

Original Poetry.

VERSES

WRITTEN AT THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE PRESENT YEAR.

Not for dull sloth, my soul,
This life was given,
Wake then! and stretch thy wing
Upward, to heaven.

Another fleeting year
Its course hath run:
How stands my great account?
What have I done?

What deeds of love and faith
Bears it to God?
Meekly, life's thorny path,
Oh! have I trod?

In doubt, and trials sore,
Calm have I bowed,
And kissed the chastening rod,
Though dark the cloud?

Erring, and sinning off,
From duty strayed,
Has my repentant heart,
In anguish prayed?

My better thoughts would rise
To thee, my God;
But oh! my heart still clings,
To this low sod!

Wayward and weak, the past
How oft I mourn!
Repenting still,—but oh!
How slow to learn.

Impart thy grace, to lead
My soul to thee;
From earth, its cares and sin,
My spirit free.

Give me, with thankful heart,
Each year to close;
Safe in thy guardian love,
Let me repose.

May every opening year
Vouchsafed to me,
Still find my spirit drawn
Nearer to thee.

And when revolving time
With me shall cease,
Calm may I lay me down
To rise in peace.

H. V. C.

A BRIEF STATEMENT OF THE UNITARIAN BELIEF.

Unitarians believe the Bible, that is, the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, to be a record of the Revelations, Dispensation, Purposes and Will of God to Man. They receive this precious volume as their only guide in faith and practice.

Unitarians believe in the Father, and in the Son, and in the Holy Ghost.

They believe in God, the Eternal and Uncreated One, the Creator and Upholder of all things—the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob—Israel's God—Jehovah, revealed by Jesus of Nazareth, as not only such, but also as the God and FATHER of the whole human family—that in and of himself, he possesses all those attributes and perfections which render him worthy of all the homage, love and obedience, which he requires of his children;—They believe in his power, wisdom, and goodness; in his providence, bounty and grace,—that He only is entitled to Supreme worship and veneration, the hour having come, when all true worshippers are required to "worship the FATHER in spirit and in truth."

They believe that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah promised of Jehovah to the Jews—the Christ, "THE SON of the Living God,"—sanctified and sent into the world by his Father, because "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life"—that he is the only Saviour of sinners, the only Mediator between God and man, "the way, the truth, and the life," worthy to be loved, honored, trusted and obeyed. They believe that all their prayers should be offered to the FATHER, in the name of Christ,—that they should possess his mind and spirit, imitate his example, and through him, look to God for pardon and eternal life.

They believe in the Holy Ghost, that power of God, that divine influence by which Christianity was established through miraculous aid, that Spirit which was given to Christ without measure, and which is

still shed abroad and imparted to all who sincerely repent of their sins, turn unto God, devote themselves to his service, and seek it of him in the way of his appointment.

Unitarians believe in human depravity, not in innate and total depravity and the imputation of Adam's sin—but in the very great depravity of mankind, the deceitfulness and wickedness of the human heart, the alienation of man from God through ignorance and sin.

Unitarians believe in the Atonement, or Reconciliation,—not that Christ died to appease the wrath, or satisfy the justice of God, to reconcile God to man, but to reconcile man to God, to bring back the wandering and sinful children of men to paths of obedience and holiness, to a oneness of feeling, affection and purpose with their Father in heaven, from whom their sins had separated them. They believe that the plan of redemption by Christ, originated in the love of the Father, "that God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life;" that the mission of Christ was intended to produce a change in man, by an assurance of God's love and willingness to forgive the returning penitent; "that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself," that through the blood of Christ, all who are led by its influence upon their hearts, to sincere repentance and the renunciation of sin, have forgiveness at the hands of God. Unitarians look for acceptance with God, not to their own good deeds, not to any merit in themselves, but to the free, unpurchased grace or mercy of God, made known in the gospel, and sealed by the blood of Christ. But they consider a life of uprightness, integrity, charity, devotion and holiness, as the only satisfactory proof of a heart reconciled to God,—the only proof that the atonement has been received.

Unitarians believe in regeneration, conversion, change of heart; they believe that we are saved by grace, through faith, and that it is the gift of God—that faith must be an active, operating principle—that all must repent of their sins—that true repentance consists, not only in remorse of conscience and sorrow of heart, but also in amendment of life—in ceasing to do evil and learning to do well.

Unitarians believe in experimental religion—not a momentary excitement—not the experience of an hour or a day—they regard Jesus of Nazareth as its most perfect pattern—they see him in the world, but not of it, humbly walking in the path of duty—doing the work given him to do by his Father, tempted, scorned and buffeted by the world—they see him moving onward, trusting in his Father's care, and only anxious to do his will—laboring for the salvation of man—suffering for his sake, even to the cruel death of the cross, and at that hour praying to his Father to forgive his murderers.

Unitarians believe in the resurrection of the dead—a judgment to come, and a life beyond the grave—that without holiness, no man can see God—that for the good, there is happiness without end; for the evil, the finally impenitent, there is misery and woe beyond the grave.

Unitarians believe in the supreme and all-absorbing importance of religion—that the soul's concern is the great concern—that compared with this, all other things are as nothing—that the interests of vital practical religion are the great interests of their being—that the Almighty has made all necessary provision for their everlasting happiness, and that no anxiety is too deep, no care too heedful, no effort too earnest, and no prayer too importunate to obtain its blessing.

PRACTICAL UNITARIANISM THE FAITH OF CHRISTENDOM.

"I mean no discourtesy, nor injustice to the Trinitarian, unless argument shall be thought such. I know that he supposes himself to hold a theory which escapes from the charge of self-contradiction. But so long as he says that the Father sent the Son, and that these two are one and the same being, I believe that he does not and cannot escape from it. I know that he professes to believe in one God; and, in truth,—in all his practical and devotional thoughts,—whenever he prays to the Father through the Son—he is, and his mind compels him to be, virtually a Unitarian. And this doubtless is, and always has been, the state of the general mind. Practical Unitarianism has always been the general faith of Christendom. Even when, as in the Roman Church, and sometimes in the Protestant, men have prayed to Jesus Christ, it would be found, if their thoughts could be confessed, that they have forgotten the Father for the time, and their error has not consisted in Trinitarianism, but in clothing the Being, called Jesus, with the attributes of sole Divinity. Still, though erring, they have been practical Unitarians.

But scholastic men have always been weaving theories, at variance with the popular and effective belief. Half of the history of philosophy might be written in illustration of this single point. Such a theory, I conceive, is the Trinity. It has existed in studies, in creeds, in theses, in words; but not in the actual conceptions of men, not in their heartfelt belief. From the days when Tertullian complained in the second century, that the common people would not receive this doctrine, and down through all the ages of seeming assent, and to this very day, I believe that it has ever been the same dead letter. And when Christianity has fairly thrown off this incumbrance, as I believe it will, I have no doubt that many will say, what not a few are saying now, "we never did believe in the Trinity; we always felt that the Son was subordinate to the Father who sent him."—Dr. Dewey.

EXTRACT FROM DR. GANNETT'S DISCOURSE ON THE TEMPERANCE CAUSE.

Injudicious as may have been the course taken in some instances by the more strenuous friends of Temperance, a much greater mistake has been committed by those who, when they might have contributed largely to the spread of principles which would secure the moral regeneration of society, have from any motive withheld their countenance and declined labouring side by side with those who had dedicated themselves to this noble enterprise. From any motive, I say,—unless it were a conscientious disapproval of the design; which we should hesitate to impute to any one. If their tastes are offended by some of the forms of expression or action which have been adopted by others, that is as poor a reason for standing aloof, as would be given by one who, seeing others engaged in saving men in imminent peril of life, should refuse to assist them because they did not use just such methods or just such language as he might prefer. If they indulge a feeling of superiority which leads them to look on the work which these philanthropists have undertaken as hardly fit for their hands, why then shame on their contemptible arrogance, as anti-christian as it is anti-republican in its character. If they apprehend a decrease of their wealth from a diminution of the sources whence it is drawn, then it is time to speak to them frankly and kindly. Addressing them in this spirit, I would "reason with them of righteousness, temperance, and a judgment to come." I would say to them, "Friends, you mistake your interest as much as your duty. Money is not the end for which you should live, nor the means on which you should rely for your happiness in this world. A clear conscience is the best possession here, and the justification of such a hope for the future as the mines of Mexico and Peru could not give. You cannot keep a clear conscience while you willingly amass property at the expense of others' characters. If your pecuniary gains are secured by their moral losses, you are carrying on a business which you have no right to carry on a moment longer. Close your counting-rooms, if against the entry of so much profit on your books your own knowledge of what you are doing must compel you to admit might be written down, So much virtue destroyed; so much misery produced; so much ruin caused. Turn the key in the doors of the houses or the shops which you have leased for bad uses, and let them remain unoccupied till they fall to the ground, rather than become through them, no matter how indirectly, the authors of sin and all its consequences. Do you reply, that if you take this course you will become poor men? Be poor, then, but be honest men, dealing uprightly with your neighbour and with the community. It is not honest dealing, to take from another in exchange for what you give him, not only the money which he agrees to pay you, but the integrity of soul, the fair reputation, and the moral influence, which he has no right to part with. Do you say it will take the bread out of your children's mouths? Better that they should be deprived, even through your decision, of the means of earthly sustenance, than that the spiritual life of others should be starved and poisoned. But there is not the least ground for these extravagant suppositions. You can get bread for yourselves and your children, and everything that is necessary for their comfort or your own, without doing that which makes you pander to the vice of the city. Oh, ye traders and ye capitalists! ye men who sell, or who suffer to be sold, where you might prevent it, that which, under the circumstances in which it is sold, you know must produce an unspeakable amount of evil! think, think of what you owe to yourselves. I approach you with no disposition to irritate or humble you. From sincere love I would set this matter before you in the light in which it ought to be viewed. You do not mean to injure the community; and yet what terrible wounds you inflict on its order, its peace, and its mo-

ral sentiment. You do not mean to harm yourselves; and yet what injustice you do to your own higher nature, to those feelings of generosity and compassion which you are smothering, those convictions of right which you are resisting and beclouding. You do not mean to lay up for yourselves a fearful retribution; yet how will you meet that judgment which a righteous God will pass on those to whom he has committed opportunities of usefulness which they have turned into occasions of most disastrous action on their fellow-men? Oh, consider your ways. 'Deal courageously' with this matter, and doubt not 'the Lord will be with the good.'

And ye who have stood at a distance, looking coldly, if you looked at all, on this movement for the recovery of those who were the miserable slaves of appetite, and for the removal of the temptations through which they were betrayed, and multitudes more will be betrayed, to ruin! how can you justify yourselves in this insensibility? How can you be acquitted of blame, while you neither utter a word nor lift a finger to help on an undertaking that originates in such pure motives, and aims at such a glorious consummation? Your cooperation is needed. Your influence should be thrown on the right side. Now it is given against the reform of social abuses and the removal of the maladies which have affected not only the surface, but the very constitution of society; for your passive resistance has the effect of active opposition. It is interpreted by many as disapproval of the principles and measures involved in this enterprise. It discourages many who are desirous to do right. It emboldens many who are willing to do wrong. You incur a fearful responsibility by the course which you pursue. Do not consent to bear such a responsibility. For your own sake, cast it from you. For the sake of those whom you love, cast it from you. For the sake of your fellow-citizens, for the sake of coming generations who will feel the influence transmitted from the present time, cast it from you. Oh men of business, men of leisure, scholars, merchants, politicians, ye whose opinions are quoted, whose example is followed! say not that you will leave this cause in the hands of others who understand it better or can manage it better than you. No, they cannot understand it better than you,—you, the intelligent and the thoughtful. They cannot manage it so well without, as with you,—you, whose words carry a weight of authority, and whose lives act upon the community with a force, which do not belong to those of other men. I plead with you in behalf of weak and failing humanity. I plead with you in the name of Christ and God. I beseech, I conjure you, nay, may I not require you as men of principle and of faith, to place yourselves among the friends of this reform. Deny yourselves the indulgence that may be harmless to you, but becomes a stumbling-block in your brother's way. You cannot doubt the justice of the Apostle's declaration, "It is good neither to eat flesh nor to drink wine, nor anything whereby thy brother stumbleth or is offended or is made weak." Cannot you live up to his rule, "If meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend." I know you can. Be ye the brave and generous disciples of Jesus Christ.

AMIAILITY WITHOUT GODLINESS.—Let us beware then, how we entertain the hope of acceptance before God, either for ourselves, or for those we love, on the ground of an amiable cast of character. We would be far from disparaging those bright pictures of family life, where with affectionate rivalry, all the members vie in the work of making each other happy. Such examples shine as lights in the darkness, and the homes which exhibit them look like cultivated spots redeemed from the vast spiritual waste—faint images of what man might have forever been. Still, we can never allow a man to plead these graceful affections as a reason why he should neglect to seek the great salvation; to set up the exactitude with which he discharges the duties of the second table in extenuation of his deficient obedience to the spiritual requirements of the first. The qualities we speak of may serve for an ornament to religion, but they will not do as a substitute for it. They may dignify the Christian character, but they will not make one. The carved work of the temple would ill suit for a foundation; and the reed, which bows gracefully to the passing wind, will pierce the hand that makes it its support and staff. "These things oughtest thou to have done," we would say to one of this estimable class, "and not have left the other undone." Moore's Sermons.

Printed for the Committee of THE MONTREAL UNITARIAN SOCIETY: AND PUBLISHED MONTHLY. ROSSIGNOL AND MANTO, PRINTERS.