

## A GOOD CONFESSION

The following article cannot fail of being read with interest and profit by all. The attack on the amiable but undefended female, (who is the writer of this article,) was characterized by that ungentlemanly and rude effrontery for which modern Orthodox revivalists are so much distinguished: and the refusal to allow her the opportunity of defending herself, or vindicating her sentiments, was what we might expect from those who are conscious that investigation will result in death to their system and triumph to ours. The young lady has certainly “witnessed a good confession,” and defended her cause like a true soldier of the cross.

S. [Rev. Dolphus Skinner, Editor]

Manchester, Ontario county, Feb. 28, 1832

BR. SKINNER—Should you discover no impropriety, and consider the following worthy of a place in your paper, you are at liberty to insert it. There has been a protracted meeting of the Calvinistic Baptists in this place: and here is a sketch of a scene that passed on a day I attended. The next time that I attended, I requested permission of Mr. Allen, (the pastor of the society) to express my feelings to the assembly, on the subject; and as Mr. A. considered it an improper request, he did not see fit to grant it: one reason for which, he assigned, was that there were “young converts,” and others “under conviction” whose minds would probably be injured, should I express my sentiments in that assembly. Now I esteem Mr. A. very highly, and not only believe him a very good, but also a very *prudent* man, as you will perceive by his not granting my request. He said he might, with the same propriety, suffer a Universalist *preacher* to come in and deliver a discourse on the subject of universal salvation. I should not have made this request, had I not been fully satisfied that I was particularly pointed out to a large portion of the assembly; and many eyes were turned on me, as though they would be glad to discover the effect the scene would have on my mind; and *I was anxious that they should know*. Mr. A. need have been under no apprehension of my injuring the minds of any present, as the following is what I had written with the intention of reading, should he permit me so to do.

### THE CONFESSIONS OF A UNIVERSALIST

MY FRIENDS—I find it necessary, in answer to my own conscience, to make a *confession* to this assembly. You will probably be surprised to hear a confession from a Universalist. But permit me to tell you that I believe we are all liable to error. Now what I have to confess is an *omission of duty*, and surely, as Christians, you will not hesitate—nay, even politeness will constrain you—to hear a candid confession, even should it be from the most simple. On Monday last, I attended this meeting. I came, not to have any dispute of controversy with any one; (as I do not hold myself capable of arguing upon the Scriptures;) but if there were any good to be derived from coming here, that I might receive it; as I supposed there was liberty for any one to come who pleased. It so happened, during intermission, that a certain young gentleman (whose name I do not know) commenced a conversation with me respecting the “*great work*” that was going on in this place; in consequence of which he was led to ask to what denomination I belonged. On my replying that I had never connected myself with any society, a lady with whom I was acquainted told him that I was a Universalist, which name I was certainly not ashamed to acknowledge, though I did not wish to subject myself to a long controversy on the subject, as I did not at that time, neither do I now, feel strength of body or mind to endure a controversy, or even to express by opinion fully on the subject, having long been subjected

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to a malady which very much impairs my strength both of body and mind, which is the consequence of my *writing this*. In consequence of the expression of the above mentioned lady, numbers flocked around me, *some* probably to *hear*, *others* to *quiz* me on the subject, *one* asking the meaning of *this text of Scripture*, *another* of *that*. In the midst of this confusion I suddenly heard a voice in the farther part of the room, crying to God *to sweep away the sandy foundation of Universalism*—soon, another, *crying or praying for the same*. Immediately one arose and said that he had once been a Universalist and now confessed *its fallacy*! Soon, *another did the same*! During these transactions many eyes were turned on me, probably to discover what effect they had on my mind: and I think I neglected my duty in not arising and expressing to the assembly what effect such *strong* arguments had upon my mind; and now, if this assembly will permit, I will state what the effect was.

My friends, what do these things prove? Does it follow, because a man once believed that Universalism was true, that the sentiment is false because he does not now believe it? I once believed in a future state of never ending torment, but I do not now believe it—but does the change in me prove the sentiment false? I presume you will acknowledge that it does not; then my friends, let us be consistent, so far, *at least*, as our abilities will allow us to be. I confess that I have been perfectly astonished that men of common sense should, to prove Universalism false, say they had been Universalists, but that they did not believe it, or that Mr. Such-a-one renounced the sentiment on his death bed. Now these things prove nothing, to my mind, but that *man is a weak, changeable being*. Though it is not *unfrequently* the case that when those who professed to have renounced it are examined on the subject, they will confess that they never did *quite believe it*, but they *wished* it might be true. Accordingly they had endeavored to hold out the *idea* to the world that it *was true*, which not only proves that they never were Universalists, but that they had been playing the hypocrite, by *professing* to believe something which they *did not* believe. Others say they *endeavored* to believe it, or at least to hold it up to the world, that they might have the liberty of going on in iniquity without restraint. To such I would say, O poor deluded mortals! how little you know of the true principles of Universalism! And O, *ye ministers* who teach people that we believe we can go on and sin with impunity! who say that we believe we can be saved *in our sins*! The sin of those miserable beings lieth at your own doors! for the reason that you misrepresent our sentiments, and they take it for granted because *you say it!* not caring to inform themselves on the subject. I have heard those ideas advanced from your pulpits! You need not make the excuse that you do not *know* what the true sentiments of Universalism are! If *you do not*, say nothing about it; if *you do*, then *do not misrepresent it*. Know then, that Universalism, which I believe to be *founded on the word of God*, (which is no *sandy foundation*), teaches *me* that “God will render to every man according as his work shall be,” and there is no respect of persons with God,” as the Scriptures declare. And that “man shall be cleansed from all impurity in God’s own appointed time,” then the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion, with songs and everlasting joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.” It further teaches me that “the way of the transgressor is hard.” There is no peace to the wicked, saith my God. He is like the troubled sea, whose waters cast up mire and dirt.” It further teaches me that “Christ came to *seek* and *save* that which was lost,” and I believe he will fulfill his divine mission.

Now permit me to ask, *What was lost?* Was not a world lost in darkness and doubt, or in other words, was not the truth lost to the world of mankind? Christ says, “I am the *way* and the *truth* and the *life*; no man cometh unto the Father but by me.” And he says, come

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unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest; take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls. for my yoke is easy and my burthen light.” And farther, “Out of Zion shall come the deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.” “Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins.” “Behold my servant whom I uphold, mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth. I have put my spirit upon him; he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the streets. A bruised reed he shall not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench; he shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgement in the earth; and the isles shall wait for his law. Thus saith the Lord, he that created the heavens.... I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and will give thee for 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.” Farther, the angel said unto the shepherds, “Behold, I bring you glad tidings of great joy which shall be to all the people; for unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.” Now I cannot discover what joy it can be to those millions of human beings, whom self-styled Orthodoxy consigns to unending torment, (if there should happen to be any such).—Farther, people say do you believe in a change of heart? I do. Our Saviour brought life and immortality to light thro’ the Gospel; and when we are brought out of nature’s darkness into the marvellous light of the Gospel, I believe our hearts are changed; such a change I believe I have experienced; and I think Saul of Tarsus experienced a change not dissimilar to this. And my friends, the light of the *Gospel* is the *light of divine truth*, shed abroad in our hearts, which brings peace, joy, and gladness; it fills our souls with love toward God and our fellow-mortals. It does not teach us that we are more holy than our fellows, as I have reason to fear that some of those think who profess to have been lately converted from the error of their ways. Let them take heed, that they do not fall into greater errors. Let them treat their parents and friends with a little more respect than some do; for the Scriptures teach us to honor our parents, and love our friends and enemies, and do good to them. I wish to imprint it on the minds of these young people, that they have other duties to perform, besides going to meetings. The Scriptures command us to work six days as strongly as they do to rest on the seventh. There is a time for all things. Do not think that merely going to meetings will save you; it will, certainly, not save you from want, if you be poor, if you do not work. Recollect you can worship God as well, and pray to him at home or when about your daily labor as acceptably as you can at meetings. It is the *heart* that God requires, not mere *lip service*. When it is consistent to attend meetings, without encroaching upon any other duties, I think it proper that we should go, even if it be on a week day or evening. Moreover, let us produce the fruits of the spirit, which are love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance. May Heaven grant that we *all practice* these things. For one, I confess that I come far short of it.

Farther, Universalism teaches *me* that when I discover a poor miserable being in distress or want, to alleviate his or her suffering, as far as in me lies; and if he or she have wandered from the path of rectitude, to endeavor to reclaim him or her, and pour the balm of consolation into the afflicted heart. I do not say that I always do this; no, I confess that I am as liable to fail in duty as others; but *Universalism teaches this to me*: and in acting up to its pure principles, I believe I do my duty to my God and my fellow-mortals. Yet to *Him* be ascribed all honor, praise and glory, who rules and fills immensely.

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My friends, I have given you but a faint description of the beauties of Universalism, but I will leave the subject in the hands of a more able advocate, for I am sensible of my inability to do it justice. I do not expect these lines will convince any one of the truth of *Universalism*, but it may excite some to examine the subject before they condemn it, or call themselves Universalists for the miserable purpose of going on in iniquity with impunity. And again I say, let those who wish to condemn it first understand it, and when they do understand it, let them not misrepresent it. I suspect I shall be censured by many, for taking this course to express my feelings on the subject; be that as it may, I have done it to discharge a duty which I owe myself, and the cause of what I believe to be the truth.— Time and occasion forbid that I should say more on the subject.

Lasira I. Osborn

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