abandonment of congregational representation made no practical difference.

In this connection we may record the short-lived movement for providing new buildings as a central headquarters for the Association in London. It had some instructive side-issues. The Rev. Robert Spears, who from 1867 to 1870 had assisted the Rev. R. Brook Aspland in the duties of the Secretaryship, himself became General Secretary in 1870. In view of the increasing business of the Association and the larger number of Committee Meetings and larger membership of the Association, it was generally agreed that the accommodation available in the offices over Mr. E. T. Whitfield's book-shop at 178 Strand, was utterly inadequate.

Accordingly the Committee determined to endeavour to secure or erect such a building in one of the best localities in London, and a scheme for a building estimated to cost £20,000 was drawn up. The building was to include "a Council Chamber or Committee-room to accommodate about sixty persons; a Room for Deputations, with waiting and retiring arrangements; a Hall sufficiently large for a meeting of 200 persons; offices for the Secretary and Under-secretary; accommodation for Book and Tract business; a

Fire-proof Room for the safe custody of (Deeds and other important documents."

It was decided that the building must b by Trustees "for the Association, and in fu ance of its objects from time to time, und direction of the Committee." This ho inevitably raised the perennial proble doctrinal endowments; and in March, 1 Special Meeting of the Committee, Vic sidents, and Home Correspondents was when the following resolution was moved:

> That in the opinion of this Committee it would be sistent with the principles of religious freedom, in and hitherto upheld by the majority of the supporters British and Foreign Unitarian Association, to sanctio cept any endowment intended to be of a permanent na terms which would confine the application of such ment to the support of the doctrinal belief of the c donors, or which would render possible any legal inqui the specific opinions either of the donors or of the m of the Association.

The resolution concluded by instructin Committee to obtain Counsel's opinion o best means of securing the building for the poses of the Association while avoiding the gers named. It was rejected in favour amendment re-affirming the original pro but none the less Counsel's opinion had obtained, especially on the question "wheth case of dispute, and the Deed being brought b the Chancery Court for a decision, the clause

so drawn as prevent the necessity of any reference to the supposed previous theological opinions of the Society either in 1825 or in 1873." Counsel's opinion was as follows:—

In case at any time hereafter any question should arise which would call upon [a Court of Law] to decide *what are the principles of Unitarian Christianity* intended to be promoted by the Trust Deed, we are of opinion that *the then current principles of* Unitarian Christianity must be recognized and adopted by the Court as the principles intended to be provided by the Trust Deed, to the exclusion of any inquiry as to what were the principles of Unitarian Christianity at the time of the formation of the Association, or at the time of the acquisition of the Trust property, or at any time other than that at which the question may arise.

The Rev. James Martineau found a considerable amount of support in moving the following resolution:—

That the permanent endowment of any form of theological doctrine injuriously interferes with the natural changes of religious thought and life. . . and that the British and Foreign Unitarian Association, being founded expressly for the promotion of the principles of Unitarian Christianity, would accordingly do well to decline the ownership of any building required for its service, and to recommend the munificent contributors of the funds to place their building, when erected, in the hands of independent Trustees of their own selection, open to such uses, religious, philanthropic, or educational, as may, by the Trustees for the time being be judged best, from time to time; the first being the free occupation of the building by the British and Foreign Unitarian Association.

This resolution was lost, on a division; but the scheme for the new buildings was withdrawn and

the amounts contributed were returned to the donors. In the following year the Committee secured convenient premises at 37 Norfolk Street, Strand, which were formally opened on April 17th, 1874, the one hundredth Anniversary of Lindsey's opening of Essex Street Chapel. Ten years later Essex Street Chapel was itself acquired by a body of Trustees, and converted into Essex Hall, the present headquarters of the Association.

From 1870 the records show a steady increase in the amount of annual subscriptions and in the work accomplished, and a very large increase in the sales of publications, the return from which had been negligible for many years. In the Report for that year, the operations of the Association are classified as follows for practical purposes;—

(i). To promote, and give assistance to, Local Associations in different parts of the Kingdom to diffuse the principles of Unitarian Christianity.

(ii). To give assistance and encouragement to ministers and others to lecture and preach beyond the limits of their particular localities, and to open new centres of religious worship and instruction.

(iii). To promote Unitarian Christian Worship by occasionally assisting congregations,[1] and to form a medium through which at times an interchange of pulpit services can be effected.

[1] That is, directly; as distinct from aid given through District Associations.

(iv). To hold adjourned or special meetings of the Association in the principal cities or towns; and to attend by deputation any of the District Associations or special services of our Churches when requested or deemed desirable.

(v). To collect and diffuse information respecting the state of Unitarian Christianity throughout the world and to adopt whatever measures may seem proper to assist the spread of religious truth.

(vi). To diffuse knowledge on topics connected with Unitarian Christianity by the publication of books and tracts.

(vii). To maintain the Civil Rights and interests of Unitarians.

This period of the Association's work in the Home Mission field shows a marked increase in the efficiency of the District Associations and in the effective desire of the central Association to work through them. The progress made is effectively shown through the following particulars, relating to the work of the year 1874, and given in the Annual Report for 1875. The principal heads of the *Income* for the year were these: subscriptions £871; donations and collections £223; legacy £500; sale of stock £459; dividends £270; sale of books and tracts £1182 (including proceeds of sale of large editions of Channing's works and Priestley's *Corruptions of Christianity*). On the other side the principal heads of *Expenditure* were these: grants to twenty-two congregations (chiefly towards stipends or building or repair funds) £671; grants to seven District Associations and twenty congregations (for missionary and literary propaganda) £810; books and tracts

(printing, binding, distribution) £1276; value of of books and tracts granted £321.

In the Report for 1875 the Rev. Robert Spears stated that in 1830, when the Rev. W. J. Fox was Secretary of the Association, an endeavour was made to obtain statistical returns from congregations professing Unitarian Christianity. Ninety-four chapels replied. Ten of these were afterwards closed. They were then very thinly attended. Mr. Spears added that during the whole period from 1825 to 1875, more than twenty of the old chapels were closed. About the year 1850 the congregations appear to have been in a very low or depressed condition; but "a great increase of zeal and activity may be dated from that period; after a season of discouragement, our people took heart and hope again." While only seven chapels were re-built or renovated during the period from 1800 to 1825, and thirteen from 1825 to 1850, from 1850 to 1875 more than sixty chapels were re-built or entirely renovated. And in addition to these re-constructive efforts, a number of new congregations were founded during the third of the periods named.

(vi). *Work in Scotland*, 1850 *to* 1875

The support and promotion of Unitarian Christianity in Scotland was embraced in the

general Home Mission of the Association, until at a later date (1889) the munificent bequest of William McQuaker, of Glasgow, founded for the same purpose, constituted it a special department. For various reasons, Unitarian work in Scotland has always proceeded under peculiar difficulties, although the ground had been to a certain extent prepared by the activities of a few able Universalist missionaries from America, who preached the larger hope and challenged the popular Calvinism.

When the Association was founded in 1825, public worship had been held for many years, by congregations professing Unitarian Christianity, in Edinburgh and Glasgow, and in Paisley and Girvan. Earlier movements in Dundee and Montrose had expired. The Unitarian Fund had been in practical touch with the work in all these places. In 1837, with the sympathy and practical assistance of the Association, a new Unitarian Christian congregation was constituted in Aberdeen. The Association was very materially assisted, in its efforts to discover the wisest ways of encouraging our movement in Scotland, by a succession of able ministers in Glasgow, especially the Rev. George Harris, the Rev. H. W. Crosskey, and the Rev. J. Page Hopps, and by the long and faithful ministries of the Rev. Robert B. Drummond in Edinburgh, the Rev. Alexander Webster in Aberdeen, and the Rev. Henry Williamson in Dundee. A Scottish Unitarian Association had

flourished for a period under the care of Mr. Harris, and then became defunct. With the encouragement of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association, and through the efforts of Mr. Crosskey and Mr. Drummond, it was revived in 1861. In that year Mr. Drummond's Report contained the following observations:—

> The longer I live here, the more I see how Calvinism has stamped itself on the heart of the Scottish nation, and the more I become convinced of the pernicious effect of the Protestant Popery (for I can call it nothing else) under which mental freedom is crushed and extinguished. The more on this account, however, I see the necessity of making every effort for the diffusion of an enlightened theology, though at the same time I feel that we must not be too sanguine of success.

The objects of the Scottish Unitarian Association were thus defined: (i) to preserve and strengthen the Unitarian Societies already existing in Scotland; (ii) to seek out those who hold Unitarian principles without having had the opportunity of joining a Unitarian congregation, and when a sufficient number of persons can be found in one place, to induce them to form a Society; (iii) to disseminate generally the principles of Unitarian Christianity, to encourage their open profession, and to sustain their practical application. In a Report written in 1861, Dr. Crosskey observed:—

> Our first necessity is a missionary; and the first task we have imposed upon ourselves is the raising a sufficient fund

to keep a missionary in the field for two years. . . . Let it be remembered that in Scotland there are five men struggling against a hierarchy, and that of those five men only three can devote their whole time to the work. We are confident that a fitting missionary will gain a fair hearing. The ears of men are opening to our faith; they will, at least, listen to our gospel. Without doubt we must be prepared to struggle for years and years in the future, unsupported by popular sympathy, as we have done in the past; but it is no less certain that, as every year passes, respect may be won and prejudice abated. . . . Let the Unitarians of England remember their brethren in Scotland, as travellers in a difficult land, who are tasking themselves to prepare a way in which another generation may walk in peace.

In 1864, and again in 1865, the British and Foreign Unitarian Association set aside the sum of £100, or about one-tenth of the ordinary income for the year towards the support of a missionary in Scotland, and the Rev. William Sharman was appointed, with his headquarters at Aberdeen. The first result of his work was the establishment of a congregation in Dundee (strictly speaking, the revival of an old one), the Rev. H. Williamson being appointed resident minister in 1866. The Association continued its grant, and in the following year the work was divided between Mr. Williamson and the Rev. J. G. Slater, who succeeded Mr. Sharman at Aberdeen. Mr. Williamson and Mr. Slater visited and lectured in many towns in the middle and west of Scotland, and secured respectful hearings. In a Report written in 1869, the Rev. J. Page Hopps observed:

The money spent and the efforts made in the past have at least prepared the way for future labours; but we must be prepared for many seeming failures. We must not be over-anxious to found sudden Churches; we must, in very many cases, be content to limit our efforts to giving lectures in well chosen localities, and scattering our literature broadcast over the land; we must not mind sowing seed the fruit of which *will find its way* into the garners of other Churches; above all, we must have good workmen who have a message, and who have the will and the ability to deliver it. All this means money, faith, and courage. The faith and the courage we must get for ourselves as we can; the money others can give us.

The Association's grants in aid of work in Scotland were continued, varying (up to 1875) from £100 to £250 in the year.

(vii). *Work Abroad*, 1850-1875

During the period now under review, the principal features of the foreign work of the Association are (i) the encouragement and assistance given to the formation of Unitarian congregations in Australia, at Melbourne (1851), Sydney (1853), and Adelaide (1855); (ii) the establishment of personal friendly relations with the Brahmo Somaj of India; (iii) the rapid development of intercourse with the Unitarians of Transylvania, enabling effective practical assistance to be given.

In 1853 we find that the question of providing for a regular ministry at *Sydney* was engaging the anxious attention of the Committee. The friends

there have asked the Committee "to select a gentleman who, in addition to his possessing the varied qualities required in so important and peculiar a sphere, was desirous of venturing on such an experiment." Arrangements were made for the Rev. George H. Stanley, B.A., to undertake the work,—"the sum of £150 remitted by the Sydney Congregation for payment of travelling expenses of their minister having been placed at his disposal." In the same year (1853) the Committee received information that a Unitarian Society had recently been formed at *Melbourne*, and public worship was being conducted by the Rev. Maxwell Davidson, formly of Godalming, and then resident in Melbourne. Mr. Thomas C. Balmain, Honorary Secretary of the Unitarian Congregation of Melbourne, wrote reporting measures taken to provide a building fund, and showing that the feeling of the members was one of hopeful enterprise.

In their Report for 1855 the Committee of the Association speak of the establishment of a Unitarian Christian Congregation at *Adelaide*, South Australia, as "the most important incident to which reference can be made, in respect to the spread of our opinions in other and distant countries." It is added that "Your Committee consider themselves fortunate in having been enabled, with the least possible delay, to announce the departure of the Rev. J. C. Woods, late of

Newport, I.W., who has accepted from your Committee the pastoral charge of the congregation."

The successive Committees of the Association remained in touch with these three congregations, by correspondence; and occasional financial aid in modest amounts was forwarded, and grants of literature calculated to be useful.

With regard to India, support was regularly continued in aid of the work of the Rev. W. Roberts in Madras and district. Looking back on the situation from the present time, we can see reason why an effort to conduct a Mission strictly on the lines of *Scriptural Unitarian Christianity as then understood* could never hope for any considerable measure of success. These reasons were not apparent at the time, and a number of years elapsed before the Association decided to abandon the effort. In the meantime information had been received from America from the American Unitarian Association, explaining their hopes of establishing a new Mission in Calcutta, where they proposed to provide for the Rev. C. H. Dall to work as resident missionary. The English Committee voted £50 for two years in support of this work. This was in 1856; and the Report for that year contains the following:—

> Your Committee cannot refrain from a reference to the cordial spirit which has characterized the communications of their American friends. The aspect of political relations

between the United States and this country has been considered by some as furnishing ground for apprehension, that the friendship existing between these two great nations may be disturbed. Your Committee cannot concur in any serious apprehensions that it should ever be engaged in a conflict so unnatural and fraught with such disastrous consequences to both countries. They conceive, however, that the present is a suitable opportunity for offering, on the part of the Association, to their brethren in America, the strongest assurances of sincere regard as co-religionists and fellowmen, connected by the closest ties of descent, of language, of social interests, and of attachment to those principles of civil and religious liberty on which depend the welfare and progress of mankind.

At the Annual General Meeting of the Association in June, 1865, the following resolution was adopted, on the motion of the Rev. James Martineau, seconded by the Rev. Brooke Herford:

That it is expedient that the Members of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association should avail themselves of the opportunity of expressing their earnest good wishes towards the United States of America, their profound sorrow for the death of the late President, and their detestation of the crime of his assassin, and that the address which follows be adopted as the address of this meeting, be signed by the President and Officers of this Association, and be transmitted to the American Unitarian Association.

The Address expressed profound sympathy with the members of the American Association and their fellow-countrymen in the calamity which had recently befallen them, and recorded admiration of the character of the late President, recognizing in his consistent efforts to put down

slavery, his calmness in danger, and his forbearance and mercy in the hour of victory, elements of true moral greatness. It concluded with the following paragraph:—

We desire to strengthen the bonds of union and amicable feeling which should exist between them that love civil and religious liberty on both sides of the Atlantic. Between your citizens and ours there should be uninterrupted confidence and sympathy. United as we are with you in the profession of the same views of a great and merciful God and of a compassionate and benignant Saviour, we solemnly record our hope and trust that nothing may ever occur to weaken our fraternal regard, or hinder zealous co-operation in the things that make for the peace and welfare of all nations on the face of the globe and all classes of society.

In the following year the Report records that the English Committee raised a fund amounting to £400 and forwarded it to the American Committee in aid of their Mission to the Coloured Freedmen of the South. In a letter expressing warm appreciation of the action taken, the Rev. Charles Lowe, Secretary of the American Unitarian Association, observed:—

If we send, as we propose, no merely sectarian teachers, with a desire to proselyte or create antagonism, but only men of large heart and singleness of purpose, full of the spirit of humanity and piety, as it comes from our liberal interpretation of the Gospel of Christ, we are confident that we shall unite largely all persons of loyal sentiment who are filled with the love of human liberty and interest in the injured race.

In 1867 Miss Mary Carpenter visited India,

with a view to organizing means of improvement in the condition of the native women. In her intercourse with persons of different classes, she became acquainted with the state of religion in the country, and on her return to England she made a long and valuable statement to the Committee of the Association, which produced a more adequate understanding of the religious conditions. Miss Carpenter had made close acquaintace with the work of Keshub Chunder Sen, whose remarkable Essay on Christianity had recently appeared in *The Inquirer*, and who, in reply to a question, whether he was a Christian, said: "I perfectly sympathize with the spirit of Christianity." The interest thus aroused bore further fruit a few years later (1870), when Chunder Sen was in England from April to September. The Committee resolved to give him "an unsectarian and hearty greeting." A welcome meeting was held in Hanover Square Rooms, when "nearly one thousand persons were present, including upwards of eighty clergymen of ten different denominations, as well as distinguished laymen of various Churches." The daily and weekly papers reported the meeting and observed that no similar religious meeting had previously been held "in this or any other country."

Since that time contact has been maintained with liberal religious thinkers and teachers in India, through exchange of letters, through the

circulation of many thousands of books and pamphlets in all parts of India, through the support of Indian students at Manchester New College, London, and through other and more recent personal visits to be mentioned shortly.

The intercourse of the Committee with Transylvania was greatly facilitated through the good offices of Mr. John Paget, resident in Clausenberg (Koloczvar, now Clujs, Roumania). In 1867 Mr. Paget made his English Unitarian friends acquainted with the effort of the Austrian Government to suppress the Unitarian schools and colleges in Transylvania by requiring them to raise an impossible sum for improvements. The Association appealed to our Churches, and over £1000 was raised; and this, added to their own efforts, brought them out of the crisis stronger than before. In order still further to increase sympathy and understanding between the Unitarians of England and of Transylvania, the Rev. Edward Tagart, Secretary of the Association, volunteered to visit the Transylvanian Churches. This purpose he was able to carry out; but to the profound regret of the Unitarian community at home and abroad he died in Brussels on his way home. The Committee passed a resolution with reference to their late Secretary, which contained the following paragraph:—

> This Committee are constrained to record their admiration of the generous zeal with which, on behalf of this Society and

the Unitarians of Great Britain and Ireland, he undertook his recent mission to the Unitarian Churches and College of Transylvania; and while deploring the mysterious providence by which they were in a great measure precluded from receiving the valuable information respecting their brethren in Transylvania of which he was the depositary, their sorrow for his untimely end is enhanced by the conviction that his life was lost through the fatigue to which, in the pursuit of an important public purpose, he exposed himself.

Mr. Tagart had been Honorary Secretary of the Association for twenty-six years. He was succeeded by the Rev. R. Brook Aspland.

The Committee felt "that the curiosity and interest of which the Transylvanian Unitarians were the object, have hitherto been only partially satisfied." They recorded with satisfaction the arrangements made for the Rev. S. Alfred Steinthal to visit Transylvania and "complete the chain of information and friendly feeling which it had been Mr. Tagart's purpose and effort to lay down between the two countries. In the Report for 1859 a valuable narrative communication from Mr. Steinthal is quoted.

The next question raised was of the possibility of maintaining a Transylvanian Student in England, at Manchester New College, London. This matter assumed a practical form through Mr. John Paget's visit and interview with the Committee in the autumn of 1859. After his return to Transylvania, Mr. Paget observed in the course of a letter to the Committee:—

I am inclined, at least for the present, to concentrate all our efforts in carrying out this one great object, the education of a succession of young men in England as the means of forming a higher grade of Professors, and thus raising the whole moral and intellectual tone of the Unitarian body here. I think it is better not to scatter our forces, but to unite all our efforts to carry this strong point; and then the battle for further progress may be fought without any great danger of defeat.

The arrangements proposed were welcomed by the Principal and Committee of Manchester New College; and a young ordained Transylvanian Minister, the Rev. Dominic Simen, entered the College in the autumn of 1860 as the first "Hungarian Student." The Unitarian Church in Koloszvar, the College, and the Association jointly contributed to his support. After Mr. Simen had completed his College course, an immediate successor was not available: but the scheme was kept in view and, a succession of students from Transylvania have come from time to time under the arrangements made between the College and the Association.

In 1868 the Transylvanian Unitarian Churches celebrated the three hundredth anniversary of the establishment of Unitarian Christianity in the form of an organized Church in that country. The Rev. J. J. Tayler, Principal of Manchester New College, London, undertook to attend on behalf of the Association and our English Churches. The Annual Report observes that

"nothing could be more fortunate than that a gentleman of such diversified attainments and large Christian sympathies should represent your Association."

In addition to the personal and practical intercourse with Australia, India, and Transylvania, which we have described, communications were maintained with Canada (Montreal and Toronto), and we find that the Association was opening up new communications with Germany and Italy as well as France: but no event of outstanding importance arose such as to demand special mention here.

(viii). *The Publications Department*, 1850 to 1875

It must be remembered that the religious and theological changes described in our last chapter, all arising from a fundamental change of thought and feeling as to the *seat of authority in Religion*, were now rapidly maturing and their meaning and results were being perceived. The policy of the Association in reference to the publication of books and tracts, which of necessity were more closely connected with these changes than any personal propaganda could be, was one of open-mindedness but caution, or, as we expressed it before, "liberal Conservatism." The new books and pamphlets produced represented a tendency

which, while refusing hastily to abandon the scriptural foundations of the past, was none the less preparing the way for the newer light, and was opposed to the establishment of any form of Unitarian theology as standard and orthodox. Until about 1870 the sales of publications were small. On the other hand, every year large and generous grants of books and pamphlets were made, at home and abroad.

It is of no small credit to an Association, having at its disposal very limited financial resources, that it should be first in the field with the production of a complete "Revised Translation of the Scriptures of the Old Testament." The Report for 1859 observes that "the want of a more correct and intelligible version of this part of the sacred writings had been generally felt." The Rev. Charles Wellbeloved had such an enterprise in hand, and had actually revised the Pentateuch, the Psalms, and the "Wisdom Books." By agreement with Mr. Wellbeloved, and with the co-operation of the Revs. John Kenrick, John Scott Porter, and George Vance Smith, arrangements were made for the complete undertaking. The first volume was published in 1859 and the second and third volumes (completing the work) in 1861. Biblical scholarship has moved much since that time: but the Committee of the Association were justified in their claim that the edition then sent forth contained "nothing that

is not consistent with the most advanced scholarship of the age." The sale of the work was not large at first; but from about 1867 onwards—chiefly through the enthusiasm of the Rev. Robert Spears—it largely increased.

The most important enterprise in the publications department about this time, after the issue of the Revised Old Testament, was the issue of very large editions of the works of Channing at a very low price. An edition of ten thousand was produced in 1869 at half a crown. The edition had a large sale among Anglicans, Congregationalists, Baptists, Wesleyans and other Methodists. Reprints of the edition were demanded, and in twelve months twenty-one thousand copies had been sold. So large a circulation of works expressing the personality and spirit of such a man as Channing had effects more far-reaching than any of which there is explicit record. About the same time, a circulation of ten thousand was secured for a cheap edition of Priestley's *Corruptions of Christianity*. We have already seen that the breadth of view which lay behind the Association's policy in this department, found expression in the decision to offer for sale Theodore Parker's works as well as those of Channing and Priestley, although a special edition with the imprint of the Association was not required in this case.

(ix). *General Work*, 1875 *to* 1890

The Jubilee year (1875) was marked by a special effort to enlarge the sphere of operations of the Association. It was decided to endeavour to raise a special fund of £20,000 within the following five years; contributors to have the option of paying their whole subscription at once or by equal instalments extending over five years. The objects of the Fund are thus specified:—

(i). The promotion of Unitarian Christianity in localities in which no Unitarian Church now exists, by grants in aid of the cost of building new Churches, and by contributing for a certain period towards the stipends of the ministers of such Churches.

(ii). The assistance of existing congregations desirous of rebuilding or enlarging their Churches, by grants in aid of such works, and by contributions in aid of the stipends of the ministers of such Churches.

(iii). The engagement of Lecturers of a high class as regards culture and talent, for the purpose of disseminating through the country the religious views generally adopted by Unitarian Christians.

The intention was that the amount raised should be treated as special income, and any investments made were merely temporary. In 1875 grants amounting to £958 were made for lectures (in nineteen centres) and £650 in aid of building new Churches (Glasgow, Calton, now Ross Street; Lampeter; Stroud). In 1876, £1513 was granted for lectures (in twenty-seven different centres) and £200 for building (Birmingham,

Fazeley Street). In 1877, £482 was granted for lectures (in fifteen centres), £150 to stipends (Stroud and Glossop) and £1400 for new Churches (Guildford, Oldham, Reading, Scarborough, Stepney). In 1878, £25 was granted for lectures, £206 to stipends (Stroud, Reading, Glossop, Scarborough) and £300 for new buildings. In 1879 the figures were: £139 to stipends (Glossop and Scarborough) and £880 for new buildings (Failsworth, Colne, Denton). Grants substantially on the same scale were made in 1880, 1881, and 1882. The building funds assisted were Rotherham, Dowlais, Hull, Manchester (Ardwick), London (Peckham). A number of payments were also made to the General Fund of the Association. The response to the initial appeal for the Jubilee Fund was gratifying, although the final total was considerably under the amount named in the appeal.

Early in 1876, the Rev. Robert Spears resigned the Secretaryship of the Association, and was succeeded by the Rev. Henry Ierson, M.A. The Committee passed the following resolution:—

> The Committee feel it to be an act of justice to Mr. Spears to record, in a formal way, their sense of the manner in which, for nearly seven years, he has conducted the business of the Association. They feel that they can hardly speak too highly of the untiring energy, the earnestness, sincerity, and singleness of purpose, and the genial kindness of manner which have invariably been the characteristics of Mr. Spears, qualities which have won the regard of all with whom he has been brought into contact, and which have been mainly instrumental in advancing the Association to its present satisfactory position.

Without entering to any extent into matters of detail, we must show what the financial position of the Association was about this time. Take the financial year 1877. The principal heads of *Income* were these: Subscriptions £1364; donations and collections £398; legacies £1803; sales of publications £705; sale of invested capital £943; dividends £222. The principal heads of *Expenditure* were these: grants to congregations £464; grants for missionary work £1362[1]; book department £1217; salaries and wages £470; rents £240. In this one year it appears that capital was sold to realize £943, which, together with legacies amounting to £1803, was all used for current expenditure. The Reports show that the Committee realized the seriousness of the position. Without a subscription list very much larger than was provided by the substantial increases already made, the policy of absorbing the limited capital of the Association in the discharge of current obligations would soon deplete the treasury. In their Report for 1880 the Committee observe:—

[1] It must be remembered that there was no clear dividing line between these two heads—"congregations" and "missions." Many of the payments placed under one head could equally well have been placed under the other.

The need of your Association does not become lessened with the increased activity of thought now directed to religious matters; it must plan for the future as well as endeavour to meet the wants of the living time. It has a great career before it, and a great work to accomplish, for which it is its duty to make careful provision. It will not be always estimated by the controversies of past times, great as have been its services in the enlargement and correction of human thought on many hard-fought fields. The entire position of theological questions is felt to be radically changed from what it was fifty years ago; but your Association holds its ground, because it is not identified with the defence of varying opinions, so much as with the active service of great principles. And the necessity will long continue for an Association which, while it encourages independent thought, strives to direct it to practical ends of religious and moral reform.

During the thirteen years from 1878 to 1891 the ordinary annual subscriptions varied from about £1500 to about £1200, tending mainly downward; on the other hand, it appears that in 1883-4 and again in 1887-8 special sums were subscribed to provide for special popular services in our Churches in different parts of the country. The formation of a Special Services Fund was suggested by experiences at Bermondsey, where for several months audiences of over a thousand people gathered to hear presentations of Unitarian Christianity in its positive, practical, religious aspects. The interest of the audiences in such cases is evident; but the number of persons who will commit themselves to membership of a "self-

supporting congregation"—by which is meant, a congregation capable of supporting a minister—is found to be very much smaller.

Returning to the financial story, the situation was much relieved in 1881 by the receipt of legacies amounting to £9528, of which £8503 was invested; although every year a larger or smaller amount of capital was sold to meet current expenditure. In 1883 a scheme for "Association Sunday" collections was instituted, under which our Churches are asked to hold a special collection on a stated date on behalf of the funds of the Association. This has proved an important and valuable addition to the annual financial resources of the Association.

The range of the Association's work, during this portion of its third twenty-five years, is fairly indicated in the following statement from the Balance Sheet issued in 1882 (referring to the financial year 1881):—

Grants to congregations:

Adelaide, building Fund	£25
Banbury, repairs	10
Buxton, lectures	5
Cairncastle, services	5
Cardiff, ,, ...	20
Carmarthen ,, ...	5
Chelmsford, ,, ...	25
Douglas, services	20
Guildford, ,, ...	10

Hastings, ,,	£35
Heywood, chapel debt	10
Horsham, repairs	10
Ipswich, services	40
King's Lynn, ,,	25
Malton, repairs	10
Belfast (Mountpottinger), services	20
Newport, I.W., building fund	20
Park Lane, repairs	5
Perth, rent of Hall	4
Taunton, repairs	20
Tavistock, services	5
Walmsley, repairs	5

Grants to Missions, etc.:

Cambridge, lectures	10
East Cheshire Christian Union (Congleton, Denton, Mottram, Newcastle, Longton, Stalybridge)	95
Kent and Sussex Association (Ashford and Canterbury)	125
London District Unitarian Society (Stepney)	5
Manchester District Association (Ardwick)	40
Midland Christian Union (Walsall, West Bromwich, Whitchurch, Tamworth)	95
N. and E. Lancs. Mission (Accrington and Blackpool)	40
N. Midland Association (Newark and Bedford)	54
Northumberland and Durham Association (Barnard Castle, Darlington, S. Shields, Middlesbro')	125

Scottish Unitarian Association (Aberdeen, Dundee, Glasgow)	£127
Southern Unitarian Association (Bournemouth, Poole, Ringwood)	45
Western Union (Devonport, Limpstone, Stroud)	85

Foreign and Colonial grants:

Hungarian Students, London (Messrs. D. Varga and N. Gal)	100
Budapest	100
India (Madras)	74

Special Propaganda Lectures (London),[1] £258.
Value of Book and Tracts granted, £313.

The policy of the Committee in reference to work in the Home Mission Field was to do their utmost to support and encourage the existing congregations, and to investigate cases of Chapels which had been closed in order to ascertain whether revival was possible. The resources of the Jubilee Fund had already been made available for breaking new ground. The financial foundation of the work was not firmly established as we have seen, and the outlook was uncertain until 1892-93, when mainly through the energy and enthusiasm of Rev. Dr. Brooke Herford, who had recently returned from Boston to settle at

[1] This was a course of ten Lectures delivered in St. George's Hall, London, 1881, on Unitarian Affirmations, and afterwards published under the title *Positive Aspects of Unitarian Christianity*.

Hampstead, the amount of the Annual Subscriptions was increased from £1209 to £1662 and then to £2036, with special donations in the two years amounting to £1750.

Until such increased resources became permanently available, the work of the Colonial and Foreign Mission and of the Publications Department could not undergo any very considerable development. New books were issued as opportunity arose and suitable authors could be found. Generous grants of books and pamphlets were made every year. The titles of "Recent Publications" named in the Report for 1887 show the widening range of religious thought: "Christianity the Science of Manhood," by M. J. Savage; by "Man's Knowledge of God," by Richard A. Armstrong; "The Future Life," by J. Page Hopps; "Evil, Physical and Moral," by G. St. Clair; "Know Thyself: a Manual of Personal Religion," by H. Shaen Solly;[1] "Anniversary Sermons: a Collection of Twelve Sermons preached at the Annual Meetings of the Association,"; "Unitarianism and the Christian Church" (extracted, with the Author's permission, from a paper by the Hon. and Rev. Canon Fremantle); "Notes on the Amended English Bible," by H. Ierson (brief observations on some remarkable corrections in the Revised

[1] These five Handbooks were not published by the Association but purchased for sale and distribution.

Version of both Testaments, bearing specially on points connected with the Unitarian Controversy). The Revised *New Testament* had been issued in 1881, and the Committee immediately arranged for the publication of a substantial pamphlet, by the Rev. Dr. G. Vance Smith, "Texts and Margins of the Revised New Testament affecting Theological Doctrines." Dr. Vance Smith had been a member of the Revision Committee. In that connection the Committee of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association observed: "It is a remarkable circumstance that the Revisers have adopted many of the amendments of the 'Improved Version,' against which, at the time of its publication by the Unitarian Book Society in 1808, such strong animadversions were made as "wilful corruptions of the Word of God.'" The most important theological publication of this period was the volume of Lectures on "Positive Aspects of Unitarian Christianity," issued in 1881, to which reference has been made. The ten Lectures are respectively by R. A. Armstrong, G. Vance Smith, William Binns, H. W. Crosskey, Alexander Gordon, Charles Beard, J. Estlin Carpenter, T. W. Freckelton, Henry Ierson, and Charles Wicksteed; with a General Preface contributed by James Martineau. The book, which can still be obtained from the Lindsey Press, is a land-mark in the history of Unitarian thought in the nineteenth century.

(x). *Essex Hall*

Before taking up our story from round about the year 1890 onwards, we must record the circumstances of the establishment of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association and the Sunday School Association at Essex Hall, where, for the first time in their history, the two Associations in 1886 held their Annual Meetings in a home of their own. We may briefly recall the history of the place. On the 17th April, 1774, while it was still a penal offence publicly to deny the doctrine of the Trinity, Theophilus Lindsey, who had on principle resigned his living in the Church of England, having hired a room in "Essex House" which had previously been used as an auction room, held a service, which at the time was unique of its kind, being professedly Unitarian, with a congregation of some two hundred persons, among whom was Benjamin Franklin. It was a period of great political excitement; the war of American Independence began in the following year. In 1777, Mr. Lindsey purchased Essex House, and built on the site the well-known Essex Street Chapel with dwelling house attached. The Chapel was opened May 29th, 1778, and on January 7th, 1783, it was put in trust by Mr. Lindsey "for the public worship and service of Almighty God." This was the building which in 1886 was converted into Essex Hall. At a public meeting held on

June 3rd, 1886, to celebrate the re-opening of the building under its new name, the circumstances which led to the purchase of the property by the British and Foreign Unitarian Association and the Sunday School Association were explained. The Charity Commissioners required that the buildings should be sold and the proceeds applied to the erection of another Chapel and minister's house elsewhere. This was the origin of Essex Church, Kensington. The total cost of purchase and reconstruction was £25,000, of which £17,000 had been subscribed when the Hall was opened. The balance was raised in the course of a few years. Essex Hall is now incorporated and is governed by twenty Trustees, who, as vacancies occur, are elected alternately by the British and Foreign Unitarian Association and the Sunday School Association. Compared with the small, inadequate, and out-of-the-way accommodation of earlier years Essex Hall was a great acquisition to the Association and to the whole Unitarian community.

Chapter VII

ORGANIZED WORK EXTENDED

1890 to 1902

WE have already observed that the Annual Report of 1890 mentioned the appointment of the Rev. Hugh Hutton as "Home Agent and Missionary," or "Field Secretary," to use a term of later origin. He was appointed with the special object of "awakening a spirit of harmonious co-operation among the Christian Churches, diffusing encouraging information (*sic*) and strengthening the Society itself by making known its operations, plans, and objects and its claims upon general support, while at the same time discovering new modes of usefulness and the most promising fields of exertion." Mr. Hutton's engagement terminated in 1857, as the Committee state in the Report for that year, simply on account of the want of means at that time for its continuance, while they add that "they looked back on the success of Mr. Hutton's labours with entire satisfaction."

The idea was revived in a practical form in

1889, when the Council recommended the appointment of a Missionary and Organizing Agent; and early in 1890 the Committee were able to announce that the Rev. W. Copeland Bowie, Minister of Stamford Street Chapel, London, and a Member of the London School Board, had accepted the appointment of "Missionary-Agent and Lecturer" of the Association, with the understanding that when not engaged out of town on his special work, he shall attend at the Office and give such help in the ordinary work of the Association as the Committee may direct.

The special duties of the new office were thus defined:—

1. To put himself in communication with any congregation to which he may be delegated, with a view to arouse and increase the spiritual and practical work of such congregation; to preach, if desired; to confer with its Committee as to existing or new agencies; to endeavour to unite the members, and to increase their interest in the general work, and to stimulate their zeal and devotion

2. To use every opportunity of extending his inspection of congregations, especially such as receive grants from the Association, in the district where he may be thus engaged.

3. To initiate, where it may be deemed advisable, whether in old or new districts, People's Services, as well as courses of lectures on Unitarian doctrine, to be conducted either by himself, or with the help, if obtainable, of other ministers; it being his business to lay out the plan of such services or lectures, and to make all necessary arrangements.

4. To inquire into the state of the Trusts of each congregation and take counsel if necessary, with the Trustees respecting them.

5. To make out lists of the friends in each district who might be specially invited to join the Association or assist in any way in Unitarian work, and endeavour to visit such friends with this object.

6. To act under the direction of the Executive Committee, through the Secretary, making it a rule to give them at each of their ordinary meetings a report of the month's work.

7. That congregations desiring his visits or assistance be expected as far as possible to defray, at least in part, his travelling and other necessary expenses.

In August, 1892, the Rev. Henry Ierson, Secretary of the Association since 1875, died peacefully and suddenly after a severe illness. At the Council meeting in October the following resolution was passed:—

That the members of the Council, at this its first meeting since the death of the Rev. Henry Ierson, M.A., desire to express their deep sense of the great loss which the Association has sustained in the decease of its honoured and respected Secretary; they wish to place on record their high appreciation of the faithful and valuable services which he rendered to the Unitarian cause, and their recognition of his painstaking devotion to his work, his unfailing courtesy to all who sought his advice, his steadfast faith in the principles of Unitarian Christianity, and his unaffected yet earnest piety.

Mr. Bowie, who had acted as Secretary during Mr. Ierson's illness, was appointed to fill the vacancy; and the period of his Secretaryship, which ended with his retirement in March, 1921, is a memorable one in the history of the Association.

(i). *Home Work*, 1890-1902

The value of the Missionary Agent's work was soon observed. The Committee state in their Report for 1892:—

There are few districts into which Mr. Bowie has not penetrated; and the experience and knowledge gained through these visits have been most valuable to the Committee in enabling them to form a correct judgment of the actual present condition of Unitarianism in England. He has sought, to the best of his ability, to inspire faith and to promote mutual helpfulness in the various congregations he has visited; and the knowledge of details brought by an experienced visitor is of great service in determining the way in which help can best be given.

The importance of carrying out the Home Mission work of the Central Association as far as possible through the various District Associations and in consultation with them—which as we have seen had already become part of the policy of the Committee—was more and more clearly observed; and the Report for 1890 gives a detailed account of the intercourse of the Committee with twelve of these Associations.

The principal work of the central Association at that time was in the districts of the Northumberland and Durham Association, the Yorkshire Union, the North Midland Association, the Midland Union, the London Society, the Southern Association, and the Western Union. The " Home

Missions' "[1] grants in 1889 amounted to £2139, of which about one-third was directly in aid of Ministers' annual stipends.

The Sustentation Fund for the Augmentation of Ministers' Stipends had been founded in 1883, and already, as the Committee of the Association more than once with warm appreciation reported, it was giving aid to a considerable number of the older Churches; but the work of helping in the support of ministers still required the united efforts of both institutions.

The Sustentation Fund[2] was initiated as a consequence of resolutions passed at one of the earliest meetings of the National Conference of Unitarian, Liberal Christian, Free Christian, Presbyterian, and other Non-subscribing or Kindred Congregations. This body had its origin in the example set by the Unitarians of the United States of America, who had organized a "National Conference of Unitarian and other Christian Churches" in 1865. The Council of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association, at their meeting in January, 1881, had passed a resolution "that the Executive Committee be

[1] The term "Home Missions" was used to signify organized work for "the promotion of Unitarian worship by assisting congregations, and by sending out or assisting Missionary preachers."

[2] This Fund must not be confused with the "Ministers' Stipend Augmentation Fund," founded by Christopher Rawdon in 1856 to replace the lost Hewley Fund (see p. 61).

requested to consider the possibility and desirableness of holding a Unitarian Conference in England, and to ascertain the feeling of the larger congregations, and report to the next meeting of the Council." In June, 1881, a Committee was formed to make arrangements for a meeting of ministers and laymen in some central district for Religious Fellowship and Conference. The *name* eventually adopted has been well described as an epitome of several chapters in our denominational history. It may be observed here that although the Conference has become the most important deliberative body connected with the denomination, its importance has not been limited to its purely deliberative functions. Several enterprises affecting the welfare of the Churches and the status of the Ministry have been initiated in consequence of resolutions passed at its meetings: and among these the most important are the Ministers' Pension and Insurance Fund and the Sustentation Fund.

Conferences were held in 1893 between representatives of the principal auxiliary funds such as the Sustentation and Augmentation Funds, including the British and Foreign Unitarian Association. The object was, to promote intelligent co-operation between the administrators of the several Funds; and the general understanding arrived at was that the Association should regard its work chiefly as of a missionary character, and

that the maintenance of Churches which have passed out of the missionary stage should be the special care of other Funds.

In 1893 the Fund raised for the organization of Special Services for the People came to an end. These meetings had their origin in the Bermondsey Town Hall Services held during 1883-4, to which reference has previously been made.

In 1888, under the Presidency of Mr. Harry Rawson, and largely through the initiative of Mr. T. Chatfeild-Clarke, it was decided to raise a special fund for Services held in public halls under specified conditions. The sum of £1081 was raised, including a contribution of £200 from the Association. Upwards of 250 services were held, attended by about 100,000 people. We previously mentioned the usually small result in the way of increased permanent membership of congregations. But the large attendances suggested, at the time, a question which is still open: namely, whether the time had not come for reconsidering and re-adopting the ordinary Sunday services so as to meet, in some measure, the apparent needs of "non-church goers."

It was evident at this time that the principles of Unitarian Christianity were still widely feared and denounced,—feared and denounced all the more because of the progress they were making. It was frequently proclaimed that a Christianity without the Deity of Christ was no Christianity

and had no Gospel. This was specially prominent during the London School Board election in the autumn of 1894. The misrepresentations and abuse which the clerical party poured upon Unitarianism, however, had an effect which their authors did not contemplate, much less intend. Pamphlets and leaflets explanatory of Unitarian Christianity were circulated—in many cases in response to direct requests for information—to an unprecedented extent.

This refers specially to literary propaganda. With regard to other methods the report for 1896 contains the following observations:—

> With regard to the breaking of new ground, the Committee have been glad to assist in promoting "Forward Movement" and other courses of Lectures in many places where our principles are unknown. This work is purely experimental and the results vary a great deal. But to those who have anything of the missionary spirit the enterprise must always appear worth trying; for even when no direct result is immediately apparent, it often happens that persons who eventually become connected with our Churches say that the first seed was sown in their minds by means of such Lectures. The Committee, however, consider that before taking the further step of endeavouring to establish regular services with the view of building up a permanent Church, the most careful consideration is required. For themselves, at any rate, they cannot undertake responsibilities in this direction without a prospect of reasonable local interest and effort. When these are forthcoming, the true policy is to encourage them generously and steadily for a sufficient time, and above all, not to trust mere casual, haphazard arrangements, but to see that every service is conducted in a manner worthy of the

cause we desire to serve. Want of care and judgment in these respects is always deplorable, but, as a matter of fact, its results may be less serious in the case of a Church with established reputation, than of a new one which is creating impressions among people unacquainted with our history and traditions. The standard of efficiency in the general equipment of Churches is undoubtedly being raised all round, and if our principles are to win their way they must be presented worthily, and our methods must be adapted to the higher requirements of the time. The Committee are satisfied that the work is growing, and would rejoice to see it growing still faster; but they are firmly convinced that quality even more than quantity must be aimed at, if permanent results are to be attained.

In this connection the following observations from the Report for 1899 are of interest:—

The Committee recognize that it is their duty to scatter the good seed of Unitarian Christianity everywhere. But to erect buildings and station ministers is an expensive work . . . and experience seems to prove that it is only in populous districts where thought is active and people are independent of ecclesiastical or social influences, that a Unitarian movement can be established with any likelihood of becoming self-supporting.

In 1897 the question was considered, of appointing a special preacher who would conduct religious services at some of the chief provincial towns as well as occasionally in London. The financial provision was entrusted to a small Committee consisting of the Rev. Dr. Brooke Herford and Messrs. H. Chatfeild Clarke, F. Nettlefold, and J. F. Swann; and arrangements

were soon made with the Rev. Stopford A. Brooke, M.A., to preach at various Churches in different parts of the country. Between October, 1897, and May, 1898, Mr. Stopford Brooke preached in thirty-four of our Churches, in England, Scotland, and Ireland. At every place crowded congregations welcomed him, and his sermons gave a stimulus to the cause of liberal Christianity all over the country. In 1900 and 1901 the Committee were again able to secure his services, and special engagements were arranged in London and elsewhere; but Mr. Brooke's health made any considerable extension of these labours undesirable.

The Committee were also fortunate in being able to arrange at the same time for a series of six lectures on "The Bible in the Nineteenth Century" by the Rev. J. Estlin Carpenter, M.A. The lectures were delivered in Bolton, Leeds, Liverpool, and London. They were of the type of University Extension Lectures, and held large audiences week after week. An important service was rendered to the more intelligent appreciation of the history and results of modern Biblical criticism. The series was given again in 1902 in Bristol, Leicester, Manchester, and Swansea, and again were attended by large and deeply interested audiences.

The appreciative and eager response, given to these special efforts by Mr. Stopford Brooke and

Mr. Carpenter, suggests that an observation previously quoted from the Rev. J. Page Hopps in 1870—at the beginning of his Glasgow ministry—is applicable in other countries beside Scotland: "We must be prepared to see much of the fruit of the seed, which has been sown by Unitarians, harvested and garnered by other Churches."

In the meantime the ordinary maintenance work of the Association, on behalf of existing congregations, was continued and extended. A large proportion of the grants was made towards the support of the ministry; and in all such cases the principle, which we have previously recorded as agreed upon between the Association and the Managers of the Sustentation and other Funds, was observed. The following list shows the range of the Assistance given in 1900:

Aberdare (Highland Place)	£10
Ashton-under-Lyne	100
Bedfield	30
Billingshurst	10
Blackpool (Building)	15
Bournemouth	25
Bradford (Lancs.)	40
Cardiff	20
Carlisle	45
Chelmsford	15
Chorlton-cum-Hardy	40
Do. (Building)	50
Ciliau Aeron (Building)	25
Clydach Vale	13
Colyton	10

Congleton	£20
Crewkerne	10
Deal (Repairs)	10
Denton	50
Elland	20
Framlingham	20
Gateshead	100
Gateshead (Building)	50
Gloucester (Building)	20
Halstead	10
Hastings	35
Heaton Moor and Urmston	45
Heaton Moor (Building)	50
Huddersfield	40
Ilkeston	45
Kings Lynn	13
Leicester (Narboro' Road)	20
London District:—	
Bermondsey	37
Forest Gate	60
Kentish Town	20
Kilburn	20
Lewisham	75
Mansford Street	20
Plumstead	70
Stepney	20
Stratford	20
Welsh Services	10
Wood Green (Building)	100
Lydgate	10
Manchester, Oldham Road (Building)	25
Newark	18
Newbury	20
Newton Abbot	10
Nottage	10
Nottingham (Christ Church)	30

Pentre	£13
Plymouth	10
Pontypridd	10
Poole	35
Small Heath	48
Southampton	100
Stockton-on-Tees	30
Stratford-on-Avon	38
Torquay	25
Warwick	10
Whitchurch	10
Wick	10
Yeovil	31
District Ministers:—	
L. & S.E.C. Prov. Assembly: Rev. T. E. M. Edwards	100
S.E. Wales Society: Rev. Dr. Griffiths	100
Western Union: Rev. T. B. Broadrick	63

In addition to these amounts, there were a number of grants of £5 and smaller sums. The total for Home Mission purposes in 1900 was £2238.

The assistance given to congregations was not, however, limited to financial aid. Visits to Congregations and District Associations not only by members of the Committee on official deputations but by experienced ministers had been customary as opportunity offered; but more than this was attempted. In 1902, for example, visits of able and experienced ministers to congregations in different parts of the country, particularly to some of the smaller and more isolated congregations, were arranged and much appreciated.

(ii). *Publications Work*, 1890-1902.

The work of the Publications department during this period presents several new and important enterprises in addition to developments which were the natural and logical issue of previous policies. During the last ten years of the nineteenth century the importance of literary propaganda specially by means of pamphlets and leaflets became more and more evident; and the Committee largely increased the supply of available material of this kind and were prepared to make large free grants in all suitable cases. Thus, the Report for 1893 records arrangements for three separate series of publications: (i) A series of *Tracts for the Times*, such as "The Principles and Ideals of the Unitarians," by Richard A. Armstrong; "The Nativity," by Stopford A. Brooke; "Science and Religion," by W. B. Carpenter; (ii) a series of *Theological Essays*, such as "Gains to the Bible from Modern Criticism," by J. Frederick Smith; "Miracles," by Walter Lloyd; "The Problem of Evil," by George St. Clair; "Authority in Religious Belief," by L. P. Jacks; (iii) a series of *Sermons by Unitarian Ministers* not of a doctrinal or controversial character. The three series of Sermons are still on sale through the Lindsey Press. Over fifty pamphlets were issued under the title *Tracts for the Times*. Many of them served their purpose and after a few years were not further reprinted;

but the demand for them proved their utility. Other series issued during this period were the *Unitarian Leaflets*, the *Home Pages*, and the *Pages for Religious Inquirers*. The largest *grants of pamphlets* on record during the years now under review were in 1895, when 186,650 were granted to various Societies, Churches, and Ministers; 17,670 to Postal Missions; and 2800 to individual inquirers at Essex Hall. The demand for Channing's works was well maintained for several years longer, especially from members of orthodox evangelical communities.

Of the books published at this time, space can be found only for a mere mention of some of the more important: by the Rev. R. A. Armstrong, "God and the Soul," "Agnosticism and Theism in the Nineteenth Century," and "The Trinity and the Incarnation"; by the Rev. J. Estlin Carpenter, "The Place of Christianity among the Religions of the World"; by the Rev. Brooke Herford, "Courage and Cheer," and "Anchors of the Soul"; by Dr. S. H. Mellone, "Converging Lines of Religious Thought"; by the Rev. J. Hamilton Thom, "A Spiritual Faith," and "Laws of Life after the Mind of Christ."

Among the important new publications, first issued during these years, were the *Essex Hall Year Book* and the *Essex Hall Hymnal*. The Year Book was first published in 1890. The Annual Report for that year states that the Committee felt the time had come for the Association to undertake the publication of a Year Book of the same kind as that published by the American Association, and other similar bodies. Arrangements were accordingly made with this object. The Report for the following year refers to the success of the publication, the second issue of which was "enriched with much new and valuable information." The Report adds that "it will always be open to improve the publication in this way from year to year." These observations have been quoted because they indicate precisely the primary principle on which the preparation of the Year Book has been based throughout its history. Its object is to give as accurate and as complete information as is possible; no portion of it has ever been compiled with any other purpose in view; and it has become invaluable to ministers, to congregational officers, and, indeed to all who desire to make themselves acquainted with the movement represented by the churches on the roll given. The financial responsibility for this publication rests entirely upon the British and Foreign Unitarian Association, and there has never been any question or any possibility of financial profit. The profit on the book consists in its usefulness to the Denomination immediately concerned, and to any of the general public interested in such information. The increasing co-operation between the Association and other

Societies contributing to the support of the Ministry lent special importance to the Ministerial Roll in the Year Book, and led in later years to the formation of a Joint Committee for the annual revision of the roll, the Committee consisting of representatives duly appointed for the purpose by the Association, the National Conference, and the Ministerial Fellowship.

The Essex Hall Hymnal, containing over five hundred hymns, was also first published in 1890. It was compiled by authority of the Committee of the Association; and the Preface to the first edition contains the following statement:—

> The aim of the Committee in this publication has been to produce a book which should be cheap in form, and therefore of reasonable proportions as to the number of the hymns; comprehensive in spirit, so that its contents might be available for universal use; and popular, in the sense of being specially adapted for congregational worship. At the same time, it has been the endeavour of those to whom the compilation was entrusted, to select such hymns as could be sung with reasonable consistency, as the expression of their real sentiment and feeling, by all persons familiar with the varied experiences of the religious life, whatever their profession or creed.

Several reprints of the Hymnal were called for; and twelve years after the publication of the first edition, the Committee of the Association appointed the Revs. V. D. Davis, James Harwood, and W. G. Tarrant to prepare an entirely new edition, which was published as the Essex Hall

Hymnal Revised in 1902. It was reprinted again and again; and in 1914 a supplement was added, increasing the number of Hymns to 585.

The foundation of the "Essex Hall Lecture" may be recorded here. In 1891 it was decided to have an Annual Lecture delivered during the Anniversary week on some topic of interest to liberal religious thinkers and workers. In January, 1892, a scheme was approved, of which the essentials were these: a competent person is to be invited to deliver a Lecture, to be called the "Essex Hall Lecture," on some religious subject, to be selected by himself in consultation with the Executive Committee; a fee of at least twenty guineas to be paid for the Lecture, the sole copyright in which shall become the property of the Association, who shall be at liberty to publish it, if and when they think fit. The first Essex Hall Lecture was delivered in May, 1893, by the Rev. Stopford A. Brooks, M.A., LL.D., on "The Development of Theology as illustrated in English Poetry from 1780 to 1830." It has not been possible to arrange for the delivery of the Essex Hall Lecture every year; the first six Lectures in the series were as follows:—

1893. Rev. Stopford A. Brooke (as above).
1894. Mrs. Humphry Ward: "Unitarians and the Future."
1895. Rev. J. Estlin Carpenter, M.A.: "The Relation of Jesus to his Age and our own."

1897. Rev. R. A. Armstrong, B.A.: "The Significance of the Teaching of Jesus."
1899. Rev. Philip H. Wicksteed, M.A.: "The Religion of Time and the Religion of Eternity."
1902. Rev. James Drummond, LL.D.: "Some Thoughts on Christology."

The expansion of the work of the Association in the Home Mission and Publication departments inevitably involved a heavy financial responsibility. We have previously recorded the success of the enthusiastic effort, initiated by Dr. Brooke Herford, by which the Annual Subscriptions were raised to £2036 in 1893, the Donations in that year being £417 and the Collections £384. The figures for the years up to 1902 were as follows:—

	Subscriptions.	*Collections.*	*Donations.*
1894 ..	£2074 ..	£395 ..	£226
1895 ..	2008 ..	389 ..	193
1896 ..	1891 ..	394 ..	622
1897 ..	1839 ..	508 ..	388
1898 ..	1793 ..	590 ..	242
1899 ..	1732 ..	590 ..	341
1900 ..	1659 ..	664 ..	87
1901 ..	1635 ..	668 ..	138
1902 ..	1615 ..	654 ..	176

The increased work was possible because in addition to these receipts there were in these years, substantial increases in the amounts received from dividends and from sales of publications.

(iii). *Work Abroad*, 1890-1902

The Report for 1894 contains a very interesting statement on Foreign Missions, the substance of which is recorded here.

Foreign Missions had not hitherto received much attention from our Churches and Societies. There had been a tendency to emphasize the need for home missionary work and to disparage missions sent to foreign lands and peoples. Unitarians had never believed that for people not converted to Christianity there is no future but hell. They had recognized that Revelation is not limited to any one form of religion, and they felt no desire to impose *what is non-essential in Christianity* upon non-Christian races. In the opinion of the Committee it was essential that all Foreign missionary work should be pervaded by a desire to do full justice to the best elements in the native religions. At the same time they believed that *essential Christianity*, as Jesus presented it, is adapted to the spiritual needs of mankind, and that it was a duty to make that teaching known among all men, and especially those whose religious ideas are bound up with debasing practices and who seem destitute of strong moral impulses and spiritual conceptions.

For the purpose in view, non-Christian races were divided into two main groups. (i) With regard to natives of the lowest stage of culture, as

in Africa and the less civilized parts of Asia, the Committee did not feel able to initiate any plan of work. "Noble examples of missionary zeal and enterprise," it is gladly admitted, "are associated with such districts . . . from the first days of Foreign Missions. Much improvement in method and some change in the presentation of doctrine have taken place; and it is believed that progress in these directions will continue. . . . When a practical opportunity offers, the Committee would be glad to be able to assist in uplifting earth's poorest children." (ii) The way seemed most open in the direction of the more civilized races of Asia, including the Hindus, Mohammedans, and Chinese. With respect to these races whose religions, if not of the highest, had yet many elements of truth, the Committee believed that Unitarians can best help by opening communication and cultivating friendly relations with the promoters of any religious reform, and especially of theistic movements, in such countries, and by rendering organized missionary help as suitable opportunities are found.

It was observed that a few years previously, in response to the desire of a number of Japanese who had come to know something of Unitarian Christianity in England and America, a Unitarian Mission was established and maintained in Tokyo by the American Unitarian Association, first under the Rev. A. M. Knapp and afterwards

under the Rev. Clay McCauley. The Rev. H. W. Hawkes had for some time assisted in this Mission, giving his valuable services gratuitously. It was decided to continue the modest contributions to this effort which had been made by the British and Foreign Unitarian Association. And with regard to India, it was evident that a Special Fund was required to meet the opportunities presenting themselves in that country, and also to provide help for any Hindu or Japanese students seeking theological training in our English Colleges.

In May, 1896, the Rev. J. T. Sunderland, of America, delivered an able and inspiring lecture at Essex Hall on his visit to India; and a resolution was passed in favour of giving the best help of Unitarians in this country to the religious thought and life of India. It was decided to raise an "Indian Fund" for the following purposes: (i) the appointment of an English missionary to visit India, to lecture in the larger towns, organize religious work on Unitarian principles in existing centres, and co-operate with the branches of the Brahmo Somaj; (ii) to arrange for the sale and distribution of books and pamphlets in Bombay, Calcutta, and other important centres; (iii) to offer scholarships to Indian ministers and students of ability and character to enable them to study at Manchester College, Oxford, in preparation for religious work in

India. A Fund sufficient for a considerable amount of valuable work was raised chiefly through the generosity of an Anonymous Donor, with the support of a large number of other contributors, and was maintained until June, 1903, when the balance was placed in reserve for future use.

The first English Unitarian minister to visit India under this scheme was the Rev. James Harwood; and at the same time large consignments of books and pamphlets were forwarded to Indian correspondents. Indian students were maintained at Manchester College, Oxford, during 1896 and 1897, two in the latter year, and two again in 1898. At the end of September, 1898, the Rev. S. Fletcher Williams sailed for India, where he laboured for nearly two and a half years. He died in November, 1901. As representative of the Association, he rendered invaluable service to the cause of liberal religion in India, creating a deep impression on members of the Brahmo Somaj and on many others outside their ranks.

In the meantime friendly correspondence was maintained with several centres of liberal religious work on the Continent (especially with Brussels and Budapest) and with the Dominions overseas, and financial aid sent from time to time. Apart from the India Fund, the grants in aid of work abroad, in 1900, were as follows:—

Auckland	£79
Brussels	10
Budapest	50
Copenhagen	10
Melbourne	35
Ottawa (for building)	100
Sydney	20

At this time there was an almost continuous succession of Hungarian students at Manchester College, Oxford.

(iv). *Work in Scotland*, 1890 to 1902.

Since 1890 the Association's work in Scotland has been profoundly affected by the munificent bequest of William McQuaker, of Glasgow, founding the McQuaker Fund to be administered by the British and Foreign Unitarian Association for the promotion of Unitarian Christianity in Scotland.[1]

When the Committee took in hand the management of the Fund, they considered it their first duty to give to the existing congregations and their ministers such help as would stimulate their own exertions without impairing the proper feeling and habit of self-reliance. In the next place they had to provide for what the testator described as missionary lectures. For these, the services of various ministers were secured for

[1] The first financial statement of the Fund appears in the audited accounts of the Association for the year 1889.

short periods, including those of our ministers already working in Scotland: and lectures were given, on the whole with encouraging results, in many towns up and down the country. Encouragement was also given to special courses of Sunday evening lectures by our Scottish ministers.

In 1890 a series of lectures of a different type was delivered in the University towns by the Revs. R. A. Armstrong, H. W. Crosskey (then at Birmingham), C. Hargrove, and Frank Walters. The remaining duty of the Committee had reference to the diffusion of literature. This was arranged by the various lecturers, from the publications of the Association. In 1891 the Rev. James Forrest was appointed "McQuaker Lecturer," giving his whole time to the work. In 1894 it was perceived that the broadcast though carefully organized seed-sowing had been carried on long enough, and that more concentration was required. The Scottish Unitarian Association conferred with the Executive Committee, and as a result of the interchange of views Mr. Forrest was stationed in Elgin, where it seemed possible to establish a congregation[1]. It was also decided to suspend the general lecturing over Scotland, and place the Reading Circles and local lecturing under the respective ministers; to publish pamphlets for special use in Scotland; and to

[1] The movement at Elgin did not prove to be a permanent one, and Mr. Forrest removed to Sale, near Manchester.

provide for various courses of lectures in University towns. Shortly afterwards from ministers in Scotland applications were invited for books expository of Unitarian Christianity. The results fully justified this method of propaganda, and it has frequently been employed. Communications with Public Libraries have also opened up a fruitful field. The change which had already come over the tone and temper of religious thought in Scotland was most marked.

(v). *National Education*

Various resolutions adopted at annual meetings of the Association, the active work of Unitarians in their respective localities, and noteworthy services rendered by our prominent men and women, testify to the interest in national education which has characterized the denomination throughout its history. While upholding the civil rights of Unitarians, the Association invariably based its educational policy not on any sectarian plea but on the broad principles of justice, freedom, and a common citizenship.

One outstanding controversy of the years 1893-94 demands more than a passing notice. The London School Board resolved early in its career (March, 1871) that in all schools "the Bible shall be read, and there shall be given such explanations and instruction therefrom in the

principles of morality and religion as are suited to the capacities of children." The teachers were enjoined strictly to observe sections vii and xiv of the Education Act of 1870, both in letter and spirit; and no attempt was to be made "to attach children to any particular denomination." The majority of teachers had been trained in sectarian Colleges, and they naturally explained the Bible in ways that would now be regarded as unenlightened and old-fashioned. Unitarians and other liberal religious people, as well as Secularists, often felt aggrieved; but as the parents, generally speaking, were satisfied, they did not seek to provoke opposition to the compromise reached in 1871. The debates in Parliament made it clear that the Education Act of 1870 never contemplated the introduction into Board Schools of dogmatic theology under the guise of Bible instruction.

It was therefore something of a shock when, early in 1893, Mr. Athelstane Riley, an Anglican churchman of the sincerely dogmatic and ecclesiastically minded type, gave notice that he would move the following resolution: "That the teachers under the Board be informed that when the religious instruction of the day is given on passages of the Bible which refer to Christ, the children are to be distinctly taught that Christ is God, and such explanations of the doctrine of the Holy Trinity are to be given as may be suited

to their capacities." This resolution was the beginning of a bitter and prolonged struggle which hampered the School Board in its proper work for upwards of a year.

The Association took an active part in calling public attention to the unjust and retrogressive policy of the clerical majority on the Board. It is only right to say that two or three Anglican clergymen among its members were as strongly opposed to this policy as any of the Nonconformists. Deputations, resolutions, letters, were continually sent to the School Board deploring the proposed action. Dr. Martineau prepared a memorial against it which was signed by a long list of eminent people, including the Lord Chief Justice of England, Mr. W. E. H. Lecky, Mr. Leslie Stephen, Mr. G. F. Watts, Mrs. Fawcett, Mrs. J. R. Green, Mrs. Humphry Ward, Canon Barnett, Dr. Clifford, Dr. Horton, and the Chief Rabbi. The press, Liberal and Conservative, was practically unanimous in its opposition. Only in *The Church Times* did Mr. Riley and his supporters find warm and persistent advocacy. The battle was fought with great earnestness and vigour on both sides. Many members became heartily tired of the controversy; but the clerical majority insisted on going forward, and in March, 1894, the famous Circular to Teachers was adopted by a small majority. It contained the following clause: "The Board cannot approve

of any teaching which denies either the Divine or the Human Nature of our Lord Jesus Christ, or which leaves on the minds of the children any other impression than that they are bound to trust and serve Him as their God and Lord."

The triumph of the clerical majority was short-lived. The School Board Election of November, 1894, was watched with keen interest, not only in London but all over England. It happily resulted in the rout of the obscurantists. Miss R. Davenport-Hill, a well-known Unitarian, was returned at the head of the poll in the City of London, and a similar honour fell to the lot of the Rev. W. Copeland Bowie in Southwark. The Circular[1] was buried without ceremony: thirty-one years have passed and there has been no resurrection.

(vi). *Conference Ideals and Realities*

The National Conference, as we have seen, was inaugurated by the British and Foreign Unitarian Association for purposes of consultation and mutual encouragement. In the process of its organization it assumed, as a matter of fact, the

[1] The Text of the Circular, a statement of the Compromise of 1871, and the speech of the Rev. W. Copeland Bowie seconding the motion for the rejection of the Circular, will be found on pp. 37-43 of the Report of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association for 1894.

form of a deliberative body consisting of representatives of those congregations which, being on the Roll of the Essex Hall Year Book, saw fit to appoint representatives for the purpose.

The practical organization of the Conference opened up possibilities of development in various directions, and among these we must specify one which appealed strongly to some of its leading members. A backward glance will make this matter clearer. We have seen that from a comparatively early period in the last century, there were some who deprecated the attachment of the term " Unitarian " to religious fellowship. James Martineau held this view very strongly; and in 1867, along with John James Tayler, he sought to promote a " Free Christian Union " in which people of various creeds or denominations should forget their theological differences and combine in those spiritual aspirations and practical duties which are common to all Christians. The Union, though attracting some eminent individuals, failed to win large support—very few non-Unitarians welcomed it; and the term " Christian " was regarded by some, notably by Francis William Newman, as definitely narrowing the limits of religious fellowship. The Union came to an end in 1870.

Another effort, not differing essentially in principle but differing very much in scope, method, and detail, was made when the octogenarian

philosopher gave a famous address at the third triennial assembly of the Conference at Leeds in 1888. Here Martineau set forth an elaborate scheme of ecclesiastical organization on Presbyterian lines, with a regular financial levy on the congregations, and a minimum of stipend guaranteed to the ministers. This scheme was to embrace the three hundred and upwards of Unitarian, Liberal Christian, Free Christian, Presbyterian, and other Non-subscribing and Kindred Congregations in Great Britain and Ireland: but they were all to be included under the name "English Presbyterian." After much discussion, the scheme failed to win sufficient support to become a practical policy; but it has borne fruit; some of its aims have been attained in other ways, and it did much to emphasize the importance of strengthening District Societies.

One of its effects, however, was to strengthen and vivify what seemed, to some, the glowing ideal of an *Organized Church* which should be *religiously Christian but theologically Non-subscribing*. There were some who saw in the "National Conference" the possibility of such a Church. It is a question whether sufficient care was taken to guard against a serious error,—of doing more than justice to the ideal of personal and spiritual *freedom* and less than justice to the ideal of lucid and definite religious *thought and teaching*; since theological "non-subscription"

emphasizes the negative rather than the positive aspects of "freedom."[1] There were some whose ideal vision extended further, and who thought they saw the real possibility of a Universal Free Christian Church in the gradual amalgamation of the Conference, transformed on the lines indicated, with the consciously progressive, liberal, or modernist elements in the larger religious communities. The ideal of a Universal Church is one thing, and the method of attaining it, another; and many of the able and liberal-minded men from other religious communions, who attended and addressed meetings of the Conference, were not *representative* of those other religious communities where they worked independently and often in an atmosphere of "heresy." There was no real evidence of the possibility of advance towards interdenominational unity in this direction.

The relations of the Conference and the Association created problems which required denominational statemanship of a high order for their successful handling. Interchanges of view on this subject, in the early years of the twentieth century, led to no practical result: partly because the work of the Association in every department was about to undergo a great extension, for reasons which we shall explain. Five years (1903 to 1907) of new and enlarged work on an unpre-

[1] Compare Chapter I, sections ii and iii (pages 10 to 15); Chapter V, section v (pages 86 to 90); and elsewhere.

cedented scale lay before the Association. Afterwards (1909) the question was taken up again, and agreement on some matters of principle was arrived at.

A Joint Committee, representing both bodies, had been appointed to discuss the relation of the Association, with a view to securing more effective co-operation among our institutions generally, and with special reference to the use of Funds for Sustentation and Maintenance. The Report of the Joint Committee began by recalling the agreement previously arrived at, when Mr. A. W. Worthington was Secretary both of the Conference and the Sustentation Fund. The British and Foreign Unitarian Association is essentially an organization for the diffusion of the principles of Unitarian Christianity, by "assisting congregations," among other specified methods. It was agreed that as far as practicable, the Association's grants should be confined to congregations which were in the "missionary" or growing stage. But in practice the resources of the Sustentation and Augmentation Funds were not sufficient to meet the needs and it was still necessary for the Association to assist some of the older Churches. The Report proceeds as follows:—

> While the Rules of the National Conference do not define the purpose for which it was established, it is best indicated in the very name. The Conference is essentially a deliberative assembly of the Congregations which constitute it, represented by their ministers and delegates; and its scope has hitherto been to confer, discuss, suggest, stimulate, and initiate. Such new movements as have been initiated through the impulse given by the Conference, for example, the Sustentation Fund, the Ministers' Pension and Insurance Fund, and the Ministerial Settlements Board, have been constituted with suitable management *ad hoc*. The special field of usefulness open to the Conference lies in bringing together representatives of our Churches to discuss matters of vital interest, to devise means of quickening their life and improving their efficiency, and to infuse a greater spirit of devotion, sympathy, and liberality of thought and life. The status of the ministry and the general welfare of the Churches come also within the province of the Conference.
>
> The Joint-Committee, while describing in general terms the present functions of the two organizations, do not of course suggest any attempt to bind the action of either in relation to the needs and developments of the future. They recommend that if at any time differences arise between the two bodies, such differences should be considered by a joint-meeting of their representatives.
>
> The Augmentation and Sustentation Funds exist for the maintenance and encouragement of faithful Ministers of such Congregations as are represented in the National Conference, many of them having been established through the agency or support of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association. There is here therefore already a co-operation between these institutions, as there is also between them and the District Associations. What is especially desirable is to draw the bonds of sympathy closer, and make the co-operation more thorough and efficient.
>
> Two main purposes to this end stand out prominently:—
>
> (1) To relieve the British and Foreign Unitarian Association from the responsibility (of which it would be glad to be free) of contributing towards the maintenance of the ministry in the older Churches;

(2) To give more adequate support than is at present possible to the maintenance of the ministry generally where the stipends are small, and the work is being satisfactorily done.

To attain these purposes, it is evident that additional funds are required, and there is little doubt that if a united appeal could be made by representatives of our Funds and Societies, speaking through the voice of the next Conference, there would be a generous response from the members of our Churches, provided that some well-considered scheme were presented.

CHAPTER VIII

THE NEW CENTURY, 1903-1925

(i). *A Great Forward Movement*

THE work of the Association depends on careful organization of the financial basis, and this involves making good the inevitable losses due to the deaths of generous supporters and friends year by year. The total amount provided by annual subscribers, as we have seen, declined during the ten years from 1893 to 1902, although there was a continuous development of work during the period. In 1903 the possibilities of the work were greatly enlarged through the munificence of an Anonymous Donor who offered to subscribe £1000 a year if £2000 in addition was subscribed annually by others; and for five years this generous challenge was met. In the year named the total of the annual subscriptions rose from £1791 to £5152; and up to and including 1907 the amount varied annually between £4502 and £4704.[1]

[1] During these years the amount received from congregational collections varied between £575 and £630.

The Annual Reports show how the Committee and Officers of the Association rose to the opportunities thus offered to them. The proposals for new and enlarged work were as summarized below.

Foreign and Colonial Work

1. To prepare, publish, and circulate a series of the best modern Unitarian pamphlets in Danish, Dutch, French, German, Italian, and Spanish, as well as in some of the chief languages of India, Japan, and other lands.

2. To make occasional grants, as fitting opportunities arise, for the spread and encouragement of Liberal religious thought and work in all parts of the world, among non-Christians as well as Christians.

3. To provide assistance in founding new churches, and in securing the services of ministers in Australasia, South Africa, and wherever else evidence of local interest and self-help is forthcoming.

4. To induce a minister of eminence and capacity to visit Australia, New Zealand, and Tasmania, to preach and lecture in the chief towns for a period of three or four months; and, if the experiment prove successful, to arrange visits to other countries by specially qualified ministers.

Home Work

1. To provide for the delivery of courses of Lectures on Biblical and theological subjects, addressed to educated and thoughtful people, similar to those so successfully delivered by the Rev. J. Estlin Carpenter. In addition to Mr. Carpenter himself, other men of scholarship and ability, with the gift of engaging the attention of thoughtful audiences, might be induced to take part.

2. To arrange for series of popular religious services in public halls and theatres, with the view of reaching the unchurched masses, particularly in large cities and towns. The Rev. J. Page Hopps and others have already shown what good work can be done in this direction, and other specially qualified ministers, it is hoped, would be found willing to assist in conducting these people's services.

3. To arrange with some of the ablest and most effective ministers in our connection occasionally to visit existing places of worship, to preach, and, if invited, to confer with the congregations about their work.

4. To appoint a travelling Missionary, whose time and energy would chiefly be employed in propagandist work in towns and villages where at present there is no centre of Unitarian teaching or worship.

5. To prepare and publish a new series of Handbooks of Religion, dealing with important questions of philospohy, the Bible, theology, and practical religion, for circulation at home and abroad.

6. To prepare and publish biographical and historical, works illustrative of the growth and progress of Unitarian thought, beginning with the Life of Dr. Priestley, the centenary of whose death occurs early in 1904.

7. To make grants of books and pamphlets on a more liberal scale than heretofore, particularly to public libraries, clergymen, ministers, students, and religious inquirers at home and abroad.

These proposals are recorded here as a matter of history. Modifications necessarily arose in carrying them into effect. In particular, a travelling Missionary Minister was not appointed; arrangements were made for several ministers in different localities to give lectures on the principles of Unitarian Christianity as opportunities arose.

The second and third paragraphs under Foreign and Colonial work indicate a deliberate extension

of aims which had been in view for many years and which were implied in the action of the Association from the beginning. Taking 1905 as an illustration, we find that the grants in aid of work abroad amounted to £1229, on behalf of congregations, ministers, and students.[1] Pamphlets were being translated into French, German, Italian, Russian, Hungarian, and Urdu (India); and the value of the books and pamphlets sent abroad in 1905 was £318. And in order to provide personal contact and fuller information and local encouragement, an extensive mission was arranged for the Rev. Charles Hargrove to our fellow-believers in Australia and New Zealand.

In the Home field during these years, the scheme of new and enlarged work was carried forward. (1) Public lectures on Biblical and religious subjects, with a view of appealing chiefly to educated thoughtful people, were arranged in various parts of the country and given by the Revs. Dr. J. E. Carpenter, R. A. Armstrong, Charles Hargrove, W. G. Tarrant, and Dr. S. M. Crothers; and the response was remarkably encouraging. (2) Popular Services were organized in theatres and public halls, conducted chiefly by the Rev. James C. Street and the Rev. J. Page Hopps, with assistance from the Revs. W.

[1] At this time the Association was assisting a Hungarian, an Indian, a Japanese, and an Australian student at Manchester College, Oxford.

Copeland Bowie, W. G. Tarrant, and J. H. Weatherall. The results showed that services conducted by Unitarian ministers could be made quite as attractive and as interesting to working men and women as any form of evangelical orthodoxy. (3) Visits to Churches, by ministers of proved experience, were systematically organized, and special Services and conferences with the local congregations were held; valuable personal contacts were thus established, and much encouragement given. (4) In the Publications department, the most important among the new books produced was Dr. Carpenter's valuable work *James Martineau, Theologian and Teacher*. Reprints of a number of important books were made and sold at sixpence. Among these were Carpenter's *First Three Gospels* and Armstrong's *God and the Soul*. Tens of thousands of these were circulated at home and abroad. Other books in the list were Martineau's *Endeavours after the Christian Life*, Beard's *Reformation* (Hibbert Lectures, edited by Dr. Gow), Channing's *Perfect Life*, and F. W. Newman's *The Soul*, with an Introduction by C. B. Upton. Large additions were also made to the list of pamphlets. It may be mentioned here that during the hundred years more than seven hundred and fifty different pamphlets have been issued by the Association, by authors representing every type of Unitarian thought; and many of these pamphlets were

printed in tens of thousands to meet the demand which arose at home and abroad.

Taking the same year, 1905, as typical of this period of special work, we find that grants to congregations and for special lectures and preachers in the Home field amounted to £3392, and books and pamphlets were granted to the value of £361. The amount spent on printing and binding books and pamphlets was £1278, and £1100 was realized by sales.

After 1907 it was not possible to claim the special subscription of £1000; but these years of new and enlarged work left a legacy of experience and encouragement which was not forgotten; and not one of the lines of work named above was allowed to die out.

It is noteworthy that shortly after this period of enlarged work on the part of the Association, the movement in favour of a larger Sustentation Fund was successfully carried forward. As we have seen, it had been recommended by the Joint Committee on the relations of the Association and the Conference. With the sympathy and support of both bodies, an appeal for £50,000 additional capital for the Sustentation Fund was issued, and met with a splendid response. The Fund was placed in a position to relieve the Association of the grants then made to established congregations, and thus enable the Association to undertake new work at home and abroad.

The Association's subscriptions and collections for the six years following the great effort were as follows:—

	Subscriptions.	*Collections.*
1908	£2892 ..	£590
1909	3668[1] ..	598
1910	3336 ..	514
1911	2702 ..	639
1912	2500 ..	642
1913	2326 ..	603

The organization of popular Services in theatres and public halls was found to involve very serious expense; and in 1906 an important scheme was inaugurated under which travelling missionary work could be carried out by many ministers and laymen of conviction and endowed with the capacity of lucid and forceful utterance. This was the Van Mission, for which the Association became responsible in 1907, by which the message of Unitarian Christianity was delivered to large numbers of people in England, Wales, and Scotland. The enthusiastic labours of the Rev. T. P. Spedding in organizing and superintending the Mission were appreciated by our whole religious community. The outbreak of war in August, 1914, led to its suspension. During the eight years from 1907 to 1914 contributions amounting to £6350 were received in aid of the Van Mission, the cost of which during those years was over £7000. It is convenient to add here that after

[1] Including some large special donations.

the war the Committee decided not to resume the Van Mission as previously carried on by the aid of a special fund. "Vans," it was observed, "are simply a means to an end; and it may prove possible to devise less expensive and perhaps equally effective methods of reaching the general public with our religious message. There can be no doubt that a fresh impetus would be given to our religious movement all over the country if a group of earnest capable men and women, possessing knowledge, enthusiasm, and the gift of persuasive speech, were enlisted in open-air missionary work."

During the period of enlarged work, and up to the outbreak of war, the Essex Hall Lectures were given as follows:—

1903. Rt. Hon. Augustine Birrell on "Emerson: a Study of his Life and Influence."
1904. Prof. H. H. Wendt on "The Idea and Reality of Revelation."
1905. Prof. Henry Jones on "The Immortality of the Soul in the Poems of Tennyson and Browning."
1906. Rev. Dr. S. M. Crothers on "The Making of Religion."
1908. Prof. G. Krüger on "Dogma and History."
1909. Prof. F. E. Weiss on "Evolution and Religious Progress."
1910. Rev. W. G. Tarrant, B.A., on "The Story and Significance of the Unitarian Movement."
1911. Prof. Rudolf Eucken on "Religion and Life."
1913. Rev. Alexander Gordon, M.A., on "Heresy: its Ancient Wrongs and Modern Rights."

1914. Rev. W. R. Inge, D.D., Dean of St. Paul's, on "The Philosophy of Plotinus and some modern Philosophies of Religion."

All these Lectures were published; and the activities of the Book Department were effectively maintained. Among the more important publications may be mentioned "The Historical Jesus and the Theological Christ," by the Rev. Dr. J. Estlin Carpenter; "Studies in Christian Doctrine," "The Way of Life," "Pauline Meditations," and "Johannine Thoughts," by the Rev. Dr. James Drummond; "The New Testament and Modern Life," by Dr. S. H. Mellone. An important series of *Modern Handbooks of Religion* was issued of which the following were the authors: the Revs. R. N. Cross, M.A., A. W. Fox, M.A., Alfred Hall, M.A., B.D., H. McLachlan, M.A., D.D., S. H. Mellone, M.A., D.Sc., S. A. Mellor, B.A., Ph.D., W. L. Schroeder, M.A., and Edgar Thackray, M.A., B.D. And a series of volumes dealing with questions of criticism and history were translated from the German, and at the time were highly prized: "The Apostolic Age," by E. von Dobschütz; "The Jewish Religion in the Time of Jesus," by G. Hollmann; "Christ the Beginnings of Dogma," by Johannes Weiss; "The Sources of our Knowledge of the Life of Jesus," by P. Wernle; and "Paul: a Study of his Life and Thought," by W. Wrede.

The work in Scotland was carried forward and

extended on the lines previously indicated, with the important addition that from 1908 to 1919 the Committee were able to employ the services of the Rev. E. T. Russell as Missionary Minister under the McQuaker Trust. Mr. Russell had a genuine gift for open-air work and for vigorous and clear exposition. For part of the period he used a Van, but afterwards his experience showed this equipment is not essential for a man of the right capacity to hold large and really attentive audiences.

While it was admitted that the progress of organized Unitarian Churches in Scotland is exceedingly slow, it was perceived that large and increasing numbers of men and women are moving rapidly towards broader views of religion. There are probably at the present time, in proportion to the population, more adherents of a liberal theology in Scotland than in any other country in Europe.

In illustration of the change that has taken place, the following sentences from a review of the volume "What do Unitarians Believe and Teach,"[1] which appeared in the *Glasgow Herald* as long ago as 1906, will be read with interest:—

> No one can doubt that in Scotland particularly Unitarianism has been unjustly dealt by. Too often the mere mention of its name has been suggestive to the churchgoer of a species of infidelity almost amounting to actual sin. It is the aim of this little volume to confute and counteract that preposterous conception by a full and frank statement of what Unitarianism actually is and what its teaching aims at. It is very true that much of the teaching is perfectly familiar to the intelligent public, for much has been accepted by thoughtful clergymen for many a day. To that extent there is some justice in the complaint that there are more Unitarians outside the Unitarian Church than there are inside it. For the present, however, Unitarians do well to content themselves with the propagation of their interpretation of Christianity through the medium of volumes like this—at once frank, fearless, catholic, and altogether solicitous for the highest interests of religion.

[1] This book contains a collection of twelve Essays on different aspects of Unitarian thought, by various representative writers.

One of the most important events in the denomination during the few years before the War,—important in itself and in its results,—was the inauguration of the *Women's League*. The proposal for the formation of such a League originated at the Autumnal Meetings of the Association in Liverpool, February, 1908, when a resolution was passed requesting the Executive Committee to take steps necessary for the organization of our women workers throughout the country, so that their power and influence may be fostered and utilized to the fullest extent. Accordingly a representative meeting of women interested in the work of our Churches and Societies, was organized in connection with the Anniversary in Whitweek. At this meeting proposals were adopted for the constitution of the League, the name

chosen being " The British League of Unitarian and other Liberal Christian Women." Its objects are to draw women, young and old, together in a united effort to strengthen the Churches to which they belong, and to quicken their religious life; to unite in a real " Fellowship " all lonely women in the United Kingdom and Overseas Dominions who through illness or distance cannot join a congregation; and to find friends and a welcome for women and girls moving from place to place or going abroad. Co-operation between the British League and the American " Alliance of Unitarian and Other Liberal Christian Women" in Fellowship Work is now active; by means of " Friendly Links " correspondence a net-work of friendship is being formed between members at home, in Overseas Dominions, and abroad; and the League is in touch with women of the new liberal religious movements in foreign countries.

An organization of this kind, with many branches in different parts of the country, has great possibilities before it.

During these years there had been a great extension of intercourse, both from England and America, with religious Liberals on the Continent of Europe; and this led to arrangements for the organization at regular intervals of International Congresses representing the different currents of thought and feeling embraced in the world-movement of Liberal Religion. The first of these

had been held in London in 1901; and it did much to reveal to English and American Unitarians that the " world-movement of Liberal Religion " is not only a name but a great reality. Further Congresses were held at Amsterdam (1903), Geneva (1905), Boston, U.S.A. (1907), Berlin (1910), Paris (1913). In all these arrangements the Committees of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association and the American Unitarian Association co-operated; and in all that was done, the energy and enthusiasm of the International Secretary, Dr. C. W. Wendte, contributed largely to the success that was attained.

The organizers of the Congresses were endeavouring to bring together representatives of the historic liberal Churches, the scattered liberal congregations, and isolated workers for religious freedom and progress, in order to assist the exchange of ideas and the promotion of their common aims. What was desired was the cultivation of fraternal relations with the liberal movements in religion now going on under various names and auspices throughout the world. The meetings were animated by a large and generous religious spirit: and it was believed by many that this kinship of spirit might become a powerful force for international friendship. But in Europe deep currents of suspicion and fear had long been working and growing in strength beneath the

surface; and the way for a world-tragedy was being prepared.

(ii). *The War Years*: 1914–1918

In the same year which marked the completion of our hundred years of peace between Great Britain and the United States, the Great War in Europe broke out with startling suddenness. Hopes and ideals long and deeply cherished by many earnest religious men and women seemed to be destroyed. The minds and hearts of serious people were perplexed and troubled beyond description by the horrors of a war such as the world had never known before and which a few months previously they would not have believed to be possible. The war was a cruel awakening, and a revelation of primeval savagery in the deep-seated instincts of men and of nations, which the humane teaching of Christ, accepted nominally by all who call themselves after his name, had failed to subdue.

The Report of the Committee adopted at the ninetieth Annual Meeting, May 26th, 1915, expressed the conviction that "it was the indignation aroused by the violation of treaties, by unprovoked aggression, and by brutal violence which inspired the people of this country to engage in this most terrible of all wars."

As the war proceeded month after month, and

its influence was more widely and deeply felt, every form of moral and religious organization had to meet the strain of diminished financial resources and the diversion of workers to National Service abroad or at home. Denominational enterprise was necessarily checked when thousands of our young men were going forth from Church and School into the fighting forces by land and sea; and manifold varieties of helpfulness to the cause of the Allies were claiming the time and thought and energy of men and women who remained in their accustomed posts of duty. The Committee of the Association, therefore, did not attempt to break new ground by missionary effort. Their endeavours were directed to the maintenance of activities to which they were already pledged; and to the task of keeping in friendly communication with members of our congregations serving in the vast area where the British arms were engaged; and to the encouragement of recognized forms of philanthropy and relief to which the attention of our people was directed.

The ninety-second Report, signed by the Rev. Dr. J. Estlin Carpenter as President, and adopted at the Annual Meeting of May 30th, 1917, contained the following:—

> Meanwhile the urgent duty lies upon us all to uphold the truths of our religion with unfaltering trust, and sustain its public services with fidelity and devotion. . . . Immense

problems are already coming dimly into view. Large extensions of the franchise may involve unforeseen political developments. Social difficulties, arising from new industrial conditions, will severely tax the mutual goodwill of employers and employed. Heavy demands will undoubtedly be made on wealth for the discharge of the obligations of the State. There may be grave dangers of conflict between the interests of property and labour. The Churches must take their share in the moral preparation needed for the inauguration of a new era in the national life. They must stand unflinchingly for the principle, at once democratic and Christian, that all gifts and privileges, possessions, learning, leisure, ease, can only be justified in so far as they minister to the welfare of the whole, and are adjusted not only to personal aggrandisement but to the good of the community. The call to sacrifice which has been so nobly answered by every class throughout the land, for the prosecution of the War, will sound with no less insistance, but in new forms, in the re-organization which will follow after the Peace.

When the war ended at the signing of the Armistice on November the 11th, 1918, our small religious community had contributed more than ten thousand young men to the army and navy; and the graves of fifteen hundred of them are in Belgium and France, Mesopotamia and Syria, and in the depths of the sea. The people had been agitated and perplexed by the excitements and agonies of a prolonged war, and were spiritually tired, while conventional morality and religion had been shaken to their foundations. The Churches, as such, and apart from the personality of individuals, seemed to have but little to give. Economic conditions had also been transformed;

the cost of all commodities, necessities and luxuries alike, had been doubled, and a period of abnormal inflation of trade was followed by a prolonged and disastrous commercial depression. The supply of ministers had almost ceased during the war, and after the war was only increased to a slight extent and the stipends of Ministers already at work decreased in value with the increase of costs.

These conditions profoundly affected the activities of the Association in all directions. The actual possibilities of the work were restricted; and on the financial side, although the story of the legacies bequeathed to the Association shows that there is an impressive confidence in the work done, the income from annual subscriptions decreased from £2300 in 1914 to £1264 in 1922[1]. Nevertheless the work of the Association, though restricted, was vigorously carried to the utmost extent of the available opportunities, as the following summary of expenditure for the purposes named will show:—

	1914.	1915.	1916.
Home Grants	£1584 ..	£1321 ..	£1210
Colonial and Foreign Grants	935 ..	573 ..	501
Book Department	1056 ..	706 ..	577
Work in Home Camps ..	— ..	— ..	402

[1] It should be added that in 1923 an upward movement began in the total of the annual subscription.

	1917.	1918.	1919.
Home Grants	£1580 ..	£1261 ..	£1870
Colonial and Foreign Grants	661 ..	483 ..	1033
Book Department	706 ..	666 ..	1168
Work in Home Camps ..	354 ..	385 ..	—
War Bonus to Ministers ..	290 ..	200 ..	—

The Association was represented on a Joint Committee appointed to draw up an appeal for a Subvention Fund, issued in the spring of 1920, which met with a most generous response, and provided a sum of over £10,000, administered by the Managers of the Sustentation Fund and available for grants in aid of stipends; the grants are spread over a period of at least seven years, after which it is hoped that the aided congregations may be able to replace these grants by increased contributions on their own part.

An interesting and important event in the activities of the Association in 1917 was the establishment and endowment of a Hostel and Social Centre for Soldiers and Sailors. A house belonging to the Essex Hall Trustees, was utilized; about £7000 was raised for transforming the building into a Hostel, supplying literature for sailors and soldiers, and providing an endowment to meet the annual rent and expenses of upkeep. In recognition of the generosity of Sir Edwin and Lady Durning-Lawrence, it was decided to name the Hostel "Lawrence House." It proved a boon to many men on their way to or from the Front. The printing and despatch of leaflets and

booklets to men on active service connected with our Churches and Schools was undertaken by Lawrence House. Many thousands of these were circulated and much appreciated by the men who received them. After the special war purpose of Lawrence House came to an end, the Hostel has been in regular use by Unitarian visitors from all parts of the world, and its advantages for ministers and laymen paying short visits to London have made it their temporary home.

In connection with the work of Lawrence House a Fund for a War Memorial was collected and applied for the erection of a marble tablet in Essex Hall and the formation and production in suitable form of a Roll of Honour. At the request of the Committee, Dr. L. P. Jacks composed the title page of the Roll of Honour, which is as follows:—

TO THE UNDYING MEMORY
OF
ONE THOUSAND SEVEN HUNDRED MEN
OF THE
UNITARIAN AND FREE CHRISTIAN CHURCHES
THROUGHOUT THE LAND
WHO
WHEN THE LIBERTIES OF MANKIND WERE IN PERIL
NOBLY LAID DOWN THEIR LIVES
ON THE BATTLEFIELD

THAT LIBERTY MIGHT PREVAIL
IN LANDS BOTH NEAR AND DISTANT
WHERE THE RESTING PLACES OF MANY ARE UNKNOWN
ON THE SEA AND IN THE AIR
THEY STROVE AND SUFFERED AND FELL
QUITTING THEMSELVES LIKE MEN
THE CHASTISEMENT OF OUR PEACE WAS UPON THEM
AND BY THEIR STRIPES WERE WE HEALED
THEIR NAMES ARE HERE INSCRIBED
BUT THEY HAVE A MORE ENDURING MEMORIAL
EACH ONE IS WITH GOD
THE GLORIOUS FELLOWSHIP OF THE LOYAL AND DEVOTED
WHO HAVE COME OUT OF GREAT TRIBULATION
AND THEIR NAMES ARE WRITTEN FOR EVER
IN THE BOOK OF LIFE

The difficulties of the war years did not prevent the Unitarian movement in Cambridge from progressing so as to require the provision of a permanent home. Here we must take a brief backward glance. Lectures expository of Unitarian Christianity, and religious services, had been held at Cambridge several times at earlier periods and then discontinued. In 1903 the Committee of the Association arranged for a course of four Sunday evening lectures by the Rev. J. Estlin Carpenter, on "How to read the Gospels." These addresses aroused a desire for religious services conducted by Unitarian ministers. Among the

first preachers were the Revs. Dr. J. Drummond, J. Estlin Carpenter, J. Edwin Odgers, and L. P. Jacks. With liberal assistance from the Association, services were continued regularly during the University terms, and signs of permanent vitality in the movement were evident. In 1920 deliberations proceeded as to the possibility of purchasing a site, erecting a building, and placing the congregation on a permanent footing with a regular resident minister. Early in 1921 a most generous offer was received anonymously, through the Rev. W. Copeland Bowie, Secretary of the Association, and after full consideration, and with the approval of the Cambridge congregation, the conditions laid down in the offer were accepted. The Donor transferred to the Association invested funds yielding £200 a year for the maintenance of the ministry on condition that a similar amount be guaranteed by the Association, and that a sum of not less than £5000 be raised by the Association for the site and building. The site secured provides space for a Church and Hall. A beautiful Hall, erected from plans prepared by Mr. Ronald P. Jones, F.R.I.B.A., was opened for public worship in January, 1923. The Rev. J. Cyril Flower, M.A., had already accepted a unanimous invitation to the ministry. Subsequently further munificent contributions from the same generous friend provided a fund for the erection of a Memorial Church (in addition to the Hall) on the same site.

An important movement among our laymen must be recorded here. At a special meeting of laymen in Whit-week, 1920, Mr. Charles H. Strong, President of the American Unitarian Laymen's League, gave a most interesting and stimulating account of the history of the League, which had an immediate and widespread success among the Unitarian laity in America. Mr. Strong afterwards visited and spoke at meetings in different parts of the country, and the impression made by his addresses led to the formation of an informal provisional committee to discuss the possibility of a similar organization among our own laymen. At the Autumnal Meetings of the Association at Leicester in 1920, a Constitution and Draft Rules were adopted, and the League formally inaugurated under the name of the Unitarian and Free Christian Laymen's League. Local "Chapters" (branches) were established in many of the Churches, and the Annual Meeting of the League takes place during the Anniversary Meetings in Whit-week of each year.

The memorable period of Mr. Bowie's Secretaryship of the Association came to an end with his retirement in March, 1921. The feeling of the Committee and members of the Association is expressed in the Annual Report for that year and in the following resolution unanimously and enthusiastically carried at the Annual Business Meeting:—

That the members of this Association, at their first Annual Meeting since the much-regretted resignation of the Rev. W. Copeland Bowie, Missionary Agent to the Association 1890-92, and Secretary from 1892 to the present year, desire to place on record their profound sense of the truly invaluable services rendered by him during a period unequalled in its history. As the organizer of the manifold labours of the Executive Committee through its various Sub-Committees, Mr. Bowie has left a permanent mark upon its character and methods; and the incorporation of the Association, which has been effected under his guidance, is a specially notable development of its resources. His intercourse, personal or by letter, with societies, congregations, and individuals, at home and abroad, has been marked by a discernment and understanding which have rendered it exceptionally influential and fruitful; while his singular ability and varied resource have been manifest in all branches of the Association's work, literary and social, financial and administrative, as well as benevolent and religious. . . . Recognizing that it is not possible to enumerate the many ways in which their late Secretary has served the Unitarian cause during these many years, the members wish to assure him that these services are not forgotten; and they take this opportunity of expressing, however imperfectly, their cordial appreciation not only of his singluar fidelity and diligence in his responsible position, but also of the personal characteristics which have endeared him to all. They trust he may long be permitted to enjoy, in health fully renewed, the esteem and affection of his innumerable friends.

When the Committee proceeded to discuss the appointment of a new Secretary, they decided after full consideration to invite the Rev. S. H. Mellone, M.A., D.Sc., of Manchester, to accept the office. The invitation thereupon sent to Dr. Mellone was cordially accepted, and he entered on

his duties in June, 1921. The following resolution was unanimously carried at the Business Meeting, 1921:—

That the members of this Association heartily welcome the appointment of the Rev. S. H. Mellone, M.A., D.Sc., as Secretary of the Association; they rejoice in the wide measure of success already attained by him in the world of religious and philosophical literature; and, assured by his long experience as a minister and the educator of ministers, they confidently trust that their new Secretary will worthily sustain and extend the reputation of Unitarian Christianity in this and other lands.

(iii). *After the War*

The European situation following the Treaties drawn up in 1919 and 1920[1] was not one where all States were working for the common purposes of international friendship. The world is far from stable. The new States are inexperienced in the art of Government and are full of fears about their

[1] The principal treaties drawn up by the Representatives of the Allied and Associated Powers (the United States of America, Great Britain, France, Italy, Japan, and others) at the conclusion of the Great War of 1914-18: (1) with Germany, Versailles, June 28th, 1919; (2) with Austria, St. Germain, September 10th, 1919; (3) with Bulgaria, Neuilly, November 27th, 1919; and (4) with Hungary, Trianon, June 14th, 1920. The *Covenant of the League of Nations* forms Part I of each of these Treaties, and took effect from the date of Deposit of the Instrument of Ratification by the Representatives of Germany on January 10th, 1920.

future, while many of their subjects are smarting under a sense of injustice and wrong. America, Germany, and Russia are still (1925) outside the League of Nations, and until they are inside, the security of the world will remain in jeopardy. And the principle of religious liberty, as it is understood and applied within the British Empire, is scarcely comprehended by some of the States which under recent Treaties are pledged to its adoption.

Notwithstanding all these things, an impressive feature of the situation to-day is found in the fact that very many thoughtful men and women in all civilized lands are feeling after a religious faith which shall be at once spiritual and free. It is this fact which gives real importance to the endeavours that are now being made to revive the activities of the International Congress. The difficulties in the way are great; they arise from the threatened moral and religious disintegration of civilized society on the Continent. In August, 1922, preliminary meetings were held in Leiden, at which representatives of twelve countries attended, and which appointed a working Executive Committee. It should be added that the desire and intention of this Committee is not only to organize international assemblies at certain intervals of time, but to secure, even though on a modest scale, a real continuity of international Liberal Religious work on definite principles.

The holding of such international meetings is essential to secure these things, but such meetings by themselves are not enough.

The services rendered during the past few years by the Rev. W. H. Drummond, the Secretary of the International Congress, merit special recognition. He has travelled all over Europe and visited America and India, diligently labouring for the deepening of international friendship on the broad lines of an enlightened religious faith.

The Committee's Report for 1924 contains the following paragraph:—

> The importance of international friendship and of the religious ideals which alone make it vital, is a fact which touches every individual. It concerns his moral and religious life, and it concerns his daily bread. What our Churches can do in this matter is to use their utmost influence to increase the right kind of public opinion. Our Churches are bound in honour to do this; it is their duty to themselves, to the world, and to the traditions of their fathers. For this reason, the Committee as a preliminary step circulated among all our ministers leaflets on behalf of the work of the *League of Nations Union*; and for this reason again, the Committee sent communications to the Ministers and Secretaries of all the Churches on the roll of the Year Book, urging the importance of affiliation with the *World Alliance for promoting International Friendship*. This body exists to use the influence of the Churches to help the right kind of public opinion which statesmen need to strengthen their hands, and without which the League of Nations cannot succeed. All the principal religious bodies are represented on the Council of the Alliance, and the co-operation of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches has been officially invited. It is gratifying to record that the response from these Churches was numerically larger, in proportion to the number concerned, than in the case of any other religious denomination which had been approached by the Council of the Alliance.

It may prove that the tragic conditions now prevailing in Europe, while limiting the endeavours which are reasonably possible, nevertheless enable us to get more closely into touch with the human realities of the situation. The Committees of the British and American Unitarian Associations are again co-operating, though on a different scale, and every opportunity is taken of encouraging and helping the struggling Liberal Religious movements on the Continent. The remarkable Unitarian movement in Prague led by Dr. Norbert F. Capek, has however passed its early and critical stage, and is now on the way to continuous success in a fine building purchased chiefly by British and American aid.

The whole situation of our Hungarian fellow-believers was radically changed as a result of the terms of peace with Hungary. Transylvania was separated from Hungary, and became part of Roumania—a country which is politically and culturally in a far more backward condition. A general scheme of expropriation has been carried out by the Roumanian Government, directed not against any religious organization but against landed proprietors as such; and the Unitarian Churches in Transylvania were dependent on

revenues from land. Compensation has been promised, but the amount of it and the period of payments are problematic; and further, the clauses of the Peace Treaty relating to the protection of religious minorities have been most inadequately observed by the Roumanian Government: the result is that the Transylvanian Unitarian Churches are in a very serious position. The problems which arise present many difficulties, but it is satisfactory to record that the English and American Committees have been and still are in active co-operation with complete harmony of aim and purpose as to the main lines on which suitable and effective help can be given.

The unity of the group of Free Commonwealths called the British Empire, has increased gradually through the century and has been strengthened by the War. Our fellow-believers overseas have a right to our sympathy and support in all possible ways; and to find the best ways of helping them, Dr. Hargrove's mission to Australasia, which we have already mentioned, was followed by visits to South Africa by the Rev. W. G. Tarrant, to Canada by the Rev. W. Copeland Bowie, and to Australia and New Zealand by the Rev. William and Mrs. Wooding, by the Rev. E. Rosalind Lee (who also visited our Canadian Churches), and by the Rev. W. Priestley Phillips. Valuable reports were received, and personal contacts of a helpful kind established.

In the field of Home Work we have seen how the seriousness of the problem of contributing aid and encouragement to existing congregations by the Association, particularly in connection with the stipends of ministers, has been much simplified by the remarkable enterprise and splendid generosity of our people in raising the Sustentation Fund, thus making possible an arrangement by which the efforts of the Association in the Home Mission Field should be concentrated on aid to congregations in the earlier and more difficult stages in their career, on the formation of new congregations in suitable cases, on the organization and encouragement of personal missionary work, and on literary propaganda. The revival of congregational and Church life in more than one quarter where it had appeared to be extinct has been an encouraging factor in a difficult time.

In 1924 upwards of seventy congregations received financial aid from the Association. In many cases the grants were towards the salaries of ministers; in some instances for special lectures and services, or for repairs and alterations to buildings, or for the erection of new churches and schools. In making grants to congregations, the Committee have adhered to the principle maintained for so many years, of acting in co-operation with local Associations, and with the Managers of the Sustentation and other Funds; and every care has been taken to make conditions

which will stimulate individual and local effort on the part of the aided Churches themselves.

It was generally recognized that the Centenary Anniversary of the foundation of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association is not only a unique occasion in the history of that organization, but also in the history of the Unitarian Movement at large. The Committee of the Association felt that they were only meeting a natural desire, and fulfilling an obvious expectation on the part of our Churches, in submitting to the various District Associations proposals for an organized scheme of propaganda and publicity, not only by way of preparation for the Centenary Celebrations to be held in June, 1925, but also as a stimulus to the propaganda of our distinctive Message to the age.

It was suggested that the former of these two aims should be emphasized up to June, 1925, and the latter taken in hand after the Centenary Week, subject to any local arrangements that have already been made, with a view to their being considered and recommendations forwarded to each of the constituent Churches on the roll. For the sake of brevity and clearness the suggestions are tabulated as follows:—

1. That Ministers be definitely requested to include the Centenary Celebrations in their public prayers, and to invite their people to include them in their private prayers.

2. (*a*) That, subject to local arrangements already in hand, monthly Special Services and Addresses should be held at each Church, so far as possible, expository of the main principles of Unitarian Christianity; and, in May, a Special Address on the History, Aims and Possibilities of the B.F.U.A. An historical pamphlet on this subject will be available.

(*b*) That each District Association should arrange for its constituent Churches to hold a combined celebration in the most convenient centre, on Tuesday, May 26th, 1925 (the actual anniversary day of the foundation of the B.F.U.A.).

3. That study circles, especially for young men and women, should be arranged to meet weekly under the superintendence of the Minister, from January to May, with, say, two weeks interval for Easter. Where this suggestion is adopted we are prepared to supply suitable books on very favourable terms, and pamphlets, and also to provide syllabus cards with references to special sections of the books selected for study.

4. That each District Association should prepare a history of its own work, with brief notes on the various constituent congregations in its area.

5. Wherever possible ministers should arrange for an article of, say, one column on the Unitarian Movement, to be inserted in a local paper, on a date conveniently near the Centenary Celebrations. Where this suggestion is adopted, we are prepared to supply typewritten copies of the substance of such an article.

6. That District Associations be invited to forward to Essex Hall, as soon as possible, suggestions of ways in which the efficiency and value of the Centenary Campaign might be increased, together with information as to any arrangements already in hand.

These recommendations were cordially and sympathetically received by the District Associations. In each District some of the suggestions were adopted, in some Districts all of them. Special interest has been taken throughout the

country in the historical publications (referred to below); in the scheme for a course of lessons on the History of Unitarian Christianity in England, with syllabus card provided; and in the proposal for local Centenary Celebrations in May 26th. It is clear that a large proportion of our Churches perceived the value of the Centenary as a means of emphasizing anew the importance of our message and rallying the enthusiasm of our people.

The ministry of the printed word increases in importance and influence. One result of the war has been to bring different parts of the world into closer communication, and fresh opportunities for extending a knowledge of the principles of Unitarian Christianity present themselves every year. From every quarter of the globe, applications are received for Unitarian books and pamphlets. Ministers and others in communions accounted "orthodox," often ask for Unitarian publications; and the Committee, as in former years, are always ready to assist in informing serious inquirers respecting our principles and faith.

The Essex Hall Lecture, suspended during 1915, 1916, and 1917, was resumed in 1918, and has become a well-known public institution. The Lecturers have been as follows:—

1918. Dr. Claude G. Montefiore, M.A., on "The Place of Judaism among the Religions of the World."
1920. Rt. Rev. Bishop Gore, on "Christianity Applied."

1921. Dr. L. P. Jacks, on "The Lost Radiance of the Christian Religion."
1922. Rt. Hon. H. A. L. Fisher, on "Orthodoxy."
1923. Rt. Hon. Lord Robert Cecil, on "The Moral Basis of the League of Nations."
1924. Prof. W. W. Fenn, D.D., on "The Christian Way of Life, illustrated in the History of Religion in New England."
1925. The Earl of Oxford and Asquith, on "Free Thought in the Nineteenth Century."

In 1922, partly in anticipation of the centenary year, a collection of ten valuable historical Essays by the Rev. Alexander Gordon, M.A., was published under the title *Addresses: Biographical and Historical.* And in connection with the centenary year, in addition to the book now before the reader, two larger publications have been produced: *The Price of Progress*, a volume of seven Essays by Dr. S. H. Mellone,[1] and a volume entitled *Freedom and Truth: Modern Aspects of Unitarian Christianity*, edited with Introduction by Dr. J. Estlin Carpenter, and containing eight Essays, four by English writers (Dr. S. H. Mellone, the Revs. R. Travers Herford, Dr. H. Gow, and W. G. Tarrant) and four by American writers (the Rev. Dr. G. R. Dodson, Professors R. Clayton Bowen, W. W. Fenn, and Francis A. Christie).

[1] The titles of the Essays are as follows: "The Price of Progress," "Is Evil Necessary?", "Does God Answer Prayer?", "Athanasius the Modernist," "The Catholicism of Newman," "The Unitarianism of Martineau," "Symbolism in Religious Experience."

The publication of this volume recalls once more the foundation of the American Unitarian Association on May 25th, 1825. A happy result of the formation of the two Associations, so nearly on the same day, has been a great increase in mutual intercourse and interest between Unitarian and kindred Churches in America and in England. This can be traced from the beginning. And in course of time, not only were such friendly relations deepened, but we find that the two Committees were in active co-operation over important enterprises. British-American relations have passed through various phases during the century; but so far as Unitarian and kindred movements are concerned, the early promise has been amply fulfilled in recent years. Both are engaged in the same great enterprise of promulgating and defending a free, noble, sincere religious faith, with charity towards every other variety of honest belief, and with the Catholic mind which is ever open to new visions of truth and righteousness, of God and man's relations to Him.

CHAPTER IX

RELIGIOUS CONDITIONS IN 1925.

OUR survey of the history of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association during the last hundred years, has shown us the developing work of a denominational organization, with a distinctive constitution and purpose, entering into and forming part of a vast movement of change in religious thought and life, a movement of mingled construction and destruction, whose beginnings, if we can date them at all, are from the Reformation, and whose end no man living can foresee.

This movement is not the work specially of any one of the various religious bodies as compared with others. It has had many simultaneous beginnings. No denomination, sect, or party, no single group of men, can claim as their own peculiar privilege to have originated it or to guide it. The true claim that the people called Unitarians can make is, not that they have originated the reforming spirit that has entered into the religious world, but that they have always been among the first to feel it and respond to it. They

may also most justly claim that, in the face of much bitter prejudice, they have done their part in helping forward the spiritual emanicipation of humanity. Even those religious communities who have been unconscious of this movement as affecting themselves, and some who have bitterly fought against it, have been deeply affected by it. They have moved like that party of explorers in the Arctic regions, who were travelling to the North over what seemed to be a limitless expanse of ice, which, though they did not know it, was a vast ice-floe, drifting slowly but irresistibly to the South, and carrying all on its surface with it.

The root of the matter is this. Formerly the sources of Religion were not only separated from human life, but regarded as being outside the utmost range of humanity, and were found in infallible persons and infallible books; but now, the sources of religion are sought for in human life itself. The presentation of religion is subject to all the uncertainties that belong to life, with its multitudinous variety, its illimitable possibilities, its unscaled heights and unsounded depths. Here, in this manifold of human life, and here alone, are we to find our answer to the elemental cry of the human heart, "Show us the Father!"

How are the leading Churches of the present day meeting or failing to meet this need? There are some facts of deep significance which demand notice. Some of the largest religious communions

of our day—hitherto confident of their numbers, wealth, and personal influence—are beginning to feel a consciousness of incipient failure. Every one whose eyes are not blinded by sectarian prejudice can see that an immense amount of very beneficent effort is put forth by these bodies, and that this is true even though what used to be the characteristic humanitarian functions of the Church—namely, educating the young and tending the sick—have been largely taken in hand and much more efficiently dealt with by the "secular" community.

We have no sympathy with the habit of railing against the clergy, many of whom are in an exceedingly difficult position, and are sincerely acting in the light of the best wisdom at their command. Signs of decline in large religious bodies, doing much good work, are not welcome signs. They are doubly deplorable when read in the light of some of the official utterances dealing with them. Men holding very prominent ecclesiastical positions have not hesitated to affirm, as an all-sufficient explanation of the facts, that the Church is good and men are evil, and the evil hates the good. The light of the Church shines in the darkness of humanity, and the darkness comprehends it not. In other words, the people are indifferent and irreligious. Nothing is said of the frantic struggle of the Churches, in the last century, against physical and historical science;

nothing of the persistent endeavour to put spiritual things out of all relation, save by miracle, with human and natural things; nothing of the long indifference to social reform, an indifference from which the Churches have only recently begun to arouse themselves; nothing of the ever-renewed attempts to compromise ancient beliefs and modern knowledge, as though it were possible to be on both sides of a gulf at once. Whatever has brought the change about, it is common knowledge that in the last few years the Church has undoubtedly been losing her hold upon the nation. The old obligation of church-going has declined; it is no longer considered a duty, but has become a mere matter of private concern. It is difficult to get clergymen; it is not easy to raise money for Church purposes; ecclesiastical pronouncements are disregarded and possess little authority among either the intelligent or the unintelligent.

We are convinced that the charge of "irreligion" brought against the people of to-day is utterly untrue; even as a rough generalization it is untrue. Look at those who are called "the masses" or "the multitude." We find much thoughtless eagerness for amusement, along with little idea of what real recreation is. We see signs showing that the edge of the sense of personal responsibility has been blunted, and the windows of the soul dulled with the dust and turmoil of life. But the windows of the soul are there.

The ethical side of religion, problems of life and conduct, the growth of character and responsibility, arouse more interest than ever in the minds of the younger generation, mainly because they have a greater freedom of choice. It is the old sharply-defined dogmas, the ancient sanctions and title-deeds, the crudely miraculous claims of medieval theology, which have lost their hold upon the increasing intelligence of the nation.

Untouched by the controversies of ecclesiastics and theologians, there are masses of people who in their own dim, uncertain, and sometimes eagerly passionate ways are seeking, under the name of social justice, a larger and fuller life,—some kingdom of heaven on earth to which they may belong. It is possible for this like every other human movement to pass into morbid or perverted forms; but the democratic movement of today is not anti-religious.

In the meantime what are the Church Assemblies doing? It might have been supposed that the chief energies of the Church would be thrown into religious and social problems, how to disentangle the old faith from its temporary accretions, how to bring religion into line with the scientific spirit, how to emphasize the growing social conscience, how to meet and interpret the claims of temperament and individuality, how to minimize the perilous clash of social forces, and, above all, how to unite divergent influences on the

basis of a simple but fundamental Christian faith. The reality is very different. There are times when the discussions of Church Assemblies would seem to be more fitted for private proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries. Questions of ceremonial and liturgical detail should be kept in the foreground and treated as if they were of profound and far-reaching urgency, is highly dangerous to the Christian Religion. There are sections in the Church, more clerical than lay, to whom such matters are of deep interest and concern, and whose policy is not inclusive but exclusive.

When a wide and more inclusive view is taken, especially when the policy and practicability of *re-union* is being discussed,—and it is being discussed more and more,—what do we find ? What, for example, are the theological conditions of re-union ? The language of the ancient Creeds, in particular that of the Creed commonly called Nicene, is insisted upon as vital to Christian faith, or, at the lowest estimate, they are its best available expressions; and where a Creed is used liturgically in the Services of the Church, we are assured that it should be understood as an expression of corporate faith and allegiance. The emphasis with which the terms of unity are defined, substantially on this basis, is remarkable and significant.[1] We affirm that the whole en-

[1] Compare, for example, the Reports of the Continuation Committee in preparation for the " World Conference on

deavour, lofty and far-reaching as its aims may be, has committed itself on this line to mere unreality and surrendered all that is valuable in religious freedom.

The most significant achievement of the past hundred years has been the gradual humanization of the doctrines of God and Christ. Other centuries said that the divine and the human were two mutually exclusive substances—divorced by man's first disobedience. God and man were by present nature at variance. All of the ingenuity of Christian thought in previous centuries was spent in effort to achieve, through a doctrine of the two natures of Christ, a theoretical reconciliation between these otherwise mutually exclusive substances. The past one hundred years has rendered this speculation merely of antiquarian interest. We have now affirmed our faith in the essential humanity of God and the native divine spark in the spirit of man. The idea of the one now helps to say what we mean when we try to define the other.

We have been led back to our original affirmation. The sources of Religion must be found in human life itself. The age of dogma, that is of

Faith and Order," containing statements which are recent and authoritative: and see *Documents bearing on the Problem of Christian Unity and Fellowship*, London, Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1920, and the publications of the World Conference Continuation Committee.

theological dogma as formerly understood, has come to an end. But we do not claim that the century just ended has given us a new theology which has adequately supplanted the old theology. What it has given us is a wealth of material out of which to make the consciousness of religion and at some later time a theology and a sociology on the basis of religion. In our modern thinking upon *the greatness and the littleness of man* we have, as the fathers never had, an unlimited supply of the mental and emotional material of which religion is made. This is the great contribution of the science and history to modern religious thought: these two overwhelming convictions as to ourselves, the two convictions of which religion, in one form or another, is always made.

What then is our heritage in all this? What does it mean for us who are the heirs and representatives of Unitarian Christianity? Our forefathers were the spiritual descendants of the few men who, in the age of the Protestant Reformation, took seriously the watchword of "the Bible and the Bible only." The spirit of faithful religious freedom in which these men read the Bible is the spirit of our movement to-day, but the former basis, that of biblical authority, has broken down beyond repair. What can take its place? Ought we to desire anything to take its place in the same sense? We remember the power and impressiveness of Martineau's appeal to the individual

Reason and Conscience. It is probable that in the urgency of defending the fundamental principle he did not see its dangers. It is probable that if he had lived to-day he would have seen them. The conscience and mind and soul of man are not infallible; the mind can make mistakes; the conscience can go wrong; the soul can be starved. The conscience of man needs to be taught, and the soul of man to be fed.

Nevertheless, in the movement represented by the Unitarian and kindred Churches, we have as our heritage from our forefathers the principle of spiritual and rational freedom, which is the true meaning of individual independence in religion. We know well the dangers involved in this principle. But we have maintained it through misunderstanding from without and difficulty and discouragement from within. We have indeed bought it at a great price, and we will not surrender it now. What it means when rightly understood and acted upon, was defined by James Martineau, with an insight extending far beyond the occasion at the London Conference of 1838, when he moved the following Resolution:—

> That this meeting, in professing its attachment to Unitarian Christianity as at once scriptural and rational, and conducive to the true glory of God and well-being of man, and in avowing its veneration for the early British expositors and confessors of this faith, at the same time recognizes the essential worth of that principle of free inquiry to which we are indebted for our own form of Christianity, and of that spirit of deep and

vital Religion which may exist under various forms of theological sentiment, and which gave to our forefathers their implicit faith in truth, their love of God, and their reliance, for the improvement of mankind, on the influences of the Gospel.

Here are defined three characteristics of the religion which the British and Foreign Unitarian Association is chartered to encourage and promote: (1) it is both rational and scriptural; (2) it is open to free inquiry; (3) it rests upon spiritual experience. Doubtless the Resolution implied the use of the Bible as a standard in a way no longer possible to us, but essentially the principles are the same now as then. Each one of these principles is capable of perversion. But when rightly understood and united, these ideals contain the promise of a Church which shall be able to understand and satisfy the needs of the world. The heirs of the great traditions of Unitarian Christianity realize their opportunity. May God send them good workmen who have a message and who have the will and the power to deliver it: may the use of financial and material resources be guided by intelligence and wisdom, and intelligence and wisdom guided by courageous faith: and then they will not fail to give to the world all the great things that they have the power to give.

APPENDIX

Officers of the Association

1925 to 1925.

PRESIDENTS.

1826	Mr. John Christie.
1827	Mr. John Christie.
1828	Mr. Christopher Richmond.
1829	Mr. Thomas Gibson.
1830	Mr. J. T. Rutt.
1831	Rev. Robert Aspland.
1832	Mr. G. W. Wood.
1833	Mr. John Taylor, F.R.S.
1834	Mr. Richard Potter, M.P.
1835	Mr. J. T. Rutt.
1836	Mr. G. W. Wood.
1837	Mr. Abraham Clarke.
1838	Mr. John Fisher.
1839	Mr. James Esdaile.
1840	Mr. James Heywood.
1841	Mr. J. A. Yates, M.P.
1842	Mr. Thomas W. Tottie.
1843	Mr J. B. Estlin.
1844	Mr. Thomas Gibson.
1845	Mr. Thomas Gibson.
1846	Mr. J. B. Estlin.
1847	Mr. John Christie.
1848	Mr. Alderman Lawrence.
1849	Mr. James Heywood, M.P.
1850	Mr. T. F. Gibson.
1851	Mr. W. Wansey.
1852	Mr. William P. Price
1853	Mr. H. Crabb Robinson
1854	Mr. Robert Scott.
1855	Mr. William Biggs, M.P
1856	Mr. James Yates, M.A.
1857	Mr. J. A. Turner, M.P.
1858	Mr. Herbert New.
1859	Mr. Alderman Lawrence.
1859-60	Mr. Charles Paget, M.P.
1860-61	Sir John Bowring, LL.D.
1861-62	Mr. J. A. Turner, M.P.
1862-63	Mr. Edmund Potter, M.P.
1863-64	Mr. James C. Lawrence.
1864-65	Mr. W. P. Price, M.P.
1865-66	Mr. Jerom Murch.
1866-67	Mr. James Heywood, F.R.S.
1867-68	Mr. George Buckton.
1868-69	Mr. W. J. Lamport.

1869-70	Mr. Samuel Sharpe.
1870-71	Mr. Christopher J. Thomas.
1871-72	Mr. John Grundy.
1872-73	Mr. Timothy Kenrick.
1873-74	Mr. James Hopgood.
1874-75	Mr. J. W. Dowson.
1875-76	Mr. Joshua Fielden, M.P.
1876-77	Mr. Joseph Lupton.
1877-78	Mr. Herbert New.
1878-79	Mr. Henry S. Bicknell.
1879-80	Mr. David Martineau.
1880-81	Mr. C. H. James, M.P.
1881-83	Mr. David Ainsworth, M.P.
1883-84	Mr. Michael Hunter, Jun.
1884-85	Mr. Edwin Clephan.
1885-86	Mr. Richard Enfield.
1886-87	Mr. Frederick Nettlefold.
1887-88	Mr. Harry Rawson.
1888-89	Mr. L. M. Aspland, Q.C., LL.D.
1889-90	Mr. T. Chatfeild Clarke, J.P.
1890-91	Mr. James R. Beard, J.P.
1891-92	Rev. H. W. Crosskey, LL.D., F.G.S.
1892-93	Mr. Stephen S. Tayler, L.C.C.
1893-94	Mr. William Long, J.P.
1894-95	Mr. Joseph T. Preston.
1895-96	Rev. H. Enfield Dowson, B.A.
1896-97	Mr. J. F. Schwann, J.P.
1897-98	Mr. T. Grosvenor Lee.
1898-99	Rev. Brooke Herford, D.D.
1899-00	Mr. Charles W. Jones, J.P.
1900-01	Sir J. T. Brunner, Bt., M.P.
1901-02	Mr. W. Blake Odgers, K.C., LL.D.
1902-03	Rev. R. A. Armstrong, B.A.
1903-04	Mr. W. Arthur Sharpe.
1904-05	Rt. Hon. William Kenrick.
1905-06	Mr. C. Fellows Pearson.
1906-07	Mr. Grosvenor Talbot, J.P.
1907-08	Sir William B. Bowring, Bt.
1908-10	Mr. John Harrison.
1910-11	Rev. Charles Hargrove, M.A.
1911-13	Mr. Charles Hawksley, C.E.
1913-14	Mr. George H. Leigh, J.P.
1914-16	Mr. J. F. L. Brunner, M.P.
1916-18	Rev. J. Estlin Carpenter, D.LITT.
1918-20	Mr. Richard D. Holt, M.P.
1920-21	Mr. Percy Preston.
1921-23	Mr. C. Sydney Jones, M.A.
1923-24	Rev. H. Gow, B.A., D.D.
1924-25	Mr. Hugh R. Rathbone, M.A.

TREASURERS.

1825-28	John Christie.
1828-30	Thomas Gibson.
1830-52	Thomas Hornby.
1852-64	Algernon S Aspland.
1864-74	Walter C Venning.
1874-77	Edward J. Nettlefold.
1877-92	Stephen S. Tayler.
1892-98	Percy Preston.
1898-1907	Oswald Nettlefold.
1907-17	Howard Chatfeild Clarke
1917-18	George W. Brown.
1918—	Harold Wade.

SECRETARIES.

1825-30	Robert Aspland.
1830-31	W. Johnson Fox.
1831-35	James Yates.
1835-41	Robert Aspland.
1841-54	Edward Tagart.
1854-59	Edward Tagart. T. L. Marshall.
1859-67	R. Brook Aspland.
1867-70	R. Brook Aspland. Robert Spears.
1870-76	Robert Spears.
1876-92	Henry Ierson.
1892-1921	W. Copeland Bowie.
1921—	Sydney H. Mellone.

PREACHERS OF THE ANNIVERSARY SERMONS.

1826	Rev. James Tayler.
1827	Rev. John Kenrick.
1828	Rev. Dr. Hutton.
1829	Rev. Dr. W. H. Drummond.
1830	Rev. J. J. Tayler.
1831	Rev. Hugh Hutton
1832	Rev. William Hincks.
1833	Rev. George Harris.
1834	Rev. James Martineau.
1835	Rev. H. Acton.
1836	Rev. Dr. Armstrong.
1837	Rev. Robert Wallace.
1838	Rev. R. B. Aspland.
1839	Rev. George Armstrong.
1840	Rev. Samuel Bache.
1841	Rev. E. Talbot.
1842	Rev. C. Wicksteed.
1843	Rev. Dr. Montgomery.
1844	Rev. W. Gaskell.
1845	Rev. B. Carpenter.
1846	Rev. J. G. Robberds.
1847	Rev. Dr. Beard.
1848	Rev. John Gordon.
1849	Rev. J. Scott Porter.
1850	Rev. J. H. Thom.
1851	Rev. Charles Berry.
1852	Rev. Thomas Madge.
1853	Rev. W. Turner.
1854	Rev. E. Higginson.
1855	Rev. G. B. Brock.
1856	Rev. W. J. Odgers.
1857	Rev. William James.
1858	Rev. W. H. Channing.
1859	Rev. Thomas Hincks.
1860	Rev. Dr. Sadler.
1861	Rev. Charles Beard.
1862	Rev. William Gaskell.
1863	Rev. R. L. Carpenter.
1864	Rev. Brooke Herford.
1865	Rev. G. Vance Smith.
1866	Rev. C. Wicksteed.
1867	Rev. J. L. Short.
1868	Rev. Dr. Bellows.
1869	Rev. James Martineau
1870	Rev. H. W. Crosskey.
1871	Rev. Robert Collyer.
1872	Rev. A. Coquerel.
1873	Rev. S. A. Steinthal.

1874 Rev. Dr. R. L. Collier.
1875 Rev William Gaskell.
1876 Rev. T. E. Poynting.
1877 Rev. Alexander Gordon.
1878 Rev. William Binns.
1879 Rev. John Wright.
1880 Rev. R. A. Armstrong.
1881 Rev. Charles C. Coe.
1882 Rev. Dr. J. F. Clarke.
1883 Rev. J. Page Hopps.
1884 Rev. Stopford A. Brooke.
1885 Rev. Brooke Herford.
1886 Rev. Frank Walters.
1887 Rev. J. Edwin Odgers.
1888 Rev. J. E. Carpenter
1889 Rev. H. E. Dowson.
1890 Rev. James C. Street.
1891 Rev. A. N. Blatchford.
1892 Rev. P. H. Wicksteed.
1893 Rev. Charles Hargrove.
1894 Rev. Joseph Wood.
1895 Rev. Douglas Walmsley
1896 Rev. J. E. Manning.
1897 Rev. L. P. Jacks.
1898 Rev. L. de. B. Klein.
1899 Rev. Dendy Agate.
1900 Rev. C. J. Street.
1901 Rev. Stopford A Brooke.
1902 Rev. Henry Gow.
1903 Rev. Dr. J. H. Crooker.
1904 Rev. W. G. Tarrant.
1905 Rev. J. Collins Odgers.
1906 Rev. Dr. James Drummond.
1907 Rev. Alex. Webster.
1908 Rev. R. Travers Herford.
1909 Rev. Dr. J. E. Carpenter.
1910 Rev. J. J. Wright.
1911 Rev. Dr. S. H. Mellone.
1912 Rev. Dr. S. M. Crothers.
1913 Rev. J. H. Weatherall.
1914 Rev. Alfred Hall.
1915 Rev. V. D. Davis.
1916 Rev. E. D. Priestley Evans.
1917 Rev. W. H. Drummond.
1918 Rev. Arthur W. Fox.
1919 Rev. Dr. L. P. Jacks.
1920 Rev. R. Nicol Cross.
1921 Rev. P. R. Frothingham.
1922 Rev. Dr. R. F. Rattray.
1923 Rev. Lawrence Clare.
1924 Rev. W. L. Schroeder.
1925 Rev. J. H. Weatherall.