

if thereby I could come to much honor, or escape so great evil. If I were promised some great good, or if I were subdued by torture, or the fear of it, I might be a hypocrite, and say I believed what I knew to be false; but the confession of such belief would be a lie, as well as the proposition to be believed.

Galileo had demonstrated the sublime truth that the sun is the centre of our system, round which the earth moves in annual revolution. The church required him to deny this, and to call it a "damnable error." The promise of security, the fear of the inquisition, and dread of the torture, made Galileo a hypocrite and a liar; and he knelt down, and declared that the earth did not move. But the faith of Galileo was not changed; and when he rose from his knees, his soul asserted its convictions in the words whispered in the ear of a friend: "It *does* move though."

This shows that fear and threats make not truth false, but men only—shows that we believe, not what we please, but what we must; not what will bring us gain only, but what will bring peril and suffering; which, however dreaded, cannot change the nature of truth or the soul.

True religion, knowing this, does not seek the faith of its followers in this way, through threats, and terrors, and denunciations of horrible torments. For it sees clearly.

*First:* That these serve only to make cowards and hypocrites. But God would not do this; and religion, to be true, must be of God's mind, and aim with Him to make the soul brave and free, pure and truthful.

*Second.* That if men are called upon to believe only what is true, it has no need to resort to these means. All truth is in chord with the soul; and therefore, it is only necessary that the truth should be shown to be truth, to be of God, and sufficient proof of this presented, and the soul will believe of itself, without compulsion, and rejoice in believing; for the truth is its life and breath, its strength and growth. Hence the earthquake and the thunder, yawning gulfs and endless fires, are uncalled for, out of place, and wholly useless in respect to the soul and its belief of what is true; and are never employed by any religion coming from God, who is Maker of the soul. Such religion spends its time, not in threats, but in demonstration and persuasion.

On the other hand, all false religions, as if conscious of their falsehood, and ignorant of the spiritual nature of man, begin and proceed upon the ground of compulsion; and thereby prove themselves false. Satisfied, it would seem, that the gods which they announce, and the doctrines which they teach, are at discord with the better and divine nature of man, opposed to his highest love and holiest aspirations; they seek to terrify him into a reluctant belief, and, at least, an outward obedience.—Hence Paganism, with its vile and monstrous gods, and its foul abominations, must have also to get them accepted, its fiery Phlegethon, its three headed Cerebus, its snake-haired Furies, and all the other accompaniments of horror and torment.—Hence also Calvinism, with its awful and cruel god, its savage and revolting decrees, and other terrible and absurd features, must have also, to get for these any sha-

dow of belief or seeming respect, its frightful devil, its tremendous hell, its shocking and endless tortures, as the penalty of unbelief and contempt. All these are the necessary accompaniments of error or false doctrine, whatever its age or name. Without these the deformed monster would have died at its birth, or at most after a few convulsive breathings. These give it a temporary life; because, through fear of them, the trembling multitude hesitate to approach and lay violent hands on it. It may seize them and crush them in its horrible embrace. It is better, they think, to give it room, and not irritate it. I repeat, therefore, these threats and terrors are always and necessarily the accompaniments, or rather the results, of such religions or doctrines. They are related as cause and effect. Either implies the existence of the other. The threats of devils and torments being given as the motive to belief, and we can determine at once the nature of the doctrines; such as those named, being given, we can predict with unfading certainty, that the threats and terrors follow.

Wholly unlike to, and in direct contrast with all this, the Christianity of Christ comes to the soul with its spirit God, the third Universal Father, loving all with a never-wearying affection; with its wise and beneficent government, its parental chastisements, and needful discipline; with its divine life of virtue and goodness, and the beauty and the worth of it; with its heaven of everlasting progress in knowledge and purity and blessedness, of growth evermore into the likeness and perfectness of God,—with these glorious truths it comes to the soul, knowing that they are adapted to its nature and wants; and without terrors or tortures, invites belief, confident that so soon as understood and appreciated, these will be received with joy; and thenceforth God and the soul be as one forever more!

#### EXPOSITION OF SCRIPTURE.

Go ye unto all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.—Mark xvi: 15-19.

We very often hear this passage quoted to prove endless damnation or the misery of unbelievers; but does not prove this? Let us examine it and see. "He that believeth shall be saved."—Saved from what? An endless Hell! No. From endless misery anywhere? No, the passage says no such thing. Saved from what, then? Why, what all sinners need to be saved from, and from which Jesus came to save men—sin. This surely is salvation enough; as for salvation from endless torments, we read no such thing in all the Book of God.

But what shall we believe, in order to saved? Ans. The Gospel—the truth. What is the truth? What does the Gospel require us to believe, that we may be saved; that is, with the present salvation from sin? for the passage has no reference at all to the final salvation. What is the truth, then, that we are required to believe? Ans. that 'God has given us eternal life, and that this life is in his Son.' Is

it certain that he has given us this life? Yes, if John speaks the truth. 1 John v: 10, 11. What if we deny it? Ans. We charge God with lying, the Apostle says. But do we not lose the promised life if we disbelieve it? No; for that would prove that it was never certainly given or secured to us; and if not certain then we can not believe it unless we create a truth by believing, what did not exist before. This would be an absurdity. Because the salvation of the world is required to believe it; and this brings a present salvation. If this salvation were not sure, it would be nonsense to call upon men to believe; for then they might believe a lie.

Again, to give our enquiry another direction; suppose our final salvation depends on the death of Christ. What must the sinner believe? That Christ died to save him? If so, he *will* save him, will he not? But do you say his death for us is contingent on our belief of it? Let us look at it. He either died for us, or he did not. Suppose he did, shall we not be saved finally, if our salvation depends on his death? Undoubtedly. Well, if he did not, will our belief be of any profit? will it change the falsehood into the truth? Certainly not. In any way we may view it, then, it appears that our final salvation can not depend on our faith. But because the Gospel reveals to us the fact that God has given us eternal life in his Son, we are required to believe it, and that brings us the present or special salvation. So, then, "he that believeth shall be saved."

"He that believeth not shall be damned." I presume it is too late in the day, for any one to need being told that damnation merely means condemnation; if not, it would be useless to argue with one who should be carried away by the mere sound of the word, and let his thoughts run immediately into the eternal world. Damned with what? Endless misery? This would be an unproved assumption. Damned with what, then?—Eternal death? Nothing like this mentioned in the word of God. The enquiry returns—Damned with what? Ans. With the consequences of his sin and unbelief—the loss of the peace and joy, and salvation that flow from a belief of the truth.—Of course, the condemnation here, must be the opposite of the salvation which depends on faith. It [the Gospel] leaves the sinner in the same condition in which it finds him, only with the increased guilt of denying the truth of what God had promised,—a state of sin and condemnation. Now if the salvation—as has been shown—then the damnation can not be carried into any other state of existence. Suppose for a moment, that the condemnation is the loss of the final salvation; what follows? Why, that this salvation is not sure to us, and may be lost; but this, John says, is charging God with lying! God forbid we should do this! even though all the creed and traditions of men in the world be proved false. "Let God be true, but every man a liar." So then we learn that, the condemnation is in this life; but, when, as Paul says,—Rom. xi: 32—God shall have mercy on ALL he had concluded in unbelief, then, the damnation will come to an end. Thus the passage is shown not to prove the doctrine of endless misery.—Star in the West.

#### RESIGNATION.

Resignation to the divine government in bereavements, sickness, and disappointments, is a chapter in the history of the present days which needs to be studied to discipline the mind; or despair will gain the ascendancy over hope and render the afflicted individual miserable indeed. We know from experience how much depends upon expanded views of the unchangeable loving kindness of the Deity, in nature and providence to sustain the mind in trials, which are unavoidable, in the wise ordination of the most High. We see some persons in a sick room; like Harriet Martineau, cherish any object that can minister to their spiritual wants: The sympathy of real friends;—music, flowers, or any pleasing person or thing—will be received with a smile though it be through tears; while others will turn from them with a sigh, and every effort to cheer them will prove unavailing. How gladly would the friends of our faith impart to such minds the ministry of reconciliation if it might be received, untrammelled by doubts and fears of God's unforgiveness of our imperfections. In acute pain the mind has not the ability for calm reflection, but in protracted complaints I have observed the contrast in different individuals under similar circumstances.

There is nothing like the worth and growth of mind approximating towards the truths contained in the Sacred Oracles; and especially the glory of the new creation. The little child is the most beautiful symbol of spirit baptized into the effluence of the Gospel purity, and the one chosen by our Exemplar to illustrate its requirements. Wisdom from above is granted to babes in Christ, to behold with a serene vision that which has been withheld from the learned in their own conceit by the advantages of scholastic lore. The first resurrection to spiritual life is too little heeded; while the future incorruptible is represented as a reward for every good word and work in this great theatre of human thoughts and actions. Let us follow The Prince of Peace from the mountain summit to the sea shores and in all his interminglings and associations we discover the same self sacrificing and disinterested affection and sympathy for all classes and condition, which he manifested at the grave of Lazarus and for the widow of Nain.

Is it not an ennobling thought, that our afflictions are transitory and are limited, while the germ of infinity with the earthly temple will be progressive and interminable. Like the stately tree of the forest which was once a little acorn, the mind is capable of continued expansion in this mundane sphere, and in that realm where nothing will retard its advancement, it may become like the Angles. To partake of the nature and perfection of the Seraphic hosts, is our highest ideal of spiritual participation. Do we realize that the time will come when the desert will be made like the garden of the Lord—and the wise and the ignorant be taught of God. With this faith sure and steadfast, the believers will triumph in the prospect before them, and endeavor to surmount many corporeal infirmities to which they are subject, cherishing that celestial principle which will survive the grave, and work out for the afflicted a far more exceeding weight of Glory. Universalism leaves no dogmas of heathenism on its helmet nor leaves them in its wake, but it seeks to elevate all the doubting and resign all the fearful and unbelieving to the will and purposes of the Father of light and life. [Star in the West.]

#### WHAT SOME CHRISTIANS (1) WOULD LIKE TO DO.

"If I could believe as you say you do I would tell two men of my acquaintance at the first opportunity?"

The above declaration was made by a pious (?) member of an Orthodox church, while conversing with a friend of mine, on the subject of Universalism. The same thing in substance has often been said to me, and that too, by the most strict professors.