

Salvation Irrespective of Character

There is, at this time, no objection to the doctrine of Universal Salvation more pertinaciously insisted on by its opposers, than that the doctrine teaches that all men are to be saved irrespective of moral character, and in violation of the freedom of man's will. The objection supposes that Universalists believe and teach, that God has decreed the happiness of all men, and that he will make them thus happy and forever blessed, be their moral characters what they may; holy or unholy; clean or unclean—righteous or wicked. The amount of the objection is, that the doctrine contends that as God will have all men to be saved, he will save them whether they will or not; whether they repent of their sins or not; whether they reform or remain sinful.

If we ask any opposer of Universalism, whether he ever heard a Universalist state his doctrine as here described, or ever read such a representation of the doctrine in any writer who wrote in defence of the doctrine, he will answer in the negative; but at the same time will say, that the doctrine implies all this, and must thus be supported, or not supported at all. Now, if we do, as we always wish to do, exercise charity, and allow that our opposers are honest in alleging such an objection to Universalism, we must offend them by believing and saying, that their objection, in room of disproving the truth of Universal Salvation, proves, beyond all controversy, that they are utterly ignorant of the nature of salvation, and know nothing concerning the process by which it is effected.

The old doctrine of the Church, ever since the corruptions of Christianity has taught that salvation means a salvation from hell in a future state; or from the wrath of God, which means the same; or from the punishment of sin, which also means the same. But concerning such a salvation the Scriptures nowhere speak; and in such a salvation no well informed Universalist believes. The Universalist believes in a salvation which he finds set forth in the Scriptures of divine authority. This is a salvation from sin. 'Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins.' Thus said the angel to Joseph. Now suppose Joseph had asked the angel, whether Jesus would save his people from their sins irrespective of their moral characters? whether he would save them from their sins even if they continued to live in sin? Would not Joseph in this have shown, that either he did not understand the nature of salvation, or that there was inconsistency in this question? Jesus said 'It came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.' What sense would there have been in the question, if any one had asked him if he came to call sinners to repentance irrespective of moral character? Jesus said that he was the 'bread of God which came down from heaven to give life to the world.' Suppose he had been asked, if he would give life to the world irrespective of moral character? In what light would the question present him who asked it? Jesus represented the process of the sinner's salvation, by the recovery of a lost sheep, which had gone astray, by the owner who went after it, found it, and carried it home on his own shoulders; and applied this parable by saying, 'Joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth.' Who recovered the sheep that was lost? The owner. Who saves the sinner? Jesus Christ. How does he save him? By bringing him to repentance. Does he do this irrespective of moral character? The reader sees that the question proves either the ignorance or insincerity of him who asks it.

God spake to the house of Israel in this wise, by Ezekiel:—'Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.' Here let us hear the learned divine of our times, ask the grave question, whether God meant he would do all this for his people irrespective of their moral character? Could God do this without working an entire change of their moral character? Look at these words:—'Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean.' Here comes the wonderful, the profound question.—Will God sprinkle clean water on that which is unclean? By the prophet Isaiah, God said he would give his elect 'a covenant of the people; for a light of the Gentiles; to open the blind eyes; to bring out the prisoners from the prison; and them that sit in darkness out of the prison-house.' Does not the darkness of the Gentile indicate their moral condition, and their blindness and imprisonment their infirm state? And if Christ is to them a light, and if he opens their eyes, and brings them out of their sinful condition, is it reasonable to bring the objection to all this, that it is irrespective of moral character? that it does not allow the freedom of the human will? Jesus sent Paul to the Gentiles to open their eyes; to turn them from darkness to light; from the power of Satan unto God, that they might receive the remission of sins, and an inheritance among all them who were sanctified by faith which was in him. Was all this to be done irrespective of moral character? Does it not necessarily imply an entire change of moral character? Could any sincere person reasonably object to all this, because it is unconditional as to moral character? Malachi, speaking of the coming of the Messiah, says,—'But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap; and he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they

may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness.' As no one can doubt that moral purification is here signified, would it not be a most unreasonable objection to the passage to say that this promise of purifying is irrespective of moral character?

St Paul, in his epistle to the Ephesians thus exhorts; 'Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word; that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy, and without blemish.' Now as the same apostle informs us that the one mediator between God and men, gave himself a ransom for all men, it is evident that he considered all men members of Christ's church, and that he gave himself for this church because he loved it, in its unclean state, and that he gave himself for the church, that he might purify and cleanse it. How will the objection lie against the accomplishment of this work of purifying mankind, that it is irrespective of moral character? To Titus, Paul, speaking of our Savior Jesus Christ, says: 'Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity; and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.' Shall we object to the accomplishment of this work of purification, because it is irrespective of moral character? When the Savior was accused of being a friend to publicans and sinners, his reply was,—'The whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.' By this we learn, Jesus regards the sinner as the kind and skillful physician does the sick patient. Who ever complained of a physician because he healed his patient, irrespective of the state and condition of his physical system? False doctrine would allow the doctor to be very free with his medicine, and bestow it most liberally, on condition that his patient should first become convalescent. And it would most graciously excuse the Savior of mankind, should manifest compassion to such as should recover themselves from a sinful to a holy condition. But to go directly to a sinner, and save him from being a sinner, is saving him irrespective of moral character, and is therefore wrong! Did the Lord Jesus effect the conversion of Saul irrespective of his moral character? The whole subject is seen in this simple question: Was Saul fit to become a Christian? Is a sinner fit to be saved from sin? Is a sick person fit to be cured? Is a blind man fit to have his eyes opened? Are such as are dead in sin fit to be quickened into a life of holiness? We must put such questions as these to our opposers in order to open their eyes; in order to turn them from darkness to light; from the power of Satan unto God. If we should ask a person who was about to wash a garment, whether so filthy a garment was fit to be cleansed? would the question indicate good sense? See Rev. 15, 'Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood.' Did Jesus love us when we were sinners? Were we fit, when sinners, to be washed from our sins? Were we washed from our sins irrespective of our moral character?

If we can succeed in persuading the opposers of Universalism to consider, with a suitable degree of candor, the queries and suggestions which are here presented, a hope is entertained that some good may be the result; and that we shall hear less said against the salvation of sinners, because the doctrine is licentious.

Many of our Unitarian brethren have lately manifested a disposition to show some favor to Universalism, if it be so modified as to teach the certainty of a future state of rewards and punishments. This they contend is indispensable; and that it is licentious not to believe it. Now we desire to reason with these brethren on this subject, and endeavor to show them the impropriety of the position they have taken. We ask, in the first place, what they mean by rewards and punishments in a future state? Do they mean that righteousness, in this life is to be recompensed in a future state? If so, when will the righteousness of the future state be recompensed? If the righteousness of this state is not recompensed here, why will the righteousness of the future state be recompensed there? According to such a theory, recompense will forever be one state of existence in arrears. The same argument will hold good in regard to punishment. If the wickedness of this state is to be punished in the future state, where will the wickedness of the future state be punished? Punishment must forever remain one state of man's existence in arrears. Contrary to this Unitarian theory, divine truth says,—Behold the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth, much more the wicked and the sinner. If our brethren were not most astonishingly blind, they would see that to teach, that wickedness is not fully punished in this world, is the most licentious doctrine ever invented; and is, in the very nature of things, the only deception which leads into sin. Who in all the world ever committed a sin with an expectation of gaining any happiness thereby in a future state? or who did not hope, not only to gain something desirable here, and to avoid the punishment of his wrong? If wickedness does not sufficiently punish the transgressor, what is there which is so much worse than wickedness that can do it? And if righteousness does not sufficiently reward the well doer, what is there so much better than righteousness that can do this?

Notwithstanding these arguments, if our brethren will show us a 'thus saith the Lord,' to prove that sin and misery will exist in a future state, we pledge our sincerity to subscribe to the truth.—(Hear Trumpet.)

A glorious and happy destiny awaits every individual of the entire human race.

A Lesson for a certain Class.

There are those who cease not to preach and write of the immoral tendency of Universalism; and to all such we recommend the following questions and answers. We find them in the Trumpet,—

- Question. By whom was Jesus persecuted?
 A. By believers in endless misery.
 Q. By whom was he crucified?
 A. By believers in endless misery.
 Q. By whom was Stephen stoned to death?
 A. By believers in endless misery.
 Q. What did those forty men believe who bound themselves with an oath that they would not eat and drink again until they had killed Paul?
 A. If they were Pharisees, (as they probably were,) they believed in endless misery.
 Q. Who persecuted the early Christians with cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover, with cruel bonds and imprisonment, so that they were stoned, were sawn asunder, were slain with the sword, some of them, and others suffered even more horrid deaths?
 A. The believers in endless misery.
 Q. Who persecuted the Waldenses, and other early Protestant sects?
 A. The believers in endless misery.
 Q. Who slew thousands of innocent men women and children on St. Bartholomew's day in France?
 A. The believers in endless misery.
 Q. Who established the Indulgence in which men have been buried alive, broken on the wheel, steeled on the rack, scalded in boiling water, roasted before hot fires, &c., &c.?
 A. The believers in endless misery.
 Q. Who have been the cause of all the persecutions that have ever been carried on in the Christian Church?
 A. Believers in endless misery.
 Q. Who drove the Puritans from home in the depth of winter, across the Atlantic?
 A. Believers in endless misery.
 Q. Who persecuted the alleged witches, and imprisoned and killed them?
 A. Believers in endless misery.
 Q. Who stoned John Murry in the pulpit in School Street in Boston?
 A. The believers in endless misery.

Last Hours of Br. O. W. Bacon.

HOW A CHRISTIAN CAN DIE.

The last Christian Freeman contains a letter in reference to the death of this faithful minister, full of interest. It appears that he died in the triumph of faith; and although young, he was fully prepared for the exchange of worlds.

There was really a most heavenly sublimity in the scene of his death. Never did it fall to our lot to behold anything like it before. We have witnessed many happy death-scenes, but this was glorious! It was inexpressible so. The stent-hearted, hard, and weather-beaten mariner, who had often withstood the fiercest shocks of Old Ocean's storms and tempests unmoved, and undaunted, wept here like the tender-hearted child. So great was his agony—so protracted and so dreadful to be witnessed and so calm, composed, and patient was he amidst the whole. He often broke out in the most thrilling exultation, in view of the blissful prospect which laid out before him. "Death," said he, "hath no sting for me, except what threatened body affords. To die is like going through a green and shady bow, dressed in bright and beautiful flowers, and borne on angel wings. O! I am happy, Br. B. although my sufferings are so great." Nothing of the ruthless storm could for a moment shut out the glory of the heavenly land from his vision. The great realities of heaven were constantly with him to cheer and sustain him through all his awful struggles.

But it was when he was struck with death, and his pains abated, and his mind seemed, if possible, clearer and brighter than ever, that this scene became the most deeply interesting and thrilling. He talked freely then with every one. And his blessed and comforting faith was the all-absorbing theme. O! it was then that such bursts of eloquence—really spiritual and heavenly eloquence fell from his lips, as seemingly never fell from the lips of mortals. It no less surprised than charmed all—even those of a contrary part, who were drawn to his bedside, were melted down by it, and compelled to admit that they never saw greater faith before, or more serenity and happiness in view of an immediate dissolution.

He called on those members of his society who were present at the time, around him, and besought them with a dying fervor and earnestness, to not let their zeal abate in the maintenance and defence of the truth. And to a brother of the same, who stood near him, he said, "Tell all my ministering brethren that you see, it is a dying brother's request that they remain steadfast to the doctrines of our holy religion; to never lose sight of them in their preaching, for they then seemed more precious to him than ever."

It was his desire to be buried on Sunday,—to have his funeral services performed at the church, and in the desk where he had preached only the Sabbath before,—to have all the ministering brethren in the neighborhood invited to be present,—for the writer to preach from 1 Cor. xv: 55, and to have his body interred under the direction of the Lodge of O. Fellows to which he belonged,—all of which was faithfully complied with.—Br. R. S. Bove, of Hyannis; A. Abbot, of Chatham; G. J. Sanger, of Sandwich; O. G. Woodbury, of Barnstable; L. W. Manning, of So. Dennis; and S. Barden, of Orleans, were present, and took part in the services at their different stages.

United States Convention.

The General Convention of Universalists of the United States, will hold its next annual session, in Cincinnati, Ohio, on the first Wednesday and following Thursday, in October, 1849. The change in the time has been made in compliance with the request of the brethren in Cincinnati, urged on account of the epidemic which has prevailed in that city. It is confidently believed by them that the cholera will have entirely disappeared from their midst, by the first of October.

At the last session of this body, Rev. A. A. Miner was appointed to preach the next Occasional Sermon. Dr. H. Ballou 2d was appointed a Committee to propose some general plan for the investigation of the charges of impropriety, whenever made against a clergyman of the order, to report at the next session. It was also voted, that the Committee appointed at the session of 1847, to collect facts pertaining to the sessions of the General Convention of Universalists in the New England States, and others, be continued, to report at the next session. The Committee consists of Brs. T. Whittemore and H. Ballou, 2d. J. M. Austin, Standing Clerk.

Jesus the Savior of all Men.

Throughout the Scriptures Jesus is spoken of as having come into the world to save all men.

1. He is called the Savior of the world. "We have seen him ourselves and do know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world."
2. He was sent to be the Savior of all. "The Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world."
3. He died in order to save all. "He gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time."
4. He held all the offices which were requisite to save all. 1. He was a prophet, or teacher, and unfolded all truth. 2. He was mediator to reconcile men to God. 3. He was an exemplar and exemplified his religion in his life. 4. He was a priest who made an atonement for sin; and by his death all sin should be taken away.
5. His salvation is grace. "Who hath saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began; but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life, and immortality to light through the Gospel."
6. His salvation is universal. "For it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell; and, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven."

Deaths in Cincinnati during four Months.

The following report of deaths was carefully made out by the Board of Health, which hereafter will cease to make regular weekly reports, as the cholera has nearly disappeared.

Report of Internments in the following Cemeteries from May 1st to Aug. 30th 1849:—

	Chol. O. D.
St. Joseph's, Irish	360 284
St. Joseph's, German	730 369
St. Peter's, Lick Run	913 335
Wesleyan Cemetery, Milreick	270 235
Methodist Protestant	115 96
German Protestant, Reading Pike	206 76
German Protestant, Walnut Hills	258 126
Spring Grove Cemetery	37 144
Episcopal, in the City	42 18
Presbyterian, "	50 26
Baptist, Catharine street	77 78
Potter's Field	450 250
Friends	8 4
Hebrew	43 13
German Prot., St. Peter's, W. Row	236 140
American Association, Colored	72 78
Walnut Hills Cemetery	55 33
Warsaw	25 5

Total 4114 2345

Total 6459

THE GOSPEL MESSENGER,

OR UNIVERSALIST ADVOCATE,

Is Published Monthly, at
LONDON, C. W.

Terms—One Dollar a year—payable in advance.

J. R. LAYELL, EDITOR & PROPRIETOR.

All Communications concerning the paper must be directed to J. R. LAYELL, Editor, London, Canada West—and if sent by Mail post-paid.

Printed by J. C. GUNN, St. Thomas, C. W., September, 1849.