

show us that, not by any figure, but in very reality, "In him we live and move and have our being." He is above nature and below it, without it and within it, yet never a part of it. He is not nature, but nature is from him and subsists by him.

" Super cuncta, subter cuncta ;  
 Extra cuncta, intra cuncta ;  
 Intra cuncta, nec inclusus ;  
 Extra cuncta, nec exclusus ;  
 Super cuncta, nec elatus ;  
 Subter cuncta, nec substratus."

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## ARTICLE II.

### WHAT IS UNITARIANISM ?

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THE adage that like draws to like has notable exceptions, both in the world of matter and in the world of mind. The factions in a party or sect are sometimes more bitter against each other than against their common opponents. When a man assents to most of the propositions which we hold of highest importance, and thus gives us proof of what we consider his good sense, we are surprised, and perhaps annoyed, at his differing from our views at all. It is, therefore, a delicate task for a person to attempt a description of the denomination to which he belongs ; he must inevitably fail to satisfy some one of the wings of his sect. It is, perhaps, especially difficult to do justice to the Unitarians, because that denomination in New England carried, for many decades, the motto: Liberty, Holiness, Love. By putting liberty first they insured the greatest variety and individuality of opinion. This is, indeed, frequently affirmed by members of the denomination to be its distinguishing characteristic. They have no creed ; and their opponents sometimes sarcastically add, no opinions.

Yet the "National Conference of Unitarian and other Christian Churches," organized in April 1865, have by repeated votes clung to the name of Christian, and insisted upon retaining the title of Lord before the name of Jesus Christ in the preamble to their constitution. The New Hampshire Unitarian Association, organized February 1863, unanimately adopted, in October 1878, a set of twelve affirmative propositions, each illustrated and explained by comments and scriptural references, as "a statement of belief, . . . of the most distinctive views that are now generally held by Unitarians." This statement is so far endorsed by the American Unitarian Association, founded in 1825, that it is "sent gratuitously, on application to the Secretary of the American Unitarian Association, 7 Tremont Place, Boston." The Maine Conference, in October 1880, found no dissenting voices to a briefer set under their consideration.<sup>1</sup>

There is, therefore, up to the present hour a solid mass in the denomination (about four hundred clergymen and three hundred and seventy-five churches) whose views have a substantial unity, and who are but slightly affected by the learning and eloquence with which individual clergymen or laymen endeavor to modify them. The predominant tone of thought still takes its key from the leaders of the denomination in the last generation.

The New Testament is, according to Unitarians, a plain book; the gospels, at least, were written by plain, uneducated men, who lay no claim to inspiration or to wisdom, but only speak right on of what they had seen and heard. And he, of whom the evangelists write used words of plain, every-day meaning, so that "the common people heard him gladly." He did not palter with a double sense; he did not hide and

<sup>1</sup> The reader who desires a fuller acquaintance with the views of the denomination as held to-day, is referred also to the works published or for sale by the A. U. A.; especially J. F. Clarke's "Steps of Belief," and "Orthodoxy;" Richard Metcalf's "Letter and Spirit;" seven discourses of "Unitarian Affirmations," and A. P. Peabody's "Christian Belief and Life." Among the American Unitarian periodicals, the "Unitarian Review" represents the views nearer to Channing's; the "Rising Faith" and "Unity," the views more influenced by new philosophy, and the "Christian Register," all parts of the denomination.

conceal his meaning; he did not imply and allude to things that he did not state, and which could not have been in the minds of his hearers. We may, therefore, take him at his word, and believe what he says. It does not require profound learning or metaphysical acumen to comprehend the sayings of our Lord. We are not to put on them the meaning which ingenious system-builders, either of the past or the present times, draw from them. We are to understand them as any ordinary person of good sense, who had never heard any particular explanation of the doctrines of Christianity, would understand them, on hearing them for the first time. Of course we are not to be childishly literal in our understanding of them,— we are to give the Lord and the apostles credit for having common sense as well as we; but we are not to suppose that they set any traps for unwary hearers, or said anything which they meant to be understood otherwise than as every sensible, unprejudiced, unbiassed hearer and reader would understand them. Even Paul, who does lay claim to inspiration, is nevertheless to be interpreted, the Unitarians say, by the same rules; we are to treat him with common sense and common fairness; not wresting his meaning, and drawing from an isolated expression, uttered in the glow of feeling with rhetorical power, every signification which it might have borne had it been intended as a philosophical definition of some religious dogma.

The main body of the denomination hold the New Testament in great reverence, as a true and faithful witness to the teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ and his apostles; convinced that what is thus borne witness to is everlasting and all-important truth. But it is written by men, in human speech, for the use of men in general; not for scholars, metaphysicians, and theologians, but for all; even for the weaker brethren for whom Christ died. The Unitarians have, therefore, always denied that their denomination is, strictly speaking, a sect. They are not, they say, to be distinguished by any particular interpretation of any particular passages, nor by any particular stress upon special doctrines;

but rather by their denial of the importance and value of any doctrine which requires special and ingenious interpretation, or acute and profound speculation to establish it. Every plain, straitforward reader of the New Testament, who reads it with reverent and obedient heart, without gloss or comment, is, they tell us, a Unitarian. That is Unitarianism ; it is simply Chillingworth's Protestantism ; it is taking the New Testament as the only creed, the only symbol of faith. This was literally done by the Unitarian church which has just celebrated its semi-centennial in Cincinnati ; the first covenant of the church was the New Testament itself, to which the members signed their names.

Thus while perfect liberty is granted in the interpretation of the New Testament, there is an assumption of loyalty to Christ. It is assumed that his word is true ; that he knew whereof he spake ; that the apostles also caught his meaning and were filled with his spirit ; that the New Testament, therefore, the record of their teachings, is the guide of life, the bread of life, so far as outward words, recorded with pen and ink, can give strength and wisdom. This personal loyalty to Jesus, as his biography is given in the New Testament, when sufficiently strong to influence man's character, to make him sincerely endeavor to obey the words of Christ (whether teaching him to pray, to trust in God, to confess sin, to ask forgiveness, to love man, to do good, or to give alms), is, according to Unitarians, saving faith. A man may add to it a belief that Jesus himself visits and sanctifies his disciples ; or he may fail to see evidence that this is now true, and may therefore think that the Holy Spirit comes from the Father only ; but, in either case, if his loyalty even to the Jesus of the four Gospels is sufficient to make him steadfastly endeavor to obey the gospel and trust in the promises of Christ, he is truly a Christian man.

The Unitarians hold strongly to the innocence of speculative error. A man is, according to them, morally accountable for the spirit and manner in which he examines serious and important questions ; but for that simply intellectual

process of drawing conclusions he is not accountable: the judgment follows the perception of the connection of the premises by an infallible necessity. Building upon this faith in the innocence of merely intellectual error (which I think they push a little too far) the Unitarians have always failed to show much sectarian zeal. They have exalted individuality of opinion, and individuality of action, have sought to exert a leavening influence in the general tone of religious thought, rather than to build up their own denomination. Thus they have acted through general literature far beyond their proportion as numerically compared with other denominations. Their leaders, both in the past and in the present, have held that fidelity to the spirit of Jesus is incomparably more important than any intellectual interpretation of his doctrine, and the great body of the denomination hold to that view still; only a few having, as they think, advanced (as the majority of the denomination think, retrograded) to the point where they place fidelity to individual whims above fidelity to the Head of the church.

What the denomination in general would desire is to bring men to a reverent acceptance of the words of Christ as containing the most vital of truths without admixture of error; of his life as the most perfect exemplification of ideal manhood; of his precepts as an unerring rule of conduct; of his sufferings and death as the most touching of all evidences of divine love; of his resurrection and ascension as the most glorious seal and attestation of his promises to forgive sins and bestow eternal life. If they can see men thus accepting Jesus, and endeavoring to mould their hearts and lives on his divine pattern, they care little concerning the other points of their faith. Their quarrel with Augustinian theology has been that it represented Jesus and his Father in an unlovely, unattractive light, and thus repelled men from Christ.

This was the Unitarianism of Channing and Ware; and it is the Unitarianism of the religious portion of the body to-day. They are indifferent to questions concerning theology, but interested in and zealous for pure and undefiled religion,

which shall lead to works of mercy and keep the heart humble before God, and open with loyal love and obedience to his Son.

I acknowledged at the beginning that it would prove a difficult matter to set forth the doctrines of a body so rich in individual diversity of views. The points on which they all agree must be few, and of the highest generality. Indeed, if we take into account the whole body, including the most erratic of those who shelter themselves under the banner of Liberty, Holiness, and Love, it may be impossible to find any propositions on which all would unite. But in regard to the great mass of the denomination, as I have been describing it, it is easy to give expression to what they would all admit is their view of the doctrinal teaching of the New Testament.

In Channing's sermon at the ordination of Jared Sparks in 1819, a summary may be found of the Unitarian doctrine of that day. It was uttered in the name of the New England clergymen, some of whom had read the sermon, and had given the distinguished preacher criticisms of which he availed himself before delivery. The first part of the discourse treats of the interpretation of the Scriptures, and coincides in its views with those given above. The second part includes five great doctrines drawn from the Scriptures—the *quasi* "five points" of Unitarianism sixty years ago.

First, Channing asserts the absolute unity of God; and of course he means by it not a tri-unity, but a unity without distinction of persons or offices. Secondly, he affirms the unity of Christ; not attempting to decide what his nature is, but insisting that reverence and trust in him require us to regard him as one personality. Thirdly, he lays stress on the moral perfection of God—his goodness, kindness, benevolence, in the proper sense of the words; evidently meaning that the doctrines of election, reprobation, and eternal torment make God unjust and cruel. Fourthly, he declares the purpose of the mission of Jesus to be the salvation of men from sin, the leading of men into a new and divine life; implying that the theology which he opposes

exalts too highly the rescuing of men from the punishment for sin. Fifthly, he insists upon the naturalness of that divine life into which Christ came to lead us ; that Christian virtue, produced by the operation of the Holy Spirit, requires the voluntary co-operation of the human spirit, and consists in a self-consecration to the service of God, a grateful obedience to the teaching of Jesus, an honest, earnest attempt to live a life of piety toward God, of charity and good will toward men.

This was the declaration of Unitarian principles, sixty odd years ago, which did more than any other one utterance to crystallize the young denomination into unity of thought ; and there is not a point in it to which the mass of the denomination do not hold earnestly at the present day, and regard as vital in distinguishing Unitarianism from Orthodoxy on the one side, and unbelief on the other.

The fundamental creed of Unitarians is expressed most briefly in the baptismal formula: "We baptize into the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." A full development of the religious doctrines of the great central body of the denomination would be only a development of the corollaries which they think flow from a cordial acceptance of that formula.

The doctrine of the fatherhood of God seems to us overlaid, obscured, and even hidden, by the prevailing forms of both Roman and Protestant theology ; and put entirely out of sight by pantheistic, agnostic, and materialistic speculations. We maintain that reason justifies our faith in an all-wise, just, holy, beneficent God ; and that Jesus gives us authority to draw on our best conceptions of an all-loving, all-wise Father as our best possible, and substantially true, idea of God. We are not frightened out of this Christian faith in a Heavenly Father by any metaphysical difficulties concerning an infinite personality, or by any sarcasm concerning carpenter theories, or by ridicule of our childishness. We know the inscrutability of God ; it was stated more forcibly by religious writers of a thousand years ago than it has been

restated by irreligious writers of our own day; but we nevertheless maintain that the highest idea of a Father comes nearer to the inapproachable truth than any other thought of man can do.

On the other hand, the objection which Unitarian writers have constantly made to all forms of so-called orthodoxy has been that these forms of doctrine seemed to them inconsistent with what they regarded as the great, the central, the all-controlling truth of the gospel, viz. the fatherly character of God.

By baptizing into the name of the Son the great majority of Unitarians mean to say that they regard Jesus as standing in a unique relation to God. Concerning the nature of our Lord — whether he had any pre-existence (assuming human nature on earth), or whether he was literally what he was so fond of calling himself, the Son of Man, — the Unitarians do not trouble themselves. Some may incline to be Arians, and more to be Humanitarians; but the majority put that question aside. It is enough for them that Jesus was a man approved of God, in whom dwelt the fulness of the Godhead bodily; that he was the word made flesh, Emmanuel, God with us. They do not know what these scriptural phrases may mean concerning the nature of Jesus; but they hold that such language implies that the apostles held his office and character far above that of any prophet or sage. And as we read the record of the evangelists we feel that Jesus continually betrays an ever-present nearness of communion with God, such as no sage or prophet ever betrayed. He stood, as it seems to us, in absolutely unique relations to God; his direct claims, his unconscious assumptions, his great wisdom and holiness, and his wonderful career, both before and after his crucifixion, all show him to have been in such connection with God as no other man ever was. We do not wish to quibble about such terms as Christ, or Messiah, or Logos, or Word, or Son; we are aware that no language can adequately express our convictions on such themes; but we adopt with all the strength of our minds and hearts the

opening articles of that old symbol: "I believe in God the Father Almighty," and "in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord." We call him the only Son of God, because we believe that no other son of man ever showed anything even approaching such evidences of divine wisdom and love, such a likeness to God, such a conscious dignity in the knowledge of God and in the possession of favor and authority from God; we call him our Lord because we believe that he has absolute authority to command our reverent obedience.

And the great majority of Unitarians believe that in the New Testament we have a trustworthy record of his teaching. The denomination have with great unanimity regarded the doctrine of plenary verbal inspiration with peculiarly strong aversion. But they have been, in general, very slightly affected by the various schools of criticism which have from time to time assailed the credibility of the histories. They believe that we know what the teaching and doctrine of Christ was more accurately and thoroughly than we know those of any other teacher of antiquity. His teaching was permeated throughout by the three great truths announced in the baptismal formula which he gave. No man can read the four Gospels attentively without being impressed (so the Unitarians think) with the prominence which our Lord gives to these three truths, — that God is our Father, that Jesus himself is the Son of God, and that both he and the Father will give the Holy Spirit to those who ask the Father for it as Jesus taught them.

Here, again, in the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, the Unitarians think that they occupy the reasonable middle ground between the orthodox and the extreme rationalists. The former appear to limit the influences of the Holy Ghost to a few; the latter, to deny their possibility to any. Against the one, the Unitarians urge the universal beneficence of the Father of all; they urge that the Lord Jesus continually implies that the Spirit of God enlightens every man that comes into the world. They even declare that inspiration is universal; that all the children of men are taught of God;

that from his inspiration all wise thought, all just counsels, all holy desires proceed ; and insist upon it that this doctrine must not be made of none effect by any interpretation of those passages in the New Testament which seem to imply a peculiar influence in the regenerate heart. But, on the other hand, they will not be scared and frightened from offering the Lord's prayer in trusting faith by any supercilious physicist undertaking to say that an answer to the prayer " Deliver us from evil " involves just as serious a violation of law as the making Niagara flow backward into Lake Erie ; or by any astronomer arrogantly " wishing it to be distinctly understood " that an influence of God's Spirit, helping our infirmities, is of the same order of impossibility as the spontaneous building of a steam-flouring mill, without hands, in a single night. Whatever such a man may wish to have understood, the Unitarian clergy and laity understand that the sphere of human thought and action is pervaded by laws that do not manifest themselves in merely physical spheres ; that the laws of thought, and mental modifications in general, have not been brought, and cannot be brought, under mere modifications of the law of the conservation of the *vis viva* ; and that there is no more violation of law involved in the idea of the Holy Spirit being granted in answer to prayer than there is in any one of the most familiar instances of spiritual action of one man upon another.

But in holding fast with earnest tenacity to these doctrines of the baptismal formula, the Unitarian does not, it may be said, clearly distinguish himself from those who are called orthodox Christians. We must show in what sense they make these three doctrines of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit peculiarly their own.

In the first place, by making them sufficient ; by refusing to press further into things which they have not seen. They do not find the Trinity in the Bible ; to them there is one God the Father. They do not find the proper Deity of the Son in the Scripture ; to them there is one Lord Jesus Christ ; never, as they read the New Testament, endowed with infinite

attributes or made equal with God. They do not find in the Bible the separate personality of the Spirit ; as they read the Scriptures the Spirit is a power or influence exerted by the Father or by the Son. Equally marked is their difference with orthodoxy concerning the great object for which the three primal truths of the baptismal formula are revealed. Lurking even in the most modern and moderate forms of Augustinianism, Calvinism, and Arminianism they at least fancy that they see the notion that Christ came to save men from the penalty of their sins. The Unitarians, on the other hand, say he came to save men from sin itself : to lift them out of a sensual, selfish, godless life into a life of purity, love, and devotion. They say that to be carnally minded is death, to be spiritually minded is life and peace ; that it needs no pictures of future misery to make sin black, hateful, awful ; no visions of future glory to make virtue, charity, brotherly love, and devout self-consecration to God lovely beyond description and pearls beyond price. They say that Jesus came to bear witness to God's law and to give men power to keep it ; that the salvation which he brought is this very passage here, to-day, from the darkness of sin into the light and life of righteousness and piety. The essence of the mission of Christ, as Unitarians read the Gospels, lies in his revelation of God's paternal love, in his promise of forgiveness from God to the penitent, and in his promise of the almighty aid of the Spirit to those who humbly try to walk by its aid. Incidentally he confirms our faith in the being of God, in the immortality of man, in the retribution for sin extending beyond the grave, in the feebleness and helplessness of man without his aid ; these are but the corollaries of the essential truths given above.

From the view of Unitarianism thus given, we find the key to another of its peculiarities,—the exaltation of morality. All Christians insist upon an obedience to the moral law as the only evidence of a sanctified heart and a saving faith. But the Unitarians insist upon the spirit of piety and charity as being in themselves the pearls of great price. Righteousness in their view is not valuable as an evi-

dence of saving faith ; but, on the contrary, faith is valuable only as a means of producing righteousness, including in that word holiness, reverence, gratitude, obedience, filial love toward God, and charity to men. So strongly marked is this feature of Unitarianism that when, a few years since, at an installation of a Trinitarian Congregationalist, the preacher insisted that holiness, the sanctification of human hearts and lives, was the object and end of all revelation, one of the hearers turned to me and said, in substance, "that sermon is more Unitarian than yours are." An old man on his death-bed, being recently asked, what is Unitarianism, replied : "The Lord's Prayer, the Sermon on the Mount, and the twelfth chapter of Romans." He did not mean, however, that none but Unitarians observed these passages, for he went on to say that he did not like to be called a Unitarian ; "All good people, who try to live by the practical precepts of the New Testament, are," said he, "Unitarians, in my sense of the word."

This putting of righteousness before doctrine is one cause why Unitarians are so tolerant of differences of opinion among themselves. They esteem a right life of so much more importance than a right creed that they sometimes fall into the inconsistency of acting as though opinions were of no consequence whatever. Practical difficulties thus arise, especially in missionary work. While all the body can cordially unite in many works of philanthropy, and even in the circulation of certain standard writings, such as Channing's Discourses and Essays, they cannot unite cordially in the support of living preachers, or of contemporaneous periodicals, because there is a very perceptible proportion of young men who preach and who write in a way repugnant to the convictions of the main body of the denomination. Yet, upon the ground of righteousness before doctrine, no steps can be taken to draw any line of doctrinal demarcation. The denomination seems pledged by its principles of individual liberty and its exaltation of practical piety before all creeds to admit into its ranks all those who choose, for any motive

whatever, to enrol themselves under its banner. This is the one great trouble and hinderance to vigorous, effective co-operation among them. Members of the body are frequently heard saying, in substance, what an active, earnest layman in one of the Middle States said to me, a few years ago: "I am perplexed as to my duty towards the Unitarian body. My parents brought me up to read the Bible with Unitarian eyes. I cannot possibly read it otherwise. I find in it the most positive statements that all the law is fulfilled in loving the Lord with all one's heart and one's neighbor as one's self. Yet, if I attempt to act with the Unitarians, I am frequently pained by the prominence allowed by them to irreverent speeches from a few of their number, whom I regard of unsound scholarship. I can bear any amount of divergence from my own doctrinal views, but I cannot bear to hear the Head of the Christian church accused of 'the veriest quibbling'; of believing in 'literal hell-fire'; of supposing 'the great majority of men doomed to everlasting torment'; of 'imputing sin to the possessing of wealth, and virtue to poverty'; of 'having lived a less worthy life than Socrates'; and so on; all which seems to me not only false, but grossly irreverent. I have, therefore, stopped my subscription to all Unitarian periodicals, and even to the American Unitarian Association, and content myself now with expressing, in private intercourse, my convictions that a fair, honest criticism of the New Testament must lead to the conclusion that the Unitarianism of Channing and Henry Ware, Jr. and Orville Dewey is the nearest approach which modern days have seen to the original Christianity of the Lord Jesus Christ. I know that the great mass of believers in our churches, and probably nineteen twentieths of our ministers agree with me; but the dozen, or score, of clergymen who disagree seem to prophesy in inverse proportion to their faith; and I am constrained to forbear the luxury of acting with the nineteen, to avoid the pain of hearing the twentieth."

Having thus frankly admitted the existence of these diversities of opinion in the denomination and the pain which they

give to certain of our number, we hasten also to say that these diversities flow as a necessary consequence from two of the fundamental principles of the body, to both of which allusion has already been made. The original Unitarian ground was simply the Protestant ground, reason against authority. The leaders of the movement insisted with great vigor on the right of individual private judgment; they protested earnestly against creeds, declaring that intellectual processes are not matters of moral responsibility, that error is innocent, and that uniformity or conformity of opinion is not practicable or desirable in the Christian church. At the same time, the importance of pure morality and of piety was affirmed, and faith in Christ was maintained to be the efficacious means of producing piety and morality.

Thus in the teaching of the leaders of the movement lay the subtle error into which those who exalt the value of the search for truth over the possession of the truth are apt to fall; an error which, whether on the lips of modern or ancient schoolmen, confutes itself on the slightest examination. Philosophers may be, as Plato called them, huntsmen after truth, and may find their pleasure, as other huntsmen, in the chase, and not in the possession of the game. But it is evident that no huntsmen would enjoy the chase if he never expected to succeed in the capture. So in the pursuit of truth the value of the end must be acknowledged, and the possibility of making some attainment must be acknowledged, else your philosophy ends in vague speculation and dreams concerning nothings. The Unitarian eulogiums on freedom of thought and independence of authority led some to overlook the value of established truth; they were thus ready to examine and explore whatever path seemed to be new; and they were also thrown, by their faith in the innocence of intellectual error, off their guard concerning traps and dangers in the new paths. Thus Hamilton, Mansel, Herbert Spencer, and others, found it easy to bring some of them into a state of complete spiritual paralysis; leading them to the false admission that spiritual things are unknown and unknowable.

This same tendency to be hospitable to new acquaintance and to neglect and undervalue old friends, produced or fostered by the exaltation of liberty above truth, opened the way for incautious Unitarian thinkers to fall into other apparent novelties of error. While in the interior of Mansoul the psychological agnostics were thus, by false interpretations of the testimony, endeavoring to show that the officers in the city had no authority; on the outside the physical dogmatists were preparing works for a vigorous siege, by which they should reduce the city to an entire subjection to the material world. The rapid progress of physical science had emboldened physical speculation to step in and say that physics is mistress and sole queen of the whole. The supremacy of material law and its invariability were adopted as axioms by these metaphysical assailants of metaphysics. Fanciful speculations concerning matter replaced, in their school, the fanciful speculations of the older theologians concerning angels and spirits. Some of the liberty-loving Unitarians have been seduced by these speculations into strangely paradoxical positions. Having vigorously resisted the theological necessarianism of Calvin, of Edwards, and of their own Priestley, they now adopt the materialistic necessarianism of the older atheists. Having followed Hamilton in his exaltation of the testimony of consciousness above the deductions of reason, they suddenly deny, *in toto*, the validity of consciousness, and would build on the sole testimony of the senses. Having followed Lardner, Norton, and other leaders, into the conclusion that the New Testament was written in the Apostolic age, and having been convinced by Paley that the main epistles of Paul are actually from Paul's hand, they suddenly decide that, nevertheless, the New Testament gives us no trustworthy history concerning Christ. The cause of this last step lies in two dicta of the new school of philosophy which has bewildered them,—the dictum that every account of a miracle must be rejected, however strong the evidence in its favor, and the dictum that all earthly things must have been gradually evolved from a preceding state. Under these

dicta a new school of historians is rewriting the histories of the Old and New Testament; evolving, that is, a history out their *a priori* conceptions as to what ought to have been; fitting the biblical history to this where they can, and lopping off that part of the Bible which will not fit. Of course this is done plausibly, and under pretext that every reader must interpret a writing according to his previous independent knowledge of the subject. In the Unitarian followers of this school we have, then, the singular spectacle of men claiming to be Christians and Christian ministers, who nevertheless say that we know very little, if anything, concerning Christ; that we only know that he performed no wonderful works, uttered few, if any, of the things recorded of him in the Gospels, may have been crucified, dead, or buried, but never rose, nor ascended into heaven, nor poured down the Spirit upon his apostles waiting in Jerusalem for the fulfilment of the promise.

The vaticinations of this wing of the denomination are so distasteful to some of the more conservative men that the latter are either driven out to worship with other churches, or, as in the instance already cited, driven into a state of isolation, cut off from all religious sympathies. But the majority of the denomination rest coolly in an optimistic view of the situation. With Upham, in his "Star of our Lord," they say, "It is the Man of Nazareth who delivers the battle." They bear with the vagaries and self-conceit of young men, with the dreams and speculations of prose poets, saying to themselves, that the young will sober by age, and that the poetical will be held by the heart to sounder conclusions than their heads have reached. The value of liberty is immeasurable. Believing that the old Unitarianism is nearer the central truth than any other views yet announced, these old Unitarians believe that all the oscillations of human thought are settling toward their position. The debates of the last century have certainly driven unbelievers from many of their old grounds, and forced them to take more reverent and believing views of the New Testament. At the same time

the bigotry of old Calvinism has manifestly softened, and the modern presentations of the five points have none of that awful antinomian aspect at which the early Unitarians so fiercely rebelled. The Christian world may, in reaction from Puritan theology, lurch too far toward agnosticism and extreme rationalism ; but it will swing back again. The voice of Dr. Furness of Philadelphia has long been sounding the rallying cry. His views have been too subtle, too spiritual, too individual, to have produced yet much impression ; but they are the views destined finally to be a complete antidote to the influence of Dutch historians, English agnostics, and German atheists. As Paley shows that Paul's Epistles bear in themselves evidences of having come direct from Paul's own hand, so Dr. Furness shows that in the four Gospels we have a portrait which it is impossible to ascribe to the imagination of the writers or of their contemporaries ; but which must have been drawn from a living person who, in dignity, wisdom, beneficence, power, and all other elements of lofty personality, stood not only above, but immeasurably above, all other prophets and sages. To that conviction all reasonable men must finally come ; and then they cannot refuse to take the further step of joining with Paul and the other New Testament writers in their doxologies of wonder, love, and praise.

Such is the view with which the central body of Unitarian Christians school themselves to endure what seem to them the errors and mistakes of the so-called rationalistic part of their denomination. Their loyalty to liberty is as intense as their loyalty to truth ; their conviction that only one is our Master is as strong as their conviction that that one is Christ ; therefore they will not attempt to exclude from the denomination any one who appears honestly to think that he belongs there, however widely such a one may depart from what can historically and actually be defined as Unitarianism. The denomination has no creed, expressed or implied, further than is implied in the name Unitarian Christian. Of these

two words the vast majority hold the word Christian to be immeasurably the more important.

The reader who is sufficiently interested in this account of the denomination to follow me thus far may ask for a little more detail upon other points on which the denomination is united. First, then, as to the condition of unregenerate man: the Unitarians say that human nature is not so much ruined as it is weak and incomplete. The new-born babe is innocent of actual sin, but inherits a defective moral constitution. He does not obey the law of God, and, indeed, by reason of innate frailty and perverseness, cannot keep that law — cannot live up even to his own imperfect apprehension of it. Thus weak and corrupted he sinks into actual sin, and is unable to attain the ideal which his own innate moral sense sets before him. He has not the strength even to attempt with any steadfastness of purpose so to do. He feels himself in bonds, fettered with this “body of death”; this body which has received, both by ancestral transgressions and by his own sins, a lurch and bias toward evil. Hence he needs, in order to rise to the inheritance to which he was born, some help from without, from the gospel or from the Spirit of God. Without that help he sinks into the second death; the death of the spiritual nature, the death of the soul.

What that death of the soul is the Unitarian, in general, does not attempt to explain. He rejects with indignation the assertion of a few of his denomination, that Jesus taught a literal suffering in literal eternal flames. Such an interpretation of the words of our blessed Lord seems to him fundamentally at variance with the great doctrine of the paternal character of God. He therefore is content to leave the fate of the incorrigibly wicked to the “uncovenanted mercies of God,” without attempting to decide what those mercies will assign them; only certain that the Judge of all the earth will do what is just and merciful.

To call man out of his sunken and lost estate Christ came. He called men to newness of heart and life, to assume their

true position as sons of God ; and by the new motives which he gave,—in the assurance of the divine love, in the promise of forgiveness to the penitent, in the promise of aid to those who sincerely try to amend, in the tender beauty of his own forgiving, loving, pure, and holy character, in the heroic self-sacrifice of his endurance of the cross for our sake, in the new hope inspired by his resurrection and ascension, in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit after his ascension,—he actually gives men power to become, in deed and character, what they are by nature, the children of God. Thus he becomes a Saviour of men ; his is the only name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.

But the Unitarian, in thus speaking of salvation only through Christ, means, what he thinks Jesus himself and his apostles meant, to speak of the great general fact, and not of any metaphysical or theological necessity. He thinks that the scriptural writers expressly concede, what the general doctrines of the baptismal formula imply, and what our feeble, finite power of observation seems to confirm, viz. that in every nation and among all people there are a few who fear God and strive after righteousness ; whose salvation, therefore, from sin and death, although not so complete as it might have been had they known Christ and thrown themselves in faith upon him and his word, is still sufficient to prepare them for eternal life. Yet as a broad, general fact it may be said that salvation, perfect deliverance from sin, is through Christ only.

With reference to the part which the death of Christ bears in our redemption, the Unitarian differs from what is called orthodox Christianity in this way : the orthodox interpretation of New Testament expressions concerning the death and sufferings of our Lord makes them refer to an action in the divine counsels ; the Unitarian interpretation makes them refer to an action in the hearts of men. That when we were suffering under the mortal disease of sin, Christ, at the appointed time, died for us, the righteous in behalf of the ungodly, that we by his death might live ; this the devout

Unitarian believes with gratitude and with rejoicing. But he thinks that all such language in the New Testament refers to the patent facts in the history of the divine ministry in Galilee and Judea, in the story of the dreadful scenes in Gethsemane and on Calvary, in the narrative of that sudden joy and supernatural strength which revived the souls of the disciples after the Lord's resurrection, in the overwhelming evidence of his power given by the rapid conversion of such multitudes throughout the Roman empire, their lifting up out of the slough of disgusting and degrading sensuality into the purity and joy of a Christian walk and conversation — it is to these patent facts, in the history of their own times, that the apostles are bearing witness, and not to any facts in the divine counsels; this is the Unitarian view of the atonement. By his death on the cross Jesus drew all hearts to himself, subdued the stubborn pride of sin, and melted the beholders into penitence; by the story of the resurrection the apostles opened the eternal world to the eyes of the heathen, and called them out of darkness into light. Even those Unitarians who have been led, by the false philosophy of the revived Epicureanism of our century, to doubt whether the body of Jesus returned to life, as narrated in the fourth Gospel, admit that the apostles believed that they had seen him after his crucifixion. This is the astounding fact to which historical research has forced the assent of the most resolute denier of miracles; the apostles did, immediately after the crucifixion, believe that they had seen the risen Lord; and it was by this preaching of the crucifixion and resurrection that they lifted Europe out of "Epicurus's sty" into the glorious liberty of the sons of God.

Now the Unitarian in general, believing in the reality of the resurrection of Christ, seeing the prominence given to that doctrine by the apostles, so that the Athenian hearers of Paul thought he was introducing a new god and goddess, Jesus and Anastasis; remembering, also, that the crucifixion was a necessary prelude to the resurrection, and that the Lord said, "I lay down my life that I may take it again,"

— the Unitarian, remembering these things, supposes that it is to them that the apostles refer when they speak of the atoning power of Jesus' death, and not to any influence on the mind of the Father. It is a continually recurring commonplace in Unitarian preaching that the atonement in the New Testament is reconciliation to God, and not reconciliation with God ; *καταλλαγή*, not *διαλλαγή*.

The new life of righteousness into which the gospel of Christ and the influence of the Spirit lift man is in itself, according to Unitarian views, salvation, peace, and joy. And this high estimate which Unitarians place upon right living, upon obedience to the law of God, is often misunderstood by orthodox critics as declaring an actual merit in good works, giving the creature a claim on the Creator for a reward. The Unitarian has misunderstood Calvinists as necessarily being antinomian, as considering *real righteousness* filthy rags (כִּטְמָה וְרֵצָח), and as thinking the imputation of Christ's righteousness would make a sinful and corrupt heart considered righteous while yet in its corruption; while the Calvinist has misunderstood the Unitarian as thinking that the righteousness of erring man could put the Almighty under obligations, and force him to concede to man eternal blessedness as the payment for doing his duty. But Unitarians consent to the justice of the Lord Jesus' ethics,— that a man can do no more than his duty, and is bound to do that; so that all that a man can strictly deserve at God's hands is more or less of blame for falling short of duty. Yet, while the wages of sin is death, the gift of God is eternal life; and out of the fulness of his mercy, and of the abundance of his goodness, God treats the penitent believer in Jesus, who tries to obey Jesus' commands, as though he had succeeded in a perfect obedience. This is the blessedness of the gospel of redemption, according to Unitarian views: that God is through Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing our trespasses to us; but allowing him who knew no sin to suffer for us, as though he were a sinner; that we might thus, through him, be brought

to seek the righteousness of God, and be treated by his mercy as though we had attained that righteousness.

According to the orthodox views by which sin was an offence against an infinite God, and deserved an infinite penalty, which penalty could be remitted only because it was borne by our substitute, it was necessary that the substitute should be of an infinite nature in order that he could bear the infinitely infinite penalty incurred by all the elect. But the Unitarian (not seeing in the language of the New Testament concerning the atonement any necessary implication of an actual substitution or transference of guilt, punishment, or righteousness) no longer feels the necessity for an infinite Saviour. God hath laid help on one mighty to save to the uttermost all those who come to God through him; but in the Unitarian view and interpretation of Scripture (of course excluding the few eccentric Unitarians who of late years have given orthodox interpretations to certain passages in order to justify themselves in rejecting the authority of the Scriptures), this implies nothing that necessitates an infinite Saviour. God himself is the infinite Saviour who saves through the mediator Christ Jesus. Jesus is called a man, and nothing is written to Unitarian eyes concerning his two natures; the Unitarian, therefore, looks upon him as a man of absolutely unique endowment, without pausing or troubling himself to consider in what that unique endowment consists; whether simply in an influx of the Divine Spirit without measure, or in an incarnation of the Divine Word, or in a conscious and glorified pre-existence before all worlds, or in all three. The Unitarian does not speculate much about any such points; it is enough for him to recognize the absolute *authority* of Jesus to announce moral laws, to prescribe conditions of forgiveness, to promise forgiveness, to promise immortality, to assure us of the influences of the Holy Spirit.

The Unitarian believes that his perfect liberty, his entire freedom from authority, his ultra Protestantism making every man, according to St. Paul's doctrine, his own judge of what allegiance to truth and duty requires, is the safeguard

and assurance of Christian faith. He believes in the reasonableness of faith, and in the sufficiency of the reasons by which he would justify it. The man who has been brought up with implicit faith in a creed of any kind, written or unwritten, may, in the first flush of freedom, on arriving at man's estate, go off into wild vagaries of thought. But the average Unitarian is in his youth accustomed to test all things and hold fast to what is good. The views of various Christian denominations and all forms of unbelief are discussed before him with perfect freedom, and he learns to put himself for the moment into the stand-point of each, only to return with more love and zeal to his own ground; whither reason and faith join hands to lead him, and where he stands happy in the conscious liberty of a child of God, rejoicing as a participant of the grace of Christ, opening his heart in gladness to the blissful influence of the Holy Ghost.

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### ARTICLE III.

#### THE BIBLICAL SANCTION FOR WINE.

BY REV. HORACE BUMSTEAD, ATLANTA, GA.

DEAN ALFORD asserted that his commentary was conducted on the principle "of honestly endeavoring to ascertain the sense of the sacred text without regard to any preconceived systems, and fearless of any possible consequences." Let us humbly endeavor to approach the subject at the head of this Article in the spirit of the scholarly and saintly dean.

I propose to consider, first, the nature of the wine sanctioned in the Bible; second, the manner in which the Bible gives its sanction to this wine; third, the limitations which the Bible places upon the sanction; and, fourth, the perpetuity of the sanction as thus limited.

#### I. THE NATURE OF THE WINE SANCTIONED.

It is generally admitted that the Bible sanctions the use of some beverage called wine. During the last half century