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Poetry.

For the Wesleyan.

LINES ON A HOUSE-PLANT.

Exotic but thy beauties form
Adorned my humble room,
When winter blighted every flower,
And wrapp'd the fields in gloom.
With joy I saw thy leaves unfold,
Of softly-blushing hue;
And breathe thy petals' fragrant sweets,
Delighted with the view.
Still cherishing, with tender care,
Thy lovely, fragile form;
I hid thee from the chilling frost
Of winter's rudest storm;
And hop'd to keep thee fresh and fair
For many, many days;
Nor thought that thou wouldst fade so soon,
From my admiring gaze.
I grieve to see thy rosy tints
Give place to pale decay;
Alas! that ought so beautiful
So soon should pass away!
Fair Emblem of earth's brightest forms,
How hast thou droop'd and died!
Soon, ah too soon, like joyous youth,
In all thy beauty's pride!

MARIA.

Christian Miscellany.

We need a better acquaintance with the thoughts and reasoning of pure and lofty minds.—Dr. Sharp.

Universalism—Embroidered and Crocod.

A young man, well known to the writer of this sketch, when about seventeen years of age, was powerfully wrought upon by the Holy Spirit. He saw and felt himself a sinner, justly condemned, and the wrath of God hanging fearfully over him. He believed then that he "must be born again, or never see the kingdom of God,"—that if he died in his sins, he should be punished forever in hell.

He desired to communicate his feelings to some Christian friend, to embrace religion, and to unite with the people of God; but two obstacles stood in his way.

He lived in an ungodly neighbourhood, where religion was universally neglected, ridiculed and despised. His friends, his attachments, and his youthful associates were there; and it seemed a great thing for him to set out alone, to separate himself from his companions, and become an object of ridicule, as he knew he must be, if he embraced religion. Besides, he lived at a great distance from the means of grace.

While in this state of mind, a book, teaching the doctrine of universal salvation, fell into his hands. Observe now, reader, the influence of a *bad* book on an awakened mind. I do not recollect the title of the book—it was from the pen of Rev. Hosea Ballou, an aged man, who I believe is still living. This book promised him eternal life without repentance. His great concern of mind had been to escape the damnation of hell, and secure the interests of his soul for eternity. But now he is gravely taught that there is *no* hell, that God is a God of infinite love, and could never doom a soul which he had created to endless misery—that he received all our punishment for sin in this life, and when we die we go immediately to heaven.

Then those passages which seem to favour this doctrine were ingeniously strung together, and woven into syllogisms, while the force of contradictory passages was still more ingeniously explained away. This reasoning appeared at once very plausible, and though the young man was not fully satisfied, he was nevertheless greatly pleased.

If this doctrine were true he need not abandon his pleasures, nor forsake his companions. There was no need

of making so much ado about religion, no necessity of coming out from the world, and being separate, and singular—a butt for ridicule and a laughing-stock to the vulgar.

He resolved to live henceforth a good moral life, and thus for a season quieted his conscience.

But still there were passages of Scripture which seemed to go hard against this *new doctrine*, but through the kindness of some Universalist friends, he obtained the loan of other books which glazed all those passages over, making smooth and straight work clear through the Bible.

These apparent difficulties were removed in various ways, sometimes by referring to the "original Greek" as giving a different meaning to the text—sometimes by quoting the explanation given by the learned Dr. Adam Clarke, the great Methodist commentator, and other distinguished divines; sometimes by calling certain difficult passages *parables*, or *ideas* borrowed from the ignorant and superstitious heathen; and when nothing else would do, by a *downright and hearty laugh* at the perfect absurdity of some texts, and the wonderful credulity of those who could believe them.

Thus he went on, searching for arguments on but one side of the question, hearing Universalists preach, reading their books and periodicals, and conversing with professors of that faith, till he became a confirmed Universalist. It was a long time before he reached that point in his experience when all difficulties were removed, all pleas of future punishment allayed; but it came at last.

He openly avowed his sentiments, tried, with some success, to make converts, and argued, as he thought, powerfully and conclusively with professors of religion.

But when the war of words was over, and he had fired away all his ammunition, used up his arguments, spent the force of his logic, and quoted all the detached passages of Scripture which to his mind proved Universalism conclusively, he was greatly astonished to find them unconverted—holding the same opinions still. He really thought that he was destined to be a champion of that faith, and was looking forward with ardent aspirations to the ministry.

Being in his opinion a very modest man, he never provoked a battle with a Methodist preacher, but was heartily glad to have them commence with him; for he felt very sure that he could "wind them up" in just three minutes, so that they would hardly be able to say another word, or ever dare to preach again.

Putting himself occasionally into the way of the preacher, he had a few opportunities to try his strength; but he generally found the clergy so bigoted that he could not convince them, and so ignorant and thick-headed, that they really did not know when he had fairly wound them up, but would talk and preach right on as though nothing had happened. He would lay up nothing against them, but pitied them in his heart. In all this he was evidently sincere. He prayed daily, and sometimes thought himself a Christian.

His feelings were very much hurt, one day, in conversation with a good Methodist brother. The latter insinuated that he knew nothing of experimental religion, and said that if he should ever be converted, he would see things differently. Yet in examining his heart, he knew that he did not enjoy what others professed, and what he believed it the Christian's privilege to enjoy. His soul hungered and thirsted for something which as yet he had never found.

He thought, that perhaps in heart he was not yet a Christian, although he had without doubt embraced intellectually the true doctrine. Accordingly he resolved to seek the religion of the heart, not because he had any fears of punishment, but because he saw in the Bible held it forth as the Christian's privilege.

He began then to offer daily, and we believe sincerely, this prayer, "O Lord, if Universalism be true, establish me in the faith, and help me to defend and teach it; if it be false, lead me by thy good Spirit into the truth as it is in Jesus."

Soon after this he attended a camp meeting for the first time in his life. He was now nearly twenty-three years of age. He went to that meeting merely out of curiosity, to see for himself what was done. It being rainy in the morning, there were no services at the stand. In the afternoon he listened to a sermon, preached from the parable of the Prodigal Son. He was interested, though not particularly affected by it. At the close of the discourse, sinners were invited forward for prayers. He had no intention, no thought, of going himself; but a friend who well knew the state of his mind came to him and affectionately asked him if he did not want religion? He unhesitatingly answered, yes. Then, said that friend, come, go with me. He followed, and took his seat with the seekers of religion.

He had not bad feelings—could not weep as others did—felt no fears of hell or punishment after death. Others might think him a hypocrite because he seemed destitute of feeling. He had, as he thought, the true doctrine in his heart; he now sincerely desired true religion in his heart.

After the praying was over at the stand, he took a young man, a friend of his, who was also among the seekers, out a little way into the grove, and asked him what he meant by going forward; if he was sincere? The latter said yes. So am I, said he.—But mark what I now say; I believe in Universal salvation, and think I always shall; but I believe also in experimental religion, and if there is any for me, I mean to have it. They returned to the encampment, and presented themselves for prayers again in the evening. And when the darkness of that night had passed away, and a bright morning dawned upon the grove, a deeper darkness had passed away from that young man, and a far brighter morning was shining on his soul. That hard and stony heart had been changed to a tender and feeling heart of flesh. His soul was happy, the void that had ached so long was filled with a calm and heavenly peace to which he had been hitherto a perfect stranger.

He now thought of his Universalism; but where was it? He looked at it, but from a different point of observation, through a different medium, and with better eyes. The Spirit of God, which brought the joy of true religion to his heart, had removed the scales from his eyes, dispelled the darkness of the natural mind, and he saw what he never saw before, the *other side* of Universalism; its native deformity and mortal tendencies.

Nearly seven years before, he had earnestly desired religion, but the devil had cheated him, and pointed off Universalism upon him as the true religion. But he now knew by what he saw and what he felt, that it was counterfeit and false. True, it had quieted his fears of hell, but it had never fed his hungry soul with a single crumb of positive joy. It had kept him away from the banqueting house, and the table spread with luxuries for the soul. He then publicly renounced Universalism, and is now preaching the Gospel which he once despised.

In the above sketch, which the writer knows to be true, we find a sincere and confirmed Universalist effectually cured of the doctrine. Would not every Universalist be as effectually cured if he would seek and obtain true religion in his heart?—And is it not the best way to seek to save Universalists, to avoid as much as possible arguing the case with them, and urge and lead them to seek for the internal enjoyment of religion, as set forth in the Scriptures as the Christian's privilege?—*Correspondent of Zion's Herald.*

Trust in God.

There were two neighbours, who had each a wife and several children, and their wages as common labourers were their only daily support. One of these men was fretful and disquieted, saying,

"If I die, or even fall sick, what will become of my family?"

This thought never left him, but gnawed his heart as a worm the fruit in which it is hidden. Now although this thought was presented to the mind of the other father, yet he was not fretted by it, for said he:—

"God who knows all his creatures, and watches over them, will also watch over me and my family."

Thus he lived always tranquil while the other neither tasted any joy nor repose.

One day as the latter was labouring in the field, and downcast because of his fears, he saw some birds go in and out of his plantation. Having approached, he found two nests placed side by side, and in each several young ones newly hatched and still undelivered. When he returned to his work, he frequently looked to these birds, as they went out and returned carrying nourishment to their young broods. But behold! at the moment when one of the mothers was returning with her bill full, a vulture seized her, carried her off, and the poor mother vainly struggling in his grasp, utters a most piercing cry.

At this sight, the man who was working felt his soul more troubled than before; for he thought the death of the mother was the death of the little young.

"Mine have only me—no other. What will become of them if I fall sick?"

All this while he was gloomy and sad, and at night he slept not. On the morning he returned to the field he said:

"I should like to see the little ones of that poor mother. Several without doubt have already perished with hunger."

He set off towards the plantation, and looking into the nests he saw the young ones alive and well; not one seemed to have suffered. Astonished at this, he hid himself to see the cause. After a while he heard a slight cry, and perceived the other mother bring back in haste the food she had gathered which she distributed without distinction among the birds. There were some for each and the orphans were not abandoned in their misery.

"Why fret thou? God never abandoned his children! His love has some secrets which we do not know. Let us believe, hope, love, labour and pursue our course in peace; if I die before you, you shall be a father to my children; and if you die before me, I will be a father to yours; if we both die before they are of an age to provide for themselves, they will have Him for a parent, 'Our father who is in Heaven.'"

"Out of the Mouths of Babes and Sucklings."

William Hone, a noted English author, was a deist. While passing a turnpike-gate, as he was travelling on foot through Wales, he saw a young girl taking her dinner of goats' milk and bread, and just of a character to impress him. On entering into conversation with her, he was overwhelmed with astonishment to find this poor, barefooted, unsophisticated girl "mighty in the Scriptures," and listened to the use she made of them, and to the power they had on her soul. His heart was subdued, and soon after he avowed himself a believer in Christ, and united with the church.

Humility.

Humility ever dwells with men of noble minds; it is a flower that prospers not in lean or barren soils; but in a ground that is rich, it flourishes and is beautiful.—*Filipian.*

Prayer is a key which unlocks the blessings of the day, and locks out the dangers of the night.