

THE LIBERALIST. TUESDAY MORNING SEPT. 8

For the Liberalist.

How truly ridiculous it would appear in these enlightened days, to our strenuous orthodox gentry, were they to see some deluded foreigner after a long and tedious pilgrimage, paying his devotions and money to a chrysal tabernacle, wherein is deposited a few drops of blood reported to be the blood of our Savior, and kept by Priests from the day of crucifixion in this same tabernacle, which was thick on one side so that nothing could be seen through it and thin and transparent on the other, having the wonderful property of showing whether man's sins were or were not absolved. When a rich pilgrim paid at a visit, he was shown the thick side, until he had offered large sums of money, and then to his great joy he was permitted to see the thin side and consequently the blood which was a confirmation of his absolution. This priestcraft trick is a fact beyond contradiction having happened in former days in our once mother country. And why should it appear ridiculous; let us look at home and see if the priestcraft tricks of these days are not carried on in as glaring a manner. If we do not see it, it is because the people are more enlightened and it requires a deeper source of cunning to deceive & make them advance their money, for the support of would be God's ambassadors; look to their missionary societies, the thousands of dollars they have obtained for the purpose of spreading the gospel, follow their missionaries, listen well to their discourse, a God of love is held forth to the people (mark here is the transparent side of the tabernacle) but that love is proffered to you on conditions, conditions conjured up by themselves without proof, (here is the dark side) you have to pay and pray and listen to their ranting till very soon does cause a fit of madness, you scream, you fall, you tear your hair and garments and then become a hopeful convert. Let us take another look at the dark side of the Tabernacle; does it take all the money they obtain to support their foreign missionaries; no such thing, it is a mere drop out of the ocean, the keepers of the Lords treasury are no fools, they get the money and they will not let a peep inside, you will see the proof that they are not so honest; and what do they do with the money? This is the inquiry of his country to his religious purposes? The money of late years has been used to make themselves a nation, to make a nation, and bring by force from the hard hand of the people what they now are obliged to pay for.

Listen to the voice of reason ye credulous, or dearly will ye pay for your credulity, did the Lord require the aid of silver or gold to create the universe? Which of the two is the greater work, to create the universe or to save his own children?

L. B. W.

We see by the annexed letters that the Revd. Wm. L. McCulla, has been so unceremonious, as to challenge a lady to words combat. We think this rather a hazardous undertaking for the Revd. disputant, as the ladies have in all ages, been celebrated for their colloquial talents.

Miss Frances Wright,

I have recently delivered lectures against the system you so conspicuously advocate, in which I have freely commented on and censured the principles contained in some of your writings as are in my possession. Anxious, however, to enter into a deeper investigation, I have concluded, after fasting and fervent devotion, to invite you to a public discussion at a time mutually convenient hereafter to be fixed upon; for which purpose, I am authorized by the trustees to offer the use of the church in this city in which God has appointed me to teach his holy word in order there to conduct a public discussion. Should the place be exceptionable to you I will use every endeavor to accommodate you by obtaining another, or by accepting one as suitable that you may propose.

My friends the Reverend Doctor Janeway and the Reverend Doctor Ely have consented to be moderators

on my part; you will of course appoint two others, and the whole four may appoint a fifth, should they think proper so to do. The selection of moderators is only suggested; this as well as other preliminary arguments, can be suitably arranged at a subsequent period.

I should not presume to call a lady to such a conflict, if I did not feel my duty urged by a sense of strong preparation in the Gospel, and if I did not confidently hope to win a lost sheep to the fold of my Lord and Master.

WILLIAM L. M. CULLA.

P. S. You can acquaint me by letter of your acceptance of my invitation; or, if more agreeable, by notice in some public print—in which case you will please publish my letter at the same time. W. L. M. C.

New York, August 11th, 1829. Mr. William L. M. Culla.

Sir,

Your communication of the 1st instant, addressed to Boston has reached me only by this day's post. Although by no means covetous of disputation, and believing truth to be rather discoverable by the study of things, of man and of ourselves than attainable by argument, yet am I most willing to meet you as proposed. The views I have presented to the American people are a fair subject of challenge and of criticism; and, far from objecting to their examination, I shall hold myself indebted to those who may assist in detecting their error or confirming their truth.

The building designated in your letter will be perfectly agreeable to me. With respect to time the early part of the month of October would best suit with my engagements.

FRANCES WRIGHT.

From the Universalist Magazine. ANCIENT HISTORY OF UNIVERSALISM.

By Skinner—It has for several years, been the opinion of the writer of this note—that the materials were abundant in the writings of the christian Fathers (as they are called) for satisfying the minds of the most sceptical, that Universalism was by no means a new doctrine in the church. And the plan of such a history plainly comprised, the quotations of the doctrines and opinions successively advanced by the eminent bishops and Fathers, of the first four or five centuries of the christian era. Such was Priestley's plan of proving the Divine unity, and it was successful.

But the difficulty of finding access to the records which contained the materials of such a history—and the still greater difficulty of finding a person of sufficient leisure, or patience, to select from the heterogeneous mass of learned and antiquated lore and monkish mysticism the particular evidences of the doctrine of restitution; seemed to present at least, in this country, insuperable obstructions to its present attainment.

It is therefore particularly gratifying to find the work done—and so well done. It is condensed in so small a compass, as to be attainable by all who wish—and by the careful translation of the Notes (except perhaps the titles of works) is admirably adapted to popular use.

When it is recollected, that the author has gathered much of the matter of this history from the Latin language—that years have been spent in examining different Libraries—in collecting and arranging the materials—and at the same time, in the constant discharge of the arduous duties of a christian Minister,—some idea will be formed of the nature of the work, and the difficulty of its completion. But its great and characteristic merit, is the candour which its author every where exhibits.—There is no distortion of subjects, to make them favor a party. He has given us the language of truth—is confident, only where his authority is positive, and where that hesitates, he leaves us to doubt.

No family of Universalists should be without this book. S. R. S.

The Ancient History of Universalism:—From the time of the Apostles, to its condemnation in the Fifth General Council A. D. 553. With an Appendix, tracing the Doctrine down to the Era of the Reformation. by Hosea Ballou, 2d, Pastor of the Universalist Society in Roxbury, Boston; Marsh and Capen, pp. 328.

From the British Universalist.—Concluded. Among the heretics of this period, by whom we mean those Christian sects who were offensive to the Orthodox, many advocates of Universalism are found, though as

the doctrine was no cause of opposition on the one hand, so it was not of peculiar favour on the other. Of the Gnostic sects, the Basilidians, Valentinians, and Carpocratians were thinly scattered over all Christendom, and were opposed by the Orthodox Universalists, as well as by the rest of that class for their views concerning the creation of the world, and for denying altogether the doctrine of a future retribution, &c. All the Orthodox, whether Universalists or not, arrayed themselves against the Gnostics of every kind and these, in their turn, against their common adversaries. Of the powerful sect of Manicheans, who arose during the period of which we speak, some undoubtedly held to the salvation of all souls. But concerning a sect whose history, like that of all the ancient heretics, is so uncertain, very little can be spoken with confidence.

Of the increasing disposition to pass censure, which began already to exist to a considerable extent in the church, of the gradual usurpation of power by the Bishops, and of the growth of corruption, Mr. Ballou speaks in the following strain:—

Christianity had then assumed many of the peculiar features it now wears in the Romish religion. Salvation, it was represented, could be secured only within the pale of the Orthodox Church; and all the heretics, the excommunicated and the dissenters, were exposed equally with the heathens, to the torments of hell. These separate sects, in their turn, however, unsorped, at times, the same terrible prerogative, and retorted upon the Catholics their own favourite admonitions. At the head of the true church, the clerical body, and particularly that of the bishops, possessed, when united, an influence uncontrollable and powerful even when divided by their frequent discords.—Some of the prelates began to affect the splendour and magnificence of secular nobility, though the sword of persecution hung over their heads, and often fell upon them in ruthless extermination. The christian ceremonies and ordinances, to which extravagant spiritual efficacy was generally attributed, were losing their pristine simplicity in pomp and tedious parade. Nor was the morality of the gospel less perverted; though downright monarchism had not been introduced into the church, yet acts of mortification and penance, were regarded as superior to ordinary virtue, and a life of rigid abstinence as the favourite institution of heaven. But, as might be expected, the manners of the time approached, at once, the two extremes of austerity & licentiousness: some who professed the abstinence of celibacy, even indulged themselves, to the great scandal of the better sort, in the possession of concubines, from among those who had vowed perpetual chastity.

Amidst the scene of growing corruption, a pious zeal was cherished against all supposed error and the church exhibited the striking, though not singular, spectacle, of rage for soundness of faith, in proportion to the common degeneracy. While the destructive persecutions of the heathens, urged at this time with unprecedented violence, were denouncing the earth with christian blood, the believers, both in the East and the West, seemed to devote the intervals of repose to a mad search for nonconformity in doctrine and discipline, which they hunted into every corner, and consumed with little discrimination or reflection. In the West, Novatus and his followers were excommunicated for their factious conduct, and for their obstinate exclusion of the lapsed; and Cyprian and the bishop of Rome were engaged in a quarrel about rebaptising heretics. In the East, Noetus and Sabellius on the one hand, and Paul of Samosata on the other, were arraigned and condemned for opposite departures from the indefinable and wavering standard of Trinitarianism. Between the East and the West, a controversy was kept up concerning the proper days for fasting, and the time for the celebration of the Paschal Feast. In one word, so universal was the passion for censure, that scarcely an individual of eminence escaped reproof from one quarter or another. pp. 136, 138.

The third division commences at about A. D. 390; and from this time, let the reader prepare himself to meet with disgraceful quarrels on the subject of Universal Salvation, and the bitterest anathemas fulminated against such as maintained that sentiment. Epiphanius, of the Island of Cyprus, was the first to commence the work of condemnation, being incited by an enemy to John, Bishop of Jerusalem, to condemn such sentiments of Origen as John had embraced. He denounces Origen, however, rather for believing in the salvation of the Devil, than that of all mankind. Next comes Jerome himself, before this an admirer of Origen, and a Universalist who condemns the doctrine of a restoration from hell. The zeal against the Origenists increasing, a decree was issued out by the Roman Pontiff, and by the synods of Alexandria and Cyprus, in which Origen and his works were specially condemned, though the tenet of the eventual salvation of all mankind was not selected as a subject of particular anathema, and some of the Orthodox continued to avow it in the church with impunity. This contest with the followers of Origen was altogether a most disgraceful affair; it originated in private pique and enmity, and it is by no means disparaging to Universalism, that it was first directly opposed by those who were busy in seeking subjects of reproach against their enemies, and who seized any thing, however pure, which they could turn to such a purpose. Personal contention was the primary cause of Universalism being considered a heresy.

This doctrine made its appearance in the north-eastern part of Spain, when a deputa-

tion was sent to St. Augustin, in Africa, the author of the present Orthodox doctrines of total depravity, irresistible grace, and sovereign partial election, who wrote immediately against the doctrines of Origen, and particularly against his opinion of the end of the torments of hell. His arguments are the first we discover which have to this day been used in the church. He criticised on the word rendered everlasting, defended the eternity of its duration, and even attempted to maintain that the original word always signified endless. He is the first who used the argument that the torments of the damned must be of equal duration with the happiness of the blessed, as the same word was applied to both. Possessed of a great influence in the church his attack rapidly hastened the downfall of Universalism, and soon it was nearly lost amid the mass of corruption, which for some time had been gradually creeping in to the church.

After a lapse of some years, the sentiment was again revived in Palestine, and flourished to some considerable extent; but the Origenists being represented to the Emperor Justinian, he immediately ordered an edict to be drawn up, in which, after condemning Universalism, he directs Archbishop Meenas to summon all his Bishops and Abbots, and oblige them to anathematize Origen and his doctrines. He wrote to Pope Vigilius, and the rest of the patriarchs, urging them to the performance of the same acts.

To this, in a few years, succeeded the meeting of the Fifth General Council. The decree of a General Council was unalterable and fixed the creed of the Catholic Church forever. When, therefore, in the year 553, this Council formally condemned Universalism, the doctrine received a blow from which it never recovered until the time came when, to the authority of Popes, Councils, and Canons, that of the Word of God succeeded, and the right of private judgment was asserted and maintained.

From the sitting of the Fifth General Council to the era of the Reformation, no continued history of Universalism can be given. Through the darkness of this long period the light of the doctrine beams infrequently, and traces of it only here and there are found. These are pointed out by Mr. Ballou in the Appendix. The volume before us is commenced with a Table of Contents, and closed with an Index of the principal Notes, (of which there is a large number) arranged in the most proper manner.

There are very few who will be able to estimate the labour which the work has cost its author. Previously to the appearance of the work before us, that it was known only that Origen was a Universalist, and that St. Augustine had spoken of some in his time who had held to Universalism, and who, on that account, were called merciful doctors. It was perhaps conjectured that a few others of the Fathers were Universalists. Compare this with the knowledge which the Ancient History pours upon the subject, and who can refrain from astonishment at that unwearied and persevering spirit which, surmounting all obstacles, and brooking all disappointments, rests satisfied only by shedding the broad light of noon where before was almost midnight darkness. Universalists, henceforth will spread with confidence concerning the opinions even of the earliest Fathers; and will be no longer subject to doubt and uncertainty, as to the effect a full disclosure of the opinions of the early Christians might have on the public mind in regard to their sentiments.

When it is known that of all the early Fathers not one condemned this sentiment, although it was believed and defended a mong them; that orthodox bishops of the greatest renown maintained it openly and zealously, without receiving censure or losing their popularity; that it was not till about A. D. 400 that it was denounced as an error; when this is known, we say, can it be believed that the orthodox doctrines of the present day were held, by the early Christians? Another fact brought to light by this History, and one highly worthy of attention, is, that the word rendered in the scriptures everlasting, was familiarly and commonly used, in the first three or four centuries, to signify duration, and was applied very frequently to punishment by the Universalists of that period. The author of the Sibylline Oracles, Clemens, Alexandrinus, and Origen himself, all applied the word everlasting to punishment, and sometimes, too, to those very passages in which they were defending the doctrine of Universalism. This fact speaks volumes. It shows the usus loquendi in relation to that word; and seems to settle the question, that it did have a limited signification, especially when applied to punishment.

We copy from the Trumpet and Universalist Magazine the annexed remarks on a suicide which took place at the north, some short time since; to give our readers some idea of the shifts to which the advocates of orthodoxy, have lately been put, at the North.

THE WOBURN SUICIDE.

We hoped to have been called to say nothing more on this subject. It is painful to dwell on so melancholy an event. We respect the feelings of a widowed mother and other relatives, in regard to them have withheld the name of the unfortunate young man; nor would we now say any thing further in relation to the catastrophe, were it not for the strange and unaccountable conduct of the Orthodox clergyman in Woburn. It is an undeniable fact, that a young man committed suicide at Dea. WARREN'S new Academy in Woburn, under the special su-

perintendence of Rev. JOSEPH BENNETT and ALFRED W. PIKE and it is an equally undeniable fact, in asserting, which we deny all contradiction, that this young man was driven by Orthodox influence to the rash deed. Does not Mr. BENNETT know, does not Mr. PIKE know, do not the relatives of the deceased in this city all know, that the young man was exceedingly displeased with the treatment he suffered at the Academy? Was he not brought up in the belief of Orthodox principles? When he went to Woburn, were not efforts made to induce him to join the Orthodox church? Was he not frightened by the doctrines taught him? and when, in the anguish of his heart, he ventured, seeking relief, to converse with one or two of liberal sentiments, was he not made an object of scorn, or hissing? When, both in a moral and medical sense, he ought to have been treated as though half-dereanged, was not his disease increased by the attempt to force him to become the teacher of a class in Rev. Mr. BENNETT'S Sunday School?—Did he not solicit his mother to remove him from the Academy? and would she not of have done it, but through fear that it might disqualify him to enter College? And does not she, and do not all concerned, believe that these were the causes of the self-murder?

But, reader, what will you think, what surprise will you feel, when we inform you, you, that the Rev. Mr. BENNETT, in his late tour through the counties that border around Boston, has repeatedly asserted from the pulpit that this young man hung himself because he was a Universalist. We cannot believe that this Rev. gentleman is himself in his right mind. His friends certainly cannot be aware of his extravagant conduct, or they would interpose and save him from disgrace and perhaps ruin. We are confident that if Mr. B. had been possessed of calm reason, he could not have acted the following part at Pelham, N. H. A correspondent in that town sends us the following account.

The Rev. Mr. BENNETT of Woburn, in his begging tour, stated in Dr. Church's Meeting House, when giving a history of the Revival (so called) in his church, and speaking of the opposition they had had to encounter, that a young man gave his own words; who had sinned away the day of grace, and had become a confirmed Universalist, and who used all his influence to persuade others to become so; and who believed that all punishment for sin was in this world,—though he would step out of hell into heaven—and he took a handkerchief, and put around his neck, (at the same time making use of his own handkerchief to give effect to his words,) and swung himself off; and then stretching out his hands towards heaven, in a most solemn manner, for some time, he at length exclaimed, "he's gone."

Does not this transaction appear more like that of an insane person, than like that of a person in his right mind? Surely, if Mr. BENNETT knew what he said, he did not believe one word about M—'s being under the influence of Universalism. How, then shall we account for this gross misrepresentation? There is no way of accounting for it, except by supposing some sad defection in the author's mind either in a moral or physical point of view. We do not blame the Orthodox for endeavoring to throw off the stain which this suicide fixes upon them. But they cannot get rid of it. It is an indelible evidence that their system of doctrine, and their means of propagating it, are at war with the peace, and we had almost said, the very existence of society.—The following remarks from the Editor of the Village Register, published in Dedham, Mass, are worthy of serious attention; and we do earnestly recommend them to the Orthodox themselves, hoping they will profit thereby.

"Are not people, yet, sufficiently aware, that fanaticism like this, is not religion?—How long will they credit the mad assertion that reason has nothing to do with religion? Would it have been any use in preserving life in the case recited? Shall we be credited in the assertion, that a genuine Orthodox man has said in the streets of Dedham, 'that the saving but one soul in Billeirca, in the Orthodox way, would justify the setting fire to the town—that is, setting every family to quarrelling—if no other means could save him!' How long, O ye, who will not weigh causes, nor effects—who had rather undertake to fathom the whole abyss of error, than make one degree in the horizon of truth and reason—how long, we ask, will ye be deluded—and heap vile epithets on us because we will not? Is there no satisfaction in truth? Does its illustration tend to make a wreck of the intellect of man? When an honestly disposed young man would ascertain the truth or absurdity of a doctrine and creed, the avenues of inquiry are shut up? he is compelled to take what he has upon trust, if not—he becomes frantic with disappointment and grief—reason, which it is said, is of no use, awfully forsakes him—and, in his desperation, he puts a pistol to his head, or a rope to his neck! Can our great Professor STUART'S, Doctor GRIFFIN'S, and BRECHER'S, and CODMAN'S, and other Doctors, justify this intolerance? After England, who has uniformly maintained a State religion, has set a most noble example to the world of religious toleration, in its emancipation of the Catholics, is it possible, we would inquire, yet to find men in FREE AMERICA, who would tie up, or chain down, the human understanding? And will the people believe, there is nothing but the purest religious motives in this?

We should not, as Editors, engage in any religious topics if we had no other justification for ourselves than speculative argument.