

INDEPENDENCE OF CHARACTER.

BY REV. R. K. RUSH.

There is nothing that will command the respect and admiration of mankind (the sensible portion of it) more than independence of character. I mean not by this, that vindictive spirit of independence, which we too frequently see manifested by some who profess to be governed by the precepts of Christianity, a spirit which will oppose—yea even damn every thing that will not bend and cringe to shape itself in every particular to meet its narrow and contracted ideas of faith or of doctrine. — But I mean that spirit of independence, which was always manifested by the great Teacher of Israel. That spirit which led him in the temple, while pointing out the many crimes of which these self-righteous pharisees who surrounded him were guilty, to pronounce them, notwithstanding their numbers and their boasted piety—“Hypocrites”—“Blind Guides”—“Devourers of widows’ houses, &c. That spirit which characterized all his actions, and which was displayed in bright and living colors in all his teachings. He hesitated not to rebuke vice, in all its hideous forms, and phases—speaking the truth plainly, but in love; and pointing the poor and weary pilgrim to the heaven of eternal rest. This is the spirit of independence to which I have reference, and which will command the respect of all persons who are imbued with the religion of our Divine Master.— Wherever and whenever you find a man exercising his “free agency” in this manner, you find him respected by all those whose favor is worth having? While on the other hand, take that man who has no soul that he dare call his own—one that is a “hanger on” to the skirts of the majority, and is swayed, as they are swayed, and who is even ready to cry “good Lord” or “good Devil” as shall best suit the leaders of the farce in which he plays a part, and he is detested even by the party, or sect to which he gives his influence.

From my soul do I pity that man, who is endowed with a mind and understanding capable, if rightly cultivated, of performing the highest achievements, and yet it dares not or will not, express his opinions on subjects of the greatest importance, because, forsooth, it may differ from that of his neighbour, or may be looked upon, with rather an unfavorable eye by the great—the wealthy—or the proud. Such an one is a perfect automaton, with a single exception; and that is the spring which moves him, instead of being invisible—is plainly observable to every eye, and summed up in one word—even in this—Popularity!

You will find this class in almost every community, and you will invariably find them with the richest and most fashionable sect,—the “upper crust”—who worship in the largest and most beautiful Church, and who, with the money that they have perhaps wrung through fraud and rascality, from the toiling sons of earth who surround them, they pay the “fat” salary of the handsome—the elegant—the exquisite—and the sentimental Mr. Somebody, whose “bump” of “Perceptiveness” is sufficiently prominent, to excite his “adhesiveness” which, by the peculiar stickiness of its qualities, “stir up” his acquisitiveness, and by subtracting a fraction from his “conscientiousness” enables him to exert his mighty talents in promoting any doctrine, which does not quarrel with his “bread and butter,” and for any denomination whose self-considered immaculate members, venerate his extensive erudition—his angelic purity—and his heavenly oratory.

These persons in number are not “few or far between.” they are found in every society—in every place—you converse with them upon matters of faith, and they are very free to admit—if you are alone—that the doctrine which you preach is true—yes they have been convinced of that, for many years—in short, they could never

believe in endless misery—that is most too bad—they believe in a little hell—[just about as much as you believe in.]—“but then to think of an endless hell!—ofstragous—they never could go that.” But when not being quite satisfied with this off-handed compliment to your doctrine, you inquire—But, Mr. A., you never profess to believe in our doctrine, and never “could have any sympathy for the doctrine of endless misery,” but yet I don’t recollect as I ever saw you in our church—pr your children at our Sabbath School on the contrary, [Mr. A—ah-h-m] I am credibly informed [Mr. A—ah-h-m] that yourself and family attend the preaching of the Rev. Mr. B., who thunders endless misery year in and year out,—who uncaps hell every Sunday, and thrusts just such hypocrites as you, into—[Mr. A.—“ahem,”—th. Why yes! we—ahem—that is to say—Mrs. A. rather leans that way, and, you know, rather than to have any disturbance in the family I being a peaceable man—i. e. as often as every Sunday go with her.”] “Yes I know what you mean Mr. A.—You mean that you, (in very few words) are a consummate hypocrite! you profess to be, to believe the doctrine which I preach yet you attend, and give your money to support the preaching of Rev. Mr. B., who misrepresents and caricatures the doctrine which admit to me you believe—vilified the character of those who believe this sentiment, classing its advocates with Infidels, thieves, robbers, murderers, and finally declares to wind up with, that if he believed in Universalism he would murder his family and then kill himself and so get into heaven as quick as he could! In other words if he were not afraid of the devil he would amuse himself in cutting the throats of his wife and children, and yet you Mr. A. “ahem” Sabbath after Sabbath attend upon his ministry, and apparently, without the slightest compunctions of conscience, or the—[Mr. A. a-hem, well, I declare I had no idea of its being so late, and by the bye to gratify Mrs. A, I promised to see and converse with deacon L. relative to making—a-hem—Rev. Mr. B. a donation of a gold watch, and some other trifles and consequently I must get along,”] and thus before you are aware of it, the kind candid and complacent Mr. A. has to use a common phrase. “vamosed” in order to make the necessary preparations to surprise Rev. Mr. B with the present of a “gold watch and other trifles to the amount of two or three hundred dollars; while you! God bless you! who preach what Mr. A. always believed, and knows to be true, are harassed with debts, and your family, it may be suffering for the necessities of life!!

My friendly reader have you any of the above-mentioned “Mr. A’s” in your vicinity? If you have not bless the Lord that He has spared you in much mercy, for yours is in truth the favoured land!! And yet, in this very Mr. A. we have an argument against total depravity! He believed the truth, notwithstanding he lacked the courage and resolution to come out openly and boldly and avow it to the world; and it is very evident that all his “better” feelings were enlisted on the side of truth, and all his benevolent and charitable actions originated in the same source.

God grant that the time may soon come when all the Mr. A’s in existence, who are so completely enveloped in “behindism,” and those that are groping in ignorance and superstition—the poor and deluded votaries of a rotten and partial theology—only to be led into the right path, when their darkened understandings may be illuminated by a beam from the sun of righteousness which shall divest them of this man-fearing and devil desiring spirit, and cause them to stand far, free and unfettered—the bold defenders of that faith once delivered to the saints.

“The signs of the times” proclaim this People are beginning to use a commodity that has long been kept in the back-ground that which urges and incites man to think, if not act, for himself. They have seen the fallacy of trusting everything to their pretended spiritual guides. In short, they have learned (some of them) that priests are but men, and they are exerting their

own powers of preception, in a manner not very pleasing to those who have been accustomed to be looked up to, with feelings of veneration and awe!

A. revolution is taking place. Old creeds that have come down to us venerable for age, are being discarded. Theories that have long been considered sacred, are being examined and exploded.

These things all tend to make mankind more free, and fearless, in expressing their views and feelings, on the great fundamental principles of Christianity. These things all lead us to believe that a better day is approaching—a day when the reign of bigotry and superstition, which has long held in sway this land, will be known only as among the things that were, and its place shall be occupied with a religion emanating from a pure fountain, and flowing to the washing away of the sins of the whole world.—Star in the West.

BLESSED ARE THE MERCIFUL.

BY LAURA EGGLESTON.

How beautiful and Godlike are followers of the meek and compassionate Redeemer, that, in all their intercourse with their fellow beings, display in words and deeds, the sublime and heavenly spirit of forbearance and mercy! When slandered and ill-treated, to look on the aggressor with a generous eye irradiated with the rays of pity and forgiveness! and imitate the blessed Savior, who, when he was reviled, reviled not again—to love and bless all, even an enemy! O! how little is the highest of Immanuel fulfilled by those who profess to be his subjects exclusively! Instead of mildness and forbearance towards earth’s frail and guilty ones, the unholy spirit of wrath and revenge is cherished; and the rod of castigation is used, with unsparing hand, without the least design that the punishment should be amendatory; and the consequence is, the criminal is more hardened in his evil ways by the brutal treatment!

On Castigation’s heavy rod,
“Reform!” let Merry pen:
It will achieve a greater good,
Than force of million men!

Dear friends, remember, that the erring are still fellow creatures—fallen brothers! Oh treat them as such and may they not be won? The spirit of Howard, or a Fry, responds, yes. And our limited observation of human nature abundantly has taught us to render good for evil, if ye would conquer an enemy. Go to the lonely cell of the criminal, with love in thy eye, heaven in thy heart, and breathe in silvery tones of sympathy, and mercy; and thy mission is blest with the rich fruits of penitence and reform!!

The heart ye cannot steel,
- In Mercy’s field;
Love’s weapon if will feel,
And surely yield!

PROBATION AND RETRIBUTION.

It is believed by many professing Christians, that the present life is a state of probation, in which we are forming our characters, and fixing our destinies for eternity;—and that it is not a state of retribution, in which righteousness is rewarded and wickedness punished, but—that this will take place after death, in eternity. Hence we hear them thanking God, that they are “on praying ground and interceding terms” with him, and that he has “not come out against them in strict justice, and cut them off as cumberers of the ground—cut them off in their sins, and placed them beyond mercy.” Hence, too, we hear them extolling the sweets of sin, and the pleasures of iniquity; and lamenting the hard service required by their Maker, which they suppose he will pay them for performing, with an eternity of bliss.

But we must beg leave to dissent from their views, in both of these particulars. We do not believe that this is a probationary state, in the sense in which they use

the term;—that our eternal destiny depends upon any thing we can do, or leave undone, here. But we do believe there is a state of retribution—that there is a God who judgeth in the earth, and rewardeth among the children of men,—and through rewards and punishments, necessary effects of our present in state, may extend a little way beyond life, yet the righteous are recompensed “in the earth, much more the wicked the sinner.” I say, the effects of present moral state, may, in some instances be felt awhile after death; for I hold it to be presumption in any mortal to be beyond what God has revealed concerning the future world.

The mercy of God is not limited to present life, nor his judgments confined to the next. Here the sinner finds their retribution for his evil ways, and he find that God’s hand is not shortened; he cannot save, nor his ear heavy that cannot hear. God is both merciful and just, for evermore.

THE LATE DISCUSSION.

After the murmurs and comments of the Messengers Advocate in relation to our extra boastfulness, noticing the oral debate, it would seem consist to hear something of a modest tone from region. We all think that it does not become a rebuke sin, nor a man who wears a bra face to despise another for boldness. But it happens by the volatile laws of human nature that the person who complains most of a certain is not unfrequently the most addicted himself. On nothing was Napoleon more querent than when declaiming against ambition tyranny; and Bacon could eulogize truth and nounce hypocrisy even while yielding to his sale bribery and detestable falsehood. So works. Nothing better may be expected, therefore our disputing friend desires a monopoly of the boasting department, and practically a plea for the exclusive privilege of expressing first best opinion of his arguments and cause. have no serious objections to compromise claim we may have in the affair aforesaid.

Allowing, therefore, our friend of debt memory to have and to hold a legal copy-right all the boasting necessary to the end of the letter, let us gravely and cheerfully attend to preceding development of Universalism. A words-only are necessary.

It appears that the gentleman’s second text is the fifteenth chapter of first Corinth entire. This is something new; but by no means alarming. Indeed had the gentleman produced in this manner while the debate was in progress, it would have been too profitable to us too profitless for him; for the writer of that letter, at its commencement, impressively began the recollections of his brethren in Corinth same gospel that has announced to them while the first he visited the city, and repeats the proud truth that they were saved by this gospel indeed they retained it as they had received. This at least proves that Paul and his Christian friends in Corinth were not Universalists, no Universalist is saved from sins on earth cause, according to his creed, all men are sinners believers and unbelievers; and no Universal saved from eternal condemnation, because, i confession of faith, there is no such thing which to be saved. It is not common to a man from being drowned where there is no water to drown him; and it would not be among things of consistency to believe in saving from everlasting destruction when there is such destruction from which to be rescued. Since, therefore, these Corinthians, upon principle they had been Universalists, could have been saved from sins temporarily, nor s from sin and ruin eternally, it was good p on the part of our friendly disputant to pass portion of the chapter in silence; but it is no honest for him now to aver that the whole cter was his proof-text.

Still, we are pleased that he places his f upon a part of it, and quotes, approvingly, “Adam, all die, even so in Christ, all are alive.” It would then appear, that as met in the first Adam they shall be raised a second Adam; if holy and happy when the in old Adam, “even so” or in like manner shall be made alive or quickened from the in the new Adam. The apostle brings t our eye a pair of balances: the adversary w down the one scale with old Adam and a posterity, saint and sinner, just and unjust. Christ touches the other scale and raises u first Adam and his whole family from the “even so” as they went down, saint and s just and unjust.

But we understand the apostle to be spe with the idea before him that some amu brethren in Corinth denied the power of C raise the dead, hence affirming that “there re a resurrection;” and the therefore combat erroneous and pernicious doctrine. Lo context speak for itself.—“But now is t risen from the dead, and became the first fr them that slept; for since by man came t by man also came the resurrection of the d For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ s to be made alive.” Christ, then, being riser the dead, is presented as a pledge of a un resurrection from the regions of death; an