We must speak theologically because:

Silence on theological questions gives our people the impression that we are in agreement with the old accepted dogmas of the Christian Church. Theological silence means acceptance of the Trinity, the Deity of Jesus, the validity of petitionary prayer, the existence of heaven and hell, the validity of the division of the world between good and evil, the existence of "free will", and the other outmoded dogmas of the orthodox Christian Church.

Because:

The answers given by this old theology are not meeting the needs of people today. The cosmic story depicted in Genesis I, although once valid, no longer meets the need for a cosmic story. The vague concept of God to which our people still cling fails to give them what they are looking for. The utter confusion that revolves about the head of Jesus leaves our people without any tenable idea concerning the christological problem. The old answers simply will not do. The minds of our people are filled with confusion as a result of the mental conflict between their own intellectual
conclusions and the dead dogma held forth by the churches.

Because:

Our people need a sound, rational theology. They need a rational and understandable concept of God. They need a basis for confidence in the supreme worth of every human being. They need a clear understanding of, and solution to, the problem of good and evil. They need a twentieth century theology with acceptable answers to these age-old problems; for they are still vital problems and need answers that are acceptable to today's mind and livable in today's world.

Because:

Our world is crying for a religion for today. It demands a church with a liberal forward-looking theology that will set forth universally valid pronouncements, a church that is truly universalist.

Because:

A sound and believable theology will give our people an emotional basis for action. Too long have we appealed to the "intellectual idealism" of our people without giving them an emotional drive.

Because:

Universalism is the answer, and the Universalist Church can be the church to provide this theology which is demanded by the critical and calamitous nature of the times in which we are living.

Contributions, letters, monetary gifts, should be sent to the Editor, 43 Oberlin Street, Worcester 3, Massachusetts.

WHAT THEOLOGY DO WE NEED?

Humanity's survival depends upon the manner in which men look upon their fellowmen. The question is not, "What do men do to each other?", but "What do men think of each other?" Since action follows thinking, man's survival depends upon whether he thinks his fellow man is valuable to him. It is obvious that survival in the atomic age can be assured only if men look upon one another as valuable.

Christianity cannot save the world in this hour of insecurity. It is not the helpmate which man needs; rather, it may be the means of his complete destruction. The chief concern of Christianity is heaven, and whether or not man will enter therein. Christianity values man according to his supposed security in a life hereafter. Such thinking may be clearly seen in the Christian attitude toward the so-called pagan or heathen, and it has been the Christian task to insure such fallen and destitute people security in a life after death. Christianity has seldom aided life this side of heaven. It values mankind not on his natural and earthly status, but according to whether he will be sheep or goat at the great judgment day.

Again, Christianity cannot save mankind because it is not willing to wait until the judgment day to divide the sheep from the goats. Paul urged the Corinthian people, "Be ye separate, for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness, and what communion hath light with darkness?" Absolute division of men who do or do not believe as the Christian has been the order of the ages.
Such dividing action cannot save a world which stands on the brink of disaster.

For survival man needs a thinking that values mankind in terms of his relationship to the present world. He needs to think of men as valuable to other men. He needs to think that each person has something valuable to add to the whole race of mankind. The value of men to God, which many emphasize, is overshadowed by the thought that "value" is a man-made concept, and that he can use that concept only in relation to himself; hence, he cannot say that God values man.

For survival man needs also to forget the differences which now segregate him, whether they be due to religious, social, economic or geographical conditions. The survival of mankind will come only if it looks upon itself as one race, united in nature and conduct, united in blood and in relationship to the processes of the universe. Any thinking which chooses to emphasize the differences which exist among men in their condition will end in destruction, and must be replaced with that which emphasizes the unity and commonness of all men.

There is no person who is worthy to die at the hands of other men. Yet, all of humanity may soon be lost. That is the most important problem of the hour. There is no time for leisure and relaxation. The thinkers know that there is actually a world to be saved from destruction. That can be accomplished only if men think rightly of one another, that is, if they have the theology which correctly appraises the nature of man. The length of our days will be relative to our effectiveness in spreading those ideas which can insure survival.

WHENCE COMETH MY THEOLOGY?

Universalism began as a distinctive sect with a message that no other church was teaching. Its birth was marked by protracted controversy. Then something happened, so that today very few Universalist churches preach a gospel that is sufficiently different from their neighbor's to justify separate existence. There is no virtue in maintaining a distinction where there is no difference. If other churches are preaching universalism, we are not justified in manufacturing small differences to support our seclusion. But, far from this, a study of history of our Universalist thought reveals that we have grown closer to the other churches by reason of our sustained retreat from the genius of our liberal gospel.

In "A Treatise on Atonement" Hosea Ballou laid the foundation for a philosophy supporting our optimistic faith. We revere his memory and ignore his basic teachings. We strive to maintain his optimism, unsupported by his philosophy. We need to restudy the "Treatise" for a revival of the force of our faith.

Inevitably, as we turn back to Ballou, we are struck by his slavish allegiance to biblical authority. But his reckless distortion of scriptural meaning reveals his unconscious belief in the superiority of reason even over the revelation of the Scriptures. "If we admit that our Creator made us reasonable human beings, we ought, of course, to believe that all the truth which is necessary for our belief is not only reasonable, but reducible to our understanding."
IN HOC SIGNO VINCES!

On the cover of "Theologically Speaking" appears a symbol of Universalism, the design of which has been the subject of considerable discussion in the "Christian Leader" and elsewhere among our ministers during the past few months. Perhaps you have asked one or more of the following questions about it. This is an attempt to answer some of the questions that have been raised.

1. WHOSE IDEA WAS IT?
   A small group of ministers meeting in "bull sessions" at the last General Assembly at Akron expressed a felt need for:
   a. Some way of appealing to the eye with a direct and simple emblem which would represent the central idea of Universalism.
   b. Some easily recognizable way of identifying Universalist Churches, literature, publications, etc., for promotional and advertising purposes.

2. HOW WAS IT DESIGNED?
   For several months, those interested worked on the idea individually and the following summer after another meeting, a rough draft was submitted to an artist, Miss Julia Scaman, of the Wakefield (Mass.) Universalist Church, who indicated the proper proportions and put it in its present form.

3. WHAT IDEAS DOES IT PORTRAY?
   The religion of the unities and the universals; that universalism is the important emphasis of religion for today; that universalism is found in the highest development of all the world religions; that the universals transcend the partialisms of every religious faith, including Christianity; that Christianity has been an important step for us in reaching universalism; that universalism is a higher development than traditional Christianity.

4. WHAT DOES THE CIRCLE REPRESENT?
   This is the all-inclusive circle made by a line without beginning and without ending—that is, infinite in its conceptions. It is the ever-expanding circle that takes in all men, binding them in a universal brotherhood.

5. BUT DOESN'T THE CIRCLE, BY ITS NATURE LIMIT AND SHUT OUT?
   No symbol is perfect. As the devil can quote scripture, so can people find objections to this symbol. It is possible to read into this symbol many interpretations. While it might be possible to represent universalism in some other way, no other ways have yet been found that are not more complex and they all present some difficulties. The circle has been used to represent infinity from the earliest Egyptian civilizations and so there is good historical precedence for this interpretation (if that be needed).

6. WHY NOT PUT THE CROSS IN THE CENTER?
   Because Christianity is not central or even necessary to Universalism. Christianity has been a partialistic religion all through history, insisting upon a divine saviour to which it had exclusive access, just as Judaism
has claimed a divine "Torah" and Mohammedanism a divine and exclusive prophet. The important feature of the symbol is the circle and not the cross.

7. WHAT HAVE THESE OTHER RELIGIONS TO DO WITH IT?

We recognize that there are universalists in all religions. Those who were at Akron (or who read the "Leader") will remember Rabbi Keller's address which indicates that he is such a person. We hope that some day some of these other universalists will use this same symbol, replacing the cross with the star of David, or crescent, or Buddha—the symbols of their religious heritages.

8. BUT ISN'T THE SYMBOL OFF BALANCE?

Yes, deliberately so. There is an artistic tension, a sense of incompleteness. We do not have a completed religion, based upon a closed book of revelation. Therefore a static symbol would not be adequate. This symbol represents the religious tension which is real in the world. Until the world is made perfect, religions should seek to create discontent with things as they are.

This fact also gives the symbol a functional value. It cannot be ignored. It compels attention. It forces people to ask questions about it, thus opening the way for a teaching of Universalism in answering such questions. All who have used this symbol can give abundant evidence of this fact. A commercial artist knowing nothing about its meaning has said that it is a perfect symbol from an advertising point of view.

9. HOW WIDE IS ITS USE?

That is hard to say, but it appears on many Universalist Church calendars, on letterheads received from different parts of the country; it is on the "Bay State Universalist," it is used on the altars of at least two Universalist Churches; and has recently been adopted as a symbol of universalism by the Massachusetts Universalist Convention of some sixty churches (although not all of them use it, of course). It is used on letterheads, calendars, bulletin boards; watch charms have been made; it is used on stoles, on pulpit robes and in many other ways. One minister rubber stamps it on all denominational literature which he distributes.

For too many years, we have effectively sabotaged our distinctive message by the use of symbols and liturgical materials which serve only to identify universalism with traditional Christianity. Here is a new symbol which is distinctly Universalist in its impact. "Theologically Speaking" suggests its use by all ministers in the Universalist Church who share in the thinking which it symbolizes.

Those who have contributed articles to this issue of "Theologically Speaking" are: Mr. Frederick L. Harrison, Mr. Raymond C. Hopkins, Rev. Gordon B. McKeeman, Rev. Earle T. McKinney and Rev. Albert F. Ziegler. Letters and contributions are accepted without remuneration, thanks or protection from editorial ruthlessness.
"Theologically speaking" is not a journal of free or unbiased opinion. It is prejudiced in favor of a specific interpretation of Universalism and its purpose is to promote the consideration of that theology by Universalists.

For those of you too busy or too dense to get the point of the foregoing pages, here is a simple summary. First, we are languishing in apathy because we have no up-to-date philosophy of religion to put into the minds of our people. Therefore they fill their vacuums with remnants of their childhood Christianity and outworn dogma, which can no longer stand the test of truth. We speak theologically because our primary need is to clarify our own faith to ourselves and others. Secondly, the character of the crisis in which we live demands that we give the world this new and unifying faith, or we shall not survive. Universalism is in very truth, the religion for survival. The issue is that clear. In the third place, this "New" Universalism is not new at all. It is firmly rooted in the thinking of our father in the faith, Hosea Ballou, who is practically unknown to Universalists except by reputation. Yet it is his confidence in the sole reality of good, manifested in the universe and in the universe creature, man, which lies at the heart of the religion for survival. And finally, at last, we are beginning to develop our own symbols and techniques for promulgating this religion to a waiting world.
Ballou is unitarian in his theology, believing in God as the only existing power, from which all things come. He is consistent in this belief to the point of denying the existence of evil. "... there can be no such thing as real evil in the universe." He defines sin as follows, "Sin is the violation of a law which exists in the mind, which law is the imperfect knowledge man has of moral good. This law is transgressed whenever, by the influence of temptation a good understanding yields to a contrary choice."

But, reasons Ballou, God is in such complete control of the universe that no such concept as that of the freedom of man's will can reasonably be maintained. "Man is dependent in all his volitions, and moves by necessity." Ballou argues at length that man cannot be free of his own nature which is inevitably responsive to the will of God. Freedom of choice is an impossible condition, since there will always be a greater weight on one side than on the other and man is drawn that way. Man cannot be happy in doing less than the best he knows. It is folly to advise people to forge happiness, and quite beside the point. "A mistaken idea of sin has been entertained even by professors. ... The wish of the honest preacher is that the wicked repent of their sins and do better; but, at the same time, he indicates that sin, at present, is more productive of happiness than (is) righteousness."

If man must act, by nature, for his greatest happiness, and righteousness will bring that happiness, how can we explain sin? "Just as much as a person thinks sin to be more happifying than righteousness, he is sinful." "It will be granted that persons may choose an object in preference to another which is not half so valuable; but this is always in consequence of error in judgment." Man is not able, willfully, to choose that which he knows is the lesser good. He makes mistakes, but sincerely, out of ignorance or lack of emotional conviction of the greater good.

Out of these basic elements in Ballou's thought a vital faith for Universalism today can be built:

1. Belief in the supreme validity of man's reason in analyzing his world.
2. Faith in one purposeful, growing universe power, by which all things are maintained and toward whose end all things move.
3. Confidence in man as a competent, creative part of that force.

Tradition can never be allowed to obstruct the continued revelation of truth in the needs of man. There is no division of forces in the universe between which there is basic conflict. There are only many stages of incompleteness in the way forward. The only life in man is the universe force. He grew out of its evolutions and is not free to move other than toward its purpose. Ignorance is the only sin, and education of mind and emotion is the method of salvation.

Herein is the reason for confidence and optimism which so characterized the best of Universalist thought from the beginning, that man is bound by his own nature to act in the way which seems to him to be best, that the essence of all man is the impulse to good and unity.
The avowed intention of "Theologically Speaking" was "the consideration of... theology by Universalists." In the language of a radio comedian, "We dood it!" For within our memory there has been no more stirring discussion of theology than has been roused by our first issue. Admittedly there were editorial indiscretions in that issue. Those wishing to discredit all that was said, pounced upon them. "The Christian Leader" devoted a large section to editorial and other comment upon the doctrines and the personalities behind emergent universalism. Letters, favorable and otherwise, have come to the editorial offices (see quotes therefrom on another page.) If we rightly appraise the impact of the initial issue, we can say that some have been stirred to defending and rethinking their own theology and that is good. But there must be an exchange of ideas in public sessions and, if necessary, a restatement in unambiguous terms of what Universalism is and what it implies.

To our mind, the crucial issue which confronts us today is "What shall be our authority?" Accordingly, this issue is designed to answer that question.
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THE AUTHORITY OF TRUTH

The child seeks absolutes and authority. He relies on parents and other adults to tell him this or that is good or bad. An adult ought to put away this childish behavior. Dependence on authority is a mark of religious immaturity. Inconclusiveness, tentativeness, incompleteness, are the marks of a person who has achieved a philosophic religion. Man has not yet reached his biological limit. He has explored only a small part of his environment. There is no way for the race or individual to transcend the process of evolutionary adjustment which is religion. Proclaimed shortcuts are delusions. Among the sins of organized religions have been extravagant claims of bliss here or hereafter by means of revealed techniques of exploiting a supernatural realm. There are no such things. No priest, rabbi, minister, mahatma, yogi, or other human being, can modify in any degree the relationship that exists between the race or the individual and the controlling laws and forces of the universe.

There is no authority but the authority of truth. There is no such thing as revealed truth. Truth is discovered. Truth in religion can be discovered in no other way than truth in other fields. It is only in religion that people demand revealed truth. They don't demand it in making love or making hay, in building a barn or embalming the dead. In every field but religion they depend on experience or the scholarly techniques of observation, classification, measurement, calculation, experimentation, and logical analysis.

Truth needs no sponsor. A good requires no affidavit. A reform is its own justification. Justice demands no attestation from someone long since dead. There are too many preachers who cannot win a case on its own merits. Some preachers in effect are saying, "Zadie should have milk because of Jesus Christ." "Prostitution and war should be abolished because of Jesus Christ." Nonsense! In the first place, no one knows very much about Jesus Christ. It is arrogant assumption to claim to know how Jesus would line up on any question were he alive and a member of the city council. From what little we know of Jesus, he seems to have been rather an unpredictable person. It is assumed that no Universalist preacher thinks Jesus was a god. If he does so think, this reputable scholarship, he isn't a competent teacher of religion, and thus does not belong in the ministry. But some preachers appeal to Jesus as though Jesus were a god instead of a shadowy figure about which scholarship has been able to discover little. What such a preacher is doing, is to appeal to an authority outside his thesis. He is reverting to a mental trait inappropriate only to childhood.

Since the last issue several people have come forward with contributions of monetary nature to help keep "T. S." in the presses. To them our thanks. If you think with them that we ought to remain on the job, your contribution will be accepted. But do not think that we will cease publication without such support!
Some Universalist ministers assume that the authority of Jesus is still adequate as a foundation for present day universalism. They hold that the "religion of Jesus" can still answer the religious needs of modern man. They believe that we can be empirical in our religious philosophy and still attach ourselves with a fervent loyalty to the historical figure of Jesus. These men insist that Jesus represents human life at its perfection and attribute to him superior spiritual insight.

Assertions of the superiority of Jesus tend to withdraw Universalism from those who hold the same fundamental values; but who attribute them to some other source. Such assumptions ignore the fact that critical examination of the "religion of Jesus" reveals that many values held to be significant for today are not found in his gospel and that certain concepts held by him are no longer valid. This blind assumption of the spiritual superiority of Jesus fails to recognize the validity of value regardless of its source.

Those who hold to the superiority of the authority of Jesus ignore the fact that he taught nothing new. Biblical scholarship has clearly shown that most of his basic teachings are to be found in the Old Testament and others of them may be found in the writings of other great world religions. Rigid adherence to the "religion of Jesus" throws its adherents into the dilemma of contradictions between the findings of modern scholarship concerning the nature of the concept of God and men that Jesus taught his disciples. Those who accept the authority of Jesus find themselves believing in a God who numbers every hair of our heads and notices the fall of every sparrow, a God who can at will interfere in the life of man. Jesus was not one to encourage the use of human reason and intelligence in the evaluation of man's problems. In place of intelligent foresight he advocated complete trust in the guiding spirit of the Heavenly Father. In today's increasingly complex world such a view is not only untenable, but catastrophic.

Likewise, those who assume the authority of Jesus are in a dilemma regarding social responsibility. Jesus held that since God will one day take supernatural charge of the world and establish his kingdom, that therefore there is no particular obligation on the part of men to interfere in political and economic affairs. His idea of rendering unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and unto God the things that are God's implies a complete divorce between religion and the other affairs of man's social life. If one accepts the authority of Jesus on such matters as economics and labor - management relations he must emerge with answers that were proposed in and for the first century A.D.

We realize that many will claim that these are not the things they mean when they talk about adhering to the authority and religion of Jesus. Nevertheless, this is the dilemma in which one finds himself when he sets up a first century religious system as a model for modern day life.
we cannot in the light of all these circumstances which are quite obviously displayed in Jesus' teaching and conduct honestly regard him as embodying the highest moral and social ideals which challenge realization today, or as a person whom we should seek to imitate in all respects. (Such an attitude) tends to confuse and weaken rather than clarify and strengthen many of the social attitudes and responsibilities that most evidently need courageous development and guidance today." 1. The plain fact we must face is that Jesus did not command slavish respect, his authority is not adequate, his religion is neither dynamic nor functional in this age, his personality can no longer dominate the educated, thinking person.

"We must discriminate...in our appreciation of Jesus and the moral ideals of Christianity intimately associated with him. Our attitude must be one of intelligent selection, rather than fervent attachment...We must view him as we do other great religious teachers of the past, recognizing that all alike have given a contribution of enduring worth to the religious growth of mankind, with which we cannot afford to dispense, and that none is properly to be accepted wholesale. Otherwise we shall lie in constant peril of intellectual stultification and moral bewilderment. Our most fundamental religious attachment cannot be to any historic source of present values, but to those values themselves—all values which seem to promise enduring satisfaction to the struggling and aspiring life of humanity." 2.


The "denial of the Lordship of Jesus is not a tragedy. Loyalty to Jesus as our "spiritual authority" cannot be the one basic loyalty which binds us together. Reason notwithstanding, in removing our religion from slavish obedience to any figure of the past in favor of a dynamic religion motivated by the best scholarship of the day makes it "merely a human 'sect'" than by all means let us be merely such.

If replacing the "authority of Jesus with the authority of empirical reasoning be heresy, then heresy it must be. Let us be united not in "the common purpose to do the will of God as Jesus revealed it" but rather let us unite on the common purpose to do the will of God as we see it. Let us build our faith squarely on the best of modern scholarship and human reasoning. Let reason and truth be our authority, not a semi-historical figure of the first century. A.D.

CONTRIBUTORS

Contributors to this issue are: Dr. Harold Scott, Rev. Albert Ziegler, Mass. David H. Cole and Raymond C. Hopkins, Dr. Frederick L. Harrison and Rev. Gordon E. McKeeman. Contributions, comments, bombs, and threatening letters should be sent to the Editor, 43 Oberlin Street, Worcester 3, Mass. If you have an idea that you think might be printed with profit, send it along. "Theologically Speaking" is not a journal of free or unbiased opinion. It is prejudiced in favor of a specific interpretation of Universalism and its purpose is to promote the consideration of that theology by Universalists.
IS REASON REASONABLE?

One of the strangest things in all of our strange world is this, that there should be a need now for discussion on the validity of reason in a church so firmly founded in, and maintained by a belief in reason as the Universalist. But, as J. R. Chesterton has so wisely said, if people will believe that one times one is three, he must continue to talk about the multiplication table.

The controversy rages today, as it has throughout man’s recorded history, between religious tenets shaped out of man’s best thinking, and those purported to have been received in some other mystical and miraculous fashion. The arguments in Mr. Baughan’s article in the July issue of the "Leader" are scarcely beyond the Catholicism of the Middle Ages in logic. In answering attempts to go beyond the Christian tradition he says to writers of "Theologically Speaking," "Where do they think they got their moral values anyway? Do they suppose them to be the logical outcome of human reason...?" Where does Mr. Baughan think we got them, if not from human reason. Does he suggest, with Moses and Joseph Smith, that they were let down from heaven on tablets of stone?

The principles from which Mr. Baughan is reluctant to move, were, like the religious perceptions of every age, born out of the growing reason of man. It was so with Thomas Aquinas, with Luther and with Calvin, whatever pretense they may have made. More miraculous methods, manifestly then, the controversy between reason and "revelation" becomes nothing more than a conflict between present-day reason and that exercised in past years. In such a conflict, liberal minds must give greater credence to modern thought. God communicated no more miraculously to men in past ages than he does now, and it would be a fatal denial of the progress of centuries to choose the truth revealed in remembered fragments of the teachings of a man who lived two thousand years ago, over the truth further developed by the best of man’s thinking since. Reason, if followed, inevitably grows out beyond the confines of any one tradition or time. The choice then must be to follow the greater truth into life, or to follow with the old, lesser truth in death.

Man has always been dependent on, has suffered from, and gained by the results of his reasoning, though he has often invented other authorities to bolster his faltering faith. The time is surely long overdue that he should face this fact and act in conscious awareness of his great powers, and stop hiding behind the skirts of a man-conceived overlord upon whom he may "cast every care," and whom he may blame in every disaster. Liberal religion calls man to walk the way of his reason, confidently in the knowledge that he has been adequately equipped by nature for his work, and humbly in the realization that he is a growing creature in a growing universe. Those who, like Mr. Baughan, still look outside of men for salvation need to read again the great proclamation of Jeremiah, "I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts....... and they shall know me, from the least of them to the greatest..."
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A SHORT PAUSE FOR...

Many questions and not a few eyebrows have been raised in connection with the group of ministers who call themselves the Humiliati. The questions indicate that the time is long past due for a frank statement about this group, its purposes and its program. There is no desire on the part of any member that any part of our association together be secretive. We are very happy to share our experiences.

The Humiliati grew out of the association through school of two of the present membership, who had experienced mutual aid from informal discussions together during school contacts. With graduation and looking forward to a future of more or less constant change from parish to parish, the thought was expressed that some basis for continued association might be established. With deeper thought the idea of a larger group, meeting once each year for study and discussion was conceived. In this, they found inspiration in the activities of the Fraters at Wayside Inn. But, they reasoned, since the number of Fraters is necessarily limited, and not likely to include them for many years, if ever, they felt they should begin at once to avail themselves of so helpful a technique as afforded by this kind of retreat.

A group of five, composed of students and recent graduates, held an informal meeting in the spring of 1945. This group of five was not chosen in any sense, but in fact a chance gathering before whom the idea was spread in an informal and tentative way. It became immediately apparent that the idea was good and that no better group could be desired to start it than that present. Accordingly, another more formal meeting was held and the groundwork laid. Purposes were discussed, additional members proposed and techniques were developed. It was felt by all that the group should be kept rather small during its formative years, and since it centered about an annual convocation, in which the members would work and live closely together for a week at a time, that members chosen be compatible, so far as possible.

A foundation was laid in the accepting of a "Rule" which is the instrument of organization and government. We quote it in its entirety because this is not a secret society in any sense:

"This is the rule of the Humiliati set down in humble spirit to promote the religious and intellectual growth of the undersigned, united in their desire to be better servants in their ministry. It is hoped that there will grow among the brethren a fellowship and feeling of mutual responsibility so genuine that it will seek expression outside as well as in the activities of the group.

"Invitation to membership shall be extended to a prospective member only after attendance as a guest at one convocation and upon the unanimous consent of the brethren.

"An annual convocation of the order shall be held, during January unless otherwise decreed by the Abbot, for communal study and worship.

"Discipline at the convocation as well as the instruction and worship, shall be
the responsibility of the Abbot. The brethren are admonished to conduct themselves in such a manner as will best further the aims and spirit of the con
vocation. The request of the Abbot on all matters touching the Humiliati shall be obeyed.
"The Abbot shall be elected by the three most recent Abbots present at the annual convocation.
"All expenses including transportation shall be shared equally by all members.
"All decisions touching matters of policy shall be made by a unanimous deci
sion of members present.
"Every member shall affix his signature hereon as an evidence of his will
ingness to obey this rule, and it shall be read at the opening session of each convocation by the Abbot."

Two annual convocations have been held. The first, at Tufts College in 1946, was concerned with the "Philosophic Bases of Liberal Religion." Papers and book re
views were presented and discussed. The second convocation, held in Swansea, Mass. in 1947 followed a similar pattern. The Humiliati were not organized as, nor intend to become a denominational pressure group. In fact two of the present members were not Universalists when they joined and a third is not now a Universalist. The purpose of the group is the development of religious and intellectual powers in its members. It has no secret significance beyond this. Yet it would be childish indeed to suppose that, if our work together be at all effective, there will not be a body of opinion formed on important issues outside of the fellowship. Our work together should make us more effective as individuals, and therefore, we rejoice if members of the Humiliati make their influence felt in affairs of the church, locally or denominationally, and that influence is for good.

It seemed good to the group to limit the number not for the purpose of being exclusive and shutting others out, but in the interest of efficiency and to preserve the spirit and original intent. We have found it so enriching an experience that we recommend to other ministers that they form similar groups. We have no patent on an idea which we bor
rowed in the first place.

While the Humiliati have taken the initiative in publishing "Theologically Speaking," they have no monopoly on the ideas which they have called "emergent Universalism." Many voices near and far are proclaiming a similar message. It is hoped that "Theologically Speaking" will encourage them and others yet silent to preach boldly, in season and out, a rational and dynamic Universalism.

It may be a matter of interest that the name "Humiliati" was borrowed from an extinct twelfth century order of laymen, who combined "the prosecution of gospel ideas with the avowed application of Christian principles to economic practices. Although living in normal family relationships, they gathered in common assembly for mutual edification, social and spiritual.

GLEANED FROM THE MAIL

We need some stimulating theological discussions, in whatever direction.

---Homer A. Jack---

It makes me wonder anew why I am in the Universalist Church.

---Lucy M. Hammond---

Your publication struck me as a terrific blunder. ---Donald W. Morgan---

At least you are drawing blood and that is much better than indifference.

---Alfred S. Cole---

I am pleased that a group of our younger men are really doing some thinking and writing in the field of Universalism.

---Weston A. Cate---

...such an inspiring job, that we would like very much to distribute copies to all Unitarian ministers.

---Melvin Arnold---

We have a long way to go before we can measure up to the historic Jesus, who is the fountain head of Christianity at its best.

---Theodore A. Webb---

It is the first ray of hope I have seen for many a day. I had about made up my mind that the Universalist Church had completely sunk in the slough of apathy. I hope we have some fight left in us as in the days of old when we made progress.

---F. S. Bishop---

Some of the sentences make me want to burst out and scream them to my congregation.....You are promoting ideas and our movement has been singularly lacking in ideas for a long, long time.

---Donald 3. King---

Our correspondence does not correspond. What do you think?
Up to the present writing, many letters have come to the office of the Editor, which indicated substantial agreement with the point of view thus far put forth. This issue may be the turning point, for herein is presented the crucial point upon which "emergent Universalism" must insist. Many do not see either the importance or the necessity of "dragging the worn-out issue of free-will" into the discussion. Some argue for a "limited determinism," fearing a stultifying effect of a completely deterministic philosophy.

Baldly stated, our proposition is this: man is a creature of nature, so endowed in his nature that he cannot do anything which does not seem to him at the moment to be the best thing for him to do. Or to be more brief, man is endowed with a natural impulse which drives him to do that which appears good to him. Our own statement of faith says, "We avow our faith in the supreme worth of every human personality." What basis have we for such an avowal? Only this, that man is by nature good, and as such is a worthy object of faith.
THE HEART OF THE MATTER

The central statement in the Avowal of Faith of the Universalist Church is the belief "in the supreme worth of every human personality." This statement makes the Universalist Church a distinctively different church. This belief in the basic goodness of man separates us from the rest of the churches in the present religious community. It is this distinction that justifies the continuance of the Universalist Church. If we are simply preserving a loyalty to a denomination that no longer really has a distinctive message, then we had better merge with the modernists of some larger and more wealthy denomination. But if the Universalist Church really believes in its assertions as to the natural goodness of man, then we not only have justification for continuing our church, but we have a dynamic message to the propagation of which we must consecrate our lives.

The writers of T. S. believe in the basic goodness of man, and in this belief they are not alone. The majority of the ministers in our fellowship accept this belief as central to our faith. Here we are in almost complete agreement. It is only when we come to a discussion of a philosophical basis for maintaining this optimistic belief that we come into disagreement. The majority of these men who recite with vigor the statement in the avowal concerning the supreme worth of every man also assert a belief in "free will". And yet the concept of "free will" is in diametrical opposition to the concept of the goodness of man, for if man is free to do either good or evil there remains no logical reason for maintaining an optimistic faith in the goodness of man. Either man is good or he is evil. Nor does it solve the problem to say that man is potentially both good and evil. If you maintain that he has the free will to do evil, then you cannot in the same breath assert that he is good.

There exists in the minds of most men a confusion as a result of the conflict between the ideals of man and his actions. Ours is a world of high ideals. Always man has held up great ideals and aspirations toward which he strives. Man has always seen things better than they actually are. And yet he has always acted on a "lower" plane. Why does man do things that he knows are in conflict with his ideals? Why does he do things that he knows are "wrong"? The orthodox answer has been that man does these things because he has "free will." He knows what things are good. He knows the difference between good and evil, but he is free to ignore the good and do what he knows is evil. He holds great ideals but since he is free he does not have to act in accordance with these ideals. He can worship with these platitudes on Sunday and then act in complete contradiction to them on Monday because he has "free will." This is the position of orthodoxy-- a position that refutes "the supreme worth of every personality."

Emergent Universalism reaches a different solution. It says that religion is natural to man; there is in man the psychical equipment for religion that exists as an impulse to something greater.
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Emergent Universalism reaches a different solution. It says that religion is natural to man; there is in man the psychical equipment for religion that exists as an impulse to something greater.
It is an urge in men that makes it natural for him to worship the highest he can conceive. Therefore, it is natural for man to have ideals that carry him beyond conditions as they are, to something better.

Man is tied to the purpose of the universe that produced him and is impelled by that purpose always to act in the manner which appears best to him. He is not "free" to do evil. He is "free" only to do the good as he sees it. But he must set it both INTELLECTUALLY AND EMOTIONALLY, since man does not act upon his intellect alone. He can be in intellectual agreement with all the ideals of mankind, but unless he believes these ideals to be in accord with what is best for him, he will not act upon them. Here is where the conflict arises between the ideals and actions of mankind. MANKIND ALWAYS HOLDS IDEALS INTELLECTUALLY THAT ARE BEYOND HIS PRESENT EMOTIONAL BASIS FOR ACTION. Not until he becomes emotionally convinced that these ideals are good for him, does he act upon them. The lag between his ideals and his actions creates a tension which is the driving force that impels him to attain to his ideals. Therefore, it is the function of the church to educate men both intellectually and emotionally to the good. Universalism recognizing that the impulse forces man to strive for adjustment with the universe; to achieve unit in the universe by seeking harmony with it must show man that what is best for the universe is best for him. It must reveal to men the knowledge and desirability of seeking unity with the universe. It must show man that this is the higher good and then he must do it.
AGAInst FREE WILL

In the book of Jeremiah, we find a courageous, pioneering idea about the nature of man's will. "I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts..." This ancient sage does not sigh for a helpless freedom of will, but sees man as a creature whose very inner well-springs of purpose are tied to the will of God. He is no freebooter, wandering aimlessly through an alien universe. He is a creature of the force that moves the universe, its purpose indelibly marked on his heart and pervading his every volition.

Throughout the centuries separating this unknown pioneer from our day, there has been a majority opinion against him. Man has been diagnosed as everything from a child of the devil, born in sin and doomed to destruction, to an amoral target for the bombardment of good and evil influences. Yet, through it all, we can trace, too, a record of small, almost unheeded voices, louder at one time, softer at another, but always insistent and growing, that proclaim a basic faith in man's nature, impossible within any concept of free will. These are not the despairing voices of those who whistle in the dark, frightened by their own terrible theologies, nor are they the results of superficial judgments, ostrich answers to crises in human experience. They are the carefully considered, sincerely held convictions of great minds and warm hearts. Some of the names are almost unknown, many are famous but for ideas that are more acceptable than this to our tradition-rid-

...den minds. The worst of Calvin's theology lives in our minds. We forget its best elements, those which gave the people the confidence and dedication to build a new economic order. As with Calvin, all of our friends have but a part of the great idea, each expressing within his own frame of thinking the needful affirmation, "we can believe in man!"

All philosophies which try to understand the universe processes as dependable and orderly are driven to recognize them as purposeful. This is clearly seen in the thinking of Descartes, who could find a basis for his mathematical theology only in belief in a teleological universe. From this it seems but a short and logical step to grant that man, a creature of the universe, is no less surely moved by the same purpose, though in different and more subtle ways. The only escape from this is to maintain that man is a free-willed creature, independent of the universe, of a different substance, and capable of following any random purpose, or of acting without purpose at all. This is the answer which orthodox religion presented. Man is a free agent who may live in accord with the universe purpose or may oppose it. As a necessary support to this theory, orthodoxy strove to maintain the separate, unnatural creation of man, and bitterly opposed any scientific propositions which made him a natural part of the evolutionary process. The view of man as a creature free, separate and apart from the substance and purpose of the universe is neither in accord with science nor effective ethically, and rational minds seek refuge from it in some
Fletcher Professor of Philosophy at Tufts College, did a masterful work in tracing through ancient and modern philosophies the growing concept of man as a naturally moral being, from its earliest dawning in the belief in "mana", a life force which moved men to the will of the gods, to its most intricate development in the philosophies and scientific knowledge of today. His own conclusions are for the existence of "a formative and directive element lying wholly in original impulse...the psychological elements deposited by experience have their worldly system broken up under the operation of an impulse wholly inward (that is within the psychical equipment of man) and are reformed within it as its content." In other words, man is born with, and retains through life, a natural impulse toward that which seems best to him. We have here, then, not a creature dependent on experience for the creation of his purpose, nor a free-willed being who can change direction in every wind, but one who is purposeful by nature, with a natural and inextinguishable urgency toward good.

Bergson finds the ultimate nature of the universe, and therefore of man, in the "elan vital", a universal vital force. This life force pervades all things (moving at different speeds in the various phases, but always moving forward) reaching its most effective form as the volition in man where "it passes freely, dragging with it the obstacles which will weigh in its progress but will not stop it." Man, while representing a higher channel for the force, is yet without liberty willfully
to defeat it. He is as completely a creature of the force as is a tree or an animal, and as faithfully carries out its direction in his way as they do in theirs.

Our own Universalist Hosea Ballou was convinced that "man is dependent in all his volitions, and moves by necessity." We are bound to that which appears to us as the best, since a good God is the only volition in us. If Universalists think of Ballou today as a "determinist" it is in tolerance for an "inconsistency" in his thinking. Yet, it is in the development of this "inconsistency" that Universalists today must seek for the virility they lack.

Thus in many ways do all these minds, conscious of our need, make their own peculiar approaches to the problem of the nature of man. The determinists, rationalists, empiricists, humanists, pragmatists, etc., all were driven to their positions by the crying need for a confidence in man, impossible in a concept which sees man doing wrong out of the exercise of his free will. We may attack their propositions as 'incomplete and unsatisfying, but we cannot avoid the same challenge that faced them. We, too, must build a philosophy, rational in our day, that unites our emotions and intellect in the confidence that man, and all men, are, by nature, good.

This third issue of "Theologically Speaking" is presented especially for those attending the General Assembly at Canton, New York, to stimulate thinking and discussion.

Comments, curses and contributions may be sent to the Editor, 43 Oberlin Street, Worcester, Mass.
MacMurray, John
*The Clue to History (Harpers 1939)

Mead, George H.
The Philosophy of the Present
(Open Court, 1932)

Meers, L. E. and T.
Creative Energy

Pratt, James B.
The Religious Consciousness

Northrup, F. S. C.
The Meeting of East and West

Reichenbach, Hans
Atom and Cosmos

Starbuck, Edwin D.
Psychology of Religion

Steffens, Lincoln
Autobiography

Sorokin, Pitirim A.
Man and Society in Calamity
The Crisis of our Age

Tolstoi, Leo
My Confessions

Ziegler, Albert F.
*Foundations of a Functional Faith
(Christian Leader 10/19/46
5/5/47, 5/17/47 and 6/7/47.
*A Functional Theology for Liberal Religion (Tufts S.T.B. Thesis No. 18, 1945)

Titles marked "*" are vital for an understanding of this philosophical position. The others are helpful although not clear-cut and some argue against it not realizing the full implications of the ideas with which they are dealing.

Contributors to this issue include: Mr. Raymond C. Hopkins, Rev. Albert F. Ziegler and Rev. Gordon B. McKeeman.