

parture from this, they would cease to be Unitarians.

The Orthodox, however, in noticing the differences among Unitarians are but pointing to the mote in the brother's eye, while they are forgetful of the beam that is in their own. In comparison with the differences which exist among the orthodox, those which exist among the Unitarians are unimportant. The Orthodox differ in opinion on points held to be fundamental. They differ on doctrines, the right perception of which they hold to be indispensable to salvation. Amongst Unitarians this is not the case. All the Orthodox hold the Trinity to be a fundamental point, yet they are unable to agree as to what the Trinity means. Not fewer than twenty different schemes have been proposed, which if laid out in order, would exhibit a graduated scale, at the one end of which we should find Tritheism, and at the other Unitarianism.

On the doctrine of human depravity, too, a wide difference of opinion prevails. Some maintain the total and innate wickedness of the human being—a wickedness natural to him, and born with him—inherited from the first man. This wickedness, they say, makes him the object of God's displeasure and curse. Consistently with this view the very infant is condemned to the pains of hell. Others, again, perceiving the monstrous character of this doctrine, materially modify it by asserting that the basis of the evil lies in the will of the individual, and that until the child commits sin by his own choice he cannot be the object of Divine displeasure. These maintain, at the same time, that the child will by a necessity of nature commit sin whenever he begins to act as a moral being. A very remarkable occurrence has lately taken place in the United States, which illustrates the uncertainty which exists among the Orthodox on the subject of human depravity.—One of their most eminent divines, the Rev. Dr. Bushnell of Hartford, Conn. published a tract some time ago on the subject of "Christian Nurture." The matter of the book had been previously preached from his own pulpit in the form of Discourses, and was afterwards read before the Ministerial Association to which he belonged. Here it was favorably received, and a request made to the writer that he would publish it. To this he consented, and the Massachusetts Sabbath School Society asked permission to publish the Tract under their auspices. This was granted by the writer, and the book appeared, "approved by the Committee of Publication," as stated on the title page. In this tract the author maintained, or assumed, that there are certain capacities in human nature, which, when properly developed, constitute goodness. This seems to us very reasonable, and capable of being sustained by facts closely connected with human experience, and open to observation. So likewise, as it would appear, thought the Association of Ministers who requested its publication, and the Committee of the Sabbath School Society who requested permission to publish it. The latter body, we are told by Dr. Bushnell himself, had the manuscript some five or six months in their hands for examination. To use his own phrase, it underwent "a sifting till the paper itself came near giving out in the process." Now if certainty was to be obtained at all concerning the Orthodoxy of the book, one would think it should have been obtained under all those circumstances. But the instructive part of the matter—that which shows us that the doctrine of human depravity among the Orthodox rests on no certain basis—remains to be told. The book was published and circulated. Criticisms were made upon it from certain quarters of the Orthodox camp. It was stigma-

tised in these criticisms as heterodox—all prior examinations by Orthodox Associations and Committees, notwithstanding. And the very men who approved it as "Orthodox," were obliged to suspend its publication,—that is, to suppress it—because others of their brethren had pronounced it "heterodox." So ill-ascertained are the foundations of the prominent Orthodox doctrines:

And even with regard to the Atonement a similar diversity is to be observed. We all know what stress is laid on this doctrine in Orthodox teaching. Yet they differ widely in opinion as to what it signifies. Some would explain it in a sense which would be readily accepted by Unitarians, while others present it in an aspect at which common sense revolts. Very wide, indeed, are the differences which exist among the Orthodox on this point, and great are the difficulties which it presents. Not long since, a distinguished American Orthodox clergyman, having carefully listened to the expositions of his English brethren on this subject, made a public declaration that they did not understand it. Dr. Cox's own language is that they are "blundering to the souls of their auditors." Even now the sounds of a Controversy, involving the essential character of the Atonement, is sounding in our ears from the bosom of Orthodoxy. It originated in this way. Some time since a book was published in New-York, entitled "The Sufferings of Christ." The author was Mr. Griffin, a lay gentleman, who maintains that in the sufferings and death of Christ, God actually suffered and died. Now this doctrine, wild and irrational as it is, is absolutely necessary to the common theory of vicarious Atonement by an infinite sacrifice. But it was assailed by Orthodox criticism and some recommendations given, or measures taken (if we remember right) to stop the sale of the book which so confidently set it forth. Its most prominent opponent was Dr. Tyler of the East Windsor Theological Institute, who published a formal reply to it. We here submit a few paragraphs taken from an article on the subject, which appeared in the columns of the Boston Christian Register, an Unitarian Journal. By perusing them our readers may form some idea of the difficulty which Orthodoxy experiences in this matter.

"The doctrine of Mr. Griffin's work has moreover, been ably sustained in the Christian Review, the Biblical Repository, the Oberlin Review, and in the present July number of the New Englander. The latter expresses the opinion, that 'the great body of the Church, without any theory in mind respecting the passibility of the Divine nature, have believed that Christ suffered in his Divine nature; that it is this chiefly which constitutes the infinite costliness of the sacrifice for sin.' He shows that it is no new doctrine. He quotes Watts, in whose Psalms and Hymns stand such affirmations as the following:—

\* God the Mighty Maker died  
For man the creature's sin.  
\* Jehovah crucified.  
\* Washed in the sanctifying blood  
Of an expiring Deity."

"He brings forward Charnock, who affirms that 'Christ's groans were the groans of God, his pangs the pangs of God;' and Hooper, who says, 'We care for no knowledge in the world but this, that man hath sinned, and God hath suffered. He finds in Horsley the declaration, that, 'the same God who in one person exacts the punishment, in another himself sustains it: and thus makes his own mercy pay the satisfaction to his own justice.' Beveridge declares, that the expression, 'they crucified the Lord of glory,' is 'the same as if the apostle said, they crucified God himself.' And to mention no other, (though the writer in the New Englander presents the names of Chalmers, and Harris, and Witherspoon, and Robert Hall,—we think, without finding any just support in them,) he quotes from Vinet's Vital Christianity, recently translated from

the French by Dr. Turnbull, of the Baptist denomination,—'O mystery! O miracle! a God humbled, a God weeping, a God anguished, a God dying!' 'That long agony of God for generations!'

"On the other hand, Dr. Tyler perceives the logical, and yet irrational conclusions, which must be inferred from the doctrine that the Divine nature suffered agony in Jesus, in the garden and on the cross. He well says, that "if this is to be regarded as an undoubted article of the Christian religion, it will furnish an argument against it more plausible than any which have been adduced by Hume, or Bolingbroke, or Voltaire.' There are certain first truths respecting the attributes of the Deity, which are as necessary and as obvious as the truth that God is. And any revelation which should teach doctrines contradictory of these first truths, would be unworthy of reception, equally with a professed Revelation which should declare there is no God. Revelation, which does not prove, but which assumes as a first truth, the Being of God, equally assumes the fact, that the immutable, ever-blessed Divine Being cannot suffer torment. One would suppose, that any course of reasoning tending to prove that God suffers pain and torment, would at once awaken the conviction in the reasoner's mind, that his premises must be erroneous.

"See how Dr. Tyler and Mr. Griffin stand related on the subject in question. Dr. Tyler argues that the Divine nature is not capable of suffering torment. He reasons precisely as Unitarians do on the subjects of the Trinity, and Nature of Christ, and Atonement. He argues from Reason and Scripture. The texts which seem to affirm that the divine nature is capable of suffering, he does not interpret literally. On the other hand, Mr. Griffin interprets them literally; and to him the argument from common sense or from reason is just as inconclusive, as is a similar argument from Unitarians with Dr. Tyler on the subject of the Trinity and Atonement.

"If the doctrine that the Divine nature in Christ suffered, be the logical deduction from the doctrine of two natures in one person in Christ, then on Dr. Tyler's theory, which is the prevailing theory at least of the New England Orthodox churches, and of the new school theologians out of New England, hang suspended all the calamitous consequences which he deprecates in the theory of Mr. Griffin. He ought to know, and the Orthodox who sympathize with him in and out of New England ought to know, that many 'plain people,' who take the liberty to think for themselves, and who also take his theory as an undoubted article of the 'Christian religion,' are furnished at his own hands, and at the hands of the Orthodox Church at large, with what Dr. Tyler himself calls, an 'argument against that religion more plausible than any which have been adduced by Hume, or Bolingbroke, or Voltaire.' The position of Dr. Tyler is precisely parallel with that which he regards as the position of Mr. Griffin, in relation to promoting infidelity. He stands in the same plane of argument. He assumes certain doctrines as true, but shuts his eyes against the legitimate consequences of them. Mr. Griffin argues for the suffering of Christ in his Divine nature, as God over all blessed forever, but shuts his eyes against the necessary consequences of such a doctrine.

"We have said we are deeply interested in the results of this controversy. We are strongly in hope, and we believe, that many in the Orthodox churches who will read Mr. Griffin's book, and the articles which it has called forth, will not adopt his conclusions; but, perceiving their contradiction alike of the truths of natural and revealed religion, and that they flow legitimately from the doctrines of two natures in one person in Christ, and of the need of an infinite atonement, will reject these two last doctrines as well as the former, and stand on Unitarian ground. Dr. Tyler perceives the advantage which must result to Unitarianism. 'Beware,' he says to all who are inclined to favor Mr. Griffin's theory; 'how you put into the hands of Unitarians a more potent weapon than any which they have hitherto attempted to wield.'

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