

**UNITARIAN AFFIRMATIONS:
SEVEN DISCOURSES GIVEN
IN WASHINGTON, D.C. BY
UNITARIAN MINISTERS**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649526499

Unitarian Affirmations: Seven Discourses given in Washington, D.C. by Unitarian Ministers by
Frederic Henry Hedge & James Freeman Clarke

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

FREDERIC HENRY HEDGE & JAMES FREEMAN CLARKE

**UNITARIAN AFFIRMATIONS:
SEVEN DISCOURSES GIVEN
IN WASHINGTON, D.C. BY
UNITARIAN MINISTERS**

UNITARIAN AFFIRMATIONS:

Seven Discourses

GIVEN IN



WASHINGTON, D.C.

By UNITARIAN MINISTERS.



BOSTON:
AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION.

1879.

PREFACE.

THE following seven discourses were delivered on successive Sunday mornings, in the early part of the year 1879, at the new Unitarian Church in Washington City, by invitation of the pastor of the Society and the American Unitarian Association. All except the first were repeated on the same Sunday evenings in the Unitarian Church of Baltimore.

The invitation was that they should be addressed, not especially to scholars and theologians, but to the people.

They were prepared independently of each other; and, for the opinions expressed, the several writers are alone responsible.

Boston, May 1, 1879.

149872

7 Oct. 11 - P. B. R.

Released 7-16-88. S. S. S. S.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
I. THE UNIVERSAL AND THE SPECIAL IN CHRISTIANITY	1
<i>By Rev. Frederic H. Hedge, D.D.</i>	
II. THE BIBLE	27
<i>By Rev. James Freeman Clarke, D.D.</i>	
III. GOD.	51
<i>By Rev. Andrew P. Peabody, D.D.</i>	
IV. JESUS CHRIST	75
<i>By Rev. Brooke Herford.</i>	
V. MAN	107
<i>By Rev. George W. Briggs, D.D.</i>	
VI. THE CHURCH: THE SOCIETY WHICH JESUS GATHERED	127
<i>By Rev. Rufus Ellis, D.D.</i>	
VII. THE LIFE ETERNAL.—HEAVEN AND HELL .	155
<i>By Rev. Samuel R. Callthrop.</i>	

UNITARIAN AFFIRMATIONS.

I.

THE UNIVERSAL AND THE SPECIAL IN CHRISTIANITY.

BY REV. FREDERIC H. HEDGE, D.D.

"Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth him and worketh righteousness is accepted with him."—ACTS x. 34, 35.

"Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."
MATT. xxviii. 19.

ST. PETER, if rightly reported in the passage first quoted, exhibits a breadth of view and a spirit of toleration strangely inconsistent with his conduct at Antioch, as witnessed by Paul and condemned by him in his Epistle to the Galatians. There, as we read, he separated himself from the Gentiles, and "walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel." Here, on the contrary, as afterward at Jerusa-

lem, he plants himself on Christian ground, and displays a liberality befitting the disciple of him who could see in the Gentile alien a faith not found in Israel.

But, whilst the apostle concedes that true religion and acceptance with God might be found outside of the pale of his own communion, he nevertheless baptizes Cornelius and his household into the fellowship of the Christian Church; thereby implying that Christianity had something to impart that was more and better than anything that Jew or Gentile could find within the compass of their respective faiths.

Two points are here presented for our consideration: first, that all religions have something in common,—that all agree in their essentials; second, that Christianity has elements peculiar to itself, by virtue of which it ranks superior to other faiths.

All religions have something in common,—all have something divine. The time has gone by when Christianity, in the view of its confessors, could claim a monopoly of saving truth. Recent study of the ethnic religions has abated the contemptuous aversion with which Christian orthodoxy was wont to regard them, waiving them aside as damnable impostures or execrable

superstitions, and their receivers as without the pale of salvation. This was the view with which Christian missionaries in former time engaged in the noble enterprise of rescuing those lost peoples from their imminent doom by drawing them into the Christian fold. They knew nothing or next to nothing of the religions they wished to supplant; but simply assumed that, not being Christian, they must be utterly and only bad and that all who held them, unless converted and baptized, must perish everlastingly. If any one maintain that such a conviction alone can inspire the zeal required for missionary effort I reply that zeal without insight — that is, without truth — can never produce the best fruits of the Spirit. The most it can accomplish is a formal confession induced by fear. Its converts will be the least enlightened and least honorable among the people addressed. One cannot but respect the temper of the Norseman who was willing to be baptized, but when the missionary represented the alternative as everlasting damnation, and, in answer to his questioning, assured him that all his ancestors, not having heard of the gospel, were in that predicament, withdrew his foot from the water, preferring rather to be damned with his fathers than saved without them. If

the missionary had but known it, there was more of Christianity and more of salvation in that reply than in all the dogmas of his creed and all the sacraments of his Church.

Of course, the missionary must believe in the superiority of his own religion. Without that belief, no missionary is qualified, or is likely to undertake, its promulgation in heathen lands. But this conviction does not necessarily imply indiscriminate, unqualified condemnation of other religions as wholly and only false and bad. The best-prepared missionary is he who adds to zeal and purity of purpose a knowledge of the mental condition, the way of thinking, the ideas and beliefs of those whom he seeks to convert, a disposition to learn, and the feeling that it is his business to learn, as well as to teach, that one important end of his mission is to gain new light for the illustration of the gospel from other dispensations. The missionaries who have wrought in this spirit have done a good work by faithful use of their opportunities in acquiring and importing into Christendom a knowledge of the faith and ideas of Gentile lands. Such knowledge enables the Christian to operate with surer method and better effect on the nations so reported. Our acquaintance with the Oriental re-