

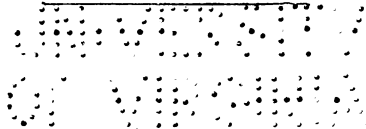
# FUTURE PUNISHMENT,

DISCUSSED

IN A LETTER TO A FRIEND,

BY

JOSEPH C. STILES.



SAINT LOUIS, MO.  
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## FUTURE PUNISHMENT.

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Sweet Springs, Saline County, Mo.

MR. WILLIAM ALLEN GWIN,

*My Dear Friend*:—One of the most powerful principles of human nature is expressed, poetically, thus: "The wish is father to the thought." In plainer language, man struggles desperately to disbelieve what he desperately dislikes. Now, the doctrine of Future Punishment, of all things, men most vehemently oppose, because, of all things, it offends self-love most severely. It is perfectly natural, therefore, that self-loving men should labor to depreciate, undermine and avert the evidence which establishes this doctrine, and to invent adverse arguments where ground for none exists. Having an immortal soul in charge, well knowing should he cheat himself, that he cannot deceive God, it certainly behoves a wise man to examine his heart conscientiously and keenly, and to strive to discover whether his seeming disbelief of man's eternal destruction is not, after all, an attempt to build up a blind on the surface, against what he dreads at the centre.

Mr. Gwin, allow me to say that, in my judgment, the arguments establishing future punishment are a mountain—all opposing arguments a bubble.

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## I.—THE ARGUMENT FROM REASON.

Weigh the testimony of those witnesses that seem most competent, in the nature of things, to conduct us to an enlightened decision on this solemn subject.

**THE LAWS OF NATURE.**—On his passage to another world, let the sinner drop his body in the grave; who imagines for an instant that this can wash away one particle of the corruption of his heart? Fix your eye upon the very vilest sinner upon earth. Through death, this instant, pass him up to Heaven—with all his lusts, and lies, and hate, and devilish heart—can he be happy there? By a law of his nature, happiness lies in a *correspondence* between the mind and its object. The unholy heart feels not, and never will feel the very slightest sympathy with any one object, or movement of holy Heaven. By what process, against a law of his nature, can you awaken one emotion of peace in that soul, while immortality endures? By another law of his nature, misery lies in the *opposition* between the mind and its object. This unholy heart feels, and must ever feel, the deepest aversion to everything that exists or transpires in holy Heaven. By what process, against a law of his nature, can you protect this sinful soul from eternal pain? Should God pass the sinner, uncondemned at the judgment, and place him on the highest throne in Heaven—let reason decide—must not the very laws of his own nature inflict everlasting misery upon him, amidst the brightest halos of glory?

**HUMAN CONSCIENCE.**—All men feel that virtue and

vice, in character, are moral opposites; and always treat them as such. We approve virtue, and condemn vice. We reward virtue to promote it, and punish vice to suppress it. There has probably never lived on earth a nation, an organized community, which did not regularly punish crime. All this is the testimony of human conscience that the sinner should suffer. Let reason decide. If the remnant of rectitude in fallen man has always punished transgression, can a God of justice do less?

**MORAL GOVERNMENT.**—Government is instituted to promote the virtue and happiness of the community. Punishment is the only just expression of the turpitude of crime. Abolish punishment, and you measurably surrender the moral training of the community; for you can nevermore teach the full demerit of transgression, or the obligation of obedience. Punishment, too, is the only adequate protection of the rights of the community against the violence of crime. Abolish punishment, and you measurably surrender the peace of the community; for you have parted forever with the necessary means of its adequate protection. Thus you fail to accomplish the primary end of government, if you fail to punish transgression. Let reason decide. If the perfection of moral government demands the infliction of the penalty, can the kingdom of God remit the punishment of sin?

**THE CHARACTER OF JESUS.**—From Godhead and the bosom of his Father, Jesus Christ sunk to incarnation and to crucifixion, to save man from pain. If Jesus

sacrificed and suffered everything to shelter man from suffering—let reason decide—would that loving, gentle, truthful Jesus torment the generations of this very race for six thousand years with truthless menaces of “the fire that is never quenched,” “the worm that never dieth,” and all the damnation of hell with its “weeping,” “wailing,” and “gnashing of teeth?” It is impossible to conceive how a man can believe in Jesus, and yet doubt his most solemn faith in the final destruction of the sinner. Thus, if we consult reason and solicit her opinion of this disputed doctrine of future punishment, her response will be this—The doctrine is true; for nature necessitates it; conscience forebodes it; government demands it; and the conduct of Jesus—seals it sure.

But you hasten to remind me that “*God is love* ;” yea, “*the Father of all mercies*.” Hereupon you confidently inquire, “How is it possible that this most merciful of all parents can consent to burn his own child in fire forever? No earthly parent has ever been known to commence the process. No! no! God cannot do such a thing.”

Ah, my friend! and where did you learn so much about God? You seem to speak as if you comprehended him perfectly. Gird up thy loins like a man, and I will demand of thee, and answer thou me. How is God One and Three? Can you answer this? How does he predestinate, and in perfect justice, too? Can you explain that? How does he deem man perfectly dependent, yet perfectly free? Are you able to solve this problem? God threw Satan out of Heaven, and

could have held him fast in hell; where was the great love of which you know so much, when it freed the devil and allowed him to come up to earth, and tempt our innocent foreparents, and involve the whole human family in sin before they were born? Can you satisfy yourself on that point? He is the strong Father, we the feeble children; where sleep his love and power, when, in all climes and ages, his providence flings upon our helpless race tempest and famine, pestilence and war, fire and flood, sickness and death?

If you shudder at the attempt to answer these questions, where did you become so well acquainted with God on the equally difficult points about which you are so positive? Friend! are you not wise above what is written? Scripture tells us that—"His ways are not as our ways; nor his thoughts as our thoughts." Nay! that his thoughts and ways "are past finding out." Now mark this, if you please. Your argument is built precisely upon the very fact—that God's ways are *as* our ways; and that you have found them out. You are a finite being; may not that be wise in God, which to you seems foolish; and that be cruel in God, which to you seems so necessary to kindness? Aye! May not this very attempt of yours to vindicate God's character, stir up his indignant charge—"Mortal! thou makest me such an one as thyself!"

The truth is, examine it to the bottom, and you will find, like every other argument of infidelity, that this reasoning of yours upon the mercy of God—assumes an intelligence superior to Omniscience. "Who, by searching, can find out God? Who can find out the Almighty

unto perfection." Your argument responds, "*I can.* I know all about him. I can sit in judgment upon every high question imagination can start about the Most High. I can tell, in all things, just what he can do and what he cannot; just what he ought to do, and what he is not allowed to do. There is nothing in God which I have not fathomed, and which I do not perfectly comprehend." *There!* there exactly is the fatal flaw in your argument. It is built upon an intelligence which you do not possess. For see! The very moment that you admit that your intellect is finite, and that there are mysteries in the Godhead which you cannot unravel, then, for aught you know, this very doctrine of future punishment may be one of them; and your argument is torn up, root and branch—for you *know* nothing upon the subject.

But, you feebly respond, "We certainly brand that man—a diabolical monster—who throws his children into the flames; and do we not fling the most blasphemous dishonor upon our heavenly Father by teaching that he burns his creatures in hell-fire forever?" No, sir! It is no dishonor to say of a man what he says every day of himself. And since God assures us, from one end of the Bible to the other, that he will consign the wicked to everlasting punishment, we do not perpetrate the slightest semblance of slander, when we simply say of him, what he constantly says of himself. The fact is, the tables are turned, and the Universalist is the slanderer. When an intelligent, dignified, firm man seriously declares to everybody, that he will certainly do a given thing within his power; that man insults him



who says—"I know him well; he never will do that thing. He is too kind, too just, too imbecile. He will never, never do that thing." God, in the Scriptures, perpetually assures the sinner, that if he comes to him impenitent, he will destroy him forever. The Universalist advances, throws a patronizing wing over the weakness of the Almighty, and well nigh conceding that God does not exactly understand himself, and speaks a little too fast, confidently affirms—"I know God; God is too kind, too just, too intelligent. He will never burn his children in the fire. No! never!! never in the world!!!" I insist upon it, this man insults God. He insults his intelligence, and his integrity, and his dignity and all the divinity that is in him. The fact is, he assumes a blasphemous superiority over God. Blind worm of the dust as he is, he practically pronounces his Maker a blusterer. Depend upon it, eternity will flash the truth into the soul of the Universalist—that it is *he*, and not the orthodox, who insults God by his views of this doctrine.

In laying by this argument from reason, we say—investigate it fairly and thoroughly, and you will find that reason plants a firm brace under the stern old Bible doctrine of eternal punishment, and repels the objector and his vindication, with the most indignant contempt.

## II.—THE ARGUMENT FROM SCRIPTURE.

To a teachable mind, the Divine testimony—seems to me—perfectly overwhelming.

1. GOD'S ETERNAL LAW settles the question forever.

In every community, the law is that grand governmental provision, whose special office it is, to settle the character and the destiny of the subject. In God's kingdom, God's law must decide the destiny of the sinner. What is the voice of God's law on the point in hand? Its simple, unmistakable, all-decisive sentence is this:—"Do and thou shalt live; disobey and thou shalt die." This is the one uncontradicted decision of God's law, from Genesis to Revelation. Mark it: there is no escape! For the law of God, firm and clear,—“thou shalt die,”—fixes, unavoidably, the future punishment of the sinner. Human reason, we have seen, sustains this doctrine. In moral principle, the character of the offender deserves it—this all nature feels; and in moral structure, universal peace demands it—since to avert the doom of the sinner, is to abolish government.

*Objection.*—But are not Christians disobedient; and are not Christians saved? Why then may not sinners be saved, though they, too, be disobedient? I answer—the objection establishes the doctrine it opposes. The very principle which acquits the Christian, condemns the sinner. You are aware that the Christian is saved only by that faith which presents and pleads the perfect obedience of Jesus Christ. If, therefore, nothing but the perfect obedience of Jesus Christ—accepted—saves the Christian, then this very principle which saves the Christian by *faith*, must condemn the sinner whose *unbelief* rejects the righteousness that saves.

2. THE SCRIPTURAL STATEMENT settles the dark doom of the sinner. God's affirmation of the final destruction

of the impenitent is not only lucid, strong, and indisputable, but reiterated in every form and shape through Holy Writ. I will present God's statement on this subject in successive classes of Scriptures, that, through their rising gradations, we may reach the massive strength of God's testimony.

The common statement of the sinner's destiny runs thus—"The soul that sinneth it shall die." "The wages of sin is death." "He that pursueth evil, pursueth it unto his death." "The light of the wicked shall be put out." "The end of the wicked shall be cut off." "The way of the wicked shall be turned upside-down." "The wicked are reserved unto the day of destruction." "The ungodly shall not stand in the judgment." "The heavens and the earth shall perish in the fire of the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men." "The wicked shall be turned unto death." "Whose end is destruction." Only let Scripture be consistent with itself, and in view of these passages, and ten times as many of similar import, it is incredible that God could have intended to announce to men, in the Bible, that the wicked shall share the mansions of bliss with the righteous, through eternal ages.

Now mark, in each of the following quotations, that God speaks of the destruction of the sinner with more solemn positiveness and emphatic certainty. The first proclaimer of Universalism was the Serpent in the garden—"Ye shall not surely die." Very different is the word of God. "In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." "O, wicked man, thou shalt surely die." "Though hand join in hand, the wicked

shall not be unpunished," Observe! God's mercy, stretched to the utmost, shall never save the wicked. "The Lord! The Lord God! merciful and gracious; long suffering; abundant in goodness and in truth; keeping mercy for thousands; forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin—and that will, by no means, clear the guilty." Nor shall God's power, exerted to the utmost, ever save the wicked. "The Lord is slow to anger, and great in power—but will not at all acquit the wicked." Sometimes in the same breath, God averts all blessing and inflicts all cursing. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; but he, that believeth not the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." All Scripture on this point is summed up in a word. "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked."

Ponder God's *positive* statement. It builds a wall directly across the sinner's path to peace. Only let the Bible be consistent with itself, as was before said, and it does certainly make the destruction of the sinner inevitable; and, clearly, you must break down God's truth before you can save the sinner's soul.

The *final* statement. Be pleased to observe that each of the following passages extinguishes forever all hope beyond the curse pronounced. "The wicked shall be driven away—in his wickedness." "The wicked shall perish forever in his own corruption." "The wicked shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and the glory of his power"—"Shall depart into everlasting fire"—"Shall be utterly consumed"—"Shall go to the generation of his fathers

and never see light." "Now consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, when there is none to deliver." For "ye shall seek me, and shall not find me; ye shall call upon me, but I will not answer."

Who would question, for an instant, the finality of God's sentence upon the sinner, in view of the following declarations: "In the end of the world, the angels shall come forth and sever the wicked from among the just, and cast them into the furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth." Matt. xiii. 49—50, "Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." I beg you to note, if possible, the yet more indisputable clearness of the final destruction of these three classes of sinners. "If any man see his brother sin a sin which is *not* unto death, he shall ask and God shall give life unto them that sin not unto death." "There is a sin—unto death. I say not that he shall pray for it." 1 John, 5—16. These persons, you will remark, have sinned unto death, and are beyond prayer. Tell me! How can this class of persons ever get to Heaven? Again. "I say unto you, blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. Whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come." Matt. xii. 31. These persons are condemned; and, you perceive, they can never obtain forgiveness, not in this world, nor in the world to come. Tell me, I say! How is this class of the human family to find their way to Heaven? Again. Jesus says—"Ye shall die in your sins. Whither

I go, ye cannot come." John viii. 21. All unconverted men die in their sins; and if they cannot come where Christ is, by what process, or power, shall they reach the presence of Christ? Alas! how terrific is the certainty of the final damnation of the sinner! Let God intend to pronounce a doom, whose finality shall be absolute—and it is hard to conceive how he could surpass his published pronouncements upon the apostate child of Adam. Accursed of heaven—the sinner dwells in "everlasting burnings,"—yet "never sees the light;" is "utterly consumed," yet "the fire is not quenched;" is everlastingly "dead,"—yet "the worm, in him, dieth not;" is "torn to pieces where there is none to deliver"—when he calls, he is never answered; when he seeks, he never finds. In a word, he sinks to a death—beyond prayer; a condemnation—beyond forgiveness; and a doom—beyond the reach of Christ.

Ponder now, God's *final* statement concerning the fate of the wicked. If, in spite of the most intense and terrible finality of all these curses, the sinner, after all, is actually saved; if the reprobates of the earth, no matter whether they have blasphemed against the Holy Ghost, or sinned unto death, or died in their sins—if, I say, they shall all, all be as heartily welcomed to Heaven as the righteous—then, undeniably, every essential idea of truth, rectitude and divinity is blotted out forever. There can be no alternative. Only give Universalism life, and you draw the breath of all virtue and annul revelation. Nor is this all. Let Universalism establish its first step in its fatal delusion, and the great Revealer himself shall never survive the calamity.

For where now is God's truth? Never forget it; when God's truth dies, God himself will not live. "God is truth."

*The Contrasted Statement.*—The ultimate division of the human family, stands out in all parts of Holy Writ, portrayed in the clearest language; for God, everywhere, holds up the end of the righteous and the end of the wicked in diametrical antagonism, the one to the other. Lend your candid attention to the passages I shall rehearse. "I call Heaven and earth to record against you this day, that I have set before you—life and death." "Say ye to the righteous, it shall be well with him; woe unto the wicked, it shall be ill with him." "The Lord knoweth the way of the righteous, but the way of the ungodly shall perish." "Repent, that your sins may be blotted out;" for "Except ye repent ye shall perish." "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, the end of that man is peace; but the transgressors shall be destroyed together." "The Lord preserveth all them that love him; but all the wicked will he destroy." "Zion shall be redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteousness; but they that forsake the Lord shall be consumed." "The righteous hath hope in his death;" "but when the wicked man dieth, his expectation shall perish." "For the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him." "For the hour is come in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice and come forth,—they that have done good to the resurrection

of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation." "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal."

How is it possible, in the nature of things, that these two classes can be brought together? They certainly are essential opposites—in principle and affection; in aim and life; by the voice of conscience; by the general word of God; and especially in view of this arraignment and opposite sentencing of the two parties, by the immutable God.

Reflect, too, that this necessary opposition in destiny stands strongly confirmed—first, by the *working of the Gospel*. The one, you know, is "life unto life"—in God's blessing upon the righteous, here *this* is; the other "death unto death"—in God's curse upon the sinner, here *that* is.

Again—by the *working of the law*—"Do and live;" by these Scriptures, the good man lives; or "disobey and die"—by these Scriptures the sinner dies.

Still again—This opposition in destiny is confirmed by the law of antithesis, that is, when human thought comes up in contrast; when one part of a two-fold sentiment is thrown out in opposition to the other part, both science and common sense establish this great interpreting law. For instance, find the meaning of one term of the antithesis, and the meaning of the other is the exact opposite. Now all men must agree that, in these Scriptures, God does contrast the end of the righteous with the end of the wicked; and that the end of the righteous shall certainly be everlasting association with God. Therefore, by the law of antithesis, the



end of the wicked must be everlasting banishment from God.

Once more, let me say—The eternal separation of these parties is immutably confirmed by every conception of language, nature and God. Ponder God's contrasted statement of what he himself solemnly purposes to do with the righteous and with the wicked. I say now, if, after all this multiplied form of consignment of them to perfectly opposite destinies, and the creation of an impassable gulf, to hold them asunder forever; if, after all, God does actually welcome both to the very same Heaven—then, by this act, God emphatically proclaims to all the universe that, henceforth and forevermore—righteousness and wickedness—are the same; to be well and to be ill—are the same; life and death—are the same; everlasting salvation and everlasting destruction—are the same; to be saved and to be damned—are the same; to be preserved and to be destroyed—are the same; to be redeemed and to be consumed—are the same; a resurrection unto life, and a resurrection unto damnation—are the same. In a word, an endless catalogue of celestial blessings and of infernal curses—are the same. Nay! good and evil, Heaven and hell, are one and the same. Surely, if Universalism is true, the foundations are destroyed! Truth, order, trust, and hope—are all adrift! Nay, if Universalism is true—God is dethroned—and Chaos is King of Kings. (*Vide Appendix.*)

*The Pictorial Statement.*—It is sometimes objected that words, being conventional, often change their import, and are therefore but an uncertain vehicle of truth.

Grant it. I meet the objector with the fact, that *paintings* never do change. Had the story of Cain and Abel been told upon canvas, instead of on the historic page—the elder brother standing, with malignant countenance and bloody club in hand, over the prostrate, breathless, mangled body of the younger—this picture would have told the unalterable story so clearly, that no tongue of time would have asked a question. Now, it is certainly true, that the manifold parables of the Lord Jesus, representing the opposite end of the righteous and the wicked, are actually *moral paintings* and paintings so palpable that no candid man can possibly mistake the truth he intends to express.

Take, for example, the Parable of “the Wheat and the Tares.” The former, the Master tells us, stands for Christians; the latter—for sinners. Whoever conceived, for an instant, that the wheat and the tares were assigned to the same end? The one—is to be barned; the other—to be burned. So the wicked are ordered to be bound up in bundles and thrown into the fire; while the righteous are translated to shine—as the sun in the kingdom above. Surely, by this parable, the opposite destiny of the good and the bad is flashed upon the mind irresistibly. The Kingdom of Heaven, the Lord tells us again, is like a net cast into the sea, which gathered fishes of all kinds. Who can glance at this picture and imagine, for an instant, that the same disposition was to be made of both kinds of fishes? No, indeed! The good were to be gathered into vessels and preserved; the bad were to be cast away as utterly worthless. How strikingly this drawing depicts the

opposite destinies of the parties in the day of final reckoning.

In the happy teaching of the Saviour, the Kingdom of Heaven is likened again unto "Ten Virgins." The wise had oil in their vessels and went in with the bridegroom to the marriage; the foolish had no oil, and while going about to purchase, the door was shut; and, though they sought it prayerfully, they never reached the happy destination of their more faithful companions. Whoever doubted that, by this painting, it was meant to portray the ultimate admission of the faithful, and exclusion of the faithless, from the marriage supper of the Lamb? So the picture of the great supper was certainly drawn by the Master to set off, in imperishable colors, the total and final difference, both in the conduct and the destiny of those, who promptly accepting his gospel invitations, were now feasting upon the luxuries of his table—while those, who declined his earlier invitations, were driven away, assured that they "never should taste of his supper."

Perhaps the most splendid work of art, drawn by the Divine pencil, is the picture of the day of judgment, at the close of the parable of the talents. No man upon earth ever calmly pondered this most august and inimitable production and failed to feel and to see the coming, certain, final separation of the human family on the last great day. Creation would stand aghast, if a child of Adam should come forth on the day of judgment, and, in the presence of the great assembly, avow the following sentiments—"Son of God! I never conceived on earth, that the sublime picture of this great day, as pre-

sented in the gospel of Matthew, was drawn up to announce to man that there would be a final separation of the righteous from the wicked in the eternal world! True! the righteous were placed on one side, and the wicked on the other. True! a blessing was pronounced upon the one for his good deeds, and a curse upon the other for his bad deeds. True, the Judge did invite the one into his heavenly kingdom, and commanded the other to depart into hell-fire. True, he did most solemnly declare that the one should go away into everlasting punishment, and the other ascend into life eternal. True, a great and impassable gulf was fixed, between the righteous and the wicked, to hold them apart forever and ever. But, after all, I solemnly avow, here in this awful presence, that I never considered that this terrible and final sundering of the human family—*by God's word*—was actually intended to set forth the final separation of the human family—*by God's hand*." No, verily! That man is not in Heaven, earth, or hell, who will ever approach to such an avowal. Verily! man has no language capable of expressing the thought, if Christ's description of the judgment does not teach a final division of the human family in eternity.

But, my friend, let me say, in a word, if you really desire to know what God thinks of Universalism, and how God feels toward that mortal, who presumes that any man of any character, regardless of the terms of the gospel, may enter Heaven, at any time, and sit down to its blessings—go this moment and read, in the twenty-second chapter of Matthew, the parable of the king who made a marriage for his son. I venture to say that

your hair will stand on end and your knees smite together, as you witness the deadly wrath of God as expressed against the creature who ventures to carry out in his presence, such dishonoring views of his character and kingdom.

It is a little remarkable that the king's servants, in the execution of their duty, seemed to act very much upon the principle of this popular heresy. "They gathered all, as many as they found, bad and good, and the wedding was furnished with guests." One of the company, in his every-day garb, without the slightest preparatory change, ventured to march into the hall and seat himself at the supper-table. Alas! what a moment awaits that man! What an agony shall soon seize his soul! Under a deadly thrill he shall look and see that every other guest at that table wears a wedding-garment. As by a flash of lightning on his conscience, he shall remember that the invitation to him was conditional. He was a guest invited, provided he would submit himself to the arrangements of the king, and apply for, receive and wear that garment, that *prepared dress* which the king himself had provided and passed upon, as every way becoming the dignity, splendor, elegance, and joyous proprieties of the great occasion. Yes, poor man! Brace up thy nerves, for thou shalt need all thy courage to meet the dread moment just at hand. For it is written, "When the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man who had not on a wedding-garment, and he saith unto him—Friend! how camest thou in hither, *not having a wedding-garment?* And he was speechless. Then said the king to his ser-

vants—bind him, hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” Such, such is the doom of that man who dares to act upon the principle of universal salvation before the face of God! For remember, it is Jesus Christ himself, who says—“The Kingdom of Heaven is like”—this.

Oh, the parables of the Lord Jesus! What vivid paintings! What lucid teachings! They seem to flash into every honest mind an irresistible conviction, that the human family is to be sundered in eternity, and the wicked to sink to hopeless destruction!

And yet, strange to say, there are men who seriously teach, that all these instructions of Jesus Christ are designed to apprise mankind that the wicked shall be welcomed home to Heaven, at last, as heartily as the righteous; and that the whole human family, without an exception, shall be finally saved. Well! if this be so, then Universalism is true! But this is not all. Then the ministry of Jesus Christ on earth is a stupendous abortion. Then the most enlightened and excellent men and women of every generation are the most consummate fools that ever provoked the contempt of man.

Out upon the preposterous accusation!! No, indeed! The work of the Son of God upon earth—is not a failure! The faith of the wisest of all ages—is not a failure! What then? Oh, then, with terrible recoil, the indignant Spirit of truth shall one day rush upon the false accuser, brand upon his forehead—“*Damnable Heresy* ;” and point him, in the future, to far more dis-

astrous failures nearer at home. For on the last great day, the mighty multitude, entrapped and accursed by his seductive flatteries here, fired with righteous vengeance, shall see the great deceiver go down to his proper home—deep amid the dungeons of the dead and damned. And say—“He offered salvation to all, but cannot save himself.”

I solicit your attention to one more Scriptural point :

#### GOD'S LAST STATEMENT.

You may remember, my friend, that in our brief doctrinal conversation, to my pertinent inquiry, your prompt reply was this—That you had never felt a doubt about the divinity of Christ, but had long been troubled by unbelieving suggestions concerning the doom of the wicked. You did not profess to believe the doctrine of Universalism ; and yet there appeared to rest upon your mind some such view as this :—Admitting the adverse testimony of the earlier books of Scripture, there seemed to come up before you in God's last book, in the book of Revelation, the semblance of an universal amnesty—a sort of general restitution of the human family to a more comfortable ground of hope for the future. In half-way argument, and yet with a doubtful smile, you recited the following passage from the fifteenth chapter, “*For all nations shall come and worship before thee.*” Now, permit me to say, my friend, that, in my judgment, the book of Revelation is not only in perfect accord with that line of truth deduced from the preceding portions of the Word of God, but that it distin-

guishes itself above them all, by thrusting a more deadly stab into the very vitals of Universalism.

For our purpose, allow me to subject the book of Revelation to a twofold division—Christ's messages to the churches of the day; and his prediction of the coming conflicts of the church of God in future ages.

The Saviour's words, through John, to the seven churches of Asia are in perfect keeping with the Scriptural argument adduced above. They comprise two classes of ideas. They deal with the same two orders of persons—Christians and sinners; and accord to them the same twofold award—salvation to the righteous and condemnation to the sinner. The righteous are fully described by the virtues they possess, and the fidelities they have practiced. The salvation promised is brightly sketched through such figures as the following—"a crown of life," the "morning star," the "white stone," the "hidden manna," the "new name," "a pillar in the temple of God," &c. This salvation, bear in mind, here as elsewhere, is offered only to a part of the human family, to a specific class—to those who are "faithful unto death," especially "to him that overcometh." Now, the following deduction from these premises, we hold to be incontrovertible—If Jesus Christ allots salvation only to the righteous, and because they are such, then he must pronounce the opposite destiny upon the sinner, in view of his opposite character.

And here let me say that this is precisely what these messages to the seven churches do. They arraign the apostates in these churches, convict them of the crimes alleged against them, and then pronounce the sentence



of condemnation in the following language: "I will come upon you as a thief." "I will take away your candlestick." "I will cast you into great tribulation." "I will kill you." "I will blot out your name from the book of life." "I will consign you to the hurt of the second death." Every intelligent man must see, at a glance, that these mandatory addresses of Jesus Christ to the Asiatic churches stand square up to the general teaching of the Bible, and assign to the human family an opposite destiny in eternity in accordance with their opposite character in time.

The Saviour's powerful foreshadowings of the conflicts and triumphs of his church, in after ages, do still more powerfully establish the doctrine of future punishment. The prophetic portion of the book demands but the same simple analysis to be applied to Christ's messages to the churches in the earlier chapters. We have here the same two classes of actors on the stage—the righteous—with God and Christ at their head; and the wicked—under the lead of Satan and the beast. These parties are engaged in deadly combat from the beginning to the end with ever-varying issues. In their early conflicts, the saints were sorely persecuted and slaughtered dreadfully; but their faithful struggles are ultimately crowned with magnificent success. The character of the parties; their moral difference, and, especially, their intimate connection and fellowship with the great prime movers of good and evil in the universe, are here far more boldly, powerfully, and amply sketched. The grand, dominant idea which connects and elucidates the entire prophecy is precisely this:—"In the eternal world the

righteous are certainly to be saved, and sinners as certainly to be damned.

Their *opposite character* must divide them. Regeneration has certainly revealed the godliness of the Christian in this book. It has thrown God's people, out of sympathy with sin and the world, into communion with Christ and his church. They love God; they love the Saviour; they love his Kingdom; they love one another; they hate sin, and cannot stand the wicked. They show all this most clearly in the history recorded. Now, such persons must be saved. In their very nature they belong to God and Heaven. They are in their place, at home, and happy there and nowhere else. They feel that they are one with God and ought to be with him; while God sees that they have complied with all his requirements, earned all his promises, possess all his affections; and to divest them of a home in his presence would be the deepest cruelty and injustice. Assuredly from their character alone, the righteous must be saved.

The wicked, too, in all these prophecies, stand out as diametrically opposite in character to the righteous. Their apostate heart has not a solitary sympathy with God or his Kingdom, but cherishes the most deadly hate against both. There is not a principle in the mind of the wicked which, acted out, would not instantly rush into deadly conflict with every attribute, measure, and servant of the great King of Heaven. Look at the character these sinners exhibit in the Revelation, and tell me, if you can, how such a nature can be saved? There is nothing, nothing in God or his home which can awaken in the wicked, correspondence or fellowship,

appreciation or amity, co-operation or comfort. Were there no curse upon his head, by the laws of mind such a creature could never be saved. The unrelenting hostility to all holiness which dwells and rankles in every sinful soul, must find its hottest hell in the centre of Heaven. Just ponder the workings of apostate nature, as they are portrayed in these histories of the Apocalypse, and you will realize that, independent of everthing else, the very character of a sinner must entail upon him inevitable and eternal separation from the righteous.

Their opposite relations secure their opposite end. Survey the Christian in these prophecies, and you will find that he is allied to God by every strong, endearing connection that can bind minds together. The Christian is the child of God. He calls God his Father, and God calls him his son; and their mutual sympathies, by every natural exhibition in this prophecy, reveal an actual, an indissoluble tie in their parental and filial affection. The Christian, too, is the servant of God, and is so called in this book abundantly, both by God and angels. There seems to exist, too, the very strongest and sweetest fellowship between the parties in this relation. God dwells with them, supplies them, defends them, fights for them, avenges their blood, and comforts their sorrows; while they serve him faithfully in the field, and day and night in the temple. The Christian, too, is God's soldier. His great commander he obeys, he fights for, and freely sheds his blood in his cause; his great captain, too, leads him in the moral battle of life, fights by his side, protects him, avenges him, vanquishes his enemies, and rewards his fidelity. On the

part of both, there would seem to exist, in the light of the prophetic history, the very heartiest, closest, and firmest attachment. Clearly, these relations must save the Christian. You cannot sunder such children, servants, and soldiers from such a Father, Lord, and Captain. To what home in the universe do such solemn and intimate connections point, but to the bosom of God?

Now, if these relations make the salvation of the righteous certain, opposite relations must as certainly involve the destruction of the wicked. The record abundantly illustrates the charge that the wicked are the children, servants, and soldiers of the devil, and how can they be saved under the holy government of God? Undeniably, if the righteous are embraced as sons, servants, and soldiers—the wicked must be rejected as reprobates, unfaithful, and rebels.

Their *opposite habits* must conduct to ultimate separation. Look at the record and you will perceive that the principles of the one, move out in holiness: of the other, in sinfulness; that the acts of the one, are obedient to God: of the other, to the devil; that the pulsations of the one, fling up heartiest adoration to God: of the other, the bitterest blasphemies against him; that the aims of the one, are to advance God's cause: of the other, the Kingdom of Satan; that the fellowship of the one, is with God and the good: of the other, with Satan and his crew. In a word, this very book says of the one, that he is a worshipper of God; of the other, that he is a worshipper of the beast. Now, if the habitual holiness, obedience, adoration, consecration, and com-

munion of the Christian—save, must not the opposite habits of the sinner—destroy? The one “follows the Lamb whithersoever he goeth,” and must go to Heaven; the other follows the beast wherever he goes, and must go to hell.

The *opposite marks* of the parties must eternally sunder them. One mark of the righteous is this—his name has been written in the Lamb's book of life. The common statement on the subject, in the book of Revelation, affirms that the names of Christians are written in this book; that the names of sinners are not.

Bear in mind, under this figure, that before man fell, the whole human family had their record in the book of life. God created man with a capacity to live forever; but at the fall, and by man's act of sin, this condition ceased to exist; and the record of life was cancelled. There exactly lay the necessity of introducing the new, or second book of life, viz. : to designate, and set apart, all those of the fallen race, who shall be saved from the general wreck. As the Christian's name is here, he will be saved; and as the sinner's name is not here, he will not be saved.

We are taught, in the revealed will of God, that which we could not otherwise have known, and which is certainly true, that there are two conditions of human existence, distinguished by those expressive words, life and death. We have *this* life in contrast with another life—“Who have their portion in this life”—“Choked with the cares of this life.” “If in this life only we have hope,” &c. So we have, “Everlasting life,” “Eternal life,” “What shall I do, that I may have

eternal life?" "He that hateth his life, shall keep it to eternal life," &c. On the other hand, we have the second death. "He that overcomes, shall not be hurt by the second death." "On such the second death hath no power," &c. This book of life obviously refers to this second death and to life eternal. The great importance of books, manifest in all the Scriptures, as registers of events, of obligations, laws, &c., renders these allusions, in Revelation, to books, very natural, especially in regard to one's rights or condition.

From the earliest to the latest of the Sacred Scriptures, this figurative expression is used.

To be blotted out of God's book, is equivalent to utter destruction, and in that last of these sacred writings, which most fully reveals the state of the future world, the book of life has a most conspicuous place.

There is a fearful solemnity resting on this subject, that demands our deepest reverence; and it is amazing, how men can talk about it, in a flippant and trifling manner.

The great Judge, whose title is KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS, in awful majesty, ascends the throne, and thus is the scene described—"I saw a great white throne and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the Heaven fled away; and there was no place found for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God. And the books were opened; and another book was opened which is the book of life; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead, which were in it; and death and

hell (the grave) gave up the dead, which were in them; and they were judged every man according to their works. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life, was cast into the lake of fire."

This book bears a special title, of wonderful import—"The book of life, of the Lamb slain." How is the mind filled with crowding thoughts, at these words! The Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world—the Lamb slain in sacrifice—Jesus, the Son of God—Calvary—the cross—the dying Saviour—the trembling earth—the darkened sun—every principle of love, and justice, and mercy, there expressed, in the Lamb slain. His book of life, and every soul therein recorded, "redeemed with the precious blood of Christ." Alas! whose name shall not be there? I tremble as I write it—whose name shall not be there recorded?

Now, with what language shall I express my amazing horror, at the thought, that any human being should dare to say, that all this is a sham, a mere frivolous play of words. No such awful judge—no such book—no such judgment from its record—everybody is saved. "O, my soul, come not thou into their secret, unto their assembly, mine honor, be not thou united."

Another-mark of the righteous is this: he is *sealed in the forehead* as the servant of God—a most significant figure to express the designation of the righteous. The common statement is, that all God's servants are sealed in the forehead; and that none of the wicked are thus sealed. The end of sealing for salvation is to discriminate and identify the saved. But if all are saved, what identification do you want? If all are saved, what

discrimination can you make? From what discriminate? A farmer owns immense multitudes of flocks and herds. Nay, all the cattle and stock of all kinds, in the whole country—are his. What would you think of the economy and skill of this man, were he to burden himself with the expense and trouble of marking his entire stock? There is nothing with which they can be confounded now, and there will be no increased identification then. Now, if the doctrine I oppose is true, and God has indeed decreed the universal salvation of Adam's race, this very decree has already affixed the very highest possible mark of salvation upon every soul of them, and what more do you want? Besides, if the great unsealed mass are indisputably saved, then would not your sealing distinguish *from them*, and thus seem to discriminate *toward* destruction? But if you insist upon it that sealing has its use, then why not seal all? What sort of a farmer is he who turns out into the prairie his thousand sheep to herd with the many thousands of his neighbors, but marks only one in twenty? What is to save nineteen-twentieths of his whole flock from foreign claim? If all are saved, why does God seal any? If sealing is necessary, why does he not seal all? God's people are known by their mark. Therefore, as sinners are not sealed by God, but by the beast, they belong to the beast and not to God, and must go to the home of their master.

Their opposite award must part them for eternity. A sentence pronounced by a magistrate, clothed with competent authority, is the highest possible evidence of the doom of the convict. Such manifestoes of the final



decree of the Judge of all the earth, touching the descendants of Adam, are multiplied from the commencement to the conclusion of this book. As the prophecy draws toward its termination, and the plot is thickening, and the great judgment lingereth not, and the consummation of all things is at hand—these final sentences seem to fix the ultimate habitation of the parties, with terrible distinctness. Let two or three specimens of the same suffice.

Early in the twenty-first chapter of Revelation God's people are introduced into the holy city, when the record thus proceeds—"And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away." "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and adulterers and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." This most solemn pronouncement, no man on earth ever misunderstood. Palpably, it welcomes the righteous to Heaven; but all sinners, not presumptuous transgressors only, but all gospel-neglectors, all who refuse this great salvation, are consigned to a terribly opposite doom for eternity.

Toward the close of the same chapter, the Revelator proceeds to present a far more gorgeous and extended description of the walls and foundations of the holy city; and again, he distinctly designates both the party who shall *not*, and the party who *shall* inhabit this happy home, in the following language—"There shall, in no

wise, enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie; but they which are written in the book of life." Here again, we have placed visibly before us, the final separation of the saint and the sinner, of the written and unwritten in the book of life. The one enters the holy city; the other is excluded forever. The last chapter in the Bible commences with a splendid description of the most captivating objects within the city, and the most exalted felicity of its inhabitants. They who carry God's name in their foreheads, the sealed servants of God—they are held up, as the persons who—"Shall see his face, and reign with him forever and ever." But observe: This book says only they—"For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie." This book of Revelation, God's last word to man, reveals distinctly to us the final home of these unfortunate people—the unrecorded and the unsealed. They are to occupy, through eternity, the same lodgings with Satan, whose mark they carry. In the nineteenth chapter we are informed that the Beast and the false Prophet were both—"Cast alive into a lake of fire, burning with brimstone." The twentieth chapter teaches us, that Satan was cast into the same lake with the Beast and the false Prophet, and adds—"Where they were to be tormented day and night, forever and ever." Now, the last verse of that same chapter comprises and therefore confirms all that has been said of the doom of the wicked, in the word of God. That verse instructs us, that "every soul"—mark that!—

“every soul who was not found written in the book of life.” What of this unwritten man? What was done with him? Why he, too, was cast into the same fiery lake with the Beast, the false Prophet and the Devil. So says the book of Revelation, this last word of God to man. On what possible ground can it be assumed, that while Satan is doomed to everlasting punishment, human beings cannot be so doomed, because of the mercy of God, purely? Oh, the doom of the wicked! The doom of the wicked! How terribly certain! How terribly disastrous! How terribly hopeless!

God made man for the truth. Let man stand up bravely for it under adverse pressure. This day I render homage to God’s dishonored truth and declare—that the Scriptural doctrine of the final destiny of the human family, to me, seems—splendidly reasonable. God’s ever-blessed book sends the Christian to dwell in a happy home, with whose august head and household he is in perfect harmony—through his character, his relations, his habits, his marks, his affections, and especially by the final decision of infinite rectitude and benevolence. God’s ever-blessed book dismisses the sinner to the home of his life-long choice, with whose head and household he has ever shown himself in perfect sympathy—by his character, and his relations, and his agencies, and his tastes, and his marks, and especially by the final decision of infinite truth and justice. What procedure of the God of Heaven could have been more just, wise or kind?

But where shall we find a brain active and comprehensive enough to measure the infinite unreason-able-

ness of this doctrine of Universal salvation? It throws together, in one home, two large families of rational beings—whose characters, and relations, and tastes, and habits, and marks, and histories, and awards, are as perfectly antagonistic as light and darkness. It collects these two antagonistic households under an august parental head, whose entire force—by the perfections of his nature and the decree of his will—must exalt the one and degrade the other through eternity. Most amazing of all! It works out its preposterous project by breasting and scorning that mighty flood of inspiration which reveals all these essential contrarities, and ultimate issues upon every page of Holy Writ, from beginning to end.

My friend, I do not hate my Universalist fellow-men. God forbid! There is not a soul of them, whom I would not instantly befriend and save. A few of them, too, I am happy to trust, are God's sincere children and will, through our doctrines, not those of their sect, reach the holy city. But I grieve for the common Universalist. I tremble for the fate of his soul. Would to God that he would come to reason in time. Oh, I fear he will be lost. The Lord have mercy upon him before it is an eternity too late.

And now, just here, allow me to say, that your proof-text brings no support to the desperate fortunes of the sinner. The fact is, the true bearing of the passage has no relation to this subject. "*All nations shall come and worship before thee.*" These words are a prediction of a future event—confined to time and reaching not to eternity; embracing a generation or two and not the race.

No serious man denies that, from the commencement to the conclusion of Revelation, God has promised that there shall come a period on earth when there will be a general prevalence of religion over the whole world. "All shall know thee, from the least unto the greatest;" and a thousand and one similar assurances. Christendom has long looked for this predicted spread of the gospel, this millennium, the conversion of the world. Now, it is perfectly clear to me, that to some such period in the future, a time of the general dissemination of religion amongst mankind, this text of yours refers, and to nothing else. The words prove it. The phrase "all nations" is commonly employed to express *not* the human family, but a generation of it. The context favors it. The church had just achieved a glorious victory over the enemies of God and man, and while singing her triumphant songs, with prophetic eye, she looks into the future and hails with ecstasy that coming, broader triumph of holiness, abundantly described in future chapters. The tenor of Scripture establishes this construction. The promised spread of the gospel is everywhere couched in just such language. "All nations shall flow unto the house of the Lord." "All nations shall serve him." "Thy saving health shall be made known to all nations."

But the question is put to rest by this fact: that between the passage under discussion and many of the millennial predictions, there is not only a perfect identity in sentiment, but a perfect identity in language. You will find every word of your text in Psalms lxxxvi. 9. "All nations whom thou hast made shall come and

worship before thee, O Lord; and shall glorify thy name." Mark now, these two things: Your proof-text has its entire field on earth; and its saving power works not in the past, not in the present, only in the future. "All nations shall" make a record now of the narrow bearing of your standard text. The four thousand years of sinners, between the fall of man and the advent of Jesus, may be this day, every one of them, in the hell of the Bible, for aught your text has done to save them. The eighteen hundred years of sinners, composing the generations between our day and the birth of Christ, may be this day, every one of them, in perdition, for aught your passage has to say upon the subject. The eighteen hundred years—more or less—of sinners, that shall dwell on the earth between our day and the commencement of the predicted holy time, shall certainly land in the pit—if delivering power is to come from your text. Satan was chained during the millennium, but turned loose at its close to "deceive the nations" again. Thus all the generations of sinners, between the close of the predicted period of natural worship and the end of the world, must perish without help from your passage. And finally, were it necessary, it might easily be shown, that your text does not even assure us of the salvation of all the sinners of its brief prophetic day. What now shall we think of the all-saving power of your standard passage? Is it an impregnable corner-stone of Universalism? Does it establish the eternal salvation of every child of Adam?

Bear with my rudeness, my friend. One stretch of a twenty-foot tape-line may go as far to measure the circumference of the earth, as does this text to sustain the

monstrous assumption of Universalism. My friend, pardon me. Do you not suppose that there are other proof-texts, popular in the mouths of Universalists, which, subjected to a little examination, would explode as absolutely?

How prodigious is the strength of the Scripture argument against this popular heresy! By his common statement, all through his word, God affirms that the wicked shall perish; by his positive statement, all through his word, God assures us that the wicked shall surely perish. By his final statement, all through his word, God declares that there is no possible hope for the wicked after death; by his contrasted statement, all through his word, God spreads an impassable gulf between the end of the righteous and the end of the wicked; by his pictorial statement, in all his parables, the Lord Jesus flashes this contrast irresistibly upon every mind; and now, by his last word, we have seen that God brings up a far more pungent and impregnable confirmation of the great preceding body of Scripture testimony. Glance along this fortified line of truth, running compactly through every page of Holy Writ, from beginning to end! Its every element is—a Scripture; and each Scripture lies—plumb—under God's doctrine of future punishment. Stand upon this firm foundation and calmly solicit the objector, in off-set to all this point-blank Scripture proof, to produce, if he can, one solitary clear text, in all the Bible, wherein God promises to save the finally impenitent, unbelieving, or unregenerated sinner—and you will be apt to feel the clear, consistent, massive, impregnable strength of the Scripture argument.

## III.—THE ARGUMENT FROM PROVIDENCE.

God's providence presides over two worlds—the natural and the spiritual. By this providence, apart from the instructions of his word, God teaches man in two ways—through the work of his hand, and the voice of his Spirit. In the one he instructs men, by the address of natural events to their senses. In the other, by the operations of his Spirit on the heart and conscience.

1. THE HAND OF GOD.—The hand of God seems to shape history in this world, so as to foreshadow the events which the word of God predicts of the world to come. All through time, God signally smiles upon the righteous, and frowns upon the wicked. Even the brief experience of man in the garden, brings up strong corroboration of the general principle. So long as our first parents were righteous, God visited and blessed them; the moment they sinned, God cursed and left them. Ere long, a great deluge is sent upon the earth. See! Righteous Noah and his family are saved; but all the wicked perish. Penal fires are discharged from the skies, and ere they reach the cities of the Plain—behold! Righteous Lot is safely sheltered in Zoar; but the wicked people, amongst whom he dwelt, shall be seen no more. On the eastern bank of the Red Sea, God's persecuted people stand calm and triumphant. But look out upon the stormy waters! The wicked pursuers, chariots, horsemen, and King, perish in the angry billows. Sometimes of old, God made the wicked, like an arraigned culprit, stand out by themselves,



surrounded by multiplied thousands of righteous spectators. At his command, the earth opened, and O, horrid! Instantly they, their wives, their children, and their all, were confined alive for the judgment! Sometimes in full view of the righteous, God made angry flames from Heaven leap upon the separated wicked with such devouring wrath, that one fierce shriek foretold their dreadful end. By these stupendous displays God seems to say to the righteous—"A thousand shall fall by thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand, but it shall not come nigh thee. Only with thine eyes, shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked." True! In an apostate world under sentence of death, by the ordinary course of events, Christians must perish, and sometimes dreadfully perish, as well as sinners; but these most signal and miraculous dispensations of Providence are very peculiar. Brought out in the early ages of the world—as if for the inspection and instruction of future generations, they do seem to be invested with a speaking, penetrating, prophetic power. In all their structure, circumstances and issues, they do certainly appear to have been shaped purposely to confirm the word of God, and the voice of conscience touching the coming destiny of the human family. Bear in mind, the Actor in providence, is the Speaker in Scripture. Now if, by his ordinary operations at all times, and especially by his miraculous displays in the early history of the race, God seems to have been holding forth to man his opposite treatment of the righteous and the wicked, and their final separation on earth, may he not mean hereby to foreshadow his opposite treatment of

the righteous and the wicked—and their final separation—at the judgment?

When the flood came, the righteous lived, but the wicked died. When fire fell upon Sodom, the righteous lived, but the wicked died. When Pharaoh chased Israel across the Red Sea, the righteous lived, but the wicked died. When the earth swallowed up Korah and his company, the righteous lived, but the wicked died. In all these cases remember, too, the righteous and the wicked were finally separated. Now, may there not be solemn teaching in all this? May not God mean to say—"Hereafter, as here, the righteous are to live, and the wicked to die. Hereafter, as here, the righteous and the wicked are to be finally separated. For as when I dealt with the righteous and the wicked here, the righteous lived and the wicked died; so when I deal with the righteous and the wicked hereafter, the righteous shall live, but the wicked shall die. And, as when I dealt with the righteous and the wicked here, they were separated forever—so when I deal with the righteous and the wicked hereafter, they shall be separated forever."

God's providence, remember, is as really an expression of God, as Scripture is, and judgment will be. Standing between the one and the other—if providence has been shaped to reflect God's speaking in the past, must it not have been equally designed to foreshadow God's working in the future?

It gives some corroboration to the argument to consider, that this construction arranges Creation, Scripture, Providence, and the Judgment, as consistent ex-

ponents of Godhead, both as to the essential attributes of his person and the grand movements of his kingdom. For, thus, they each and all bear the same witness, viz.: that the human family is to be finally separated and the wicked destroyed forever.

2. THE VOICE OF HIS SPIRIT.—Men of all ages and countries feel that God does press his truth upon the soul by his Spirit; and so press it that the man knows surely, it is God who is speaking to him, and understands perfectly what it is that God communicates. These spiritual teachings of God are always confined to two points—man's duty and destiny, and do always leave the soul perfectly instructed on these two points, viz.: what God thinks of rectitude, and how he will treat the good man; and what God thinks of sin, and how he will dispose of the bad man. Here, then, in these soul-teachings of the Spirit of God, in all climes and ages, is a vast field of light; and of light precisely upon the very point in hand; and of light from God direct. Here, therefore, in God's Spiritual providence, is a fountain head of knowledge, which we are bound to consult in studying the fate of the sinner in the eternal world. One of the most thrilling inquiries of time is this—*What disposition will God make of the sinner in the DAY OF reckoning?* Independent of God's people, there are always two opposite classes of persons on earth, who profess to report, experimentally, God's Spiritual reply to this inquiry—the sceptic and the convicted sinner. In giving in this testimony, of what they say God has communicated to them, concerning the

doom of the sinner, the sceptic is always in an easy, composed state of feeling, such as any man would have in the common affairs of life; the convicted sinner, on the contrary, is a man impressed, over-awed, sombre. The former is often loquacious, self-sufficient, positive, disputatious, censorious, and bitter; the latter is taciturn, gloomy, self-absorbed, and oppressed. The former will discourse upon the subject anywhere, on the corner of the street, in a groggery, in any company, under any circumstances. The latter flies the society of men, and broods gloomily over the fearful secrets of his soul—all alone.

Now, every man on earth, who knows anything of our blessed Christianity, well knows that the infidel, sceptic, or heretic who feels, conducts, and discourses as above, is an utter stranger to the precious influences of the Spirit of God. In the heat of argument, he may smite upon his breast and exclaim in the most earnest and passionate manner, "I know from the feelings God has put in my soul, that he will never, never destroy his creatures in hell-fire forever." The fact is, from our religious experience we better know that this man's views, feelings, habits, aims, and life, expel the Spirit from his soul; and that not one item of all his religious opinions was derived from the special agency of the Holy Ghost. Most clearly, he is not a competent witness on this subject. He does not and cannot report the teachings of God's Holy Spirit, for he has never *felt* them. But look at that convicted man! Arrested, called out from the cares of time, and the cares of the world, solemn, anxious, fearful, bowed at the feet

of God! There is the man whom the Spirit of God is teaching. That man never encounters one moment of life when God's eye is not awfully bent upon his very heart; not one moment, day or night, when he does not seem to hear God say directly, terribly, to his inmost soul—"You are guilty. I am displeased with you. I will never, never be reconciled to sin. I shall deal with you soon. Know, once for all, if you do not turn, I will assuredly punish you." The very Spirit of God is in that man's soul; he, it is, who is the legitimate, competent witness of the teachings of God's Spirit concerning the ultimate doom of the sinner. What now, I ask, is this man's testimony on this subject? If this world knows anything, it does know of a truth that when God's Spirit is shed upon man's mind, and man awakes to the entrance of God's truth, that child of Adam was never found on earth who instantly broke forth into *raptures*, because the Spirit taught him and he felt—that *all sinners* were going to be *saved*; because the Holy Ghost had revealed to his deepest soul that *Universalism is true*. The convicted of the earth and the Spirit of Truth himself would stand aghast, and be most terribly confounded by any such report as this. On the contrary, every impress upon the soul of man by the special agency of the Holy Ghost, is in perfect accord with his every inspiration upon the holy page. Therefore in his inmost soul the convicted sinner feels the wrath of God revealed against his unrighteousness. Yes, he feels, and distressingly feels, that it has come to this—*he must repent or perish*. *This, and this alone is, and ever has been the distinct word of the Spirit in the*

*conscience of awakened man.* And here, just here, is the death blow of Universalism. The Spirit of God is the great teacher, set apart by the ascension of Christ, to re-utter the teachings of Jesus, and proclaim all truth necessary to the conviction and salvation of men, especially of "sin, righteousness and judgment."

If this doctrine of Universal salvation is true, why does not the spirit of truth teach it to man when he works on his soul? Why is it that, ever teaching, he has never put this doctrine upon the conscience of one solitary convicted sinner, since the fall of man. Bring me a child of Adam who says—"Under conviction there was a moment, when I felt that I and all men were to be saved;" and I will make that man acknowledge, in his farther testimony, that the very next moment the Spirit convinced him that this very impression was a device of the devil.

Let me re-state the argument. The Holy Ghost is called "the Spirit of truth" because he is appointed to convey God's truth to man's mind. This truth he makes known in two ways: by revelation in the Bible, and by agency on the conscience. Mark it now! From the fall of man to the present day, the Spirit of God has never pressed upon the conscience of one convicted sinner this doctrine, viz: "I and all men are to be saved." Then, this doctrine is not taught in Revelation—then this doctrine is not the truth of God. Again, from the fall of man to the present day, the Spirit of truth has fastened upon the conscience of every awakened sinner this conviction, viz: "If I and all men do not repent, I and all men shall perish." Then, this is the doctrine which

is revealed in the Bible—this, the doctrine which is the truth of God.

If I mistake not, the premises are sound, the conclusion clear, and the error of Universalism established. Collect the mass of this testimony. Countless myriads upon myriads of voices of the Holy Ghost, each uttering the dark doom of the sinner, have been actually felt and realized by myriads upon myriads of awakened men in all climes and ages. Oh, the mass of the testimony! Weigh the worth of the testimony. All convicted souls, from the apostacy to the present day, bear witness that the Spirit's every utterance was most clearly understood by every man; and, again, that every utterance of the Spirit taught the death of the sinner. Oh, the strength of the testimony! If there have indeed been such a multitude of clear communications from the Holy Ghost to the souls of men; and if each of these communications did indeed announce the coming death of sinners, where, O, where, is Universalism? Directly under the frown of the God of truth. We repeat, from the date of his creation to the present hour, the entire spiritual experience of man, convicted and converted, in Heaven and on earth, instantly and intuitively realizes, that every utterance of Universalism is in direct hostility to every inward teaching of the Holy Ghost. Is this true? Then every argument of the Universalist is a striving of the potsherd against his Maker. Woe be to that striver. He must perish.

The support which Providence brings to the assaulted doctrine of future punishment, may be grouped in a single thought. Providence, natural and spiritual, is a

simple and splendid epitome of the judgment. Within—God's Spirit is ever writing the sentence of eternal death upon the spirit of sinful men. Without—God's stupendous judgments upon the wicked of old and his every-day operation amongst men, do hold up a striking type of the final execution of the sentence.

*Reason, Scripture and Providence* compose a tripple foundation for God's doctrine of future punishment which former ages have struggled in vain to overthrow.

**THE ARGUMENT FROM REASON.**—If God is holy, and man unholy—the laws of rational nature necessitate man's everlasting destruction. If God has so framed human conscience, that man furnishes sin all through time, where is divine consistency if God acquits the wicked all through eternity? If punishment is the only perfect expression of the immorality of sin, and again, the only perfect protection against the disorder of sin, you overthrow government, if you do not lay hands upon the sinner. If the stupendous sufferings on Calvary were endured to deliver man from that awful wrath, suspended over his immortality by sin, and if man, solemnly warned by Jesus to flee the wrath to come, will yet trifle with that wrath through this life, assuredly, he must meet that wrath in the life to come. Nor is the strength of the argument at all impaired by the objection drawn from the goodness of God; since that objection involves self-deification—for it never sets out to argue, until it has assumed an intelligence equal to God's.



THE ARGUMENT FROM SCRIPTURE.—The stupendous strength of the Scriptural statement of the doom of the sinner, it is impossible to express in a word. Its simplicity, perspicuity, variety, authority, intensity, continuity, and consistency—are amazing; the multitude of indisputable, point-blank proof-texts, unimpaired by the semblance of adverse testimony—is almost incalculable; while the strength of the emotion, conception and language employed to express the doctrine—is often grandly sublime. Indeed the man who surveys the massive, consistent, palpable power of the divine statement, and does not instantly believe, practically lifts his arm against the Godhead. When he sees God on his throne, sentencing the sinner to death—so angrily, and does not believe, he despises God's authority; when he hears God announcing his purpose to destroy the sinner—so frequently, and does not believe, he despises God's truth; when he observes how clearly God commits himself to the *death* of the sinner, and yet imagines that this very commitment may include his *salvation*, he despises God's intelligence; when he marks God's purpose to destroy to-day, yet hopes for deliverance to-morrow, he despises God's dignity. In a word, he who ponders all the Bible evidence of the final destruction of the sinner and withholds his entire faith for an instant, in that very moment, essentially impairs every power of his soul to respect the rights of his Maker, and, by example, leads the creature to strip God of all his claims upon the work of his hands. It is a just and splendid tribute to the power of the Bible argument, that no man can withhold his faith for an instant, with-

out thereby, practically, driving his soul into a war with God.

**THE ARGUMENT FROM PROVIDENCE.**—God's glorious providence, natural and spiritual, speaks out in simple and beautiful confirmation of the teachings—both of reason and of Scripture. On the one hand, in God's Spiritual world, he who inspired the Scriptures, who is the author of all truth, who has been appointed the great instructor of the earth, ever since the ascension of Christ, he, the Holy Ghost, is ever at work—writing upon the consciences of multitudes of sinners of every generation, precisely those very suggestions of reason and those very records of Scripture, which we have rehearsed; thereby, infallibly assuring the sinner, in the very depths of his soul, that if he does not repent—perdition is his doom. On the other hand, in the natural world, Providence, by that mighty arm which formed and governs universal nature, stands in the forefront of all the generations of the earth, as they come upon the stage, one after another, and for their instruction is ever holding up to their observation the great deluge, the conflagration of Sodom, the ingulphing of Pharaoh, the entombing of Korah, the consumption of Nabad and Abihu, that by these and many similar displays of offended majesty and holiness, as well as by his ordinary operations, all mankind might see, splendidly exhibited, just what reason suggests and Scripture records, and the Spirit impresses, viz: that when the great day of reckoning comes, while the righteous shall be left in the full enjoyment of his promised reward, the sinner

shall be dreadfully, hopelessly banished from the presence of the Lord and the company of the redeemed.

O, yes, yes; there is a great and awful truth in the government of God. Fallen man—impenitent—shall be lost, and lost forever. Reason teaches the doctrine; Scripture establishes the doctrine; and Providence confirms the doctrine.

Let us close our discussion with one reflection—If Universalism is true—where is the truth of God? They certainly stand arrayed against each other in irreconcilable conflict. One or the other must go down.

My good friend, from the few doctrinal words we interchanged, on our introduction, I inferred that you had been conducted by your Scriptural studies to a comfortable reliance upon the last book of Revelation. You will permit me, then, to commend to your solemn consideration, the last words of God to man on earth.

If I mistake not, they sound out a clear and loud—Amen—to that doctrine of the ancient faith for which I have earnestly contended in the preceding pages; and seals the irrevocable separation of the righteous and the wicked through eternal ages. Under the agitating pressure of this terrible doctrine of eternal punishment, you may have heard some thoughtless mortal, just returned from the faithful preaching of the gospel, fling out fallen nature's venom against holy truth, in some such exclamation as this—"These hell-fire preachers!! What do they know upon the subject? Why! At the very last moment, in the twinkling of an eye, by one single volition, God can inaugurate a splendid system

of universal amnesty, reverse this whole order of things, close up the mouths of these denunciatory preachers, and save the whole human family gloriously and forever."

Preposterous thought! He can do it just as soon as he can surrender his character, cease to be what he is, and wreck the universe, and no sooner. By this Bible, through every successive moment of the world's existence, God is crying out to lost men—"Just as sure as you come to me impenitent, I will assuredly destroy you forever." After such a commitment of himself, before all Heaven and the men of every generation, if he saves the sinner he destroys his truth. By his ministers of every denomination, country, and age, through every successive moment of the world's existence, God is crying out to thoughtless men—"Just so sure as you come to me unregenerate, you shall surely die!" After such a commitment of himself, let God acquit the sinner, and he condemns himself.

But we are not left to human reasoning upon a subject so big with the eternal fate of men. One of the very last words of God to this world is his most positive assurance that, for the relief of procrastinating, presumptuous, incorrigible men, no such unpromised deliverance shall ever be introduced. On the contrary, God pledges his unsullied truth and honor that the time is coming when he will fix the righteous and the wicked in character and condition—unchanged, irreversible, forever—"He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is

holy, let him be holy still." This text is utterly senseless, if it does not solemnly confirm every word uttered to establish the final separation of the righteous and the wicked.

The very last word of God to man, you must allow me, my friend, to commend to your immediate consideration. "*If any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, I will take away his part out of the book of life.*" Verily, if man can take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, the Universalist does perpetrate this very offence. The most solemn, the most awful utterances of earth, are those maledictions of God upon the wicked recorded, in the book of Revelation. In their bearing—so fearfully, utterly, eternally overwhelming; in their manner—so particular, positive, deliberate, and repeated!!

Behold God! Under the intensest rousings of his insulted authority, and his determined purpose! he advances and decrees, concerning sinners—"They shall be cast into the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death." The first death we know what it is—but the second death! God forbid that you or I should know what it is—but a reality, as certain as God's truth, it must be.

Behold the Universalist! In his senseless, impious audacity, he, too, advances and exclaims—"The wicked shall not be cast into the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone; for there is no second death." Ah! does not that man most wickedly, most outrageously take from the words of the book of this prophecy? My friend, do not allow yourself to tamper, for one mo-

ment, with this miserable delusion of Universal salvation. It is grievously blasphemous against God ; it is infernally dangerous to the soul.

My dear Mr. Gwin, when I proposed to write you a letter upon the subject of Universal salvation, I had no design to inflict such a demand upon your patience. But the composition grew upon me as I pondered the great subject, and I was sustained and encouraged in my studies, by the following considerations. You did not seem to be stubbornly wedded to the doctrine; I therefore hoped that you might be the more readily divorced from it. I found you, too, in character, what men told me you were, (pardon my plainness,) an intelligent, honest, serious, candid man. And as these properties seemed to imply all due consideration, comprehension, and appreciation of the argument, I did verily hope that God, in mercy, might rectify your faith, intensify your anxiety, and save your soul. This, of course, greatly invigorated my investigations; for I could not exclude the thought that, in addition to your personal salvation, Christianity in your neighborhood might be substantially advanced. For the warm-hearted, benevolent energy of true conversion, I imagined must compel you, through future life, to fling out upon your surrounding neighbors that power of character, which had hitherto wrought so long, and well, and exclusively at home.

Mr. Gwin, methinks I hear a little voice in your heart of hearts, uttering these words—" Had you exhibited a sweeter charity in your abundant handling of your fellow men, upon these pages, it might have won favor for your argument and, perhaps, achievement for

your hopes." Guilty! my friend. While I live, this shall be my plea to every charge of defect of fraternal affection—when pointed against my character and conduct as a Christian professor, and especially—when tabled against my effort as a Christian minister. On this point, my own conscience pronounces solemn sentence against me, all life long. But will you hear one alleviating explanation? It is the voice of my principle, God grant it may be of my heart, that I would not cherish an unfriendly feeling against a Universalist, for the world we dwell on. Why should I? He is my brother man, whom I am bound to love. My fallen, redeemed, probationary fellow creature, for whom I am bound to labor. Surely, I should ever wish him well, from the bottom of my heart. Surely, I should ever toil to win his soul to Christ, with the tenderest solicitude. It is not enough that I strive to avoid the wounding of his feelings. I must struggle to command his respect and insure his kindness, that I may serve and save him. May I say now that, to my knowledge, with one exception, I have not set my thought upon a Universalist, since I commenced to inscribe these pages. It is the principle—not the professor—that I have been combating. It is the doctrine—not the man—I now oppose. There are good men and women in this fraternity, I doubt not, (not made such by Universalism, but because, at bottom, our faith is in them.)—God's precious children, whom we shall meet in Heaven, if we reach the happy land ourselves. God bless them and all associated with them, though now unblessed. But Universalism, as a religious system—I deem the common enemy of Heaven and earth. When I look at its

character—in spirit, principle, practice, aim, and work, the perfect antagonism of the entire genius and influence of our glorious christianity; when I listen to its cry—“All blessing to everybody! no matter about the claims of God, or the character of man, or the nature of things; happiness to everybody, even the worst of sinners, all good and no evil forever!!” When I look at its work—what havoc it makes of the church of God; what armies it raises, and walls it builds for the kingdom of Satan; and what vast multitudes of the unwary it entraps in its seductive snare—I feel it my duty to draw the sword, and go forth and do battle, whenever the heresy crosses my path. Sworn for life to fight for God, man, and the truth, I must face this deadliest antagonist of them all. And when I see this Evil Spirit draw his sword upon God, and upon the Bible, and upon the church, and upon the souls of men, and upon the hope of the earth—I have a heart for the work, and I feel that no condemnation can be too strong, no opposition too decided, no blows too hard.

All true! you say—but inasmuch as the very strongest prepossessions and sympathies of these few misguided Christians among Universalists whom I am bound to love, and those many deluded sons and daughters of Adam among them, whom I am bound to serve, are at present most intimately intertwined with every part of this system of false Christianity—is there not a wise discretion, a true fraternity, which should be called up to temper language, make allowances, guard expressions, and put forth kindness, lest I should unnecessarily alienate and prejudice, and thus damage those I am sent to serve?



Ah, my friend, here my plea is—Guilty! nor have I one word to say. God and your soul be my judges. Whatever short-coming of the spirit and bearing of an exalted Christian you may have actually discovered in the spirit and conduct of this religious effort—may God forgive. And as for you, Mr. Gwin, I throw myself upon your charitable promptings, trusting, should we live and be associated, that you may be more gratified by my future reformation than you have been disquieted by my present delinquency.

“Should we live and be associated!” Ah, Mr. Gwin, I am quite an old man; and you are not as young as you once were. I suspect, verily, that you and I have parted for the judgment. I should like to meet you again. But hear me! I never expect to meet you in that imaginary, unchristian, heterogeneous, Universalist Heaven. No, never! If you and I meet hereafter in peace, there is but one way for us both. We must secure the regeneration of our fallen hearts by the Holy Ghost—through humble, filial, earnest, and confiding prayer; and the justification of our guilty consciences, by the blood of Jesus—through simple, direct and sustained faith.

How fearfully lost! Nothing short of a Trinity—can save you and me. It is only through the Son, and by the Spirit, that we have access to the Father.

Mr. Gwin! God grant you and me a meeting above, and the richest blessings of his providence, and of his grace to yourself and your family below.

I am your friend,

JOSEPH C. STILES.

## APPENDIX.

I am not prepared to concede, Mr. Gwin, that there is the slightest extravagance in all the language I have used. It seems palpable to me, that the doctrine I oppose, if carried out—by one fell blow, demolishes the Bible; and of necessity, all it represents and all it addresses—Creator and creature. Indeed, I think, I observe a sharp resemblance, in spirit, language, and movement, between this false Christianity and the great Destroyer. When of old, God said to our ancestors, in the garden—“Ye shall surely die;” the Serpent responded to our foreparents—“Ye shall *not* surely die.” As fairly as I can, I will lay the Bible and this false doctrine side by side; and beg you, in comparing them, to observe whether there is not something in the bearing and voice of this audacious opponent of God, which reminds you both of the Spirit that contradicted God in the garden, and of the Spirit which is now said to work in the children of disobedience?

### SCRIPTURE.

1. The wages of sin is—*death*.
2. The soul that sinneth — it shall—*die*.
3. Woe unto the wicked—it shall be *ill* with him.
4. The end of the wicked is—*destruction*.
5. He that believeth not—shall be *damned*.
6. He that believeth on the Son hath life; but he that believeth not the Son—shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.
7. Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.
8. Whoso speaketh a word against the Son of God it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not

### UNIVERSALISM.

1. The wages of sin is—*not*—death.
2. The soul that sinneth — it shall *not* die.
3. Blessed be the wicked — it shall be *well* with him.
4. The end of the wicked is—*salvation*.
5. He that believeth not—shall be *saved*.
6. He that believeth on the Son hath life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see *death*, for the *love* of God abideth upon him.
7. Though a man is never born again, he is sure to see the kingdom of God.
8. Whoso speaketh against the Son of God, it shall be forgiven him; and whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it *shall be*

## SCRIPTURE—Continued.

be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.

9. Ye shall die in your sins; whither I go ye cannot come.

10. Ye generation of vipers! How shall ye escape the damnation of hell?

11. They that have done good—shall come forth to the resurrection of life; they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

12. Depart ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his angels.

13. The wicked shall be turned into hell, with all the nations that forget God.

14. So it shall be at the end of the world; the angels shall sever the wicked from among the just, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

15. In hell, he lifted up his eyes, being in torments; and seeth Abraham afar off and Lazarus in his bosom.

16. And, beside all this, there is a great gulf fixed; so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence.

17. Finally—He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still.

## UNIVERSALISM—Continued.

forgiven him, both in this world and in that which is to come.

9. Ye shall die in your sins; and whither I go, ye shall come also.

10. Ye generation of vipers! Ye shall surely receive the benediction of Heaven.

11. They that have done good shall come forth to the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of salvation.

12. Come ye blessed into the kingdom of Heaven, prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

13. The wicked shall be taken up to Heaven; with all the nations that remember God.

14. So it shall be at the end of the world; the angels shall sever the wicked from among the just, and shall convoy them to the Holy City; there shall be shouting and clapping of hands.

15. In Heaven he opened his eyes, being in raptures; for he beholdeth himself embraced with Lazarus in the bosom of Abraham.

16. And, beside all this, the great gulf between us and you has been filled up, and we all have one home forever.

17. Finally—He that is unjust, let him be justified forever; and he that is filthy, let him be glorified forever.

