

THE  
PRINCETON REVIEW.

OCTOBER, 1857.

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No. IV.

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ARTICLE I.—*A Half-Century of the Unitarian Controversy; with particular Reference to its Origin, its Course, and its prominent Subjects among the Congregationalists of Massachusetts.* With an Appendix. By GEORGE E. ELLIS. Boston: Crosby, Nichols & Co. 1857.

THIS book deals with great topics. In form, it is an historic survey of Unitarianism, during the fifty years of its avowed existence, and distinct organic development, in New England. In substance, it is an elaborate and ingenious defence of rationalism, both abstract and concrete—as a principle, and in its actual workings and fruits among Unitarians and other parties in the Congregational connection. The principal chapters in the volume first appeared in a series of articles in the *Christian Examiner*, of which its author was editor. We have no doubt that their republication in this form was demanded by the general conviction of his brethren, that nothing could better subserve their cause. On nearly every page, we see the strategy of the dexterous polemic, familiar with the whole history of the conflict, the present position and attitude of his foes, and striking his keen and polished weapons, with consummate precision, at their tenderest points. He accomplishes much by his calmness, self-possession, and generally courteous and conciliatory style, which he seldom loses, except when he touches Old

Calvinism, or vents his impatience with his New School friends, for claiming to be (in distinction from the Unitarians) the only rightful successors of those Puritan forefathers, some of whose distinctive doctrines they so often in one breath apologize for, and in the next breath denounce. Indeed, so gracious is the tone, so sweet and delicious the decoction, in which he applies his caustic to this class, whom he treats now as allies, and now as foes, that they hardly suspect the poison until they feel its sting. His adulation is often so delicate and unctuous, that the progressive theologians, whom he makes alternately his friends and his adversaries, are scarcely conscious that the point of this two-edged sword has been pressed to the heart, until they find themselves faint from loss of blood.

This volume is significant in various ways. It is the most important and skilful contribution to Unitarian polemics which has appeared for a long time. The position of the author as editor of the chief organ of the denomination, and his recent elevation (as we are informed) to the Professorship of Theology in their divinity school, indicate that he is their recognized and trusted champion. The occasion of the work, and its special aim, also invest it with importance. It is occasioned by those "signs of conciliation" and reunion, which have been freely and gladly given and welcomed by certain parties, including the more "advanced minds" in both branches of the sundered Congregational communion. That some tendencies and foretokenings of this kind have appeared, is manifest to all competent observers. They have been hailed with delight by some, as signs of the conversion of Unitarians to orthodoxy. A large party, under the influence of this persuasion, have been fertile in devices to divest the ancient faith of the drapery in which the creeds present it, which they have conceived to be repellant to many Unitarians who were ready enough to embrace the substance of it. They have flattered themselves that it could be stripped of this repulsive dress, without sacrifice of its body and substance. Another class have feared that this promise of conciliation arises rather from the approaches of the New School party among the orthodox to Unitarianism, than from any retrocession among the Unitarians from their distinctive tenets; or rather their negation of the distinctive tenets of the Christian

faith. Liberal Christians too are not indifferent to the solution of these questions. How has their faith, or negation of faith, stood the test of fifty years' trial? Is the experiment a failure? Must they now make the humiliating confession, that the principles which ruptured their fellowship with the great mass of Congregationalists are vicious, and that the doctrines they so bitterly reviled and denounced are worthy of all acceptance? Or, on the other hand, as these two systems of doctrine have faced each other for two generations, has their own held its ground without wavering, and has the antagonist system been giving way and retreating before its assaults? And has this process been going on without any noteworthy accession of numbers to the Unitarian body, by a steady dilution of the theology current among their adversaries? Whichever doctrine any may espouse, these are questions of no slight interest, not only as they refer to the progress of truth and error in the ancient and honoured Congregational body, but as they touch the pride of success and consistency which is inbred in man. To the solution of these questions, Mr. Ellis devotes his strength in this work. In this line of inquiry, he brings out his subtle attacks of various severity, sometimes softened and disguised by felicitous compliments, upon various orders of antagonists, and types of obnoxious doctrine. He states his own purpose thus:

“Unitarianism stands in direct and positive opposition to orthodoxy on three great doctrines, which orthodoxy teaches, with emphasis, as vital to its system; namely, that the nature of human beings has been vitiated, corrupted, and disabled, in consequence of the sin of Adam, for which God has in judgment doomed our race to suffering and woe; that Jesus Christ is God, and, therefore, an object of religious homage and prayer; and that the death of Christ is made effectual to human salvation, by reconciling God to man, and satisfying the claims of an insulted and outraged law. Unitarianism denies that these are doctrines of the gospel, and offers very different doctrines, sustained by scripture, in their place.

“The rejection of these three orthodox doctrines, and the belief of those which Unitarians substitute for them, constitutes Unitarianism. All the rest of Christianity is common ground

between us and other denominations. On all other matters of Christian doctrine, a Unitarian may be in entire accordance with the general views of the orthodox, and yet be not one whit less a Unitarian. . . .

“Unitarianism defined a position in direct and complete antagonism to orthodoxy on these three points, and on no others. On these three points Unitarianism has resolutely held its ground, and intends to hold it firmly, and without a hair’s breadth. Orthodoxy has been during the half-century, reconsidering its position as regards one or another of these three points, modifying, qualifying, and abating its dogmatic statement of its three primary doctrines.

“Now, if there has been any tendency to harmony and accordance of opinion, and reconciliation of differences between the two parties, it is to be referred either to a recognition of sympathies, and a common belief in the other doctrines of the gospel, in the realm of Christian truth and faith, which was not appropriated exclusively by the orthodox or by the Unitarians, or else to the fact that the orthodox have a better appreciation of the strength of our position, and of the dubiousness of their own position, on the three points of doctrine just stated.

“We propose in successive papers to deal with those three great doctrinal issues, and when we have disposed of these topics, we shall have to discuss a very important question relative to the proper view of the scriptures, and the mode of treating them, and of criticising and expounding them, so far as that question has entered into the controversy. We hope thus to gather some of the best fruits of a half-century of sharp but not unprofitable controversy between brethren,” pp. 47–9.

This statement seems to us essentially just. Whoever denies the fall, the Deity of Christ, and his vicarious sacrifice for men, is, whatever else he may hold, a Unitarian. Nor have the Unitarians in the least relaxed the earnestness or firmness with which they cleave to this denial. There may be a few exceptional cases of men who adopt, in a vague and confused sense, some of the phrases of modern Pantheistic Sabellianism, somewhat after the fashion of Dr. Bushnell. Besides this, doubtless, all shades of opinion respecting the person of Christ exist among them, from pure Humanitarianism, to the high

Arianism of those who, like Mr. Ellis, freely term Christ a divine person, but most strenuously deny that he is God. It is also true that the Unitarian body, as our author freely confesses, has always included almost every variety of opinion on other topics. It is true that their cardinal and distinctive negations require, and quite uniformly produce, lax views of inspiration, in order to their vindication. It is also true that logical consistency, or if not this, a due *concinnity* of thinking and feeling, requires them to be sceptical and chary in regard to the doctrine of future and eternal punishment. This they generally explicitly reject, or treat with prudent reserve. In regard to divine influence in purifying the soul, some avow a vague belief in something of the kind, without defining precisely what they mean by it. Others believe only in the development and culture of human nature, by outward teaching and training. All gladly accept the ingenious formula of Professor Parke, "that the character of our race needs an essential transformation, by an interposed influence from God."

The facts of the case then are briefly: 1. That Unitarianism has its essence in the negation of the fall in Adam: the Deity of Christ; involving also the Trinity; and in vicarious Atonement. 2. Signs of conciliation and accord between the parties are beginning to be recognized. The question then arises, whence does this tendency to conciliation arise? In an advance among the Unitarians towards orthodoxy, or of the nominally orthodox, or parties among them, towards the Unitarian view of these subjects. This is the main question with which Mr. Ellis deals, and all other topics are auxiliary to this.

In meeting this issue, he finds occasion to deal chiefly with three classes of men indicated by their respective types of doctrine. These are 1st. the Old Calvinists, or such as abide by the ancient Reformed symbols, and especially the Westminster standards. 2d. New School men, a convenient and accepted designation of all grades of innovators upon these standards, who still remain in communions recognizing these standards. 3d. Unitarians. The strict adherents of the Old Confessions which once expressed the faith of New England Congregationalists, he considers as either extinct among them at present, or so few that they may safely be ignored. The great body of

the New England Congregational clergy out of the Unitarian ranks, he places among the different grades of the New School, who, with whatever circumstantial points of difference, agree in renouncing the propositions of the Confession relative to Original Sin, and Atonement; and are generally far enough from being tenacious of its phraseology regarding the Trinity. If the abundant protestations of many of their leading divines are to be trusted, he by no means overstates the general antipathy of the New England clergy to the Westminster propositions on these points. They glory in renouncing the form, while they claim that they retain the substance of doctrine set forth in these formularies. Now Mr. Ellis insists that it is against these *doctrines as set forth in these ancient formularies*, and not against something else, that Unitarians protested, and that for so protesting they were disowned. He insists further, that all the attempts of the New School to soften, apologize for, and recast them in less offensive forms, is a virtual endorsement of the Unitarian protest against them; while the attempt to retain the substance, with the offensive part eliminated, is and must be a failure. For it is against the substance, and not the mere garb of these doctrines that Unitarians recalcitrate. It is this that is odious and intolerable to them. And all the forms in which these advanced minds have put the substance of these doctrines, retaining it still intact, contain all *for substance* that was hideous in the rejected form. Their position has no advantage over the Old School in relieving orthodoxy of its terrors. It is incomparably inferior in vigour and consistency. Yet while it lacks the consistent strength of the old system, and retains its weak points, it is a protest against it, and therein a protest against itself, and a concession to, an advance towards Unitarianism. Hence it merits and receives the profuse eulogies of Mr. Ellis, after he has exposed its suicidal weakness, and its serviceableness to his own cause.

Mr. Ellis's method will more fully appear, by tracing it in actual example. He of course begins with the topic of human corruption and ruin, which always affords the most convenient and available topic of declamation for those who wish to enlist the sympathies of men against the orthodox system. He quotes the articles on original sin, in the Westminster stand-

ards, which set forth the faith of the Reformed churches, are the avowed formularies of the leading Calvinistic bodies in this country, and not only are the professed, but the real faith of the New England churches, up to the time when Unitarianism began secretly to germinate among them. The elements of the doctrine here maintained are, the probation of the race in Adam; the consequent imputation of his sin to his posterity; the consequent conveyance of a nature corrupt, disabled, opposite to all good; liable, unless redemption supervenes, to all the miseries of this life, and to the pains of hell for ever.

Says Mr. Ellis, "This doctrine still stands, however, unchanged in word, unrelaxed in authority, in the formulas of Orthodox churches. Still is the repute of holding the faith of the Fathers claimed by those who are called Orthodox. . . . And this is the doctrine which Unitarianism rejected positively, and without qualification, concession, or tolerance; asserting that it is not taught in the Bible, but is utterly inconsistent with the teachings of that book; that it dishonours God by ascribing to him a method arbitrary, unjust, and wholly subversive of all righteous law; that it wrongs human nature, destroys moral responsibility, corrupts the Christian system, unsettles morality, and leads to infidelity and irreligion. This is the ground of opposition, and these are the terms of it which Unitarianism recognized at the opening of the controversy. Unitarianism has held its ground without misgiving or compromise, Unitarianism means to hold its ground—no more nor no less than its ground—on this matter of doctrine. Its courage and assurance and confidence have steadily increased, as it has realized its own strength and the weakness of its antagonist on this doctrine of the entail on all the human race, on account of the sin of one man, of a corrupted nature, which must work corruption in this life, and is sentenced to the pains of hell forever," pp. 66-7.

Such is a sample of the vituperation which the author constantly visits upon the scriptural doctrine of the fall of mankind, in the fall of their first parent and progenitor. We shall confront him on this subject, in connection with his own admissions, hereafter.

Meanwhile, let us examine his reckoning with the New School

men relative to the subject. They yield so far to these stereotype objections to the doctrine, as to adopt manifold expedients to soften its aspect, without, as they think, sacrificing its substance. They deny the federal and representative character of Adam, and the consequent imputation of his sin to his posterity, and echo the old Socinian cavils against them. Those are now few who deny imputation, and still retain the doctrine of native sinfulness, and exposure to suffering and death in punishment thereof. But while they deny all this, they assert such a natural sinless depravity of the moral constitution, as leads men to sin and sin only from the first exercise of moral agency, till they are converted to Christ. They further assert this to be in consequence of the fall of Adam; and yet that this depravity, innocent until it ripens into conscious acts of transgression, does not disable its subject for a perfect spiritual obedience to God, although it ensures the certainty that he will sin and only sin.

Now, here is an ingenious attempt to eliminate from the doctrine its unwelcome ingredients—imputation, hereditary sinfulness, and inability—and yet to keep the substance, viz. that men inherit from Adam a vitiated moral nature, which ensures that they sin to their utter and eternal ruin, until, through grace, they become new creatures in Christ. Will not this satisfy Unitarian and other objectors? Does it not clear away all their most troublesome objections? Not at all. Mr. Ellis will not allow that this modification of Calvinism “furnishes any essential relief of what are to us the unscriptural and revolting features of the system. . . . It leaves the outrage, which is inherent in Calvinism—of assigning to us a prejudiced start on an immortal career, of making human life a foregone conclusion at its commencement. . . . I cannot reconcile the statement that, in consequence of the fall of Adam, we come into existence *entirely depraved*, with the statement, that, though thus depraved, we are *justly* required to love God with *all the heart*, and are *justly* punishable for disobedience. How does the doctrinal belief affirmed in these two statements differ from the doctrine of the formula?” pp. 460–1. And in reference to the alleged ability to love God with all the heart, he asks, “Of what character or value must

be all the love of an entirely depraved heart? Is pure love, or the love of a pure object, possible to such a heart?" p. 461. Still further, in reference to the supposed relief afforded by asserting natural ability along with moral inability, he says, "There certainly is a real difference between a lack of *power* and a lack of *will* to do one's duty; but if the lack of *will* springs from a lack of *power to will*, or of a capacity of being influenced by the will otherwise than to disobedience, a moral want of will becomes essentially a natural want of power," p. 100. That is, if in asserting natural ability, they do not intend to destroy the substance as well as the form of the old doctrine of inability—if they hold to any real inability—they are still obnoxious to all the objections which lie against the old doctrine. For, according to this the inability, though natural and real, is none the less moral. If, on the other hand, they mean to destroy the substance of the doctrine, then they are on Unitarian ground.

This, then, is the true state of the case. The attempt to meet, evade, or silence the objections of Socinians and others to the doctrine of the fall, or to reconcile them in any manner to it, by the modifications of New Divinity, is an utter failure. Unless they renounce the doctrine, in any form or modification of it, however dilute, they neither silence, satisfy, nor attract them. Says Mr. Ellis, "The only modification of the dogma which will be explicit enough for us, will be an entire and honest renunciation of it." Why? Because so long as any substance of it is retained, so long it is bare to the objections, the prejudices, the intolerant aversion which this class of men bring to bear against the old or any other form of it. It may be safely affirmed that it has not contributed an iota to weaken the tendency to Unitarian thinking in New England. It may as safely be affirmed that it has done much to diffuse and invigorate it. It has endorsed and urged with violence the old Socinian objections to the doctrine of original sin as stated in the formulas of Reformed Christendom. The tirades against "propagated depravity," in the *Christian Spectator*, were no whit less vehement than the denunciations of Mr. Ellis, and were very much like them as to substance and form. They have therefore become powerful allies of the Unitarians in

witnessing against the doctrine. But since these objections lie "for substance" against the "substance of the doctrine" in any modification of it, so far as they lie against the doctrine of the Confession, all who employ them, so far forth, sanction and promote Unitarian thinking. And it is none the better, but all the worse, if this thinking has such ascendancy in the Orthodox ranks, as to prevent all secessions to and consequent growth of the Unitarian body. It inures all the more to the benefit of Unitarianism. The distemper spreads with vastly more rapidity when it lives and flourishes in the Orthodox body, than if its diseased members should withdraw from it to the Unitarian sect.

So says Mr. Ellis: "All the modifications, abatements, and palliatives of which professedly Orthodox writers have felt compelled to avail themselves in dealing with their doctrine, have been of great service to Unitarians," p. 89. "They are of service to us as showing a constant uneasiness under any form in which the old doctrine has yet been presented, and as indicating how trifling a relaxation of its old terms will be welcomed as a comfort," p. 66. "We are ready to grant to the Orthodox the benefit of all the modifications of this doctrine which the most ingenious man among them is able to devise. But we must urge that these modifications all accrue to our side," p. 61. After all this, his compliments to their liberality, astuteness, and progressive spirit, are somewhat tantalizing, when he thus caps his climax: "The lamentable shifts and evasions and subtleties to which Orthodox theologians have had recourse during the last half century, in trying to evade the plain meaning of this article of their creed, are a scandal upon our whole profession. That we ought to expect a long and sad reckoning to be visited upon us in a widely diffused unbelief, a distrust of religious teaching, and a general and dismal sense of unreality about religious dogmas, is but a looking for a retribution, the tokens of which are too evident to be disputed." So the New School theologians are already charged with producing, by this tampering with doctrinal standards, that infidelity which they have been so ready with Unitarians to attribute to those standards as their legitimate fruit.

The principle that it was unjust in God to regard and treat

the race in Adam as its federal head, and so to reckon his sin to their account, and, on this ground, to abandon them to the corruption and misery in which we find them, as a judicial and penal visitation for that sin, has been a radical feature, not only of Unitarianism, but of New Theology, and New England Theology, amid whatever other variations from old Calvinism, these terms may have been employed to denote. It is adopted in the hope of removing objections, and conciliating favour to whatever residuum of the doctrine of human corruption may remain, after this and other attenuating processes. The question is, has it had this effect? or has not the obvious reach of the above principles, if valid, in proving it unjust that the race should be born corrupt at all, or begin existence with a "prejudiced start," been working its due effect, in producing utter unbelief in natural depravity, in the evangelical system, in the word of God, nay, in the rectitude, the justice, if not the being of God himself? Secret and silent tendencies usually first crop out into visibility, in the utterances of bold and audacious minds. Is it unfair to bring to view the public attitude of Dr. Lyman Beecher's children, male and female, on these subjects, as fairly indicative of the tendency of a general abjuration of the principle that the fall of the race is a penal visitation for the sin of its head and representative? We would be the last to hold a school, party, or communion answerable for the idiosyncrasies of individual members, unless these aberrations are clear logical deductions from the principles in which they have been trained. But considering the position of the father, as the once chosen champion of orthodoxy, with the weapons of New Divinity in the Unitarian metropolis, and considering the eminent rank of his children of both sexes, as preachers, teachers, and authors, who exercise a commanding influence in the non-Unitarian congregational body, we think it fair to notice their deliverances on these subjects as signs of the times, and way-marks of the course of improved theology. Years ago we found circulating, by the hands of Unitarians, in our own congregation, a tract against creeds and confessions, consisting of two sermons, preached at the dedication of a church in the West, by the Rev. Charles Beecher, and published by the *American Unitarian Association*. Of Mrs. Beecher Stowe's new anti-slavery

novel, Mr. Ellis says: "Those characteristic features of orthodox faith and piety, which have always been most offensive to Unitarians, receive from her hand a most scorching delineation." The Christian public have not yet forgotten the Rev. Henry Ward Beecher's unblushing avowal, that he had greater sympathy with such Universalists as Dr. Chapin of New York, than with "vinegar-faced evangelicals." Dr. Edward Beecher does excellent service to the cause of scriptural truth, by admitting and proving the undeniable facts in regard to the moral corruption and impotence of man. He has insight and candour enough to see that the old orthodox doctrine serves more fully than any New School modifications of it, to reconcile these facts with the justice and goodness of God. Yet he insists that it does not so reconcile them; and the moral character of God is defensible on no conceivable hypothesis, but that of the trial of all men individually in a preëxistent state. Thus he stakes faith in the goodness of God, in other words, Theism itself, on a theory which not one in ten thousand can adopt. The effect of abjuring the old doctrine with him, is either to compel belief in a visionary theory, or the denial of palpable facts, a fearful plunge towards Atheism. What relief then has come of renouncing the old doctrine of the formulas? But the celebrated Miss Catharine Beecher, in her latest work, brings us straight up to the goal toward which all this tends. She says, "The systems of theology in all the Christian sects, excepting a small fraction, teach that the mind of man comes into existence with a depraved nature; meaning by this a mental constitution more or less depraved."\* "It being granted, then, that the mind of our race is depraved in its nature, of course the Author of this nature is responsible for this inconceivable and wholesale wrong. This forces us to the inevitable conclusion, that the Creator of mind is a being guilty of the highest conceivable folly, injustice, and malignity."† "The assumption that the constitution of mind is depraved, not only destroys the evidence of the Creator's wisdom and benevolence by the light of reason, but destroys the possibility of a credible and reliable revelation from him"!!‡ This will do. Every vestige of the doctrine

\* *The Bible and the People.* C. E. Beecher, p. 282.

† *Id.* p. 283.

‡ *Id.* pp. 287-8.

of a corrupt nature is repudiated, in phrase the most intense and hyperbolic, in which hatred of it can be vented. And this method of dealing with the subject of depravity, is offered as an "illustrative example" of the method of dealing with other Christian doctrines in another volume. Indeed she informs us that she printed, but was dissuaded by friends from publishing, an octavo volume, years ago, in which these "principles of reason and interpretation" were applied to "theories on the character and atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ, where relief was first experienced by the writer."\* Had the theory of Pelagius triumphed, she supposes that the "energies of the church would have been mainly directed to the right training of the human mind, in obedience to all the physical, domestic, social, and moral laws of the Creator." She complains that her schemes for educating women have met a cool and fatal reception, owing to the "indifference to the training of the habits of childhood, resulting from the long established dogma of a misformed mind, whose propagated incapacity is not within the reach of educational training." The inference is, and the whole tenor of her disquisition is to the effect, that there is no hereditary disorder in the human soul which education cannot cure, and which is not the result of wrong education. Thus she speaks of "the great change of character which wrongly educated mind must pass in order to gain eternal life," as if this were the only sort of mind needing such a change. Her abhorrence of the doctrine of native depravity seems to be greatly intensified, and indeed chiefly caused by the discouragement which she conceives it offers to effective moral education. This levels down the whole theory and practice of religion, to the lowest Unitarian standard. Yet we are glad to see enough of her early faith left, to extort the confession that without the aid of the Holy Spirit "success is hopeless," pp. 329-333.

Nothing more amazes us than the facility with which assailants of the high truths of Scripture, after having seemingly borne them down under a torrent of one-sided, spiteful vituperation, admit and assert what they boast of having annihilated. It seems after all, that there is a distemper in the

\* The Bible and the People, p. 316.

human soul, which the Holy Ghost alone can cure. Is not this giving up the whole, and demolishing at a blow what she has zealously and toilsomely reared? Does this abate her zeal in the right training and nurture of children, or confidence in its utility and efficacy, under God? Not an iota. As well might it be said that it paralyzes all zeal in preaching the gospel, and the use of other means to save men. The fearfulness of man's ruin, the fact that Christian training and the foolishness of preaching have the promise of the Holy Spirit to render them effectual in rescuing him from it, are the grand incentives to energy and zeal in each of these spheres of Christian effort. Where do we find the most earnest and effective preaching, if not among the believers in human depravity? And does not Miss Catharine Beecher know that to-day Christian education, training, and nurture, are pursued with most vigour, patience, and success by that class of churches and parents, that accept, without the smallest misgiving, the *ipsisima verba* of those confessions and catechisms, which kindle her to such a furor of indignation? If not, she is ignorant of the most weighty fact, in reference to the whole subject on which she writes.

Having sufficiently considered the drift of the New Divinity towards Unitarian ground on the subject of the fall, we return to Mr. Ellis. What is his faith in regard to this capital point in theology? How will it endure the ordeal to which he subjects the orthodox system? How will he and his sect bear the same measure which he metes to others. Let us see. He tells us, "it can hardly be said that Unitarianism has fashioned any dogma of its own upon this point," p. 86. Indeed! It comes to destroy what faith we have in reference to our own estate by nature, which of necessity determines all our ideas of the requisites to our redemption, the entire Christian economy, and dares not take the responsibility of giving us any other, lest that should prove too frail to stand. If one summons us to forsake our dwelling, in which we and our fathers before us have been sheltered safely for ages, because it is insecure, we shall hardly respect the call, until he claims at least to offer us some other and safer refuge. We have little respect for a system, which is shown by all experience, and by the testimony of its advo-

cates, even Mr. Ellis himself, to be good for destruction but not for edification.

But if Unitarianism shirks, (Mr. Ellis will pardon a word which he applies to his adversaries) from taking any ground of its own, which will expose it to reprisals for the assaults it makes upon all others, it is nevertheless obliged to concede certain great facts which involve all the real difficulties at which it rails in the orthodox system, while it denies the relief afforded by that system. He says, "Unitarians do not affirm that human beings are born holy; nor that the original elements of human nature are free from germs which grow and develope, if unrestrained, into sin; nor that no disadvantage has accrued to all the race of Adam from his disobedience, and from all the accumulations of wickedness that have gathered for ages in the world into which we are introduced. Unitarians do not deny that all men are actually sinners, needing the renewing grace and forgiveness of God; dependent upon the gospel of Christ as a remedial and redeeming religion, and having no other hope than that which Christ offers. Unitarians do not deny the great mystery which invests sin and evil, nor profess to have any marked advantage over orthodoxy in looking back of that mystery and dealing with it," p. 55. Commenting on the narrative of the fall in Genesis, he says, "Adam's experience is representative of the experience of all human beings. We are created as he was. Human nature works in us as it worked in him. We sin as he sinned; we suffer as he suffered; we die as he died. We do not sin *because* he sinned, but *as* he sinned; *in like manner*, since we have a like nature. It would be invested with an unrelieved gloom to us, did not the narrative immediately connect with this typical representation of the workings of the experiment of humanity, the promise of continued aid, and of mercy, and blessing, and redemption from God," pp. 76-7. "Adam proved in his own case the result of the experiment made by God with the elements and conditions involved in the constitution of a human being. The result of the experiment in one case of course signified what would be its result in all cases. As Adam was a sinner and mortal, so all human beings are sinners, and all are mortals; *not because he was a sinner, but because they are all*

*like him in their humanity.* But is this nature of ours *corrupt* and DEPRAVED because it is *imperfect*?" p. 92. "Unitarianism does not deny the sinfulness of man, nor does it discharge that sinfulness of positive guilt, nor does it trifle with the consequences of sin, here or hereafter. Some of the most appalling admissions, and some of the most startling assertions as to the guilt and devastations of sin, are to be found in the writings of Unitarians," p. 88.

Reviewing these citations, they concede, 1. That all men are sinful and mortal. 2. That they are so ruined that there is no hope for them but in the "remedial religion" of the gospel of Christ, and the renewing grace and forgiveness of God. 3. That this sinful and ruined state results from "germs" in the original elements of human nature, which "grow and develope into sin." 4. That we sin, not because Adam sinned, but *as* he sinned, since we have a like nature; i. e. it is because of their *nature*—call it frail, imperfect, depraved, or what you will—that men thus sin. 5. That although the race sin, not *because* Adam sinned, yet they suffer disadvantage because of his sin. 6. That this state of facts would invest the subject with unrelieved gloom, were it not for redemption, which, however, it must not be forgotten, the Bible refers not to the justice, but to the grace of God.

The material points here conceded are not theories, but palpable facts; not dogmas of speculation, nor first learned from the Bible, but conspicuous in the whole state and history of man. They are facts with which any theory, Infidel, Socinian, Orthodox, New School, or Old School, must deal. The simple question is, how is it to be reconciled with the rectitude and goodness of God, that men should be born in a state which infallibly develops itself in sin, woe, and death? Evade and shuffle as they may, this is the real question which every system must face. The Reformed Theology accepts the scriptural solution of it, not because it relieves the subject of all difficulty, or does not leave it still in some aspects a profound and awful mystery; but, 1. Because God has declared it. 2. Because it affords relief as far as it goes. 3. Because it accords with the analogy of faith, in which the method of justification through the righteousness of the second Adam corresponds to our con-

demnation, on account of the sin of the first Adam. Rom. v. 12-21. 4. Because every other explanation shrouds the subject in still more appalling difficulties. 5. Because the arguments against this view, as seemingly inconsistent with the goodness and justice of God, bear with more crushing weight upon every other theory set up in its place, to account for the universal depravity of our race.

The solution is simply this: The race is not born in its normal unfallen state. Originally, in the person of its progenitor and representative, God made man upright, in his own image. Now it is abandoned to sin and misery. This abandonment is not only the consequence, but the penal consequence of Adam's sin committed while they were on trial in him as their representative. On this view, the race had a probation under the most favourable circumstances for ensuring a happy result. In that probation it failed, it sinned. Its abandonment to sin and misery is the penalty of that sin, reckoned and treated judicially as the sin of the race. This accounts for the present corruption of man, not by attributing it, like Mr. Ellis, to the normal nature originally given him by his Maker, irrespective of Adam's sin; nor, like the New School and New England theologians, to the mere sovereignty of God making this fall and ruin of the race the effect of Adam's sin, without any imputation of that sin to them; but it makes so fearful an evil a penalty for sin committed while on trial in the person of their federal head. Mr. Ellis follows Dr. E. Beecher in asserting that the fifth chapter of Romans teaches nothing of this sort, but only that Adam was a type of his race. All his descendants sin and die, just and only as he sinned and died. But to deny that it asserts that Adam's sin is somehow the cause of man's sin, is a blind shift of sheer infatuation, worse by far than the evasions he charges upon his New School brethren. He might as well say that the Westminster Confession, or that this journal, does not assert it. It is so asserted and implicated with the whole passage, that no considerable portion of those disposed to get rid of the doctrine, and ready to impeach the apostle's inspiration for this purpose, have ventured to attempt it. It not only asserts that sin and death came upon all men "by one man," (Adam,) "through the

offence of one," "by one that sinned," "by one man's disobedience;" it also asserts that it was by virtue of judgment and condemnation therefor: "The judgment was by one to condemnation," (*χρίμα εἰς κατάκριμα,*) and "upon all men to condemnation." There is no escaping the plain meaning of these terms. They indicate that the condition of our race has come by way of judgment and condemnation for the sin of its head. This implies that he acted not merely for himself, but representatively. So much light, and no more, the Scripture gives us in reference to the cause of the awful fact which none can dispute. We do not pretend that it clears away all the clouds and darkness which shadow this appalling subject.

But is it not something that our dire estate is an infliction for sin, committed during a probation allotted under the most favourable circumstances, by the benevolent appointment of God? Is not this more consonant with our natural sense of justice, than to refer it to the mere sovereignty of God, either in the manner of our original creation, or in making the fall consequent on the sin of the first man, although he was in no sense our representative, and we had in no sense any probation in him? Is it asked, by what right Adam was made our representative, and empowered to shape our condition without our agency? By what right is a parent empowered to represent his children and determine their fortunes without their consent? How, under the government of a righteous God, are monarchs empowered to plunge their subjects into the horrors of war, without their consent? The fact is, whether we can answer such questions or not, if they are valid against the federal headship of Adam, they are valid for a great deal more. They end in Atheism. These topics bring us all to heights and depths of the divine wisdom, which outreach all human ken. Does not Mr. Ellis find it so? Does he not find himself compelled to retreat to this refuge of mystery on this subject, and expose himself to the reproaches he pours upon old Calvinists for doing it? Let him speak for himself: "Like all other classes of Christians, like all other serious thinkers, we are baffled by the original moral mystery involved in the existence or allowance of evil in the universe of God. The solution of that mystery would be an essential condition of any full and complete doctri-

nal formula, as to the source of sin in man's heart and life; but before that mystery we bow in bewildered amazement, and with an oppressed spirit which cannot look for relief in this stage and scene of our being." p. 86. But, a statement in this journal, to the effect that this class of topics do not admit of philosophical explanation, that they cannot be dissected and mapped off, so as that the points of contact and mode of union with other known truths can be clearly understood, and that the system which Paul taught was "not a system of common sense, but of profound and awful mystery," he pronounces a "confession that the old theology and *good* metaphysics cannot be reconciled." p. 372. This is only a specimen of the blind unconsciousness, that the blows which he levels at others rebound against his own system, which pervades the book. If the avowal of one, that his doctrine terminates in mystery, is a confession that it cannot be reconciled with good metaphysics, is not that of another? "Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest. For, wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself. For thou that judgest, doest the same thing."\*

As Mr. Ellis has spent his greatest strength on this most available topic of declamation against orthodoxy, so his other topics will bear a more rapid and summary treatment at our hands.

In regard to the Trinity and Incarnation, amid some elegant platitudes, we discover little bearing against them, but the common-places of Socinian argument. As the New School and New England theology has attempted no material modification of these doctrines, he has no occasion for his tactics in regard to its adherents, in treating them, although he loses not his opportunity to make what he can of Dr. Bushnell's position or want of position in the premises. The sum of his objections is the confounding and incomprehensible nature of these truths.

\* "It is astonishing that the mystery which is farthest removed from our knowledge, (I mean that of the transmission of original sin,) should be that, without which we can have no knowledge of ourselves. *It is in this abyss that the clue to our condition takes its turns and windings, inasmuch that man is more incomprehensible without this mystery, than this mystery is incomprehensible to him.*" Pascal, as quoted in McCosh on Divine Government, p. 67.

“It sets us into the frame into which we fall, when any one proposes to us an enigma or conundrum.” Christ’s “prayers must be construed into soliloquies: his deeds of power must be referred to himself, and his professions of dependence to one element of that self, speaking of another element in the same self.” This is of a piece with most of his difficulties. Does he not know that, be the doctrine true or false, *self* represents personality, and that when Christ is addressing his Father, *another self* in the Godhead, he is not addressing *his own self*? This kind of cavil therefore is founded on sheer misrepresentation, or misconception of the doctrine so impugned. Mr. Ellis knows full well, that his system stands or falls with the Deity of Christ. If Christ be God, he will not deny that he is a person distinct from the Father, and that God is one being in essence. This gives us one God in two persons at least, which involves all the difficulties of three. He of course denies that his Deity is taught in the Scripture. As in other denials of this sort, he expects us to rely for the most part on his own unsupported assertion. He indeed applies some small rationalizing criticism, to a few leading proof-texts. The first sentences of John’s Gospel are dispatched with the following paraphrase: “In the beginning was Christ, and Christ was with the Father, and Christ was the Father. That will not do. In the beginning was Christ, and Christ was with the Trinity, and Christ was the Trinity. Neither will that do.” This is a sample of the manner in which he disposes of such scriptural proofs as he chooses to notice, that our Saviour is God, blessed over all for evermore. But he soon halts. He says, “we have no heart for going through this unnatural, this offensive task of tracing the windings of this textual ingenuity, or of answering its characteristic results.” We have as little heart for threading the turns of a Pickwick criticism, which might quite as readily obliterate these doctrines from the Thirty-nine Articles, as from the Bible. Most of their force is derived from that radical misconception which confounds the Three Persons with the One Substance of the Godhead, to which we have already referred—although he shows himself not ignorant of the constant affirmation of the orthodox, that they hold the Godhead to be one in one sense, three in another; one as to substance, three as

to persons. If it be objected, that distinct created persons are always distinct beings, are all distinct created beings persons? And if not, who has proved or can prove that the element in any created person, which constitutes his self-hood or personality, may not have a threefold existence in the Divine Immensity? It is easy for Mr. Ellis to say, as he is very apt to do, when obliged to face undeniable and unwelcome distinctions which he is disposed to ignore, this is obscure, shadowy metaphysics. No cardinal truth ought to be obliged to take refuge in such tenuous distinctions. He might as well say it of the eternity, or omnipresence, or infinitude of God, which though in some sense apprehensible by us, still exceeds the grasp of finite minds. The doctrines of the Trinity and Incarnation, like much else in God, are high mysteries. They are not contradictory or absurd. No man more freely brandishes the weapons of logic and metaphysics against his adversaries. No one more frequently complains of their using the same weapons offensive and defensive, or oftener makes his own retreat in the mystery; while he denies that retreat, or allows it grudgingly to them. He counts much on the extraordinary claim, that the Scriptures nowhere demand or allow the worship of Him, whom all are required to honour, even as they honour the Father, and who hath a name above every name, at which every knee shall bow, and tongue confess!

But what he relies on with most confidence evidently is, that the entire doctrine of the Trinity cannot be adequately expressed in any single text, and so requires a human formula embodying the meaning of a number of texts. He says: "My critic must have sadly underrated the importance which I attach to the Unitarian objection to the Trinity above announced, if he supposes he can evade its force so easily and dogmatically as he has essayed to do. We boast that our scriptural faith can express itself in explicit, ungarbled, positive, and emphatic sentences of Scripture. . . . We object to Trinitarianism, and the objection never has been fairly met, and never can be fairly met, . . . that it presents to us . . . a dogma for which it cannot quote a single comprehensive text," p. 464. Is not this pitiful in a man of his parts and accomplishments? Does he pretend to say that he can utter his

whole belief about God in any single text of Scripture? If so, it must be more negative than he would admit, or than the most extreme Trinitarian polemic has charged. That the Scriptures assert the unity of God he contends with us. That they assert the Father to be God he contends with us. That they set forth the Father and Son as distinct persons he also maintains. He says they exhibit Christ as divine, but not as God. Nearly the whole Christian world say that they exhibit him as divine, *because* they exhibit him as God. They also say that the Bible represents the Holy Spirit as God, and ascribes to him personal properties and acts, as truly as to the Father and the Son. The question is not just here, whether, in all this, they interpret the Scriptures aright. But on the supposition that they do—that these several truths are set forth, as we hold they are, not merely figuratively, but literally, manifoldly, and didaectically, not together in any one passage, but separately in a vast number of passages, do they not teach the Trinity? As well might it be claimed, that because the word Christianity is not found in the Bible, the various truths comprehensively designated by it are not there; or that, because no one text declares, in so many words, that God is holy, wise, just, good, omniscient, and omnipotent, therefore these attributes do not express Bible doctrine concerning God. The confidence of our author in the invincible character of this plea, is our apology for honouring it with so much attention.

Mr. Ellis of course makes the most of those expressions which exhibit Christ as inferior in any regard to the Father, and which are founded, 1. on his filial relation; 2. on his official subordination; 3. on his humanity, in order to impugn his co-equal Divinity. But all these, as we see from the very statement of the case, arise from causes perfectly consistent with that co-equal Divinity. After thus attempting to destroy confidence in the orthodox doctrine, what does he offer us in its place?

He tells us that it is "matter for thought, serious and perplexing thought," and that men "will find themselves led to speculate towards different conclusions." This leaves scope for what actually exists among Unitarians, every variety of opinion from Arianism to mere Humanitarianism. Mr. Ellis

espouses the former. He says, "we can tell them that our doctrine gives to us the same God whom they worship, and another being—yes, a Divine Being besides." "The pointing upwards to the one who is *Highest* as the only one who is *higher*, distinguishes Christ alike from Deity and from humanity. The universe of being is to us enriched by an additional being, through the view which we entertain of Christ. The awful vacuum between the loftiest partakers of angelic natures and the Supreme, has now a radiant occupant, who fills the whole of it," p. 142. He represents him as one to whom God has delegated and imparted his own infinite properties save self-existence, "the sharer and almost equal in essence with the Supreme!" p. 147. Of course he claims to derive these views from the Scriptures. Himself being judge, then, the Scriptures do teach that Christ is a "divine being, infinite, the *sharer* and almost equal in essence with the Supreme." This is enough. If they teach that he shares the divine essence, they teach that he is God, and they teach this *because* they teach that he is God. Or in teaching this, do they teach that he is a mere creature? Mr. Ellis and his sect may believe so. The Christian Church never has, and never will.

Moreover, the Bible sets forth the true and proper manhood of Christ, in the most varied forms of representation. Mr. Ellis will not deny this. If then he was also a "divine being," have we not here a union of two natures, a human and divine, in his one person? Without worming our way through his specious sophistries in regard to the mystery of two natures in Christ, we leave him to rescue his own theory from the web he has woven for himself as well as others.

The doctrine of Atonement next falls under review. Here the author takes in hand the old scriptural doctrine of the creeds, the New School governmental theory, and compares them with each other, and with the Socinian. He of course felicitates himself on the protest which the governmental theory makes against an atonement truly vicarious. This he thinks inures to the benefit of Unitarianism. Yet it affords no substantial relief. It contains all the real virus of the old doctrine; and so far as it retains the substance of that doctrine, is obnoxious to the objections, which, with suicidal hand, it hurls against it.

The scriptural doctrine is perfectly plain. That Christ died, the just for the unjust, as bearing their sins, (which always means bearing the punishment of such sin, and is the only way in which an innocent person could bear it;) that he thus became sin, became a curse for us; that he thus bought, purchased, redeemed us from the curse of the law, and the bondage of Satan, to the lost rank and franchises of the sons of God; that herein he offered himself without spot to *God* as a sacrifice for our sins; that thus God is just while justifying the ungodly, and accepting us in the Beloved, is plainly and manifoldly taught in the Bible. This view of the redemptive effect of the death of Christ, accords with all the correlate scriptural representations of the method of salvation by grace, and gratuitous justification by faith. It signifies all that is uttered in these sentences of the Confession, against which, Mr. Ellis informs us, the Unitarian "protest is raised; 'Christ underwent the punishment due to us;' 'enduring most grievous torments immediately from God in his soul;' 'he hath fully satisfied the justice of God,' and he hath purchased reconciliation." The radical idea lying underneath all these forms of statement is, that the justice of God demands the visitation of evil upon sin, either in the sinner's own person, or that of an accepted substitute; and that Christ is such a substitute for believers. This revolts those who estimate the demands of eternal justice by the capricious standard of human sympathy, and who make God, if not altogether, quite too much, like themselves. They say that it imputes undue severity to the Most High, to attribute to him an unwillingness to forgive the penitent sinner, without exacting suffering from an innocent being in his stead. It is "barbarous and vindictive," according to these men. We venture to say, however plausible such pretensions may be, that the conscience or moral faculty is a surer guide than all sentimental speculations. And the conscience of man makes sinners to "know the judgment of God that they which commit such things are worthy of death;" and still further, as the sacrifices of every nation have testified, that it is suitable to God's character to require some sacrifice in expiation of sin, as the condition of its forgiveness. The force of this fact is not to be blunted by "charging us with confounding the purest and holi-

est element of the gospel with the most hideous element of heathenism," and by saying, "we utterly and almost indignantly reject the dreadful fancy," pp. 210-11. These men say that the idea that God cannot, without breach of his perfections, pardon the penitent unless their sin is expiated by sacrifice, revolts the instinctive ideas of perfect goodness in the human mind. We say that all fact proves the universal intuitive judgments and instinctive feelings of the human race to be just the opposite. It shows that when stricken with a sense of sin, they feel that a just God must inflict a penalty. The small sect of Socinians, who have speculated, "educated," cultivated, or refined themselves out of this belief, form only such an exception as proves the rule. This intuitive judgment may be perverted, as it is, like other intuitive principles, in the abominations of heathenism. But it is none the less universal. So all moral judgments are variously perverted and misapplied by heathen blindness. Is it not fair and conclusive to urge against the coterie of speculatists who urge that there is no intrinsic difference between virtue and vice, that all mankind believe in and act upon such a difference, however they may err in its use and application? At all events, is it not conclusive against those who may allege that such a theory outrages our intuitive beliefs?

In order to retain the substance of the doctrine of vicarious atonement, and, at the same time, evade this rationalistic objection to it, the governmental theory was advanced by the younger Edwards, and is a constituent element of the New School and New England theology. Instead of referring the necessity of the atonement to the justice of God, considered as the attribute which renders to each one his due, this theory refers it to state reasons, reduces it to an expedient for maintaining good government, and so promoting the greatest happiness of the universe. This regard to the general welfare, it styles general justice, and says that this was satisfied by the death of Christ, but that distributive justice, which is justice in the strict sense, was not thus satisfied. This general justice is sustained by the death of Christ, because that is such an exhibition of God's righteousness and abhorrence for sin, as is fitted to restrain transgressors who might otherwise be emboldened in sin, by the free pardon

of penitents; while it is also such a manifestation of his love as is fitted to win the hearts of men. This is supposed to obviate the charge of vindictiveness in God, who, according to the old system, will exact suffering at the demand of justice; while, according to this, it is inflicted solely from benevolence, because it conduces to the welfare and happiness of the universe. They also suppose that it evades the baseless objection which they join Socinians in charging against the old scheme, viz. that it makes the justification of the sinner a matter of debt, and not of grace, inasmuch as his punishment has been borne by Christ, his substitute: as if grace were any the less grace, because it "reigns through righteousness." This scheme Mr. Ellis justly treats as the accepted doctrine of the great body of his Congregational adversaries. He turns it to the utmost account, as giving sanction to Unitarian objections against vicarious atonement, while yet it retains the substance of all that displeases his party in that doctrine, so long as it attempts to retain the substance of the doctrine itself. It after all holds forth God as a being who will not forgive the penitent, without, as Dr. Bushnell says, having his "modicum of suffering somehow." Just here lie the whole point and stress of their repugnance to the old doctrine. Moreover, turn the matter as we will, by any rationalizing process whatever, suffering inflicted in vindication of law, and in manifestation of righteousness, for offences, whether upon the person of the offender, or a substitute for him, is undeniably penal. This is so true, that the governmental school are constantly sliding into the use of the word *penalty*, in reference to the sufferings of Christ, in spite of themselves. Mr. Ellis therefore gives the following summation of this doctrine, and then proceeds to impugn it, simply as possessing the obnoxious feature of every theory of atonement, which regards it as requisite that the sufferings of Christ should be rendered to God, in order to open the door for the pardon of penitents:—

"First, that suffering of an intense character must in some form or shape be suffered by the guilty or the innocent, as a tribute to the violated law of God, and that mercy cannot possibly remit this penalty without making grace overthrow righteousness.

“Second, that the death of Christ, by a method and in a compound nature, which so intensified, (and rendered them of infinite worth, *Rev.*) as to make them an equivalent for the eternal woe of a doomed race of human beings, is *looked upon by God* as offering to him and to his law that needful penalty,” pp. 204–5.

His arguments against the vicarious character of our Redeemer’s sufferings are for the most part self-answering. He denies that a text can be found from Genesis to Revelation which teaches either of the foregoing principles. He admits, however, that by a skilful combination of different texts, “a marvellous show of authority may be claimed for the theory.” He is daring enough to assert that the Jewish sacrifices were “complete in themselves,” and were subordinated in no single instance to another prospective sacrifice, p. 178. As in the case of the Trinity, he exaggerates in itself, and in its importance, the difficulty of making a complete, formal statement of all the elements of the doctrine, in any single scriptural phrase, p. 198. He objects that it fetters the free sovereignty of God, to say that he is hindered from exercising merey, unless his justice be satisfied. Is God’s sovereignty indeed impaired because he cannot deny himself, or be false to his own perfections, or stain his purity—because it is impossible for him to lie or commit injustice? As to objections which are mere matters of taste or sensibility, or are due to soft Unitarian culture, they need no separate statement or refutation. The tenderest affections of the Church have ever gathered around Him, who then became a curse for us, and in “most grievous torments immediately from God upon his soul,” exclaimed, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!”

Mr. Ellis takes courage from the protest which the governmental theory offers against an atonement strictly vicarious, as evincing a rationalistic movement from the ancient New England faith towards the opposite scheme. “The fluctuations and turnings down of doctrine which have reached that form of doctrinal statement are not likely to stop with it. If with due modesty we may intimate a conviction which the tendencies of thought, with some recent striking examples of the result of those tendencies, lead us to hold in strong assurance, we will

say that this legal view of Christ's death must and will yield to a profounder Christian philosophy," pp. 198-9. We feel constrained to add that the case of Dr. Bushnell is a painful illustration of the ground which our author had for these observations. We observed, while his case was before ecclesiastical tribunals, that while he, like Mr. Ellis, put the old doctrine and the governmental scheme in the same condemnation, he triumphantly appealed to his antagonists who held the latter, and silenced them. He said, in effect, you hold that the efficacy of Christ's death lies not in its being a direct substitutional offering to satisfy divine justice, but an expedient to promote reverence for God's law among his creatures. You indeed hold that it accomplishes this result, by taking the place directly of the sinner's punishment. What if I say it accomplishes this result in another way;—that by teaching, example, or a mysterious agency of some sort, it causes the law to be revered and honoured? One of his chief apologists was reported in the journals as saying, when his case was last agitated before the General Association of Connecticut, that New School men could hold no front against him. Those who would withstand him must take Princeton ground. We have never yet seen this reasoning refuted.

But if this scheme strengthens Unitarianism, by breaking down the defences against it, it is nowise more palatable to Socinians, than the formula of the Confessions. They cherish the same radical, invincible hostility to every view which "regards the death of Christ as looking God-ward for its efficacy." They "reject it in heart and faith, unreservedly and earnestly as a heathenish and unchristian doctrine," p. 190. Says Mr. Ellis, "the essential token of the Calvinistic or orthodox scheme in this doctrine, whether characterized as a covenant between the Father and the Son, or centering upon the word *vicarious* or *satisfaction*, or planting itself on the governmental theory, is, that the efficacy of Christ's death works by its operation upon God, or some attribute of God, or upon some abstract difficulty in which he is involved by the laws of the government he has himself established. Orthodoxy interposes a law between God and man which mercy cannot relax, but which only a victim can satisfy. God can freely forgive, but

his law cannot freely remit a penitent offender. The essential token of the Unitarian scheme is, that the whole operation of Christ's mediatorial death is upon the heart, and life, and spirit of men. We cannot confound or merge this distinction. It reaches deep, it rises high," pp. 190-1. Neither can we. And here as well as elsewhere we must part fellowship. Our faith is, first of all, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures.

Mr. Ellis does not even allow that these New School men, who retain the substance of the orthodox doctrine of Atonement, afford any real relief in regard to its extent. The Old School "maintain that Christ's death is of service only to those whom he actually saves. The advocates of an unlimited Atonement come, in fact, to the same result; for they teach that though all have the offer of salvation through Christ, though all are called by him, yet that the renewing work of the Holy Spirit which alone can dispose the sinful heart to avail itself of this offer, is wrought only upon the heirs of salvation. . . . The atonement is *sufficient* for all; but it is *efficient* only for a portion of our race. What then is the difference in the real substance of the matter between these two orthodox parties as to a limited or unlimited atonement? Nothing at all." p. 333.

After discussing the three cardinal points which divide the Unitarians from the orthodox, our author treats, in successive chapters, of Inspiration, of Reason and Faith, and of the New Theology. These call here for only cursory notice. He says that such discussions "involve sooner or later an incidental controversy upon the authority of Scripture, and the right principles of its interpretation." How are we to account for this undeniable fact? Why do the laxer party always find it necessary to attenuate the infallibility of the Scriptures, and thus impair their authority as a Rule of Faith? The most anti-Calvinistic side in such controversies are always busy in weakening the absolute authority of Scripture. Would they be so deeply interested in achieving this result, if they felt sure that the Bible gives no countenance to orthodox doctrine? Would Mr. Ellis have laboured out his toilsome pages in this behalf, had he been sure of what he constantly asserts, that

the orthodox doctrines on the Fall, the Trinity, and the Atonement, are not contained in the Bible? We think that the conduct of the various parties in controversy relative to these doctrines, is among the surest tokens of what the Scriptures teach the unsophisticated reader in regard to them. He stigmatizes the view current before the appearance of Unitarianism, as an "almost idolatrous estimate of the Bible." He pronounces "the old doctrine of the plenary inspiration and consequent infallibility of the-written word," a "discomfited and discredited superstition," pp. 374-5. The Book of Job, the Song of Solomon, the imprecations of the Psalms, minor apparent discrepancies or other incidental difficulties in both Testaments, are made to perform their accustomed service. Stuart, Jewel, Stanley, Alford, Davidson, and others nominally in orthodox ranks, who have, in any particulars given their adhesion to the rationalistic view of interpretation, are also summoned to his aid. He says, "the American Unitarian Association has now in preparation a commentary and exposition of the New Testament. Such a work, covering both Testaments, might be made to the perfect satisfaction of our fellowship, every line of whose necessary comments and dissertations should be compiled from nominally orthodox volumes," p. 233. Such orthodoxy must be quite nominal, we fancy, so far as the compilation is anything more than a string of garbled extracts. The following is a sample of the confidence which he in various ways displays in regard to large portions of Scripture. "I am not prepared to admit that Moses was inspired to serve as an amanuensis for a Personage, who, if he has half the power that has been attributed to him, was abundantly able to keep his own records, without taking into his disloyal service a penman previously engaged for a worthier Master," p. 509. The animus of this and much more the like, puts it beyond comment. But what does he offer us in place of the "discredited superstition" which he boasts that "nominally orthodox" men have conspired with his own party to break down? After telling us that Unitarians "insist upon their belief in the inspiration of the Scriptures," he says, "they have never given a rigid dogmatical definition of their idea or belief on this point, because the very conditions of their

case prevent their doing so. Again do we have to admit vagueness and indefiniteness into our creed," p. 251. This is certainly prudent. A position which is no position at all, is quite beyond assault. But if he cannot give us an idea of the inspiration of the Scriptures, he has given us his idea of what it is not. And this is enough utterly to subvert their normal divine authority over the minds and consciences of men. It leaves each one free to reject and interpret the Bible according to his own predilections, as to what it ought to teach.

This is the substance of what he maintains in another form in the chapter on Faith and Reason. His ground is simply, that we can receive nothing as taught of God, which does not accord with our notions of what he ought to teach: "One, at least, of the conditions of securing the acknowledgment that God has said or revealed what claims our belief as from him, is, that we can believe it of him. If we cannot believe it of God, we cannot admit it to have come from him," p. 294. This is a very simple provision for getting rid of the fall in Adam, the Trinity, Incarnation, vicarious Atonement—whatever else may be unwelcome to Socinians, though ninety-nine hundredths of all who call themselves Christians have found themselves enabled to believe them, and multitudes have sealed their faith in them by their blood. Mr. Ellis is discerning enough to see the necessity to thoughtful and devout minds, of something that has an authority beyond their own faculties: "A religion which is to satisfy a thoughtful, earnest, and devout person, must have authority over, and above, and outside of his own thinking and reasoning powers, his own guesses or fancies, his own knowledge or wisdom," p. 336. This is plain enough. It is not, however, so plain how this is possible, with his views of the inspiration and normal authority of the written word. It is plainly impossible on such a theory.

The following, which reminds us of Mr. Beecher's "vinegar-faced evangelicals," is advanced as explaining how and why orthodox communions are not pleasing and attractive to the young: "The young know very well that there are some exceedingly hard, uninteresting, and forbidding members among the foremost in such communions—sour-visaged, scandal-loving, morose old women, and men whose sharpness at a bargain proves

that the eye opened upon another world has lost none of its keenness for this. The exercises which engage these fellowships in their meetings have often a clammy or sombre character, a grim and dreary aspect to the young. And so the 'vestry' assemblages for conference, held generally in the cellar of a meeting-house, draw together for the most part those who have long shared the privileges there offered. The young are not attracted by a religion which makes such an exposition of itself and its prominent disciples," p. 341. How does this abusive and wicked caricature, which has a stronger savour of infidel ribaldry than of the chair of Christian Theology, consist with the following confession in the midst of an attempt to account for defections from Unitarianism? "Young girls there have been and are—and unless there is more fidelity in our churches and families in the work of robust religious training for the minds and souls of the young, there will be many more of that most interesting class in our community to imitate the catching example—who have found the faith, or rather, we ought to say, the mode of worship, and the creed of their parents, ineffective for their *feelings*. Our communion, though small, has been free, and we have done so little in the work of *indoctrinating* a new generation, that we have no right to suppose that even half of those nominally with us, have really any decided faith." Faint then as are the attractions of orthodox piety for the young, it seems that those of Unitarianism are still more so for many serious young females, and are likely to be still fainter, unless their spiritual guides more thoroughly indoctrinate them. Indoctrinate them in what? That they are not fallen in Adam, that there is no Trinity, no Incarnation, no atoning sacrifice for guilt, no plenary or definable inspiration of the Scriptures, and such like negations? What can be taught them by those who cannot "define their own creed"? The longer they are indoctrinated in these negations, the less will serious minds find to satisfy their longing souls. We suspect that what Mr. Ellis utters as the reproach, will still be true only so far as it is so, in a sense creditable to Orthodoxy. He says, "It takes up those of easiest sensibility and conviction, and leaves the hardest subjects to Unitarianism." But it leaves them only when it is left by them. If these two classes, by elective affinity,

find their homes respectively with the Orthodox and the Unitarians, why is it? Each one can answer this question without our aid. †

Our readers have already seen something of the use which Mr. Ellis makes of the New Divinity. We will only glance at the chapter in which he treats this subject in form. He uses the term "to designate an undeveloped, unsystematized class of speculations, (by divines nominally orthodox,) fragmentary portions of which are to be found in a great many publications, intimations of which are continually presenting themselves in unsuspected quarters, and suspicions of which are known to be far more widely entertained, and on better evidence, than some who are concerned in them care to have made public. This, at least, we are warranted in saying, that, if some of our more acute and earnest theologians are not profoundly exercised by a sceptical spirit in reference to their own orthodoxy, they are trifling with the community, and, what is more, with the truth. Clerical scepticism is the root of much of our present religious agitation." p. 366. We are sorry that we are not prepared to deny the substantial truth of this representation. We are constrained further to agree with him that the creed cannot be subjected to this "chemistry of thought," without being decomposed, dissolved, and evaporated. We still further must confess with him, "that if we avowed ourselves to be believers in the substance of the doctrines of the Westminster Assembly's Catechism, or of the Thirty-nine Articles, we could not, in consistency with religious or intellectual honesty, write or preach what we find in the contents of a hundred valuable volumes now lying within our reach, bearing the names of divines in the American Congregational and the English Episcopal churches," pp. 367-8. Mr. Ellis rarely lets his opportunity slip, of inveighing against the New School divines for claiming the advantage, as against Unitarians, of being the true doctrinal and ecclesiastical successors of the New England fathers, while they at the same time reject or qualify some of the chief formulas of the Confession, and resent it as an injustice, if the propositions in which the ancient New England churches defined their faith, are imputed to modern orthodoxy and its defenders. He will not allow them "the privilege of

professing to be Calvinists without believing Calvinism." He does not admit that they can "spend all their energies upon the philosophy of the creed and spare the creed." "When we contemplate as a whole the subtleties, the worse than dubious ingenuities, and the self-convicted duplicity and evasion which have been spent upon this Calvinistic doctrine, a rising disgust for everything associated with this department of our theological literature overwhelms us," p. 95. "Our own convictions extend the length of a firm belief that, within the shattered and no longer defensible intrenchments of disabled orthodoxy, there is under training a party which sooner or later will affiliate with another party, now outside the fold, to prove the main reliance of the Church, when shams, and conformities, and traditions must sink into ruin," p. 363. His theory is, that the growth of such principles in the orthodox ranks has prevented the otherwise inevitable increase of the Unitarian body. We, on the other hand, believe that the ancient doctrine of the creeds, consistently and intelligently maintained theoretically and practically, would have laid a far stronger grasp upon the people of every class, than this dilute orthodoxy which he flatters himself is training up a party to affiliate with Unitarians. If such an alliance shall be formed, on which side will the advances be made? Not on the part of Unitarians, as has been conclusively shown. That all change and movement in this direction is from the "party in training" on the other side, has been no less conclusively shown. What progress has Unitarianism had in gaining proselytes from communions in which Old Calvinism has maintained exclusive ascendancy! Has it ever flourished where the *descensus Averni* had not already commenced, in those milder forms of error, which by logical consequence terminate in this, or in what our author pronounces the only heresy possible to be developed from it, "unbelief in revelation itself?" p. 348.

After making such an exhibition of the character and tendencies of New School theology, is it not cool in him to pronounce the opposition to such speculations, which shows itself in orthodox communions, "unreasonable"? p. 393. Is it unreasonable for them to oppose what he, at least, contends leads toward a latitudinarianism, so unrestrained as to embrace all possible

heresies short of infidelity? Does he expect those who have faith in God and his truth, to yield without resistance to the progress of such an influence? Withal, does not he himself most sturdily resist and rebuke the pretensions of those who claim to be Calvinists, while they repudiate Calvinism—the inheritors of the substance, while they disown the formulas of Puritanic doctrine?

After the evidence which has been given of the real intent of Mr. Ellis in this volume, and of the estimate he makes of the position of New School divines, and the results of their labours—and especially in view of the bitterness he manifests towards the orthodox system, in its theoretical and practical relations, in its ancient form, and as run in the New School mould—we cheerfully resign to our New School brethren the profuse laudations he bestows upon them, as being “noble” and “generous” in their aims, foremost in genius, scholarship, eloquence, intellectual progress, liberality, and independence. We are content with his reluctant concession that the Old School are outspoken, consistent, and, on the basis of the creeds professed by both parties, have fairly and honourably vanquished their opponents. As to all else, we should begin to tremble for our own fidelity, if such a writer could give a more favourable estimate than the following: “We can conceive of nothing more utterly ineffective, hopeless, or dismal, than the pleadings of the Old School divines of our day, in defence of their antiquated system,” p. 365.

He concedes that Unitarianism cannot bring its “forces to bear, as do the orthodox, in combined zeal and earnestness of purpose. . . . Unitarianism has certainly exhibited some marked deficiency, either of power or of skill, or of ingenuity, or of enthusiasm,” p. 40. The impracticability of framing a creed is avowed as a principal cause of the comparative failure of the American Unitarian Association—the only attempt to organize the fraternity into effective coöperation.\* He also concedes that the vagueness and diversity of opinion among them are such, as to everything except a few negations, that an adversary finds it almost “impossible to define and identify his foe.”† This, one would think, solves the mystery. Men cannot live and

\* See Introduction, p. 17.

† Id. p. 24.

work on mere negations. There must be something positive, definite, certain, momentous, to awaken zeal, and sustain effort. Simply to pronounce the cardinal doctrines of orthodoxy absurd, confounding, revolting, "hideously heathenish," may indeed for a while rally around a blank standard a crowd of unbelievers. But unless there be inscribed on it a creed, a *credendum*, a somewhat to be believed, loved, obeyed, sustained, propagated, because the eternal weal or wo of men hangs upon it; a somewhat, too, that is positive, definable, and knowable, it never can permanently enlist the religious zeal and activity of large numbers of men. Even tender maidens will desert those, who, when they ask the bread of divine truth, give them some undefined platitude, which "it is impossible to identify." The adherents of such a system will become more and more unable and indisposed to teach it to their children, from generation to generation. Smitten with sterility and impotence, it must die out, and give way to a better, or to that only heresy which can be developed from it, according to our author—sheer infidelity.

We should not completely unfold the animus of this book, if we failed to quote one of the passages which more distinctly indicate whom he honours as chief coadjutors in propagating the seminal principles among the orthodox, which are among the tokens of ultimate affiliation with Unitarians. While we only expect the vituperation which he vents upon the class to which we belong, we shall rejoice if it turn out that the objects of this laudation are here honoured with encomiums which they neither covet nor deserve:

"When we read in the controversial pamphlets of a half-century ago, the positive assertions made by orthodoxy, . . . and then turn to the pages of the eminent orthodox writers of the present day, we stand amazed at the change. True, some lean, and querulous, and stingy souls, still give forth their dreary or petulant utterances; but they are not the ones that win a large hearing, or speak for their party. The tone and manner of Dr. Edward Beecher's "Conflict of Ages," compared with the sulphurous preaching of his now venerable father, when he was leader of revival meetings about this neighbourhood, tells an interesting tale of the work that has been wrought here in the interval between the father's man-

hood and that of the son. True, the very problematical hypothesis by which the son has sought to relieve the orthodox dogma of its dogmatism, is but a poor device. But he is not to blame for that, as he did the best he could; better indeed than could have been expected, for in assailing one dogma he has not substituted another. The true orthodox men who now have the most influence over the higher class of minds to which orthodoxy is to look for its advocacy in the next generation, are Professor Park and Dr. Bushnell, men of brilliant genius, of eminent devotion, of towering ability, and regarded by large circles of friends with profound regard and confidence. Those two noble expositors of truth, as they receive it, have added a century of vigorous life to many orthodox churches, and have deferred the final dismay of that system for at least the same period of time. Professor Park's Convention Sermon is, in our judgment, one of the most remarkable pieces in all our religious literature. For subtlety, skill, power, richness of diction, pointedness of utterances, and implications of deep things lying behind its utterances, it is a marvellous gem of beauties and brilliants. Dr. Bushnell's writings, in some sentences unintelligible to our capacity, and in some points inexplicable as to their meaning, are rich in their revelations of a free and earnest spirit which keep him struggling between the wings that lift him, and the withs that bind him. These two honoured men have relieved orthodoxy in some of its most offensive metaphysical enigmas. How have they blunted the edge of Calvinism! How have they reduced the subtle and perplexing philosophy of the Westminster Catechism, by the rich rhetoric with which they have mitigated its physic into a gentle homœopathy? Unitarianism aimed thus to abate and soften religious dogmatism. It has succeeded; and the noblest element in its success is, that it must divide the honour with champions from the party of its opponents," pp. 42-3.

With this, which gives out so strongly the aroma of the book, we close our protracted comments upon it. None would rejoice more than ourselves to know that these praises are wholly unmerited, and that the eminent divines on whom they are bestowed, have here suffered the infliction of gratuitous and unmerited eulogy. We hope it will turn out that

they are "more sinned against than sinning" in the premises. But let all concerned know where Unitarianism fixes "its heart and hope," and why it does so. "The New Theology has, (says Mr. Ellis) I believe, dealt a mortal blow upon the Old Orthodoxy." Multitudes have thought so before. But it still lives, and will live when all rival systems are dead; for it stands, not in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

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ART. II.—*The Argument from Prophecy for Christianity.*

WHAT is the legitimate force and extent of the argument from the phenomena of Prophecy, as they are found in the Bible, and developed in history, has always been regarded as a great question in the general argument for the divine origin of the Scriptures. Many answers have been given to it, even amongst those who have employed it in defence of the religion of Jesus Christ. And the opponents of the religion have differed far more in their methods of dealing with the facts and the argument.

It is not proposed to call attention, at this time, to any theories of objection to the predictions of the Scriptures, or of modes of accounting for their existence and their nature, that have been at times brought forward by disbelievers in the inspiration and reality of these predictions. There is no common ground of such objectors. The testimony of the vast majority of them in regard to these grounds of objection in detail is, that they are untenable. Until they come to something like agreement amongst themselves we may be allowed to invite friends and enemies alike, to go with us round about Zion, to mark her bulwarks and consider her palaces. The object of this paper shall be to indicate the affirmative argument in its outline and general character, as it lies in the state of facts, in regard to the existence of the predictions, and their fulfilment, a sufficient knowledge of which may be safely presumed.

1. Our consciousness tells us nothing more plainly and emphatically than that there is a difference between our know-