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REPORT
OF THE
THIRD MEETING
OF THE
NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF UNITARIAN
AND OTHER
CHRISTIAN CHURCHES,
HELD IN NEW YORK, N. Y., OCTOBER 7-8-9, 1868.
TOGETHER WITH THE
CONFERENCE SERMON,
THE
CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS OF THE CONFERENCE,
AND A
LIST OF THE ACCREDITED DELEGATES.

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THE SERMON

PREACHED IN THE CHURCH OF THE MESSIAH, NEW YORK,
ON THE EVENING BEFORE THE FORMAL
MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE.

BY REV. HENRY W. BELLOWS, D. D.

Now, therefore, ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord. In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the spirit.

EPHESIANS ii. 19-22.

I put these words at the head of my discourse, not as a text which I am about to unfold, but as a motto, fitly indicating the spirit and the direction of what I have to say. The body we represent is not one of strangers and foreigners in the kingdom of God; but one claiming fellow-citizenship with the saints and to be of the household of God—built on Jesus Christ the chief corner-stone. And it is of our duties and dangers and opportunities as one of the buildings which needeth to be fitly framed, that it may grow together unto a holy temple in the Lord, that I shall, I fear, at too great length and with too little wisdom, speak to you now.

I am about to speak of the interests and duties of a special religious denomination, and to speak of it under its distinctive name as an ecclesiastical and a Christian body, and in doing this I feel at once how much of the most earnest and aspiring sentiment of our day is opposed to special distinctions; opposed to any attempts to distinguish religious interests and common and universal

interests ; opposed to separating Christian truth from other truth, theology from philosophy, revelation from intuition. It would be in vain to deny that the tendency to find a common key to all religions, a common base for all systems of faith, is a noble zeal, and one which has enlarged religious thinking, and aided to disclose the true significance of Christianity. And certainly any denominational or sectarian plans which are not looking towards the final unity of the Church, and are not in the interests of that unity, would be unworthy a ministry as broad, a laity as enlightened as ours, — besides being destined early to lose the sympathy of thinking people. I will go further and declare that any religious platform or theory of church organization which does not include toleration and protection for all the rights and all the interests of human nature and human life ; which does not in its theory cover in and provide for the harmony of human faculties and human tastes ; the reconciliation of freedom with obedience ; of self-culture with self-forgetfulness ; of allegiance to God and duty, with free play of reason and spontaneous thought ; of respect for what is fixed and eternal, with allowance for flux and change ; of the claims of the life that now is with that which is to come ; of duty and pleasure, body and soul, sense and spirit, — is a platform and an organization which cannot long hold together, and which presents no better claims than those we have all been compelled to abandon. It is the unconscious tendency to a union of things long held antagonistic and irreconcilable, which has produced the various bodies of Liberal Christians all the world over. That is what Liberal Christianity means, a Christianity liberal to human nature, its culture, its essential

and manifold wants and aptitudes, inclusive of the whole area of humanity, starting from a religious centre, but with a circumference encircling the most outlying wants or capacities of the race. And above all Christian bodies that have a name, the Unitarian has distinguished itself by its unitary sweep of all that is human into relation with all that is divine. It is the harmonizing of religion and philosophy, self-culture and worship, faith and reason, of Hebrew awe and moral rule with Hellenic illumination and intellectuality, which gives us our only claim to the special following of an age in which the Bible and universal literature are in most Christian sects trying to fight each other down; science and faith are at a dead-lock, and the Church and the world in irreconcilable theoretical hostility but in practical and illicit compromise, instead of lawful union and open peace. I could with the greatest relish use every moment of this opportunity in proving the urgent need and anticipating the gracious rewards of our Liberal Christian Church,—considered only in the character in which I have now described it. But I have an humbler, and, I think, a more useful^d duty to perform. I assume that this is the understood character of the Unitarian body. And that we need more now to see what its relations are historically to existing church organizations and to the Church itself; what it is, not in its abstract, but its concrete character; how it came, where it is, and how it can use its denominational and its Christian position to the best advantage; how strengthen its influence, and confirm its life and sway.

I propose, then, in the following discourse to consider the present position and immediate duties and opportu-

nities of the Unitarian body in America. I see before me the delegates of churches, connected, for the most part, directly with the Unitarian denomination, and a few, perhaps, not thus immediately associated, but representing churches willing to co-operate with them. I will not assume that the Convention which assembles to-morrow has no aims and duties except those of promoting the growth and efficiency of the Unitarian denomination, nor that the only bond which binds the Convention together is a denominational one. The change made at Syracuse in the name and style of the Conference, declaring it to be the "National Conference of Unitarian and other Christian Churches," forbids that assumption. It expresses the desire and purpose of the Conference to invite the sympathy and co-operation of all Christian churches, agreeing with the Unitarian body in the great principles of congregational independence and individual liberty of conscience. None can be more willing or more glad than I am to have the presence and co-operation of other Christian churches in the National Conference. Yet I do not suppose that these other Christian churches expect, or will claim the right of demanding, that the Unitarian churches, the overwhelming majority in the Conference, will suppress or make light of their Unitarianism, or will cease to consider the first duty of the Conference to be the consideration of the interests and duties of that body. If they did not believe in the Christian worth and importance of the Unitarian denomination, they would not associate themselves with us, nor should we wish their co-operation.

We opened our doors to them, not in the expectation that any great number of Christian churches

outside the Unitarian body would desire to act with us, but to afford a shelter and offer a fellowship to those exceptional churches, which, being cut off by their greater love of liberty from other Christian bodies, desired to deliver themselves from a painful isolation, and to enjoy the privileges of a broader communion and a recognized sympathy. Should it prove at any time that the number of churches thus disposed is large enough to make the National Conference one in which the representatives of other denominations equal or exceed those from the Unitarian body, it would unquestionably change the position and duties of the Conference. It would then be obliged, by the inevitable vote of the delegates, who unquestionably have equal rights in the Convention, to confine itself to those questions which are of like importance to all Christians — whether Trinitarian or Unitarian, free Methodist or Orthodox Congregational, Universalist or Baptist — who might choose to accept the call of the Conference; and it would, as a matter of course, drop denominational questions and interests, and consider only those duties and measures which Christians, united only in the love of liberty and a Christian fellowship raised above all dogmatic and ecclesiastical distinctions, could agree in thinking important and obligatory. For the sake of such a fellowship, and to emphasize so glorious and so useful a truth or principle as a Christian co-operation based only on the confession of a Christian spirit and common Christian ends, without reference to dogmatic agreement, I should be willing to see the denominational character of this Conference, with all the duties and methods specially obligatory upon Unitarian churches, entirely forgotten. But it

would then be incumbent upon the Unitarian denomination to create another National Conference in which its special and peculiar duties could be discussed, its own denominational business done, and the diffusion of its own theological opinions, and the planting, increase and efficiency of its own churches looked after. But the beauty and worth of a broad church organization, a wide Christian sympathy and a willingness to co-operate for universal Christian ends, are by few of us based on the assumed worthlessness of distinctive theological or Christian opinions, or, what is almost the same thing, the equal value and truth of all creeds or symbols. There are general principles of agreement — such as the right of private judgment, the love of truth and devotion to the service of God and man, or reverence for the spirit and character of Jesus Christ — which unite all those who avow and trust in them, and which are worthy of the best organization of which they admit.

But these particular principles are not honored most by those who deny or belittle the existence of distinctions or discriminations in regard either to dogmatic opinions or ecclesiastical methods. We judge that those who emphasize theological opinions or ecclesiastical methods to the extent of denying the Christian name or a Christian fellowship to those, who, however clear their Christian spirit and profession may be, refuse to accept their distinctive opinions and methods, are narrow and to that extent unchristian, and that their exclusiveness is unjustifiable and injurious. But a zeal for distinctive opinions or methods, which is combined with charity for those who think other opinions more Scriptural or more sound, and other methods wiser and better, is surely

worthy of all praise ; and, however earnest and persistent, does not involve any unchristian narrowness or exclusiveness. In short, charity, in its ecclesiastical sense, is an impossible grace towards those with whom we wholly agree. Those who attach little or no importance to their own distinctive ideas or methods, cannot do honor to the great principle of toleration, or even advance the dominion of a broader sympathy and fellowship. It is the agreement in still greater things of those who differ in many important ways, that lends its true triumph to Christian communion.

It will not be forgotten that many of the Orthodox sects in this country, who are actively devoted to their denominational interests and advancement, are also united in evangelical alliances for common objects. I have never heard that those alliances were able to accomplish much for those general objects ; but they certainly have never demanded or wished for less activity in their component parts. Presbyterians, Baptists, Methodists, Lutherans, have not ceased to be less zealous within their own ranks, because of the possibility of a wider fellowship with each other, nor have any of them hoped to accomplish the ends of their denominational existence by the creation of wider organizations, or expected to sacrifice their denominational methods and opinions for the sake of a broader co-operation. I presume, indeed, that it has been their experience that even their common ends were most rapidly and efficiently advanced by the humble but the more definite and practical instrumentality of an independent and restricted denominational zeal and activity ; and that the utmost their evangelical alliances could do was to emphasize by

a few great meetings and manifestoes the lofty sentiments of that larger Christian brotherhood of which the theoretical recognition is sweetening and widening, but which does not admit of much practical application and use when we come to those details indispensable to business, religious or secular.

Assuming then that the opportunities, duties and interests of the Unitarian denomination are, in the present condition of the National Conference, the most pressing and important questions for our collective wisdom to discuss, let us ask ourselves, first, What the Unitarian denomination is and stands for in its historical import?

When, a half century ago, the cultivated intelligence of Massachusetts had inwardly broken with the popular Christian creed of New England, and a considerable portion of the best educated ministers could no longer teach Trinitarian or Calvinistic theology, there grew up a small body of churches, which, at first ignoring the authority of what was known as Orthodoxy, but struggling to maintain without rupture their old ecclesiastical fellowship, were at last reluctantly forced by the decision of courts and the opposition of the adherents of the old theology, to assume a separate existence, and to recognize themselves as a distinct and new Christian body. After struggling long against any theological description or name, and against all proselyting or denominational ambitions or methods — with the strongest antipathy to anything in the shape of a creed — they gradually and of necessity drifted into a loose organization, accepted a name, and began to recognize the duty and value of mild missionary measures. Their original aim had been only to secure freedom for their own consciences, and

allowance for their congregational independence in matters of faith as well as discipline. It was the necessary consequence of their silent defection to arouse controversial discussion, to compel Orthodoxy to draw its own lines more distinctly and to define them out of its communion. Thus, their position was cleared and bounded for them rather by the exclusion of their Orthodox opponents, than by any limitations or definitions of their own. The continued action of the causes that produced them slowly increased their adherents, and justified their more positive and active methods, until in 1825 the American Unitarian Association was established, which may be regarded as the first distinct, practical evidence the liberal Congregationalists of New England gave of their consciousness of a denominational existence; at any rate their first open appeal to the public in that character.

Even then there was no considerable expectation of a rapid change in the theological opinions of the common people of New England. Unitarianism, with a firm conviction that its account of the Christian faith and its interpretation of the Scriptures would ultimately prevail in Christendom, deemed the Trinitarian and Calvinistic creed too strongly entrenched in the popular prejudices, and even the popular wants, to dream that in two generations Liberal Christianity would be called upon to feed the religious hunger of any part of the masses in any part of the world. It supposed its only allies to be scholarship, and the higher culture of mind and manners. It had no confidence in its power to deal with popular passions or tastes. It did not think itself so much an instrument of Christian civilization,

as a result of it. It waited for schools and colleges, for wealth and refinement, for moral culture and literary tastes to prepare the way before it, and to bring in those whom the coarse and crude, or stormy and vulgar ideas and methods of the Orthodoxy of that day had disgusted and repelled. So deeply was this unconscious policy rooted in the Unitarianism of my childhood, that it is by no means without present influence over me, and evidently is still in the minds of many of our best and ablest ministers a ruling feeling.

It was not then understood that what the cultivated few attain to only by solitary study and painful effort, is propagated so rapidly in a growing and youthful country by popular literature and public opinion, that a single generation often suffices to place at least half a whole community at the point where only its professional thinkers and scholars were thirty years before. And it is not too much to say that half Massachusetts is to-day as well prepared to hear and accept, and in a condition to need and value the Unitarianism of Worcester and Freeman, of Ware and Channing, as the literary and socially cultivated classes of Boston and Salem were in the days of Buckminster and Bentley. Critical and literary in form as the early arguments against Trinitarian and Calvinistic opinions were, their inspiration was from universal reason, common instincts and general tendencies. The descending dews of common sense as applied to theology first showed themselves in raising the wells in the gardens of scholars and recluses, or in making verdant the enclosures of dainty and cultivated wealth; but they were secretly and unobservedly watering the roots of the farmers' pas-

tures, and destined very soon to fill the common cisterns ; ay! to supply the public aqueduct. Perhaps theological reform never ran so directly in the channel of political, scientific and economical reform as in the case of the Unitarian reformation ; and it may be truly said, that the general and rapid illumination and release of the public mind through the education of political events, practical science and philanthropic reforms has done more to make Unitarian theology acceptable, inevitable and triumphant, than Unitarian theology, considerable as its influence has been in that scale, has done to encourage and produce social, political and moral progress.

Not forgetting its scholastic and literary antecedents, its social high birth and breeding, Unitarianism has been, for a quarter of a century past, striving to accommodate itself to its larger public, and its more democratic constituency. Honestly and properly anxious not to lose its hold on the most highly educated class, it has not felt sufficiently rebuked by its ill-success in popularizing its preaching, keeping pace in its ecclesiastical growth with the growth of the country, making itself co-extensive with the spread of enlightenment and civilization in the newer States, or taking a commanding position in the great cities out of New England.

Accordingly, it has the mortification of finding that doubt, and liberal intellectual habits, and hospitality to free thought on religious subjects, have travelled much faster than its missionaries or its organizing zeal ; that a large portion of the American people in their educational, political, scientific and humanitarian views are in advance of their theology ; at odds with their religious teachers and creeds ; and are either dropping away

from Christian worship and the Christian faith, or compelling their teachers to hold the old theology very much in abeyance. What Unitarianism was waiting for, as the condition of its own spread, and the needed spur to its zeal, has come and gone, leaving it behind! When there was a cry made, lo! the bridegroom cometh, they that were ready went in, and the door was shut upon the sleepers.

Perhaps this is all providential. The spirit of grace and truth is apt to have a pause between its acts, a lull between the outgoing sea of a retiring dynasty of ideas and the great tidal wave with which it sometimes changes the face of whole moral territories, overwhelming the cities of dead thought and obliterating their traces, to drive the human mind to safer, higher, and more divinely sanctioned habitations. The old theology, so venerable for its services and sacred for the truths enveloped in its rough skin, after serving the world for fifteen centuries, has an honorable claim on the gratitude of humanity for careful attendance in its mortal sickness, lingering as it may be, and a stately burial at its decease! I should respect our common nature less than I do, did I observe an irreverent haste to acknowledge the infirmities which its age has betrayed, or hear its children saying, "Corban, Corban, it is a gift whereby ye might be profited by me," and then hurrying off with their old mother's support to the temple of the new faith. The sturdy attachment which American Christians have shown, in the face of their own general progress in all kindred matters, to the religious connections and symbols of their grandfathers and of preceding generations is the best indication of the kind of devotedness and zeal with which, after

gratitude has had its full indulgence and association its tenderest dues, this same people will abandon themselves to the new statement of the eternal gospel they believe. Besides, God's time and man's time are not always identical. Things do not always move when we push hardest, even when we see no reason why they should not move; and we do not always push hardest when every human motive would invite our strength, simply because a divine impulse and opportunity are not given us. I am not sure, brethren, that God's time has come for *us*, but it has evidently come for some Liberal Christian movement of vast proportions and corresponding beneficence, in these American States, and I think also in the world at large. I cannot join those enthusiastic Liberals who proclaim Puritan theology utterly departed; Trinitarian and Calvinistic, Lutheran and Wesleyan opinions essentially abandoned, — mere theological figments, — death's-heads, wherein cunning jewels hold the place of eyes that once glowed and ruled. I have been far and wide in this country, from Atlantic to Pacific, and I have not found the old altars cold, or in want of worshippers; only I have found many thousands who would not join the many other thousands that loved and honored and served them.

I have lately been in many European and some African and Asiatic countries, and I have not seen that the world had yet done with its old Catholic shrines, its worship of Christ and the Virgin Mary, its faith in a vicarious sacrifice, or in a bloody expiation, or in transubstantiation, or even in baptismal regeneration. The Christian religion is still, to a great extent and with sincere faith, a sacerdotal mystery, a spell which is muttered

in an unknown tongue, an "Open Sesame" to a celestial cavern full of diamonds and gold called heaven, a safe conduct past hell's flaming gate! And, moreover, the Roman Catholic faith, long thought by Protestants to owe its life wholly to ignorance and tyranny, to the temporal powers that guaranteed its existence and the fears and hopes of the degraded rabble, is more fully exhibiting a sway which it always possessed over the most cultivated minds, even having made cardinals and bishops out of its converts from the most advanced Protestant classes. Despite of the questioning and the decay in certain countries of the creed of the Reformation, and its total loss of influence over millions of minds, it also still has a mighty organized existence, a vast spiritual power over many millions more whose constitutional need of dogmatic expressions combine with their reverence for established ideas, their fear of change, and their distrust of their own wisdom to devise better things, to give them a profound practical attachment to their hereditary opinions.

We need neither waste our pity upon nor indulge our contempt towards that great Orthodox body which has done, and is still doing, the chief religious work of Protestant Christianity. It is idle to speak of its weakness or its unsatisfactoriness, simply because millions nearer to us do not feel its power. *Other* millions still *do*, and live from its altars, passing happy, devout and holy Christian lives in the light and heat of its teachings. To reason against its beneficent influence, to deny the comfort of its doctrines to its own disciples, to declare its decease, to charge its disciples with ignorance, folly, insincerity and discontent, simply because, with *our*

hereditary light, *our* views of Christianity, and in our advanced or independent position, *we* should be guilty of hypocrisy, and find ourselves enslaved and convicted of unreason in professing or receiving its opinions, — is one of those illogical and untenable conclusions, which sectarian zeal and partisan prejudice are commonly enough adopting, but which is unworthy a cultivated and disciplined Christian intelligence. It is in this same fashion that Protestant Orthodoxy has been long accustomed to treat Roman Catholicism, ascribing to the adherents of that Church all its own experiences and wants, and judging them from its own position. What kind of insight into the power, the attractiveness, the beauty, the consolation, the inspiration of Roman Catholicism, for her own children, does Protestantism afford its average disciples? A mere man of business might just as well undertake to measure the inspiration, charm and uses of an artist's life and calling! It is a gross offence against the dignity of that human nature we so volubly profess to reverence, when we ascribe to a religious faith which was the sole Christianity known or professed for a thousand years, at least, only degrading and irrational qualities, and pronounce it a wholly vain and injurious superstition! Roman Catholicism avenges itself upon Protestant contempt and abuse by exhibiting its modern vigor in the very countries which have despised its pretensions and its power; nay, in the land of universal popular education and absolute religious freedom, it is making enormous strides, and holding successful head against the universal opposition of our national ideas and our prevailing religious opinions.

Until we pursue another policy than that of scorn,

uncandid estimate, and cries of priestcraft and superstition, we shall have no more power to check its advances or to modify what we disapprove in its character, than Protestantism has hitherto exhibited. We need rather in humility to study the secrets of its influence, the sources of its power in human nature, the place it has in God's providence and Christ's kingdom, to honor what is true and good in its principles and methods, and to recognize it as a legitimate part of the Christian Church, entitled to all the influence it can gain or hold, and to all the charity which we claim from Christians differing from ourselves. If any Protestant flatters himself that the Roman Church lives only upon the accumulated capital of a rich past, and is dead while it lives, so far as spiritual force, self-denying graces and persistent faith and devotion are concerned, let me caution him against that self-delusion. From the bottom of my soul I wish that much of our Protestantism had only as much zeal, confidence in itself, and practical self-consecration, and as much breadth and liberality, as marks some portions of the Roman Church. I see no present bounds to its spread, and no final date to its existence. It thrives upon the divisions, doubts and denials of Protestantism. It gathers into its perfumed and symbolic shrines those believing natures, those leaning and devout souls to whom Protestantism denies any food for the religious imagination. That reason which we exalt into a solitary attribute, and place upon an icy throne around which human instincts, affections and passions stiffen, freeze and die, Romanism, as if to balance the madness of Protestant excess, hurls to the ground and puts beneath her feet, while the chilled instincts and sensibil-

ities, with music, art and mystic symbol and childlike faith — their cold tyrant overthrown — come back into grateful life and wreath themselves in almost riotous profusion over his vacant seat. The infinite wisdom and truth will not have the ingredients of the Christian religion or the elements of human well-being diminished or destroyed. Dispersed and lying in separate heaps they may be — authority with the Romanist, freedom with the Unitarian, the Holy Spirit in charge of Quakers and Methodists, the externals here, and the internals there ; but perhaps neither less nor more at any time ; only waiting for proper combination and reconciliation. Excess on one side produces antagonistic excess on the other ; deficiency here, superabundance there.

Thus in dogmatic as well as ecclesiastical Christianity, Liberalism, which makes light of dogma, ridicules the importance of theological definitions, or denies the existence of any truths connected with the Gospel of Christ which can be systematized into a body of divinity, only drives the Orthodox sects into more positive affirmations and a narrower theology. The spirit of Orthodoxy has grown milder and more practical, but it has not improved or broadened its dogmatic basis. The disuse or suspension of some of its articles of doctrine, in deference to the spirit of the age, is not to be mistaken for their abandonment. I do not believe that Orthodoxy is as wide and as near the truth as it was in Luther's day ; and I am confident that, as it drives Liberal minds out of its communion, it will become narrower still. What can be more obvious than the perilous tendency to the exclusive worship of Jesus Christ ? The Pope's final announcement of the

miraculous conception is not as backward, as dangerous, as characteristic an exhibition of the tendency of the Catholic Church to despise the light of the nineteenth century, as the growing worship of Christ, with the neglect of the Creator's superior claims, is of the dogmatic audacity, intensity and narrowness of modern Orthodoxy. For, take away the checks and balances which the Nicene creed or the Athanasian puts upon this anthropomorphism, leave a once visible, created and corporal being to be the highest object of human trust, adoration and thought, and you do the utmost to weaken the spiritual aspirations, to limit and confine the sweep of the Christian consciousness, and to take from Christian theology its once gymnastic and dramatic power — its power to exercise and develop the whole religious manhood in our souls. If we desire to understand the philosophical Trinitarianism of many practical Unitarians, it must be studied in the tendencies, on the one hand to isolate God and leave Him without mediatorial connection with humanity, which ends in pure Theism on the one side, and on the other the tendency to dethrone God and put Jesus Christ in His place. Unitarians are in danger of the first error, modern Orthodoxy of the last. Those Protestants who wish to avoid both errors find relief either in the publicly recited creeds of the Episcopal Church, which just now are rendering Christendom important services, or in fighting the superficial tendencies of the Liberal Christian body, by insisting that the New Testament doxologies and the baptismal formula contain a permanent doctrine and symbol, and that God is to be worshipped

in the name and through the mediation of Jesus Christ, by the aid and inspiration of the Holy Ghost.

I have dwelt upon the tendencies, the truths, the errors of other great Christian schools, because Unitarianism, either in its excellency or in its exposures and faults, cannot be understood without the boldest and most candid study, appreciation and measurement of the great epochs and theological and ecclesiastical systems from which it descends. And upon this descent and family bond, in my deepest conviction, depend both our heritage of faith, the purity and richness of our Christian blood, and our only claim to any place, much less any leadership, in the Christian Church.

Unitarians, Reformers, Protestants of the Protestants as we are, we have never professed to be setting up a new religion or reviving one older than Christianity. We have, as a body, aimed only at purging the Christian Church of certain things which had been taken up into the system provisionally at crises of special want or peril, or peculiar weakness and trial. We have desired to recognize the claims, the services, the spiritual experiences and victories of our predecessors in charge of the great trust of the Gospel and the Church. Down that main line of tradition and faith, the precious fruits of Christ's life, and teachings and death have descended, and gathering wealth and hallowed power and holy fragrance from the ages and generations that, according to their providential opportunities, have aided in developing its significance and increasing its volume, they form now the revered river of our religious strength, the river of God which is full of water. We do not propose to build into the temple we fashion on or over this

stream all the drift-wood or wreck of old fanes that we find in it, nor to worship the theological crocodiles and lizards that may have found its waters hospitable or nourishing. Neither do we mean to abandon the stream because of its drift-wood or the monsters that we see here and there swimming in its waves. We believe that God has chosen to make this Jordan of His the baptismal stream of humanity, and that until He works some new miracle, like unto the life and character and teachings of Jesus Christ, and baptizes a new Teacher and Saviour in a new stream, we shall be presumptuous and unwise to go back to Pharpar and Abana, or even to go forward to Mississippi or Amazon, as if size and depth, or commercial or political importance could measure the compass of His choice. It is in no dread of free inquiry, in no desire to entangle or baffle others' consciences, in no caprice of opinion, or fear of what the world will say, that the Unitarian denomination has planted itself, or rather has been planted by its progenitors, upon the great traditions of the New Testament and the historical Church. It is its providential birth-right, its saving instinct—whence alone nutriment for it can proceed. It is from convictions stronger than any formal arguments, from attachments deeper than reasoning, from wants and cravings that will not be denied, that our Unitarian churches have held their anchorage in the storms of modern scepticism and a devout infidelity, and the moment the question was raised, declared themselves, by a decisive and overwhelming majority, the disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Such being the history and position, what then are the duties and opportunities of the Unitarian body? We

are the heirs of whatever liberality of theological opinion there is within the domain of positive Christianity. We do not go out of that domain to seek our fellowship or to establish our kingdom. Our aim is a definite one. It is not to do good in any and all ways, and to scatter ourselves over the whole field of human interest. We have inherited the ordinary work of the Christian Church. And our specific business is, as a church of Christ, to make Christians ; to preach the Gospel, and bring such human souls as we can gather under our ministry to know the inspiring, guiding and saving power of the truth Christ taught, the life and character He exhibited, and the spirit He was of. And this we propose to do, by the means of a stated ministry, in places of Christian assembly on the Lord's day, for the worship of God in the name of Jesus Christ, and for the preaching of His Gospel. Protestant Orthodoxy and Romanism tell us, on the one hand, that we have neither a ministry nor a Gospel ; that we have abandoned both in forsaking the Catholic Church and disowning the creed of Christendom ! We do not fling back the reproach, nor deny the Christian status of either. And we say to both, " Think of us as you will and exclude us as much as you can. We are sorry for your suspicions and your objections. But it is not you or those you can help, teach and satisfy, that God has given us a mission to instruct and to bless. Keep all you can keep within your respective pales of belief and of discipline. You have at least half the civilized world who trust and look to you for Christian guidance. God bless your labors and reward your pains ! But you know as well as we, that millions of intelligent people

have for some reason abandoned and rejected your worship and your creed. It is these millions that we are to look after, and by the new interpretation of the Gospel of Christ, to enlist as disciples and build up in the order of faith and Christian obedience."

It is perhaps none the worse for our cause that to be self-consistent they must denounce us as infidels and wanting the true unction of the Holy Spirit! We know that we mean to be and are Christians, and it is because we feel the power and the blessedness of the Gospel in our own hearts that we desire to communicate it in its holiness and its grace to all who, repelled by their narrow and partial statements, are unable to see or to love and believe in Jesus Christ as they set him forth.

On the other hand, a small class, it may possibly be larger than I know, say to Unitarian Christians and to this Conference, "If you wish to meet the wants of the great body of free-thinking, earnest, independent minds and hearts in this country, you must go a great deal further than the Conference has gone yet! There are thousands of people, thoughtful and well-disposed people, in America and in all other parts of the world, who do not believe that Christianity has any special claims on their faith or their love; who deny its supernatural origin, and put its sacred books upon the ordinary level of serious literature; who think the moral and spiritual truths in the New Testament wholly independent of the authority of Him who taught them, and that Jesus Christ is in no just and truthful sense their Master and Lord, and the Gospel, in no just interpretation, to be distinguished from any good news which reaches the spiritual ear and heart from any quarter." Now, I am

convinced of the moral and spiritual earnestness and religious worth and excellency of some who entertain these opinions; and I know that some others, who feel the supreme beauty of Christ's character and the value of his ministry, are still very reluctant to say that he is their Lord and Master, or that the Gospel has any specific or peculiar value. What, then, are we to do! As Unitarians we desire to keep our platform broad enough to hold upon it as many of those brought up with us, and whose personal worth we know, as we possibly can, let their theoretical agreement with us be as imperfect as it may. Practically we know their worth and usefulness and their essential sympathy with us. We cannot, we would not, cut off or exclude any who desire to work with us from either side, — either of those leaning to Orthodoxy or those leaning to pure Theism. If I know the denomination, such exclusion is impossible. We will neither turn from our gates any who choose to enter, nor bolt our doors against the return of any who, having gone out, desire to come back. But I think it is equally certain that we intend to maintain our present platform, whether it suits either extreme of our body or not. It does express the great distinctive and controlling faith of the denomination. Moreover, it expresses a fundamental article of faith so deeply planted in our history and antecedents, so long undisputed and unquestioned, so intensely believed and trusted in by the majority of this denomination, so inexpressibly dear to many of the most serious and spiritual minds and hearts among us, that any abandonment, suppression or equivocation of it would be the signal of complete revolt and utter rejection of the Unitarian organi-

zation. You might as well attempt to put a Calvinistic or Trinitarian gloss upon our preamble as to take away its distinctively Christian character. Neither will or can be submitted to. If the preamble excludes any, it is not because we wish to exclude them, but because we cannot conscientiously stay ourselves or keep the great body of the denomination together upon any less than what the vast majority of this body regard as the simplest and least possible dogmatic statement of a Christian faith. If we thus seem to trample upon the convictions of a few, and exclude them by a definition, it is our common misfortune. If their consciences are so tender and their views so advanced that they cannot work with us upon a platform which, without a single other dogma, distinctly avows discipleship of the Lord Jesus Christ, then it is plain that we have come to a boundary which the Unitarian denomination cannot pass. If, as it is claimed, there are thousands of religious people who are outside of so broad a pale as ours, surely there is room for a new kind of religion. And its apostles may as well go to work at once to occupy the providential field.

That is not, if I understand our body, the field the Unitarian body wishes to till; not the one historically committed to us, or which we can wisely let down or widen our fences to take in. Nor is it necessary, in order to find profitable and abundant work, to dash into the vague labor of feeding those who do not wish distinctly Christian bread and wine. We have millions of people to fold in the positive fold of Christian discipleship who are not distressed with these scruples, and who will not repel our Christian care. They are equally.

averse to Orthodoxy and to a bare theism; they are neither prepared to go back into the old temples nor to live out of doors. It is our business to meet this great want. If we attempt more we shall do less. We have a faith which our antecedents and our literature have made more or less definite, which we call the Unitarian faith. It is founded on the divine authority of the Christian religion. We are forced by the love of peace to leave the words "divine authority" to the private interpretation of each disciple. This faith has its churches and its organization. To multiply those churches, increase their efficiency, give them able, devoted and well-furnished ministers; to send forth missionaries to awaken attention, to collect scattered sheep and fold them in new churches; to unite this body in closer sympathy, and by considering its opportunities, make it a power for good, by improving every chance for using its light, liberty and love for the benefit of our country and of humanity — this seems to me our urgent duty and our gracious opportunity. It resolves itself practically into a more energetic and systematic pursuit of the humble work we have been engaged in for fifty years — building up a Christian denomination on the old foundation, but with liberty and love and holiness wrought more fully into its walls.

I know that some of the most energetic, gifted and devoted minds and hearts among us are dreaming that we have some wider and higher and more spiritual mission; that there is something petty and sectarian, and, to speak plainly, effete in talking about Unitarianism and the Unitarian denomination. According to this vague idea the world is hungering for a new religion,

or, at least, clamoring for wholly new vessels out of which to drink the water of the old fountain. Our churches and our Sunday preachments are not what is to do the business. The people, it is said, will go to halls and theatres or gather in the public streets for religious instruction who will not put their heads into church. They welcome good, earnest, practical statements of moral and spiritual truth, come they from Trinitarian or Unitarian, Supernaturalist or Rationalist, Conservative or Radical. It is undeniably true. Then let us meet the people just where they will meet us.

No place is so profane that a serious purpose to bless and save human souls will not sanctify it. And if this passion for gathering in theatres and halls for religious teaching is only a fashion, and is destined to pass away, let us economize the fashion while it lasts. The fact that the people will listen to serious and earnest talk eagerly and reverently, and all the more when there are no dogmatic bones in it, is something to give Christian teachers of all denominations pause! It means a great deal both good and bad. But in a country as fond of public speaking and of public meetings as ours it must not be supposed to mean too much either way; and to depend mainly on it for great results, or to believe — if any do, which I do not assert — that it can in any way take the place of the more steady teaching and systematic instruction of the Church, would not be sagacious. The churches are our great and steady reliance. And to make them more earnest, efficient and attractive is our most practical way of deepening our influence and extending our type of Christianity. If you abandon or weaken the church organization, and trust to public

meetings, newspapers and lecture-ships to propagate the reformed faith, your new machinery will soon give you something far less than the hereditary, traditional faith of the Gospel to teach! You will have broken your connection with the tender and holy associations of the Christian religion, and thrown away all the unspeakable wealth of its hereditary sentiment. It is little or no indication of influence to get people together in a theatre or a public hall, — a promiscuous crowd, more or less changed every Sunday, — even though it be in the name of religion. You can do it for any purpose, good, bad or indifferent. And, however excellent the teaching on these occasions, you cannot follow up your influence; you have done nothing to integrate the individual hearers in a living body; they commit themselves to nothing; they enjoy no feeling of shelter and protection, no sense of ownership or of being owned; there is no fellowship and no communion in such a decorous mob.

If the occasion is used to send them to the churches, and to persuade them how useful, beautiful and vital a thing the Christian Church is, you do well; but I fear this is the last thing that is done. No; if Liberal Christianity, in her new methods, breaks down the regular traditional church institutions and substitutes other ways, believe me, it will not be a progress but a revolution, and a backward one at that. What we need, and what will be a great and glorious success, is to hold fast the precious vessels which ages of divine guidance and religious experience have handed down to us, the great bequest of the Church, while we fill them with the liberty of thought and the freshness of the spirit which God has bestowed upon this latter day. If we cannot organize

our liberal theology into ecclesiastical shapes, if we cannot maintain the universal rites of the Christian Church, then the religious instincts of the Christian world will repudiate us, and rightly so, and the Holy Spirit will find some new body to occupy our room. I believe, then, that every Unitarian Church which really succeeds in making itself the religious home of its people, which crystallizes their affections and occupies their zeal, and unites them as under the inspiration and guidance of the Head of the Church, in a sacred faith which they are not ashamed to express by outward symbols, and in works of Christian obedience and Christian charity, does more to commend and to establish our Liberal Christianity than all the crowded assemblies we can boast, East and West. For that is just what the prudence and the latent wisdom of the emancipated Christian minds of the country are waiting for, to see whether so free a faith as ours can occupy the forms and maintain the traditions of positive Christian institutions; whether we, with our Liberal opinions, can keep the holy flavor of the Christian religion and enjoy the blessing of its time-honored, time-proved methods and usages! Prove this,— and every well-ordered, living, sanctified church and congregation helps to prove it — and there is hardly any limits to be put to the number of our constituency or effective influence.

I know how hard it is, with the unsettled theology, the critical or negative habits of Christian thinking now in fashion, and the decay of church life and church activities, to make our individual churches religious homes, where co-operation among the members can be relied on, and a spirit of mutual helpfulness and mutual depend-

ence and protection can be exhibited. And that is the reason why our churches are now so commonly and so perilously dependent for their prosperity wholly on the pulpit-gifts of their minister. The people, as a rule, hire their minister as the lyceum committee does its lecturer. Unless he has an electrical temperament, or skilful way of putting what he knows, a good voice and an easy delivery, popular manners and a fine presence, his success cannot be guaranteed. It comes to this: second-rate men cannot meet the wants of Liberal Christians or make Unitarian churches flourish. Well, then, they must die! for how many first-rate men, how many electric, genial men, who recommend themselves at first sight, and continue to recommend themselves to the popular taste, does divine Providence furnish in a year or a generation? How many men who can do the duties of the pulpit, and all the duties of the congregation too, unite in their own persons the teaching, exhilarating, sympathetic, charitable functions scattered in separate gifts through a whole flock, and so release them from all duties except those of coming to listen to eloquent sermons, or giving money when it is pleaded for? No religious denomination can be built up on the hypothesis of a copious supply of such men. And if we had them, they would be a doubtful blessing. God does not want the officers in the Christian army to do all the fighting. A true church is a communion or fellowship of Christian souls that contribute their respective spiritual graces and powers to a common stock for the benefit of all. Churches can do without ministers better than without an interior life of their own, and a parish or a church that is blown up by the breath of the minister and

collapses the moment his breath is withdrawn, is hardly worth a name, and has no real existence. This everlasting cry, "Send us a smart man, a first-rate speaker, a man with popular gifts, if you expect us to live or thrive," is a dreadful confession of spiritual dearth and mournful ignorance of the duties of Christian disciples. It ought not to be said, it must not continue to be said, that our Unitarian churches are more dependent on gifted preachers than the churches of other faiths. It indicates vital defects; it shows organic disease; it betrays the want of spiritual life and positive Christian faith and experience. The condition of the unit of the individual church is the most pressing question in our body. Let us clearly understand how thoroughly to organize one single church, and make all its members work with spiritual power and grace for the common good, and the scandalous dependence of our churches on brilliant gifts in their ministers would at once be done away with.

Next to the better interior life and self-adjusted organization of the separate churches by their own lay wisdom and care, comes the supply of ministers.

I congratulate you that this question is receiving immediate and earnest attention. We have now two schools in the East and one in the West, engaged in preparing our ministers. Concerning the character of two of them, there can be no dispute. They are upon the basis of all other theological schools in this country, and aim by patient and thorough methods to train up a learned ministry. Let us have a learned ministry if we also must have a less learned one. We could not hope to hold our place as a highly intelligent body of Chris-

tians with any decline in the standard of our scholarship. Let us keep it up with all diligence and confidence. Now our Cambridge and Meadville schools—until recently our only schools—have greatly disappointed our hopes in the number of pupils of any kind they have drawn to them. It is not their fault, in my judgment. It reflects more painfully upon the religious influence in our churches, that more of the young men of education are not driven by the seriousness of their own religious convictions into the blessed work of the Christian ministry. It would almost seem as if Christian and religious faith had temporarily so left the educated class, that the only recruits are to be looked for in the less artificially trained and humbler classes of society. The ministry has long been supplied in other denominations from that quarter. Let us welcome our ministers from wherever we can get them, and if the Holy Spirit send them from the farm-yard and the factory and the work-bench, perhaps they may bring more of the temper and zeal that the original apostles brought from their fishers' nets and their publicans' stalls. I presume none will refuse to acknowledge that a profound religious experience, or a powerful natural call to preach, or a strong Christian personality, or a ripe Christian character, are better without learning and theological training than the best culture is without them. For one I believe that "aptness to teach" will outstrip all training of inaptness, and that the man is a vastly more important element than his attainments in every minister.

Let us then accept those who, with unquestionable sincerity and Christian purposes, wish to prepare for

our ministry, whether they know Latin and Greek or not; and if they cannot spare three years in their preparation, do the best we can for them in two, or even in one. We cannot afford to be over-nice in the question of scholarship, when so many communities are waiting for religious men who will help them organize Liberal Christian churches. With real respect for better judgments, I cannot sympathize with the proposition to unite the schools at Boston and Cambridge. Two schools will be certain to have more pupils than one, and it will be very dangerous to disturb what is growing so well as the Boston School, because it costs a little more money to keep it a-going separately than if it were merged in the Cambridge School. You cannot always tell what the subtle conditions are in the success of an educational movement. Nobody can say exactly what has brought such a large body of candidates to the Boston School. But because you cannot explain how it has succeeded, do not question its success or jeopardize it by changing its circumstances or its place, under the supposition that these have nothing to do with its success, because you cannot see that they ought to have or how they do have. It seems to me that it is altogether too early to meddle with that great and I believe providential movement, and that we ought humbly and devoutly to wait on Divine Providence, and see what the spirit of grace and truth means by blessing so signally this plant, so unpromising at its heroic start and with so little certain prospect of growth. When the Holy Ghost really seizes any part of our body and deigns to use any of our instrumentalities, let us not dare to disown its work. Could that same indescribable influence move in our churches, and

make us feel that not by our own power, but by Divine grace, we were working out our common salvation, every other question would drop into insignificance, and we should have an immediate harvest, with abundant reapers to gather it in. Meanwhile I believe it to be one of our first duties to sustain the Boston theological school, and I believe it will for a few years do better without an endowment than with one, living on the immediate sympathy and the voluntary gifts of our people.

Next to the duty of recruiting our ministry from young men not in the work already, I hold the opportunity of recruiting it from the ministers of other denominations to be one of the most encouraging, and one deserving our careful attention. Those who are best acquainted with theological questions, and who are called upon to express Christian sentiments in theological forms, in short, publicly to teach Christianity in our day, best appreciate the difficulties in the old theology and the relief and freedom of our position. But ministers of other denominations will not be inclined to come into the Unitarian denomination, however closely their theological sentiments may approximate, if they discover that ministerial fellowship among us means little or nothing; that our churches have no special sympathy with each other, but, like houses in a block, each depending on its own owner's support, stand each one stiffly on its own private foundations, without any notion that its sister churches can lend or draw any support from it. A Unitarian minister is the most unsheltered Christian teacher in the world. With such gifts as God has bestowed upon him, he must fight out his work, singly and alone. He can depend

little or nothing upon his people, unless he has the exceptional gift of magnetizing them, for any other furtherance than a meagre pecuniary support while he continues to please them. He acknowledges no allegiance to any ecclesiastical or ministerial body. If he chooses he may call in a council to ordain and settle him, or he may begin his work in scorn of any such idle formality. He has no ministerial rights other than those laid down in his personal contract with the congregation that settles him. If disputes arise between him and his people, there is no familiar body to arbitrate between them. He is a mere hireling, who may be turned off at three months' notice, excepting always what position he owes to his personal talents and potent, I do not say Christian, character. And I am inclined to think that this state of strict individualism in our parishes is increasing, and has the favor of our people; that most of our body think that the laws of gravitation settle a minister's place; that he ought to have no protection but his own talents and character, no restraints on his absolute freedom of opinion and speech, and his congregation no restraints on their absolute freedom to treat him just as they think best.

You well know I have a great love for freedom and a great hostility to any needless restraints. But I know that a Christian church, or a permanent Christian ministry, or a Christian denomination, cannot be built up if freedom is the sole or the main interest of the people who support it. There are such things yet as justice, truth, duty, comity, morality, piety and faith; there are such things yet as vested rights and implied obligations; there are such things yet as wisdom and prudence, sen-

iority in experience, right to give counsel, and obligation to heed it, deference from the young and authority for age and experience; there are such things yet as institutional virtues and obligations. Man has not wholly lost the faculty nor the necessity of such surrenders of his private tastes, opinions and caprices as will enable him to live and work with those who agree in certain great principles, affections and methods. The notion of the state, of the nation, of the church, dimly and wretchedly as it is in our day popularly understood, is not wholly extinct, and indeed will extinguish us before we can extinguish it. And, for one, because it happens to be a popular error of our time that he is the noblest, the most heroic, the most progressive, the most of a nineteenth-century man, who avows the most unqualified faith in freedom as its own safeguard and the mother of all the graces and virtues and securities, will I falsify my own profound convictions or suppress my fears that the freedom which makes one man, ignorant and senseless as he may be, think his opinions as good as his minister's, who has perhaps given his life to thinking and to Christian study; or encourages a young minister to set up his personal speculations against those of his theological professors, as if they were only his peers; or which makes a pastor think his own individual notions of Christianity what the people come to church to hear, and not the Gospel according to the received ideas of the body to which he professes to belong — that such a freedom is the freedom of intellectual bandits, and not of a civil, social and moral order; and that no visible church, much less any Christian denomination, can exist and flourish in such an atmosphere. It leads to the

worst tyranny. It sometimes makes learned and worthy ministers the slaves of the ignorant or unchristian portion of their congregations and of church committees. It gives capricious and lawless churches the opportunity of bringing general discredit upon whole denominations with which they are associated, but whose wishes and influence they disown. It gives single men of exceptional boldness and unbridled license of speculation the perilous opportunity of placarding a whole body of churches and ministers with the odium of their private excesses of opinion; and sometimes taints a Christian denomination with the suspicion of the infidelity which is avowed by some one of its ministers. Is there no escape from the perils of priestcraft and the ecclesiastical keys, except in this wild independence? Is there no alternative between tyranny and anarchy? If there is not, I shall choose the despotism of a sensible oligarchy, rather than the license of a senseless mob. But just here it is that our religious denomination calls for the highest wisdom. What have we got such a body of thoughtful laymen and ministers together for, if not for the sober and practical business of devising ways and means to give our churches growth and religious life and hope, our ministry increase, our pastorates stability, our freedom ballast, and our course a compass and a chart, and not a mere wave-tossed, wind-blown direction?

I believe we need inexpressibly all the order compatible with congregational independence. It is idle to say that congregationalism does not admit of order. Its history refutes the charge. It would be self-condemned and a suicide to concede it. Let us essay, then, some order in our ministry. Let us teach some positive the-

ology in our training schools. Let us claim some authority for our ministers at their settlement, some defined rights as well as expected duties. Let us have some meaning in ordinations, some dignity and reality in our Church councils, some alliance in our Church conferences which can be counted on as a real support, and some status in our ministry which shall stamp a man with the authority of our denomination when he enters it, by his making himself a voluntary subject of its principles, rules and purposes! You may as well give up, first as last, the work of this Conference, or of this denomination, if you cannot come to some mild but positive system of order and co-operation which shall give walls, roof, shelter — the feelings, the obligations, the privileges, of a religious home to the individual members of the Unitarian body. I do not expect these views to be popular, or to be acted on in the coming convention; but I do think they should be the subject of a careful consideration in our next convention.

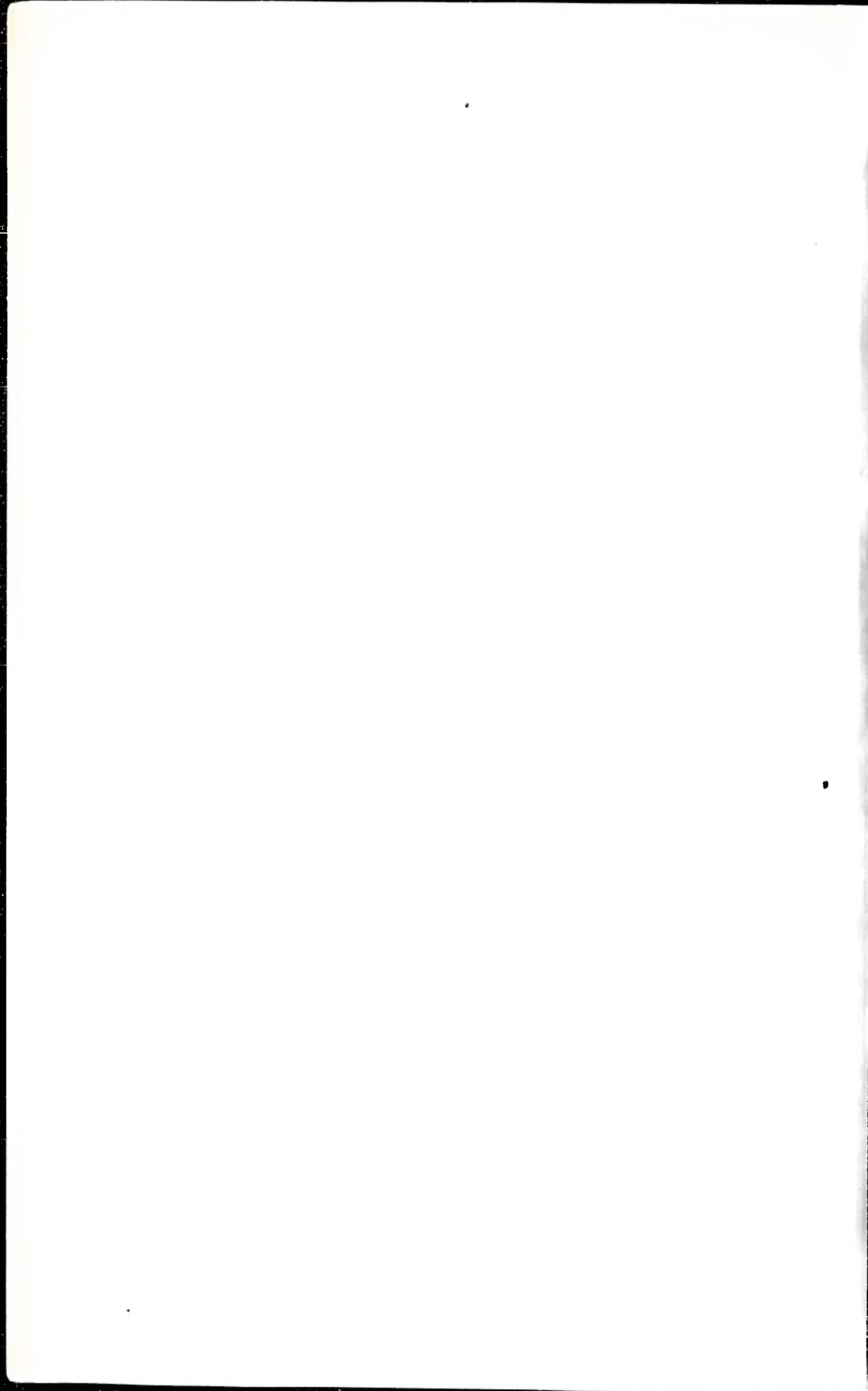
Finally, we need for our denominational growth a periodical literature of a very different character from the present. That question will come up in the sessions of the Conference, and I will not discuss it here, except to say that while I think a speculative and scholastic journal — free and broad — is very important, I attach vastly more importance to some weekly journals which shall provide our people with positive Christian theology and positive devotional reading; journals devoted not to the advancement of new views and speculations, but to the diffusion of things known and believed among us, in which the inquiring people of this country can see what Unitarian Christians believe, and how they apply

their doctrinal belief to the nourishment of their religious affections and the growth of their own souls. You cannot expect Orthodox people, with their minds accustomed to the full furniture of a settled and substantial creed, to come into our Church, and find neither spiritual chair nor table wherewith to furnish forth their emptiness, and still to be content! They greatly need a new body of Liberal Christian Divinity,—articles of understood opinion wherewith to set their hearts and minds up at their new religious housekeeping, and we need it ourselves as much as our Orthodox converts. Our children, for want of it, cannot say their souls are their own, and they are not their own, but at the mercy of any diligent and skilful theological casuist who has interest enough to convert them to his opinions. They cannot tell in one case out of fifty what they think or believe, after ten years in the Sunday School; nor can our ordinary laymen usually give any clear and definite account of their own faith. If we have no faith, let us say so, and cease beating the drum and calling attention to nothing. But we do have a faith, capable of positive statement; a Christian faith which can be stated negatively towards the errors of the churches about us, or, better, positively towards the Gospel itself.

There is no duty more urgent than the duty of furnishing our people with a definite Christian statement of belief. I will not say that we can lay down a platform or publish a creed for the next thousand years or the next hundred years. I am much more concerned for the religious wants of the next ten years. We cannot suit everybody, and we must not permit a few who can

never be suited to stand in the way of wants so general and so legitimate.

Brethren, I have made a great draught on your patience and on your forbearance, but I have not willingly taxed either. I have felt a deep responsibility in standing here to-night, and never sought Divine guidance with a more single eye to the glory of God and the spread of Christ's kingdom. I believe that the National Conference has a sacred trust in its hands, and one in which our whole country has a profound interest, ignorant as millions may be of its claims to their respect. If, dropping vague ambitions and unprofitable speculations and disputes, we give ourselves unreservedly up to the study of the interests and duties of the Unitarian body, with practical reference to the growth of personal faith and piety in our churches, and the ways and means of diffusing that faith and piety among the unfed, the unfolded millions of our countrymen, we shall have the sympathy of thousands of minds that now look toward us kindly but timidly, as wanting a definite belief or a fixed habitation, and yet as being in an atmosphere that attracts them; we shall regain the co-operation of the deeply religious minds in our own body, whom our wasteful discussions have repelled; we shall invigorate the feeble faith of our own sons and daughters, whom a temporizing and unpractical indefiniteness has driven into indifference and waywardness; we shall invite the spirit of piety and prayer back to our altars; we shall have the leading and encouragement of the Head of the Church, our Saviour Jesus Christ, and the blessing of him who alone is God over all, blessed for evermore!



REPORT.

NEW YORK, Oct. 7, 1868.

The Conference was called to order in Irving Hall, at 9.45 A. M., the President, Hon. T. D. Eliot, in the chair.

Rev. S. B. Stewart, of Lynn, led the Conference in prayer. The President delivered the following

OPENING ADDRESS.

I have in charge, friends, from the council of officers of your Conference, to give welcome to all the delegates from the Associations and the Churches of our faith, and from all other Churches whose presence indicates their willingness to unite with us in Christian work. Our Conference, my friends, rests upon a creed; for it is as true to-day as it was when it was first said, — “What doth the Lord require of thee but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?”

“To do justly and to love mercy,” in this our age, and in the presence of this people, requires more than the individual efforts of just and merciful men; and therefore it is, that we have come together at this time, lifting ourselves for the moment away from the exciting scenes and sounds and strifes of politics, that we may confer together and determine what things can be done, and what we can do to establish justice, to vindicate the claims of mercy, and to demonstrate the divine energy of humility in our life.

Outside of this hall, in the streets of this wonderful city, where multitudes of men from all the regions of the earth have come together, each pursuing in his own way, and on his own account, his own road to wealth, or office, or renown, in his pro-

fession, or industry, or art; and not here alone, but at all our homes, from whatsoever State we come, the eye and the ear are filled with the sights and sounds of preparation for the closely impending political conflict of the year. My friends, we cannot shut out sight or sound from eye or ear; nor can we shut out from the heart that absorbing interest, growing day by day, as the hour draws nigh, craving outward expression in prayer to Him who ruleth all things well, that He will now, as heretofore, guide this people aright.

Yet, friends, while the political citizen is earnest in his work, and availing himself of the best means to accomplish the ends desired, in the best way, the Christian citizen cannot be unmindful of his work; and we come to our work here without misgiving, or hesitancy, or doubt, or fear. We are assured of our work, and we know that God has given us the opportunity and the power; what we want is the will. Grant us the will, Father of men, to do the work thou hast assigned to us, as Jesus wrought, and then thy will, thy way, thy work we find.

It was written in the old story, that Abram, when he lived in Haran, heard the voice of God, and it said to him, "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy father's house, into a land that I will show thee, and I will make of thee a great nation." My friends, just in that way the voice of God came to us, and it said to us of the liberal Church, "Get you away from your sects, and from beliefs that hinder, and separate into a broader Church that I will show unto you; and I will make of you a great power, and you shall be blessed, and in you shall all the families of man be blessed"; and those who came, some three years ago and more into this city, had heard the voice, and came pursuant to its call; and they found, when here, that they too, not unlike Abram of old, had their cattle and their goods and their silver and their gold. How they followed the voice, how they have begun the work, what has been accomplished, the hindrances that have been encountered, the prospect that is now

before us, and the work that is yet to be done, will be stated to you by those who have had those matters in charge, and it is not for me to consider them. But I would like to make one suggestion, if you will allow me. Ahram, it is said, was rich in cattle, and in silver and gold; so also was Lot; but it is said that the herdsmen of Abram and the herdsmen of Lot did not agree. I do not know whether they divided upon a point of faith; but Abram thought they could not work together, and he said to his nephew, "Take your cattle, and your silver and gold, and go to the North, and I will go to the South, or go to the left, and I will go to the right." But it was not a great while before Abram went for Lot and carried him back. Now, my friends, I do not know, but I should be very glad if we could do a little better than Abram; and if with our Abram (type of faith, you know) there has come up any Lot (symbol of unrest, or progress, or unbelief), do not let us send off Lot with his cattle, and his silver, and his gold, but, if we can, let us remove the cause of difference and keep Lot; for, my friends, in this country of ours, where every household has been made sad, where, not in the manger, and amid sounds of peace, but in the camp, bristling with arms, and amidst the roar of artillery, freedom was born of war; where millions of slaves are citizens, and millions of citizens, white and black, crave education, and Christian aid, and moral culture, and intellectual help; there is work enough, ay, more than enough, for us to do; work of that same kind to which Jesus referred when he said, "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" And this is our work; "To preach the gospel to the poor; to heal the broken-hearted; to preach deliverance to the captive, and recovering of sight to the blind; to set at liberty them that are bruised; to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." When we have done that, and not until then, we, too, my friends, may close the book and sit down'

Rev. E. E. Hale stated that the following Reports of Committees appointed at the last meeting of the Conference had been printed, and were ready for distribution, viz :

I.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON UNITY AND FRATERNITY.

The undersigned, a Committee appointed at the second meeting of the National Conference of Unitarian and other Christian Churches, held in Syracuse, N. Y., October 10 and 11, 1866, respectfully Report :

Your Committee was appointed as one of fellowship and co-operation, "to promote acquaintance, fraternity and unity between ourselves and all our brethren of the liberal faith."

We did not consider ourselves confined, by the terms of the resolution, to those sects technically known as Liberal Christians. Every faith which liberalizes the mind and enlarges the sympathies is a liberal faith—no matter with what opinions it may chance to be associated. A man may hold Orthodox opinions or Roman Catholic opinions, and yet have a liberal faith; and another man may be a Unitarian or a Radical in his opinions, and yet not be liberal at all. For if an Orthodox man or a Roman Catholic is able, notwithstanding his opinions, to feel Christian sympathy toward those from whom he differs, and to co-operate with them in Christian work, he is, to all intents, a liberal Christian. And if a Unitarian or a Radical has sympathy only for such as agree with him, and considers men who do not go as far as himself as wanting either brains or courage, he, however liberal his views may be, is himself a bigot. Your Committee have therefore looked for men of a liberal faith, in all directions, and have found such everywhere. They have attended Conferences of Universalists and Conferences of Methodists and Free Religious Meetings. They have also been received into the pulpits of different denominations, and have been kindly welcomed by all. They have been invited to take part in the ordinations and installations of gentlemen of other denominations. One of your Committee, Mr. May, has long been in the habit of going freely among his neighbors who differ widely from himself in their theology, and often preaches for them. These facts show that the rigid system of exclusion, formerly in vogue, has softened. Many gentlemen, in high standing in the various sects, are in full religious sympathy

with many members of our body. Without wishing to emphasize these facts too strongly, we are glad to see in them the tendency toward a genuine unity of the spirit, hereafter to be a blessing to the universal church.

The Resolution of Conference made it the duty of your Committee to promote *acquaintance, fraternity and unity* with brethren outside of our body. We have attempted to do this, partly by the methods before mentioned, by attending the public meetings of other bodies, and partly by private intercourse. We have been greatly encouraged by seeing a marked disposition in individuals commonly known as Orthodox toward a liberal faith. We have found members who no longer consider Christianity as a Creed, but essentially as a Life. We have found many, who, while holding in the main Orthodox opinions, hold them rather in the spirit than in the letter, and by no means accept any of the received creeds as a finality. We meet with those, belonging to Orthodox churches, who are truly in spiritual unity with us. We cannot, of course, enter into details here, or give the names of individuals. Were we at liberty to do this, we might state many interesting facts in support of our assertion.

The great change in this respect, and that which gives us our hope that the time is approaching when the last prayer of Jesus shall be fulfilled, and all his disciples be one, is a change in the *method* by which Christian Unity is now attempted. Formerly it was universally thought right to begin on the outside and work in — now we begin on the inside and work out. Then the Church sought to produce first an outward unity of form, in order to obtain the unity of the Spirit — now, many seek, first, for the unity of the Spirit, in order to arrive, afterward, at the unity of form. Then, they sought conformity rather than conviction — outward assent rather than inward agreement. Then, they were satisfied if men went through the regular ceremonies of the churches, and accepted passively its creeds. All the rest, they thought, would come in due time. A man might believe what he chose, or disbelieve what he might, provided he did it silently, and made no proclamation of his opinions. Hypocrisy, it was thought, was better than heresy — secret infidelity than open dissent. So a poor physician is contented if he can drive the disease in, and make its symptoms disappear, and thereby often kills his patient, while a skilful practitioner prefers to have it come to the surface. For, as unannealed glass will fly to pieces because the surface has hardened into form, without giving time to the particles within to take their natural positions, so a creed or a church which is accepted outwardly, before the

mind within is prepared, is likely to be broken apart. Such a creed or church may have the outward aspect of unity, but it is in a condition of unstable equilibrium within. Its emblem is the glass toy called a Prince Rupert's bubble, made of glass suddenly chilled, which will fly asunder if you scratch the surface anywhere ever so lightly.

The Roman Catholic Church has always aimed at producing unity from the surface inward. Throughout the Catholic States of Europe it has used the civil power to produce, by force, this outward uniformity. And now that the civil governments grow reluctant to enforce conformity by the secular power, the Pope cries out that all things are going to destruction. Protestant *Nations* have, in these last centuries, allowed freedom of worship and belief. Yet Protestant *Churches* have not been willing to allow it, but have tried to compel outward uniformity by such means as lay in their power—still holding to the same method of working from the surface towards the centre, instead of from the centre to the surface. But enlightened men, of most creeds, are beginning to perceive that this mode of producing uniformity of opinion resembles the method adopted by the Flat-head Indians of gaining a good phrenological development—by compressing the outside of the head, instead of cultivating the brains within. Only from the *Unity of the Spirit* can any valuable unity of the Body come; make men love the same thing, see the same thing, work for the same thing, and being thus inwardly as one, outward fraternity and a visible organic union will follow in due time.

Your Committee therefore have taken no pains to invite any individuals or churches to join this Conference. But we see everywhere the old dogmatic belief in the form of religion giving way before an influx of better life. We find a tendency in all churches to come together and work together. We are glad that this Conference presents, in its very name, a standing invitation to all other Christian Churches to unite with it. We have no doubt that, in the gradual disintegration of sects, many churches, not agreeing with us in belief, will take occasion to join us for Christian Work. Meantime, let us, on our part, believe that we have brethren of the same liberal faith in those who differ from us widely,—both in the direction of greater Orthodoxy and also of greater Radicalism than that of the majority of this body.

JAMES FREEMAN CLARKE,
SAMUEL J. MAY,
ROBERT COLLYER,
Committee.

II.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON DENOMINATIONAL
LITERATURE.

To the National Conference of Unitarian and other Christian Churches :

The Committee on the subject of Denominational Literature present the following Report :

Your Committee were appointed in accordance with a series of Resolutions, presented by the late Mr. James P. Walker, whose sudden removal from a field of high Christian usefulness has been so widely lamented. These resolutions, after speaking of the extent and value of our denominational literature, declared that " it ought to be collected into one channel, controlled and systematically disseminated, by sale and gift, through some single central organization, as the American Unitarian Association." On this ground, your Committee were instructed to consider this whole subject of denominational literature, and in connection with the Executive Committee of the A. U. A. digest and adopt a plan calculated to realize a result so important, and still further to utilize and make available for Christian ends the literary ability of our body.

In pursuance of the duty thus assigned, your Committee had two meetings with the Executive Board of the A. U. A. and at these the subject was discussed at length. It appeared that the suggestion of a central agency in the wide extent which was contemplated in the Resolutions, was, in the opinion of some among us, subject to serious objections. To make the A. U. A. the one great book-publishing establishment of the denomination, would, it was feared, subject it to the risks of trade, to an extent which an organization of such a character ought not to encounter. Besides this, it would require the officers of the Association to determine on the fitness for publication of whatever works any of our writers might wish to bring forward ; thus subjecting them to reproach, either for accepting books which some might deem objectionable, or rejecting volumes which were considered valuable. Yet the advantages were obvious of an agency which should disseminate our literature on principles more liberal than those which guide the course of private enterprise. While therefore your Committee could not advise the officers of the Association to carry out the idea of the Resolutions to its full extent, they saw with pleasure that the Association was extending its

operations in the field of literature, yet within moderate and prudent limits. It appears to them that, within such limits, those operations may be yet more widely extended; and that, without aspiring to engross the whole field of Unitarian literature, the Association may adopt such measures as shall, in the language of Mr. Walker's resolutions, "still further utilize and make available for Christian ends the literary ability of our body."

There are many persons who might make their literary acquirements profitable to their fellow-men, if guided and assisted to the right course for their employment. On the other hand, there are wants of our religious community which are not met, because the talent that could supply them is not organized and directed. Notwithstanding the labors of our departed and living scholars, we have no edition of the Bible, which can be read in our families with full confidence in its representation of the original text, or in the notes by which it is accompanied. We have no Introduction to the Bible for general use; no popular Commentary on the Old Testament; no complete Commentary on the New. We have no Unitarian Ecclesiastical History. The want is deeply felt, of more books of a devotional and meditative character. Organization, we are aware, cannot create the talent, the scholarship, or the devotional feeling, which are alike necessary for the preparation of such books; but it may do much to bring them to light where they exist, to encourage their development, and direct their application to the most important objects. Some of the works which have been named are such that the labors of many persons might well be employed upon them; but to select these persons, to invite them to undertake their work, and furnish facilities for its prosecution, should be the task of a Committee of the Association, or of a Board separately constituted. That Committee or Board might also arrange for the publication of these works, either on account of the Association, or by making suitable agreements with private publishers.

Believing that the subject thus presented may, if duly acted on, be pursued with much advantage to our denomination and to the cause of religion, your Committee recommend to the Conference the adoption of the following Resolutions:—

Resolved, That the Conference observes with pleasure the increased activity of the A. U. A. in the publication and circulation of books.

Resolved, That it is of high importance that there should be

provided an Introduction to the Scriptures, a Commentary upon them, and a History of the Christian Church, embracing, in popular form, the best results of modern scholarship; with works for general use, of a meditative and devotional character; and that the subject of procuring or aiding the preparation of such works be commended to the attention of the A. U. A.

Resolved, That the Conference suggest to the Association to consider the expediency of preparing, by the labors of a sufficient number of competent scholars, a Family Bible; the text and translation to have the most important and best established emendations of recent criticism; to be arranged in paragraphs and parallelisms, and to be accompanied by brief Notes, and Introductions to the various books.

All which is respectfully submitted.

For the Committee,

S. G. BULFINCH, *Acting Chairman*.

III.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE ENDOWMENT FUND FOR MEADVILLE THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL.

The Committee, appointed at the last National Conference to receive and pay over to the Treasurer of the Meadville Theological School the money pledged at the Conference towards an Endowment Fund of that School, Report:

That the whole amount paid over to the Treasurer by the Committee, or forwarded to him by the societies themselves, which made pledges, is \$27,591.70 (twenty-seven thousand five hundred and ninety-one dollars and seventy cents).

The whole amount of money pledged, exclusive of that offered by the friends of the school at Meadville (\$4,000). was, as stated by the record of the Secretary, \$26,455 (twenty-six thousand four hundred and fifty-five dollars).

But of this sum two thousand dollars was entered by misapprehension, so that, in fact, but \$24,455 were pledged at the Conference.

It appears, therefore, that \$3,136.70 have been paid, over and above the pledges actually made at the Conference, and that there is yet a deficiency of \$2,408.30. This should be raised

to complete the \$30,000, on raising which was conditioned the gift of \$4,000, by the friends of the school at Meadville.

Of their pledge, \$3,000 have already been paid over, and the fourth thousand only awaits the completion of the condition, namely, raising the \$2,408.30, which is yet needed. It is very desirable that measures should now be taken to raise this sum. The work undertaken will then be done, and well done.

In behalf of the Committee,

RUFUS P. STEBBINS, *Chairman.*

IV.

ANTIOCH COLLEGE ENDOWMENT.

The Committee on the Endowment of Antioch College have the honor to Report:

That they were directed by the Conference at its meeting at Syracuse to represent to the public the necessity of enlarging the Endowment of the College by the sum of \$150,000. They have attended to this duty in such general appeals as could be made through the press and in some public meetings. But they have not considered it proper, in view of the other large demands made upon our Churches, to attempt at one time to collect the whole sum, however desirable such a collection would be. They have to report, therefore, the collection for the College in two years since the Convention at Syracuse of \$22,150 only. This sum is mostly the gift of a few individuals who have a closer acquaintance than almost any others with the present condition of the College, with the value of its work, with its steady enlargement and with its various necessities. No more striking testimony could be given of the interest which it excites among those who know its condition, than the fact that such generous contributions are made to it by those who are best informed.

The College is now conducted with the most severe economy by a staff of energetic teachers who deserve a much higher remuneration than they receive. During the last year, four of them have with great generosity supplied, almost without remuneration, a great part of the instruction to the freedmen at Wilberforce College, which is twelve miles distant from Antioch College. With the increasing attendance at Antioch, the receipts from its pupils have increased in every year since

it was re-opened, and in the last year were \$1,366 more than in the year before. It is still necessary however, for the trustees to collect from its friends \$3,000 annually, to meet the regular expenses of the College. To provide this income regularly, an invested fund of \$50,000 is highly desirable.

But the Committee do not consider that the endowment of the College should stop there. As the number of its students increases, they wish to see the remuneration of the professors increased and the staff of professors enlarged. Situated in the very heart of the country, the influence of this College in extending true and just views of education, of politics, of social order and of religion may be immense. It is the only College in the country to whose government we can give the free and generous direction we desire. Its reputation is established. Its means of usefulness are larger with every year. It has a very valuable property. It is wholly free from debt. And we cordially commend it to all members of our communion of large or small means as worthy of their most generous benefactions. All gifts may be made to any of the Trustees or to the Treasurer, Artemas Carter, Esq., in Chicago. The legal style of the College is Antioch College, of Yellow Springs, Greene County, Ohio, and in bequests it should be thus named.

EDWARD E. HALE,

For the Committee.

GIFTS TO ANTIOCH COLLEGE,

BETWEEN OCTOBER 1, 1866 AND OCTOBER 1, 1868.

1866.			
Dec. 7,	Alfred Windsor, Brookline	. . . . .	\$50 00
" 17,	and at other times,		
	Henry P. Kidder, Boston	. . . . .	5,000 00
1867.			
Jan. 26,	Miss Ernestine May	. . . . .	250 00
" "	" Josephine May	. . . . .	250 00
Feb. 5,	and at other times,		
	Tully Bowen, Providence	. . . . .	2,000 00
	Seth Padelford	"	2,000 00
	W. B. Weeden	"	2,000 00
May 1,	Through E. C. Sprague, Buffalo	. . . . .	55 00
" 29,	Friends in Cincinnati	. . . . .	300 00
Feb. 7,	and at other times,		
	Mrs. Caroline Merriam	. . . . .	1,500 00
June 20,	and at other times,		
	Mrs. Eliza Sutton, Danvers	. . . . .	625 00

Nov. 21,	David Joy,	Boston	. . . . .	\$100 00
" "	Charles Merriam	"	. . . . .	100 00
" "	Daniel Denny	"	. . . . .	100 00
" "	Miss Newman	"	. . . . .	200 00
Nov. 22, and Aug. 10,	Wm. Munroe	"	. . . . .	1,000 00
1868.				
Jan. 1,	J. S. Hayward	.	. . . . .	200 00
Mar. 25,	A. Carter	.	. . . . .	1,000 00
April 6,	Mrs. S. J. King,	Taunton	. . . . .	1,000 00
June 22,	Edw. Whitney,	Boston	. . . . .	500 00
" "	Miss M. A. Hastings	.	. . . . .	100 00
" "	Miss E. A. Foster,	Boston	. . . . .	100 00
" "	Edw. W. Clark,	Germantown	. . . . .	700 00
" "	Friends in Cincinnati	.	. . . . .	500 00
" "	John J. May,	Boston	. . . . .	2,070 00
" "	Israel Nash	"	. . . . .	50 00
" "	Society for Propagation of the Gospel	.	. . . . .	100 00
" "	Other persons	.	. . . . .	20 00

Most of these subscribers were large contributors to the original Endowment Fund.

V.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON MINISTERIAL SUPPORT.

The Committee appointed by the National Conference to take into consideration the subject of Ministerial Support would submit the following Report:

They have canvassed the subject as thoroughly as their means would allow, and feel that the facts elicited by the very large correspondence which they have had with the ministers of all denominations should in some way be placed before the community at large.

Your Committee believe that there is no class of men in the community who have suffered more for the comforts of life during the last few years than the ministers who are far removed from cities. And they further believe that this evil will be at once remedied, if societies can be made to listen to the facts in the case. There is an immense deal of pinching poverty among the clergy of New England. Scores of men in the country towns are supporting, or trying to support, large families on salaries of less than five hundred dollars. These gentlemen have a liberal education. In their youth, unmarried, they could

get on quite well with the pittance given, but they have been cramped more and more every year as the times grew harder, and the family grew larger, until to-day they are compelled to resort to all sorts of contrivances, and to cut and trim the necessities of the family in every way in order to pay the provision and clothing bill. We think it would stir the community to a complete revolution in this matter if some of the letters which the Committee have received could be published. We have been greatly troubled as we have read the details of attempts to appear respectable in cast-off clothing sent from some rich relative in the city, and to seem to be well fed and comfortable with the meagre supply which the table afforded. Actual want of the comforts if not the necessities of life is involved when a man makes up his mind to enter the sacred profession.

We cannot help feeling that while a certain degree of poverty, just enough to dampen the ardor of those who are uncertain as to whether it is best to take the step or not that decides the work of the future, is necessary for the protection of the office from unworthy seekers, and while we would not be understood as advising such an increase of salary as would offer any temptations whatever to persons not fit, we still hold it to be a patent truth that the present unnecessarily meagre compensation does have a large influence to keep good men and true out of the ministry. Willing as they may be to suffer any amount of privation themselves, they must feel it to be a very serious thing to involve in the same necessity the wife and children. Let the salaries of ministers be made sufficient to meet the wants of a man of the middle class in society, i. e., give him such a sum that he need not concentrate so much of his energy upon the hopeless task of making both ends meet, and give more of his time to the books and the work to which he has devoted himself, and we believe that the effect on the religious world would be felt at once.

Our only wonder, and the wonder has been on the increase since our investigation of this matter, is that so many men, with these inevitable evils before them, have entered the profession. To give up all things in order to serve the best interests of humanity, and to be paid for it with the coarsest possible crust, seems to be hardly fair. If a young man, with the Spirit of God moving in his heart, looks out upon any other profession, he sees a thousand inducements,—he can live in the midst of plenty, and of his plenty he can give whatever his generous heart may dic-

tate to the philanthropic organizations and the reforms of the time,—he can give his children a fitting education, and he can do a vast deal of real ministerial work among men by the sterling integrity of his character and the eloquence of a pure life; but if he looks at the prospect which the ministry has to offer, he sees so much pain and poverty and care for merely household goods, that your Committee do not and cannot think it strange that the professions of the Law and Medicine are crowded with aspirants while the Ministry is compelled to be thankful for the little it gets. No man can write a good sermon with an unpaid provision bill lying on the table; and no man can put zeal into his preaching, and into his daily talk, if his landlord's promptness in sending for the quarter's rent is not met with equal promptness on the part of the parish in paying the quarter's salary. This may seem to be a very small thing to many, but to the minister it involves his peace of mind and gives color to all his public services.

The necessity of growing old, and the inevitable cold shoulder which is turned to a minister in parishes which are looking over candidates, make it very important to provide at mid-day for the time when the shadows will gather. Under the present regime this is utterly out of the question. In these days a young minister must either marry a rich wife, or not marry at all. In country parishes it often happens that the wealthy man of the village pays out of his abundance only thirty or forty dollars a year for the support of the church, whose minister, with a salary varying from three hundred and fifty to seven hundred dollars, is expected to give his whole time to his sacred work and make as good an "appearance" as his position demands. In scores of instances ministers are compelled to resort to some secular pursuit in connection with the sacred office in order to meet the demands of the provision dealer. He keeps a little farm and does all the work himself; he opens a school, and thus incurs the displeasure of his society, who insist that the care of his people is quite enough work for one man; he boards and teaches forlorn suspended students, or resorts to some other device to meet the constant demands on his purse.

You can see at once that all this is true when we say that there are scores of ministers in New England who are living (we could choose a different word) on less than five hundred dollars a year, and scores more who subsist on what less than eight hundred will buy. If you will be kind enough to compare this with the wages given to artisans, you will see at once that

educated labor in competition with uneducated labor stands no chance at all. A first-class mason receives per day \$4, or for the working days of the year about \$1,200. A first-class carpenter \$3.50 per day, or per annum \$1,000. A first-class painter \$1,000. A common Irish laborer \$2 per day, or per annum, say \$500. A lumper or porter, per annum, say \$700. And so we might go through the list. It is enough to say that the country ministers of to-day receive, for the amount of labor done far less than any other class of persons including day laborers. This is not as it should be. The people will never know the amount of actual pinching that is constantly practised in consequence of this under pay. We are not wrong in saying that if the salaries of ministers could be so increased as to insure the comforts of life, the tone of Sunday exercises would be more healthy and cheerful, and the influence of the churches would be largely increased.

Your Committee have tried to find a remedy for this evil which they could recommend to the Conference. The whole matter ought to find its way to the thoughtful, the careful and the Christian men and women throughout the country. We believe that something should be done at once. If it is found impossible to pledge an increase of salary, let the minister be protected from the evils of poverty in his old age by means of a policy of Life Insurance on the endowment plan, which will guarantee to the possessor at a certain age, say fifty, the payment of a sum sufficiently large to keep the wolf from the door. This would not be a heavy task for any society to assume. The minister's life can be insured for a small annual expenditure, and the comfort which would accrue to recipients of such bounty would be of great benefit to the church. This is only one means of obviating a serious difficulty. We would recommend to all societies a thorough investigation of this matter, and feel sure that when the community is made aware of the bald facts of the case, its own good sense will suggest immediate action.

Respectfully yours,

GEO. H. HEPWORTH, *For the Committee.*

Rev. E. E. Hale then read the

REPORT OF THE COUNCIL.

The Council of the National Conference has the honor to report as follows:

The most important work of the Syracuse Conference was the establishment of the system of Local Conferences, covering almost the whole country. Fourteen such Local Conferences have been organized under various constitutions, all with the same desire for giving system and energy to our missionary work. The Maine Conference, the New Hampshire Association and the Western Conference have continued their energetic operations in the same direction. The Western Conference has formed the closest alliance for its missionary work with the American Unitarian Association, which has appointed Rev. Carlton Staples as its Western Secretary. The increased vigor and unity of action fitly represents the complete unity of spirit which has always characterized the action of the two societies.

One of the most important subjects which will come before you for consultation is the method of work of these several bodies, so closely related with the religious life of our churches. In place of any printed reports from the missionary organizations, the Council has asked the presence of all the secretaries of these Conferences, and they have requested Rev. Mr. Scandlin, one of their number, to report at this session the progress made in the organization of our body through the Conferences. We will therefore here simply say, that, while in various ways they have quickened the life and activity of our individual churches, they have also, without at all infringing on the principle of congregational independence done very much to quicken the action of the denomination.

The secretaries have held frequent meetings, and as an evidence of the entire harmony and strong interest of all, it may be stated that each one of these meetings has been attended by nearly every secretary of Conferences in the New England and Middle States. At these meetings a comparison of methods and results has been had, and such plans agreed upon as bear on the more general interests of the denomination. In particular, the raising of money for the American Unitarian Association has been systematized, and much has been accomplished towards realizing the practical results for which the system was designed.

From the reports of these bodies, and from the other informa-

tion brought before us, we are satisfied that we have more reason than ever to congratulate ourselves on the extent of the work before us, and on the means we have for carrying it out. The signs of the times certainly show that we have a great duty in the religious organization and instruction of this country, and in giving to it purer forms and simpler statements for the expression of its religious life. And the short life of the National Conference even is already long enough to show that efforts, even as slight as those we have used, will be largely rewarded.

There are, it is true, no statistics which properly represent the steady growth of liberal sentiment in religion through the land. The enumeration of the churches represented here from time to time furnishes no such expression. First, because such sentiment exists largely in districts of scattered population, where no efforts can be made to express it by the organization of churches. Second, because, even the steady demand made in the cities of the Middle States and of the West for the establishment of new churches of our faith cannot be understood by persons who do not see the correspondence of the secretaries of the Unitarian Association at Boston and Chicago. In many cases it becomes the duty of those gentlemen to say, however unwillingly, that they cannot advise our friends to organize themselves in parishes, because they cannot in fairness promise them even a reasonable prospect of attaining a satisfactory religious teacher. At any moment there may be a small number of preachers unemployed. But the number of parishes without ministers is always substantially as large. The enlargement of the number of our parishes goes forward, therefore, precisely as fast as the increase of our clergy. It goes forward no faster.*

This fact is to be observed with interest by those persons who hope to substitute the work of laymen while engaged in other walks of life, for the ministrations of a professional clergy, set aside for the ministry and for no other service. Whatever may be the value of such religious organizations as the Friends establish, not directly involving the work of a stated ministry, *we* have not yet succeeded in making any such organizations take the place of churches on the old pattern. On the other hand the first demand in our new societies is for a minister who shall not only take the work assigned to the ministry in all ages of

* Two hundred and sixty-three churches were invited to the first New York Convention of April, 1865. Three hundred and fifty-six were invited to this Conference in October, 1868.

the church, but also shall understand and carry through much of the detail of the work of a new organization. Right or wrong, this demand thus far controls the formation of such societies, and our secretaries are therefore constantly compelled to discourage movements in the formation of new parishes, till they can be sure that there is a reasonable chance of an adequate pulpit supply.

The mere statistics, therefore, of the increase of our churches, gratifying as they are, do not in any way represent the general interest in the Northern, Middle and Western States in the cause which we have at heart. They simply show the extension which has been possible with the force of ministers which this body can now command. A careful comparison of the number of our churches now, with the number invited to the Convention in this city in April, 1865, when the Conference was formed, shows an increase of eighty-three churches, about thirty per cent in three and a half years. The policy of the Unitarian Association and of the Western Conference, a policy which the council emphatically approve, is to place these churches, as largely as possible, at centres of influence, as at university towns or in central cities. Every city in America of more than 50,000 inhabitants has now at least one Unitarian Church, with two temporary exceptions, which are fitly supplied by our Universalist brethren.

These new churches are mostly self-supporting, after the necessary missionary expenses of a beginning had been generously met. There is no economy in attempting to limit those initial expenses by a niggardly standard. The steady increase of this work, however, has not been accompanied, as we could have hoped, by a corresponding increase in the contributions to our central treasury. We believe there is no doubt that the contributions of our churches during the last year, for religious purposes, have been larger than ever before. But almost every church, in its new activity, has found some object of direct interest which has occupied its attention, and the charity which begins at home has in many instances absorbed the offerings which we would have been glad to use in distant service. For instance, the few years past have greatly enlarged and improved our church edifices. Of such local work the Council has no official accounts — its character not falling within the view of the reports presented to us. But a single illustration of it, which is not exceptional, is found in the work of the churches in the city of Boston. That city is represented here by delegates from

thirteen churches, and five chapels of the Ministry-at-Large. Within six or seven years past twelve of the thirteen churches have occupied or have undertaken the erection of wholly new church edifices much larger than they occupied before, or have supplemented their work by the erection of mission chapels. The one exception is in the historical society of King's Chapel — to change whose venerable church would be sacrilege; but the congregation there, none the less alive to its duty, has made the most liberal contributions for the extension of church accommodations elsewhere in the city. These new arrangements, when completed, will more than double the accommodations for worshippers provided in those churches. The same churches, united in the Benevolent Fraternity, have in the same time arranged for the erection of two larger chapels than those now occupied; and one chapel wholly new has been added to their number. Briefly stated, here is an instance of the steady work going forward within our churches, which makes no appearance whatever in a list which simply counts their numbers.

The experience of every Protestant church shows, however, that only those inhabitants of our cities whose residence is in some measure permanent, attach themselves to an established congregation. Our churches are religious homes, and the people who have no homes elsewhere do not yet find themselves at home in these churches. Now in all our large cities one-half the population may be considered as belonging to the nomadic, movable or floating class. They are supported by wages paid weekly or monthly in contracts which last for short periods only. They have no real estate, little other property which fetters their movements, and at a day's notice are ready to pass to any other city which offers more for their labor. They rent their tenements on short leases, or on none, and often regard themselves as a transient population. Such a population is not provided for in its religious needs by any of our older ecclesiastical systems. None the less do those needs exist, however. The necessity of worship and communion is as great as ever, and a fit provision for that necessity is perhaps the most serious demand now made on the churches in America.

We have watched, therefore, with intense interest the great popular gatherings conducted for two winters past in Boston, Lawrence, Springfield, New Bedford, Providence, Salem, and other large cities at the East, and in Chicago and in San Francisco, under the direction of our Local Conferences or our clergy, to which the general name of theatre meetings has been

given. In these meetings there has been a steady attendance, not yet seen to flag, of all classes of the people. Sometimes it happens that this attendance is larger than that in all the churches in the town the same day. In Boston the attendance has more than once outnumbered the attendance the same day in the thirteen Unitarian churches of the city proper — the theatre congregations being indifferent to storms which deter the attendance of worshippers more certain that they have “already attained.” It is impossible as yet to state any law of these remarkable assemblages. It is observed, however, that they distrust any reference by the preachers to sacerdotal theology, or to that of terror or of partiality; it is even observed that they are not familiar with the tunes which had been supposed universally known by Protestant worshippers. It is thought that they do not relish merely ornamental or rhetorical addresses more than do audiences of the most scholarly taste; and that their attention is best held by the most thoughtful discussion.

We regard the maintenance of these services as a duty of the first importance in the present aspects of society.

The wish is constantly expressed that congregations, which seem to be determined to, make the theatre or public hall their place of worship, should be better known, their separate wants better attended to, and the duties of ministry among them better fulfilled. But we do not learn that the efforts of the Local Conferences in this direction have met with any success. In the city of Providence, however, under the lead of the Committee who had in charge the City Hall meetings of 1867-8, has grown up the Providence Union for Christian Work, which carries forward those meetings still, and has inaugurated a systematic and careful series and method of religious work, which seem to interest the people of that city who had not found their religious homes in churches. The example was so striking that a similar organization called the Suffolk Union was formed in Boston, which is represented here to-day. The Council are so impressed with the necessity of diligent study of every enterprise for meeting the great popular need of the cities, and are so gratified by the success of the Union in Providence, that they have asked for a special report of that enterprise, which will be presented to you at this meeting — in connection with some studies on the general problem of the absence of so large a part of the population of our cities from our established churches.

In the States lately the scene of war, the Unitarian Association has made some efforts to establish churches, with little

result. The principal work of our churches there has been the assistance and establishment of schools — in which with most catholic spirit they have worked generally in connection with the Freedmen's Commission and the Soldiers' Memorial Society. The Methodist, Orthodox, Baptist and Episcopal churches, however, gradually withdrew from these organizations to render their assistance to denominational institutions. The Roman Catholics never joined them, and an unsectarian common school system for the South — like that universal through the North — is now left, therefore, mainly to the oversight of the Bureau of Education, of the trustees of the Peabody Fund, and of the Liberal churches of America.

In our own evident inability to meet the religious destitution of the South, the Council and the officers of the American Unitarian Association studied largely the efforts of other religious bodies more favorably placed than we, and we satisfied ourselves that the great organization known as the African Methodist Church, a body created and managed wholly by men of color, understands the exigency at the South, and is doing more to meet it than any other religious communion. Conscious ourselves that we had neither preachers to send to the South, nor congregations to hear them, we consulted with the bishops and members of that Conference as to what fair ways were open in which we could render them assistance. The outlines of a plan have been agreed upon, by which the Unitarian Association agrees to furnish such books as may be jointly determined on as valuable for the religious uses of the African Church in its Southern mission. We have attempted also to render some assistance to the training school for freedmen which that Conference has established under the name of Wilberforce College, at Xenia, Ohio, and other plans are now being prepared by a joint committee of the African Methodist Church and the American Unitarian Association, for a more general co-operation in the work of higher education.

The subjects thus briefly touched upon have been those which have chiefly occupied the attention of the Council at its meetings. We have generally sent representatives to the meetings of our Local Conferences — and we were represented at the recent meetings of the Methodist Conference for New England — of the United States Convention of Universalists, and of the African Methodist Church, by delegates who were directed to express to those bodies our sense of the value of the great work which they have in hand.

Our chief work, however, is in the arrangement of the business presented for consideration at this General Meeting of the National Conference. Different Conferences and members have notified us of their wish to bring up eleven different topics for consideration. Ten of these are named on the printed list which for convenience is circulated to-day.* After this was printed, several delegates gave notice of their intention to propose an amendment to the preamble of our Constitution. Recognizing the general interest of this subject, the Council, after consultation with those interested in the amendments, propose that that subject be assigned for the special order for to-morrow—the discussion on it to begin at the beginning of the session. They propose that the election of officers be made the special order of Friday morning.

They propose that, with these exceptions, the other topics be taken up in the order in which they stand on the printed docket, excepting that article five be transferred to the closing day of the Convention.

The range of subjects is wide, and their number large. But there is no doubt that they are vitally interesting to the Churches represented here, and to the faith intrusted to us. They group themselves under six different heads; if the Conference gives half a day to each, they will occupy us three days only. We

* I. The Local Conferences of our body, and their working in practice. This subject will be opened by Rev. W. G. Scandlin. Rev. C. B. Ferry will follow on Itinerant Missionary Work.

II. The methods of raising money by the Churches of the American Unitarian Association. This subject will be introduced by Rev. J. F. W. Ware and Rev. Charles Lowe.

III. Theological Schools. This subject will be introduced by Rev. R. Laird Collier, D. D. of Chicago.

IV. The relations between this Conference and other liberal religious organizations in America. Opened by Rev. J. F. Clarke, D. D.

V. The relations between our Churches and the liberal Churches of Europe. Opened by Rev. H. W. Bellows, D. D.

VI. Our duty to the part of the population of our cities who have no connection with the established Churches, and take no interest in them. Opened by Mr. W. B. Weeden, of Providence, R. I.

VII. Our duties regarding education in the Southern States. Opened by Prof. A. Crosby and Rev. Geo. L. Chaney.

VIII. The relations of this Conference with the African Methodist Church. Opened by Rev. Fielder Israel and Bishop Payne.

IX. The possibility of a literary, critical, scientific, and theological review, which should combine the support of the liberal religious organizations of America. Opened by Rev. Samuel Osgood, D. D., and Rev. J. H. Allen.

X. The best arrangements for assisting the publication of a liberal religious literature. Opened by Rev. S. G. Bulfinch, D. D.

approach such discussions more easily than do the Assemblies of Churches more closely bound. For in all our proceedings it is to be remembered on all hands,—what we suppose to be granted by all,—that this Conference only exists, and is only possible, on the Catholic statement originally so wisely and unanimously made as the foundation stone on which it rests, in the original vote of our first Convention.

“That to secure the largest unity of the Spirit, and the widest practical co-operation of the members of our body, it is hereby understood that all the resolutions and declarations of this body are expressions only of its majority, committing in no degree those who object to them, claiming no other than a moral authority over the members or the Churches represented here; and are dependent wholly for their effect upon the consent they command on their own merits from the Churches here represented or belonging within the circle of our special fellowship.”

On motion of Rev. E. E. Hale,

Voted, That the Chair appoint a Business Committee of five.

And the Chair appointed: D. B. Eaton, of New York; Rev. Augustus Woodbury, of Providence; Artemas Carter, of Chicago; Rev. Frederick Frothingham, of Buffalo; Rev. T. B. Forbush, of Cleveland.

Rev. Wm. G. Scandlin read the following

REPORT ON THE LOCAL CONFERENCES OF OUR BODY AND THEIR WORKING IN PRACTICE.

At the last meeting of the National Conference it was recommended by the Council that the whole Unitarian domain should be territorially sub-divided, so that every church should belong to some Association or Conference. As a result of that recommendation, fourteen Local Conferences have been organized, reaching through Wisconsin, Minnesota, Ohio, the Middle and Southern States, New York and New England. As a denomination, we have reached this specific result from a general impulse and movement. The National Conference came into being first;—the most distinct positive want that it realized at the outset were local organizations.

In the attempt to form these, the necessity of a feasible plan

for society action and for mutual co-operation, became obvious; not only as a possibility of success for these Local Conferences, but as the only condition of prosperity for societies themselves;—this last comes first as a matter of efficiency. A living Church or society is made out of the living members which compose it, out of co-operative toil for the end binding them together. Hence the necessity of some plan for society organization, generally accepted, and faithfully used, for the binding of our many members in these Conference relations into a living body of Christian co-laborers.

All the local organizations felt this to be a necessity. Some pressed it as a duty—others waived it out of what was termed respect to Congregational usage, rather to the fear of jealousy or suspicion that might arise from external suggestions. It was the old lion of Individuality in the pathway of our denominational progress. Wherever these local Conferences adopted plans, or offered suggestions, for society organization, and the annual appointment of committees for specific religious work, they have been kindly received and more generally adopted than any had dared to hope.

The brief period allotted to this report makes it impossible to treat of the work done by the *different Local Conferences*. One could not reach in thought the territory over which they extend in the time. To avoid confusion, though at the risk of apparent selfishness I accepted the task of outlining the work attempted by the Worcester Conference. It has an established basis of representation—the pastor and six lay delegates of either sex for each society. Some societies elect one set of delegates for a year, but the course recommended is for each society to elect new delegates for each meeting, so that all may be eventually brought into social and spiritual contact, being baptized into the power of Christian fellowship. There can be no feeling of responsibility for Conference action without an exact basis of representation, and the immediate action of each society in the election of its delegates. All who desire attend the meetings of the Conference, but the business is transacted by the delegates. The whole machinery of the Conference is left in the hands of its Board of Officers, so that we have a definite plan for each meeting, something looking toward practical work, embodied ere the meeting closes in one or more resolutions, which are sent forth as the recommendation of the Conference to the societies that were or might have been present at its gathering. Out of twenty-nine societies, seventeen have adopted the plan of organ-

ization recommended, so that any information required, or any suggestions to be made touching Sunday-schools, missionary work, and charity or Christian fellowship, may go direct from the secretary of the Conference to the chairman of either of these committees. In this way we hope to cultivate among the laity of our parishes practical co-operation in our Christian work. By our missionary committees we have learned the actual religious condition of fifteen towns. We have gained this knowledge by a very easy and simple process. By using the school district of a town or the wards of a city, we have territorial divisions already made. One or more members of a parish in each division have been selected by the Committee of the Society on Missionary Work, and a series of questions to be answered for each family, placed in their hands. These sub-Committees make their reports to the Missionary Committee of the parish, placing the statistics and facts gathered as material for Christian work in their hands. This has given a clear, definite idea of the field that is white unto the harvest, lying under the very shadow of our churches. The districts revealing the greatest religious wants are to be entered in one of two ways, and, whenever possible, by both. Sunday or other evening service should be held in the district Town Hall, or one's own people of each district should be gathered at one of their residences, and they be taught the actual condition of their neighborhood as set forth in the report of their district; and have commended to their sympathy those living without Christian relations or apparent religious interest. You thus organize the religious sentiment of each neighborhood, and commit to its care not some distant outpost, but a locality familiar, people known, and work ever soliciting. We advise moderation in order to obtain stability, — selecting one or two families in a district, and then concentrating on them its whole power, — carrying our personal religious influence to them in their homes, by our neighborly intercourse and sympathy. Giving them this, they will eventually turn to the spiritual homes of our faith, as the planet turns toward the light.

Pastoral visitation, weekly, to *one* of these points, welcoming any and all of the district to friendly religious intercourse, would keep the machinery in operation, deepen the life of the parish by the Christian work it was doing, and help with holiest sympathy the unchurched masses of the nation.

These Committees should be appointed by the societies, and they should receive from the chairman of each an annual report

of their work and its results. In this way you organize and set in active operation the combined power of laity and clergy. As secretary of the Conference I am to learn all I can of the condition and wants of each society — ministering to the last whenever and wherever it is a possibility, bringing their vacant pulpits and our unsettled ministers into hopeful connection and communion, setting forth in every way and in all places the work, power and life of the denomination, spurring them to holy zeal and righteous emulation, touching their pure minds by way of remembrance on contribution of finance for our general missionary work. Few will justly question the love for religious liberty that is to be found in the heart of Massachusetts. And yet these suggestions, plans for remodelling societies that have passed their century of existence, this external supervision, if you please so to term it, has been received in the kindest spirit and with deepest gratitude. We are freer to-day than when we were frozen in our separate icicle of individuality. By such a system we are striving to make our Conference a wheel in the mechanical construction of our denominational life, so that any suggestion or inquiry of this National Conference may pass down through the American Unitarian Association as the headquarters of our missionary work, to the Secretary of the Conference, and then through him to every society in his territorial domain — finding at each point a guardian of our religious liberty, a defender of its sacred rights. By this Conference action we have lost much of the isolation and coldness of our past; and the mingling of our offerings on the common altar of Christian fellowship and faith brings down a very pentecost of joy — so that we find new tongues and power for the ministry of Christ in the world of humanity. We feel that no one thing would do so much toward awakening a deep religious interest, concentrating it into practical avenues of Christian co-operation, as this thorough organization of our societies, this starting of laity into an examination of their own local surroundings, and then setting them to work upon the material which they find. It will give sympathy, confidence and fellowship among societies, between Conferences, and all through the denomination. With a common aim and a common system for our practical Christian work, we march, not as separate units, but as a solid organized body to the living strain and impulse from union, under the standard of the Cross, rescuing humanity from the fetters of error and the degradation of sin.

A common system of organization for societies, which means a common plan for work, mutual and harmonious action of Conferences, the concentration of our whole power through our denominational avenues for the particular work which we have been raised up to do; — the sooner this is done the sooner our strength will be realized, and the quicker all needed means will be raised through these regular and established ways. This is our first and greatest want. The worth of these local organizations can be seen from the work they have already accomplished, the deepening of our religious life, and the systematized apportionment and collection of funds for the general missionary work of the denomination. The fact that such harmony and co-operation are possible is found in the meetings already held by the secretaries of these different Conferences, and the great practical good growing therefrom.

Rev. C. B. Ferry read the following

REPORT ON ITINERANT PREACHING.

No one rejoices more than I do over the earnest efforts that are making to convey the Word to the unchurched masses of our large cities. It is a noble work, and I am glad that Liberal Christianity is to have the honor of initiating it. Perhaps ours is the only form of Christianity that will readily adapt itself either to the wants of the common people, or to the methods which alone will meet their case. And whether these efforts result in church organizations, or any thing like them, or not, is to me a matter of very little anxiety or concern. The people will hear the Word; the seed will be sown in many hearts; man and woman will be lifted up, and comforted and saved, and then they will organize themselves as best suits their own needs and inclinations. At all events I think we may safely have visible results with God, and go forward and do the work assigned us in faith, believing that no word or influence of the Spirit will be lost, but will accomplish that—all and no more—whereunto it is sent. Jesus said little or nothing about organizing churches. His appeal to his disciples about preaching the Good News was very urgent.

But while you are doing so much, and so much is being said on every hand about feeding the spiritually destitute multitudes in our large cities, some of us are beginning to ask ourselves, cannot something be done more than has hitherto been con-

templated, to meet the wants of the vast multitudes of people in similar circumstances, who are living in the country. I suppose you who live in cities, unless your attention has been specially called to the subject, and have had opportunities to inform yourselves, have very inadequate ideas of the number of people in our country towns, everywhere, who do not, regularly or irregularly, attend the public ministrations of religion in the various places in which they reside. In my own State it is estimated that not quite a third part of the inhabitants are church-going people. In several of the towns there are no churches at all, and most of the churches that do exist are not, on an average, two-thirds filled from Sunday to Sunday. In one town of 1,700 inhabitants, there is one religious society, Free-will Baptist I think, and just one hundred persons find their religious home in it. There is a handful of determined women in the place who are making every effort to establish and maintain liberal preaching, which, it is said, is the only kind that has the least shadow of a chance of being heard. Preaching has been had there more or less during the two years past, and we hope one day to establish in the place a Unitarian Society. This is perhaps a rather extreme case, but it seems to show the state of things in many of our towns, and probably in too many towns throughout the country.

New Hampshire numbers some 330,000 inhabitants. There are, as nearly as I can ascertain, 550 churches or places of public worship in the State. Divide the number of inhabitants by the number of churches, and you have for each church a congregation of about 600. "Well," you say, "this is well enough." Yes, providing all the inhabitants go to meeting, and providing moreover that the aggregate church accommodations are all used. But the average attendance upon public worship throughout the State does not exceed 200 to each society—hardly amounts to that number. Besides, the average capacity of our churches is, perhaps, not sufficient to accommodate more than 300 persons each. So you see, full two-thirds of the inhabitants of the State are wholly outside religious influences, do not see fit for one reason or another to fill up the churches which exist among them, and could not all be accommodated with church privileges, provided all had the desire to enjoy them.

This is the condition of things religious, or rather ecclesiastical, which exists in the State to which I belong. That my own State is an exception to most others in this respect, I have grave reasons to doubt. If a condition of semi-barbarism can

be predicated of us, we have the consolation of knowing that we are not alone in this distinction. All over the country, so far as I can learn, the same melancholy state of things exists. Not a third part of the people are in the habit of going to meeting, or care much about religious things; are rather inclined to the opinion that religion, as it is publicly set forth, to say the least, is a thing of the past, churches an unnecessary expense, and ministers a kind of humbug. The masses of the people do not believe that there is anything in this whole matter which the preachers are making such an ado about. They believe in politics, in science, in education, in agriculture, in trade, in machinery, in government bonds, but they do not believe in religion, — well enough for those who have the time and means to attend to it, but not the thing for practical business men, who have something tangible, something of immediate and pressing importance to occupy themselves with. They are called by their pious neighbors, sceptics, infidels, the world's people, and what not; but care they for that? Their company is so large, and so respectable withal, that they can afford to be so regarded by the insignificant handful calling themselves "Christians." Besides, they are getting it into their heads, many of them, that the Christians are really no better off than they are — live no better, and die no better; are no happier in this world, and they see no reason, say they, why they should be happier in the next. Multitudes of them have the notion that they, their families, and society, can get on quite as well without the churches as with. At any rate, they take no interest in what the preachers say, and they are not going where they will not be interested; especially they are not going to pay out their money where they can see nothing that is going to come of it. They will go in crowds to hear a stump speaker, and if he interests them they will go again and again. But to the political speaker who is dull, once is always enough for him. He has no need of coming the second time. And the same test is applied to ministers and preaching, and I am not able to bring myself to think that it is far out of the way.

Some may be ready to maintain that the cause of this general indifference is the irrational doctrines which are preached in the churches, and that Orthodoxy therefore is responsible for it, and that all we need to do is to plant Unitarian churches in every town and village throughout the country. Doubtless this is partly true. But it is not the whole truth, nor even half the truth. Many of the people are, we know, tired of the old

absurd dogmas, which they have heard from their childhood, and which they utterly nauseate over. And this class are longing and waiting with great anxiety to hear the gospel preached once more as it was preached in Judea; and they are ready any moment to lend their aid and influence to any movement promising to give them what their souls so deeply hunger for. They read and think, and hold their own opinions upon mooted points in theology, and are continually raising questions in morals and religion, which a committed pulpit is illy prepared to meet. They sometimes go to church, and are willing to waive their own objections to doctrines they hear preached which they deem false, if only they can be entertained. Their influence and their money, therefore goes to the support of Orthodoxy. At the same time it is interesting to note how Orthodoxy trims its statements to suit this growing class in its congregations, and to draw in the much larger numbers outside who perhaps are moulding Orthodoxy by their free way of looking at things, and the general weight of their influence in society, quite as much as Orthodoxy is moulding them.

But this is not the chief reason why the masses take no special interest in religion, and for the most part stand wholly aloof from its public institutions and ministrations, namely, that they are sick of Orthodoxy. This I say is not the chief reason. One great difficulty is, as a general rule, they are not sick enough of it. It would be well if Orthodoxy would make them a little more sick than it does. No; the great and alarming cause of this wide-spread indifference, below all other causes, I believe is to be found in the lack of ability, earnestness, originality, and personal power in the pulpits themselves. Let Calvinism be preached in all its baldness, in all its shocking monstrosity, but preached with ability, enthusiasm and power, preached as if the preacher believed it himself with all his might, and as if it were a life and death concern, and the masses will flock to hear it, and fill to overflowing its churches, and be benefited by it too. On the other hand let the highest, grandest and clearest truths of Unitarianism be set forth in that soulless, dignified, aping way so common among us, and it will, at least it ought to, empty any church in the land in a twelvemonth. Correct views are important in the preacher, and especially in the sermon, unquestionably, but they are not half so important as *power* in the man himself. Far deeper and better than anything the preacher has to say, is the life he communicates from his own personality. And this is quite independent of the particular views he holds or

labors to inculcate, quite independent of any official functions he may chance to exercise, quite independent of any authority he may claim for his assertions, based on any external grounds whatever. Whoso has this is "a first-rate man," and is usually regarded so, let his other qualifications for his office be never so mean. And it is hardly necessary to say that wherever men find this, whether in Orthodox or Liberal churches, there they go, and listen attentively to what it has to say to them. Now we would naturally expect that he whose views are soundest, brightest and best, would have, and be able to communicate the most of this soul power, this life of God; and as a general rule I believe it is so. But not always: for *life*, residing less in the views a man holds than in the man himself, it follows that many a man is a truer and better minister of religion, spite of his false theology, than that Liberal minister, be he never so well qualified in other respects, who is wanting in that personal soul-power, which alone moves and heals and gladdens men's souls.

Hence the great need in our country towns, and particularly in those towns where the people are most alienated from the churches, is liberal preaching. Yes, but more than that — preaching that will communicate life — intellectual, moral and spiritual life — to the people. It is not liberal views alone that we want in the country. We want far more than liberal views, great, strong, brave men — and women, if any there are — who have the ability to command public attention and mould public opinion, and lift the masses out of their materialistic notions and aims and ways, by the irresistible force of their own personality.

We often hear men complain of small parishes, that they are not satisfied with cheap ministers, such as they can afford to have, but want first-rate men, who can command a large salary. Who can or ought to be satisfied with a *cheap* minister? Is this demand on the part of the people (and I know not why mere handfuls of people should not make the demand as well as large congregations) for "great preaching," as the phrase is, in other words, *good* preaching, — the kind that will interest them, — so very unreasonable? Is it not well that the people have this high desire? Do we count it a matter of regret that any one, or any class in the community, prefers the best books, the best newspapers, the best works of art, and will not possess or look at that trashy stuff which is food only for a corrupt taste, and a depraved heart? Would we discourage a literary or active taste in any one? Is it not one of the first duties to cultivate it, especially in the *sparsely* settled districts of our country?

No: I believe that poor, lifeless preachers have much to answer for, in view of the dying state of many of our churches, and of the religious indifference of the multitudes throughout the country who never or seldom enter the churches. The people are not half as much at fault as the ministers. Why, a poor preacher is enough to kill any society, only let him preach to it long enough.

But how are our feeble societies to be supplied with preaching if they do not take up with such as they can pay for, and be content therewith? And how are the famishing souls throughout the country to be fed with the bread of God, if we do not send among them gospel messengers who can be cheaply kept, and whom the people can readily pay for? This is the problem. Now, I suppose the fact is well understood that the best things are always pecuniarily costly, and that even those things which are decently good have a price. Then how are we to reconcile these seemingly irreconcilable circumstances? How are we to marry the wealth of heaven with the poverty of this world? In fine, how is so costly a thing as the gospel of Jesus Christ to be got into the very places where it is most needed, but where the prospect of its material support is most discouraging? I answer, by giving it feet and sending it through the world, "providing neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in its purse," but compelling it to live off the country it passes through and blesses. In other words, let each preacher's parish be found in half a dozen towns, and let it embrace a thousand, or ten thousand people, instead of a hundred or five hundred; so will he be liberally paid, and at the same time his people will be richly fed with the "true bread" out of the fulness of a great soul, at least once a month.

My plan is simply that of an itinerant or circuit ministry, by which the demands of both the people and the ministers shall be met. The people shall have ministers whom they will love to hear, and the ministers shall receive in return a sufficient compensation. Let three or four or even more adjoining towns unite in one parish, and call a good strong man to preside over them ecclesiastically, and break the bread of life to them, preaching in each town once a fortnight, or once a month, as circumstances will permit, and let him be the recognized and responsible minister or bishop of that district. I would not call him a missionary—at least I would avoid as much as possible the meaning usually attached to that word, for it does not give us sufficiently the idea of permanency. I would have the circuit preacher just as permanently settled by ordination or installa-

tion over his scattered charge as any minister among us is over his city or his country parish, the only difference being that the circuit minister's parish shall extend over a wider territory than that of the local minister. Suppose, for example, the Local Conference of Worcester County, in Massachusetts, take the best man they can find for the purpose, and plant him in some centre of influence, say Milford, have him take up his residence there, with the distinct understanding that he is to preach, as often in each place as he may, in the several towns round about there where no Liberal preaching is now heard, including the town of Milford itself. We are not to ask whether Liberal preaching is wanted in any place. Of course it is. Enough people, I believe, in every town in the land might be found who would gladly welcome the gospel as we should carry it to them. We are to take it for granted that everywhere souls are waiting and hungering for the true bread. And every town in every State should be as faithfully looked after as your Local Conference system proposes to look after every family in every parish. Not one should be neglected. And all may be supplied, and well supplied, if the plan I suggest be carried out. It would be impossible for any strong, thoughtful, earnest man to plant himself anywhere, in our Northern States, and not find enough to do, and a sufficient compensation for his labor, within a circuit of twelve miles. There are in my own vicinity no less than five towns with closed church edifices in them — two belonging to the Universalists, and three to the Orthodox Congregationalists. What is to hinder my taking to myself a colleague, and by relinquishing my afternoon service at home, holding regular services in all those churches alternately, and collecting regular congregations, and organizing them as such, and as churches — we two working together for that purpose? So entirely practicable has this plan seemed to me, and to a friend who proposes to aid me, that we have actually determined to put it into execution, and thus carry on as we hope to do, the work of five ministers instead of two, provided each place had its own minister.

This plan would involve the necessity of a minister's preaching twice or thrice a week, and each time to a fresh congregation. And it requires also, considerable travel on his part. But I imagine that such a ministry would not be without its charms and inspirations. I believe it would open to a man grander opportunities for usefulness than he can possibly have in a single country parish. And by systematizing and economizing his time properly, he could find an abundance of it for necessary leisure

and study. Many country ministers, I am convinced, have more time on their hands than they well know what to do with, and much of it goes to waste. Did they have more to do, more engagements on their hands, more enterprises to work, more to call them out, they would study to better purpose and be much more useful and effective men, as pastors and preachers, in the several spheres in which they labor.

But the system of circuit preaching would call a man much away from his family and the comforts and duties of home. True, sacrifices would be required of those who should undertake thus to do the Lord's work. But how, I ask, is the Lord's work to be done, and the gospel carried into *all* the world, unless men can be found who will be ready to take up that work and make the necessary sacrifices in its behalf, and in behalf of humanity? How are these famishing souls in the morally desert places of our country to be supplied with spiritual food, unless the food be carried to them? They will not come to it, it must go to them. And I fully believe that if the work is only taken up, and carried forward with the energy, self-sacrifice and ability necessary to carry on successfully any great undertaking, we shall be surprised at the result.

There will be no use in sending indifferent men and dull preachers into these fields of labor. There are too many of us there now. If anywhere in the world first-rate men are needed, it is in the very places where the people do not go to meeting, and where the churches are dying for lack of support, and souls are being eaten up by the love of money. And if anywhere ministers are not needed or wanted, who have failed elsewhere, or have mistaken their calling, it is in these places.

Now by the plan proposed, real ministers of religion who have shown, or will show, their fitness by their success, can be secured for our fullest parishes, and the unchurched masses will have the gospel preached to them. These separate congregations of 150 persons each, combined, would make a parish of 450 members. And this would be competent to support liberally a good minister. Then a parish of four or six congregations could do for themselves still better, only the more congregations included in one bishopric or curacy, the less frequently could each have preaching. And yet I submit whether it would not be better that they should have good preaching twelve times a year each, than poor preaching twice every Sunday; better for the people, better for the cause, better every way.

True, it is desirable that every minister should establish, by

frequent intercourse with them, personal relations with his people, as far as possible, and therefore it might not be desirable that any one should have charge of more than four different congregations. It seems to me that the day is coming when less of what is called parochial labor will be required or expected of the minister than now, and that his greatest power and his best influence will be found to be in the pulpit. The true minister of religion will, of course, always be a minister of consolation and of general helpfulness to his people. But he will sustain this character the less in form and more in reality than now. And so while his bodily labors will be relatively less, his actual influence and usefulness among his fellow-men will be far greater. And *then* the man who feels that he is sent to do a specific holy work, who has something to say to the world, and is gifted with the faculty to say it, will be just as able to minister to a thousand people as a hundred, and to ten thousand as a thousand.

Now in some such way as this, it seems to me, the multitudes of unchurched and unsatisfied souls throughout the country, living not in cities, but in the smaller towns and rural districts, must be fed with the bread of life, and raised to the new life in God, if fed and raised at all. The Methodists have set us an example in missionary enterprise to which we shall do well to give heed. And now that liberal Christianity is coming out from the half dozen cities in which it has been nursed and confined for the last half century — out from its parlors and studies, where it has grown a whitened and delicate thing — out from the hands of the few, and is fast assuming the character and proportions of a faith for the millions — a hope and consolation for a nation of fainting and dying men and women, it becomes us to adopt such methods for its wider diffusion in the world, as shall be in keeping with the commission we have received by virtue of possessing it as a legacy from the Master of Souls. Our Universalist brethren had the right idea and the true spirit in the pioneer days of their great reform, when their earnest preachers, all ablaze with their precious truths and glorious protestations, and armed to the teeth with invincible logic and Bible texts to match, took to their saddles and journeyed up and down the country, publishing their glad tidings, holding their meetings in halls and school-houses wherever they could find ten men who would come out and hear them, ready and glad any time to hold public discussions, and even inviting them, bearding the very lion of orthodoxy in his den, wherever they could meet him. And the result is that there is hardly a town in my own State where

the doctrines of Universalism have not been preached and fairly set before the people, where Universalist people will not be found, and where Universalist churches do not now, or have not once existed. And this I apprehend will fairly describe the general history of Universalist missionary operations, and their present results in nearly every State, — in the North, at least. I know not how it is in the South. But how is it with Unitarianism? It has existed as a distinct faith and denomination for over fifty years, and yet you shall go into a majority of the towns in my own State, and find plenty of people who never so much as heard of the thing, or even the name. Rome, with her proverbial wisdom, looks well after her children, scattered here and there over the land, — looks after them in the persons of her bishops and priests, who, in those districts where the Catholic population is comparatively small, pursue methods somewhat similar to the one I have indicated, in order that they may be sure that all Catholics everywhere shall hear the word and have churches to go to, and priests to absolve them from their sins. And there is no reason why liberal Christianity should not be equally wise and zealous, and take up the cross, and go forth into all the world conquering and to conquer, as we fondly dream it is destined to do.

Beside the plan indicated, in regard to circuit preaching, it seems to me it would be practicable and very profitable to have what might be called mass meetings, or, if you please, camp meetings, as has already been suggested, in the summer time, in the country, at which our best men shall be heard. What we want is to get the people together. And I see no reason why they may not be got together in vast multitudes in the country as well as in the city, nor why the whole country, from centre to circumference, may not be made all alive by the good news we bring, and the gifted tongues we have.

I know not why something, yea, more than we dream, may not be done by these great truths of ours, which, in this time of national regeneration, are just beginning to show their true character and their perfect adaptation to this new world, to lift the cloud which has so long rested like a nightmare on the heart of the world, to reclaim from a semi-barbarism a vast multitude of our fellow-citizens, and to make this nation in deed and in fact a free, a loyal, and a thoroughly religious people.

Rev. A. D. Mayo offered the following Resolution :

Resolved, That the National Conference regards the success already attained in the formation of Local Conferences as full of encouragement; and urges the complete development of the system as essential to the life of the Unitarian Body.

Adopted.

The subjects of Local Conferences and Itinerant Missionary work were further discussed by Rev. Messrs. C. A. Staples, J. C. Kimball, B. H. Bailey, Rev. Dr. Bellows, Rev. S. R. Calthrop and Mrs. Dall.

Rev. J. C. Kimball offered the following Resolution :

Resolved, That the Secretaries of the various Local Conferences, with Rev. Mr. Scandlin of the Worcester Conference as chairman, be a Committee to report on the condition and working of these bodies up to the present time, and to form and carry out some plan embodying the principles contained in the paper presented by Rev. Mr. Scandlin, for a more thorough organization in our separate societies, and for greater uniformity of action and efficiency in doing the work of the denomination.

Adopted.

Rev. Dr. Bellows offered the following Resolution :

Resolved, That this Conference recommends to Unitarian families living in places where there is no established Unitarian Church, and also to parishes without a settled pastor, to hold regular Sunday services among themselves, without reference to the presence of a minister.

Adopted.

The Business Committee submitted the following Resolution :

Resolved, That all amendments to the Constitution and By-laws that shall be submitted to the Committee on Business during its now pending session be considered on the morning session of Thursday.

Adopted.

At 1, P. M., the Conference took an hour's recess.

AFTERNOON SESSION.

The Conference re-assembled at two o'clock.

The Business Committee made a Report on order of Meetings and assignment of topics for discussion, which was adopted.

The same Committee submitted the following Resolution :

Resolved, That no person speak more than once on the same subject, or more than ten minutes at any one time, without leave of the Convention.

Adopted.

Rev. Robert Laird Collier, D. D., read the following

REPORT ON THEOLOGICAL SCHOOLS.

It is a truth, in no wise exaggerated, that in every community of ten thousand souls in the Northern and Western States, a capable and consecrated minister of our faith could call together and ecclesiastically organize a self-sustaining Christian church. It can therefore be a ground of no surprise to discover among us a growing anxiety to make easy the passage from secular vocations to the sanctities of the ministry, and especially that young men, half-educated, certainly insufficiently equipped for the performance of its divine functions, should be hastily and therefore unwisely trained to meet this importunate demand of the church.

To begin with, it would be a mistake to disallow the superlatively important and exceptional character of the sacred office. Ministers should have, and for the most part do have, a sufficient and suitable maintenance; beyond this, pecuniary inducements would only serve to unsanctify that which in its very nature has no computation in things earthly and material. Few men who long, or at all, usefully remain in the ministry, enter it from pecuniary motives. Its duties are so arduous and its responsibilities so infinitely above those of the other learned professions, that few men, whatever their success, remain in the church except through a sense of duty which they dare not silence, and seldom wish to weaken.

The men who seem to do so poorly, — the unnotable names, — men without definite results and conspicuous usefulness, are in most cases heroic spirits enduring the penalty of inward distrust, yet kept at their work, tread-mill though it be, by an inward sense that needs to conquer this distrust, but a sense, that though the man "die daily" he is "separated unto the gospel of God."

Only the spirit of the hireling, of whom the image rather than the instruction of our Lord hath forewarned us, can transform the cross of sacrifice into a couch of repose.

Ministers at the altars of the church are born of the spiritual fervor of the church.

"Like people, like priest." Earnestness and the showing of it, a greater emphasis upon the interior life of Christianity and devotional methods, would at once kindle and spread a flame of wise, because divine, enthusiasm that would burn upon the hearts of a thousand youth who would agonize with the conviction "woe is me if I preach not the gospel."

But this divine calling, though the essential pre-requisite, is not a sole and and substitutional qualification for the ministry.

It will always occur, as in the past. that men of apt genius and godly conviction will become leaders of men, commanding a hearing and a following, without special professional training, but the rule will always remain that the greater and exacter the culture, the wider and more enduring the usefulness. Certainly, this is no time to lower the standard of professional qualification, but for insisting that it be alike more affluent and more profound.

For obvious reasons the multiplication of ministerial training schools beyond the number at present, under our immediate denominational patronage and control, is in no wise feasible or desirable.

There is no sufficient reason why there should be more than one such school in the centre of our churchly influences at the East, and one in the West.

The management of the Divinity School at Cambridge should be so comprehensive that there would be no sphere, as at present, for the Boston School for the Ministry.

If with only inconsiderable disturbance at all points the Meadville Seminary could be removed to Chicago directly, certainly no local or less potent considerations should prevent a result of such paramount importance.

Recognizing in this matter the present temper of the denomination, hardly anything more serious than unwitting prejudice can remain in the way of these or any other needful changes. Cambridge should do all that needs to be done for the East, and Chicago all that needs to be done for the West. Not that this sectional distinction should be recognized in settling candidates thus trained, but only that these cities are the centres of our activities for the East and West, and so would best serve the convenience of the applicants for admittance.

These schools should take the candidate just where the grace and calling of God find him and thoroughly furnish him intellectually and professionally for his work. He should remain one, two, three, four or five years, according to the requirements

of each personal case, and this to be determined by the judgment of the student and the godly council of his instructors and other friends.

The relations between the teachers and the students should be only brotherly, certainly in no way perfunctory.

At once the young men should be encouraged to pray, preach, hold conference meetings, and in every way exercise their gifts as opportunity might offer.

These schools must in nowise be constrained by any traditional or conventional views concerning them.

If the overseers and faculty of the Cambridge school should deem it wise and best to adapt the instruction to all classes of candidates for admission, then there would be no province for the Boston school, which at present serves a useful, but only complementary purpose.

Beyond the implied moral character of the applicant to the school, one or more of the faculty should have a cordial, but close and spiritual conversation with him, that he may ascertain, if possible, whether such a one has deep settled convictions and purposes with regard to the work of the ministry.

The young man should, moreover, have, in the sense of the old divines, "a good degree of utterance," or aptitude of verbal expression.

We need a race of apostles in the liberal church, and our theological schools must supply this need. The call is not for a new and better set of essay writers, but a generation of prophets, — men who have ears to hear and lips to speak the truth of God to the people concerning the *sins* personal to them; men who have no thought that they are sent into the world to perform only the trick of a lady's veil, to conceal ugliness or relieve excesses; but men who can stand up without affectation and vanity on the one hand, or timidity and self-serving on the other; men of the martyr's craving to fill up in their bodies "that which remaineth behind of the sufferings of the Lord Jesus"; men who know with the quickness of a mother's instinct that nothing is so incongruous as a priest of religion neglectful of her inward spirit and outward forms; men who cannot help loving men. Albeit there is in the ministry of such prophets of God the weird and inexpressible sweetness of a vesper flute, for in it is the dominance of this atoning love of souls which is its enduring charm and certain success. Above all things conscious religious character and communion should be insisted upon. I have no confidence in the quality of the success gained by any man in

the ministry of reconciliation, who is not wholly and without qualification consecrated to God and the work of saving souls from error and sin.

No man is in any sense worthy of a Christian pulpit who does not profoundly realize that it is a throne of power to be exchanged for that of no monarch who reigns or lives.

The highest grace of a ministry is like the conspicuous elegance of a robe rendered so by the wearer. The spirit of the ministry must be characterized by a purity without suspicion and a dignity without falseness. It must be the spirit promised to the apostles and their successors — successors whose credentials are now, as then, not parchments of ordination, but the power to open the eyes of the blind, heal the sick and liberate the captive, — the spirit not only of truth but of fire, — the baptism wherewith Christ came to baptize. And without this interior view of the meaning of the ministry, without this estimate of it that lifts it above compensation in material values, one would come to the functions of the ministry like an upper class Italian to the work of the spade, with an eye of content but a heart of disdain.

This is not so much the instruction to be given as the spirit to be inspired.

The atmosphere breathed in Divinity schools should be not unscholastic but eminently devotional and heavenly.

There must be no dogmatic limitations thrown about the thought, certainly no dogmatic bigotry about the temper of our theological seminaries.

Two moral terms must co-ordinate in the quality of instruction given to men who are to become Christian ministers — the love of the Father and obedience to the law of Christ; the first is the pledge of liberty, the other the principle of order.

Finally. These schools, when limited to two, should be endowed in so generous measure that nothing shall be wanting to make them serve the demands of our denomination in supplying it with ministers of thoroughly furnished intellects and sanctified hearts; loyal to truth, loyal to freedom, loyal to progress.

Rev. Dr. Gannett followed in the discussion of the subject, and read the following:

RESOLUTIONS PASSED BY A COMMITTEE OF CONFERENCE BETWEEN
THE BOSTON AND CAMBRIDGE THEOLOGICAL SCHOOLS.

I. *Resolved*, that a union of the Boston School for the Ministry with the Divinity School of Harvard University, if it could be effected with a proper regard for the special purpose which each School has in view, would be productive of mutual benefit.

II. *Resolved*, that the arrangements for such a union could, probably, go into effect with most advantage a year from the present time.

III. *Resolved*, that the following scheme be proposed to the faculty of the Divinity School, with the request that, if it meet with their approval, they will submit it to the Corporation for their consideration, viz:

1. There shall be a Theological course extending through three years, at the end of which those students who shall have spent three years in the School, or shall have been admitted in advance, and shall pass a satisfactory examination, shall receive a Degree of Bachelor in Divinity. Any student having satisfactorily completed this course, who shall waive an examination, may receive a certificate of honorable graduation.

2. Students may be admitted to the School for a period of not less than one year, who shall pursue such studies and attend such exercises as the Faculty prescribe; and shall at the end of the period receive a certificate stating the length of time which they may have spent in the School, or on satisfactory examination shall be entitled to a certificate of graduation.

3. Students may, at the discretion of the Faculty, be admitted to the special or limited course without a knowledge of the learned languages.

4. Persons who may not be prepared for entrance on either of the courses in theology shall be furnished with preparatory instruction in connection with the School.

5. A course of study shall be prescribed and instruction provided for those who may wish to remain in connection with the School a fourth year as resident graduates.

6. Provision shall be made for an instructor, in addition to the incumbents of the present Professorships, who shall reside in or near Divinity Hall.

7. Persons not connected with the School may be invited by the Faculty to give instruction gratuitously, or for a proper compensation.

8. The Local Conferences of Unitarian and other Christian churches shall be invited to furnish aid in carrying out the plan here proposed for an increase of both instructors and pupils in the School.

9. The Students shall be encouraged and assisted in spending that part of the year not included in the "Terms" of the School with ministers having parochial charges, or in such employment as may be a training for the practical work of the ministry.

IV. *Resolved*, That the Chairman of this Committee bring the subject of a union of the two Schools, as presented in these Resolutions, before the National Conference to be held in New York in October.

Dr. Gannett concluded by offering the following Resolution:

Resolved, That this Conference approve of the union of the Cambridge Divinity School and of the Boston School for the Ministry, as proposed in the plan contained in the resolutions adopted by the committee appointed by the Alumni of the Divinity School last July, and recommend to our churches, that should this plan go into operation, they be ready to afford their practical sympathy.

After discussion of the subject by Rev. C. F. Barnard, Rev. Dr. Bulfinch, Rev. Wm. O. White, Rev. Dr. Clarke, Rev. A. A. Livermore, Rev. E. E. Hale, Rev. Drs. Bellows, Collier and Lothrop, and Rev. E. Gifford, the question was put on Dr. Gannett's Resolution, and it was lost.

Rev. E. E. Hale offered the following Resolution :

Resolved, That this Conference respectfully ask the corporation of Harvard College to consider the possibility of maintaining in that institution a school of theology, in which there may be teachers and scholars of every religious denomination.

Referred to the Business Committee.

Rev. C. A. Staples offered a Resolution with regard to the condition and needs of the Meadville Theological School, which after successive amendments by Mr. Joseph Shippen and Rev. Dr. Thompson, and discussion by Mr. Shippen, Mr. Artemas Carter and others, was adopted in the following form :

Resolved, That a Committee of three laymen and two clergymen be appointed to consider the present condition and wants of the Meadville Theological School, and how its usefulness may be increased; said Committee to report as soon as convenient to the Council of the Conference.

Rev. E. E. Hale presented the following report of H. P. Kidder, Esq., Treasurer of the Conference :

NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF UNITARIAN AND OTHER CHRISTIAN
CHURCHES, IN ACCOUNT WITH H. P. KIDDER, TREAS.

CR.	Oct. 1866.	By collection at Syracuse	.	.	.	.	\$440.19
DR.	" "	To sundry bills paid	.	.	.	.	440.19
							000.00

(In addition to the above the American Unitarian Association has paid bills amounting to some \$200.00.)

E. & O. E. H. P. KIDDER, *Treasurer*.

BOSTON, Oct. 1868.

Referred to New Council for auditing and settlement.

Adjourned to Thursday morning.

EVENING.

In the evening two large missionary meetings were held simultaneously at All Souls Church, New York, and at the Church of the Saviour, Brooklyn. The meeting at New York was conducted by Rev. Dr. Collier, and addresses were made by Rev. C. A. Staples, Rev. A. D. Mayo, Rev. Dr. Collier, and Rev. Dr. Clarke.

The meeting at Brooklyn was conducted by Rev. A. P. Putnam, and addresses were made by Rev. E. E. Hale, Rev. J. F. W. Ware, Rev. Robert Collyer, and Rev. Dr. Bellows.

THURSDAY, October 8.

MORNING SESSION.

The Conference was called to order at 9.45, A. M., the President in the Chair.

Prayer was offered by Rev. Dr. Thompson, of Jamaica Plain.
On motion of Rev. E. E. Hale,

Voted, That the Chair appoint a Committee of five, to nominate a list of officers of the Conference—said Committee to report to-morrow morning.

Rev. Dr. Osgood offered the use of the Church of the Messiah for the remaining sessions of the Conference.

On motion of Rev. A. D. Mayo,

Voted, To accept the kind offer of the Trustees of the Church of the Messiah, and to hold the sessions there after this morning.

Rev. Dr. Clarke offered the following amendment to the Constitution:

ART. IX. To secure the largest unity of the Spirit and the widest practical co-operation, it is hereby declared that all expressions in this Preamble and Constitution are expressions only of the majority of the Conference, committing in no degree those who object to them, and depending wholly for their effect upon the consent they command on their own merits from the Churches here represented or belonging within the circle of our fellowship; and that we heartily welcome to that fellowship all who desire to work with us in advancing the kingdom of God.

Rev. Dr. Osgood moved to amend by inserting the words "in Christian faith," between "who" and "desire."

After discussion of the proposed amendments by Messrs. Clarke, Osgood, Hale, Calthrop, Bellows, Heywood, Shorey, Collier, Frothingham, Grinnell, Lothrop, Edwards and Mayo, they were both withdrawn, and Rev. E. E. Hale offered the following amendment.

ART. IX. To secure the largest unity of the Spirit and the widest practical co-operation, it is hereby understood that all the declarations of this Conference, including the Preamble and Constitution, are expressions only of its majority, committing in no degree those who object to them, and dependent wholly for their effect upon the consent they command on their own merits from the churches here represented or belonging within the circle of our fellowship.

Hon. James H. Mitchell moved the previous question.

Voted, To second the previous question.

The amendment proposed by Rev. E. E. Hale was then adopted.

The President announced the following Committee on Nomination of officers of the Conference, viz: Rev. E. E. Hale, Messrs. A. Borden, A. P. Sprague, J. H. Choate, A. G. Bailey.

The Conference then took an hour's recess.

AFTERNOON SESSION.

The Conference re-assembled at 2, P. M., in the Church of the Messiah.

Mr. Wm. B. Weeden, of Providence, read a

REPORT ON OUR DUTY TO THE PART OF THE POPULATION OF OUR CITIES WHO HAVE NO CONNECTION WITH THE ESTABLISHED CHURCHES, AND TAKE NO INTEREST IN THEM.

The city of Providence, in common with other large towns, had its course of free religious meetings, held in a theatre; and in the spring of 1868 they resulted there in the formation of the "Union for Christian Work." A similar institution has been formed in Boston. This organization was designed to meet the wants of those of both sexes not interested in churches; and a statement of its principles may suggest matter for this discussion.

The name was not planned or contrived by any person or persons. It grew out of the life of the assembling body, and seemed to express the need of the occasion. It required no declaration of belief, but laid its foundation in this simplest form of creed: "The object of the members shall be to do good and to grow better." The bond of union was to be work; and differ-

ing temperaments, differing opinions, differing cultures, differing conditions all united for this common end. The members, according to their several inclinations, grouped themselves in four sections, for worship, for education, for benevolence, for hospitality or sociality, all working together in mutual interest. This classification was not to separate the members, but to draw them nearer each other by giving full play to the particular gifts and essential characteristics of each one in his or her chosen mission. Many young men and women, who would not unite with a body of worshippers as such, associated together for hearty amusement and healthful recreation, and thereby joined in the worship; while serious and devout persons, whose lives had been touched by deeper experiences, joined in works of love and social worship, thereby lending their saintly influence to sports they would never have sought for themselves. The simple purpose of doing and getting good drew these varying minds and hearts together, and bound them by a new tie — new not in its nature, but in its administration — which was more sympathetic, free and elastic, than they had ever known. Nearly all beliefs, from the Quaker to the Catholic, were represented in the membership, and people beyond the pale of any sect freely combined with those whom the world recognizes as believers, to labor in this ample field.

The moving power of this organization is love; no new principle, but the ever new divine idea which was in Christ, embodied in new forms and working by new methods. The current of life flowing through its varied action has been as natural and spontaneous as the vital energy which animates the human body. The city church has sought in many ways to create the social heat and magnetism which is generated by blending differing individualities into one whole, without adequate success. "The Union," seemingly without an effort, has brought out this mysterious element; and the sweet domestic influence, which in our modern society has prevailed in the family only, has extended into this larger circle. Nor has the institution dominated and oppressed the life of its members, for out of this partial surrender of the individual has come a higher and stronger personality. Having used every fitting means of social and religious culture, it has brought out the spirit and essence of a church under a different form.

We cannot enter into the details of the operations of this institution—its devotional exercises, its meetings for mutual study and the discussion of religious truth, its deeds of charity,

the free intercourse and sociality of the members in their entertainments and amusements, its failures and successes on every side of its development. It is sufficient that an institution so broad in its purpose, so generous in its administration, has been successfully organized, has fairly entered upon its work, has secured the co-operation of all large minded men and women, and has a good prospect of vigorous life. This is a fact worthy of the serious consideration of this body, alert as it always is for any opportunity to aid the better life in our fellow-men.

The actual statistics of people and church in cities are imperfect, but we may learn something from the movement of population. In the great State of New York, a fair average of this region, the civic population increased from 1850 to 1860 by 24 per cent more than the agricultural. Since 1860 this movement of population has been more marked and the relative disproportion has grown larger. We think it safe to assume that the 24 per cent of extra increase in cities has been met by no corresponding increase of church buildings, that by this change the country is relatively better provided than the city with church accommodation. Certainly not one-half of the people in our cities or large towns use, or can use, church accommodations, as the census terms it. The unrepresented portion may be indirectly affected by the church, but they are not connected with its life or its institutions. The fact of the situation is sufficient proof that the present ecclesiastical methods have not fully met the wants of our people, and we claim that the time has come when the church must change, or supplement, its methods, if it would give a fuller and higher development to the religious life. We will use the term church to denote the true embodiment of the social religious life, and the term ecclesiasticism as the organized form of that embodiment as it now exists.

Various substitutes for the pew-system have been tried, but none have succeeded as a basis of our Protestant ecclesiastical bodies. In this statement, we neither overlook nor underrate the great work of Ministers at Large, and similar institutions, as their final support comes from the pews. Property, in so far as it is an expression of social force, justly has a large influence in the organization of the religious life; but some of the bad features of the institution of property are concentrated in our pew system. Any temporary holder of wealth comes into possession of a broad-aisle pew; in buying this, what does he buy? Not simply a half-dozen seats, nor so many square feet of roof, nor his proportional part of the buildings; with all these he takes posses-

sion of the sacred life of Channing, or of Luther even. That hallowed influence descending from the heroic work of the Reformers, the stormy struggles and lonely watches of the Puritans, in their contest with man and nature both, intertwined with the holy lives of the women who have patiently borne the cross through these generations of growth, concentrates in the hands of the representative of wealth. Capital, true to its instincts, occupies and possesses all these points of vantage. Whether the capitalist be of recent creation, or a dilettant and worn-out descendant of a powerful family, it matters not; the weapon is too heavy for him to wield, and his allies around suffer the consequences. The young minister finds that the rod, which he fondly imagined one with Aaron's, is virtually controlled by the iron rod in the hands of him who possesses this peculiar and unsympathetic strength. And the old and tried servant of the church, after sufficient cudgelling by this mysterious power, quietly and wisely takes the prescribed track, which does not offend its irritable sensibilities. At this time the influence of capital goes beyond its legitimate sphere, and aggravates the evil. The sudden increase of wealth, which will continue to derange the institutions of this century, must be met by the church. Caste, which crystallizes the abnormal growths in civilization, further augments the difficulty. We are not discussing this feature in a hypercritical spirit; for we believe these evils as suggested are essential to the system as now organized, and must be met. Individuality is the strength of Protestantism, but when transmitted in the form of privilege it weakens its life. We say Protestantism, for this feature and some others we shall mention, indirectly cause more difficulty in sects organized on a strong ecclesiastical basis, than in free Congregationalism. We cannot divorce our ecclesiasticism from property; the church must devise a method to give it healthy action.

Few people debate this vexed question without bewailing the extravagance and costly luxury of our ecclesiastical establishment. Though this may widen the separation between the ecclesiastical and the popular religious life, we regard the view which makes it the cause superficial merely. The finest church buildings in America are cathedrals built by people not rich, and we believe they are built not simply that the rank and file of the Roman laity dread purgatory, but because in these grand piles they centre their best affections. The American people generally have their wants, and pay for what they have. Within a half century in our large Eastern cities a carpet was a rare and ex-

pensive luxury; but it must be a wretched laborer or seamstress who does not now walk on a carpet of their own. Nor can we say the people care more for carpets than religion, for the people are not irreligious. If they thought the splendid and luxurious modern ecclesiastical edifices essentially good, they would have them. Without doubt, in one sense, they are good, but let us look to it, lest in this, which the time seems to force upon us, we do not sacrifice other and higher expression of the religious life, lest in supporting the form we do not absorb the whole current of sacred heat which should be expended to vitalize the substance. If the Protestant church is to succeed and be the grand controlling power in this magnificent American civilization, it must economize its whole strength. It cannot remain aloof from the world, and reject the vital moral forces which the world contains. Every good influence in our active communities must be concentrated for its benefit, and its ecclesiasticism expanded until it embraces the deepest thoughts and most glowing sympathies of this American people. The Roman ecclesiasticism has its own mission as well in the future, as the past; but the liberal church must be Protestant, and not protesting only, but progressing towards its larger and higher idea.

How shall the liberal church meet the want of the time? We do not assume to interpret divine providence, but it would seem that God has opened to this body of believers and thinkers a way to the heart of the people. This gathering in theatres, a movement born of the spirit, without organization, with no plan or theory, has sprung into life, and is now one of the marked features of our social religious culture. Beginning in the house of the drama, where for ages thought and feeling have together worked out the expression of human life, the preacher has found among the every-day people of our large towns a congregation ready for the highest truths and responsive to the deepest emotion.

We cannot define all the reasons why the people are so drawn together, but some are sufficiently apparent. Look through your own households, and see the immense number of mechanical appliances civilization is forcing upon you. Day and night you are surrounded with minute and complex contrivances for ornament and use, ever increasing in variety. This is not an outgrowth of luxury, nor a mere change in social habit; it is one of the most palpable evidences of the deep struggle of mind with matter which is controlling this century. This contest makes luxury its servant, and masses the more active intelligence

in large towns. The vacant places in the fields are supplied by machinery, which in turn stimulates the mind of the agriculturist.

This great body of artisans contains a grand supply of crude intelligence. Generally they are not attached to ecclesiastical organizations, but are constantly seeking social sympathy in secret associations and other clubs, in their better moods, and, if ill-disposed, in haunts of dissipation. The vast and growing influence of these men is not appreciated. No class, not even the professions, have so much time or more ability for thinking, and they think with remorseless logic. They not only receive ideas, they make ideas in men whose knowledge may be more extended, but who cannot concentrate so much mental force on a single point. They are an aristocracy, not by the inertia of privilege, but by an indwelling creative strength. They are not to be cajoled by agrarian appeals to their vanity, nor outraged by a philosophical system which makes their own labor a curse. They know that wealth and culture and social privilege in themselves are good, and are quick to see when these are subverted to the vanity of the possessors. These men give tone to our popular meetings; in another generation their influence will be very strong in society at large.

To reach such congregations it is not enough to say in never so many ways, "We have the most liberal creed or theology extant." We must be substantially liberal, not only in thought but in feeling, not only in opinion but in vigorous personal effort. These practical people look to results; it is not enough to open the doors of ecclesiasticism to them if they are rich enough to enter its temporal house, or to build charitable houses of worship when they are too poor; they want no alms, they want sympathy.

We do not attempt to define the whole nature of these congregations, only to trace some prominent characteristics illustrating our main idea. All classes of men are represented, and in them we shall find the principle working as we have defined it, in the artisans. Mind is everywhere moving, and its motion working on the religious nature gathers these mobile congregations which respond with quick sensibility to vital feeling, and show quick apprehension of original thought. We have seen them in deep attention to the severe cumulative thought of one of our hardest thinkers, or rapt and breathless when touched by a strong, earnest preacher, and again impatient under mere didactic teaching, or laughing at, rather than sympathizing with,

clerical story tellers, whose anecdotes were dragged into, and were not native to, their thought.

To reach the nature of these masses, the preacher must give, not any system or crystallization of opinions however wise, but the best fruitage of the individual, his own verity, and essential strength; and then, with true American egotism, content with the best to be had, they give back their own sympathies.

In the present ecclesiastical system, the pews cannot meet this rushing tide of humanity, for as we have suggested in another connection, it rests not on real life, but on an artificial condition of that life. The soul of the church might ultimately force its ecclesiastical body into new relations with its pews and pew-holders, but the whole social sentiment would first have changed. In dealing with the restless mind of the time, the church has a formidable foe in the positive philosophy. As in the convertibility of forces, one term remains unconvertible, which is the ultimate parent force, so in human life one force alone can control all systems of thought, and compel them into the domain of the spirit; this is active, creative love, God's love.

Now, if through its defects in its ecclesiastical expression, the church fails to communicate this love to the world around, it is losing its peculiar power, and, sooner or later, will be reformed.

We do not claim that the Providence and Boston Unions afford the only means of solving this problem. It is the means which earnest people, whose lives would be freely poured into any better mode which providence might grant, have taken up carefully and anxiously. They believe in its final success. The method must vary with the conditions of different communities. This method, superior to creeds, is readily adapted to the needs of those places where no liberal ecclesiastical organization exists. A few devoted people, with this system, can consolidate the liberal, educational, or religious elements, and give them vitality, where they would otherwise lie dormant. It can work independently, or co-work with any branch of the church; and wherever it may be found, it will stimulate any good institution within reach.

We cannot close this paper, without giving utterance to the feeling, deeper than any thought can embody, and stronger than any word can express, that the liberal church cannot assume a negative position toward this profound development of life. This body has an active duty, and cannot maintain a mere watch upon the situation. The young men in Boston, with prescient enthusiasm which impels all great movements, builded better,

wiser than they knew. For better or for worse, this ancient church, this cultured clergy, have grappled with the life of the people—as in the war of the Union we gained God's favor, not by elaborate plans or digests of our past life, but by simple trust in the innate and growing loyalty of the people; so in these vital changes the church must not look to its own history alone, nor hesitate through much knowledge, but boldly confide in the ingrained faith of the people, if she would keep the countenance of Him who is the Father of his people.

The subject was discussed by Rev. Messrs. J. B. Green, G. H. Hepworth, Robt. Collyer, Rev. Drs. Clarke and Osgood, Rev. Messrs. E. E. Hale, G. L. Chaney, C. F. Barnard, Rev. Dr. Nathans, and Rev. John Williams.

Rev. A. Woodbury offered the following Resolution:

Resolved, That, in the opinion of this Conference, the so-called Theatre Meetings, so successfully carried on in most of our large cities, are doing a very important work, and should be encouraged, with the hope that they will culminate in new religious organizations and labors on a basis more broad than any now known.

Adopted.

Rev. C. A. Staples offered the following Resolution:

Resolved, That a Committee of three be appointed by the President to report a plan for organizing a system of theatre meetings throughout the country, their report to be presented to-morrow afternoon.

Adopted; and the chair appointed the following Committee: Rev. C. A. Staples, Rev. Geo. H. Hepworth, Wm. B. Weeden.

Rev. H. H. Barber offered the following Resolution:

Resolved, That a Committee of three, consisting of Robert Collyer, James Freeman Clarke and S. R. Calthrop be appointed to prepare a memorial to our churches urging the advisability and Christian duty of making the sittings in our houses of worship free and welcome to all comers.

Laid on the table.

Adjourned to the evening.

EVENING SESSION.

The Conference re-assembled at half past seven.

Rev. J. F. W. Ware read the following

REPORT ON THE METHODS OF RAISING MONEY BY THE
CHURCHES OF THE AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION.

The paper I was originally asked to prepare was upon "*The raising of funds for our missionary purposes.*" It takes, in the schedule prepared for the Conference, the broader title of "*The methods of raising money for the churches of the A. U. A.*" You will understand that it is not the report of a committee, but of an individual, and will therefore excuse any inevitable intrusion of the pronoun in its first person singular.

I have not succeeded in getting exactly the class of statistics I would like to have laid before you, because they were not easily reached, and I had not the time or means, personally, to get them up. I cannot give you the number of volumes which have been printed since the last meeting of the Conference, nor just the number of tracts that have been published, while the circulation of the latter, including that of the *Monthly Journal*, will for the past year average very nearly 1,000 *per day*. Of the number of persons employed as missionaries and their length of service I am equally uncertain; while since our meetings in May last, we have had preaching in eighty-three places, in most of which no Unitarian had been before heard; and, in a number of these, churches could at once be started. Within the past year fifty-seven new societies, self-sustaining or partially supported by the funds of the A. U. A., have been organized; while there are other facts, movements, promises, all in their way significant and encouraging, which cannot justly be classified under either of these heads. These statistics are given simply as matters of fact, not as matters of boasting — Heaven help us! we have little enough cause for that — but as encouragement, and as proofs that some of us who are blamed for our desire to "push things," who believe in this day's demand and this day's opportunity, have fact on which to base our hope for the future, and the demand we purpose to make for the work of the future. These statistics are of work done directly by the A. U. A., and do not include the more special operations of the Local Conferences.

For these and for kindred purposes the A. U. A. comes before you and asks for the sum of \$100,000 per year, for the next two years, which is believed to be absolutely necessary to the carrying

out of the work in hand, and the meeting of demands sure to arise. If you think the sum large and doubt about it, I say that I have confidence that the denomination not only can but *will* do anything it agrees to.

1. And it sets before itself and before you a missionary work in city and town, street, alley and harbor, east, west and south, by clergymen, laymen and women, the like of which it never before contemplated, the possibility of which most of you do not realize. The virtue it is called upon to exercise to-day is largely one of repression, to keep back zeal, to shut down on opportunity, to preach postponement of action, to nip in the bud project and promise, because neither money nor men can be had. It would surprise you to know what can't be told, of reports at the central office, from wide-awake laymen, from our outpost ministers, of inquiry by laymen and clergymen of other denominations. We know of broad fields, not whitening to harvest, but fallow and waiting, and we have no laborers to send out with what we believe to be precious seed. We propose to organize for this work as effectually as we can, to seek out and encourage good men and women, white or black, to undertake it, to stand in and fill the gap as best we may, till the laborers come at the call and the vineyard rejoices.

2. The opportunity of helping the great cause of emancipation, only as yet begun, of supplementing edict, sword and school, by the voice and influence of the preacher, opened up to us as by the hearty and trustful way in which the African Methodists, — forgetting prejudice and fear of our faith, resisting taunt and blandishment of others, have accepted our offers of help in a work they only can do, and we only can help in doing by our good will and our money — is one which ought to appeal warmly to the feelings and purses of a denomination, always standing forward and fearless in the cause of the colored man, from whose ranks went the pioneers in the bravest philanthropy, misunderstood, evil spoken of, badly treated then, even by ourselves, but remembered and revered now as the far-off seers of a day their devotion and suffering hastened and established.

3. The organizing of a system of colportage, and the distribution through the hands of capable men and women of books and of tracts, is a most needed and desirable feature in the work of the present, which we propose to make into a special, systematic and extended operation in the future. Our ministers do not yet seem roused to what may be done, this way, even in New England; but there is not a parish that might not be visited

once a year for this specific purpose, to the minister's benefit as well as the people's; while the work, that may, by a little care and thought, be in this way done at large is almost without limit. Our churches, villages, and communities without churches, hotels, depots, steamboats, trains, every place in which men congregate and have leisure, should be from time to time systematically visited and supplied. Do not elections go through the thorough colportage of doubtful districts, and shall we not borrow their wisdom for the doubtful districts, both without and within our parish precincts?

4. For the printing of old thought and new thought, for the paying for thought that is good and the man too poor to give it, we need money, and we ought to have and can have it. We want books, — books for the people and their children, — and because we do not supply them, the religious and moral reading of this generation, the religious and moral tone of the next is in the hands of and being shaped by those of a broader practical wisdom, if of a narrower religious faith than ourselves. Our pulpits are at disadvantage, private intercourse, Sunday-school instruction at disadvantage, because we have no sufficient literature to back them up — the whole vast field and influence of religious literature, especially for the young, being in the hands of, systematically and sedulously pushed by, those holding views wholly opposed to ours, and the thing we believe false and are contending against is cunningly slipped in and received under the fascinating influence of fiction.

These are the main objects which we see before us, and which we feel that the denomination is bound to meet, and for which we believe the sum asked only partially adequate. Let the denomination once arise in its might, see and feel and meet its duty, and a very much larger sum would be inadequate to our demand. Everywhere the witness of the laymen is — "Never was there so much religious inquiry among the people. We meet it constantly in our business relations." "Our ministers are not alive to the real want of the day. They do not read this time. We do not want the preaching we hear too much of, but to be shown how to live." "Life, real, energetic life is wanted." We are not creating a work, the work is crowding upon and importuning us. The impulse is not from within us, but from without. We are not making a clamor, raising a smoke — *vox, et præterea nihil* — but we speak as we are compelled to speak, compelled by the cry that comes to us for help, compelled by the Spirit, greater than ourselves, opening before and showing us the way, and

demanding of us to enter in and possess. Not great, glowing results do we anticipate, not the mere holding of the lap to catch ripe fruit, but the opportunity to begin in earnest and with system a work too long deferred,—a work that has waited and beckoned, while we have stood timid and unbelieving.

How shall this money be raised? Heretofore there has been no system in our money raising, neither top nor bottom, beginning, middle, nor end, a topsy-turvy muddle and vexation, having neither beginning of years nor end of days. It has been a thing of uncertainty and spasm, a thing everybody deprecated and everybody dodged. It has been presented hesitatingly, apologetically to our societies, if at all, instead of as duty and privilege. We have talked about begging and gone at it in the spirit of beggars, and have got beggars' treatment and beggarly return. To ask a man for money to help any good cause is not to beg. It is to point to a duty and show him the way he shall discharge it. That the manner of presentation, the timidity and half faith, have emasculated the appeal is the testimony of a large number of laymen, while the uncertainty as to time, method and amount needed have embarrassed both asker and giver.

First and foremost, then, we must have a system—an amount to raise, a method of raising, a time at which it shall be raised. It will no longer do for a body, with the interests and operations of this, to go on without that which is vital to success everywhere and in everything,—*system*. If God cannot do without it, how can man?

Beside a system—supplementing and completing it,—must be *its unanimous and hearty acceptance, its unanimous and prompt execution*. We do not want to vote it, but to put it through. Don't let us disgrace ourselves by any more dead resolves.

To this end I propose first: *the system*.

1. A general Committee consisting of the Secretary of the American Unitarian Association, and the Secretaries of the local Conferences—who shall apportion to the separate Conferences that part of the whole sum it is considered they can fairly raise. The separate Conferences, by their own Committees, shall subdivide this sum among themselves, assigning to each, or each taking, *as much as it can do, not as little as it can get off with*.

2. The general Committee shall set apart one Sunday in the year, which shall be the great collecting Sunday; when it shall be known that all of kindred faith throughout the country in stately church, in hall, in parlor or in barn,—for we hope

yet to add these to the number of our sacred edifices,—all, everywhere, rich and poor, with one consenting heart, are, of their abundance or their penury, giving in to the treasury of the Lord. The fact that there is a fixed day, beside the sympathetic inspiration of united action, will lead many to lay aside for it in advance, and that fact will again obviate the objection that one season or day is better here, and another there. I was day before yesterday advised by the secretaries of the local Conferences, to whom I read this paper, by whom it was kindly and unanimously indorsed, to suggest the first Sunday in November as, on consultation, the most favorable time, with the belief that whatever might be lost in individual cases, by the selection of a so-called unfavorable time, would be more than made good by the aggregate. Of course there will be some little friction and jar, some demur and some hitch at starting, but it is believed all this can be remedied by a spirit of hearty, sympathetic unity and good will.

3. Let the minister on that day specially speak of, if he do not preach about, not a charity but the duty, the privilege of assisting in the spread of the views he and his people profess to accept. Let him insist that no one can be exempt. *In proportion to ability*, let every one, the poorest as the richest be called upon to give.

In this way we have one grand day of collection, to be supplemented inevitably, at first, at least, by the action of a local Committee picking up waifs and roping in delinquents—in which not a man shall be considered exempt, or expected to give to the Lord his God that which doth cost him nothing. We shall have then a *collecting day* and not a *collecting year*; we shall have a calm giving of a specified sum, not the uncertain giving under pressure; we shall need no peripatetic pudding-stick to stir up by way of remembrance sluggish or dilatory parishes, but each minister would be forced up to the notch, he would be kept up in denominational interest and facts, and the Association be saved the salary of a man whom no minister, once alive to his duty, would ever let into his pulpit.

4. This should be the only time on which a collection should be taken for *denominational work*. Let the parishes know this,—that they are expected to give well and will then be let alone until the year comes round. No uncertainty or frittering then, but the work *done*; once done and well done. Experience proves that one strong demand for a whole work will bring more than a dozen demands for part of a work, as a good,

strong blow will bring down your man when a hundred raps would not stagger him. Experience also proves that an over-large and strained donation once in five or ten years, is followed by a sort of anaconda lethargy, a season of parish recuperation and denial, which is a telling injury to the parish and the cause. Even a smaller sum *sure*, each year, would go further and encourage more.

5. By and with the advice and consent of the secretaries of local Conferences, I propose that the financial year shall close with the 31st of December, commencing with the present year.

This plan I believe to be simple and feasible. It is digested from the replies of the most practical men to quite a varied inquiry, and has this advantage, that it exactly accords with none. Whether it commend itself to you or not, something of this kind has become a necessity, and if we are not going to do something of this kind heartily, we had better take our carpet-bags and go home, sell out at 26 Chauncy street, and take to "the shovel and the hoe."

While it were better every way that each clergyman should see to the collection in his own parish, and so become cognizant of and alive to denominational interests as well as those of his own church or Conference, there may be reasons why for the rest of this year, and as preliminary to the introduction of any fixed system, one or more special agents should visit such societies as may desire it, but after this year the collection on the appointed day should be considered a thing both minister and people are pledged to. Meeting the obligation should be a point of honor.

On this point let me add for everybody's consideration and guidance, what I thoroughly believe in, that there is but one time to strike home a thing like this, as there is but one time to strike iron — when the heat is white. We only lose, we never gain, by going home to cool off before we do. One of our most practical laymen, long used to questions of finance in connection with the Association, pointedly answers my inquiry — "My answer is this — if the American Unitarian Association need money, send their men into the pulpits of the denomination, tell them the story, and take the hat around the church as soon as the story is told." And let me tell you that I believe in a hat, as a something other than to cover a head, or carry a brick. Another of the same stamp says — "It is no use to make a stirring appeal to a society, unless some one on the spot is ready to follow up the word by work at once. Pass the contribution box or subscription paper, and

collect the money before the effect is lost in a dissolving, mental haze."

The great obstacle to a system of collection, to anything like harmony and thoroughness of action is — do not blame me for saying it — the clergy. With entire unanimity every layman I have approached has replied, that the people are ready to give but the ministers are not ready to ask. Again and again gentlemen have come to me and spoken of the terrible mistake their minister was making in not getting his people to give, in shutting his pulpit up from appeal and themselves from opportunity. They do not want the pulpit thrown open to every peripatetic cause, but that the cause of their own denomination shall at least be heard and helped. "The minister must be thoroughly in earnest and not afraid to ask for money for good purposes," says one; "*in the first place*, only the minister is right the parish will be." "Our people need to be educated up to a system of benevolence," says another. "They are the most generous people in the Christian church," says one who has joined us from another sect, "but they do not know how to give. They lack system. They give and give largely, but not wisely. We must become more denominational — not more sectarian — in our charities. If you can get the co-operation of the ministers, I am sure you will be successful." From my own experience, as well as observation, I believe that man loses influence with his people, who for any reason, refuses to present and to press really worthy objects upon them, as the sympathies and charities of a people wilt and wither except he bring them from time to time squarely up to duty. It is too true that some of our clergy not only take no interest in and know nothing of denominational action and plan, but set themselves squarely against them, and it is equally true that parishes are restive under it, not liking to go against their ministers, and not liking to stand idly by while others work. Our clergy need a larger faith in the work to be done, and *the men they elect to do the work*. Let the ministers show that they feel that the cause is good, and ask with a great confidence, *nothing doubting*, and they will hardly ask vainly. To educate into the duty and privilege of giving is one great means of establishing the second commandment; and giving to the spread of our faith is, in this day, not only the imperative demand of our opportunities without, but the means of building up and cementing our societies within.

This paper, like the action of the A. U. A., looks to a correction of all that is mistake in the past, a new and broader era of

activity and life in the future, and asks for that co-operation and confidence the Association has not yet had, has not perhaps deserved, but without which there is no success, without which, the best efforts must fall fruitless.

With the effort and purpose of frankness, with no spirit of assumption, dictation or wisdom, desiring only a great harmony of clergy and laymen upon work I hope all may feel that they can unite in, I have drawn up this paper, honestly believing what I have expressed of the opportunity on the one hand and the duty on the other, as honestly believing that if we will not seize the opportunity and do the duty, we must see, so far as we are concerned, the work of liberalizing the Christian thought and life of the present, undone. It will not be left undone, for there are other hosts, thank heaven! again, beside ours in the field, but that part providentially delegated to us, will be left undone, and when others come in with hallelujah cries at the great harvest-home, we shall be there with hanging heads, and shrunken and blasted sheaves. The question for the churches, for the denomination, for the Conference, is a very simple but a very vital one; — will you consent to a systematic, annual raising of the funds needed to sustain, carry on and advance the various enterprises which present themselves before you as legitimate objects to be accomplished by the A. U. A.? will you enter it upon your parish records as among your parish obligations; will you feel pledged in honor by it as you are pledged in honor by any established agreement in your organizations? Will the clergy, dropping all questions of preference and custom, of doubt, dislike, prejudice — or what not — come honestly, heartily, squarely up to it? The thing is simple and the thing is vital. Already are we crippled by want of system, never knowing what we may expect, whether the present shall yield what the past year did, or whether we shall get the sum we ask for, prolonging the year of collection indefinitely and to every body's bewilderment, in the hope that the tardy amount will at last be fully realized. Nobody else does work this way. Other denominations are wiser; and if we are to deserve even a name to live, we must do differently, and make out of this new era of inquiry and interest a crisis in benevolence and activity, in faith and work, — not to the glory of ourselves, but to the glory of the God whom we best serve when we consecrate not only all that we are, but all that we have to the spread of His name and love upon earth.

Brothers and friends! I think the issue is with us, and is this

day made. The question is to live, or to die. *To stand still is to die.* We do not want a throwing out of a few skirmishers to feel the forces in front; we do not want a reconnoissance, even in force; we do not want "thunder all round": — but we do want a grand, forward movement along our whole line, — an advance against all wrong, for all right, advance in the cause of the broadest liberty, individually and collectively, under the one all-rallying watchword and spirit of the 'gospel. It must be this, or a yielding of the field, a crumbling of energy and hope, and a passing away of ourselves as of servants unworthy to be trusted in so broad and brave a cause. You cannot doubt; you cannot falter. Forgive me if my language seem not clerical, but savor rather of that of which we all have imbibed so much in the years past. Would to God I were worthy to be heard, and that my voice could carry the inspiration of a leader! It is our battle-day. Dangers are thick about us, within us, but the foe is in front. No mutiny in the ranks. Give way a little on the right, a little on the left, that each man's swing may be the freer, each man's step the firmer, the march easier, the support nearer, the fight concentrated. Touch elbows! Don't crowd! Don't spread! Close up! Head of column to the right! FORWARD! With one banner at the front, one leader who knows neither dismay nor defeat, whose spirit is the inspiration of every true life and right endeavor, let us follow, and sweep on to the victory, which we shall not see, but which our action and our faith shall hasten and assure.

Rev. Charles Lowe addressed the Conference on the same subject.

Rev. A. P. Putnam offered a resolution, which, after amendment, and discussion by Messrs. Collyer, Carter, Green and Padelford, was adopted as follows:

Resolved, That this Conference recommends to the Parishes of our Denomination that the second Sunday in November in every year, beginning with the present year, be designated as the Missionary Sunday of the Unitarian Church, on which the annual collection for the benefit of the American Unitarian Association shall be taken in all our churches.

On motion of Hon. Seth Padelford:

Voted, That Rev. John F. W. Ware be requested to act in conjunction with the Secretary of the American Unitarian Association, during the next three months, in raising money for the Association in such a way and by such methods as shall be deemed advisable on consultation with the Secretaries of the A. U. A. and of the Local Conferences.

The next topic in order was :

THE RELATIONS OF THIS CONFERENCE WITH THE
AFRICAN METHODIST CHURCH,

which, after a few explanatory remarks by Rev. Charles Lowe, was introduced by Bishop Payne, of Wilberforce University, Xenia, Ohio, as follows :

It is proper that I should say a few words that may not seem just to the point, before I address myself to the subject before us. I wish to say, that, in forming a connection with the American Unitarian Association, the African Methodist Episcopal Church do not desire what is popularly called affiliation, because we believe affiliation would fetter our moral liberty, prevent freedom of thought, fetter our expression of what we believe to be true. Neither do we desire union with your talented, learned and venerable Association, because this would be absorption, ecclesiastically. Neither do we desire isolation from our Christian brethren in these United States, because that would be stagnation and death. It would be throwing us back into Africa, back into India, back to the heathen ideas of God and humanity. But we desire co-operation with your venerable body ; we desire mutual attraction, if I may use that term ; you attracting us by your generous spirit, we attracting you by our absolute necessities and wants. And this is the law of attraction.

We are willing to co-operate with you, we believe in the generosity of your religious principles, we believe in the godlike nature of the spirit which you manifest, — perfectly unselfish, and having no desire beyond that of blessing sinful humanity. You can do us good in this co-operation and we can do you good. If you have seed to be sown, we have the soil, the rich, the luxurious, the fertile soil, in which you can sow that seed, — the seed of immortal, heaven-born truth. We have the soil for that which will bring forth, in due season, the rich fruits of righteousness and good works, to the glory of God and the well-being of our common humanity.

Then again if you have the strength to impart power to us, we are ready to receive that power. If you have wisdom to assist us in entering upon a line of usefulness on which we have never entered before, — I mean the great work of Christian education among the people of the South ; I mean the great work

of training immortal minds to be educators of other minds,—we can co-operate with you in that work. We have a noble band of young men and women at our school; young men and women highly gifted by nature, and I will say, yet more richly endowed with the spirit of Christ. They have intellect, they are getting learning, and they have already been put in possession by God of that wonderful power which subdues the will of man and subjugates the affections of the soul to the power of divine truth. They have consecrated themselves to Christ; they have laid themselves upon the altar of Christian usefulness, there to smoke and to burn until life itself becomes extinct. They have given themselves to Christ, to God, and to humanity. We want you to help us in cultivating these minds, in sanctifying these hearts, in securing these immortal powers to the service of that great Redeemer who came down from heaven to suffer and die that we might live for ever. That we may do this, we ask you to give us money. We can never hope to give it back, but be sure, Mr. President, it will be “recompensed at the resurrection of the just.”

The subject was further discussed by Mr. Tanner, Editor of an African Methodist newspaper, and Bishop Brown, of the African Methodist Church.

Miss Amy Bradley made an appeal in behalf of her Mission Schools for poor whites in North Carolina.

On motion of Rev. C. A. Staples, a collection was taken up in furtherance of Miss Bradley's mission, amounting to \$645.

Adjourned to Friday morning.

FRIDAY, October 9.

The Conference was called to order at 9.30, A. M.

Rev. J. H. Heywood offered prayer.

On motion of Rev. John D. Wells,

Voted, That the Conference hold one continuous session to-day, until the hour of its final adjournment.

On motion of Rev. John D. Wells,

oted, That the thanks of the Conference be presented to Rev. Dr. Bellows for his able, comprehensive and eloquent sermon preached before the Body on Tuesday evening; and that a copy of the same be requested for publication with the Report of the Conference.

On motion of Mr. Joseph Shippen,

Voted, To authorize the President to appoint the Committee of Consultation regarding the interests of the Meadville Theological School.

Rev. E. E. Hale, from the committee appointed to nominate a list of officers, reported as follows:—

President — Hon. THOMAS D. ELIOT, of New Bedford, Mass.

Vice-Presidents — Hon. JAMES SPEED, Louisville, Ky.; Hon. CHARLES S. MAY, Kalamazoo, Mich.; Hon. GEO. PARTRIDGE, St. Louis, Mo.; Hon. JOHN WELLS, Chicopee, Mass.; Gen. MANNING F. FORCE, Cincinnati, O.; Gov. AMBROSE E. BURNSIDE, Providence, R. I.

Recording Secretary — Rev. ROBERT L. COLLIER, D. D., Chicago, Ill.

Statistical Secretary — Rev. AUGUSTUS WOODBURY, Providence, R. I.

Corresponding Secretary — Rev. JOHN D. WELLS, Quincy Mass.

Assistant Secretary — Rev. H. W. FOOTE, Boston, Mass.

Council — Rev. H. W. BELLOWS, D. D., New York; ARTEMAS CARTER, Chicago; Rev. JAMES FREEMAN CLARKE, D. D., Boston; WARREN SAWYER, Boston; Rev. CHARLES LOWE, Somerville Mass.; O. G. STEELE, Buffalo, N. Y.; Rev. A. D. MAYO, Cincinnati; WM. B. WEEDEN, Providence; Rev. G. H. HEPWORTH, Boston; JOSEPH SHIPPEN, Meadville, Pa.

The report was adopted, and the persons therein named were declared elected.

H. P. Kidder, of Boston, was subsequently chosen Treasurer.

The Committee on Business submitted the following resolution:—

Resolved, That this Conference hereby expresses its interest in the labors performed in India by the missionary established in that country by the American Unitarian Association—the Rev. C. H. A. Dall; labors which have been characterized by a rare and truly Christian devotion, fidelity and zeal.

Rev. C. H. A. Dall then addressed the Convention.

Under the lead of Rev. Dr. Collier, the Conference proceeded to raise a contribution for the India Mission, and over \$2,200 were quickly pledged by a few societies and individuals.

On motion of Rev. Charles Lowe, it was

Ordered. That the following brief statement of Rev. Mr. Dall's labors be printed with the proceedings of the Conference:—

THE ELEVENTH REPORT OF THE INDIA MISSION OF THE
AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION IN CALCUTTA, 1868.

Mr. Dall is leaving Calcutta for a twelvemonth, after thirteen years' labor in India, to make his second visit home, and arrangements have been made to carry on the mission till he returns.

I. *Is the Gospel proclaimed?* Answer:— Yes, continually, both by teaching, preaching, and work. Mr. Dall usually gives a course of well advertised public lectures during the cool and dry season, between November and March, urging, one year, the claims of a liberal theology, and another year those of some needed moral reform. Besides these lectures, he is frequently addressing bodies of Hindoos and Mohammedans in their own halls, and at their own request. Again: The older pupils of his principal school are students of the Bible as a class-book, and not less than three times a week, all the year round, addresses are given by Mr. Dall to two hundred or two hundred and fifty of his pupils, like the General Lessons in our home Sunday Schools. Again: The voice of the Missionary is, and for a dozen years has been heard through the press, on the Christian side of life as presented in the daily and occasional journals and newspapers. Though, perhaps, the directest propagation of the gospel appears in the regular exposition of the New Testament at the Mission House to young men, pupils, chiefly Hindoos, and in their learning by heart the teachings and life of Jesus, in their common course of study. Add to this a continual distribution, over India, of our Christian books and tracts.

II. *What numbers are reached by the Mission?* Answer:— For the first five years of Mr. Dall's residence in Calcutta (from 1855 to 1860) the attempt was made to establish a congregation of Unitarian Christians. Some one hundred and fifty different persons, English, American, Eurasian and Hindoos, were from time to time found in this assemblage, whose attendance on any single occasion rarely exceeded twenty-five. With the year

1860 another plan was adopted, and the little visible church of Unitarians, holding Sunday and other services as is done at home, was merged in a proper mission for the gospelization of the Hindoos. During the past eight years, more than two thousand young Hindoos have been brought into daily contact with Christian instruction in our schools. Hundreds have been reached by Mr. Dall's appeals to them in their own organized assemblies, over some fourteen of which he has acted as their chosen and regular president. The Missionary has also lifted his voice for Christ and the gospel occasionally in several of the large cities of India; not preaching and lecturing in Calcutta alone, but in Madras (by annual visitation), in Bombay, in Salem, in Secunderabad, in Delhi, in Agra, in Allyghur, and in most of the towns in the near neighborhood of Calcutta. Two annual courses of Mr. Dall's sermons on Gospel Principles were sent throughout India in 1856 and 1857 in the columns of our principal Calcutta newspaper, the *Englishman*, in its Saturday Evening Edition; and thus his name became known in cities, in which, in subsequent years, he found unexpected friends. It thus appears that the mission is not unfelt by hearers and readers in considerable numbers.

III. *Will your several Schools continue during the Pastor's absence?* Answer:— Yes; their daily management will now fall upon Mr. Dall's long-tried friend Baboo Dwarka Nauth Singhee. At our headquarters, No. 34 Mott's Lane, Dhurrumtollah, will continue to be taught —

1. *A Vernacular School*, in which the primary lessons of a common school are given in Bengali with but little English: this being the juvenile department of our

2. *English School*, wherein Bengali and Sanscrit are thoroughly taught, as well as English studies; in three classes, junior, middle and senior; paying respectively, as fees, half a rupee, one rupee and two rupees a month; and studying from three or four to six or seven years, till fitted for the University; to which we have sent students for several years past.

3. *A School of Useful Arts*, which instructs a majority of the pupils of the two schools just named, in drawing, book-keeping, the knitting and embroidery of garments, etc., etc., with the single purpose of productive industry and self-support.

4. *A Hindoo Girls' School*, teaching about fifty pupils; which, since it was opened in September 1866, has demonstrated that the Hindoo girl, in our part of India, is not surpassed in mental activity by the Hindoo boy, and falls behind none of her sisters in the Western world in the rapid acquisition of knowledge.

N. B. — The four schools above-named have little short of three hundred in attendance, in the ten recitation rooms of our premises at Mott's Lane; several of these rooms being full thirty-four feet long, and all fairly furnished with benches, tables, good maps and blackboards. The *Useful Arts' School* has received annual assistance from the British Government, to the amount of one thousand rupees, for the last seven years. The "A. U. A. *Hindoo Girls' School*" is also receiving a Government grant-in-aid of thirty rupees a month.

5. *A (Ministry at Large) Vernacular School* for boys was opened in another part of the city by Miss Carpenter on the 15th of December, 1866, and called the "Calcutta Ragged School." Not many weeks afterwards her chosen teacher left the school for Government service in Orissa. Miss Carpenter then withdrew all support from the school, save the rent of the building to the 15th of December, 1867, which she was bound by her lease to provide. The friends, members of this Committee, to whom the oversight of the school had been given, determined to continue it, and Mr. Dall kindly lent his aid, both by sending teachers and furniture, and by personal contributions and interest. So the school was kept open till the end of the year; and now, with the aid of kind friends of various denominations, a fund has been raised, which, it is hoped, will suffice to carry on the school for another year. There has been a steady increase in this school, from twenty to sixty pupils, and admission is only possible to the very poorest and most morally exposed and forsaken. This "Ragged" or Rovers' School has a Government grant of 20 Rs. a month.

6. *Another School* has since been opened, adjoining the "Ragged" School, to meet the great hunger of this class of boys for bettering their condition through a knowledge of English. A hankering for a possession of the English tongue has grown so strong and so general, that Government have decided to grant no aid to instruction in English within the city. This craving seems an almost providential call to us, as opening a door into Western, which is Christian, thought and life. The Committee, therefore, cheerfully surrendering all chance of Government aid, decided against the advice of some valued English friends, and former donors to the cause, that in this school, for the poorest children of the lowest castes, that hunger for English should be supplied. They have reason to be highly pleased with the labors of the head teacher, Baboo Okhoy Lal Ghose, who, teaching his twenty-five boys within the same court yard, and having the help

of a Bengali Pundit, gives half his school hours (which, by custom here, extend from 10 A. M. to 4 P. M., six hours a day) to the object lessons and higher training of the "Ragged" School. No fees are possible (we speak after experiment) to be paid by the orphaned and neglected boys of either of these schools.

IV. *Income and Expenditure.* — The following is the estimate for the year 1868:

EXPENDITURE.

Salaries, other than Mr. Dall's, at 34 Mott's Lane.....	Rs. 4,572
Rent of those premises.....	1,080
Taxes and Sundries	200
Total.....	Rs. 5,852

RECEIPTS.

Schooling fees.....	2,800
Government Grants to U. A. School and Girls' School.....	1,360
Total.....	Rs. 4,160

leaving a deficit of Rs. 1,692 for the year, which must be supplied by Mr. Dall from funds not yet at his disposal.

It will be observed that this sum is exclusive of any expenditure on account of the Ragged School, which is mainly provided for by donations and subscriptions recently raised in Calcutta.

V. *Who are to be the chief workers during Mr. Dall's absence?*

Answer: — Baboo Dwarka Nauth Singhee, for eight years Mr. Dall's head teacher, will be in charge of the schools, under the Committee, who, with Mr. Dall, have full confidence in him.

COMMITTEE OF GENTLEMEN.

William Theobald, Jr., *President*, now in London.

*James B. Knight, *Vice-President and Treasurer*.

*J. Bruce Gilton, *Secretary, and Book and Tract Distributor*.

William Musgrave.

J. B. Nelson.

COMMITTEE OF LADIES.

Mrs. James B. Knight, *President*.

Miss M. Knight, *Vice-President*.

Mrs. J. L. Shawe.

Mrs. William Musgrave.

Mrs. Jane Evans.

* Address, No. 3 Dalhousie Square, Calcutta.

NOTE. — In Southern India are: Our Madras Mission, Chapel and Schools, Rev. W. Roberts; Our Salem Mission, Chapel and School, J. A. Paul, *Catechist*; Our Secunderabad Mission, Chapel and School, Elisha, *Catechist*.

The chair announced the following Committee of Consultation on the interests of Meadville Theological School: Rev. C. A. Staples, Rev. E. E. Hale, Messrs. Joseph Shippen, Artemas Carter, E. W. Clark.

The Business Committee reported — That a Report has been received from Prof. Alpheus Crosby, of Salem, upon the subject of Education in the Southern States. The Committee exceedingly regret the absence of Prof. Crosby, which has prevented the reading of the Report by its author. They recommend that the essay be received and be printed with the minutes of the Conference.

Adopted.

Here follows the report of Prof. Crosby:

OUR DUTIES WITH REGARD TO EDUCATION IN THE SOUTHERN STATES.

The Christian Church is essentially a missionary organization. Its earnest forerunner did not content himself with quiet discourse to his priestly friends; but went into the *desert* to preach for the inauguration of a movement through which "*all flesh should see the salvation of God.*" Its Great Founder "*went about doing good,*" preaching the gospel to the poor, and seeking to elevate the most degraded and despised. That missionary zeal which carried him out of the circles of refinement and professed piety among publicans and sinners, was one of the chief grounds for the reproaches brought against him by the conservatives of that time. He instructed his disciples to follow his example, and, among his latest recorded words we read the emphatic command, "*Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.*" The distinguishing characteristic, the crowning glory of the Christian religion is that it is the religion of *universal benevolence and beneficence*; and so far as we narrow our sympathies with suffering humanity, so far as we limit our desires and endeavors for the welfare of others, so far we are *un-christian*.

We perceive clearly the error of those who make doctrinal belief or ceremonial rites, instead of practical goodness, the basis of religious character. Let us beware lest, at the same time, the practical zeal of these errorists should rebuke our own supineness. There is nothing distinctively Christian in keen-eyed religious philosophy, or even in purity of outward conduct. The ancient Pharisees, who gathered their robes close about them that they might not be touched by their inferiors, were, not a few of them, men of learning, clear-sighted intelligence, and unblemished cleanness of external life. Let us not, under the Christian name and with a clear perception of the essence of Christianity, be Pharisees of the Nineteenth Century, — still less, Sadducees. It must never be forgotten that, whatever may be our exemption from intellectual mistakes and moral stumblings, we are *Christian* only as we sincerely, earnestly and practically seek the well-being of others, — only as we *love our neighbor as ourselves*.

“But who are our neighbors,” is the old question. All, as we are taught by the old answer, who have come into such relations to us as admit *neighborly good-offices*; all who, in any way, have been brought into such nearness to us that we can reach them for their good. These are our neighbors whatever may be their nationality, race or hue; whether they live North or South, East or West, in Judea or Samaria, in America or Australia. And the relationship becomes close, just as our opportunities and resources for doing them good multiply and increase. Commercial exchanges, general international peace, facilities and habits of travel and foreign residence, enlargement of personal freedom and of free association, the study of languages, the shortening of geographical distances, steamships, railways, post-offices, telegraphs, printing presses, — in a word, that vast system of reciprocal operations which holds so large a place in modern civilization, is making near and constantly nearer neighbors of those who were once afar off. The recent appointment of an American as minister plenipotentiary of the “Celestial Empire” is a striking illustration of the wonderful proximity into which even our Antipodes have come to us.

Again, as this neighborhood is a relation for good offices, it becomes closer in proportion to the need of these offices. It is a common error that the rich are especial neighbors to the rich, and the poor to the poor; the educated to the educated, and the ignorant to the ignorant; the refined to the refined, and the degraded to the degraded. The reverse is the truth. In the gospel sense, the unfortunate are nearer neighbors to the pros-

perous man, than another prosperous man can be; and, the deeper their misfortune, and the higher his prosperity, the closer neighbors do they become. The robbed and wounded Jew was a nearer neighbor to the Samaritan, than those even of his own country and acquaintance that were passing securely along the road.

Sometimes an event in history, without changing geographical relations, makes *very near neighbors* of those who were before at a great distance. The severe famine in Ireland bridged the Atlantic, and brought the eight millions of that unhappy country to our very doors, asking for the bread which we had in such abundance. The recent patriotic efforts and sufferings of the Cretans have brought that remote island into our close neighborhood. But the most remarkable event of this kind in all history has been the sudden emancipation of four millions in our Southern States. These were before, in a sense, our neighbors, but they seemed to be *very far off*. Their need that we should do them good was extreme. They looked to us with streaming eyes for relief. Our hearts went forth to them. But how could we reach them? The obstacles in the way seemed almost insuperable. They could not come to us. There were armed patrols in their way, and bloodhounds to track them. Even if, here and there, a strong, sagacious man could elude these, and, hiding in swamps by day and following the north star by night, could painfully make his way across the border, there was the Fugitive Slave Law, which stretched forth its strong arm even to the Canada line, and, when the poor fugitive saw liberty just before him, could seize him with a nation's might, and snatch him back to more griping chains and bloodier stripes. We longed to go to the sufferers; but Southern prisons and gibbets, or, prompter still, the bullet, the bowie knife, the Lynch Court and the limb of the nearest tree, were ready to arrest the very first effort of philanthropy. Nor could the printed page, silent and impassive, perform a ministry for good from which personal agency was debarred. Mails, expresses, and travellers' trunks were searched to get material for bonfires; and, still more effectual precaution, a wall was built up between the page and the mind by the laws which forbade, under severe penalties, all teaching of the slave to read.

How ardently did we pray, in those evil days, that the great prison-house might be opened! How earnestly did we vow, at least in silent resolve, that, if we might be permitted to reach the oppressed, we would omit no effort for their instruction and

elevation! Meanwhile, the prison walls were growing higher and stronger; and the realization of our desires seemed so improbable that we were ready to say, with the nobleman in Samaria, "If the Lord would make windows in heaven, might this thing be?" But this thing now *is*. The *windows in heaven have been made*. The prayers which we offered unbelieving, are answered, and more than answered. The work of a century has been performed in a day. The prison walls, which seemed reaching to heaven, are all *prostrate*. The slaves, *four millions of slaves*, are all free; and our National Constitution has received an addition to make this freedom firm and perpetual. Can we now forget our prayers and vows? Now that there is perfect liberty to teach, can we neglect to do what we were so zealous to do when it was beyond our power, as if *we had no desire to do good except when it were impossible*? Can we make so ungrateful a return to Him who has granted, as by a miracle, what we sought? Can we turn a deaf ear to the cries of those who are so remarkably hungering and thirsting for the instruction which we can give? Then were we indeed worthy to change places with them, to be ourselves consigned to their former condition!

What shall we then do for the education of the freedmen of the South?

The *first* work, it seems to me, should be *to scatter broadcast over the South, as widely and liberally as possible, the seeds of elementary learning*, that they may spring up, and bear fruit which shall contribute to the seeding of the land for the next crop, or, to drop the figure, that we should raise at once as many as possible to the ability to read, not only that they may secure this essential basis for their own instruction, but also that they may become teachers of others. Any one who can read can aid another in learning to read, even if his instruction is as unphilosophical and unskilful as possible. The common methods of teaching the elements of reading in our own schools have had little enough of didactic merit, as we well know, and yet a great nation of readers has been formed through their patient prosecution. Our first aim, then, should not be so much to carry education to a high point in a few individuals or a few places, as to institute at once the greatest number possible of reading stations, or points of radiation in reading, among the colored people of the South. They need at once, and everywhere, the ability to read newspapers, ballots, and the Bible. Their desire to be able to read these,— a desire

for learning, such as has had no parallel among our ignorant people in all the ages, is at once an encouragement and a providential indication to our duty. We must rejoice in all that is doing in this work by the different Freedmen's Aid Societies, sectarian and non-sectarian. There is room enough, and more than room enough, for all. And there is no sectarianism in the alphabet. Here all are working without conflict for the same end. But, for a full supply, a *hundred teachers* are wanted for *one* that is now in the work; a *hundred books* for *one* that is now in use. And, so instant is the demand, and such the rapidity with which learning multiplies itself among such eager scholars, that what is done this year is worth *twice as much* as the same done next year. An investment here yields an interest of a hundred per cent the first year. Let money and personal effort be thus invested, according as each one may have either to contribute. And, where so many laborers are needed at once, let not previous experience in teaching, or the most advanced literary attainment be too rigorously required as a prerequisite to employment. Nor should much time be lost in carefully preparing a new system of operations, or nicely adjusting preliminaries. It is best to work *at once*, so far as we can, through agencies already established; and, if these are agencies among the colored people themselves, so much the better. Let the motto be like that of Demosthenes, "*action, ACTION, ACTION.*"

The *second* great object in our efforts for education among the freedmen should be, I cannot but think, *to raise up teachers among themselves*. Learning is only an exotic, while it depends upon foreign teachers; it is of forced growth and slender hold on life, liable to perish when, from any cause, the importation from abroad is checked. It is like a plant, the seed of which must be brought each year from another land. It only then becomes acclimated and naturalized when it can seed itself upon the soil; in other words, when the work can be independently taken up and carried on by native teachers, even if all foreign aid is withdrawn. That state of society at the South, which I do not wish to describe, which I need not describe, makes it especially important that the progress of the colored race in letters should be rendered, as speedily and as far as possible, independent of assistance from the North. I need not say how *inhospitable* the clime is to Northern philanthropists, or that in many parts of the South "*carpet-baggers*" are a *very perishable commodity*.

There is another consideration which is, perhaps, still more essential. The question before us is, how to elevate the colored

race. Now it elevates more *to teach* than *to be taught*. The relation of teacher and taught is one of superiority and inferiority. The instructed looks up to the instructor, as from a lower plane. As long as the blacks depend upon the whites for their education, so long they must be looked upon by others, and look upon themselves, as inferiors. But essential equality of the different races combined, in our free government, is the indispensable condition of the best welfare of the nation and its constituents. Whatever may be the professed form of government, a permanently inferior class will always be oppressed, or the tools in oppressing others, or, most likely, both.

How, then, shall teachers be raised up among the colored people of the South? Shall we establish Normal Schools and Colleges for such an extended course of instruction as is deemed necessary for those who are to be teachers at the North? This will be very well in its time and place. But just now we cannot wait for agencies which require so much time for their establishment and practical efficiency. It is well to prepare a nursery of fruit trees, but we shall starve if we are not to eat till they grow up and bear fruit. While we are waiting for Normal Schools and Colleges to send forth their graduates, let us have a *more immediate agency*. In every place where there are freedmen's schools, let the most advanced and promising pupils be gathered into a Normal class, and trained, even if imperfectly, with express reference to their becoming teachers of others. Let them be employed, to some extent, as they may be most usefully, not in the sole instruction of less advanced learners, but in multiplying instruction for these, a work alike beneficial to the pupil-teacher and his class. And let arrangements be made, without fail, for the continuance by these advanced pupils of the instruction of younger scholars, during that unfortunately long vacation which the health of Northern teachers usually requires.

The *third* great object in our educational labors at the South should be *the establishment of good State systems of popular education*. Systems that shall be efficient, judicious and impartial. Towards this goal we should be constantly looking and striving. But this is evidently a goal that is not very near. It does not now seem as near as it has seemed at some times since the close of the war. For the present, the great dependence must be upon benevolent instruction, upon *missionary work*. In this work, let every Church, every Christian, every philanthropist, engage according to their means and opportunities. There is no other way

in which proper public systems of education can be so hastened. There is nothing like a taste of knowledge to make a community eager for a full meal. The more the colored people learn, the more earnest will they be to secure regular and permanent provision for learning. And not only so, but the more favorable will the whites be to such a provision. If the blacks could be kept in ignorance, most of the Southern whites would doubtless be *very well content* — nay, *would rejoice*. But, if they see that this cannot be, they will naturally say to themselves, "If the blacks must be educated, let them be educated by a system in which we ourselves *shall have part and influence*. Let us rescue them from that foreign influence which is so detrimental, if not to our *interest*, at least to our *honor*. Let us not be constantly giving the lie to our so oft repeated assertion, that *we are their best friends*."

A *fourth* mode of effort, subsidiary to the more strictly popular methods which have been presented, lies in *the establishment and support of higher institutions for colored students, both North and South*. It is certainly best that the pupils should be admitted to our institutions of learning, higher as well as lower, without distinction of color. The time will doubtless come when they will be so admitted. They are so admitted now to not a few institutions. In general, I believe it wiser to send colored students to those more liberal institutions, and to strive to liberalize others, than to perpetuate false distinctions by the permanent endowment of separate institutions for pupils of a special color. Still, in some localities, it may be wise to maintain for a time such establishments as a *temporary resource*. Those who are debarred on account of their color from the privileges of existing institutions, should not therefore be denied all opportunity for higher education. He who elevates himself by obtaining this education, not only prepares himself by this to benefit others, but does by the very fact contribute to the elevation of his race. The intimate relations between institutions of higher and those of common education must be too familiar to your minds to require argument or illustration at this time.

I was invited to introduce the subject of "Our Duties with regard to Education in *the Southern States*"; and I have not forgotten that we have duties to ignorant whites as well as ignorant blacks. But there have never been laws in these States to forbid the teaching of the whites; institutions for their education, though not as abundant or as free as might be desired, are by no means wanting; the greatest barrier to their improvement in

learning has been their own *indifference to learning*; and I believe that nothing will be so effectual in removing this indifference as the sight of colored faces bending over books, and glowing with the delight of new acquisition. We shall work, then, I believe, most efficiently for the education of the Southern whites by doing all that is in our power for the education of the Southern blacks. Still let us omit no opportunities of contributing more explicitly and directly to the same end. Our obligations to one needy class are not at all diminished by our deeper obligations to those who are still more unfortunate. The fact that most of the Southern whites have been such bitter enemies to us furnishes *a special reason* for our attempting to do them good; and we rejoice to see that some associations and individuals are showing so full and practical an appreciation of this *distinctively Christian* motive.

I regret that I am so positively debarred by the flight of time from a specification of the eminently praiseworthy labors of different societies and persons,—noble men and noble women!—in this great field; and of that remarkable success attending these labors which shines so brightly as an encouragement to future effort. I must leave the best wine of the feast for others to present. I have already exceeded the brief period accorded me; and must now close, by thanking you for your indulgence, and imploring a continued blessing from on high upon the great work. “GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST, AND ON EARTH PEACE, GOOD WILL TOWARD MEN!”

Rev. Dr. Bellows presented the following

REPORT ON THE RELATIONS BETWEEN THIS CONFERENCE AND THE LIBERAL CHURCHES OF EUROPE.

Dr. Bellows began by saying that he regretted his inability to present any written report on this important subject, but would do his best to bring it before the Conference, out of the fulness of his own recent experiences among the liberal Christians of many other countries. Before speaking of European churches, it seemed natural to him to cast a thought to the trans-continental churches of our faith in our own broad country, where laborers who needed and would enjoy our sympathy so much were in a not unhappy exile from an annual gathering, but always working and most successfully in our common cause. Rev. Mr. Stebbins of San Francisco, who followed in the footsteps of an almost peerless predecessor, had

achieved a perfect success and obtained a hold upon that entire community equal at least in its direct religious influence and moral power to that which any Unitarian minister who had visited the Pacific coast had ever attained. Of Rev. Mr. Ames' labors we were always having accounts which did not surprise, but certainly delighted us. Our young missionary bearing the chairman's honored name, and repeating his father's claims on our respect and love, the Rev. Thomas Eliot, was achieving a wise, deeply planted and already most fruitful work in Portland, Oregon. He had the honor, himself, to share with a Portland citizen the privilege of representing the only Oregon church of our faith, in the Conference. He recalled with delight and affection his short visit to Portland four years ago, and trusted that his then encouragement to the few and feeble, but faithful and self-sacrificing Unitarians there, had now met with a complete verification. Dr. Bellows read from a letter from its pastor an interesting account of the work done in the Portland church.

After paying a respectful tribute to the labors of Rev. Mr. Dall, our missionary in India, Dr. Bellows expressed his doubt whether we estimated the vastness and significance of the problem presented by India and the further East—a Unitarian country in so much of its philosophy—but at any rate a country teeming with acute and speculative minds, and where the Trinitarian forms of Christianity not only had no pre-occupation of the popular mind, but were even antagonistic to it. He believed that our missionary work required the very highest judgment in such a country, and must be based on a thorough practical study of the Indian mind, a statesmanlike survey of the existing civilization, and a comprehensive plan of operation. He doubted if we had yet had any such wise and intelligible basis of action as to give us much hope of large practical results. And while appreciating the labors and sacrifices of our present missionary, he could not but think that if we sent the most philosophic and statesmanlike man we could find in our body, to survey and study the Indian ground, before proceeding with further missionary labors, it would economize time and money, and be justified by results.

Dr. Bellows referred with great respect to Miss Carpenter's important mission to India, and to her wonderful zeal and patience, and hoped for a lively interest on this side of the water in her movements of an educational kind. He had rarely met a more earnest and enlightened worker in the field.

I have now to speak, said Dr. B., of our relations with our

liberal Christian brethren in those portions of the world which I have recently visited, and of course I shall begin with England, because I have much to say which I think will encourage your hearts. I was very much surprised (supposing myself to be ordinarily well informed in regard to English Unitarianism), on reaching England, and visiting systematically many of the centres of Unitarian influence, to discover that I had been in a condition of almost absolute ignorance both as to the numbers of the body and as to its spirit and temper. I found, in fact, that it was the other hemisphere, if I may so say, almost or quite equal in size to ours, corresponding with the hemisphere of the Unitarian faith, in the English tongue, which we represent here in America; for there were, in England, Ireland and Scotland, three hundred churches, (almost all in England.) There was a body of Unitarian ministers almost or quite as large as our own, — scholars and gentlemen and able men in their own way and work; a great deal abler, dear brethren, than they are supposed to be, even by their own constituents, for familiarity seems to breed contempt everywhere. I found them speaking of our American Unitarian ministers who came over there, almost without exception, as if somehow or other they were very superior to their own men. It was a profound delusion, dear brethren; I knew it perfectly well, although I profited by it. I told them it was an error, but I said if they would send some of their best men, or even some of their middling men over here, I supposed we should have the same kind of glamour in our eyes which it was so pleasant to us to find in theirs.

One thing, however, I noticed, that caused me to feel, not proud, certainly, but deeply grateful. I oftentimes asked myself why it was that our English Unitarian brethren received me so universally with a wonderful degree of hospitality, mental, social and domestic, and were pleased to attribute so much importance to my visit among them. I am not going to say now that it was all due to the fact that I represented a national body; nor that it was due to anything personal to myself, for I do not think it was; but it was really due simply to this — that they found they were talking to a Christian man, who belonged to an establishment that was just as good as any English establishment, and who was not conscious that there was anything better in the country, or anything that could look down upon it, or anything that he had been accustomed to look up to; and so talked large, and felt himself perfectly comfortable in any kind of religious society or ecclesiastical body into which he might be cast, utterly

unconscious that there was anything curious or funny about it. This illustrates the precise position of Unitarian ministers in England. Whatever might be their personal worth or their scholarship, I did not see a single man among them who did not seem to be unconsciously more or less overshadowed with the idea that he belonged to a comparatively small and insignificant communion; that it was a kind of misfortune that he was not attached to the regular establishment; he could not conscientiously be in that establishment, but he considered he was going through a pilgrimage of long suffering for his devotion to his principles; and it was a somewhat sad thing that he could not be with a people who had social prestige and ecclesiastical authority, and general influence, and unquestioned belief among the great English people. Now, brethren, we have nothing of that kind in this country, I trust. Perhaps there was a time when we did not quite hold up our heads and feel that we were as good as anybody, but I think that time has so utterly gone by in America that it is hardly remembered by most of us; and it is a beautiful distinction of our body, that we have none of that sense of social ostracism or feeling of inferiority which, to a certain degree, marks the most gifted minds in the English Unitarian ranks.

I was very much surprised, in view of what I have just said in regard to some conscious inferiority of position, not only to find so many Unitarian churches, and to find them in such thrifty condition, in the main, but to see that the same desire to render the worship of God symbolic, and to offer it in fit temples, had inspired them to erect expensive churches, as it has us. There has been almost a complete rehabilitation of the architectural structures of the Unitarian body within the last twenty years, and I noticed an immense growth in the external manifestations of ability and of success. They were deploring, as we sometimes deplore, that they had seen their best days; that the men of learning, the men of ability, were not with them as they used to be; and I suppose it is true in that country, as it is true in ours, that in the eyes of some people, when Unitarianism is popularized, it is vulgarized. One sober, and discreet, and able man gave as his main reason for supposing that Unitarianism was going to decline in England, that they were not drawing the candidates for their ministry from the upper classes of society! I do not think we share that fear in the least degree. I found that the Unitarian ministry of England was really being invigorated by gains from the ministers of other denominations. I might

say that the most promising young men I saw came from the middle ranks from the other dissenting bodies, — men who were, in a social point of view, inferior to the position of the body which they had recruited with their own blood and strength. I make this remark because it bears upon the question whether or not we are going to strengthen the Unitarian body by admitting into it fresh, vigorous blood from the uncultivated ranks of society. I think we shall, and that there can be no doubt about the wisdom of our course. I believe they are totally mistaken.

In regard to the relation of English to American Unitarians, it is one of the most delightful cordiality, of the most thorough-going, generous hospitality; and no Unitarian minister need go to England without meeting the heartiest private and public reception (if he desires it) from the Unitarian body there. I know there is a strong desire over there to secure this kind of intercourse between the two bodies. I hope we shall be grateful to them for their kindness to us, and endeavor to show the same kindness towards those whom they send to our own country.

Let me say that there is a very strong desire that there shall be established some sort of system of ministerial exchange, by which men who are weary and tired, but who have the accumulated results of long experience in the Christian ministry, might come to this country, on an exchange for a year, for instance, while we sent to them some minister who was equally weary and tired, and wanted to see England — the best country to see in all the world. I think there might be instituted a system of ministerial exchange which would be universally useful and serviceable to them and to us.

Then, again, I have an order for several Unitarian ministers for important positions in England. I do not say that I accepted the order, for I told them if we had any clever fellows we wanted to keep them all here. But they do seriously desire an importation into England of American Unitarian ministers. If there be those who, by any peculiarity of temperament, or for any other reason, might hope to succeed there, who would not obtain success here, and who have a strong proclivity in that direction, I think I could put them in the way of coming to a very good understanding with even important parishes on the other side of the water. It seems to me important that we should come to an understanding with our English brethren, and they with us, respecting the credentials of ministers passing to and fro. They desire it, and we ought even more than they, to encourage it. No minister going to either country, and claiming fellowship and

confidence, should fail to carry the evidences of his good standing at home. It is a matter of common prudence, and our body is becoming numerous enough to make some police of this kind necessary.

I cannot leave the subject of English Unitarianism without expressing the respect and admiration awakened in me by the character and gifts of many leading ministers, or by the solid worth and social influence of very many of the laity. A better and more thoroughly respectable body of persons I never saw than the English Unitarian Body. In Liverpool, Manchester, Birmingham, Leeds, Sheffield, Newcastle, Nottingham, Exeter, Bristol and many other places, they seem to have a strong and sometimes even a commanding social position. There are usually from twelve to fifteen Unitarian members of Parliament. Unitarians are known for Liberals in Reform and philanthropic sympathies. The historic family of the Arplands is still worthily represented in their clergy. The venerable Kenrick and Madge still live, and the last writes, even now in his 80th year, in defence of the faith once delivered to the Saints. His blessing it is worth crossing the water to secure. I need not speak of names as well known as Martineau and Taylor. They are joint professors in the Theological School, Manchester New College, in London, where our Unitarian ministers are chiefly turned out. Rev. Mr. Gaskill—an honored name—and others keep a sort of Boston Theological School, a manufactory of ministers at shorter notice, a-going at Manchester, near which Dr. Beard is still laboring, in a green old age, and where Rev. Brook Herford is trying a free Church movement with glorious earnestness and much success. I might speak to you of Rev. Mr. Bache, of Birmingham; of Rev. Mr. Higginson; of Mr. James of Bristol, “the Bishop of the West of England”; of dear Mr. Wicksteed, of Liverpool, and of Charles Beard, one of the very most prized of preachers and scholars in the middle age of life; of young men like the Drummonds, and Gordon, and saints like Mr. Kell of Southampton, and Mr. Spears of London, and many others equally worthy. But I must reserve the few moments I have, before passing on, to pay a tribute to the noble patience and fidelity of Mr. Martineau and Mr. Taylor, who seem to be consecrating gifts of the rarest kind, with the most uncalculating disproportion, to a work which, measured only by *quantity*, would seem wholly unworthy of such giants. I could not but look upon these Titans in their workshop amid a few ingots, hammering away as though they had an iron mine to work up, with a sad

feeling of wasted power. But when I saw the work they turned out, I was more reconciled to the length and strength of the labor lavished upon it. "The world knows nothing of its greatest men" was never better illustrated than in Martineau's case. He is the finest of living critics — a man of almost universal culture and with a character to match his gifts and training,—the handsomest man, intellectually considered, I saw in England. I don't agree, I believe, with the tendency of some of his speculations, or with many of his theological opinions, and I am not sure that his genius is giving a wholesome direction to Unitarianism in England; but I have a boundless admiration for him as a scholar, a character and a Christian. I did not find much organized Unitarianism, much organized liberal Christianity on the European Continent; but there is floating about there, in all communities, and in many minds, a general habit of scepticism, something like a universal having done with Christianity in any shape or form. I did not find, however, even in that class of minds, an unwillingness or reluctance to hear a positive statement of Christianity; and I seriously believe that there is no form of Christianity which at this time is so much needed and which would take such a hold upon the people as the essential form of Christianity which we hold and teach.

I think there is an immense necessity for our putting ourselves in connection with the continent of Europe, little as we are. A little salt will go a good ways, and if we could infuse something of our organizing power and something of our Christianity through the ranks of the liberal Protestants in Europe, I know it would be an acceptable service.

We ought to have a central bureau in Paris, in the shape of a missionary church, to be established by special funds collected of this Unitarian body here, where Liberal Christians travelling through Paris, or liberal men who live in Paris, might find a place of Sunday worship of their own; where the minister would be the regular European correspondent and regular European agent of the American Unitarian Association of this Conference, and hold direct intercourse with all other Liberal Christian bodies and Liberal Christian men who desire to communicate with us. I believe that a Liberal Christian congregation might be gathered in the city of Paris, which in the course of three or four years would be absolutely self-supporting; and I am perfectly confident that by putting ourselves into something like a fellowship and general relation with the Liberal Christian mind throughout England and throughout Europe, we should reën-

force ourselves and invigorate them, and help on the development of a conception, whatever it may be, of this new Church of the Lord Jesus Christ, which we are aiding to establish and inaugurate, and which we now hold in a tentative kind of way, sometimes letting it slip out of our fingers, sometimes clutching at it with desperate resolution, but all the while persuaded that it is going to be something great and glorious in God's own time.

Dr. Bellows then referred to the charming relationships that he had with the teachers of the theological school and the pastors at Geneva, — men, he said, whom to see was to love, and who had something about them of the most beautiful and Christ-like spirit, — and then very briefly referred to what he saw at Beyrout and Cairo and Constantinople, affirming that the conviction was forced upon him, wherever he went, that if they would carry the gospel of Christ they must carry a great deal with it, — commerce, trade, domestic economy, and general education, — because modern civilization had crystallized about Christ and his religion. He concluded as follows :

Let me say in concluding these remarks, dear brethren, that I have perhaps said some things in the course of your discussions that have wounded you. I have said things (not now, but at other periods of this Conference) that have discouraged you. I have not seemed to appreciate, perhaps, the life which I have seen among you. I have not expressed that lively sympathy with all the various parts of your work that you might, perhaps, ask of all the members of this Conference; but God knows how proud I am of my own position among you and thankful to you who have given it to me; and, believe me, I am with you for better or for worse; and I believe that there is, down at the bottom of us, something to keep us right; that all this energy, and all this life, and all this heart, and all this effort, and all this love of freedom, and all this desire for work, and all this sympathy with everything generous that is proposed, must come from some deep fountain; and that although, as it seems to me, you have not, many of you, made it very definite in your conceptions, and do not hold it very logically, yet I would rather trust the noble instincts of this body than my own logic, and I humbly hope and pray, if I am a stumbling-block, by my conceitedly, complacently thinking that I am right and you are wrong, that God will knock me over with the first stick that comes to his hand. I do not want to be in your way in any manner whatsoever. I want to be with you and help you according to the measure of my ability, as God knows, and you know too.

Rev. Dr. Bellows offered the following resolutions :

Resolved, That the American Unitarian Association be recommended to consider the expediency of establishing a permanent missionary church of the Unitarian faith at Paris, France ; calling for funds for that special purpose ;— the object being to create a European centre from which to gather in the sympathy of Liberal Christians in Europe, and to meet the wants of Protestant Christians not satisfied with the Trinitarian faith, resident in or passing through Paris.

Resolved, That we desire to cultivate the closest relations with our English Unitarian brethren, and heartily congratulate ourselves upon the increasing intercourse and improved acquaintance between the English and the American Unitarian churches and ministers.

Resolved, That we gratefully acknowledge the generous hospitality publicly and privately extended to the official representative of the National Conference and the American Unitarian Association lately in England, and earnestly invite the early appearance among us of an official delegate of the British Unitarians.

After remarks by Rev. A. Woodbury, the resolutions were adopted.

On motion of Rev. Charles Lowe :

Voted, That the amount pledged and given towards the support of the India Mission be credited to the American Unitarian Association, and be received as a contribution independent of any which the churches may hereafter raise.

Rev. Samuel Osgood, D. D., presented the following

REPORT ON THE POSSIBILITY OF A LITERARY, CRITICAL,
SCIENTIFIC AND THEOLOGICAL REVIEW, WHICH SHOULD
COMBINE THE SUPPORT OF THE LIBERAL RELIGIOUS
ORGANIZATIONS OF AMERICA.

I. We have now come to a somewhat decided standpoint in our history, and it is time that we had an intellectual organ corresponding with our position. Our Liberal Christian fathers began our denominational campaign in an apologetic and defensive tone, and stoutly maintained their right to keep their place within the Christian Church, and they utterly repudiated the exclusive system that based the Church on dogma instead of faith and love. Channing was most earnest in claiming for Unitarians, as well as Trinitarians, fellowship within the Christian congregation, and delighted to recognize them both at his own communion table. We still keep that attitude, and regard ourselves within the Church universal by our faith and charity, and we neither try to unchurch any other Christian body, nor do we allow any Christian body to unchurch us. We belong to one

branch of the Church universal, and neither sacrifice our individuality to its universality nor its universality to our individuality. We do not exclude pope or bishop, presbyter or deacon, Methodist or Congregationalist, Calvinist or Universalist. If the Pope excludes us — the most consistent type of close communionists — we get the better of him by taking him into our fellowship, and belonging to the Church universal, of which he is a part. He is probably a well-meaning and venerable Christian man, and only necessity compels him to be the Mrs. Partington of the nineteenth century, and try to mop up the ocean of liberty. We keep this defensive attitude still, whilst we appreciate the second or controversial stage which followed it. In this polemic stage our fathers affirmed, under such leaders as Andrews, Norton and others, the unity of God, the total dependence and not the total depravity of man; the freeness of salvation and the paternal aim of retribution here and hereafter in the face of the dominant Calvinism. The substantial elements of their doctrinal position we still maintain, and are not ashamed of their protest against the ruling superstition. Yet we rejoice that the third stage of more scientific theology came, and men like James Walker and others called attention to the foundations of faith in reason and conscience, as well as Scripture, and gave such noble contributions to the Broad Church theology of the nineteenth century on our part. This position we still maintain; and we claim that we loyally keep the rational spirit as well as the doctrinal largeness and catholic charity of our fathers, as manifested in these three historical stages.

Now we have reached a new period, when we are called to carry out our principles practically and organically. Why not call it our Realistic stage, and say that we have taken our place in the great field of Christendom, and pitched our tent and drawn our lines there? We are here to-day as a National Conference of our churches, and we touch, as never before, the general mind and heart of Christendom. We have our own flag, and our own arms and stores, and, whilst in charity with the whole church, we are our own part of that church, and are not thought beneath notice by the press of the nation and the world. Archimedes said: "Give me a place to stand upon, and I will move the world." A wiser man said: "Take a place to stand upon and move the world." A wiser man still said: "Stand where you are and move the world." Let us stand where we are and move our world of thought, duty, fellowship and joy. Let us there set up our press, and with its lever do our work.

II. Such is our present standpoint. Now, what is our characteristic idea? Our idea accords with our name. We are a Conference of Unitarian Churches, with our fellowship open to other Christian churches. So we are Unitarians of the stamp of Catholic Christianity, and not after the merely dogmatic or sectarian pattern. We are Unitarians in affirming that God is one being, but we are not bound to affirm that He is merely a numerical unit, nor to be in all senses anti-Trinitarian, nor to deny all the distinctions in the Divine nature which thoughtful men have called by the name of Trinity. To us there is one God, and we adore him as the Father over all, and with us in the manifestation of the Son and the Spirit. The ontology of God we leave open to the study of devout students and enlightened thinkers, and find more countenance in our Christological views of the gospel from all enlarged theologians every year. We still are steadfast Unitarians, and we hold that God is one, and that the plurality within His being is in its modes of being and manifestation, not its persons. We are Christian Unitarians, not Atheists, Pantheists, Polytheists or Deists.

We are more concerned with the practical than the theoretic unity of God, and as Unitarians we are bound to affirm, not only that His being is one, but that His laws and His ends or His measures and His kingdom are one. One order pervades His universe, and it is to be traced out in our study of nature, history and religion, throughout all ages of the world, aeons of humanity and dispensations of faith. What our age calls Monism in philosophy expresses our idea, and we do not make over any part of the universe to the work of strange gods or to the reign of the devil. Even what are called Pagan religions show to us some evidence of man's aspiration and God's power, and we are to appreciate the good elements of these religions before we can suppress the evil and lead the Gentiles to the true light of God in Christ.

We affirm Monism also in regard to the ends of God's providence, and believe that in some way God shall subdue all things to Himself, and be all in all. We cannot abide the Dualism, whether Manichæan or Calvinistic, which divides His empire with Satan, and makes evil an eternal discord in creation. We do not rest in the obsolete and extreme Universalism that regarded death as salvation, nor in the mechanical view of restoration that looks to universal salvation as to be effected by some stated and arbitrary act of God, but are content to believe that God's grace is universal in its quality, and His universe shall be good

in the end, as it was in the beginning. So, as Unitarians, we may, with peculiar emphasis, repeat the ascription of glory to the Father, with the Son and Spirit, as it was in the beginning and ever shall be, world without end. Our proposed organ should have generous fellowship with all of every name who hold this faith and believe in the triumph of God over all evil, and the final victory over sin and death and hell.

III. Our Review should aim to meet the wants of Liberal Christians within and without the nominally Liberal ranks. It should encourage fraternity with generous Orthodox thinkers, and be earnest to bring out a better way of thinking in the pulpit and the press. It should welcome the thoughtful men of the large and growing Universalist body, and try to develop their positive convictions, and lift them from cheap dogmatism into the sphere of spiritual ideas. It should look carefully after the higher order of radicals in principle and reform, and endeavor to enlist them in the service of constructive religion, and bring their free, Hellenizing spirit into the service of solid faith, historical revelation and serious experience.

It should be in close correspondence with enlightened Christian scholars of Europe, such as the Christian Liberals of England, Holland, Germany, Switzerland, France, and not despise the keen and devout men of far India who are seeking the divine light in the wilderness of vague speculation, and have not found the land of open vision under the brightness that came with our Christ, whose coming was the rising of the sun in history and humanity.

It should keep its hold also in the Church universal, report all its significant thoughts and movements, and say its own word from inside the faith and fellowship of Christendom, determined never to be unchurched or unchristened, either by priests' ban or by radicals' rancor.

IV. As to the form of the Review, it had better be a monthly, somewhat after the pattern of the *Catholic World* or *Hours at Home*, and be so various in its contents as to find a ready place in the parlor or in the library, and interest our wives and daughters as well as ourselves. It should be popular, yet not vulgar; philosophical, yet not abstract; ideal, yet practical; and should aim to have an open eye upon the world of art, letters, politics and society, without ceasing to be Christian and churchly. It should have a good theological article in every number, and a religious spirit in every article.

Much depends upon its name, and if the *Christian Examiner*

is to part with its time-hallowed title, the new monthly may perhaps be as well called "The Hemispheres," and try to meet the demands of our time as the *Examiner* met the wants of our fathers when it was established. This name would imply our desire to embrace the whole world, and look fairly round every great subject, and reconcile the great antagonisms of nature, science, industry, society, sex, race, religion. The magazine might begin in January, in a modest way, and work in time upward to its true place and proportions. Perhaps it might absorb the *Examiner* and our two monthly journals, and so start with a fair support.

V. As to the method of conducting it, we need a vigorous publisher, the co-operation of our best writers, clergy and laity, men and women, and the help of our denominational organism. It might be advisable to have a lady upon the editorial staff, and let her say out fully the woman's side of religion and of life. Perhaps the American Unitarian Association might back it up to a certain extent, and justify the expense by publishing its most important proceedings and ideas in its columns. It should have a direct, personal and practical aim, and not lose its own home and standpoint in the ambition of sweeping the globe. It should have heart and force enough to pay its writers liberally, and not compel them, like our old organs, to utter their convictions, like the old martyrs, at the risk of starvation.

Rev. Dr. Osgood offered the following Resolution,

Resolved, That it is the sense of this Conference that the Unitarian movement in America ought to be represented by a literary, scientific, and theological Review, such as may command the respect and support of the liberal Christian public,—to be issued under the auspices, and at least in part sustained by the funds of the Body; and that a Committee of three be appointed by the Chair to confer with the Executive Committee of the American Unitarian Association on the best means of establishing such a Journal.

After discussion by Rev. Messrs. W. Sharman, S. R. Calthrop, H. P. Cutting, Mr. E. Coggeshall, and Rev. Dr. Bellows,

The Resolution was adopted, and the chair appointed the following Committee: Rev. Saml. Osgood, D. D., Rev. J. H. Allen, E. P. Whipple.

On motion of Rev. S. R. Calthrop,

Voted, That the hearty thanks of the Conference be presented to the late conductors of the *Christian Examiner* for their self-sacrificing labors.

On motion of Artemas Carter,

Voted, That this Conference desires now to hear a word from Dr. Hosmer, President of Antioch College, respecting that broad and efficient educational institution, endowed and supported chiefly by our own best men, and so wisely administered by him.

Rev. Dr. Hosmer addressed the Conference, and was followed by Rev. H. C. Badger on the same subject.

The Committee to whom was referred the Resolution concerning Theatre Meetings, reported that the whole subject be referred to the following Committee:— General Committee, Rev. G. H. Hepworth, Rev. E. E. Hale, Rev. Geo. L. Chaney, H. P. Kidder, Wm. H. Baldwin;— District Committees, Rev. A. Woodbury of Providence, Rev. A. D. Mayo of Cincinnati, Rev. S. R. Calthrop of Syracuse, Rev. Chas. A. Allen of Montpelier, Rev. C. A. Staples of Chicago, Rev. C. E. Grinnell of Lowell, Rev. John D. Wells of Quincy, Rev. T. P. Forbush of Cleveland, Rev. R. Metcalf of Winchester, Rev. George Batchelder of Salem, E. W. Clark of Philadelphia.

Report adopted.

Mr. Joseph Shippen declined acting on the Meadville Committee, and moved that the Committee be increased to seven and that the vacancies be filled by the election of Rev. Dr. Eliot of St. Louis, Hon. J. E. Williams of New York, and E. S. Throop of Cincinnati.

Carried.

Rev. Dr. Bulfinch, being called upon to present a Report on Denominational Literature, pleaded the lateness of the hour, and referred to the Report of the Committee on Denominational Literature as a sufficient presentation of the subject, under the circumstances. [See page 49.] He farther urged the adoption of the following Resolutions, contained in that Report:

Resolved, That the Conference observes with pleasure the increased activity of the A U. A. in the publication and circulation of books.

Resolved, That it is of high importance that there should be provided an Introduction to the Scriptures, a Commentary upon them, and a History of the Christian Church, embracing, in popular form, the best

results of modern scholarship; with works for general use, of a meditative and devotional character; and that the subject of procuring or aiding the preparation of such works be commended to the attention of the A. U. A.

Resolved, That the Conference suggest to the Association to consider the expediency of preparing, by the labors of a sufficient number of competent scholars, a Family Bible; the text and translation to have the most important and best established emendations of recent criticism; to be arranged in paragraphs and parallelisms, and to be accompanied by brief notes, and introductions to the various books.

The first of these Resolutions was adopted, and the second and third were referred to the Council of the Conference.

The Committee on Business reported the following Resolution, which had been referred to them :

Resolved, That this Conference respectfully ask the Corporation of Harvard College to consider the possibility of maintaining in that Institution a School of Theology in which there may be teachers and scholars of every religious denomination.

After remarks by Rev. Dr. Bulfinch, the Resolution was referred to the Council.

The Committee on Business submitted the following Resolutions :

Resolved, That this Conference rejoices in the opportunity of coöperation with the African Methodist Episcopal Church, in the great work of ameliorating the social, civil and religious condition of the colored population of the United States.

Resolved, That we heartily indorse the action of the American Unitarian Association in appropriating \$4,000 for this purpose.

Resolved, That we heartily commend this work to the increased liberality of our churches, through the Unitarian Association.

Adopted.

Also these :

Resolved, That this Conference desires to cultivate the most friendly relations with, and encourage fraternal intercourse between the various Liberal Christian Bodies in this country, and that a Committee of three be appointed to represent our fraternal sentiments, and to consider all questions which relate to mutual intercourse and coöperation.

Resolved, That this Committee be empowered to appoint delegates from our church, to visit and confer with the liberal organizations on the occasion of their Annual Meetings.

Adopted: and Rev. E. E. Hale, Rev. Charles Lowe and Rev. John D. Wells were appointed said Committee.

The Business Committee submitted also the following:

Resolved, That the Council be requested to consider the propriety of recommending to the next meeting of the Conference the erection by the denomination of a National Church, at Washington, D. C.

Adopted.

Resolved, That the thanks of this Conference be presented to Hon. Thomas D. Eliot, for the ability, impartiality and urbanity with which he has presided over its deliberations.

Adopted.

On motion of Rev. A. Woodbury,

Voted, That the thanks of this Conference be offered to the Trustees of the Church of the Messiah for their generous hospitality in furnishing for the uses of the Conference their beautiful edifice.

Voted, That the thanks of this Conference be tendered to the Hon. James Kelly, Postmaster of the city of New York, for the kind attention which he has shown in providing convenient mail facilities for its members.

On motion of Rev. E. E. Hale,

Voted, That the Committee on the endowment of Antioch College appointed at the last meeting of the Conference be continued to the next meeting.

After singing the Doxology, the Benediction was pronounced by Rev. T. J. Mumford, of Derchester.

Adjourned *sine die*.

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS

OF THE

NATIONAL CONFERENCE.

CONSTITUTION.

PREAMBLE. — *Whereas* The great opportunities and demands for Christian labor and consecration at this time increase our sense of the obligations of all disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ to prove their faith by self-denial, and by the devotion of their lives and possessions to the service of God and the building-up of the kingdom of his Son, —

ARTICLE I. — Therefore, the Christian churches of the Unitarian faith here assembled unite themselves in a common body, to be known as the National Conference of Unitarian and other Christian Churches, to the end of energizing and stimulating the denomination with which they are connected to the largest exertions in the cause of Christian faith and work.

ARTICLE II. — This National Conference shall be composed of such delegates, elected once in two years, not to exceed three from any church, including its minister, who shall officially be one, as any of our churches may accredit to it by a certificate of their appointment.

ARTICLE III. — The American Unitarian Association, the Western Conference, and such other theological, academic, or humane organizations in our body as the Conference may see fit to invite, shall be entitled to representation by not more than three delegates each.

ARTICLE IV. — The Conference shall meet biennially at such time and place as it may designate at its successive biennial sessions.

ARTICLE V. — Its officers shall consist of a President; six Vice Presidents; three Secretaries — a Statistical, a Recording, and a Corresponding Secretary; a Treasurer; and a Council of ten, half ministers and half laymen; who shall be elected at each meeting, to hold their offices for two years, and until their successors are appointed.

ARTICLE VI. — The Council shall have charge, during the intervals of the biennial sessions, of all business having reference to the interests of the Conference, and intrusted to it by that body, which is hereby declared a purely advisory one.

ARTICLE VII. — The National Conference, until further advised by its experience, adopts the existing organizations of the Unitarian body as the instruments of its power, and confines itself to recommending them to such undertakings and methods as it judges to be in the heart of the Unitarian denomination.

ARTICLE VIII. — This Constitution may be amended at any regular meeting of the Conference, by a vote of not less than two-thirds of the delegates accredited thereto.

ARTICLE IX. — To secure the largest unity of the spirit and the widest practical co-operation, it is hereby declared that all the declarations of this Conference, including the Preamble and Constitution, are expressions only of its majority, committing in no degree those who object to them, and dependent wholly for their effect upon the consent they command on their own merits from the churches here represented, or belonging within the circle of our fellowship.

B Y - L A W S .

1. Three months at least before the time fixed by the National Conference for its Biennial Meeting, the Council shall issue a circular letter of call to the churches and organizations in its fellowship, accompanying it with a form of certificate, the production of which shall be the proof of membership of the

Conference until others are elected, unless otherwise ordered by the Conference.

2. The Recording Secretary shall keep a full report of the proceedings of the body, which shall be published at the expense of the Conference, and a copy sent to every delegate.

3. The Council at the conclusion of each Conference shall issue an address to the churches and organizations in our body, whether members of this Conference or not, to be published with the proceedings of the Conference, containing such advice and encouragement as it may deem appropriate, but especially communicating to the churches and organizations the recommendations of the Conference in regard to plans and methods of work; the amount of money required for the uses of the year; the special objects to which they would advise its appropriation, with such suggestions as to a just apportionment of the burden as they may judge expedient and becoming.

4. The Council shall have it for its duty to keep itself accurately informed of the plans and operations of the various organizations in our Body, and of the state of the individual churches; inviting correspondence and soliciting reports, to be sent in one month before the Biennial Meeting, in which the general condition of the parish, its Sunday-school, charities, and general working, may be set forth, to the end that the Conference may know what the wants and the wishes of the churches are, somewhat more particularly than it is possible to learn in the necessary hurry of the Biennial Meeting.

5. The Corresponding Secretary of the National Conference shall be the person to whom all letters and communications shall be addressed; and he shall be, *ex officio*, a member of the Council, and constitute its Secretary.

6. The list of delegates, churches, and organizations, represented in each Conference, shall be part of the Biennial Report. The archives of the Conference shall be in the keeping of the

Recording Secretary, subject to inspection and temporary possession by the Council.

7. A collection shall be taken up among the delegates at each Conference, to which any others may contribute, to defray the incidental expenses of the Conference, such as printing the Report, etc.

8. Each church in this Conference is recommended to defray the expenses of its delegates.

LIST OF ACCREDITED DELEGATES.

MAINE.

BELFAST. — First Parish.

Rev. Cazneau Palfrey, D. D., Hiram O. Alden, Wm. H. Burrill.

BRUNSWICK. — Mason Street Religious Society.

Rev. W. E. Copeland, A. V. Metcalf, Josiah Mitchell.

CALAIS. — Unitarian Society.

Rev. Wm. G. Nowell, Joseph Granger, Mrs. P. H. Glover.

CASTINE. — First Congregational Society.

Rev. G. F. Clark, S. K. Whiting, Mrs. H. E. Clark.

EASTPORT. — First Congregational Society.

Hon. Joseph M. Livermore, Mrs. Mary Smith.

ELLSWORTH. — First Unitarian Society.

Rev. W. H. Savary, Gen. J. C. Caldwell, John D. Hopkins.

FARMINGTON. — Liberal Christian Association.

Rev. Charles A. Hayden, Hon. Sam'l Belcher, A. H. Stewart.

HOULTON. — Unitarian Society.

Rev. John Murray, Chas. P. Tenney, Theodore Cary.

PORTLAND. — First Parish.

Rev. Benj. H. Bailey, Wm. Boyd, Lendall G. S. Boyd.

SACO. — Second Parish.

Tracy Hewes, G. A. Emery, S. W. Luques.

NEW HAMPSHIRE.

CHARLESTOWN. — South Parish.

Rev. Adams Ayer.

CONCORD. — Second Congregational Society.

Rev. J. F. Lovering, Hon. H. A. Bellows, Hon. Wm. H. Kimball.

DUBLIN. — First Congregational Society.

Rev. Geo. M. Rice, Joseph F. Hay, Nathan Whitney.

EXETER. — First Unitarian Society.

Rev. J. C. Learned, J. S. Parsons, D. M. Quimby.

KEENE. — Keene Congregational Society.

Rev. Wm. O. White, Hon. Thomas M. Edwards, Isaac Newton Spencer.

LACONIA. — First Unitarian Society.

Rev. T. L. Gorman, Mr. and Mrs. John C. Moulton.

LANCASTER. — First Unitarian Society.

Rev. J. M. L. Babcock.

NASHUA. — First Congregational Society.

Rev. M. G. Gage.

PETERBORO'. — Congregational Church.

Rev. C. B. Ferry, Rev. A. M. Pendleton, A. J. Aldrich.

PORTSMOUTH. — South Parish.

Rev. James De Normandie, Jonathan M. Tredick, Joseph H. Foster.

WALPOLE. — Walpole Town Congregational Society.

Russell N. Bellows, Edw. M. Holland.

WILTON. — First Congregational Society.

Rev. Richard Coleman.

VERMONT.

BRATTLEBORO'. — Unitarian Society.

Rev. Frederick Frothingham, Mr. and Mrs. Chas. J. Richardson.

BURLINGTON. — First Congregational Church.

Rev. Loammi G. Ware, John W. Pomeroy, Joel B. Gates.

CASTLETON. — First Liberal Christian Church and Society.

Rev. A. N. Adams, Joseph Adams.

MONTPELIER. — Church of the Messiah (Independent).

Rev. C. A. Allen, Mrs. H. S. Loomis.

RUTLAND. — First Liberal Christian Society.

Geo. E. Royce, Newman Weeks, Dr. Chas. Woodhouse.

MASSACHUSETTS.

ARLINGTON. — First Congregational Parish.

Rev. C. C. Salter, John Schouler, S. G. Damon.

ASHBY. — First Congregational Church.

Rev. George S. Shaw.

ATHOL. — First Congregational Parish.

Rev. W. S. Burton, George T. Johnson, A. Harding.

BARRE. — First Parish.

Rev. John B. Beach, Hiram Wadsworth, J. Foster Snow.

BELMONT. — Congregational Society.

Rev. Amos Smith, Dea. George S. Adams, Dea. Samuel P. Hammatt.

BERNARDSTON. — First Congregational Church.

Rev. S. Barber, Israel P. Hale, Frederic Chapin.

BEVERLY. — First Parish.

Rev. John C. Kimball, Charles Davis, Mary T. Weld.

BILLERICA. — Unitarian Society.

Rev. C. C. Hussey, Hon. Thomas Talbot, Wm. W. Warren.

BOSTON. — Church of the Disciples.

Rev. Jas. Freeman Clarke, D. D., N. G. Chapin, Geo. Wm. Bond.

BOSTON. — Church of the Redeemer.

Rev. C. D. Bradlee, Rev. Adams Ayer.

BOSTON. — New South Free Church.

Rev. W. P. Tilden, Matthew Binney.

BOSTON — King's Chapel.

Rev. Henry W. Foote, Hon. John Wells.

BOSTON. — South Congregational Church.

Rev. E. E. Hale, David Reed, Charles G. Wood.

BOSTON. — Music Hall Society.

Rev. Wm. R. Alger, Calvin G. Page, Benj. Baker.

BOSTON. — Warren Street Chapel.

Rev. Wm. G. Babcock, J. L. Emmons, E. R. Butler.

BOSTON. — Warren Street Chapel Inner Mission.

Rev. Charles F. Barnard, John L. Hunnewell, Rev. Dr. Nathans.

BOSTON. — Church in Arlington St.

Rev. Ezra S. Gannett, D. D., Edw. Wigglesworth, Jas. L. Little.

BOSTON. — Hollis St. Church.

Rev. Geo. L. Chaney, Lyman E. Sibley, S. Augustus Dix.

BOSTON. — Church of the Unity.

Rev. Geo. H. Hepworth, Sam'l Hall, J. B. Moors.

BOSTON. — First Church of Christ.

Rev. Rufus Ellis, Thomas Goddard, Jos. B. Wales.

BOSTON. — Hanover St. Chapel.

Rev. E. J. Gerry, Geo. S. Pike, Geo. Gould.

BOSTON. — First Religious Society.

Rev. Geo. Putnam, D. D., Rev. Adams Ayer, John Rogers.

BOSTON. — Mt. Pleasant Congregational Church.

Rev. Chas. J. Bowen, Alonzo Joselyn, J. L. Daniel.

BOSTON. — Church in Brattle Square.

Rev. Sam'l K. Lothrop, D. D., Hon. Peter T. Homer, Lewis B. Bailey.

BRIDGEWATER. — First Congregational Society.

Rev. G. H. Hosmer.

BROOKFIELD. — First Congregational Church.

Rev. D. A. Russell, Emmors Twitchell, Charles Fales.

BROOKLINE. — First Parish.

M. P. Kennard, Henry V. Poor.

CAMBRIDGE. — First Parish.

Rev. Joseph H. Allen, Rev. R. M. Hodges, U. Tracy Howe.

CAMBRIDGE. — Lee Street Church.

Rev. A. W. Stevens, Jason Winnett, John Wilson.

CAMBRIDGEPORT. — Cambridgeport Parish.

Rev. Geo. W. Briggs, D. D., Hon. Isaac Livermore, Wm. V. Spencer.

CANTON. — First Congregational Society.

Rev. Geo. F. Piper, J. Mason Everett, Geo. F. Sumner.

CHARLESTOWN. — Harvard Church Society.

Rev. Geo. E. Ellis, D. D., William Murray, Abram E. Cutter.

CHELMSFORD. — First Congregational Society.

Rev. Fiske Barrett, Dr. John C. Bartlett, Mrs. M. J. Bartlett.

CHELSEA. — First Unitarian Society.

Rev. John B. Green, Benjamin Dodge, James M. Gross.

CHICOPEE. — First Unitarian Society.

Rev. Calvin Stebbins, Hon. John Wells, Jerome Wells.

COHASSET. — First Parish.

Rev. Joseph Osgood, Ephraim Snow, A. H. Tower, Jr.

CONCORD. — First Parish.

Rev. Grindall Reynolds, Henry F. Smith, Nathan B. Stow.

DANVERS. — Unitarian Congregational Society.

Rev. L. J. Livermore, P. H. Wentworth, Alfred Fellows.

DEDHAM. — First Parish.

Sandford Carroll.

DEERFIELD. — First Congregational Church.

Rev. E. Buckingham, Mrs. Josiah Brown, Mrs. L. W. Eals.

DIGHTON. — Pedobaptist Congregational Society.

Rev. Isaac Kelso, Capt. Wm. Cobb, G. M. Peck.

DORCHESTER. — First Parish.

Rev. Nathaniel Hall, Daniel Denny, Alexander Beal.

DORCHESTER. — Third Unitarian Society.

Rev. Frederic Hinckley, Joseph Dix, Charles Smith.

DORCHESTER. — Third Religious Society.

Rev. T. J. Mumford, Nathaniel F. Safford, Joseph Carew.

DORCHESTER. — Church of the Divine Unity.

Rev. H. D. Catlin, Wm. F. Temple, J. W. Porter.

DUXBURY. — First Church.

Rev. Josiah Moore, Hon. S. U. Gifford, Saml. Loring.

EAST BRIDGEWATER. — East Church.

Rev. F. C. Williams, Mrs. Isaac Nutter, Henry Hobart.

EAST CAMBRIDGE. — Third Congregational Society.

Rev. S. G. Bulfinch, D. D.

EAST MARSHFIELD. — Second Congregational Society.

Rev. George Leonard, Mr. and Mrs. Constant Oakham.

EASTON. — Congregational Parish.

Rev. G. G. Withington, Rev. David Reed, Daniel Reed.

FAIRHAVEN. — Washington St. Christian Church.

Rev. C. Y. De Normandie, Warren Delano, Bartholomew Taber.

FITCHBURG. — First Parish.

Rev. Henry F. Jenks, Geo. H. Spencer, Alfred R. Ordway.

GRAFTON. — Congregational Society.

Rev. Wm. G. Scandlin, John Wheeler, J. M. Davenport.

GREENFIELD. — Third Congregational Society.

Rev. J. F. Moors, Theodore Leonard, S. L. Shattuck.

GROTON. — First Parish.

Rev. Geo. M. Folsom, Geo. W. Bancroft, Henry D. Dix.

GROTON JUNCTION. — Unitarian Society.

Rev. Crawford Nightingale, Robert Woods, Henry Woods.

HAVERHILL. — First Parish.

Rev. J. Vila Blake, John A. Appleton, Mrs. Wm. H. Hewes.

HINGHAM. — First Parish.

Rev. Calvin Lincoln, E. Waters Burr, Luther Stephenson, Jr.

HINGHAM. — New North Church, Third Congregation.

Rev. Joshua Young, David Whiton, Geo. P. Heywood.

HUDSON. — Union Society.

Rev. Wm. S. Heywood, W. F. Trowbridge, H. K. Graves.

HYDE PARK. — Christian Fraternity.

Rev. Wm. Hamilton.

IPSWICH. — Liberal Christian Society.

Rev. Wm. H. Knapp, Theodore Andrews, Curtis Damon.

JAMAICA PLAIN. — First Congregational Society.

Rev. James W. Thompson, D. D., Anson Dexter.

KINGSTON. — First Congregational Parish.

Rev. Joseph Phipps, George Holmes, Horatio Adams.

LAWRENCE. — First Unitarian Society.

Rev. James B. Moore, Geo. D. Cabot, Wm. D. Lamb.

LEOMINSTER. — First Congregational Society.

Rev. Edward A. Horton, Ward M. Cotton, Mrs. Geo. Robbins.

LEXINGTON. — First Parish.

Rev. Henry Wescott, Hon. Charles Hudson, Howland Holmes.

LINCOLN. — Unitarian Congregational Society.

Rev. J. H. Allen, Edward F. Hodges, Geo. G. Tarbell.

LITTLETON. — First Congregational Society.

Rev. A. B. Vorse, Mr. and Mrs. Reuben Hoar.

LOWELL. — First Unitarian Society.

Rev. Chas. E. Grinnell, Hon. Geo. F. Richardson, Peter Andersen.

LYNN. — Second Congregational Society.

Rev. S. B. Stewart, Hon. Thos. B. Newhall, Wilder S. Thurston.

LYNNFIELD. — First Congregational Society.

Ebenezer Parsons, Mrs. Caroline H. Dall, Miss Pamela O. Emerson.

MANSFIELD. — First Congregational Parish.

Rev. J. L. Hatch, Joseph Draper, William Deane.

MARBLEHEAD. — Second Congregational Society.

Rev. Wm. B. Buxton, Mr. and Mrs. S. P. Hathaway, jr.

MARLBORO'. — West Parish.

Rev. Eugene De Normandie, Henry O. Russell, Aaron B. Rice.

MEDFIELD. — First Congregational Parish.

Rev. J. H. Wiggin, John Ellis, Charles Hamant.

MEDFORD. — First Parish.

H. T. Wood, Thatcher Magoun, jr.

MELROSE. — Congregational Unitarian Society.

Rev. Wm. S. Barnes, Amasa Mason, Freeman Baker.

MENDON. — First Parish.

Rev. D. P. Lindsley, H. A. Aldrich, S. G. Davenport.

MIDDLETON. — First Unitarian Church.

Rev. L. J. Livermore.

MILFORD. — Hopedale Parish of Liberal Christians.

Rev. Adin Ballou, Warren W. Dutcher, Ebenezer D. Draper.

MONTAGUE. — Second Congregational Society.

Rev. David Cronyn, C. P. Wright, S. C. Wells.

NEW BEDFORD. — First Congregational Society.

William P. S. Cadwell, Alanson Borden.

NEWBURYPORT. — First Religious Society.

Rev. Joseph May, E. F. Stone, Miss Brockway.

NEWTON CORNER. — Channing Religious Society.

Rev. E. J. Young, D. B. Flint, W. P. Tyler.

NORTHAMPTON. — Second Congregational Church.

Rev. Wm. L. Jenkins, Henry Dikeman, Christopher Clarke.

NORTH ANDOVER. — First Unitarian Society.

Rev. C. C. Vinal, Hiram Berry, Benjamin Rogers.

NORTHBORO'. — First Congregational Society.

Rev. Joseph Allen, Geo. C. Davis, Mrs. F. M. Chesboro'.

NORTH CHELSEA. — First Congregational Parish.

Rev. J. Herbert Senter, H. V. Pinkham, Wm. T. Hall.

NORTH EASTON. — Unitarian Society.

Rev. Wm. L. Chaffin, Cyrus Lothrop, Joseph Barrows.

NORTHFIELD. — First Congregational Society.

Rev. Charles Noyes, Hon. A. C. Parsons, Judah Nash.

PEABODY. — First Unitarian Church.

Rev. Edw. I. Galvin, Wm. N. Lord, Wm. Cutter.

PLYMOUTH. — First Parish.

Hon. Jacob H. Loud, Allen Danforth, John T. Hall.

QUINCY. — First Congregational Society.

Rev. John D. Wells, Lewis Bass, Jr., Geo. W. B. Taylor.

SALEM. — First Congregational Society.

Rev. J. T. Hewes, Henry Derby, Abner C. Gordell, Jr.

SALEM. — Second Church.

Rev. S. C. Beane, Gardner Barton, Frederick Grant.

SALEM. — North Church.

Rev. E. B. Wilson, N. A. Clark, John B. Tileston.

SALEM. — Independent Congregational Church in Barton Square.

Rev. Geo. Batchelder, W. P. Phillips, James Chamberlin.

SANDWICH. — First Church of Christ.

Rev. T. W. Brown, C. I. Gibbs, John W. Pope.

SCITUATE. — First Parish.

Rev. Mr. Cargill.

SHARON. — First Congregational Society.

Rev. G. W. Stacy, H. A. Lathrop, Charles Winship.

SHERBORN. — First Congregational Church.

Rev. Wm. Brown, Jacob Cushing, Jesse Ellis.

SHIRLEY. — First Congregational Society.

Rev. Seth Chandler, Thos. E. Whitney, Asaph E. Buss.

SOMERVILLE. — First Congregational Society.

Rev. Henry H. Barber, Robert A. Vinal, Chas. S. Lincoln.

SOUTH BOSTON. — Hawes Place Congregational Society.

Geo. Baxter, Jr., Edwin H. Gill.

SOUTH NATICK. — South Congregational Society.

Rev. Horatio Alger, Dea. Thomas Phillips, Elijah Perry.

SOUTH SCITUATE. — First Parish.

Rev. W. H. Fish, E. T. Fogg, Sylvanus Clapp.

SPRINGFIELD. — Third Congregational Society.

Rev. C. A. Humphreys, Hon. Geo. Walker, Henry Smith.

STOW. — First Parish.

Rev. F. F. Lovell, E. Whitney.

STURBRIDGE. — Unitarian Congregational Society.

Rev. H. F. Edes, Mrs. Edes, Earl Chase.

SWAMPSCOTT. — First Unitarian Society.

Rev. John F. W. Ware, J. C. J. Brown.

TAUNTON. — First Congregational Society.

Rev. J. W. Hudson.

TISBURY. — Church of the Unity.

Rev. D. W. Stevens, Dr. Moses Brown, Maj. Oliver Holman.

TYNGSBORO'. — First Parish.

Rev. W. G. Todd, Dea. Cyrus Butterfield, Ebenezer Swan.

UPTON. — First Unitarian Society.

Rev. Geo. S. Ball, Calvin Ruggles, E. C. Aldrich.

UXBRIDGE. — First Congregational Society.

Rev. Rushton D. Burr, Arnold S. Sweet, Sam'l W. Scott.

WALPOLE. — First Congregational Society.

Rev. W. B. Smith, Jerome B. Cram, Beeri Clark.

WALTHAM. — First Parish.

Rev. S. B. Flagg, Arthur T. Lyman.

WARE. — First Unitarian Society.

Rev. John W. Hudson, Mr. and Mrs. Charles A. Stevens.

WESTBORO'. — First Congregational Society.

Rev. Geo. N. Richardson, Geo. Forbes, D. Rice.

WEST BRIDGEWATER. — First Congregational Society.

Rev. J. G. Forman, Mr. and Mrs. Otis Drury.

WEST CUMMINGTON. — First Universalist Society.

Rev. L. W. Brigham, Mr. and Mrs. E. Jordan.

WEST DEDHAM. — Third Parish.

Rev. E. Gifford, Erastus Gay, Caleb Ellis.

WESTFORD. — First Congregational Parish.

Rev. Geo. H. Young, John B. Fletcher, Henry Folland.

WESTON. — First Parish.

Rev. Edmund H. Sears, I. E. Coburn, Wm. H. Floyd.

WHATELY. — First Unitarian Congregational Society.

Rev. H. C. Bates, Myron Brown, Wm. Richtmeyer.

WINCHESTER. — Winchester Unitarian Society.

Rev. Richard Metcalf, Edw. Shattuck, T. P. Ayre.

WINCHENDON. — Church of the Unity.

Rev. C. H. Wheeler.

WOBURN. — First Unitarian Parish.

E. W. Champney, J. B. Winn, Stephen Nichols.

WORCESTER. — Second Congregational Church.

Rev. Alonzo Hill, D. D., Hon. Phineas Ball, Stephen Salisbury, jr.

WORCESTER. — Church of the Unity.

Rev. Rush R. Shippen, Hon. Geo. W. Richardson, Joseph Mason.

RHODE ISLAND.

NEWPORT. — Unitarian Congregational Church.

Rev. Charles T. Brooks, Thos. Coggeshall, Mrs. Julia Ward Howe.

PROVIDENCE. — First Congregational Society.

Rev. Arthur M. Knapp, Benj. N. Lapham, Saml. H. Zingley.

PROVIDENCE. — Westminster Congregational Society.

Rev. Augustus Woodbury, Hon. Seth Padelford, Dr. F. N. Seabury.

PROVIDENCE. — Church of the Ministry at Large.

Rev. Edwin M. Stone, Wm. B. Healey, Henry S. Stone.

CONNECTICUT.

HARTFORD. — First Unitarian Congregational Society.

Horace Cornwall, Mrs. Charles Cheney.

NEW YORK.

BROOKLYN. — Church of the Saviour.

Rev. A. P. Putnam, Ripley Ropes, Leopold Bierwith.

BROOKLYN. — Second Unitarian Congregational Society.

Rev. J. W. Chadwick, Ethelbert S. Mills, John F. Desmazes.

BROOKLYN. — Third Unitarian Society.

Rev. H. C. Badger, H. B. Shute, Royal A. Gaines.

BUFFALO. — First Unitarian Congregational Church.

Rev. Frederick Frothingham, Noah P. Sprague, John Felton.

FLUSHING. — First Unitarian Society.

Rev. F. W. Holland, David Little, Mrs. Catherine Huntsman.

HARLEM. — Universalist Society.

Rev. Wm. T. Clarke, Thomas Weston, S. F. Noyes.

ITHACA. — First Unitarian Church.

Rev. J. C. Zachos, Rev. Jacob Caldwell, Mrs. E. Goodwin.

NEWBURGH. — Church of our Father.

Mrs. Sarah Schram, C. P. Cranch.

NEW YORK. — First Congregational Church.

Rev. Henry W. Bellows, D. D., Dorman B. Eaton, Joseph H. Choate.

NEW YORK. — Second Congregational Church.

Rev. Saml. Osgood, D. D., Alfred Brookes, Wm. F. Bridge.

NEW YORK. — Third Congregational (Unitarian) Society.

Rev. O. B. Frothingham, Oliver Johnson, Wm. H. Woodman.

ROCHESTER. — First Unitarian Congregational Society.

Rev. Clay McCauley, John Bower, Geo. G. Clarkson.

STATEN ISLAND. — Church of the Redeemer.

Rev. W. R. G. Mellen, Geo. W. Jewett, Geo. Wm. Curtis.

SYRACUSE. — Church of the Messiah.

Rev. S. R. Calthrop, C. C. Loomis, E. B. Judson.

TRENTON. — Reformed Christian Church.

Rev. Wm. Silsbee, Wm. H. Miller, Mary E. Pierce.

TROY. — First Unitarian Society.

Rev. N. M. Mann, Hon. Thos. Coleman, M. M. Waterman.

UNION SPRINGS. — First Christian Society.

Rev. A. Freeman Bailey, Rev. A. Coburn, Mrs. Kate Beardsley.

VERNON. — Vernon Unitarian Congregational Society.

Rev. W. P. Payne, J. H. Hills, E. Case.

YONKERS. — First Unitarian Congregational Society.

Rev. R. D. Burr, John E. Williams, Mrs. Duncan Smith.

NEW JERSEY.

VINELAND. — First Congregational Society.

Rev. Oscar Clute, W. H. Earle, Mrs. L. B. Felton.

PENNSYLVANIA.

GERMANTOWN. — Unitarian Society.

Rev. S. Farrington, E. W. Clark, James A. Wright.

MEADVILLE. — Independent Congregational Society.

Rev. J. C. Zachos, Joshua Douglas, Joseph Shippen.

DELAWARE.

WILMINGTON. — First Unitarian Church.
Rev. Fielder Israel, Henry Lea, Thos. Y. De Normandie.

MARYLAND.

BALTIMORE. — First Independent Church.
Enoch Pratt, Geo. B. Cole.

BALTIMORE. — Church of the Saviour.
Rev. John F. W. Ware, A. A. Perry.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA.

WASHINGTON. — First Unitarian Church.
Rev. Wm. Sharman, Geo. E. Baker, Franklin Philp.

OHIO.

CINCINNATI. — Church of the Redeemer.
Rev. A. D. Mayo, Seth Evans, Miss Harriet E. Hosea.

CLEVELAND. — Church of the Unity
Rev. T. B. Forbush, Fred. C. Goff, Wm. P. Fogg.

MARIETTA. — First Unitarian Society.
Rev. W. C. Finney, Gen. A. J. Warner, Dr. Abram Pratt.

TOLEDO. — First Unitarian Church.
Rev. Stephen H. Camp, Mrs. J. J. Barker, N. N. Sherwood.

ILLINOIS.

ALTON. — First Congregational Society.
Rev. H. P. Cutting, M. H. Topping, L. Hamlin.

CHICAGO. — Church of the Messiah.
Rev. Robert Laird Collier, D. D., A. G. Bailey, D. L. Shorey.

CHICAGO. — Unity Church.
Rev. Robert Collyer, Artemas Carter, Gilbert Hubbard.

EVANSTON. — Unity Church.
Rev. John Williams.

WINNETKA. — Liberal Christian Society.
Mr. and Mrs. Thomas M. Thompson.

MICHIGAN.

ANN ARBOR. — First Unitarian Society.
Rev. Charles H. Brigham.

DETROIT. — First Congregational Unitarian Society.
Adams Elder, H. C. Hodges.

KALAMAZOO. — First Unitarian Church.
Rev. C. G. Howland, Hon. Chas. S. May, Mrs. C. P. Potter.

KENTUCKY.

LOUISVILLE. — First Unitarian Church.
Rev. John H. Heywood, A. G. Munn, E. B. Whitman.

WISCONSIN.

BARABOO. — Free Congregational Society.
Rev. A. A. Roberts, Mrs. Roberts, Thos. D. Lang.

BERLIN. — Liberal Christian Society.
Rev. W. G. M. Stone, James H. Foster, A. A. Spencer.

MISSOURI.

ST. LOUIS. — Church of the Messiah.
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