MANUAL OF UNITARIAN BELIEF

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Manual of Unitarian Belief by James Freeman Clarke

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JAMES FREEMAN CLARKE

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OF

UNITARIAN BELIEF.

BY

JAMES FREEMAN CLARKE.

NINETERNIH EDITION.

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PREFACE.

As Unitarians have no creed, and as their union is one of sympathy and co-operation, and not of formulas, no one among them has any right to define the views of others. A Manual such as this is meant simply to express what, in the opinion of the writer, is the general belief of the majority of Unitarians. Every proposition contained in it is liable to discussion, correction, and revision. No one is bound by it; and it does not attempt to limit thought, but rather to stimulate and rouse inquiry.

It is intended to be made the theme of discussion, and to help the teacher of the class in the Sunday-school, by furnishing, for himself and his pupils, topics for examination. To this end questions are added at the close of each Lesson, and references are given to passages of Scripture.

J. F. C.

The Questions on each Lesson have been prepared by Mrs. Kate Gannett Wells. They follow the text, and also contain suggestions for conversation. <u>.</u>

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MANUAL OF UNITARIAN BELIEF.

LESSON I.

RELIGION NECESSARY TO MAN.

- § 1. Religion may be defined as the worship and service of God. It is necessary, because man is feeble, and needs Divine power to give him strength; he is ignorant, and needs Divine light to guide him; he is sinful, and needs Divine mercy to give him peace; he is mortal, and needs faith in things unseen and eternal to give him the hope of continued existence.
- § 2. That religion is natural to man appears from the fact that in a higher or lower form it has been found among all races and nations, among civilized and savage people, in ancient and modern times.
- § 3. The following elements in the soul constitute the basis of religion; namely, the sense of dependence (see § 1); conscience, or the sense of right and wrong, giving the ideas of duty and responsibility; reason, or the faculty which perceives universal and necessary laws; * aspiration, which tends toward the good, the beautiful, and the true, and is the basis of worship.
- § 4. Natural religion is that which is awakened by the sight of the order and beauty of nature, of its adaptations to

[•] In this definition of reason is followed the school of thought represented by such writers as Coloridge, Victor Cousto, and Dr. James Walker, who distinguished "reason," the higher intellectual faculty, from "reasoning," a function of the lower understanding.