

Doctr.

CHARITY.

In the hour of keenest sorrow,
In the hour of deepest woe,
Wait not for the coming morrow,
To the sad and suffering go.
To the sad and suffering go.
Make it thy sincerest pleasure
To administer relief,—
Freely opening thy treasure
To assuage a brother's grief.

Go, and seek the orphan sighing,—
Seek the widow in her tears;
As on Mercy's pinions flying,
Go, dispel their darkest fears;
Seek the stranger, sad and weary,
Pass not on the other side,
Though the task be sad and dreary,
Heeding not the scorn of pride.

Go, with manners unassuming—
In a meek and quiet way—
O'er the fallen ne'er presuming,
Though thy brother sadly stray,
'Tis a Saviour's kind compassion—
'Tis his righteousness alone,
All unmerited salvation
That around thy path has shone.

When thy heart is warmly glowing,
With the sacred love of prayer,
Be thy works of kindness flowing
Not as with a miser's care;
Duty e'er should be thy watchword,
Pity drop the balmy tear,
Always toward the fallen cherish
Sympathy and love sincere.

A PLAIN LETTER.

[From Jonathan Farr's Plain Letters.]

DEAR SIR,—I find that you have, for some time, been halting between Unitarianism and Trinitarianism. When I conversed with you, you seemed to have many fears, doubts and scruples. You knew not what was right, and what you should believe.

Now let me tell you, you have not taken a right course to remove your doubts and anxieties. You have not repaired to the proper source. You have been swayed too much by earthly motives. You have consulted your own feelings, ease and worldly interest. You have regarded the opinions and assertions of frail, arrogant and bigoted men, rather than the word of God. If you really love God, you will love the Bible better than any other book. If you desire the truth, as it is in Jesus, you will learn of Jesus himself. If you would follow the teachings of the Scriptures, you would feel no hesitation about giving up the doctrine of the Trinity. Neither the word, nor the doctrine is found expressly and plainly in the Bible, which ought to contain the religion of Protestants. The Scriptures teach us to ask the Father for the holy spirit; not to say, O God, the Holy Ghost! They teach us to ask the Father in the name of Christ—to do all things in the name of the Lord Jesus; giving thanks to God, even the Father by him; not to say, O God, the Son. They teach us to do every thing to the glory of God the Father; not to talk of paying equal and undivided honors to the triune God.

You spoke of the beginning of the first chapter of John's gospel. But did not your conversation seem to cast a dishonorable reflection on the evangelist? You will insinuate that he contradicted himself. He tells you near the end of his gospel, which doctrine he professed to teach concerning Christ. He tells you plainly, that these things are written, that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; not the opposite doctrine.

And admitting that you cannot understand other passages, this declaration ought to silence and satisfy you. If you put any confidence in the apostle, you must believe that even could you understand these dark places perfectly, they would not contradict this positive assertion, 'these things are written that ye might believe &c. and that believing, ye might have life through his name.' Yes, he speaks of this view of the character of Christ, as a live-giving faith; these considerations ought to set your doubts at rest. The apostle Paul seems to say that Christ is equal to God; but still he speaks of every thing's being done to the glory of the Father; and Christ himself, when charged with making himself equal with God, refutes the charge, and disclaims any such pretensions. The word 'equal' in Philip. 6, does not mean a perfect equality in every respect; it would be better rendered likeness, or resemblance, here. I will quote only three passages, which it seems to me, are of themselves enough to silence the fears and doubts of any rational and pious mind. The apostle says,—It is manifest that he

(God) is excepted, which did put all things under him.' 1 Cor. xv. Christ says, 'I can do nothing of myself. My Father is greater than I: my Father is greater than all.' The Father says, 'This is my beloved Son.' It seems to me, that you would show both your wisdom and piety by receiving these and similar instructions, to the rejection of strange and opposing doctrines, taught by fallible men. I would recommend books, which treat on these subjects; but you observed, you had little time to read. I hope, however, that you are not so immersed in the cares of the world, but that you can read some in your Bible, every day, and that you devote the sabbath to moral and religious improvement and to the worship of God. I saw Calvinistic and Trinitarian papers and tracts in your house. If you can read them, why can you not read on the other side? Is yours one of those houses, where any thing can be tolerated but Unitarian Christianity? where he, who, by the laws of nature, of nations, and of God, should be the head, is in fact, the most abject thing belonging to the family?

I think I discover where your difficulty lies. You are slavishly afraid of your wife, who shows her religion by assuming an authority, which both the Old Testament and the New would tell her, would she have respect to all God's commandments, is improper and usurped! Slavishly afraid of your wife, whose ignorance of the doctrine is as great as her prejudice against them! You are afraid for your money. It would cost you some time, trouble, and money, if you adopted the Unitarian faith. You are afraid of some officious friends and neighbors, whose favor depends upon your submission to them in your religious sentiments. You may think me severe; but I suspect it is only the severity of truth, when I say, you seem to love the praise, and dread the censure of men, more than you love the praise, and dread the displeasure of God.

If you would be a Christian, go to Christ, in his gospel, for doctrines and precepts. Study the scriptures without fear of man.

If you have had the folly or misfortune, to be disturbed or perplexed by Trinitarians; have the courage and honesty now to listen with equal candor to the arguments of Unitarians; and oh! consider, that it is gospel truth, that it is the truth as it is in Jesus, which you want, to make you holy and free; and that the fashions and opinions of this world are swiftly passing away!

Your wife may be offended at what I have said in regard to her. I am confident she will see the time, either in this world or the next, when she will acknowledge, that my reproof, though pointed, was just. In what way, many wives can reconcile their conduct towards their husbands, with their marriage vows, with their belief in revelation, and their professions of godliness, I know not. If they would read their Bible, they would find some precepts especially addressed to them, to which they have not paid that solemn attention, reasonably expected from those, who trust they are born of the Spirit. I know this is a delicate subject; but I know, also, that there is often a false delicacy about it, if religion is true. How much of this sin I am alluding to, will be laid to the charge of those religious teachers, who have encouraged it either through a gross ignorance, or ambition, I am not to say. That you may belong to the household of faith, is the sincere desire of your friend.

HUMAN DEPRAVITY.

BY EDWARD Q. SEWALL.

*** The Scriptures afford us a far different view of human nature from that presented by the doctrine we have attempted to refute. They everywhere take it for granted, that a man is a sinner only through his own act and choice. 'The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him. Every tree is known by its own fruit. He that committeth sin, transgresseth the law. Know ye not that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness. He that doeth righteousness is righteous.'

The sacred volume contains many severe *Rebukes* pointed at offenders. But rebuke is unjust where the offence could not be avoided, and is the consequence of something else, and not our own choice.

There are also numerous pathetic *Lamentations* and *Remonstrances* addressed in the name of God, to his erring creatures. 'Turn ye from your evil ways, and keep my commandments. Turn ye, for why will ye die? What could I have done more for my vineyard that I have not done? How often would I have gathered thy children together, as a bird gathereth her brood under her wings, and ye would not. O that thou hadst known! My people will not consider!

Now such language as this, is mere mockery of human woe, unless it was by their own conduct the guilt lamented was incurred, and unless they had power to do otherwise. Why lament an evil which he himself had caused, by bringing them into the world with a depraved nature, and which none but he can ever cure? It is impossible to reconcile these expostulations with the idea, that, at any moment, the occasion might instantly have been removed by the Divine power, and that without a special interposition on the part of God, there was no possibility of its removal. We ought to consider them as sincere; and if we do, we must conclude that the people concerned then had been the authors of their own ruin, and always possessed the ability to prevent it.

The Bible abounds with *Precepts*. For whom? A being, who, by his nature, is utterly unable to observe them?

The views of future *Retribution*, exhibited in the same volume, are so many contradictions to native depravity. We are taught that we shall be judged by our *deeds*. And they only, who have *done* evil, shall arise to condemnation. But what influence have our deeds upon that sentence, which was passed ages ago on the whole race, and by which we are 'liable to the pains of hell?' The judgment is already completed, when we begin the race of life, and cannot be reversed by all we may perform. Is this being rewarded according to our deeds?

All men are represented as alike interested in the blessings of Christianity, and its invitations are accordingly addressed to all with the same earnestness. Jesus knew what was in man, both our strength and our weakness. He was without guile. He ever spake the truth. If, then, these calls of divine goodness were not designed for every one's acceptance, or if none had power to comply with them, would he not have said so? He might have lamented our blindness, but he could not have asked, 'Why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?' He might have been anxious for our unbelief, but could not have inquired, 'Why do ye not believe?' He might have exhorted us to wait patiently for the coming of the Holy Ghost, but could not have upbraided us for a guilt which that coming only could terminate. He might have expatiated on the miseries of our condition, but could not have held up the promises which concerned none but the elect, to a dying world; thus adding fresh anguish to their helpless woes.

But we are *not* taught in the New Testament that our nature is depraved. Our Lord once exclaimed, 'How can ye believe, who seek honor one of another,' but never, 'How can ye believe, who were altogether born in sin.' He uniformly ascribes the ruin of the wicked to their own immediate fault, and not to any foreign cause, least of all to one prior to their existence. There are no words in the Bible, by which a bare statement of the doctrine we oppose, can be made out with even a show of fairness. From a few passages it has been extorted, however; and the candid reader of Scripture may justly express surpris at the manner in which a sentiment, so inconsistent with its whole spirit and instructions, has been drawn from it. As I have before observed, most of the passages relied upon in the argument, contain vivid and striking descriptions of the vices of particular men, communities, or generations. Some only declare the general truth, 'There is no man that liveth and sinneth not.' And scarce one can, even by force, be made to allude to human nature itself, abstractly considered.

Three texts are cited always on this occasion; and they are all which I shall now notice; both because the mode of interpretation which applies to these may apply to every other which is referred to, and because the constant use of these, shows the dearth of good proof sufficiently to indicate the weakness of the cause they are supposed to establish.

One of these passages lies in the 51st Psalm. David is there giving utterance to some very strong emotions of his heart, excited by the recollections of his own crimes. The whole piece is an exercise of private, personal devotion, and should be interpreted as such. Shall we take up his words and analyze them, as if they were the language, not of emotion, but cold philosophy? Shall we read his Psalm as a lecture, instead of an humble prayer of private penitence? If any one supposes David designed to be understood literally, when he says, 'I was shapen in iniquity; then let him be consistent, and equally literal in such sentences as the following: 'The wicked go astray as soon as they are born, speaking lies.' That is, infants speak as soon as they come into the world, and they speak lies too. 'Rivers of water run down mine eyes.' Here you may imagine his cheeks two channels or beds of rivers. 'Purge me with hyssop.' That is, take the herb

hyssop and cleanse me. 'Break the teeth of the young lions.' 'There is no soundness in my flesh, because of my sins.' It is easily seen to what absurdities we are led by this mode of interpretation; yet no reason exists for applying it to the words of the penitential hymn, which does not equally require its use in those just recited. The truth is, all these passages are properly regarded as the expressions which naturally suggest themselves to the mind of an Oriental poet, in a state of strong emotion; but not as literal representations of fact or opinion.

Ephesians ii. 3, is another text much relied upon in this argument. 'And were, by nature, children of wrath, even as others.' To whom is this said? To persons recently converted from *idolatry*; who had, in times past, 'walked according to the prince of the power of the air, who were Gentiles in the flesh, and aliens from the commonwealth of Israel.' This heathenish state with its attendant vices, Paul contrasts with the condition into which Christianity had brought them. The phrase, 'by nature,' occurs in another Epistle, in a manner which illustrates its meaning here. 'We, who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles.' Now it is certain, Paul does not intend their nature as human beings, for that is peculiar to no nation, and makes us simply *men*, not Jews nor Gentiles. The latter clause proves that we are to understand the former thus, if any proof were needed. For sin, as an attribute of man, is surely not limited by national divisions, and the phrase, 'sinners of the Gentiles' would have no sense, if we did not know that by this title, the Jews were accustomed to distinguish idolaters from their own people. To be a Jew by nature, is to be one by parentage, education, and affinity. 'Children of wrath, children of disobedience,' are terms significant of the actual character of those to whom they apply, a character acquired by themselves, when they 'gave themselves over to the lasciviousness, and walked according to the course of this world.' So Peter styles similar characters, 'cursed children,' indicating their liability to punishment for their vices. And, in like manner, virtuous Christians walk as 'children of the light.' If any one prefers to understand the Apostle as affirming that the Ephesians were proper subjects of divine wrath, on account of their birth simply, without any regard to their own subsequent conduct, he may enjoy his opinion. But he turns aside entirely from the argument of the writer, to hang a fond notion of his own upon the naked words.

The only remaining passage I shall notice, lies in the Epistle to the Corinthians. 'The natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God.' A wrong translation alone, occasions the least mistake here. The Greek word does not signify what the English term implies. Its true meaning is expressed in Jude xix, 'sensual.' So also in James iii. 15, 'sensual' is the rendering. It is found in three places in this Epistle besides the passage just quoted. Paul, speaking of the human frame, says, it is 'sown a natural body.' He means, 'a fleshly body.' This expresses his sentiment more clearly; for 'flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom.' The Apostle in the chapter containing the words under discussion, declares, respecting the future happiness of the good, that 'eye hath not seen the things which God hath prepared for them that love him; but God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit. In reference to the same things, he afterwards says, the natural or sensual man, he who is immersed in sensual indulgences, receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; that is, the things which he hath revealed unto us by the Spirit. 'They are foolishness unto him.' Why? Because spiritual joys, the bliss of virtue, has no charms for the sensualist. 'Neither can he know them.' Why? 'Because they are spiritually discerned.' They are of a purely intellectual and spiritual nature; they are not to be understood or valued by one whose gross mind is bound to the earth, and who has never experienced a felicity which has no relation to the gratifications of sense. His moral perceptions and taste are blunted, obscure, perverse. He sees no attractions in the prospect of a happiness, whose nature he cannot comprehend,—whose worth he is incapable of appreciating. Let his mind be spiritualized—let it be restored to purity and virtue, he will then discern spiritual things.

The mind of man is capable of strange things, and many an honest soul has travelled to heaven by a most circuitous route.—*Rev. Dr. Gannell.*