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## ARTICLE IV.

## THE DOCTRINES OF UNIVERSALISM.

BY REV. A. A. MINER, S.T.D., LL.D., PASTOR OF "THE SECOND UNIVERSALIST SOCIETY IN THE TOWN OF BOSTON."

[The series of "Denominational Articles" published in the *Bibliotheca Sacra* has been found so useful that their republication in separate volumes has been often requested. Each Article has been written by a distinguished representative of the denomination whose tenets are described: the Article on Methodism by Dr. D. D. Whedon; on Episcopacy, by Rt. Rev. Bishop Burgess; on the German Reformed Church, by Pres. E.V. Gerhart; on the Evangelical Lutheran Church, by Prof. J. A. Brown; on the Old School Presbyterian Church, by Dr. Atwater, of Princeton; on the New School, by Dr. George Duffield. Other denominations have been described by other representative divines. The description given of Unitarianism by ex-President Thomas Hill has led to a request that a description of Universalism be given by a believer in it who is well fitted to represent it. No one is better fitted to represent it than Dr. A. A. Miner, who was four years a colleague pastor with Rev. Hosea Ballou of Boston, and has been for many years a recognized leader in the denomination. At the present day it is peculiarly important to know just what the Universalists affirm and just what they deny. Our readers will not agree with Dr. Miner in his belief, but will find him frank and explicit in his statements. In a theological crisis, open avowals are what we most need. — Ed.]

THE various statements of Christianity prevalent in our time may be conveniently grouped in three classes. The first class claims to be especially biblical — a claim apparently sustained, if traditional expositions be accepted and the survey be limited to the severer aspects of Scripture rhetoric. The common mind, however, recognizes with difficulty its reasonableness or its special claim to be deemed evangelical, and fails to discover the ethical qualities of its scheme of salvation.

The second class confessedly places the Scriptures under the gravest doubt. Their alleged mythical or legendary

character, uncertain origin, and questionable inspiration leave little reason for accepting them as an authoritative revelation. The defenders of this class of statements, nevertheless, show their reverent mind by gratuitously ascribing to the Saviour the highest moral perfection, even after they have discredited the only means extant of knowing anything about him. This scheme of Christianity, though claiming to be pre-eminently reasonable, appears to have one defect — the lack of anything characteristically Christian.

The third class is no less biblical than the first. Its survey is surely as broad. The universal and unalterable love of God is its key to the meaning of the sacred word. It secures the harmony of Scripture by subordinating figure to fact, rhetoric to reason, things perplexing to things plain. Relying upon the authority of the divine word, it finds illustration of the divine government in that of a wise earthly parent. All its aims and instrumentalities, in their final outcome, are moral, and its ultimate success will fill the angelic hosts with highest joy. The views of this class, truly evangelical, eminently reasonable, and accepted by some of the wisest men in all ages of the church, it is the object of this paper to expound.

Universalism, like all religions worthy of the name, finds its root and justification in the divine character. Self-existent, necessary, absolute, the Infinite Spirit is one, simple, indivisible; over-filling the "heaven of heavens; inhabiting eternity." The idea of God will be found among the necessary truths of our consciousness, when we shall have learned to read that consciousness aright, making atheism impossible, and quickening in us a sense of the fact that it is "in him we live and move and have our being." What God is, he has ever been, and ever will be. All his attributes are so many blending activities, not in exercise in limited spaces and times, but in all space and in all time. No one is restricted by any other. His power never acts in the absence of his wisdom, nor forgets to take counsel of his justice — an attribute imposing responsibilities towards every created being.

Even his love, instead of being a soft and tender inclination, is a firm unyielding principle, which fastens upon the sinner and will not let him go. All the divine attributes conspire to make love rigidly persistent and efficient in its purpose to "make an end of sin and bring in everlasting righteousness." Hence, "our God is a consuming fire."

As it is impossible that he should have created without a purpose, so it is equally impossible that his purpose shall fail. That purpose could not have been empirical, because he is God, and not man. Since it must have reached to the end and must have virtually ordained that end, whatever it may be, it can be such only as infinite love can rejoice in. A universe of moral beings, disciplined to the love, service, and worship of a righteous Father is an end, and the only end, in view of which the heavenly host might shout "glory to God in the highest." All those who hope for this end, under whatever modification of details of doctrine, are Universalists. The Universalist church of to-day, however, holds a fairly well-defined system of faith.

Of his own free will, prompted by his infinite goodness, God created man in his own image, by virtue of which man aspires unto God, hungers for him, yearns after him, and can never be truly blest save in obedience to, and communion with him. Man was, indeed, made subject to vanity, to error, transgression, sickness, accident, and death, not by his own consent, but by the pleasure of his Creator, who purposes his deliverance from "the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God" (Rom. viii. 20, 21). Born into the world in utter ignorance and helplessness, what wonder that all men sin; that the image of God in all is defaced; that this source of human wretchedness has planted the seeds of bitterness in every soul.

The image of God, however, is not lost. The harmony of human powers is disturbed, and through heredity each generation is something other than it would have been but for the sin of its ancestors. This difference, though occasioned by

sin, is not itself sin. However great this inherited damage, it is not entire in any aspect, nor has it moral quality. The new-born child brings with it no indwelling or original sin; no burden of personal guilt. It bears no responsibility for Adam's sin, nor for that of any other man in the whole line of its ancestry. It does bring with it all the faculties, physical, intellectual, and moral, possessed by the first pair. These faculties all retain their normal functions in kind, however different in degree, and awaken the same self-approval in obedience, and the same self-condemnation in disobedience. Thus the righteous voice of God, adequately rewarding every one according to his work, is heard in every human soul. Outward distinctions of birth, wealth, or social position, chiefly related to pride, vanity, love of ostentation, and lust of power, are of little worth. With men and women of highest character they are like the toy feather in the cap of the mimic soldier; while "wisdom is more precious than rubies, and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her" (Prov. iii. 15). God's grace is given, not to flatter our pride by bestowing outward distinctions, but to enrich our souls.

A subject of this grace man ever remains. Truth is its instrumentality. If a known truth is not obeyed, more truth is needed; or new relations of the accepted truth must be pointed out and illustrated. The truth it is that makes free; and that truth we shall come at length to know (John viii. 32). Universalism thus keeps hope alive. It confesses the defilement by sin, but denies the destruction of the divine image. Everlasting redeemableness may be affirmed of every soul.

It follows that the current church doctrine of probation must be rejected. Only in lower things, if indeed in them, can the past rule the future. A given opportunity passes; but a kindred opportunity may return. In highest things it must be so. While man remains man, his moral state cannot be fixed. Yesterday cannot absolutely dominate to-day. The present and the future are ever at liberty to add their

contributions to the past ; and those contributions may be a reversal of one's moral state. God's judgments are discriminating. He deals not with individual merit by wholesale. Youth may modify manhood, but need not rule it ; nor manhood, old age. Much less can this life, with all its darkness, doubts, errors, and limitations of opportunity, dominate the eternity beyond, excluding forever the ineffable light of the divine presence. To assume this, is to assume that God will not do as well as he can by his creatures ; that he will destroy the image of himself in his children lest they become like him.

Instead of time as a whole being a trial for eternity, every purpose, word, and deed is a trial in itself for this present time. Man succeeds or fails in every moral act. On it hangs the divine judgment — God's approving or disapproving voice in conscience. Every day may bring to a given soul both reward and condemnation ; since every day some deeds may be good and others bad. Experience, here as elsewhere, ought to be our divine interpreter. The rewarding of any man according to his work is an analytical process, at the very best approximated only by his fellow-man, perfected by the infinite God. Such retribution involves none of the difficulties of wholesale dealing. A life of sin is not rewarded by an eternity of blessedness in consequence of repentance in the closing hour — a repentance often more closely related to the supposed penalty of sin than to sin itself. Eternity, indeed, ceases to be the especial storehouse of rewards, though it may still proffer in its fulness the gift of God, which is eternal life. Such a view also removes the chief difficulty arising from inequality in early condition, whether of intelligence or of virtue. The ignorance or viciousness of one's childhood home, however it may shadow this life, does not necessarily shadow the limitless life to come.

Nor in estimating personal guilt do we consider exclusively the greatness of the lawgiver, or the importance of the law given. These may be infinite and absolute. But

to measure sin thereby is to make all sins equally heinous. The giddy and ignorant child becomes the peer in guilt of the pirate on the seas. The new-born babe cannot sin. There must be moral awakening before there can be responsibility. The limitation of moral perception is the limitation of possible guilt. No man sees all truth. The most renowned Christian sage is but a babe in Christ. As no man can pluck our very God from the heavens, so no man can fall to the utmost depths of imaginable guilt. In great darkness he may be overwhelmed. Under mountains of guilt he may groan. Extraneous help, that shall infuse the life of heaven into his body of death, may be a necessity; but he is still a child of God, still the subject of divine love, still and forever redeemable. The infinite and ever-enduring mercy of God is still open to him and still pleading with him.

To meet these moral needs of the world Christ came. Not a mere man; much less the very God. The express image of the divine person, the Son of God in a higher sense than any other, the beginning of the creation of God, he was yet made in the likeness of sinful flesh, that he might condemn sin in the flesh. The perfect teacher, he became also the perfect exemplar, and so lived and taught that truth and character interpenetrated each other. Had he suffered less, his righteousness would have been less manifest and his saving power less apparent. Not till the intensest wrath of the world had counted him its victim and baptized Calvary with his blood, did the Sun of Righteousness rise to the zenith of its splendors. Then was revealed the power by which all enemies shall be subdued unto him. Then was fulfilled the sole condition, as stated by our Lord, of a world's salvation — "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me" (John xii. 32). This work was not sacrificial, making it possible for men to be saved; since the time never was when a penitential soul, turning in faith to God, would not receive divine mercy. The work of salvation is clearly moral. Christ's sacrifice of himself was moral, not penal. His language, therefore, is moral, "I will *draw* all men

unto me," showing, as Paul says (Rom. v. 11), that not God, but man receives the atonement, or is reconciled. Thus the work of redemption, both as respects the agency of Christ and the effect upon men, is wholly moral, and escapes the ethical difficulties of the sacrificial scheme.

Let no man say this view of Christ is inadequate. No man, no body of men, is authorized to pronounce *ex cathedra* upon this transcendent subject. It is marked by all the simplicity of the New Testament. Christ is sent by God; prays to God; utters God's word; can do nothing of himself; comes from the Father; returns to the Father; and all this without the slightest indication of those scenic illusions — now you see him, now you do not — involved in the Trinitarian and sacrificial scheme. God hath laid help upon one who is able and mighty to save. He is a bold man who to-day will affirm that Christ must therefore be God; that only the infinite can be empowered and qualified to save poor feeble man. Meagrely too, will he display his own moral perceptions by affirming that the work of the Saviour must be sacrificial rather than moral; or sacrificial that it may be moral. When the doctrine of the infinity of sin is given over, and its consequent infinite ill-desert is held in doubt, the leverage of the sacrificial scheme is gone, and its logic inextricably confused. Still more hopeless becomes this view when we reflect on the absurdity of supposing power to be given to one who is himself the original source and permanent possessor of all power.

No statement has ever yet been made of the doctrine of the Trinity that can be intelligibly presented to the understanding. Indeed, the ancient formula of the church, Father, Son and Spirit, "co-equal, co-substantial, co-eternal" — "one in three and three in one" — is simply unthinkable. As the senior Ballou has well said — "Since they are co-equal, neither is greater than the other. Since they are co-substantial, there is nothing in the one that is not equally in the others. Since they are co-eternal, neither existed before the others. There is no reason, therefore, why the



Father should not be called Son; no reason why the Son should not be called Father; no reason why the Holy Spirit should not be called either Father or Son." And since all saving truth works by faith; and since faith, that cannot appeal to the understanding is not faith, but a mere tradition or superstition, it would seem to follow that the doctrine of the Trinity has in it no saving energy. We should object to the doctrine on metaphysical grounds, even more strongly than on theological. The infinities of time and space are unlike, and therefore possible. But three personalities each clothed with infinite power — infinities of the same kind — are metaphysically impossible. The same is true of every attribute.

In holding these positions, Universalism, by no means fraternizes with Rationalism. Christ is not merely a good man among other good men; a man whom Plato may challenge, Aristotle instruct, or the modern scientist overthrow. If no more than this, he cannot be shown to be even this. To say that he is no more than a good man in the common rank of men is to deny the Christian records; and having denied the records we have no access to Christ. His high moral qualities may then well be in doubt. But accepting the records, his wondrous power so blends with his wondrous wisdom, and both are so illumined by his wondrous life and character that it is no marvel that the touch of his garment is salvation, and the mandate of his lips life from the dead.

It was through the miracles he wrought, conjoined with the prophecies concerning him, that God first made him known as the promised Messiah and Saviour of the world. Credentials that could not be counterfeited constitute the seal of his commission from the high court of heaven to the subordinate court of humanity. These stand forever ineffaceable. The nature of his message, the immediate effect of his preaching, the subsequent growth of his church, with the power of his doctrines to revolutionize the condition of men, are all important proofs of his Messiahship. But these

came afterwards, and by no means displace, much less disprove, the palpable evidences of his active ministry.

Nor do we at all sympathize with the assumption that a miracle is impossible. We are living in a universe that seems itself a miracle. In its whole, and in its every part, we meet with unfathomable depths. What other wonders are possible we cannot presume to know. No man can prescribe the limits of possibility until he has exhausted the resources of nature on the one hand, and tested every fibre of the divine energies on the other. The biblicist, so often charged by the would-be scientist with superstitious credulity, may well turn the tables upon his critic, and suggest the suspicion, at least, that he himself is guilty of egregious audacity. The scientist is liable to an unfortunate habit of mind. With his attention directed exclusively to retorts and crucibles, to analyses and syntheses, to gases, atoms, and molecules, he forgets the realm of the spirit and the omnipotence of the invisible. He forgets that what he cannot weigh in his balances may bear the universe in its bosom.

Much of the incredulity concerning miracles is born of a misuse of terms. Law, it is said, is universal, absolute, unchangeable. God is not afflicted with "after-thoughts," and finds no occasion to "violate his own laws." In our study of him "who declares the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done," we have slight basis for alleging "after-thoughts." But to deny the gradual development of God's providences according to his original purpose, is to surrender the affairs of the world to the blindness of atheism. Nor will they then move on so sublimely and smoothly as the physicist imagines. Make law as universal, as absolute, as unchangeable as you please, and it determines little concerning human welfare. Laws are not altogether harmonious, but very much in conflict. When the elasticity of the atmosphere resists the tendencies of gravitation, laws conflict with, but do not violate, each other. Laws are among the conditions under which all human effort is put forth. Man makes and mars his own

fortune, law to the contrary notwithstanding. He modifies the fortunes of his fellow-men whatever be the domination of law. Human enterprises are made possible chiefly because of law. In a thousand fields man harnesses law to his chariot and compels it to do his bidding. The expansive power of steam, the tenacity of iron, and the principles of mechanics are as old as the universe; but the locomotive is a thing of yesterday. It is more nearly true that man rules law than that law rules man. Is God excluded from a field which man so freely occupies?

While Universalism dares brave the sneers of a sceptical age by faith in a miracle-working God, it opens the way thereby to faith in the prophecies of old, the providences of God in all time, and the general integrity of the Scripture records. Any agency of God in creation must be in the nature of miracle; since it must have been anterior to, and, in part at least, must have consisted in the very establishment of nature's laws. Any like exercise of the divine will partakes of the same character. Information respecting the coming Messiah, as "the lamb slain from the foundation of the world," imparted by whatever method, to the first pair in the hour of their condemnation, to David in the rhapsodies of his worship, or to Isaiah in his evangelical visions, as well as that respecting the overthrow of cities, and the setting up and casting down of kingdoms, is altogether in the nature of miracles, at the same time that it is genuine inspiration, showing the agency of God unrestrained by law.

Nor can human wisdom undertake to limit the methods of revelation. Cavilings in respect to what is possible in method can be little else than essays into the fields of ignorance, where the possibilities of the agent are infinite, and those of the subject as various as human susceptibility. Visions and dreams may seem to us vague and unsatisfactory. But the subjective result cannot be judged by an extraneous observer. It is no stretch of prerogative for God to make himself quite at home in the human soul. He may communicate with it in various fashion,—by the language of

man ; by illustrative symbols, as in the vision of Peter ; and by the great events of his providence.

In speaking of the Scriptures as a revelation from God we would guard against two opposite errors. There is not a little in the Bible that does not claim to be a revelation. Much of it is purely historical. Thus, "Jesus went out and his disciples, into the towns of Cesarea Philippi : and by the way he asked his disciples, saying unto them, Whom do men say that I am ? And they answered, John the Baptist : but some say Elias, and others, one of the Prophets" (Mark viii. 27, 28). This may have opened the way to something in the nature of a revelation ; but in itself it is the record of the Saviour's method of drawing from his disciples the current rumors respecting himself. All that is needed here is integrity in the historian. The same may be said of the remarks in numerous instances, of the Pharisees, the Sadducees, the Scribes, and Pilate, in their conversations with Christ ; as well as of those of Festus and Felix and Agrippa, in their interviews with Paul. To meet the necessities which such facts impose we say in our formula of faith "The Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments contain a revelation."<sup>1</sup>

But here we must guard against the opposite error—the reducing of this revelation to a minimum. As we have already shown, we must not be identified with those who, in the free use of the scalpel of indiscriminating criticism, cut out every supernatural element from the biblical records, leaving the body of revelation a mangled and bleeding

<sup>1</sup> The Universalist Confession of Faith, adopted at Winchester, N. H., 1803. Art. 1. We believe that the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments contain a revelation of the character of God, and of the duty, interest, and final destination of mankind. Art. 2. We believe that there is one God, whose nature is love, revealed in one Lord Jesus Christ, by one Holy Spirit of grace, who will finally restore the whole family of mankind to holiness and happiness. Art. 3. We believe that holiness and true happiness are inseparably connected, and that believers ought to be careful to maintain order and practice good works ; for these things are good and profitable unto men." The Universalist Church congratulates itself on the brevity, simplicity, and comprehensiveness of its Confession of Faith.

corpse; and yet, on the admission that some truths remain in the midst of the ruins, and that all truth comes from God, claim still that the Scriptures *contain* a divine revelation. Adroit, but misleading! My soul, come thou not into their secret.

In thus claiming a maximum of revelation in the sacred records, we do not deny that there are difficulties to be surmounted. But these difficulties may be attributable in great measure, perhaps exclusively, to our ignorance. The claim itself, of course, pertains to the records in their original state. What errors have crept in through the inadvertence of transcribers, or otherwise, it is impossible to say. What departures from the originals the best modern texts present, is a problem concerning which the learned are greatly agitated. How far obscurity in the meaning of the records may have arisen from changes in the use and meaning of terms, or from the lack of those geographical, biographical, and historical facts so necessary to the elucidation of even modern discourse, we can, perhaps, never know. It would seem, then, that the proper attitude for reverent faith to assume, even in reference to the obscurities of the more ancient Scriptures, is not that of audacious rejection, but rather of humble inquiry and patient study.

This is the more fitting from those high considerations which override all difficulties of detail. The general trend of both Old Testament history and prophecy, as well as of the New, is clearly divine. They are the sacred records of a living people, to a large extent in the hands of that people, as Bancroft's history is in our hands; subject, therefore, to verification and criticism. Their currency among the chief men of the nation may be taken as establishing the leading facts as historical verities. This done the, providential hand of God therein is seen to be inevitable. That providential direction is in itself a revelation, and justifies the claim for other and varied revelations. Such a mosaic of providences, extending through long centuries, conspiring to a common end, and that end the creating and supplying a treasury of

divine truth—involving the character and purposes of God, the duty and interest of men, and the immortal destiny of the race—necessarily implies intelligence guiding and directing all. What is thus apparent in the Old Testament is still more manifest in the New. Apart, then, from all minute criticism, and notwithstanding confessed difficulties and obscurities which may be chiefly attributable to our ignorance, there remain evidences, most palpable in their character, embracing a long line of conspicuous public events, that God has been pleased, at various times and in various ways, to reveal himself, the principles of his government, and the duty and destiny of man.

Many of these revelations are such as do not involve the problem of inspiration. To others the fact of inspiration is vital. In the discussions of this subject various theories are propounded or necessarily implied, some of which appear to lack justification, and others to be wholly inadequate.

The doctrine of plenary inspiration—extending to the entire text, the historic records included, making the whole, *verbatim et literatim*, the direct work of the Holy Spirit—has to-day, probably, few adherents. Confining ourselves to those portions of revelation to which inspiration is vital, it is difficult to ascribe superiority in value to any verbal theory over that of the inspiration of the subject-matter. If the Holy Spirit suggested the very words of inspiration, they must of necessity be such as those inspired were familiar with, otherwise the revelation would be unintelligible. A language peculiar to the Holy Spirit would require a lexicon of that language for its exposition. A verbal inspiration of Scripture, therefore, must be in the language of the hour. There appear to be many instances of such inspiration. It would seem, however, that a proper appreciation of the divine resources would forbid our limiting inspiration to this single method. As there appear to be other forms of revelation than by inspiration, so there may be other forms of inspiration than the verbal. A superintendent of any enterprise may send the same message by a half dozen messengers to as

many different persons, every one of whom will deliver the message correctly, but in language differing from that of every other one and from that of the superintendent himself. Still another party might write a correct history of the transaction, yet in terms differing from all. In such a case the original message, which might have been wholly verbal, or partly verbal and partly pantomimic, or wholly symbolic, would have been a common inspiration throughout the transaction.

There are other considerations tending to weaken the supposed especial value of verbal inspiration. The mass of Bible readers everywhere are ignorant of the languages in which the Scriptures originally appeared. If the very words of Scripture were inspired, the mass of men cannot have the benefit of the fact, inasmuch as they are shut up to translations, and are thus placed in substantially the same attitude in regard to the revelation as were those to whom it was originally given, if only the subject-matter were inspired. True inspiration, in its most subtle form, perhaps, is a direct and intelligible impression from God upon the human soul. Innumerable impressions upon men from other sources are vague and unintelligible. These cannot be included. God by his Spirit may dwell in every heart, and yet no definite guidance result therefrom. There are impressions, however, distinct, intelligible, by which the inspired prophet may know that God is with him. Out of such inspirations may have come revelations, by which individuals, cities, nations, have been warned, instructed, saved.

This view is strengthened as we turn to the teachings of Christ. Not only do the mass of readers come to his teachings exclusively through human translations, but the translators themselves cannot say what were the specific terms which Christ himself employed, since the Christian histories record his discourses in somewhat varied phrase. If Christ uttered the very words of the Holy Spirit, but one of the four evangelists can have recorded them, and we have no means of knowing who that fortunate one is. The proba-

bility is that none of them records precisely his words, though in substance they all agree.

Assuming, then, that inspiration may have been independent of precise forms of words, the record of the truths becomes a human record. As such, it will be marked by all the mental characteristics of the individual making it. The style, whether vivid or tame, terse or diffuse, will be his. The rhetoric, the figures employed, will be his. The literary, scientific, geographical, biographical, and historical allusions, so far as these are not involved in the subject-matter of the inspiration, will be his. These will conform to the culture, the literary skill, the scientific attainments, and the historical knowledge of the author of the record. These belong to the framework in which the inspired truth finds its setting. Error in the framework may not even mar the picture. Bad grammar, mixed figures of rhetoric, allusions to erroneous views in history or science, may be involved in the record, and yet in no way affect the inspired truths which that record presents.

For example: Matthew describes the temptations of Christ previous to his entrance upon his public ministry (iv. 1-11). The last of these exhibits his absolute incorruptibility, though the whole world were presented him as a bribe. The whole representation is doubtless scenic. The impossible high mountain whence may be viewed all the kingdoms of the earth; the personification of whatever is adverse to the work of Christ in the devil who taketh him thither; Christ bidding Satan to get behind him, as only God should be worshipped — these, with all the other particulars, are but parts of a general portrayal of the inflexibility of Christ. This incorruptibility is the central and only important fact in the general scene. The point of the narration is untouched, whatever the scheme of exposition we may adopt. Let it be conceded that Matthew believed the devil to be a real personage instead of a personification; that he thought the earth a vast plain, instead of a globe, from the heights of a mountain in the midst of which all the kingdoms of the



world, and the glory of them, could be seen ; and the integrity of the inspired truth or revelation, would remain. The unhesitating devotion of Christ to the work of his ministry would be equally apparent. So long as the passage is employed exclusively to this end no error can arise. But if we turn aside from this end, and discuss instead problems of geography, we shall both abuse the Scriptures and fall into error.

Again, the Jewish mind in the time of Christ was possessed with the philosophy that a variety of current diseases were occasioned by demoniacal possessions — that is, by the spirits of departed persons having taken possession of the bodies of the persons afflicted. These diseased and afflicted ones Christ cured. The historian narrates the facts as they appeared to the Jewish mind. He is said to have cast out the demons. Sometimes he is said simply to have healed them. Sometimes the two expressions are coupled together, and he is said to have cast out the demons and to have healed them. The reality of the demoniacal possessions in no case came into controversy. Nothing was affirmed or denied on that subject. When the historian says ; “There was brought unto him one possessed with a devil [demon], blind and dumb ; and he healed him, insomuch that the blind and dumb both spake and saw ” — he intends to *teach* nothing touching possessions, but simply Christ’s power over blindness and dumbness. The Jewish philosophy appears only incidentally. Christ makes no affirmation or denial of it. His reasoning with the Pharisees about it, simply shows them their utter inconsistency, standing on their own premises (Matt. xii. 22–30).

Solomon compels us to some such discrimination in his description of a virtuous woman (Prov. xxxi). She brings food from afar ; rises while it is yet night ; considereth a field and buyeth it ; planteth a vineyard ; deals in merchandise ; keeps her candle burning all night ; clothes her household in scarlet ; covers herself with tapestry ; clothes herself in silk and purple ; manufactures and sells fine linen ;

and delivers girdles unto the merchants. It is no part of the purpose of the wise man to set forth these concrete forms of labor as requisites in a virtuous woman, but as embodying those abstract qualities which are essentials. If this may be considered a portion of inspiration, we can hardly assume that inspiration to extend beyond the subject-matter.

In this view it will be seen that both revelation and inspiration are specific and definite; that inspiration of divine truth, by means other than verbal, may leave the servant of God free to make the record from his own vocabulary, limited by his mental characteristics, qualities of style, and literary and scientific knowledge.

We cannot dismiss the subject of inspiration without referring to another phase of doctrine concerning it. Much is said in certain quarters of all truth coming from God, of inspiration as universal, of the various degrees in which it is imparted to different persons, and of the divine impartiality thus exhibited.

If the divine impartiality requires that every child of God should be dealt with after precisely the same fashion I fear its vindication would be difficult. The claim that inspiration is universal could hardly be accepted as proof, since that inspiration is admitted to be imparted in different degrees. Besides, if inspiration is universal it must be substantially valueless. The inspiration of all men, which leaves the mass of men in profoundest error, could evidently be spared without loss. There would remain no criterion by which to distinguish the degree that is reliable, from the degree that is utterly erroneous. In such case, it would be immaterial whether we say all men are inspired, or no man is inspired. In either alternative we should be without guidance.

To rest the claim of universal inspiration upon the fact that all men possess some truth, is to prostitute the term from a sacred and technical sense to a mere secular and rhetorical sense. We say of men of rare genius in their respective callings, they sing, speak, write, paint, or invent as by

inspiration ; but we speak rhetorically, and by no means scientifically or technically. To apply the term inspiration to the ordinary use of our faculties in the acquisition of knowledge is simply to confuse our own thinking. As well might we claim that the sheep is inspired to grow wool, the whale to secrete oil, and the horse to digest his dinner.

Thus we have in view two great helps for the recovery of sinful man — the personal Christ and the authoritative word. Each aids the other. Both gradually grew into commanding influence. Christ becomes practically the Saviour of the world only as his truth is seen and believed. The gospel becomes the “power of God unto salvation” only as the living, crucified, and risen Christ is identified with the word. Through both Christ and the word God comes near to man: “The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life,” says our Lord.

The New Testament presents many striking illustrations of the powerlessness of the word until illumined by some special providence. Even the promise of immortality seems to share the common fate. God says to Moses, “I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob”; and Christ adds the comment, “God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.” Christ said, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will build it again”; but such sayings imparted little life. Not till Christ had risen from the dead did his disciples even understand that “he spake of the temple of his body.” Christ’s own ministry was relatively inefficient as compared with that of the apostles after his resurrection. He commanded attention; he excited wonder; he begat superficial conviction. How could it be otherwise? He fed multitudes; he healed the sick; he made the blind see, the deaf hear, the dumb speak. He comforted the sorrowing. The common people heard him gladly and said, “Never man spake like this man.” Yet they were without strength. Christ had not yet come to them with power. When he was arrested, they were terrified. When he was condemned, they were scattered

every man to his own. Even the ardent Peter declared, with oaths and curses, that he knew not the man. Christ rose from the dead; was seen of the women, of Peter, of the eleven, and of five hundred brethren at once; and ascended to the Father. Still the multitude were scattered. Peter's courage had returned. He mustered the disciples and stood up in their midst to address them. "The number of names together was about an hundred and twenty" (Acts i. 15). To this small company was the Christian army reduced. Christ had not yet been fully manifested. The logic of the crowd was feeble. He had not yet practically come to them in his high character of Teacher, Saviour, and risen Lord.

With the apostles it was otherwise. Upon them the "Sun of Righteousness had risen with healing in his wings." The day of Pentecost came. "They were all with one accord in one place. . . . They spake with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." This was noised abroad. The multitude from Jerusalem, from Judea, from the provinces afar, "came together, and were confounded." Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice and preached to the vast throng clearly, pointedly, faithfully. He arraigned them at the tribunal of Christ. He cited his miracles and wonders. He unfolded to them the counsels of God. He charged upon them rebellion against God, in that with wicked hands they had crucified and slain their Lord. They were "pricked in their heart"; and three thousand were converted in a day. A few days later, on healing the man lame from his mother's womb, when all the people ran together in Solomon's porch, Peter and John again charged home upon the Jews their exceeding guilt in killing the Prince of life, and desiring a murderer to be granted unto them. Notwithstanding the priests, the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, being grieved that they taught the people, came upon them and put them in hold until the next day, about five thousand believed (Acts ii.-iv.); and there is no evidence that any of the three thousand, or of the five thousand, ever turned back. So much more effec-

tive was the ministry of the apostles, standing on the completed history of Christ, than had been the ministry of Christ himself before that history was complete. Thus was fulfilled the promise of the Saviour to his disciples; "The works that I do shall ye do also; and greater works than these shall ye do; because I go unto my Father" (John xiv. 12).

In this we gain the key to what is commonly spoken of as the "second coming of Christ" — phraseology, however, little used in the Scriptures. Both Christ and his apostles make frequent mention of his coming. Universalists do not understand this to mean a personal coming, but a coming, rather, in the moral power and spiritual energy of his more manifest truth. Whatever manifests his truth promotes his coming. That coming is one. It is a thing of degrees. Christ has come to a given soul when he has made his truth effective in that soul. Christ as a person is essential to the Christian scheme; but the Christian scheme does not rest in Christ as a person. He is the channel of the truth, teacher of the truth, exemplifier of the truth. When the truth has accomplished its heaven-born mission in any soul, Christ has fully come to that soul. It is saved not primarily from punishment, but from sin, and consequently from further punishment.

Among the providences which carry conviction to the human heart, divine judgments hold a prominent place. Prominent among these are the judgments verifying the prophecies of our Lord. He foretold the catastrophe in which the nation that crucified him would meet its overthrow. He pointed out the signs that should precede it, and emphasized the dire calamities involved in it (Matt. xxiv. and xxv.). This would carry conviction of Christ's Messiahship to the heart of the nations, and hence is appropriately styled "the coming of the Son of Man." Nor is there any authority for applying the latter part of this discourse to supposed scenes in the future world. The attempt to so apply it is involved in inextricable difficulties. The first portion undeniably refers to events then at hand. The time

of their fulfilment is definitely limited (vs. 34) to that generation. The several paragraphs are so joined together, by such connectives as "then" and "when," as to preclude the admission of a gulf of thousands of years between the fulfilment of the former and that of the latter portion of the discourse.

The supposed hiatus is more commonly placed at Matt. xxv. 31. But this is formally connected to what goes before by the phrase "When the Son of Man shall come," etc. It is of no avail to urge here that this coming of the Son of Man is in glory, with all his holy angels, and is to be followed by rewards and punishments. The Saviour had elsewhere announced just such a coming in the lifetime of those about him. "For the Son of Man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels; and then shall he reward every man according to his works. Verily, I say unto you, there be some standing here which shall not taste death till they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom" (Matt. xvi. 27, 28). It will be seen to be impossible to apply this judgment to scenes of another world, as is done by the Rev. Lyman Abbott and Dr. Whedon in their respective commentaries. Not simply is the event limited to that time in its very terms, and by the manifestly close connection of the verses with each other, but by the opening clause of the first verse itself, when properly translated. The force of the verb *μέλλω*, *about to be*, is entirely overlooked. Christ does not say merely that "the Son of Man shall come," etc., but that "the Son of Man is *about* to come," etc. The passage in Matt. xxv. 31-46 is but an amplification of the same judgment. No one, so far as I am aware, assumes that two such scenes are foretold. The limitation of time in the one, therefore, necessarily limits the other.

The references by the apostles to the coming of Christ, in connection also with a judgment, are somewhat vague, but of the same character. They expected that coming and judgment in their own time. This is quite generally conceded. Were they not right? Had they not good reason?

Writing on the eve of a great convulsion,—a time of “tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be” (Matt. xxiv. 21),—they express their sense of the imminence of the events, and are justified by the Saviour’s own authority. The fact of their inspiration and the integrity of their writings remain free of imputation. But if we interpret the coming and judgment to refer to the end of the world, rather than the end of the age, then clearly they were in error. Into this difficulty does the usual exposition plunge them, and there is no deliverance. Whatever theory of inspiration is adopted, this difficulty remains. The error is not incidental; it pertains to the subject-matter. It is not in the framework of the picture, but in the picture itself.

We are now prepared to understand more broadly the subject of Christ’s coming. While the revelations by Christ were illumined by the judgments of his time, the procession of the ages brings still further light. His coming, in the sense of reaching the hearts of men, the chief purpose of his coming, advanced by judgments, is still further advanced by whatever makes the gospel better understood. Every step in the progress of the Christian church, is a more glorious coming of Christ. The awakening thus occasioned is also frequently called a resurrection. When there shall no longer be occasion for any man to say to his brother, “Know the Lord”; because all shall have come to know him, “from the least even unto the greatest,” Christ will have fully come; his glorious appearance will be complete; and the kingdom will be ready to be delivered up to the Father, that “God may be all in all.”

Perhaps the gravest objection, in the popular thought, to the view of Christ’s coming here presented, is found in the remark of the angels to the Galileans: “This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven” (Acts i. 11). Instead of the adverb rigidly describing the manner of the coming, there is some reason to think that it is con-

ployed rather to emphasize the fact; while the manner may be as already described. When the Saviour uttered his lament over Jerusalem, saying, "how often would I have gathered thy children together, *even as* a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not," we cannot suppose he literally described the manner of his protection; and yet the adverbs are the same. Any explanation that will apply to the one case, will also apply to the other. Such forms of statement, like many of the references to the heavenly bodies in connection with great changes among men, appear to conform to the style of the age, and take their place among the boldest examples of rhetorical imagery. Thus Paul speaks of the Lord descending "from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God," and of being "caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air" (1 Thess. iv. 16, 17). Jesus, speaking of events at hand, says: "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of heaven shall be shaken: and then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven" etc. (Matt. xxiv. 29, 30). So Virgil, as translated by Dryden, writing in a similar vein just before the Christian era, says:

"The sun reveals the secrets of the sky;  
 And who dares give the source of light the lie?  
 The change of empires often he declares,  
 Fierce tumults, hidden treasons, open wars:  
 He first the fate of Caesar did foretell,  
 And pitied Rome when Rome in Caesar fell;  
 In iron chains concealed the public light,  
 And impious mortals found [feared] eternal night."

Virgil. Geor. i. ver. 462.

We come now to state more generally the biblical doctrine of judgment. When Christ comes by the light of his truth, in any measure, to any soul, that soul "stands before the judgment-seat of Christ." It judges itself by the Christian standard, according to the light it has. Christ is said to judge him; but it is by his truth. "The Father judgeth



no man ; but hath committed all judgment unto the Son " (John v. 22). But Christ disclaims judging personally. " If any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not ; for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that rejecteth me and believeth not my words, hath one that judgeth him ; the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day " (John xii. 47, 48) — the last day spoken of by Joel, and applied by Peter to the Christian day (Joel ii. 28–32 ; Acts ii. 17–21).

In harmony with these teachings Isaiah prophesied of Christ, " He shall not fail nor be discouraged till he have set judgment in the earth ; and the isles shall wait for his law " (Isa. xlii. 4). Christ himself says : " For judgment am I come into this world " (John ix. 39). " Now is the judgment of this world ; now shall the prince of this world be cast out " (John xii. 31). Peter says : " For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God " (1 Pet. iv. 17). Many scriptures, vague in our version, are quite definite in the original. Paul " reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment *about* to come " (*μέλλω*), Acts xxiv. 25). " I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ who is *about* [*μέλλω*] to judge the quick and the dead at his appearing, and his kingdom " (2 Tim. iv. 1). John the Baptist said to the Pharisees and Sadducees (Matt. iii. 7), " O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath *about* to come ? " (*μέλλει*). In more than a hundred instances *μέλλω* is used, applicable sometimes to visible judgments, sometimes to Christ's spiritual rule in the gospel day, and to a great variety of events then about to occur ; but never, it is believed, unless it be in these controverted passages, to events that have not yet transpired in whole or in part.

Illustrative of God's judgments in this world, is the whole course of his government as presented in the Old Testament records. Upon rulers, cities, and kingdoms, were his judgments visited for a period of four thousand years. Never was there an intimation that these judgments were either

inadequate or unjust. Having been both adequate and just, there would seem to be no occasion for revising them either in this world or in the world to come. The Christian church is to be congratulated on the discovery that, in very large measure at least, the divine rewards are administered in this world. There will remain, therefore, no reason for that scenic and universal arraignment before a visible tribunal, which is the objective point of so much Christian labor. The clumsy adjustments of earthly courts, sitting at long intervals, with their sheriffs, and juries, and pleadings, will no longer be the pattern for a purely spiritual administration. We may above all things be sure that God keeps the administration of his government well in hand. Consequently his judgments, whether understood specifically of the determination of character, or in its broader acceptance, as including all the elements of his government, cannot fall far in arrears.

The Universalist doctrine of the divine rewards will now be readily understood. Outward and visible under the law, they were educational as well as retributive. Spiritual and invisible under the gospel, they are the fruitage of truth acting upon the moral sense. The law was the schoolmaster to bring men to Christ. Strictly speaking, the rewards of duty are exclusively spiritual. Secondary results may be physical, economical, social. Duty bears directly on the moral law; indirectly, on a variety of other laws. Other things being equal, duty favors health, wealth, reputation. "Seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." Nevertheless, health and outward prosperity are not the rewards of virtue. These come of conformity to the physiological, economic, and social laws of our being. Wisdom in one direction may be joined with folly in another. Success, therefore, in one direction may be joined with failure, in another. There may be great worldly prosperity, and utter spiritual leanness. There may be great spiritual prosperity, and utter worldly leanness. No variety of outward condition, therefore, can impugn divine justice. As Pope has said:

“But sometimes virtue starves while vice is fed ;  
 What then, is the reward of virtue bread  
 That vice may merit ? 'tis the price of toil, —  
 The knave deserves it, when he tills the soil :  
 The knave deserves it, when he tempts the sea,  
 Where folly fights for kings, or dives for gain !  
 The good man may be weak, be indolent ;  
 Nor is his claim to plenty, but content.”

If we carefully study the fortunes of the vicious, we shall find little occasion to envy their occasional successes. The injustice of their methods often vitiates their well-laid plans. They are “snared in the work of their own hands.” They “fall into the pit their own hands have digged.” Position and power are sometimes gained by falsehood and indirection ; but they are of little worth. Men build for themselves gilded tombs ; but the contents are death. It still remains true, that “wisdom is better than riches ;” and that the divine rewards are as various as human service.

If it be still assumed that these rewards in this world are inadequate, an appeal to the next world can scarcely afford relief. If the fruitage of righteousness be an inadequate recompense, whence shall the deficiency be supplied ? Shall the fruitage of unrighteousness be added ? The delights of a golden and sensual heaven given over, “righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost” are all that remain. If these fail, the bank of heaven is broken.

On the other hand, the recompense of the wicked must be the same in kind as they here experience. The imagination may be quickened by the rhetoric of the “undying worm,” the “unquenchable fire,” the “smoke of their torments,” the “outer darkness,” and the like ; but once interpreted as rhetoric, these figures can only enhance our appreciation of the present fruitage of sin. If sin shall cease, its fruitage will cease. If sin shall continue, its fruitage must continue ; and if that fruitage be now inadequate, will it not then be inadequate ? One of two things ; either both the good and the bad are now adequately rewarded and the law of God vindicated ; or that law is insufficient for the work assigned

*vice is laid*; and must depend on extraneous helps. If the latter, *bread* *se* helps may be "banishment," or "darkness," or *of tail,* "worms," or "fire." They can hardly be all these at the *the soil* same time. Solomon says; "Behold the righteous shall be *is the* recompensed in the earth; much more the wicked and the sinner" (Prov. xi. 31). We accredit the witness.

The principles of retribution are not commercial. A given sin does not entail a given number of stripes. The same act of sin, by different persons, does not produce the same fruitage of woe. There are various degrees of responsibility, and various degrees of incorrigibleness. From the bitter fountain flows the bitter stream. The bitterness of the one is modified by the bitterness of the other. "The wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked" (Isa. lvii. 20, 21). The moral nature of man, under the light of divine truth, cannot be at peace in sin. This is not at all a question of times and seasons, but of purpose and character. When the fountain is dry the stream will no longer flow. When, in penitence, the wicked turn from their wickedness and are forgiven of God, they are no longer "like the troubled sea." We incarcerate criminals for a given number of months or years. There is nothing analogous to this in the divine government. The sinner is under abiding command to repent and turn unto the Lord, who will have mercy upon him, and to our God who will abundantly pardon (Isa. lv. 6-9). This is the result which punishment seeks. This gained, the rod of chastisement is laid aside.

We do not forget that the church presents various reasons for the punishment of offenders. Among them, may be named the desire to reform the transgressor, to restrain him from further transgression, to warn others of the danger of sinning, to protect the community, to vindicate law, and to satisfy justice. The first of these, it should be said, is the primary purpose, and includes all the others, which are but secondary and incidental. Whatever of chastisement is requi-

site to arrest the attention of the transgressor, to subdue his stubbornness, to gain respect for the rights of others, and to secure obedience, is legitimate and ethically defensible. Such chastisement will best deter others from sinning. It shows the failure of transgression. It protects the community by converting depredators into defenders. It vindicates the law, by showing that it will rest in nothing that is not merciful, just, and true. In such a consummation, we venture to think, justice rests with delight.

In this dealing with the sinner, observe, not a blow is struck, not a pang is inflicted, that his own good does not require. He is in no measure whatever, as regards his chastisement, made a sacrifice for the good of others. Excess of justice would be quite as ruinous as its deficiency. Justice, indeed, does not admit of either excess or deficiency. Divine retribution is morally wholesome, from all points of view. Not an element in it that is not morally defensible in its direct and exclusive relations to the transgressor himself. Were it otherwise, the angels would stand aghast. When the sinner is brought to penitence, excess of chastisement would be an outrage. Not the moral sense of the victim alone, nor of other criminals, would cry out against it, but of the whole community. Its spiritual health would be damaged. Its sense of rectitude and of propriety would be confused. A wise parent would not inflict a penalty upon an innocent child for the restraint of other and guilty children of his household, nor for the vindication of law. No more, for these purposes, would he inflict a penalty, any measure of which is improper. An affectionate and persistent administration of government that holds the child rigidly to duty, and secures submission, is above all things wholesome in family discipline, and will best secure all incidental good. Righteousness is the same on earth and in heaven. It is a misfortune to oppose the moral sense of the world in the government we ascribe to God.

I have thus far avoided the discussion of the abstract demands of justice. Its principles, however, we have seen in

operation. There is a technical or church view of justice, which is recognized nowhere out of the church. It is very doubtful if it should be recognized in the church. It is commonly supposed to be a rigid and unyielding principle, before which everything else must give way. It is unyielding. So is every other attribute of God. No one attribute is required to give place to any other. The divine attributes are perfectly harmonious. Love requires justice; and justice requires love. Wisdom is essential to both; and mercy is the fruit of their blending energies. The criterion of justice is the divine law. That law is summed up in the two great commandments: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy soul, and thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. Were these two commandments perfectly obeyed, justice would be satisfied. It is no wonder that they are not perfectly obeyed. Born at zero in knowledge and power, man would not reach perfect obedience. Even when a knowledge of the right is gained, man is not free from the winds of selfishness and passion. A perfect life in man would have been as great a miracle as was the perfect life of Christ.

Still, love is the fulfilling of the law. Justice cannot be done till the law is obeyed. Till then it has imperative claims upon each and upon all. But what claims? Its original claims,—that we love God with all the soul, and our neighbor as ourselves. Justice seeks this continually. In default of the claim being answered, justice undertakes to remove the difficulty. It warns, chides, chastises, punishes. How long? Till its end be gained. How great are its penalties? As great as the obstacles in the way, and the end sought, may require. They cannot be made so great as to defeat the end and thwart the primary claim. But what if the sinner shall remain incorrigible? The discipline must continue. But may he not prove eternally incorrigible, and justice be eternally foiled? Yes, if justice seeks an impracticable end; if it seeks a practicable end unintelligently; if it

is confronted with unexpected and insurmountable obstacles; if it is trying an experiment, instead of accomplishing a work; if the hearts of kings are not in the Lord's hands (Prov. xxi. 1); if the will of his people is not in his power (Ps. cx. 3); in a word, if man be God, and God be only man, justice may be obliged to surrender its primary claim, and stand forever baffled. Worse still, if punishment in the future be arbitrary; if it be an overt infliction; if it be an irreversible doom. Justice will still have surrendered its primary claim of love to God and man, and will have accepted its precise opposite — eternal rebellion against God, and eternal hatred of man, which is eternal injustice. Its motives for punishment are now changed. Originally it sought obedience. It now rests in eternal disobedience. It began with an aim that necessarily limited infliction; it accepts a result involving unlimited infliction. It began with hope; it ends in despair. It began with chastisement; it ends in vengeance. It began in a spirit paternal; it ends in a spirit quite other than paternal.

There is another aspect under which it is our duty to view the demands of justice. The very first duty of a parent is to the children he brings into the world. He is bound to invest them with the best constitution in his power. He is culpable, if through any fault of his they inherit disease. He is responsible, if through his moral delinquency they inherit moral infirmities. Justice demands of the parent support, protection, and shelter in infancy; education, training and nurture in childhood; and assistance, counsel, and guidance in youth,—all this, by virtue of the fact that he is their parent. Having taken the responsibility of their parentage, all else necessarily follows. It is true there may also be reflex duties of children to parent. The child will owe gratitude, obedience, co-operation; but the child must be trained in these duties by the parents. The parent's obligations are primary, and cannot be put off. His fidelity must not depend on the children; rather the children's fidelity will depend largely on the parent.

The analogies of this relationship readily suggest themselves. God is the universal Father. He voluntarily assumed the responsibility of creation. It would be moral idiocy to deny that it is a responsibility. The great family of man is his; but it is not his to sport with, much less to maltreat. He had no right to create thoughtlessly or wantonly; no right to create without an end in view, and that end a good one. He had no right to thwart his own purpose by the granting of hazardous powers. He could not properly withhold his scrutiny from a single link in the long chain of causes that bear the infant from its mother's arms to the bosom of Abraham's God. The necessary education of the world is with him. The providences, instrumentalities, and opportunities necessary for the discipline of the world to himself, it is his responsibility to provide. No responsibility of man that can arise along the line of God's providences can override the divine responsibilities, or multiply the divine obligations. If there shall be failure then, it is fundamentally his failure. However man may share in the failure, he may shelter himself under the shadow of the greater failure above him. An earthly parent cannot fail in the rearing of his children to usefulness in life without something of shame to himself. Much less can the Infinite Father fail in his purpose to discipline the world to himself without a shadow resting upon his throne.

Justice now shines with a joyous light. It commands infinite power, wisdom, and love for the instruction, regeneration, and salvation of man. It wields all the resources of the universe to enforce its inflexible claim upon man to love God with all his heart, and his neighbor as himself. Hence, from every point of view, justice guarantees the salvation of the world.

By a singular refinement of reasoning, in certain quarters, universal salvation is admitted, and yet endless punishment (not misery) is maintained. Sin, it is said, dwarfs the soul. The sinner is morally undeveloped. If saved, he is but a babe in Christ. However he may afterward progress, he



will never attain to so high a moral rank, at any given moment, as he would have held had he never sinned. This will forever reduce his measure of happiness, and therefore prove an endless loss.

It would seem a pity to destroy the last hope of those who are eagerly borne on to this result. But there are a few obvious remarks which must be submitted. 1. No man is, or can be, conscious of such punishment; as, contrary to the premise, this would imply a spiritual capacity already developed, but unfilled. 2. The Scriptures nowhere recognize such a hazard. 3. It conflicts with biblical principles which are fundamental: "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound" (Rom. v. 20); "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isa. i. 18); "Let the wicked . . . . return . . . . to our God, for he will abundantly pardon" (Isa. lv. 7). 4. It presumes all progress to be measured progress, in serried ranks. 5. It applies to the best, not less than to the worst of men; to infants, idiots, and heathen, not less than to sinners; to all later generations as compared with earlier ones of the same character. 6. It is by no means certain that great sinners are dwarfs in moral powers. The qualities which made Saul of Tarsus great as a persecutor made him equally great as a defender. 7. Besides, if it were so, men of different capacities may be equally happy. Loving God with all the soul, whatever be its capacity, is supreme bliss. A gill cup may be as full as a gallon measure. Universalists dare not deny that those who come in at the eleventh hour will receive every man a penny.

Universalism does not claim that this work is accomplished this side the grave. We know not, indeed, what changes may be wrought in the very hour of death. But we affirm nothing of the realm of the unknown. The righteousness of his children must be alike dear to God in all worlds. He cannot, therefore, by his providence, bar any soul at death from coming to him. Nay, his grace cannot cease to plead

with any soul. Many are the promises which can be fulfilled only by the after-death efficiency of divine grace. Not yet has Christ "drawn all men unto him." Not in this world does Christ subdue all things unto himself, preparatory to the delivery of the kingdom to the Father, "that God may be all in all" (1 Cor. xv. 28). Not in this world do we see "gathered together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in him"; according to God's "good pleasure, which he hath purposed in himself" (Eph. i. 9, 10). Not here do we see "every knee bow to Christ, and every tongue confess him Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. ii. 9-11). Not this side the grave is the vision of the Revelator fulfilled: "And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever" (Rev. v. 13). To conclude hence that such consummation can never be reached—a conclusion that challenges the power of heaven, and blasts the hope of earth—demands the most absolute authority. Where can that authority be found?

But for a single dogma of the Protestant church, and adopted, it would seem, to rid itself of the Romish purgatory, such a conclusion would not to-day be thought of. I refer to the dogma of "no change after death"—a dogma at once unreasonable, unphilosophical, and unbiblical; confusedly defended by partialism, unhesitatingly rejected by Universalism. If there shall be no moral change after death, it will follow, not simply that sinners in Christendom will remain sinners, the heathen would continue in heathenism, undeveloped infants and idiots remain in blank ignorance forever, but the church itself will bear eternally the stains that mark it here, and share in heaven only the blessedness involved in its present measure of righteousness. Promptly does the church itself reject these conclusions. It practically joins issue with itself at every one of these points. The

sinners of this world, we are now told, will grow worse and worse in the next. The honest heathen will be instructed in Christ and saved in the world to come. The veil of ignorance will be rent away from infancy and idiocy, and the light of heaven introduce them to the kingdom of God. And even the poverty of earthly saintship will be enriched and quickened by the presence of the King eternal. Surely, a dogma so little respected by its friends, need have very little weight in our judgment of highest things. New light in all worlds must bring new moral conditions. If man shall hereafter remain free — a condition equally necessary both to obedience and to disobedience — he must be the subject of new light, and move on to new moral states. To bar a change of character, therefore, there must be a deeper change of nature. Can such a change redound to the glory of God?

The Scriptures give no support to this dogma. Those adduced to this end are misapplied; commentators believing in the dogma themselves being judges. The parable of the rich man in Hades is expressive of the woes of the rejected Jewish nation in this world. *Hades* should never be translated hell, as the authors of the revised New Testament confess (Luke xvi. 19–31). The men unto whom it is appointed “once to die, but after this the judgment” (Heb. ix. 29), are the high-priests under the law, who once a year entered by the blood of others into the holy of holies — thus symbolically dying for the nation — and came thence wearing the breastplate of judgment, announcing forgiveness to the people. The Revelator’s language, “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” (Rev. xxii. 11), is misapplied to another world. It is found, indeed, near the end of the Bible; but by no means applies to the end of all things. It follows immediately the injunction: “Seal not the sayings of this book; for the time is at hand” (vs. 10). Revelation opens with the caution that the events

“ must shortly come to pass ” (Rev. i. 1) ; and closes with its substantial repetition : “ The time is at hand ” (Rev. xxii. 10) ; “ Behold, I come quickly ; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be ” (vs. 12). It is preposterous to suppose that these events have not yet transpired. Daniel, writing within seven hundred years of the overthrow of the Jewish state, is bidden, “ Go thy way, Daniel ; for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end ” (Dan. xii. 9). Is it possible that the Revelator, whose injunction was : “ Seal not the sayings of this book ; for the time is at hand ” (xxii. 10), referred to events eighteen hundred years away, with indefinite ages yet to transpire ? It seems far more probable that these events are in part identical with those of which Daniel wrote ; especially as the Revelation of John appears to have been written before the year 70 of our era, and while the Jewish temple, with its Gentile court, was still standing (Rev. xi. 1, 2).

As little successful in the support of this dogma is the argument recently deduced from habit. This argument does not at all sustain the doctrine of “ no change after death ” ; since it is alleged the sinner will grow worse and worse. Its only force goes to show that there can be no change for the better. But has it any real value to this end ? Habit gives facility ; it cannot constrain. The profane man may utter an oath with every breath ; but place him in the presence of those he profoundly respects, and his profanity is hushed. Habit gives the musician facility ; it cannot compel the use of the instrument. Besides, if the next world has nothing in store for man but the natural fruitage of the habits here formed, it is an open question whether the cheerful hilarity of many a sinner will not stand him in better stead than will the sad blissfulness of many a saint. In all such discussions we must step aside from the technical piety of the sects—from their shibboleths, their genuflexions, formulæ, and ceremonials—and stand face to face with everlasting verities.

Universalism maintains the sovereignty of God over the human will. Men are stubborn through error, passion, prejudice. While God may not directly attack the will, he may break down all the bulwarks of its persistency. He may flash the light of truth upon the understanding, dispelling its errors. He may afflict the spirit by his judgments, dissolve the bonds of passion and prejudice, and open new fountains of feeling. Out of these changed conditions may spring new motives, volitions, purposes. These are among the steps of human regeneration in every age. The worst of men will be saved on the same principles as the best. The freedom of the human will in all will be alike respected. Man is made willing in the day of God's power. We should not be so solicitous to preserve the freedom of the human will as to destroy the freedom of the divine will. To make the human will sovereign — even whimsically and lawlessly sovereign — is to introduce confusion, and spread abroad uncertainty throughout the universe. It is said, "God cannot save man against his will." It is equally true that God cannot damn man against his will. Salvation is a condition in which human powers co-operate with divine grace. The saving of man, therefore, is the bringing of his powers into such co-operation. The only thing that makes salvation necessary is perversity of will. To remove this perversity is to save. Such salvation is explicitly salvation from *sia*. Those who say, God cannot effect this, have forgotten the history of Abraham, and Joseph, and Moses, and David, and Peter, and Paul; and have relapsed unconsciously into atheism.

Universalism rejects the doctrine of the resurrection of the body, of conditional immortality, and of sleep till a future day of general uprising. The resurrection of Christ's body was for evidential purposes, and affords no more reason for supposing that our bodies will be raised than that they will be raised in forty hours after death. What appears to be Paul's teaching is accepted as authority and as highly reasonable: "For we know that if our earthly house of this

tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" (2 Cor. v. 1). He regarded death as gain; and believed that on departing he should be with Christ (Phil. i. 21-23). In describing the resurrection of the dead, he says, "It is, sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body" (1 Cor. xv. 42, 43). "As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly" (vs. 49). The very term resurrection appears to include, not simply life, but regenerated life beyond the grave. Hence, its application to the moral awakening of men in this world (John v. 25-29) is scarcely a figure. Man is not saved in sin, nor is death his saviour. Death delivers man from temptation, and may be accompanied by experiences fraught with great moral power. It is only moral power that saves. As long as darkness and alienation continue, condemnation will continue. The removal of the veil will introduce us to new light and new glory. Paul says, "For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face. Now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known" (1 Cor. xiii. 12). And John says, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is" (1 John iii. 2). So the elder Ballou sang:

"As night before the rays  
Of morning flees away,  
Sin shall retire before the blaze  
Of God's eternal day."

Nothing is affirmed of the first moments of consciousness in the after-death state. While the Scriptures describe that state as incorruptible and glorious, some Universalists think a period of discipline, longer or shorter, may elapse before that glory will be fully revealed. And if, in this discipline, punishment shall be included, it will neither approach to the

Winchesterian fires in duration, nor be other than the natural fruitage of sin. Others with whom the writer himself sympathizers, regard the change from this world to the next as far greater, and, morally considered, far more important. The veil that is cast over all nations will be removed. The unclouded glories of God will shine upon the soul. Mortality being swallowed up of life, no man will deny a future life any more. Standing face to face with the Father, no man will deny the being of God any more. Beholding his infinite wisdom, his infinite power, his infinite goodness, his infinite mercy, his infinite justice, and especially his infinite love—a love in which there is no pulpit cant, no legal or technical dodges, no nullifying relationships; but which is upright and downright love, embracing you and me, and the entire universe—no man will deny God's real and personal love any more. Love begets love. "We love him, because he first loved us." "Love is the fulfilling of the law." Here, then, are moral changes, growing out of moral causes, which can hardly fail to be prompt in their influence, and far reaching in their power. All the light of this world is but as darkness compared to the day. The Patriarchal, Mosaic and Prophetic times are so many rills mingling in the river of Christian love which flows by the throne of God. But, as we reverently approach that throne, the infinite ocean of love stretches out before us. All that is involved in penitence and forgiveness will be experienced as the hatefulness of sin shall compel its rejection; and the meridian light of the Sun of Righteousness shall photograph the moral image of God upon every soul. With John we can say: "We know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." There may be after growth, and unceasing progress amid the infinite wonders of God; but salvation will be enjoyed all along the way.