

UNITARIANISM.

THE real spirit or essence of Unitarianism to our mind, is the effort to imitate the life and character of Jesus Christ after the pattern of ordinary hero worshipers. Christ is their *hero*, and, by studying His character and memorizing His precepts, they try to approximate to His life by imitating the one and practicing the other. This they do without making any pretence about securing special spiritual power, or the benefits of an atonement. It is Confucianism with Christ, instead of Confucius as the originator of the *ism*.

It is not at all likely that many Unitarians will accept this characterization as correct, and yet it will be far easier to repudiate it in words than in argument. Look at the matter more in detail and this our portraiture will be seen to be more and more lifelike as we continue the examination.

Christ, according to their creed, was a man of like passions with themselves, although the best of the race, his precepts the very best ever uttered, his private and public life the most faultless ever lived in the world. All then that He could possibly be to them, according to this creed, is a pattern, an example, to be copied just as the school boy copies a first class specimen of writing. The copy is the result of the engravers art but the scholar is to imitate it with his pen, and hence is not required to equal its excellence, he is only required to approximate nearer and nearer to it as he gradually improves his hand writing.

The method by which Christ succeeded in living this is utterly and intentionally ignored. The engravers art is presumed to be a myth, and this perfect copy is presumed to be the work of pen and ink. They never aspire to the art of engraving, that is to the method whereby Christ set the perfect copy. Their creed has only to do with the result, never with the method.

Hence they not only do not succeed in perfectly imitating, i.e. equaling the original copy, but they are content that it should be so. The creed is brought down to their practice, and so a species of soul rest is the outcome of the process.

The difference between this creed and Trinitarian creeds is, that whilst the one does not, even in pretence, or in definition, require equality with the original copy, the other does. And so, when the copy is not equaled, aspirations after such result are in order, and exhortations to secure it are not considered silly.

But here the difference, as a general truth, ceases, for Trinitarian and Unitarian alike, as a rule, strive to copy Christ's example, but not His method. To both alike the engraver's art is assumed to be a myth. The one attempts only to approach in excellence to the set copy and professes to be satisfied with such approximation as in full harmony with his creed, the other attempts to equal the copy, but by the same methods, and fails, and yet professes to be disappointed with the result as not in harmony with his creed.

To imitate the true method by going further and adopting the methods of the engraver is not practiced or even thought of by either creedist, and so the result with both is complete, continuous failure, to equal the original copy.

We never realized the similarity, in this essential respect, between these two forms of creed so vividly as when, last Sabbath evening, listening to a sermon in St. James Hall, by the leader of what is called "The forward movement." Rev. Hugh Price Hughes, when discoursing to his immense audience, gave the different initial steps which men and women should take to live Christ-like lives, viz., repentance concerning all the past, including restitution where needful, confession to God, and faith. And now came up the question of the future life, after these steps were taken. We found ourself listening carefully and with hopefulness in the ascendent. But we