

of misrepresentation! The plain fact of the case, is that we only preach what is prayed for by all other denominations; we only believe that God will accomplish the conversion of the world, which they beseech Heaven to effect, though they have no faith that Heaven will bring it about.

Go to an individual, and convince him, that the impartial grace of God will save him and all his family and unite them in heaven with joy, and he will not oppose it; he will rejoice in it. Why should he, the moment we extend that grace to all families and to all nations, take exceptions and oppose it, and say that he wishes not to go to heaven if all people will be saved? The fact is, that all persons are Universalists in regard to themselves, and their own families, and believe that endless misery is for their neighbors only. The doctrine of the restitution is not thus self-righteous in feeling or cramped in extent. It extends the love of God to every son and daughter of Adam, and it represents the Messiah as enduring the untold horrors of crucifixion for the salvation of the world—it looks forward to the work of drawing degraded minds from error and sin and elevating them to the better and holier station of virtue and truth—and it holds up to our admiring view, the destruction of every evil to which human life is incident, and the introduction of the universal race of Adam into immortality and felicity. And as such, it is worthy of regard and reception, not only on account of its boundless and sublime views of another world, but also for its power to lead its followers to the purest and most elevated morality.

#### REV. JOHN FOSTER.

This eminent and venerable man was a minister of the Calvinistic Baptist Church in England. His Life and Writings have been lately republished in this country, and his Baptist and other Partialist brethren here are much horrified to learn that their beloved and venerated minister was all his life-time a Universalist! Mr. Foster was Calvinistic in every point of doctrine, except endless sinning and suffering—that horrible sentiment he rejected as unscriptural and unreasonable. His Editor, J. L. Ryland, says of him,

"On one point only of dogmatic theology, Mr. Foster dissented from the religious community with which he was most intimately connected. Allusion to this subject (the duration of future punishment) occur in two or three passages of his early correspondence; but it is discussed at some length in a letter to a young minister, written in 1841 (vol. ii. p. 202). Without offering an opinion on 'the moral argument,' which to a mind of so high an order carried irresistible force, or inquiring what exceptions may be taken to those views of mankind and the present life to which it may appear that that argument owes much of its cogency—and while those who differ from, and not a few, probably, who would assent to his views, may regret that the statements of Scripture are not more fully discussed—it may be permitted, in justice to his memory, to remark that in Mr. Foster's mind, as is evident temporary destruction might be used, but from his other writings, this belief was associated with the holiest views of the Div-

ine Being, and with a most elevated standard of moral excellence; nor among those who deem him mistaken on this subject, could any one be found who would more earnestly deprecate that a theological speculation should occupy the thoughts to the neglect of practical, personal piety," Vol. i. pp. iv. v.

The principal article on this subject, is a letter from Mr. Foster to a young minister of his acquaintance. It is long, but the following extracts will exhibit its reasoning and spirit:

"But, after all this, we have to meet the grave question, *What say the Scriptures?* There is a force in their expression at which we well may tremble. On no allowable interpretation do they signify less than a very protracted duration and formidable severity. But I hope it is not presumptuous to take advantage of the fact, that the terms everlasting, eternal, for ever original or translated, are often employed in the Bible, as well as other writings, under great and various limitations of import; and are thus withdrawn from the predicament of necessarily and absolutely meaning a strictly endless duration. The limitation is often, indeed, plainly marked by the nature of the subject. In other instances the words are used with a figurative indefiniteness, which leaves the limitation to be made by some general rule of reason and proportion. They are designed to magnify, to aggravate, rather than to define. My resource in the present case, then, is simply this—that since the terms do not necessarily and absolutely signify an interminable duration,—and since there is in the present instance to be pleaded, for admitting a limited interpretation, a reason in the moral estimate of things, of stupendous, of infinite urgency, involving our conceptions of the divine goodness and equity, and leaving those conceptions overwhelmed in darkness and horror if it be rejected, I therefore conclude that a limited interpretation is authorised. Perhaps there is some pertinence in a suggestion which I recollect to have seen in some old and nearly unknown book in favor of universal restitution:—that the great difference of degrees of future punishment, so plainly stated in Scripture affords an argument against its perpetuity; since, if the demerit be infinite, there can be no place for a scale of degrees, apportioning a minor infliction to some offenders; every one should be punished up to the utmost that his nature can sustain; and the same reason of equity there may be for a limited measure, there may consistently be for a limited duration. The assignment of an unlimited duration would seem an abandonment of the principle of the discriminating rule observed in the adjustment of degrees.

If it be asked, *how could the doctrine have been more plainly and positively asserted than it is in the Scripture language?* I answer, I ask, how do we construct our words and sentences to express it in an absolute manner, so as to leave no possibility of understanding the language in a different, equivocal, or questionable sense? And may we not think that if so transcendently a doctrine has been meant to be stamped as in burning characters on our faith, there would have been such forms of propositions, of circumlocution if necessary, as would have rendered all doubt or

question a mere palpable absurdity?" Vol. ii. pp. 267, 268.

But this is not all—not only was the eminently pious and truly evangelical Mr. Foster a believer in Universalism, but he has informed the world that a number of clergymen of his acquaintance were also Universalists. This is sad news for our opposers. Well may they ask in astonishment, "What is the world coming to?"—and as well and truly may we reply, "Coming to light, to be sure!"

"A number (not large, but of great piety and intelligence) [of ministers within my acquaintance several now dead, have been disbelievers of the doctrine in question; at the same time not feeling themselves imperatively called upon to make a public disavowal; content with employing in their ministrations strong general terms in denouncing the doom of impenitent sinners. For one thing, a consideration of the unreasonable imputations and unmeasured suspicions apt to be cast on any publicly declared partial defection from rigid orthodoxy, has made me think they should better consult their usefulness by not giving a prominence to this dissentient point; while yet they make no concealment of it in private communications, and in answer to serious inquiries." Vol. ii. p. 270.

#### THE SPIRIT, NOT THE LETTER.

"The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life," is the language of the apostle Paul in contrasting the law with the gospel, and the saying furnishes us with an infallible rule by which to judge of every dispensation, institution and doctrine in the world. Let us apply it in a few instances.

"The life is more than the meat, and the body than the raiment," was the language of a greater than Paul—and he applied it to encourage contentedness under the allotments of divine providence, and trust in God. It is equally applicable to every means, and to every end, the end is always superior to the means—the body, to the raiment—the life, to the meat—the soul, to its fleshy tabernacle—the whole, to a part—and the eternal, to the temporal. "Ye are of more value than many sparrows," is but another form of its great principle, calculated to assure us, that if God provides for the wants of the inferior creation, he will more surely provide for man—and if for that body, how much more for the soul. And this assurance receives further confirmation in the declaration, that if God provides so well for the lily of the valley, which to day is, and to-morrow is cut down and burned, how much more will he provide for the higher and truer glory of his moral blossoms who endure to all eternity. Still, still we have the elevation of end above means—of greater above lesser—of spiritual over material.

Of the same character is the declaration of the Savior, that he came "not to destroy men's lives, but to save them;" and that the Father had sent his Son, "not to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved." And with these clear declarations of the great principle, agrees that more ancient saying, that God has no pleasure in the death of the sinner, but that he turn from his evil way and live. In order, then, to save life, even

never the reverse: for the end must always be superior to the means, and must always be regarded more than evil. No condemnation, when opposed to obtaining the end, (salvation,) must be regarded—not inflicted—for as life is greater than destruction, even so must salvation be obtained, rather than condemnation. But if condemnation (or damnation) can be made to work for good—for salvation—then the means may be used to secure the end. Thus it is that God has no pleasure in the sinner's death, but [i. e. leave out] that the sinner may [by that death] turn from his evil way and live.—The means are always regarded as inferior to the end—the death and condemnation, to the life and salvation of man. How foolish—how un-spiritual, then, for Christians to contend for endless sin and endless suffering as a result or end in God's moral government? How contrary to every principle of goodness to suppose that God will ever choose or permit moral death, destruction and condemnation to prevail finally and endlessly over life and salvation—that he will select sin in preference to holiness, and misery in preference to happiness, for any of his moral offspring!

The same rule of giving preference to spirit over the letter—to good over evil—to end over means—is applicable to every command God has given, and to every institution God has ordained. Instead of judging God's character and design by the letter of the command or the institution, we must infer the meaning of the law [or ordinance, by the character of God. Let this be done, and a Pharisaic sabbath, and capital punishment in Genesis ix: 6, will vanish forever. What was made for man's benefit, can not be meant for his injury—what was ordained to render sacred human life, was never meant to take it away.

A. B. G.

"As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." 1 Cor. xv. 22.

That universality is expressed in the first member of the sentence—all die in Adam—is generally acknowledged. And that the same universality is expressed in the latter member—in Christ shall all be made alive—few, if any deny, and the phrase "even so" abundantly proves.—The only doubt, then, that can arise in any mind whether the text teaches universal blessedness in Christ, must be based on the meaning conveyed by the phrase—"made alive in Christ." What does this language mean? What is it to be "made alive in Christ." Reader, do not, I beseech you, let sectarian prejudice answer this important question; but go to the Bible—find, if you can, at least one instance where being made alive in Christ means merely common, animal life—being merely endowed with sensibility and consciousness—before you adopt the Partialist view. If you can not find one such instance, then must you, if you would believe what God has revealed—you must believe that it means spiritual life—spiritual blessedness and glory in Christ. "For if any man be in Christ he is a new creature" born again—regenerated by the power of Him who is "the resurrection and the life." And so it does mean, as the remainder of the chapter shows;—for what was sown in corruption, weakness and DISHONOR, is to be raised in incorruption, in power and in GLORY. Is it being raised in glory, to be raised to endless sufferings and sinfulness? Can any one be alive in Christ, and yet be endlessly enduring spiritual death in hell? Do, my dear Partialist brethren—do look at this subject in the light of common sense, and Scripture, and behold the absurdity, not to say the impicity of the "Orthodox" interpreta-