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UNITARIANISM IN THE UNITED STATES.*

BY REV. JOHN PARKMAN.

THE correct answer to the enquiry, What is the numerical strength of Unitarianism? would be this. The religious body in the United States composed of those who do not receive the doctrine of the Trinity, i. e. the "Christians," the "Universalists," the "Hicksite Quakers," and the "Unitarians," have about twenty-eight hundred societies, and twenty-three hundred ministers. To represent the number of "Unitarian" societies in the United States as giving the strength of Unitarianism, is somewhat as if we should estimate the statistics of Trini-

* We have a strong repugnance to the parade by any religious body of its deeds, numbers, or influence, yet there are times when self-vindication, and justice to the public, alike require that some word should be uttered to counteract misrepresentation. M. Grandpierre, a French clergyman, made a brief visit to the United States some time ago, and on his return to France, in writing his impressions thereof, he rendered a very mistaken account of Unitarianism. His statements on this head are reviewed at length in the last number of the Boston *Christian Examiner*, from which we extract a few pages for the information of our readers.—ED. LIB. CHRISTIAN.

tarianism by the number of the "Congregationalists" in New England. The extent of Unitarianism thus viewed is remarkable, when we consider that, forty years ago Trinitarianism was not avowedly repudiated in more than twenty churches throughout the whole country. The whole number of Unitarian societies — using the term in its distinctive sense — is about 275. Of these, 162 are in Massachusetts, and 22 in Boston. M. Grandpierre says, "They have only a few churches, in Cambridge, Boston, and in one or two other cities of the Union." Maine has 15, New Hampshire 13, New York 13, Illinois 9. In all the Slave States together there are 6, or at most but 7, churches. That this enumeration fully satisfies sectarian pride, or even reasonable hopes and expectations disconnected with mere sectarian considerations, cannot be affirmed. Still, even in these facts there is much which we may regard with a justifiable complacency.

"Only in Massachusetts are the Unitarians numerous," is often contemptuously said. Those who will examine the statistics of this State, not only with reference to the number of Unitarian churches, but also to the number of schools and benevolent and literary associations found there, — those who know the spirit of her people, and what she has done and is doing for the promotion of all worthy objects, — those who have compared her with other communities in respect to all that constitutes the true glory of a state, — those who consider these things will not count it a small praise that "only in Massachusetts Liberal Christianity has exerted a leading influence during the last thirty years." Further, we are willing to admit, without feeling much chagrin, that Unitarianism has made but very little progress in new States where

the work of education is in its infancy, or where "Judge Lynch" holds his courts; and that the same is true of older communities, where repudiation and slavery exist side by side with the most intense bigotry and the most ultra Orthodoxy. Unitarianism and slavery, especially, seem uncongenial. The fact that there are two hundred and sixty-eight societies in the Free States, and only six or seven in the Slave States, is a significant one. Equally noteworthy are the facts, that in the pulpits of two of these societies their ministers were not allowed to preach, because they believed with Dr. Channing in respect to slavery; and that in one of them there still ministers a clergyman who was till lately the editor of the only anti-slavery paper in the Slave States. Parisian readers of M. Grandpierre's statements, of the Calvinistic school, who share the enthusiasm awakened by the French translation of "Uncle Tom," should bear in mind that, in the States where the scene of that story is laid, Orthodoxy reigns almost supreme. In Virginia, one of the largest States of the Union, which has recently imprisoned and fined a Christian woman for teaching slaves to read the Bible, there is but a single Unitarian society, that at Wheeling.

Besides our societies, there are other religious organizations among us, which, though we cannot look upon the amount of their zeal and efficiency with entire satisfaction, are nevertheless doing much good. They prove, to say the least, that Unitarianism is not quite dead.

"The Unitarian Association," in addition to what it has already done, shows signs of vitality such as it has not before exhibited. A new impulse appears to have been given to its activity by its recently appointed General Secretary. In its efforts to extend the circulation of the

writings of eminent Liberal Christians, it has been, during the last year, peculiarly successful.

In addition to the "Unitarian Association," there are several societies moving in a humbler sphere, yet not without useful results. "The Society for promoting the Gospel among the Indians and others in North America" contributes, yearly, sums from fifty to two hundred dollars in amount, to the support of each of several missionaries among the Oneida, St. Regis, Marshpee, and Herring Pond Indians, and also among those at Martha's Vineyard, and gives similar aid to preachers laboring in eight other destitute places among fishermen and borderers. The "Massachusetts Evangelical Missionary Society," not sectarian, but under the influence of Liberal Christians, "The Society for promoting Theological Education," "The Society for promoting Christian Knowledge, Piety, and Charity," "The Children's Missionary Society," "The Society for the Relief of Aged and Destitute Clergymen," founded 1849,—all of these are efficient agencies of Christian benevolence among us. The Massachusetts Bible Society is supported by all the sects, and Unitarians contribute to its funds, and are always represented in its government.

Eight periodicals are not a small number for a denomination so small as ours.

The Cambridge Theological School has averaged more students during the last ten years than it ever did before. In addition to the twenty-seven who are under education there at the present time, there are twenty-six theological students at Meadville, so that there are about twice as many persons preparing for the ministry under the auspices of a liberal theology as there were eight or ten years ago.

The strength and influence of Unitarianism cannot, however, be estimated by such statistics as these. Its practical effects enter also into the question. Whatever may be said by friends, as well as by opponents, about our short-comings, the practical and indirect effects of Unitarianism are not such as authorize the terms of disparagement sometimes applied to the "narrow influence and small results of the Unitarian movement." To some of these practical effects we propose now to refer. One important class of these has reference, not only to the number of noble and beneficent enterprises which Liberal Christians have supported and fostered, but to those which they have originated. It is not necessary to exaggerate the importance of individuals, who usually are acted upon by influences around, who anticipate others less than is commonly supposed, in order to rightly appreciate those who are regarded as the founders of reformatory beneficent institutions. The Liberal party has furnished, to say the least, its full proportion to their ranks. Dr. Worcester gave birth to Peace Societies. The Temperance movement derived its first impulse from a body of men the majority of whom were of our faith. We do not disparage other sects or other men when we say, that to Horace Mann, now President of Antioch College, the first Secretary of the Board of Education in Massachusetts, and to Edmund Dwight, the cause of elevated education in New England owes its first impulse. The first State Reform School in Massachusetts for the instruction and employment of boys traces its origin to one holding our views, the late Theodore Lyman. The first Institution for the Blind in Massachusetts was established and richly endowed by Hon. Thomas H. Perkins, and until this day

remains under the charge of Dr. Howe, well known in Europe, as in this country, as the friend and advocate of every good cause. Nor are these the only Unitarians towards whom the blind have reason to be grateful. "Of the institution for the instruction of the blind in Philadelphia," Mr. John Vaughan, an eminent and zealous Unitarian (says his biographer,) was emphatically the founder.

Miss D. L. Dix, who has spent several years in visiting prisons, and who, by her memorials addressed to different State legislatures, has procured the erection of several State lunatic asylums, was the personal friend of Dr. Channing and a member of his church. The first asylum of the kind for superannuated sailors will owe its origin to a large sum recently left, to accumulate for twenty years, by one of our faith.*

The first Sunday School in New England was that commenced in Beverly, Mass., in 1810, by two young women, and subsequently merged in the Sunday school connected with Rev. Dr. Abbot's society. The first one established in Boston was in connection with the Rev. Dr. Lowell's society, in 1812. Both of these, as well as one at Cambridgeport, connected with the church of Rev. Mr. Gannett, preceded the first Sunday school established by the Trinitarians of "Christ Church," which was instituted in 1815.

To the Unitarian body belongs, especially, the honor of having originated and established the Ministry at Large. On the 5th of November, 1826, Dr. Tuckerman entered on the duties of what he called the Mission to the Poor in Boston. December 2d, 1826, "in a painter's loft, un-

* The late Hon. Robert G. Shaw, of Boston, who made provision in his will that in 20 years the sum of \$400,000, or thereabouts, should be available for, and appropriated to, this noble purpose.---ED. L. C.

der naked beams, surrounded by plain walls, the wind whistling through the casements, he preached his first sermon," to a mere handful of hearers. At the end of a year he had made nineteen hundred visits; and one hundred and seventy poor families were connected with him as their minister. In six months more, two hundred poor families stood to him in this relation. Not until several years afterwards was there in the United States any institution like that which he thus founded.

Nor need we go back to the past to see that Unitarianism has some vitality.

The religious instrumentalities now existing and employed by Unitarians present many encouraging features. Our Sunday schools will compare advantageously with those of other bodies, in all respects. They are considered as necessary auxiliaries to our religious societies.

In 1845, Mr. George Channing, the Domestic Missionary of the American Unitarian Association, estimated the whole number of Sunday-school scholars in our body to be 27,000; and of teachers, 4,800.

The ministry to the poor is still in successful operation. Established, as we have seen, by Dr. Tuckerman, in 1826, it immediately awakened interest in our body, and when its founder left for Europe, on account of his impaired health, it was taken charge of by the "Benevolent Fraternity of Churches." Since that period, the spacious brick chapel in Pitts Street, that in Warren Street, and the stone chapel in Suffolk Street have been erected by this association of Unitarians.

The Suffolk Street Chapel was built at a cost of \$15,000. Eleven different clergymen of our faith have for longer or shorter periods been employed in this service.

The children who have been connected with the Warren Street Chapel alone number about seven thousand, almost entirely of the poorer classes. The number of families connected at the present time with the two other chapels is five hundred.

Unitarians are sometimes reproached for the backwardness which they manifest in comparison with members of other sects, when appeals for pecuniary aid in behalf of worthy objects are made. Though we must regret that they have not done more this way, still the degree of failure and lack here is often greatly overstated. However difficult it may have been in some cases to raise even comparatively small sums for particular objects, however provoking such failure often is, we are confident that the pecuniary liberality of Liberal Christians, in Boston and New York, towards worthy enterprises, is not behind that shown by the members of other sects. To prove this, we need not point solely to Harvard University, as having received from this source, in forty years, over one million and a half of dollars; to the "Cooper Institute," endowed by one "Liberal Christian" to the amount of some three hundred and forty thousand dollars; to the Lawrence Scientific School, endowed by Hon. Abbott Lawrence, also a Unitarian, with a sum equal to one hundred thousand dollars; to the Lowell Lectures, — that most excellent investment for two hundred and fifty thousand dollars; or to many public institutions besides, associated with the names of Gore and Dane and Smith and Eliot and Thorndike and Lyman and Appleton and Lawrence and Grinnell and Graham and Munson and Perkins and Lowe and Brooks. We believe that the large benevolence associated with the names of these more conspic-

uous enterprises and men is largely imitated in less signal connections. There is scarcely a benevolent enterprise of any description, in any place where our faith is prevalent, which would not be seriously crippled were aid from its adherents withdrawn or withheld. Perhaps no better proof of the prominence of Unitarians in all benevolent enterprises could be offered, than that given by a glance over the list of officers of benevolent societies in Boston. Looking over a list of such which was published in 1848, without the slightest reference to such a conclusion, we find that, out of twenty-six charitable institutions of Boston, not connected with sectarian objects, fourteen, and possibly fifteen, have the office of their President filled by a Unitarian. There are not more than two or three, at the most, which do not count among their other officers those of "the sect everywhere spoken against," — sometimes "spoken against" because of its supposed bad tendencies practically upon the community.

The number of eminent men, public characters, writers, and others, who have adopted our views, has also an indirect bearing on our subject. Among those who have held high offices under our government, are three Presidents (including Mr. Fillmore,) Christopher Gore, Commissioner under Jay's Treaty, Samuel Dexter, Secretary of the Treasury, appointed in 1800, Daniel Webster, Secretary of State, and Messrs. Wheaton, Everett, Bancroft, and Lawrence, who have represented our country abroad. The late Chief Justices Parsons and Parker of Massachusetts, and Eddy of Rhode Island, and Judges Story and Wayne, of the United States Supreme Court, were Unitarians. Chief Justice Cranch, of the United States Circuit Court, and Judge Curtis of the United States

Supreme Court, are also of our faith ; and the same is true of Judges Parker and Jeremiah Smith of New Hampshire, and of Judge Gilchrist of the same State.

The two Senators of Massachusetts in our national Congress are Unitarians, and so were their immediate predecessors. The office of Governor of Massachusetts, for the last thirty-eight years, has been held by Unitarians twenty-seven years. Of the *thirteen* judges of the Supreme Court and Court of Common Pleas of Massachusetts, seven are Unitarians.

Among the eminent writers (omitting the large number of clergymen of our faith who have distinguished themselves as theological writers) may be mentioned, in the department of history and biography, Belknap, Tudor, Prescott, Bancroft, Sparks, Quincy, F. Parkman ; in jurisprudence and politics, Fisher Ames, Webster, Sullivan, Nathan Dane, Judge Story, John Q. Adams ; in poetry, Bryant, Longfellow, Sprague, Pierpont, Lowell, Tuckerman ; in science, Bowditch, Dr. Prince of Salem, Pierce, Farrar ; in elegant literature and criticism, Ticknor, the Everetts, William Ware, Prof. Browen, George W. Curtis, Hilliard, and most of the leading writers in the North American Review since its commencement. To this enumeration may be added various female writers, such as Miss Sedgwick, Mrs. Follen, Mrs. Child, Mrs. Butler, Mrs. T. Lee, Mrs. G. Lee, Mrs. Gilman, Mrs. Kirkland, etc.

The weak point in the benevolence of Liberal Christians undoubtedly is, that they have not given (compared with other religious bodies) so liberally towards objects distinctively religious, as they have towards other objects. It must be granted that there is some reason for this

charge, and yet we suspect that, if all the sums given to importunity in aid of religious objects not exclusively Unitarian were added to those which many of our brethren contribute from time to time towards the building of distant churches, the deficit would be very much less than it appears. The want of interest which our body has shown in the two fields of religious effort occupied by our theological school at Cambridge and the Unitarian Association, is much to be deplored. A Liberal Christian, who thinks of the field already ripe for the harvest, which nothing but denominational supineness, excusing itself oftentimes on the poor plea of dread of sectarianism, has prevented us from reaping, — cannot but wonder that these organizations have been so often allowed to languish on this account; yet the whole truth should be stated. Neither the Unitarian Association nor our theological schools have been fostered as they should have been. Still, the one has received from Unitarians, since 1825, \$202,314, or an average of over \$7,000 annually, enabling it to employ 212 missionaries, and to print 20,000,000 pages of tracts; and one of the schools has been aided to the amount of \$90,000 or \$100,000; the Meadville theological institution receiving about \$40,000 in addition.

The general view of the bearing of all these instrumentalities, influences, and facts on our condition and prospects as a religious body, does not authorize the disparagement with which the power and influence of Unitarianism are sometimes spoken of, neither is it discouraging. As regards this latter point, nothing is more apparent than the tone of increased confidence prevalent at this time in our ranks. It contrasts very much with that which was manifested only two or three years ago. Our

outward condition on the whole justifies it. Our churches in Boston, though much affected by the removal of parishioners into the country, and diminished in number by the loss of one church edifice, under the operation of somewhat similar circumstances which have caused to our Orthodox brethren the loss within a few years of three of theirs, are, with scarcely a single exception, in a more prosperous state than they have been for a long time ; and the same is true, we believe, almost universally, of the churches throughout New England. In distant places our cause is advancing. The societies at Chicago and Detroit, for some time languishing, bid fair to emulate those at Buffalo and Syracuse and St. Louis. In San Francisco the Unitarian society is quite promising. In the State of New York, all our societies, with scarcely an exception, are increasing largely. Within a very brief period two new societies have been established in the immediate vicinity of the city of New York ; and since we commenced this article, we have heard of another having been gathered in Jersey City. Those already existing in New York and Brooklyn now number larger congregations, and exert a wider influence, than at any former time.

No act falls fruitless ; none can tell
How vast its power may be ;
Nor what results enfolded dwell
Within it, silently.

THE PERSONALITY OF GOD.

BY REV. J. J. TAYLER.

IF we confine our thoughts to the fixed and uniform order of phenomena which act on the senses — we not only see God *in* all things — which is a Scriptural idea — but we are borne unconsciously to a conclusion which goes beyond it; we identify all things *with* God, and look upon ourselves as a part of Him. If we add to this view, the profounder consciousness of our spiritual activity and personal responsibility, which is its needful complement — and which has a yet stronger expression in Scripture — the latter inference is checked, for we then recognise all things — ourselves included — as dependent on God, yet distinct from Him — subsisting indeed through his ever-present energy, but under such conditions of limitation, as must separate by an insurmountable barrier every thing created from the absolute perfection of his own Infinitude. In tracing to its legitimate consequences the idea of fundamental power from these opposite data, we reach the point of vital separation between the pantheistic and the monotheistic conception of the universe. A different interpretation of the same phenomena, will cause a momentous difference in the conclusion. According as we take consciousness, intelligence, will — in one word — Spirit — to be only the last result of the progressive development of things, or to be itself, in its absolute state, the source and regulating principle of the entire system — the most recent effect in the order of creation, or the fundamental agency which underlies all creation's energies and manifestations — we lapse into virtual atheism,

or we come to a clear acknowledgment of the Living God.

A vital question, then, is involved in the right apprehension of what is called the personality of God. This doctrine, truly conceived, stands in the central point, from which opinion has constantly diverged, on one hand, into *anthropomorphism* which degrades the Almighty into a mere exaggeration of human passions and infirmities — and, on the other, into *pantheism* which evaporates Deity into an abstraction, or reduces it to an unintelligent and incomprehensible force. Each of these extreme tendencies is at war with a healthy reason, and destructive of genuine religion: but we must not on that account include in indiscriminating censure, all the individuals who may from various causes have been more or less carried away by them. All errors that have had extensive currency among earnest and thoughtful men, are allied to some truth, and were originally designed to correct some excess or meet some want of the spiritual nature. In the action and re-action which mark the progress of ideas, doctrines mischievous in their remoter consequences, may help to qualify too strong a tendency in the opposite direction, and so adjust the final balance of opinion. Meanwhile, the calm and dispassionate mind, observing how these divergencies successively compensate each other, is confirmed in its attachment to the great central truths whose fixed influence and controlling attraction are equally indicated by them all. In pronouncing judgment, therefore, on an individual, it is not fair to allege even the undeniable consequences of his opinions, if we have reason to think, that he did not anticipate them. We must ask what his Past has been — and what his Present

was: in them we can often find the determining impulse of a man's peculiar opinions. Perhaps he was so absorbed by the desire of counteracting evils and errors, which he daily felt and saw in strong operation around him,—that he hardly carried forward his thoughts into the Future at all. The impassioned anthropomorphism which mingled such exciting elements with the religious agency of Zinzendorf and Wesley — is entitled at least to a lenient construction, when we remember the cold and powerless rationalism which it strove to overcome. Nor again is it surprising, that men so profoundly meditative as Spinoza — so ardent in speculation as Lessing — so refined, subtile and comprehensive as Schleiermacher — disgusted with the gross and heavy orthodoxy of their day, and earnestly aspiring after a higher spirituality — should have rarefied their conception of God, till substance and vitality — all that we can realise to ourselves as a Living Personality — vanished away. It is impossible to doubt the pious feeling and serious purpose of all these men. Such considerations, however, should not blind us to the pernicious tendency of errors which their genius and virtues have invested with a kind of moral respectability. Only let us spare the persons, while we attack the thing.

We put ourselves in the right position for apprehending the idea of the Divine Personality, when we set out from the first and nearest of all realities — our own spiritual consciousness — and think of God, as a kindred nature — a Conscious Mind. All that we mean by the Personality of God, is included in an adequate conception of Mind. From Mind we acquire the notions of will, power, origination. But mere power left to itself would be a lawless and destructive force. From an inherent necessity, there-

fore, in mental action, we are compelled to assume the co-existence with Power, of other attributes to impel and guide it. These we express by the terms — Goodness and Wisdom — which embrace together all the moral and all the intellectual perfections of the Sovereign Spirit. As we are conscious, that our own errors and vices proceed from passions, infirmities and fears which are incidental to our limited nature, but from which He whose nature is without limit, must be free — we hesitate not to speak of God as absolutely without imperfection, and we ascribe to Him boundless Power, unerring Wisdom, infinite Love. These three great attributes of Power, Wisdom, Goodness, present themselves to us as necessary conditions of the existence and operations of the highest Mind — the absolute Being. Assume one of these attributes, and it will involve the co-existence of the other two. Admit flaw or deficiency in any one, and it will disturb its relations with the rest, and draw after it a dissolution of that harmony and self-consistency of action which is the basis of our reliance on the order and perpetuity of the universe.

Among the powers appertaining to the unsearchable essence of God, we must include that of limiting the outgoings of his own creative energy — of arranging and distributing creation in endless gradations of life and faculty — of imparting to the race which he has placed at the head of the visible scale, some portion of his own spiritual consciousness and freedom — and of allowing them within certain bounds, through the mysterious endowment of will, to act in independence of Himself. Within these bounds lies the choice of Right and Wrong — with its effects on the moral condition of the agent — and the liberty implied in that choice, of voluntarily ap-

proximating to God or withdrawing from Him. It is in this highest sphere of our existence, where we are conscious of moral distinctions and a spontaneous reverence for what is just and true — that our minds attain the deepest conviction of the Personality of God — that we own Him as a real Being — a living Presence — a sympathising Father and Friend. Our spirits — in this their holiest and most elevated mood — crave intercourse with a kindred Spirit — and believe, it is granted them. They repel it as an impossibility which their inmost nature disavows — that at this most advanced point of their ever-unfolding being, on the dim confines of visible and perishing things, they should at length find themselves lonely and forsaken — placed foremost among creatures, only to feel a more hopeless desolation — with no voice from the infinite Silence, to answer their imploring cries — no breath of responsive Love, to hush the throbbings of the expectant heart and soothe its intense yearnings after sympathy — no witness of a Parent Mind, to which a child's affections may cling, and to which a child's weakness and ignorance may trust itself, in the dread uncertainty which overhangs the Future and the Unseen.

THE CHRISTIAN MIRACLES.

BY REV. C. A. BARTOL.

MUCH scorn has sometimes been expressed at the idea of proving truth by any displays of power. Spiritual things, it is said, must be seen in their own light, and cannot be cleared up by material phenomena. The Christian advocate, however, does not suppose it is the design of the miracles to show the intrinsic credibleness or lay

bare the ultimate basis of any intellectual propositions, but to seal and certify their origin. They do not so much establish the truth as defend it; and, like sentinels posted at a treasure-house, protect all the teachings and precepts with which they are connected. They repel the attacks of human speculation, coming without heavenly warrant; like vehicles of celestial make and strength, they carry all that the divine Instructor said along with them through the course of ages, suffering nothing to be lost from their strong and holy girdle; and, while with their sacred charge they marvellously move over the earth and down the track of time, they seem, as from a spirit's tongue, ever echoing forth the declaration, — He that affirmed these principles, and enjoined these commands, had the witness of the Most High with him; the name of God is written on the instrument by which he conveys this wealth of knowledge; returning health and sense and reason are the strong and blessed tokens of his agency; and the image of a broken sepulchre is stamped in the seal of his signature.

We may, in our perversity, forsake the spiritual truth even as thus inclosed and proclaimed. We may choose to go in the ways of error. We may immerse ourselves in matter and material science, till God and heaven disappear; and nothing is left but the ground, with plants and animals, and man as the great animal, upon it. Nevertheless, from the fortifications constructed by an Omnipotent Hand, — wherein they are for ever safely entrenched, — shall be heard, in voucher and protest, these same grand monitions, of a personal Father, a present obligation, and a future account. They cannot, by terrestrial might, be torn from their strong cover: they

cannot be dissipated by neglect, nor feloniously stolen away. Miraculous lines, stronger than squadrons of warlike array or than twelve legions of angels, are a guard around them. System after system of infidelity and corruption has risen and beat upon this environment of rock ; but the celestial fortress, stronger than any rampart against the flood, withstands the deluge of worldly thought and passion ; and a voice from it, as the voice of the Son of God, still rises above the human tempest to declare to all the same everlasting principles : — Your Maker observes you, takes cognizance of your conduct, requires your obedience, stretches out paternal arms that the prodigal may come back to him, and reserves judgment for the impenitent.

Thus framed in adamant, as it were cemented with the stones of which the New Jerusalem is made, for their bulwark, these principles, in solemn adjuration and unceasing repetition, are uttered in our ears. Therefore is the volume of our faith one book, — its leaves not rent, its parts not separated and scattered upon the winds, — because of this unshaken and impenetrable defence. It is by some imagined that the truth and morality of the gospel are things of an undeniable quality, shining always in their own light, which nobody can dispute, which indeed have always been in the world, are old as the creation ; and therefore need no such defence. But the manifold schemes set up in these days, not among mere worldlings, but, under the name of benevolence and the color of social reform, obtaining from many so fond a hearing, appear in conclusive refutation of such a fancy, show very plainly that what is intrinsically certain and immovable may by human folly be gainsaid, and by the murky breath

of human disputation made to tremble, even as the sun and stars will quiver in a passing smoke ; and thus signify how profoundly grateful and loud in our thanksgiving we should be, not only for Christ's instructions, but for his miracles over his instructions placed on guard. Our debt to God is not only for his bestowment of the pearl of great price, but for his sure conservation, in a casket that cannot be broken, of what he has bestowed.

Once more, these extraordinary displays of power in the Christian miracles, to authenticate and hold for ever the message of the divine mind and will, illustrate the enduring interest of God in his human children ; and the crowning miracle of all, in the resurrection of Jesus, is a special assurance of our personal immortality. There is a general kind of immortality of truth and goodness, of which men sometimes speak, with no idea of an individual survival of the grave. It is an immortality in the future like that in the past ; an immortality in which the drop of our existence — which has been for a moment insulated for such achievements of honor and promise — sinks back to the sea from which it rose ; and we ourselves, after we are dead, subside to the condition we were in before we were born, — that unconscious state which David speaks of, when God saw his "unperfect substance." Such an immortality, for the human creature so unreal, has not seldom been represented in the speculations of those who cannot quite conceive that spiritual qualities should perish, or find their house in the grave ; and yet have no distinct belief, that those in whom these qualities have for a passing moment been incarnated and enshrined, shall ever transcend the floods of time, and plant their feet on the shores of eternity. But the immortality which Christ, by

his resurrection, brings to light, is an actual immortality, which, in enjoyment, memory, self-possession, noble effort, and endless progress, God's faithful children shall have in themselves, and of which they shall be for ever sensible. Coming back the same, in character and appearance, that he was before he went, Jesus proved he was not lost in the vagueness and void of the spiritual world ; but could come and go, cross and re-cross the stream, stoop under the arch of the grave, and still keep all that made him himself. This case of his own he applies to his followers. He ties their individual fate to his heavenly fortunes. Those prints of the nails, which he asked Thomas to verify, were not only the sign of his imperishable identity, but the demonstration of our own. To continue the same conscious being and will, this alone is immortality.

I know by some the wish of an eternal continuance is characterized as overweening vanity and the very acme of selfishness. What is the individual, they say, this little personality we are so proud of, that it should be preserved ? I will not answer with the obvious suggestion, that it is the affections which, a thousand-fold more than any proud pretense or vain self-interest, inspire the great hope of enduring after the dissolution of the body. But, above this, nothing in the view of intelligence, or to the common feeling of humanity, is more dear and holy than this very principle of personality. What an illustration of this we ourselves have had ! We have seen, by virtue of it, a single man, destitute and uncultivated, a stranger, a fugitive, and a slave, becoming the centre of universal interest, the most conspicuous object in a nation ; the character and course of statesmen and rulers judged of in reference to him ; all the elements of morals,

and the truths of Christianity, canvassed in their bearing on him ; the grounds of law, and basis of civilization, tried anew in the ascertainment of his rights ; the terms of mutual regard, and esteem of long-trying friends, shaken, or put sharply to the test, in the tug of opinion respecting the disposition to be made of him, because he was by nature a person, and not a thing ; and, in fine, fame blowing her trumpet all abroad about one, who, but for the touching of this question of his poor personality, would have lived the obscurest of the unknown, and, so far as the general regard is concerned, died as a bubble breaks in the air. Or, to show, by another striking instance, this general interest in the personal lot and enduring existence of a fellow-creature, let some adventurous navigator, with his crew, be missed upon the deep ; let gloomy doubt gather about his condition, and over his life ; and the concern for him, instead of diminishing by distance, and fading away with time, shall only wax and widen, till whole nations shall be agitated with sympathy, and moved to laborious effort, and engaged in costly enterprise for his discovery. The benevolent soul of some stranger to him shall pour out treasure like water for his possible relief. Yea, though years may have passed away, and he peradventure be frozen into the dreadful birthplace of the iceberg, or wedged among the glaciers of the land, or the snowy tempest howl over his bones, with no earth for their burial, — successive fleets shall be dispatched into the shadow of the Pole, and, under the long darkness of the arctic night, to hunt for him surviving, or gather up his cold remains. Is not all this a sign of the depth, and a foreshadowing of the destiny, of that personal being, which by Christ's resurrection, is assured in the hope of a limitless

individual existence? Amid the uncertainties and continually hazardous liabilities of an ever-precarious and short-lived existence, the thought of what may be real in a future state ever haunts us. Our doom stands in a winning, yet, to our conscience, fearful glory before us. Ignorant how soon the voyage which we are on shall end, we can scarce fail, from our most busy entanglement, to cast our glance sometimes onward, peering over the horizon of this world. Well indeed is life, in our common speech, described as an ocean. All sudden perils and remediless disasters, as of the sea, are in our path. At any time, the fierce gusts may rise, and drive us to some pitiless fate. In any hour, the lantern of our own wisdom may be quenched in blinding spray from the surges of conflicting human opinions, or the vapors of doubt may obscure our course. On the rocking billows, with the foundations of our bark ever trembling beneath us, shall we not hail the lamp of life shining out of the monument of our Lord's resurrection, and casting steady lustre from the farther coast of his heavenly ascension? As when the waves are up, and the rain descends, and the winds blow and beat, the orders of the pilot, who can guide through the storm and night, are more precious and important than all the strength and wealth and wisdom of the world; so is it with the directions of him who marks the way to eternal life over the great bewildering deep of our present so agitated and mysterious being. Through all the jeopardies of our mortal career, let us obey and follow our great Master, the captain of our salvation; and, exulting even in gloom and tribulation, steer to that haven of rescue and firm ground of boundless advancement, which he has revealed.

GOD IS LOVE.

BY REV. E. H. EDDES.

I SPEAK not poetically or speculatively, but I utter the words of truth and soberness, when I say that the very sufferings and sorrows which so constantly make a part of human condition are, under the guidance of Christianity, and, I would add, under that guidance only, the means of deepening in the heart of the sufferer, and in the very hour of his suffering, the conviction that God is love.

Look at that brightest and purest example of virtue and holiness which the world ever saw, the man Christ Jesus. To him the character of God was revealed as to no other mind. He was in the bosom of the Father, and he stood among men as the manifested presence of Divinity, — “God manifested in the flesh.” Through him comes the true knowledge of God to us. From him may we learn what God is, as we learn by no other medium. And from him, therefore, may we learn the truth that God is love. And we learn it, too, not from the brightness of prosperity, the joy of success; not from those happy circumstances which breathe an atmosphere of gladness around the path of life, and from which this truth would appear to be a natural or inevitable deduction; but we see it shining out from the depths of suffering and anguish. Was not Jesus justly represented as a man of sorrow, and acquainted with grief? Did he not endure through the whole course of his ministry a constant baptism of sorrow — despised and rejected by those whom he came to save, persecuted and reviled by those whom he would bless, and finishing a life of unrequited toil by the tortures of the cross, and the ignominy of a criminal execution?

And what but his heart-belief that God is love sustained him in this pathway of bitterness and grief? How, in all his conflicts, trials, woes, did he go to that God and Father, and pour out his sorrows into that paternal bosom, secure of compassion, support, and relief. And was he not led to this by his perfect knowledge of the love of the Being whom he sought? Thus was his whole life, though passed in the midst of affliction, and trial, and persecution, a constant revelation of the truth, which by his teachings also he sought to confirm, that God is love.

Go, now, into that chamber of sickness, and look at the pale and exhausted sufferer, to whom days of pain and nights of weariness are appointed. The pleasant light of the sun is shut out. The fresh breath of heaven may not enter there. Incurable disease has settled down on the springs of life, and the victim is wasting slowly away. The voice of friendship cannot call back health to that emaciated and weary frame. The kind offices of love cannot still the pains which send anguish through that panting bosom. In vain may human aid be invoked. No relief is hoped for but that which releases from all earthly sorrows. Yet there, to that bed of disease and suffering, would I bid you go to learn the truth that God is love. It beams forth in the calm resignation which utters no murmuring word. It shows itself in that unflinching confidence with which the soul cleaves to its God. It shines out in that pure communion which the trusting spirit holds with the Father of spirits. I ask you not to account for this, but I ask — Is not such the fact? Has it not fallen within the experience of almost all who hear me to have known some such instance, in which the severe suffering of long and helpless sickness has had the effect to rivet

more and more strongly in the sufferer's heart the deep conviction that God is love, — a conviction which no sufferings could shake, but which was the rather held with a closer and firmer grasp amid the accumulation of pain and distress ?

And so, too, is this sentiment felt and cherished by the heart which bereavement has robbed of its loved ones, whose affections, like the broken strings of a sweet-toned instrument, are now shattered and unstrung. O, how do those affections mount upwards from earth, and fix themselves with a pure and eager embrace on Him whose name is Love ! Earth may be a solitude, and the stricken mourner feel desolate and alone even amid the beaming beauties and bounties which may still be left. But, in the belief in a Heavenly Father, and in the consciousness of his presence and love, the solitude of earth is peopled with gladness and joy. The companionship of spirit is still unbroken, though its earthly relations are severed, and in the light of a joyous immortality, and in the consolations of a holy faith, is seen and felt the undoubted truth that God is love.

Now it is not to be questioned that these are among the evils of life, which are apparent objections to this great truth. Yet we see and know that by the holy power of Christianity they may be and are made the surest means of fixing this truth in the heart. Not amid the throngs of the gay, or the homes of the happy in this world, not where the sun of prosperity shines brightest, or where the laughter of merriment is the loudest, would I go to learn the truth that God is love. I ought, I know, to find it there, for I know that the hearts of the happy and the joyful should be lifted in gratitude to God, the giver of good,

and the inspirer of joy. But I also know, that in the government of an infinitely perfect Being there can be no such thing as real evil, and therefore I would turn to those which are called evils, to see if they are not designed to teach the same truth, though by a different process, which ought to be learned from the blessings of life. And I again appeal to my hearers whether the fact is not as I have stated it, — that the evils of life, in the very hour of their endurance, are, under the guidance of Christianity, teachers of the truth that God is love.

But there is another class of evils, which seem still more strongly to oppose this truth. Man is allowed, in the providence of God, to sin, to defile himself with iniquity, to resist, and in some measure to defeat, the designs of infinite wisdom and benevolence for his true welfare. Yet the difficulty presented by this case is rather apparent than real. If it were the appointment of God that a course of sin cut off the transgressor entirely from the divine mercy; if, in other words, there were no such thing as repentance, and the promise of forgiveness to repentance, and a restoration to God's favor, then would this seeming objection be irreconcilable with the truth that God is love. But the representations of the Gospel on this point bring us to the opposite conclusion. They teach us that God ever looks with compassion and pity on those who transgress his laws, and that he is constantly striving by his spirit and providence to bring them back to him in penitence and love. And, indeed, there is no case by which the truth of my text is made more clear and undeniable than in that of the repentant sinner. He is conscious that he has violated the wisest laws; that he has slighted and despised his Maker and Benefactor, from

whom alone he holds his gift of life, and by whose providence all his blessings have been enjoyed. He feels his unworthiness and debasement, and is oppressed by the sense of guilt. But when, from the lowliness of his penitence, he looks upwards to the Being he has offended, he sees as it were a father's face bending over him in mercy; he hears the voice of encouragement and hope; he is received again to that favor which he feared he had forfeited, and with what a blessed experience of its truth does he exclaim, God, thou art love!

Thus do the evils of life, which are apparent objections to this truth, bear their united and strong testimony to its reality. And I have chosen this method of presenting it, because it seems to me to be the most convincing and striking. If the very difficulties which seem to oppose its acknowledgment tend to illustrate and confirm it, who can doubt it? Yet might it be proved, as I have intimated, by a more direct process. It might be shown to beam forth in all the joys of life; to irradiate, as by a sunbeam, all the gladsome scenes of our earthly pilgrimage, and to shine out in bright effulgence over the path to immortality. But wherever and however it may so enter the heart as to mingle with and purify our affections, and elevate and sanctify our sympathy with all that is lovely and good, it will be clung to and cherished as the dearest and most valued of all holy truths. It cannot, indeed, be understood and appreciated by the mind, where the power of Christianity is unheeded and unfelt. Over the troubled waters of the sinful heart the divine spirit must move, or they cannot be stilled to that calmness and clearness in which the image of the God of love may be purely reflected.

THE WAVERING MIND.

ANONYMOUS.

THE moral indecision manifested by so many minds cannot fail to be hateful to God. No father can delight, or ever did delight, in a child who loved what he had forbidden more than it loved him ; who by deliberately preferring it over and over again, rejected that favor which is life to the childlike heart. This thought is too obvious to be dwelt upon. Our own souls rise up in rebellion against our spiritual hesitancy. Our own experience of life most manifestly condemns us.

Let us come to something yet more definite. God can never give more satisfactory evidence than that truth is true which we now tamper with and virtually reject. No new prophet, no higher miracle, no farther revelation, no added resurrection, can now come to quench your doubts, and end your delays. All you can have, you already have. Yes, more now, than will be yours in this life again. That old man, still pausing on the river's bank, and looking over wishfully into the flowery Canaan where he had always meant his feet should walk, — can he have stouter heart or firmer purpose, quicker conscience, or diviner appeal? No; oh no! Imperceptibly will decay spread over his faculties, his memory will give up one golden link after another, his reason will mourn because the locks of its strength are gone; in the infancy of all the rest, his passions and prejudices will hold him with a giant's grasp. And how dare he say he shall be permitted another season of worship with the people of God? Who has insured him another call to that Table which commemorates the dying love of the best friend humanity

ever had? His heart hourly grows cold beneath a heavy load of discontent; his trembling steps drag heavily on; at last, in some least expected hour, he vanishes, hardly able with his last breath to invoke a mercy he never sought, or utter that name of tender assurance,—strange to his heart and stranger still to his lips,—God, my FATHER!

Better, far better, to decide any way, to hear the voice, “No man can serve two masters.” “Go and sell all that thou hast.” “He that will not forsake all he hath cannot be my disciple.” Give an unlimited preference to duty over every earthly interest, and settle the question at once and forever. While the heart is quick, the aspiration fervent, the conscience living, and the will not finally fixed—then decide for or against God, for or against the soul. With a *resolved* mind, God and providence, the ministry of Christ and social influences, can work. With a wavering spirit they can neither do nor hope anything. The firmest granite they can build up or wash away, but the shifting sea-shore sand, the drifting cloud, the passing vapor, the restless wave, the flitting autumn leaf, they can neither build up nor tear away. And remember, while you hesitate, God may decide. While you deliberate, the time for resolve may pass away irrevocably, as with the old man in the story. You may be cut down as a cumberer of the ground before another spring. Death may give in the judgment life would not. The opening of the book of judgment, if not of the sealed book of duty, may determine the great—ay, the greatest question. The gates of the unchangeable future may slowly, silently unfold, to take in the lingerer at the threshold of life!

My brother! hear me. Let this matter now be settled.

For your peace, for your soul, for your God, I pray it. Make up your mind, this only time that is certainly yours, to be all or to be nothing, and then calmly face the result. It is time we were men in these things; no longer wavering like infant children between this toy and that. Let us manfully determine the most momentous matter the human mind has to determine; which determines all things else through all the ages of conscious being, which God has honored us more by giving to our free choice than if he had taken counsel with us in the creation of worlds. If Jesus be the true guide, follow him. If God be the worthy object of worship, love, adore, obey. If heaven be the only rest, the everlasting hope, the perfect realization of longings we hardly dare to breathe, seek that. Let nothing turn you aside. Pray for, care for, live for nothing else. Move on, unterrified, unallured, unslumbering, unwearied, as the gallant Red Cross Knight pressed on through cunning enemies and treacherous friends, through perils by sea and perils by land, to deliver the ancient City of God from the profane foot of the Infidel. Give yourself fearlessly to the work, as the ancient Jew went up from every abode of his race through storm and sunshine, through foe and brother, through threat and seduction to the Holy Hill where was the shrined presence of his God.

INTELLIGENCE.

WESTERN UNITARIAN CONFERENCE.—The Annual Conference of the Western Unitarian Churches was held in Louisville, Kentucky, commencing on Thursday, the 11th May, lasting five days, and passed off to the entire satis-

faction and edification of all persons present or concerned. There were in all one hundred and thirty delegates, lay and clerical, present. In addition, there was a delegation from the American Unitarian Association, and other friends from the eastern part of the Union, besides representatives from the Meadville Theological School, and the Christian denomination. From the reports given from all the sources represented, it was very evident that, during the year, Liberal Christianity had made rapid progress along the gigantic water courses and across the broad prairies of the beautiful western land. New missionary fields are constantly opening, and notwithstanding several young men have settled in the west during the year, there is a constant and largely increasing demand for more ministers. The discourses delivered by Rev. Drs. Gilman, Farley, and Hill; and Rev. Messrs. Osgood and Bellows, were received with deep interest by large audiences, and attracted the attention of many persons beyond the limits of our body in Louisville to hear them. As the report of the Conference is to be printed, but little notice has been given of it in the papers, so we are unable to give any statistics of the strength of the body in the west. By the Treasurer's Report, it appears that they have risen from the sum of \$994, the amount of the first year's subscription in the churches for the objects of the Conference, to more than \$3,400 during the second year. This is one of the hopeful indications of the increasing progress of Liberal Christianity in the West. Nor does this sum include large amounts given to Alton, Ill., or the astounding liberality of our St. Louis brethren, who have raised the magnificent endowment of \$43,000 for a classical school and college in that growing city of an unimagined future. The cause of Liberal Christianity never stood so well as at the present moment in these Western States, and they are now entering on a series of effective measures that will show better results in time to come than have been witnessed in any previous period.