

THE PEARL.

HALIFAX, FRIDAY EVENING, MAY 25, 1838.

RECAPITULATION AND FINALE.—The recent article in the "Wesleyan," intended as a reply to our observations on the denunciatory spirit of its editor, we have perused with all diligence and candour. It is almost needless to recapitulate the points under discussion. Not for the exposure of error, (for there was no argument or refutation in the piece) but for the bold assertion of the anti-catholic opinion that Universalists were abandoned by God to delusion to believe a lie, did we at first complain. That we wrote with blandness and with a pen dipped in oil, is admitted by our antagonist. Our gentle remonstrance was met by "a plain, blunt" effusion on Latitudinarianism. In this specimen of plainness and bluntness, gross personalities were introduced—our reputation was sought to be injured by partial testimony—and we were branded as loving self more than truth. With a spirit saddened by the utterance of such charges by a fellow christian and a fellow labourer in the ministry, we penned our replication. In no bitter or querulous spirit did we seek to convince our offended opponent that we were not indifferent to truth or error—that we cherished as dear to us every syllable of divine revelation—that we blamed no man for defending truth and refuting error—and yet that we considered it highly improper and quite out of character for one mortal to say to his fellow-man, professing to have equal regard and love for the Bible with himself, "I fear God has given you over to delusion to believe a lie,—your heart is obdured and your understanding willfully perverted." Having declared that our christian charity extended so far as to hope and believe there were sincere believers of the Redeemer amongst all religious sects, we inquired whether the editor of the "Wesleyan" did not believe this also, and if not, whether he had adopted consistently the name of the venerable Wesley as the cognomen of his paper. "Mr. Wesley's own words" were then produced, incontrovertibly proving that, whatever were his views in theory, in practice and in fact he had admitted that an individual who was a Pelagian, a Socinian, and a Universalist, was endowed with much moral goodness and feared God. Similar testimonies were cited in favour of the piety of Roman Catholics. We noticed the harsh treatment Mr. W. experienced on account of his liberality—and the unkind manner in which his noble views concerning religious opinions were distorted and mis-represented. Once more, keeping in view the fact that the piece on latitudinarianism was written as a reply to our notice of the anathematizing extract, we mentioned that, we thought the "Wesleyan" did not recognize christians in all religious communities, and considering that it advocated assault on persons as well as systems, on these grounds we pronounced it to be Anti-Wesleyan.

To all this our friend puts in his rejoinder. He claims for himself a catholic spirit, and "is confident that to expose the errors of Universalism, cannot deprive him of that claim." So we say, and thus we wrote. And when Universalists or Socinians write to refute what they conceive to be error, we do not suppose, that therefore they are wanting in a catholic spirit. But if any of these should denounce their opponents as given over to delusion, etc. we would then conclude that they wrote in a most anti-catholic manner. "But a catholic spirit is different from a latitudinarian spirit." Precisely so, and hence we spoke in praise of the one and against the other. "But Mr. Wesley was not indifferent to men's opinions in religion." Very true, or he would have been a latitudinarian, but we commended him as a man of a fine catholic spirit. "He did not suppose a man might believe any thing and every thing with equal regard to propriety and safety." No, or he would have manifested sad symptoms of insanity—neither did our article inculcate so vastly absurd a notion. "But he opposed what he thought to be error." Then he acted as we stated every christian ought to do. Our antagonist who "has endeavoured to shew the anti-scriptural character of Universalism, is not therefore a bigot." Certainly not—and the editor of the Universalist periodical in Boston who has endeavoured to shew the anti-scriptural nature of our friend's treatise, is not therefore a bigot. We should be sorry to think so of either party. A class of christians who are Deists, and whose lives are fruitless of good works, our brother will not own "as his fellow christians." Nor will we consider them as our fellow-disciples, for as we "are not mad most noble Festus," we have arrived at the sage conclusion that a Deist or a wicked man, is not a christian. So far, then, the last article in the "Wesleyan" is a mere echo of our plainly expressed sentiments. In all these items, the Pearl and Wesleyan perfectly agree. Have we then been entirely misapprehended; for if not, may we be allowed to ask—What these statements from the "Wesleyan" have to do with the denunciation of persons? How do they prove that a man has a right to judge and condemn others? But surely we have been misunderstood, and therefore, to remove all mistakes on the subject, and not from any unkindly motives, we will explain by a reference to a number of extracts. To begin with our friend's preface to his work on Universalism—in it he states that the heresy he opposes "is the most insidious, delusive, and fatal of all the heretical doctrines with which the church has ever been infected." Worse therefore than Socinianism, and yet a believer in the former system may be saved, but not in the latter. To such lengths of inconsistency does a fiery zeal transport a person. But so vile a heresy we are told should not "be allowed to pass without public oburgation." A calm but powerful refutation is not enough, it must be a public reproof—reprehension—emphatically, oburgation. Nay it is declared to be "an act of aggravated criminality in ministers of religion to allow it to pass without some public expression of condemnation." So that to refuse to mount the judgment seat with our brother, and pronounce condemnation, and issue your string of reproofs, is to be guilty of an act of aggravated criminality. Now for a sample of rebukes;—on page 42 of the Treatise on Universalism, referring to the modern form of the doctrine opposed, our author says—"And is not the end of this heresy eternal ruin. Such according to the word of God must be the inevitable consequence to all who embrace, and live and die under the influence of such a doctrine." That is oburgation enough for the most fiery zealot. Again, on page 56 it is remarked, that if Universalism cannot satisfactorily [to the satisfaction of its adversary] establish from the Bible that unfailingly efficacious means are used in eternity for the restoration of the miserable, etc., "it cannot stand—its cloven foot discovers

itself, and THE MARK OF THE BEAST appears on its forefront in glaring characters, with this inscription—MY FEET GO DOWN TO DEATH: MY STEPS TAKE HOLD ON HELL."

Glaring enough! And with the writers italics and large and small capitals, he who runs may read. No less emblazoned on his escutcheon to another chapter, are these gentle terms—"UNIVERSALISM, THE OFFSPRING OF THE DEVIL, AND TO BE REJECTED." And also in the heading of another chapter, where after stating that it is false for certain reasons, the record is given—"MODERN UNIVERSALISM IS THEREFORE NECESSARILY DESTRUCTIVE TO THE SOULS OF MEN." So on page 76, "How alarming the situation of those who either really or pretentively [a catholic insinuation] embrace such a system, and use their utmost endeavours to propagate their principles!" Our author must find some consolation in the fact that Universalists at least, are not latitudinarians. Again, on page 83, it is observed that, if Universalism can oppose the plain undeniable import of certain passages of Scripture [of course what the writer concludes is their plain import, for a conscientious Universalist would shudder at the thought of such denial] then—"all we can say is, Universalism is possessed of unparalleled effrontery, and displays the most daring and blasphemous presumption. It shows that it is the legitimate offspring of him who said unto the Woman, Ye shall not surely die. The plain matter of fact is—

HIS IMPERIAL SATANIC MAJESTY PREACHED UNIVERSALISM TO EVE." This is all our friend can say and it is quite enough! Once more, our author on page 182, having laid down certain premises, arrives at this conclusion—"If Scripture is TRUE, Universal Restoration is FALSE—the offspring of the bottomless pit—the broad road which leadeth to destruction." Now it is true, we have an admission of the salvability of Universalists, but so clogged with qualifications, that it is almost worse than none—"the Universalist who builds on Christ by a living faith, and retains his error, under circumstances of unavoidable ignorance, and inveterate prejudice, mingled with much sincerity, will be saved, but with difficulty." Our author draws upon the divine mercy as a miser upon his purse. Where these three units do not concur the Universalist is consigned over to perdition—unavoidable ignorance, inveterate prejudice and abounding sincerity. Well is it for the world, that God, and not the fabricators of merciless creeds, is to be the judge of mankind. But we have introduced these examples to point out what it is we condemn in controversy. Such imbecile threats—such opprobrious rebuke—such rash judgment is what we oppose, and not the legitimate attempt to refute error. What good is effected amongst Christians by such worrying of each other? Who fears the puny rage of a fallible creature? Who is convinced of his error by the brandishing of such polemical weapons? Can you scare a reasonable creature into truth? Nay, are not persons more and more confirmed in their views by such severity and assault? And do not infidels scoff, and does not the world ridicule—and the church bleed at every pore by such manifestations of the odium theologium. Well did Mr. Wesley say to those who considered he had mistaken the way of scriptural truth,—"May I not request of you not to give me hard names in order to bring me into the right way. Suppose I were ever so much in the wrong, I doubt this would not set me right. Rather it would make me run so much the further from you; and so get more and more out of the way. Nay, perhaps, if you are angry, so shall I be too; and then there will be small hopes of finding the truth." Will our good brother then understand us? The problem for his solution is this—"Is it right, is it catholic, is it christian, for a fallible man so to judge his differing brethren as to put on the cap of condemnation and decide upon their miserable fate." To meet this broad intelligible question not a line is to be found in the two articles of the "Wesleyan," and we venture to predict there never will be, and for this plain reason—the question is indefensible.

Having touched on the points of agreement, it may be well to notice wherein we are the antipodes of the "Wesleyan." We are told that, "it is an unfounded charge that our last editorial is at variance with genuine Wesleyanism." So says the editor of the Wesleyan of his production, but if the editor of the Pearl had asserted this many would have charged him with uttering a shameful libel on Wesleyanism. But we know Methodism better, and love what is good in the system better, than to say it gives its sanction to injustice, to denunciation, and to unkind and ungenerous charges against opponents. Never will we believe that it lends its support to personal assault and false accusation. Our author seems to conclude that all Arians, Semi-Arians, and Socinians will perish. With a coolness and boldness which sent the blood thrilling through our veins, he says, "We aspire not to the privilege of being an heir to their inheritance." This language is decisive enough of the fate of such persons in the opinion of its author. Well, they may all be lost, but we hope not, we pray not. But the question returns, What have we to do with settling the question of their ultimate condition? A man of gigantic intellect and of christian feeling, we refer to the great Metaphysician, Samuel Drew, was asked "Are Unitarians christians?" The reply of this Wesleyan preacher was—"Who shall decide when doctors disagree? To their own master they stand or fall. If we put one sect to decide upon the destiny of others, but few will be permitted to enter heaven. For hatchet-men this will furnish ample employment. Nothing grieves me so much, as to see professed Ministers of the Gospel of peace, whose charity has been smothered by their zeal, going about with the tomahawk and scalping-knife, liberally or illiberally dealing out destruction and perdition to all who differ from them." And then, as to the piety of Unitarians, we cannot speak from personal observation. We find, however, in a late work of a lady of masculine mind, the daughter of the distinguished Dr. Beecher, and who has been brought up in all the strictness of a puritanical religion, the following admissions—"When I talk with serious Unitarians and describe what I mean by true piety, they say they mean the same thing, and that they believe and are taught, that men ought to become pious in this sense. And when I read their most popular theological and devotional writings, they certainly do urge this duty, as of the first importance and obligation. I do not think it right to undervalue the sincerity of their religious belief, or their piety, if they give proper evidence of it. If I see the evidence of true piety existing in a Unitarian, I would never refuse him the name and claims of a child of God, because of his false intellectual views." And so if we had a personal acquaintance with many persons of this faith who, notwithstanding their grievous errors, gave proper evidence of their love to God and man, we honestly say we would gladly claim them as our fellow christians. In

short, we want to have the greatest number in heaven possible, and hence we are firm believers in the position established by Rev. Daniel Isaac, a Wesleyan Minister, in his work against Universalism, "that only a very small proportion of the human race will finally perish."

We shall notice but one point more and then conclude. Allusion is made to our publication on "Christian Baptism." In this community the circumstances under which that work was written and the awful charges we had to rebut are well known. Perhaps for this reason, much allowance was made for its bitterness and severity. Whether on this account or not, yet certain it is that by none was the work eulogized more highly than by Wesleyan Ministers, and some of their written testimonials we have in our possession. With the exception of a single page, we composed the whole treatise—and although we spoke with indignation of the voluntary perpetration of what we knew to be wrong, yet the only intimation given of a fear that our bitter antagonist was a graceless man, is on the solitary page just referred to, and that page was written expressly for our work by a Wesleyan preacher. But a truce to the opinions of fallible men! We are heartily ashamed of our production, and have been for a long time. It does not breathe the meekness, gentleness and kindness of christianity. True we were stigmatized as infidels and without the slightest cause—and our blessed Lord was reviled as holding communion with Beelzebub—but he did not revile again, and we ought to have imitated Him who, under the greatest insults and injuries exhibited the most wonderful patience, meekness and love. However assailed in future we hope in patience to possess our souls. Formerly, with many other christians we were sadly blinded in respect to all acts of retaliation and violence. We read our Bible and thought that in some cases, as in self-defence—vindication of character, etc., smiting and contention were lawful. But the Master we now serve with more knowledge, is the Prince of peace—his precepts are regarded by us as promotive of peace on earth—his followers, as blessed peacemakers, who follow peace with all men, and who possess that wisdom which is pure, peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and hypocrisy. In our estimation no ornament so graces the christian, or is so precious in the sight of God, (O that we and all christians had more of it!) as that of a meek and quiet spirit. With us a truly pacific disposition, is an element of the new man, an indispensable characteristic of a state of regeneracy, inasmuch as we are divinely informed that the "fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." For ourselves we wish to imbibe more and more of the kindly, pacific, forgiving disposition of the Gospel, and to be animated by the same spirit of sublime charity, benevolence, and forgiveness which glowed so brightly in the bosom of the Saviour. The only armour we want is the panoply of love, assured that it is more impenetrable to the attacks of adversaries than that of steel. And with regard to religious controversies we wish to learn to "agree to differ peaceably;" and to leave every christian brother, untroubled with complaints or rebukes—we wish to "Think, and let think"—and if we carry our aversion to bigotry so far that some of the strait-laced brethren accuse us of latitudinarian principles, we must try to bear it patiently. But if any parties are for war, we are sorry for it—still we must let all know that the belligerents can never be admitted to figure in our pages. We are pledged to a strict neutrality, and hence, no gladiatorial exhibitions can be witnessed on our sheet.

One word more and we close, we hope, with the same kindly spirit with which we commenced. Our good friend intimates that some persons are gross hypocrites; "they have a bland, insinuating manner, and yet have much bitterness in their hearts—may that they assume a suavity of manner for the very purpose of concealing inward acrimony and vengeful feelings." If this is not intended as a thrust at us, we are sorry for its introduction, for its author by most persons will most assuredly gain the credit of accusing us of sheer hypocrisy. But if it is levelled against us, we are grieved at the unkind accusation—we hope the wormwood and gall of unkindness is eradicated from our nature—we trust that we have no vengeful feelings towards any human being, no, not to him who charges us with their possession. We love him who has told us that we care more for gold than God—who has produced a false impression on the minds of many concerning our recommendation of certain amusements, by his withholding a part of the truth—and who now promulgates the charge (perhaps unintentionally) that we are guilty of deception, of hypocrisy. But those who know us best, will be the proper judges, whether our ministrations and the whole tenor of our conduct, at least since we have regarded christianity as being emphatically a revelation of love, and as opposed to every species of unkindness, have not agreed with the spirit of our late articles in this unpleasant controversy. We have now done.

THE THEATRE.—An Inquirer in "THE WESLEYAN" wishes to know how "advertisements respecting the Theatre in a volume devoted to religion can promote the cause of true piety," but the editor of that paper declines giving the very important and anxiously desired information. From merciful motives to his friend, we presume, this partizan obtrudes himself upon the public attention. He would help his brother out of difficulties, and yet, we fear, plunges him into much greater. Under other circumstances the "Wesleyan" might receive its meed of praise for its exposure of evil, but at the present crisis, for permitting an inquirer to exhibit his folly and inclination to impale others, an unkindly world will give the editor credit only for spite and malice. He may be actuated in this affair solely by his detestation of sin, and we should hope he was, but how many persons who have perused his two leading articles against us, will believe this? But would it not have been kind and fair for the Wesleyan to have told this same sagacious Inquirer that the Pearl had published a quotation "from the works of a professed Socinian in which" the Theatre was denounced in the strongest terms the English language could supply—and more, that we had given our voice against it in these words—"The present depraved condition of the stage is such that its continuance is no longer to be desired—its measure of iniquity is full, and for the sake of the public morals, it is to be hoped, its days are numbered." And might not the Wesleyan have given one proof that its catholic spirit, is in deed, as well as in word, by stating that we were opposed to the modern theatre as much as the Inquirer could be and hence that the advertisement might have been inserted