

FIVE DISCOURSES

ON HELL!

BEING AN EXPOSURE AND REFUTATION OF
UNIVERSALISM;

IN REPLY TO THE REV. THEODORE CLAPP;

BY ALEXANDER CAMPBELL,

PASTOR OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH CORNER OF CARONDELET AND PERDIDO STREETS
NEW ORLEANS.

“ ————— Facilis descensus Averni;
Noctes atque dies, patet atri janua Ditis:
Sed revocare gradum, superasque evadere ad auras:
Hoc opus, hic labor est.—*Virgil's Æeid*, vi. 126.

“The gates of hell are open night and day;
Smooth the descent, and easy is the way;
But to return, and view the cheerful skies—
In this the task and mighty labor lies.—*Dryden's Translation*.

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P R E F A C E.

CUSTOM immemorial requires at the hand of every one who permits himself to appear as an author, some apology for assuming such a prominence before the world. In compliance with this time-honored custom, it is but simple truth to state, that the present publication originated in no preconcerted plan of authorship, but, arose from circumstances by the writer wholly unforeseen. For more than a quarter of a century, the Rev. THEODORE CLAPP has stood prominent as a preacher in this city. His sentiments, promulgated from the pulpit only, were variously understood. For years a diversity of opinion has existed in the public mind as to what are the doctrines of his creed. The publication of his discourse on Future Punishment excited a deep sensation in the community. In this state of public feeling, the writer of the present discourses was requested to take up the subject. He was requested to repeat, and afterwards to publish, the first discourse in the series; and subsequently, as the state of the controversy seemed to demand, he continued to deliver discourses on the subject, on Sabbath evenings, until they reached the present number, which are now published, in compliance with the manifestations of public interest in the subject.

THE AUTHOR.

NEW ORLEANS, July 15th, 1848.

[CORRESPONDENCE.]

THE following Correspondence led to the publication of the first discourse of the annexed series, which appeared in "The Daily Crescent" of April 22d; was subsequently followed by the second discourse, which appeared in the same paper under date of May 4th, and eventuated in the determination of the Author to present the accompanying five discourses to the notice of the public.

NEW ORLEANS, APRIL 11, 1848.

Rev. ALEXANDER CAMPBELL.

Dear Sir:—Having listened with profound attention to the sermon, or discourse, preached by yourself on last Sabbath evening, in the Presbyterian Church of this city, in answer to, or refutation of, a certain discourse of the Rev. THEODORE CLAPP, upon the subject of "Future Punishment," and believing that its publication will be exceedingly gratifying to many persons who had not the pleasure of attending in person, we would most respectfully solicit from you a copy of said sermon, that we may lay the same before the public.

Very respectfully,

V. N. SMYTH,
M. S. EDWARDS,
R. S. ALLEN,

GEO. ANDERSON,
H. HOMER SMITH,
S. S. CALHOUN.

MR. CAMPBELL REPLY.

NEW ORLEANS, APRIL 12, 1848.

Gentlemen:—Although the discourse, a copy of which you are pleased to ask for publication, is a hasty production, prepared without any knowledge of a call for its publication, and doubtless owes more to your indulgence than to its own merits, yet, with the humble hope that it may be useful, a copy of it will be submitted to your disposal, after it shall have been repeated, in compliance with request, on Sabbath evening next.

Very respectfully yours,

ALEXANDER CAMPBELL

Messrs. M. N. SMITH, M. S EDWARDS.

A DISCOURSE ON HELL !

Delivered by request, in the Presbyterian Church, at the corner of Carondelet and Perdido streets, New Orleans, April 9th, 1848, and repeated, by request, at the same place, on the 16th April;

In Reply to a Discourse on the same subject by the Rev. THEODORE CLAPP,
delivered on the 19th March preceding:

BY THE REV. ALEXANDER CAMPBELL.

Matt. v. 22: "But whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire."

THESE words, my hearers, are presented to you at this time as a subject of discourse, at an urgent request from without this church, from a quarter of intelligence and respectability such, that to disregard it, might appear like shrinking from a call of duty. It may be almost unnecessary to inform you, that the request was prompted by the appearance in print of a discourse on this same text, recently delivered in the First Congregational Church of this city.

Now, brethren, may we all enter upon the consideration of this very solemn and momentous subject, in the love of truth and the fear of God! May the sentiment of our united prayer be, that this holy book of God may not be soiled by the impurity of our hands, and that the clear mirror of Heaven's revealed truth, which reflects the image of the godhead, may not be obscured by the very breath with which we profess to honor His most holy name! But whilst we contend earnestly for the faith, let us speak the truth in love. In the discourse alluded to, it is maintained that "*the punishment of those who die impenitent will come to an end; will terminate finally in their recovery and restoration to heavenly and immortal bliss.*" This doctrine it is our main design, at present, to controvert.

I. The design of our Lord, in the passage of Scripture before us, undoubtedly is, to disinter some of the great principles of true religion, which had been long entombed in the rubbish of Jewish abuses, and to exhibit them before the living world in the proper beauty of their forms, and the heavenly harmony of their proportions. In the time of our Saviour's pilgrimage on earth, the Jews indeed retained some of the forms, but had almost wholly lost the spirit and the power of their ancient and holy religion. They recognized its existence only so far as it appeared in the observances of forms and ceremonies, whilst He pursued it upwards to its incipient and secret movings in the heart. They would deter transgressors from the horrid crime of murder only by warning them of the council, whilst He would deter them from even calling a brother a fool, by teaching them that the want of fraternal affection, indicated by

this unkind expression, is a violation of the great principle of love, on which hang all the law and the prophets, and therefore brings into peril the whole eternal well-being of the transgressor. With such a temper of mind he is disqualified, yea, wholly incapacitated, for the society and the employments of the New Jerusalem; for,

“Love tunes the harps of all the bless’d above;
Heaven’s harmony is everlasting love.”

As he is thus unprepared for the bright world of saved spirits, he is in danger of the dark world of the lost.

Having thus briefly stated what is believed to be the general design of the passage of holy writ in which our text is found, and also having described the character of him who calls his brother a fool, let us proceed—

II. To consider the doom threatened in the text. Hell fire is indeed a word of fearful import; but to the bright Christian, hell is disrobed of its terrors. If they disturb the peace of any good man, it is because he lives in the neglect of his duty, or in the culpable ignorance of his privileges. And if these fears should arouse him to that sense of obligation and discharge of duty which will cause him to

“ — read his title clear,
To mansions in the skies,”

he will assuredly bless God forever, and forever and ever, for the terror which that word conveyed to his mind in the days of his wanderings. And so, also, if the same word should carry alarm and fearfulness to any one of our “weak, erring and misguided race,” that may be found sinning against God and his fellow-man, who is created in the image of God, so that he turns from the error of his ways, and pursues the pleasant and the peaceful ways of wisdom; such a one will praise the Lord in loud anthems throughout eternity, that in the days of his disobedience and rebellion, his ears caught the terrible sound of hell. If we consult the members of the church militant on earth, we shall find myriads who will confess, that with unutterable anguish produced in their minds by this terrible name, they were induced to pause in their downward course of iniquity, to consider their ways, and to turn to the Lord, who had mercy upon them, and to our God, who abundantly pardoned: and if we could consult the holy ones who had gone hence to the upper world, we should hear the same response. Then, if the term “hell” designates a doctrine which has long been “a rack of torture and a source of unutterable anxiety, gloom and despair” to any, as affirmed by the Pastor of the Congregational Church of this city, it must be to those, and to those only, who have thus far neglected their duty both to God and man, and who are, it may be, even now unwilling to forsake their sins. And the best prayer we can offer for all such persons is, that the fears of this terrible word “hell” may keep hold of them until every wicked man may forsake his ways, and every unrighteous man his thoughts.

It is our duty, as it is but justice to the cause of Truth, to controvert the allegation, that the doctrine conveyed by the word “hell” “has never been the means of preventing a single

sin, a single species of crime, nor of converting a single sinner." We are willing to test the question in this way:—Take any considerable number of preachers who never use in their sermons the word "hell," as a means of warning transgressors, and who repudiate the doctrine which it is usually understood to convey, and then take the same number of clergy who maintain the contrary doctrine, and who faithfully warn every man of the eternal consequences of the sins of the impenitent; and then count the number of conversions on each side, in which men of admitted wicked characters and abandoned habits, such as drunkards, debauchees, gamblers, and persons of profane and dishonest lives—men of falsehood, deceit, and cruelty, have forsaken all their evil doings, and are now acknowledged to be reformed men. After making such an examination as this, any man of candor and observation can determine for himself which class of preachers exerts the greater influence upon the minds of wicked men; and also, which doctrine is the more efficient in the worst cases of depravity. This examination has been made by one engaged in the process for more than a quarter of a century, whose acquaintance with preachers and churches in our various large cities, and in many portions of our vast country, is somewhat extended; and his report is, that whilst hundreds of conversions of these worst characters have been witnessed, where transgressors have been faithfully warned to "flee from the wrath to come," he is surprised to discover, that, although among those who preach to the people soft and smooth things, there are found a goodly number of moral, intelligent and highly respectable hearers and respectable professors of religion, he has yet to see, or even to hear, of the first case of the reformation of a notoriously bad man, effected through the instrumentality of their ministry. This, on a first glance, appears strange. One would suppose, that even with the denial of the doctrine of an eternal future retribution, there still would be truth in their system sufficient to be instrumental in the conversion of at least a few, even of the worst cases of moral turpitude. This failure cannot arise from their want either of talents or of learning,—they possess a fair proportion of both; nor for a lack of hearers, for wicked men generally prefer their preaching to any other. The secret of the matter is simply this: whilst, with one hand, they endeavor to tear from the Bible the doctrine of eternal judgment; with the other, they generally also endeavor to divest the Saviour of Men of His real and Supreme divinity, and His cross of its divine glory: whilst, with one hand, they attempt to extinguish the unextinguishable flames of perdition; with the other, they attempt to quench the Sun of righteousness from the moral heavens. And whilst they thus abolish the justice of God, as it appears in the flames of the world of woe, they also abolish His love as it appears in the cross of His co-equal Son: and thus the gospel which they preach is no more like the gospel of God, than the hewn block is like the living oak. It is an image shaped after man's device, devoid of the great motive principles of love and fear, and presents to the sinner nothing to alarm his fears, and comparatively little to awake his love: and as this is not the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, and is not adapted, like the true gospel, to man's love of what appears good, and his hatred of what appears evil, nor to his hopes of future happiness, nor his fears of future misery, the Holy Ghost refuses, in any signal manner, to set His seal to such preaching: and hence, whilst the pulpits of such doctrine may be decorated with the

adornments of criticism, the flowers of poetry, the garlands of philosophy, and the figures of eloquence, yet through them the gospel falls on the ears of wicked men as martial music from a muffled drum. Men of such theology, although they may amuse and interest their hearers sometimes by ridiculing the old-fashioned credence of their clerical brethren; at other times, excite them to sympathy, by relating the self-tortures which they inflicted on themselves while they remained bound by the brazen fetters of their early creeds; and again, move their compassion, by showing how they have periled their fortunes and their fame, by bursting their ecclesiastical shackles, and in proving that they now stand wonderful men!—quite martyrs in the cause of truth!—and although they may thus, by turns, make their hearers both laugh and weep, yet with all this there is no sinner converted. God’s Spirit is not here. The gospel, in such a place, is a deformed, mutilated body, without a soul. There are, in the preaching of such a theology, wanting the great motive principles essential to the stirring up of the moral energies of the sinner’s heart. The preacher has little motive to preach, except to admonish his hearers not to be alarmed at the fear of hell; and the sinner has no motive to reform, except the desire of becoming more comfortable in the present life, inasmuch as he has been well instructed by his preacher, that good or bad, holy or unholy, righteous or unrighteous, he is sure of no unhappiness in the life to come. And as he, perhaps, supposes himself as wicked as he ever will be, and, notwithstanding, experiences his greatest enjoyment in the practice of sin; and as his preacher has also taught him to believe that all the miseries ever to be endured, on account of sin, are felt whilst engaged in its pursuit here; and on reflecting that his condition here is quite tolerable, and not likely to become any worse, he feels no very strong motive to reform his morals, and no very great repugnance to remaining as he is. Such a theological system sits like an incubus on the energies both of the preacher and the hearer, and converts the church which tolerates it into a charnel-house of souls.

The words rendered from the originals of the Scriptures into English by the word “hell” are, in the Hebrew, *Sheol*, and in the Greek, *Tartarus*, *Hades*, or *Gehenna*. The last term is the original of our text, and literally signifies the valley of Hinnon. It was the place where, in the days of Mannasseh, children were offered to the idol, Moloch. In the time of our Saviour, it was the place to which all the filth, and the dead bodies of animals and criminals from the city of Jerusalem, were conveyed. Here worms were ever reveling on the carcasses of the dead, and fires were ever kept burning to consume the noxious matter and to purge the air from its pestilential stench. By the inventive powers of man, a more horrid place could not be imagined. The name of this horrible place is the term selected by our blessed Lord to designate the state of the wicked in a future world. This interpretation accords with the ideas of the great theological poet, Milton:

“The pleasant valley of Hinnon, Tophet thence,
And black Gehenna, called the type of hell.”

This appears to be the only term in the Scriptures which favors the notion of confining hell to a local habitation. *Sheol* and *Hades*, when used in relation to the souls of men, seem descriptive of the state of souls departed from the present life, rather than of their locality.

It is of no very great importance to determine the question whether the soul derives some of the miseries of hell from the locality in which it may be placed, or whether its unhappy state may not be sufficient to make its locality anywhere a perfect hell. Milton describes Satan thus:

“Me miserable!—which way shall I fly?
Infinite wrath, and infinite despair!
Which way I fly is hell: myself am hell.”

Again he says:

“ — horror and doubt distract
The hell within him; for within him hell
He brings, and round about him, nor from hell
One step, no more than from himself, can fly.”

Most certainly this interpretation of the text is in correspondence with the general manner of the Scriptures, which is to convey to our minds spiritual and invisible things by means of material and visible objects. Indeed, this appears to be the proper, if not the only possible means of elevating our ideas from the world of matter to the world of mind, and of carrying them forward from the visible realities of the world which now is, to the invisible realities of that which is to come.

To suppose that our Lord here teaches, that he who should be guilty of the sin specified in the text would be taken by the Jewish authorities and cast into the literal Gehenna, near Jerusalem, is preposterous. What contrast would this sustain between the absurd and formal notions of sins and retribution at that time entertained by the Jews, and those rational and spiritual ideas of transgression and punishment which it was His design to reveal in the gospel? Understood in that sense as the mere exposition of the Jewish custom, what relevancy can the text have to the Christian system?

The question which presents itself next is, Whether the miseries of hell are endured in the present life, or in the life beyond the grave? Several passages of Scripture, both in the Old and New Testaments, are decisive on that question. In the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, we read that the rich man died, and in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torment. The word rendered “hell” in this passage is, in the Greek, “*hades*,” and “*hades*” is a translation of the Hebrew, “*sheol*.” “*Sheol*” sometimes means “pit;” at others, “the grave:” and also, it sometimes signifies “the state of departed spirits.” When used in relation to a dead body, it means “the grave:” when in relation to a departed spirit, it means “the state of the souls of the dead.” Whether that state is to be understood as happy or otherwise, depends on the words or the circumstances which accompany it. When it is used in relation to the soul of the rich man who in hell lifted up his eyes, it is “a state of misery;” but when used to describe the condition of the departed soul of our crucified Lord, and it is said, “his soul was not left in hell,” it does not signify a state of misery. This passage in the second chapter and twenty-seventh verse of the Acts of the Apostles, is a quotation from the sixteenth Psalm, where the

original word is the Hebrew “*sheol*.” Hence it is sufficiently evident that “*hades*” and “*sheol*” designate simply “the state of departed souls,” whether that state be miserable or otherwise. And this position is still further sustained by the seventeenth verse of the ninth Psalm, in these words: “The wicked shall be turned into hell (*sheol*), and all the nations that forget God.” Now, here “*sheol*” cannot mean “the grave,” because it is as true of the righteous, and the nations that remember God, as of the wicked, and the nations who forget Him, that they will be turned into the grave, since it is appointed unto man once to die. It cannot mean simply “the state of departed souls,” for this also is true of all others, as well as of the wicked and the nations who forget God, since it is the universal lot of man, that his “dust shall return to the dust as it was, and his soul to God who gave it.” It can, therefore, here only mean the miserable state of wicked souls, which, in the parlance of theology, is “hell.” Thus, from the Old Testament as well as from the New, we learn there is an unhappy state of the wicked after death.

The second question is, Whether this state shall be of a finite or an infinite duration? This is found distinctly answered, both in the Old and in the New Testament. In the 12th chapter of the book of Daniel, we find the general resurrection foretold: “When the multitude of them who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.” Again, in the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew, forty-sixth verse, we read:—“And these shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal.” Also, Second Thessalonians, first chapter and nineteenth verse: “They who know not God, and obey not the gospel, shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power.” Moreover, in the twenty-ninth verse of the third chapter of the evangelist Mark, we are taught, “That he who shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost, hath NEVER forgiveness, but is in danger of *eternal* damnation.” But it is objected that eternal and everlasting do not mean unending duration.

In reply to the objection, it is maintained that the word in Hebrew, in the text quoted from Daniel, is *olam*; which is translated into the Greek by the seventy translators of the Septuagint, by *aionios*. In the texts quoted from the New Testament, the original word translated everlasting and eternal, is also *aionios*. *Aionios*, the adjective, is derived from *aion*, the noun. *Aion* is formed, according to the authority of Aristotle, from *ai*, “ever,” and *on*, the present participle of the verb *einai*, “to be.” In treating of celestial beings, this greatest of heathen philosophers and scholars, the preceptor of Alexander the Great, who could not be mistaken in the use of the words of the Greek language, in which he wrote and spoke, speaking of celestial existences, says of these beings, that “they are without change or infirmity, and possessing a most excellent and satisfactory life, they continue through all eternity” (*aion*). Here follows the definition of the term, and its derivation: “For this word has been divinely spoken by the ancients: for the sum total comprehending the duration of the life of each one not supernatural, is his age (*aion*). For the same reason, the sum total of the whole heaven, and the sum total, containing the unending duration and the infinitude of all, is eternity, (*aion*), deriving its name from ever-being (*aei einai*), deathless and divine.” This passage Aristotle wrote, not as many lexicographers make lexicons, for the purpose of

sustaining some theological hobby. Here we learn, both from his derivation of the word, and his definition of it, that it literally and primarily means eternity, since it comprehends unending duration, and infinitude, and is deathless: although, when applied to the natural life of a mortal, it denotes merely a life-time. Now, as *ai* signifies “ever,” and on, “being,” the word *aion*, the compound, as fully and completely settles the unlimited meaning of the term, in its primary acceptation, as Aristotle’s definition itself. From *aion* come not only the Greek *aionios*, but also the Latin *æternitas* and *æternus*, as also our “eternity” and “eternal.” Now, our English meaning of eternity and eternal is precisely the same as the Greek *aion* and *aionios*. All will admit that the primary, proper and literal meaning of “eternal,” in English, is endless duration; and that, when used otherwise, to signify limited duration, it is employed in an improper or figurative sense—as when we speak of the “everlasting” hills, or the “eternal” mountains. So, precisely, in Greek, the word *aion* means, in its original and proper signification, infinity of duration; yet, as Aristotle intimates, it is figuratively applied to express the natural life-time of any being, when his life-time would then be styled *his* eternity. These words, then, always express interminable duration, except there be something in the nature of the subject which limits their meaning. Thus, we have endeavored to settle the sense of these words, not by appealing to definitions given by modern lexicographers, but by an appeal to the use of the terms in the best classical usage.

But if it be still insisted that these words do not express endless duration, then be it known, that these very terms are employed, in the original languages of the Scriptures, to express the eternal life and the eternal salvation of the righteous. If, then, *aionios* does not prove hell to be eternal, neither does it prove heaven to be eternal. He, then, who puts out the fires of hell, also extinguishes the lights of heaven. He who relieves the wicked from the fears of hell, also blots out from the righteous every hope of heaven; and leaves man to live and die like a beast, with no hell to fear, and no heaven to expect.

But the great objection, after all, is, that “it would be at once both unmerciful and unjust to condemn any one of our frail, erring and misguided race to everlasting misery, for any sins which he can possibly commit in this brief state of flesh and blood.” We trust that our hearers will see that we state this objection fairly and clearly: so we, also, hope to meet it.

In reply, it may be maintained that the objection is highly presumptuous, in creatures like ourselves, who know almost nothing. Our origin is but of yesterday, and the sphere of our knowledge but a point. How little do we know of the relations, bearings and correspondence of this stupendous universe!

“ — how system into system runs;
What other planets circle other suns!”

Shall we, then, but the insects of a day,

“Snatch from His hand the balance and the rod;
Rejudge His justice—be the god of God!”

Surely it would seem sufficient to make angels smile, to behold the insect man, climbing the throne to judge his Maker!

But beyond all, this grand objection is based upon three false assumptions.

The first is, that our doctrine implies that the eternal punishment of the wicked is an arbitrary dispensation of God.

The second is, that our theory supposes, that, in the sufferings of a future world, the miseries endured by the more and the less guilty are the same.

The third is, that our system implies that all the torments of the lost are inflicted for the sins committed in this life only.

Let us now take up these assumptions in their proper order.

First, then, we deny that eternal punishment is a mere arbitrary dispensation of God.

The discourse to which we alluded in the commencement of this, admits a penalty for sin in the form of mental punishments, as a *necessary* result, “in the exercises of a mind narrowed by exacting selfishness; inflated by pride and vanity; heated by wrath and malice; debased by sensual desires, and steeled with utter insensibility to the claims of God, truth, honor and philanthropy.” Observe, our preacher admits that there is a punishment of sin, which is the *necessary* exercise of such a mind as has been just described in his own terms. Now, taking the idea which his language suggests, let us suppose low animal desires never to be gratified—preying upon the soul like the revelling worm on the dead carcase—and the passions of anger, envy, hatred and revenge, raging in the soul with the objects against which they are directed, wholly beyond the reach of their fury; whilst fear, horror and despair are all raving in the frantic spirit, and undying remorse is feeding like a vulture on its prey: suppose all this—and is there not a sufficiency of elements to correspond with the types of Gehenna, and the unquenchable fires and the undying worm of that horrible place? But all these agents of the sinner’s torments are the operations—the sinful operations, of his own soul. They are the objects, together with the natural and necessary consequences of the objects, of the sinner’s own rebellious choosings. He preferred the course which formed these perverse habits, and their woful and *necessary* consequences, and he still prefers to act according to the habits which he has thus perversely formed. He himself, not God, is the proper author of these unutterable woes. You might, then, as well say, that the blindness of a man who wilfully plucks out his own eyes, is an arbitrary dispensation of God. Now, for aught you or I, or any man on earth knows, these may be the very miseries typified by the Gehenna of the text; and if so, the assumption of our objectors is wholly gratuitous.

Before passing to another topic, we cannot, in justice to the cause of truth, and in justice to the pastor of the Congregational Church in this city, but invite your attention to the following sentiments in his discourse before alluded to, as, with some exceptions, at once appropriate, true, and confirmatory of our views just submitted. He states the following as particulars in which all the clergy of the United States (of course himself included) are of one mind: There is no hell! but the brand and stigma which licentiousness stamps on the heart, the emotions of a narrow, envious and malevolent mind; the baseness of trying to build one’s self upon the ruins of others; the restlessness of an unsatisfied and desolate soul; the darkness

of an intellect estranged and alienated from the great Central Luminary of the Universe, and the sharp piercing stings of an accusing conscience, which inflict upon the poor sinner a shame and agony more to be dreaded than a thousand deaths. No material fire could cause as much pain as is produced by these guilty, agonizing passions, which burn, blacken and blast the soul, and lay upon it a grievous weight of retribution, which, without repentance in time, may darken and depress its fortunes, through what (to our minds) are the unknown and immeasurable evolutions of a coming eternity. Yes! man was not sent into this world to lead an animal life merely; to indulge his bodily appetites and passions; to revel in the joys of sense, and drink of Pleasure's guilty cup a few years, and then to lie down in the same ditch with the brute, to be lost in the dark gulf of annihilation!"

Waving the question, as not within the range of the plan of the present discourse, as to whether the preacher is strictly correct in stating that the divines of the United States universally coincide with the foregoing statement or not; and also as to whether there may be other torments in hell which he has not specified, we beg our hearers to observe, that he concedes, not only that man is not annihilated at death, and that his suffering for sin may pass with him into a future world, and "*depress his fortunes throughout eternity,*" but also, the sinner's suffering by mental agony, produced by sin, greater than could be caused by material fire, is the *necessary* exercise of his own mind; and therefore fully sustains our position, that the eternal punishment of sin is not a mere arbitrary dispensation of God. And furthermore we maintain, that these elements of truth contained in his concessions, if carried out in the full power of a logical mind, would blow to atoms our brother's theory of passing sinners to heaven through the gates of hell.

Secondly: We do not maintain, neither does our doctrine imply, that the sufferings of the more or less guilty are equally severe in the torments of the second death. We do not affirm this assumption, because we do not ourselves believe it to be true, neither does our doctrine imply such a conclusion. For if we maintain, as we have already shown we do, that men's own depravity constitutes misery in the world of torments, it follows as a legitimate consequence, that the greater the depravity, the greater the misery, and the less, the less. This notion of the adjustment of suffering to the magnitude of moral turpitude, corresponds, not only with our common sense of equity, but also with the representation of our Saviour, that the more guilty are to be beaten with the more stripes, and the less, with fewer.

Thirdly: We do not maintain that men are punished eternally for sins committed in this life only. The analysis of the sufferings of a future retribution, which we have just given, is itself sufficient evidence of this fact; for the indulgence of voluntary depravity is itself both sin and punishment. As a consequence of past sins, the sinner has formed the habit of sinning. It is a law of man's nature, that habit creates both a tendency to certain acts, and a facility in their performance. As the result of the habit of sinning, formed in this life, a tendency to repeat acts of sin is carried on by the sinner into a future world; and every such act repeated in that world, not only perpetuates, but increases the tendency to further acts of the same kind: and thus, as by every repeated act the tendency to sin is increased, and as every act also brings with it its own punishment, so, by the laws of man's mental and moral

nature, the sinner's progress in both sin and suffering in a future world, is like that of a falling body, which increases its velocity as the squares of the distance increase through which it falls. There is, therefore, just as little probability that a sinner, left to himself in a future world, should repent and turn to God, as that a falling body should arrest itself in its downward course, and ascend to the elevation from which it fell. And as each pang of suffering in that world of torment is the appropriate punishment of the sin which produces it, surely, surely the assumption that our doctrine supposes that God punishes sinners eternally for sins committed in this brief and frail life is wholly gratuitous.

But it is contended, that even if sinners are their own destroyers, and even if in eternity they are punished only for the sins committed in eternity—it is, even then, inconsistent with the infinite benevolence of the Deity, to permit any of them, as a part of his creatures, to be miserable forever.

We must again rebuke the presumption which arrogates to itself the competency of comprehending the deep things that may operate as motives in the eternal and infinite Mind. Who art thou, O man, who repliest against God? and who dost

“Call imperfection what thou findest such?
Say, here he gives too little—there too much!”

Let us, for a short time, hold up this objection, for the purpose of trying its strength. It is admitted that, at first thought, when we remember that God is infinitely benevolent, and cannot delight in misery; as such; that he is infinitely wise, and, as we should judge, competent to adopt the plan of a moral system best suited to exclude misery from his works; and that he is almighty, and able to do his will in heaven as on earth; it is admitted that it appears to us, on first view, impossible that even a sigh should disturb the harmonies of the Universe. But hark! what mean those wailings and other sounds of woe that greet our ears? Open your eyes, and behold the varied and ever-varying miseries of a world that lieth in wickedness! Survey the dungeon, the hospital, and the battle-field! and is not suffering as omnipresent as the surface of this vast globe, and as protracted as the history of man? Then, in despite of our reasoning, Misery actually reigns in our world, and even at this moment Death is pursuing his desolating march. Here, then, is a fact directly in opposition to our theory. Misery has darkened the fair face of our globe for almost six thousand years; yet shall we presume to say that God is not infinitely benevolent, wise, and powerful?—shall not we rather say, His ways are not as our ways? But, if it be not inconsistent with his perfections, that man may endure misery for a moment, for aught we know, it may not be that he should endure it for an hour, or a day, or a year, or a thousand years, or for eternity! However the idea of eternal misery may afflict the imagination more than that of momentary misery, yet the one is as wholly incompatible with our reason as the other—the less, as the greater. There are, undoubtedly, reasons for the existence of misery in our world, such that it is not inconsistent with the attributes of God's perfect character. For aught that we know, the very perfections of God may demand that both men and angels should be left to the freedom of their own will; and that the controlling of this free will may not be the proper object of Almighty power; or if it be, perhaps the holy and sin-hating Jehovah may prefer to permit sin

and its unhappy consequences to prevail in the universe to a certain extent, as an evil less, than to despoil his intelligent creation of the high attribute of moral liberty.

Thus, sin and misery, for aught we know, as a consequence of this liberty abused, may have entered the universe at first, and may still continue to destroy the harmony and tarnish the beauty of God's works. For aught we know, there may be great and sufficient moral reasons; why the righteous and Almighty One should suffer wicked men and sinning angels to continue their rebellion against himself throughout eternal ages. As beacons, chained and anchored to the bed of the ocean, are held to float on the wave, to warn the wandering mariner of the rocks and the quicksands which lurk below, so impenitent sinners in a future world may, in all the agonies of self-inflicted torments, be left as burning beacons, to float on the surface of eternity, to warn all the holy creatures of the universe of the woful consequences of sin. For anything we know, the loud roar of populous hell may resound from world to world, throughout immensity, admonishing the inhabitants of all unfallen worlds, by the torments of the lost, to remain true in their allegiance to the throne of their Maker; and, as obedience is happiness, the sufferings of the lost, held up in lurid flames before the eyes of all intelligences, may be one of the great instrumentalities employed by the infinitely wise and Almighty God, to uphold in happiness the inhabitants of unnumbered worlds. This is in accordance with principles, practically, continuously, and, we may add, universally recognized by civilized man; and it may therefore be admitted as a dictate of common sense. The State does not employ the dungeon or the gibbet as instruments of passion or revenge, but mainly as exhibitions of terror and warning against the perpetration of crime; and thus diffuses the inestimable blessings of peace, order, and the security of property and life throughout the whole extent of its population. And this disposition of human government is not viewed, in the common opinion of intelligent men, as produced by hatred, cruelty, or revenge, or even by the demands of justice only; but also, and principally, as dictated by a love of benevolence, which embraces the whole nation, in all the extent of its well-being, and the variety of its interests. So, for aught we know, the very benevolence of God, as well as justice to himself and to His holy creation, may demand that the smoke of the self-inflicted torments of the rebellious should be permitted to ascend for ever and ever, as a means of rolling the tide of happiness to the farthest shores of immensity, and of impelling it onward throughout the ever-revolving ages of absolute eternity.

Did our time permit, numerous other passages of Scripture might be adduced to sustain our doctrine: as, when it is alleged, that between the saved and the lost there is a great gulf fixed, which cannot be passed by either; and as that, in which it is said, that they who believe not on the Son shall not see life. In the Scriptures we find no intimation that after death the impenitent will either repent or believe, or ever ask or obtain forgiveness of sins, or pass through the fires and the gates of hell into heaven.

“In that lone land of deep despair,
No Sabbath's heavenly light shall rise;
No God regard your better prayer,
Nor Saviour call you to the skies.”—*Dwight*.

A few observations, and we close the discourse.

1. From this subject we learn, that the system which denies the doctrine of the future sufferings of the wicked for ever, is at war, at once, both with the language of Scripture and with the nature of man, whose mind ought always to be addressed on the subjects of eternity by the motives of eternity presented to his fears as well as to his hopes.

2. We also may hence learn the danger of the doctrine which we oppose in associating with itself other hurtful errors, and, like the unclean spirit in the parable, taking to itself seven other spirits worse than itself. He who denies the doctrine of eternal retribution is almost certainly led to adopt a system of interpretation which divests the Saviour of men of His divine glory, and Heaven itself of the eternity of its bliss. To avoid the eternity of the shame and contempt proclaimed in Daniel as the portion of the wicked who are to be raised from the dust, it would deny that the text refers to the unending destiny of man, and, in doing this, annihilates the eternity of life to the righteous, which the text is understood to reveal: to parry off the stroke which our Saviour aims at this doctrine, when he says—“These shall go away into everlasting punishment”—it denies that all nations, in the context, means all nations; and that the transactions here described belong at all to the general judgment; and, in doing this, it demolishes the eternity of the life which the text is supposed to present to the righteous. Thus, it can be demonstrated, as clearly as any moral truth admits of demonstration, that, by these principles of interpretation carried out, the doctrines both of heaven and hell are expunged from the Bible; and so, every other doctrine peculiar to Christianity. It is but justice to the cause of truth to state, that although the preacher of the Congregational Church in this city professes to base his doctrine “on the Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible,” it is equally true, and ought to be generally known, that those Universalists who are also Unitarians, as is understood to be the fact in regard to that reverend gentleman, do not, for the most part, admit the Divine authority of the whole of the New Testament, as generally received among Christians; but amputate from it all such texts as are opposed to their creed, and adopt the remainder only as their New Testament. It ought also to be stated, that with regard to the future punishment of those who die impenitent, Universalists are at war with the Old Testament as well as with the New—with Jews, as well as with Christians. The Jewish doctrine is, that the torments of hell are eternal—with this peculiarity, however, that there is a respite from suffering every seventh day.

3. The denial of future punishment leaves the laws both of heaven and earth without any adequate sanction, and, therefore, loosens the bonds both of religious and civil obligation. According to Montesquieu and Lord Bolingbroke, it virtually cancels the obligation of civil law; and even Hume himself admits, that this creed renders the laws, equity, and society, less secure.

4. Our hope for the triumph of truth over error, is founded on the Bible. While men reverence the Bible, the hallucination of Universalism can have but a temporary reign over the human mind. It is difficult for wicked men themselves to profess universal salvation, and yet acknowledge the Bible as the standard of religious truth. However the mists and fogs of this error may for a time obscure our heavens, still we need not fear but the Bible, in the

hands of the people, like the sun in the firmament, will ultimately chase away the mists, and dissipate the clouds, until the glorious sunshine of truth shall brighten our skies, and cause the Church to look forth, clear as the sun, fair as the moon, and as terrible as an army with banners.

Having disposed of the main question in controversy, let us now proceed to notice some minor points in the singular sermon under consideration.

1. What shall we say of our preacher's dramatic pathos, or rather bathos, [scene in the cemetery,] of a prayer of a bereaved father, for the eternal torments of a profligate son? We are not a little surprised to find, that, from a fair construction of his language, he must believe in prayers for the dead; and what is most surprising to us of all is, that he should believe it to be at least the privilege, if not the duty of a bereaved father, to pray for the disciplinary punishment of hell upon a deceased profligate son! Among Protestant divines, the pastor of the Congregational Church of New Orleans takes the singular position of advocate for prayers for the dead, and especially for prayers for the "*disciplinary*" "*punishment*" of hell upon those who die impenitent! This is certainly the original part of his discourse, and is not the less extraordinary in being put forth by a divine who is professedly opposed to the doctrine of the second death.

2. We are gratified to learn, by fair inference from his own language, that the preacher's own mind is not fully settled, but is still wavering and doubtful, in regard to the truth of the doctrine which he teaches in relation to the doom of the wicked; and the hope is, that he may yet settle down on the side of truth. That our hearers may not be held in farther suspense, in regard to this fact, let us adduce our proof; it is the following remarkable language from his discourse: "Let the present moment terminate my existence on earth!—let me this instant share the same fate as that of an illustrious fellow citizen, who, a few days ago, by a visitation of providence, at the Capitol, in Washington, fell, in the twinkling of an eye, close locked in death's embrace, rather than be upheld here one hour longer, only to help forward the cause of corruption—rather than be left this morning to utter any thing detrimental to the interests of pure religion—detrimental to the virtue of the immortal beings within the sound of my voice, or the reach of my influence!"

This is an extraordinary appeal to appear in the pulpit. It partakes of some of the essential characteristics of an oath. Some pronounce it profane, in the most offensive sense; others class it with the oath-figure of Demosthenes, who added power to his eloquence by swearing by the souls of the patriots who had fallen in battle, in the defense of their country. But, waiving the consideration of these points, it is certain that, in law, men are not disposed, nor are they always permitted, to swear to their own accounts, when they feel strong in other testimony; and even the profane swearer will not generally sustain his assertions with oaths, when he knows his proofs, without them, to be sufficient. Our inference then, is, that the preacher could not have taken such an oath in the pulpit, where nobody required or expected him to swear in support of his religion, had he not felt some misgivings of mind in regard to his proofs and arguments. This idea is sustained, at least, by good classical authority. Virgil, a good judge of human nature, appeared to consider such awful protestations and

imprecations as the natural results of a wavering mind. He represents Dido, when about to violate her resolutions in regard to her second love, when almost overcome by her affection for Æneas, addressing her sister Anna thus:

“First, let yawning earth a passage rend,
And let me through the dark abyss descend;
First, let avenging Jove, with flames from high,
Drive down this body to the nether sky,
Condemned with ghosts in endless night to lie,
Before I break the plighted faith I gave.”

In conclusion, may we not hope, not only that the pastor of the Congregational Church in this city, but ministers of the gospel everywhere, who have gone astray, will yet take their ultimate stand on the side of truth and righteousness, and see eye to eye in the great doctrines of the Christian religion, until Zion shall arise and shine, her light being come, and the glory of the Lord being risen upon her?

Amen!

THE JUDGMENT !

A DISCOURSE ON THE 24TH AND 25TH CHAPTERS OF MATTHEW,

*Delivered in the Presbyterian Church at the corner of Carondelet and Perdido streets,
New Orleans, on Sabbath evening, April 23d, 1848,*

IN REPLY TO STRICTURES PUBLISHED BY THE REV. THEODORE CLAPP,

BY THE REV. ALEXANDER CAMPBELL.

*Matt. xxiv. 36: "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of
heaven, but my Father only."*

THE same passage of our Lord's discourse, as reported by the evangelist Mark, (xiii. 32,) is recorded in these words: "But of that day, and that hour, knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father."

We are induced to take up this subject at the present time, by the appearance of strictures, under the name of the Rev. Theodore Clapp, in which an attempt is made to prove that the text quoted in our discourse of last Sabbath evening—"These shall go away into everlasting punishment"—has no relation whatever to the final destiny of the wicked. Although those strictures were intended as an answer to Rev. Mr. Martin's discourse, in which it appears he quoted that text, yet, as they are just as applicable to my discourse alluded to as to his, the first opportunity is embraced to present to your minds the truth on this question.

The writer just named maintains, that the day designated in our text is the time of the destruction of Jerusalem; we, that it is the day of Christ's coming to judge the world.

His argument is, as he himself states it, that the whole of the discourse of our Lord on this occasion, recorded in the twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth chapters of Matthew, is delivered in reply to a question put by the disciples, which, as he understands it, is, as to when Jerusalem should be destroyed, and the stones of the temple left not one upon another. He argues, that as Christ commences his discourse professedly in answer to this question, it is not credible that in the progress of his speech he should leave the subject of the destruction of Jerusalem and the subversion of the Jewish polity, and take up the day of final judgment, without giving his hearers any notice of the transition. But let it be remembered, that if all the doings of Christ had been written, even the world itself, according to the inspired authority of the apostle John, could not contain all the books that would be required for the

purpose: much more must this be true in regard to all his sayings, if they had all been written. Then, as we understand the matter, the holy apostles and evangelists were moved by the Holy Ghost to commit to writing, not all that the Saviour said, but such parts of his various discourses as, in the wisdom of the All-wise, were viewed convenient, and at the same time sufficient for the use of mankind. If, then, what our Lord says, in any part of that discourse, does not accord with the destruction of Jerusalem, but does correspond with descriptions of the day of judgment found in other passages of Scripture, there is no necessity that he should have introduced a formal notice—a special *nota bene*, of his transit from one subject to another. To the hearers of our Lord's discourse, it might have been necessary, and if it was so, there can be no doubt but such notice was given in the address, as uttered, although not reported by the evangelists, who were doubtless instructed by the Spirit what parts of His discourses to report, and what to suppress.

The great mistake of our opponent, on this question, and the one which puts him in error on the whole subject, is this: he takes for granted, in the argument, that the coming of Christ and the destruction of Jerusalem are one and the same event; or, at least, that they are events of the same date. Now, if we consult the passage containing our Saviour's answer to the question in connection with the question itself, we shall find that the question contains in it two subjects, each of which required a separate answer; and that the discourse of our Lord presents to each of these subjects an appropriate reply. Now, let us inspect the question. The disciples came to him privately, saying, "Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the world?" Here, mark it, are two subjects distinctly and separately named—the coming of Christ, and the end of the world. There can be no reasonable doubt, but, by the terms of the original, rendered, "end of the world," is intended the termination of the Jewish state, which occurred about the year 70, in the destruction of Jerusalem by the Roman army under Titus; and there ought to be just as little doubt, that, by the coming of Christ, in this question, is meant, His coming as the judge of the world at the last day. Such being the subjects of the question, our Lord, taking up the latter first, continues to answer it from the commencement of the fourth to the termination of the twenty-eighth verse of the same chapter, (Matthew xxiv.) He then proceeds to announce, that "Immediately after the tribulation of those days, (the days of Jewish calamity,) the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken. And then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn; and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet; and they shall gather together the elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." From these verses, we learn that the time of the Saviour's coming is to be *after* the tribulation of the Jewish nation in the destruction of Jerusalem. By keeping in our minds the two distinct subjects proposed in the question, we are prepared to perceive very clearly the transition from the answer of one part of the question to that of the other.

1. Let us now proceed to notice some of the circumstances which identify “that day,” in the text, with the second coming of Christ.

In various parts of the New Testament, the term “THAT DAY” is, as by way of eminence, applied to designate the day of judgment. “I know in whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against *that day*.” “The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in *that day*.” “Thenceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at *that day*: and not to me only, but unto all them that love His appearing.” “Many will say to me in *that day*, Lord, Lord; and then will I profess to them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.” “But I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable in *that day* for Sodom than for that city.” “But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that *that day* should overtake you as a thief.” “And to you who are troubled, rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, with His mighty angels in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and the glory of his power, when he shall come to be glorified of his saints, and to be admired of all them that believe, in *that day*.” Not one of these texts can, if interpreted by their contexts, be applied to the subversion of the Jewish State; but, upon all the principles of rational interpretation, must be referred to the final judgment: this our hearers must understand, if they but read over these passages of sacred Scripture in their connexion.

2. The occurrences described in this chapter (xxiv.), from the beginning of the twenty-ninth verse, to the end of the next chapter, correspond with other descriptions of the final judgment elsewhere given in the Scriptures, but not with the destruction of Jerusalem, or the subversion of the Jewish polity.

In the thirty-first verse of this chapter, it is said: “And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet; and they shall gather together the elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other;” in the fifty-first and fifty-second verses of the fifteenth chapter of First Corinthians—“We shall all be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.” Who can doubt but, in this passage in Corinthians, the apostle describes the judgment day?

Christ, in His second coming, is to appear in the clouds of heaven. In the thirtieth verse of this chapter, we read, “And they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.” In Acts, first chapter, verses 9th and 11th, while they beheld “He was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight.” Two men who stood by said—“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.” But he was seen going into heaven in a cloud. Who can doubt but this prediction, uttered at His ascension, relates to His second coming at the judgment day? In the thirty-second verse of the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew, it is revealed, that “before Christ shall be gathered all nations to be judged;” in the tenth verse of the fourteenth chapter of Romans, that “we must all stand before the judgment-seat of

Christ;" and again, in the tenth verse of the fifteenth chapter of First Corinthians, that "we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ."

In the thirty-second verse of the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew, we learn, that the righteous are to be separated from the wicked, "as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats;" in the first Psalm, fifth verse, that "the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous."

The destinies awarded to both the righteous and the wicked, in the forty-sixth verse of the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew, where it is said, "These shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal," correspond with the general judgment, and not with the dissolution of the Jewish State. If the sufferings of the Jews, in that terrible catastrophe, were great, they were still only temporal, and not eternal. But it is said, that *aionios*, the original word, here translated *everlasting* and *eternal*, literally means age-lasting, long-enduring, and not *everlasting* or *eternal*. This definition is affirmed by our learned opponent as "conceded by all scholars." This assertion is made with a positiveness and dogmatism, at all times very necessary when proof is not at hand. As in another discourse we introduced the derivation of the term, and its definition, as given by Aristotle, we might safely place our humble selves behind this great name, and leave the pastor of the Congregational Church to class the Stagerite among scholars or not, as he might prefer. But our object is to place information before the people, who have neither leisure nor other facilities of examining a subject, which cannot be properly understood without some research. We will here offer something further on this word.

Philo says: "In eternity (*en aioni*) there is nothing, past or future, but it exists a unit by the necessity of its nature." This definition is full and unequivocal. The Latin version of the Bible, called the Vulgate, was made by the learned Jerome, a Christian father, who flourished in the fourth century, and the early part of the fifth. In this translation, the word *aionios* is rendered by *æternus*: and the same is true of the Latin translations of the Greek fathers generally, where the word occurs. We have already said, in the discourse of last Sabbath evening, that from *aion* the Latin words *æternitas* and *æternus* are derived: and, we might add, *ævum*. This last word comes directly from *aion*. Then, from *ævum* would come *æviturmus*, which, by sycopy, becomes *æternus*, *æternitas*, and our English words eternity and eternal. Now, let us inquire what is the proper meaning of *æternus* in Latin.

If our preacher please, we will let Cicero answer the question. He says: "As to the universe, in part mortal, God himself, eternal (*æternus*), gives motion, so the soul, immortal, (*sempiternus*), imparts action to the frail body. For what is always moved is eternal, (*æternum*); for that which causes action in another, as well as that which is acted upon by something without itself, when it ceases to move, by necessity, it ceases to live. Therefore, that only which is self-moved, because it is never deserted by itself, never ceases to impart motion to other things which are moved; this is the fountain and the source of action. To the source itself there is no origin; for from the source all things are produced—itsself from nothing. Nor has that been a source which was produced from any thing without itself, which, if it never had a beginning, will never have an end." Then, if the authority of the prince of Roman

eloquence can be admitted, it proves, unequivocally, that *æternus* is used to designate existence, without beginning and without end. Then the Christian fathers generally, and so far as we know, universally, believed that *aionios* meant unlimited duration, in its primitive, literal and proper signification. It will probably not be affirmed that Jerome and Cicero were not scholars, or that Philo was ignorant of Greek.

Another proof of the unlimited signification of *aionios*, is derived from its cognate, *aidios*. They are both derived from *ai*, *ever*. We have the authority of Clemens Alexandrinus and Aristotle, to prove, that *aionios* and *aidios* are used in precisely the same signification. The former, in commenting on the fortieth verse of the sixth chapter of John, makes the following expression: "What can possibly be obtained beyond eternal (*aidion*) life?" In the text on which he was commenting, the words are eternal (*aionion*) life. In the judgment of Clemens, *aidios* and *aionios* must be understood as anonymous. Aristotle heads one of his chapters "Heaven everlasting," (*aidios*), which he afterwards expresses by *aion*. In the same chapter he affirms, "not only that Heaven is but one, but that it cannot be many, and that it is, moreover, everlasting, (*aidios*), imperishable and unproduced." We will now show that *aidios* means eternal. Hierocles, of Alexandria, who wrote a commentary on the golden verses of Pythagoras, in that work says: "It is demonstrated that mind cannot be generated, neither can it be liable to corruption, and that it is a being different from the body—a being which is, in its own nature eternal," (*aidios*). Here, he makes that to be *aidios*, which is never generated, and which will never decay. Again, the author proceeds—"Nor is it possible that that could have existed forever, which took its origin at any particular time: neither can that admit of corruption, which exists from eternity," (*ex aidiou*). Here, again, any thing to be *aidios* must never have begun to exist, and must not be subject to decay, which is to be eternal. Then, since *aidios* signifies eternal, so also must its synonyme, *aionios*. As our authorities are classical, and at least rather more than barely respectable—on an average above par, we shall take our retreat in the rear, and leave our preacher and his "scholars" to settle the controversy with these ancients. Before we retreat, however, we must try how well his definition of *aionios* can be substituted for everlasting and eternal, in some of the passages of Scripture by which that Greek term is translated, by one or other of those latter words. We have already stated that our preacher proposes "age-lasting, or long-enduring," as a translation in lieu of eternal and everlasting. He denies that age-lasting, or long-enduring—designates any given amount of duration, or any definite period, but simply the entire duration of the subject which the adjective *aionios* describes, and that we know God is eternal, not because the word *aionios* describes his duration of existence, but we know that *aionios* means eternal, when applied to Him, because, independently of that word, we know that He is eternal. Now, if his definition is adopted, the term, whenever applied, appears to be wholly superfluous and tautological. When applied to life, it makes it life while it is life; when applied to God, it describes him as God while he is God; if to man, it describes him as man while he is man. If this be all the significance of the word, it describes nothing in the subject which is not entirely evident without any describing word at all. When we are told that life is life as long as it lasts—that man is man, as long as he lives—and that God is God,

as long as he is God, we know no more than we do by hearing the term life, man or God. The mind very readily takes it for granted, that life is life to the end of life—that man is man while he is man—and that God is God while he is God. Let us read some important texts of Scripture, with this synonyme, *aionios*. This is life as long as it is life, to know Thee, the only true God and Jesus Christ! The things that are unseen are things while they are things! Some to life while it is life, but others to contempt while it is contempt! These shall go away into punishment while it is punishment! but the righteous into life while it is life! We can say Jehovah is God while he is God; and so we can say of Moloch or Baal, he is god while he is god; thus, the *aionion* god of the Universalist is any god at all—

“ ————— adored,
By saint, by savage, or by sage,
Jehovah, Jove or Lord.”

Furthermore, the punishment into which the wicked are to go is prepared for the devil and his angels, and therefore is inapplicable to the destruction of Jerusalem, as what was designed as a temporal calamity upon the Jewish nation only, and not as a punishment of devils.

But the reverend pastor of the Congregationalist Church, while he informs us that the fire into which the wicked, in the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew, are cast, means the affliction of the Jews at the destruction of their city, also instructs us, that the devil and his angels are the enemies and persecutors of our Lord. Neither of these appear to us in exact correspondence with the teachings of the Scriptures. The fires which burned Jerusalem are certainly quenched; and the sufferings of that calamity are as certainly ended: but the fire into which the wicked are to go is *unquenchable*.

But, if the enemies and persecutors of our Lord be the devil and his angels, as the Jews were his enemies and persecutors at that time, the Jews must have been the devils of that day. Then the numerous persons who followed the Saviour, of whom we read, possessed of devils, must have been possessed of Jews, and he must have cast Jews out of them. The man possessed of a dumb devil must have been in the possession of a dumb Jew, and our Saviour must have cast out of him a dumb Jew. The Jews must have entered into the herd of swine that ran into the sea! Out of Mary Magdalene our Lord must have cast seven Jews! and surely the man's corporal capacity out of whom he cast a legion of Jews must have been equal to Virgil's wooden horse! And still we suppose our adversary, the *Jew*, goeth about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour!

Surely our Congregational brother could not have seen the ludicrous consequences to which his Scriptural interpretations lead. We are not surprised that he should sometimes betray some misgivings in regard to the truth of Universalism, when he finds it necessary to resort to such biblical exposition.

But he very magisterially challenges us to settle this question with Christ, and not with him, since the Saviour has told us that the then existing generation should not pass away until all these things should be fulfilled. In reply, we say that our controversy is not with

Christ, but with himself, who mistakes the meaning of what Jesus Christ says. We contend, that the Redeemer does not affirm that he would confine his answer to the subversion of the Jewish polity, when one stone of the temple should not be left upon another, and that he would not answer the division of the question which relates to his own second coming. Now our reverend brother states, that some who differ from him think that Jesus may be understood as speaking of temporal judgments in the discourse before us, only from the beginning to the thirty-first verse of the twenty-fifth chapter; but that there, it is asserted, he introduced a new topic—the general judgment of the human race. But he asks, “What is the evidence of this fact?” The reply is, that the question, as has been already abundantly shown, *requires* that the Son of God should, in some part of his discourse, pass from one topic of the question to the other; and we furnished direct evidence that he did thus pass, in showing that the description which he gave in the latter part of his reply, corresponded with descriptions elsewhere given of his second coming; and they do not correspond with those given of the destruction of Jerusalem. Also, when we established the fact, both by classical and other authority, and by argument, that *aionios* literally and properly means eternal; and when we proved that our opponent’s explanation of *aionios*, in making it tautological,—his exposition of “unquenchable fire,” in making it signify the temporal sufferings of the inhabitants of Jerusalem in the destruction of that city, and his strange metamorphosis of the Jews into the devil and his angels, were unfounded and ridiculous, we then furnished indirect evidence of the same. Until he overthrows our authorities and refutes our arguments on this point, we hope to hear no more of the want of evidence: there is evidence sufficient, and to spare, until then. Now, if the transition be made, as some suppose, at the thirty-fifth verse of the twenty-fifth chapter, then the text, which affirms that the then existing generation should not pass away until these things should be all fulfilled, can be referred to the destruction of Jerusalem, which happened about the year 70 of the Christian era, and unquestionably before some of that generation had passed from the earth; and then the sending away of the wicked into everlasting punishment may, undoubtedly, be among the doings of the Judgment Day. The same would also be true, if the transition be understood to be made, as others suppose, at our text, the thirty-sixth verse of the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew. And then “that day,” in the text, would refer, as in other passages of Scripture already cited, to the day of judgment not antecedently but subsequently described.

And should this transition, as it is by Archbishop Tillotson, Brennius, Henry, and other learned commentators, be understood to be made at the twenty-ninth verse of the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew—which, all things considered, is probably the correct opinion—*that day*, in our text, may still be considered the day of judgment, as we maintain it is; but we must meet the supposed difficulty of reconciling this interpretation, with the accomplishment of all these things, in that then existing generation, and with the expression, “immediately after the tribulation of those days,” in the twenty-ninth verse of this chapter. On the latter verse mentioned, the following, from Henry’s Commentary, is sufficient for our present purpose: “It seems to refer to Christ’s second coming. The only objection against this is that is said to be ‘immediately’ after the tribulation of those days: but as to that it is usual in the

prophetic style to speak of things great and certain, as near and just at hand, only to express the greatness and certainty of them. Enoch spoke of Christ's second coming as within ken: 'Behold the Lord cometh.' A thousand years are in God's sight but as one day." Indeed, the events signified by the darkening of the sun and moon, and falling of the stars, may have literally commenced immediately after the destruction of Jerusalem, may be now in progress, and so may continue until Christ shall appear the second time.

In regard to the fulfilment of all these things within the time of the then existing generation, it is not only true in regard to the destruction of Jerusalem, but also, in a very important and solemn sense, it is true of all things pertaining to the day of judgment. The day of a man's death is in every practical sense the day of judgment to him; although between his death and that day thousands of years may roll their changes over his tomb. Viewed in this light, in all that is important, the time of Christ's second coming was as near the generation that then was on earth, as to that which shall be living when he shall come the second time, without sin, unto salvation. The judgment is near, the Judge standeth at the door. Who can read, in these chapters before us, the parables of the virgins, of the talents, of the servant who thought that his Lord delayed his coming, and of the householder watching for the thief, in connection with the repeated warning, "for ye know not at what hour your Lord doth come," and the exhortation also repeated, "Watch ye, therefore, and be ready!" without seeing and feeling, too, that the scenes and events here described were not intended merely for the men of that generation, but for men of every successive age throughout all time; nor for men nationally considered, but for every man individually and personally; and not for his interest in time only, but for his concerns throughout eternity? This discourse of our Saviour was suited to produce a deep and solemn impression upon the minds of the disciples, and, from its general adaptation to human nature, upon the minds of all who should read it to the end of time. As, in the hand of the astronomer, the telescope brings distant planets near in view, so in the hands of the reader, Christ's description of the signs of his second coming brings the judgment, with all its terrible glory and grandeur, immediately before our eyes. And viewing death and judgment as in effect the same day to every man *then* and *now* living on earth, every man in that as in all succeeding generations, in all that is important, was as near to the fulfilment of all the predictions of a judgment as to death itself. In this view of the subject, and in this view only, we see the significancy of the exhortation and warning addressed, indeed, at first, to the disciples of our Lord, but applicable to all men in all ages throughout revolving time: "Be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh." This, to our mind, is sufficient to remove all objections predicated on the fulfilment of all these things, before the passing away of that then existing generation.

The twenty-eighth verse of the sixteenth chapter of Matthew, supposed by our brother of the Congregational Church to be of similar import with the last one considered, is thought by others to relate to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, when, by the increase of converts, Christ came in the prosperity of his kingdom—the church.

A few remarks, and we are done:

1st, We see that Universalism, as it exists in New Orleans, is not only at war with the Bible, but with philosophy, with morality and common sense; and that, by demolishing all the high sanctions, both of religion and law, its principles, if carried out, would deluge the whole fair face of our world with licentiousness and blood:

2d, That, in teaching that the judgment is past, it not only removes all the terrors of that day from the wicked, but also all the expected consolations of that day from the righteous: and,

3d, That it adopts a system of biblical interpretation, which leaves in the Bible no proof of a hereafter, and man to die like a beast, or, if it exhort him to hope for a future, it requires him to hope without any light from the upper world; that, if it teaches immortality and heaven, it teaches what, by its own rules of interpretation, it cannot prove.

THE WRESTING OF THE SCRIPTURES BY THE UNLEARNED AND THE UNSTABLE,

A DISCOURSE ON UNIVERSALISM,

Delivered in the Presbyterian Church, corner of Carondelet and Perdido streets, New Orleans, on Sabbath evening, 21st May, 1848,

IN REPLY TO THE REV. THEODORE CLAPP,

BY THE REV. ALEXANDER CAMPBELL

2 Peter, iii. 16: "Which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction."

ONE great evidence of the truth of the Holy Scriptures, is, their correspondence with the facts of human nature. Their descriptions are drawn, not from imagination, but from Nature herself. Every tree is made to bear its appropriate fruit, and each kind of fruit is found its own proper tree. In them, we find no description which puts not the figs on the fig tree and the grapes on the vine. In them the fruits and the trees are mutual exponents of each other, so that while the fruit reveals the tree, the tree also indicates the fruit. The text so accurately describes the character of the men who wrest the Scriptures, that the wresting of the Scriptures and the character of the men may be taken as mutually exponential of each other. Whenever, therefore, we find interpretations given to the sacred volume, at war with known facts, and the decisions of common sense and sound reason, we may rest assured, that the authors of these interpretations are either unlearned or unstable men, and possibly they may, in some cases, be both; also, when we know men to be unlearned or unstable, or both, we may be equally certain, that whenever they become commentators on the Bible, they will wrest the holy oracles, pervert their meaning, and change the truth of God into a lie. This text we understand to be eminently descriptive of the founders and the advocates of Universalism, and of the manner in which they torture the good word of God, to force it, if possible, to deny the truths of orthodoxy, and teach the falsehoods of Universalism. Aware of the responsibility of making such an application of the text to men who profess to be Christians,—men, many of whom are good citizens and true patriots, and men of moral character, wholly unimpeachable so far as worldly respectability is concerned, and so far as the high demands of gospel piety are not required, we nevertheless apply the text with an humble confidence, that such a use of it is both warranted by truth and demanded by duty. But let us reprove, not only with the severity of truth, but also with the spirit of meekness, lest, after having preached and heard the gospel, we ourselves should be cast away. We proceed to prove—

I. *The founders of Universalism are unlearned and unstable men.*

Before proceeding to the proof of our proposition, we beg the indulgence of our hearers, while we make some preliminary remarks, deemed requisite to the proper understanding of the subject.

Universalism is of recent origin. Although the doctrine was taught by the old serpent to our first parents in Eden, and although it has been reiterated by the prince of fallen angels in his various temptations of our erring race, and by many a false prophet and lying spirit ever since, yet Universalism, in its present form, as defined by Hosea Ballou, and generally adopted and defended by the fraternity, whether nominally united in ecclesiastical unity or not, reaches back only to the antiquity of 1818. Here let us define the system.

Universalism of the present day denies the native depravity of man, the divinity of Christ, and the vicarious nature of his sufferings; the free moral agency of man; all dependence of man's well-being in a future world—upon his well-doing in the present; that there is any retribution in a future state for man's conduct in the present, and that sin is an evil in the government of God; that there is any hell; that the Sabbath is of Divine appointment, and that prayer is a duty: whilst it maintains, that the Devil is a Jew,—“a figure of speech,”—“a Sabæan freebooter,”—“a disease,” or “an evil principle” in man, and that the Sabbath is a mere institution of expediency.

It is true, Universalists endeavor to show the antiquity of their system by claiming Origen, Clemens Alexandrinus, and some of the early Christian fathers, as the asserters of their doctrine. But the testimony of Mr. Hosea Ballou, in his *Ancient History of Universalism*, proves, that Origen did not believe in the salvation of all men. His doctrine is, that the fires of hell are never extinguished, but that when souls in heaven sin, as he gratuitously supposes they will, they are to be sent to hell until they repent, and that on their repentance in hell, which he also gratuitously assumes, they are to be released and again received into heaven, still liable to the same changes as before; and that thus heaven and hell will be forever transferring their population from one to the other. This is not modern Universalism.

And Clemens Alexandrinus was as far from Universalism as Origen. His doctrine is, that to *some* the future would be a life of probation, in which they who died without the knowledge of Christ would have time allowed them for repentance; implying, that others would not. He does not affirm his belief that all to whom this opportunity is afforded will repent.

Universalists style John Murray, who commenced his public life in 1770, not quite 80 years ago, the father of Universalism. But Murray was in harmony with modern Universalists only in one single point, and that is, the ultimate salvation of all men: in all other respects he was a Calvinist. His, then, was not modern Universalism. It is proper here to state, that the pastor of the Congregationalist Church in this city, so far as we understand him, differs from modern Universalists generally, only, in his professing to maintain that, without repentance in the present life, men must endure in a coming world a temporary and disciplinary punishment, and may be somewhat darkened and depressed in their fortunes throughout eternity: whilst *they* hold, that all men, whatever may be their difference of moral

character in this world, will commence a future life upon a perfect level. But although these schemes may be theoretically different, yet the practical difference is but the shadow of a shade. What terror can it strike on the mind of sinners to be told, that if they repent not here, they will experience hereafter a temporary suffering, and that they *may* find their fortunes somewhat darkened and depressed throughout eternity? Sinners will shake off such terror from their minds with as much facility as the lion, the dew-drop from his mane. The truth is, the ideas of punishment and loss presented in this theology are too undefined to produce any reasonable alarm at all. For aught the preacher knows, the punishment may be but for a moment,—it may be for the duration only of the twinkling of an eye; and “the *somewhat*,”—mark the preacher’s term—the “*somewhat*” of the darkness and depression of the eternal fortunes, may be the lightest shadow and the least depression that the imagination can draw. The man who reckons sin so slight an evil (if he does not indeed, like most other Universalists, consider it no evil at all) as not to require expiation by the blood of a divine Saviour;—the man who, like our preacher, makes sin so much a trifle, cannot be supposed to teach either a weighty or a lengthened suffering in the world of woe, nor to depress the fortunes of impenitent sinners very low, or to dip them very deep in the darkness of eternal retribution. Sin, even in its less emboldened forms, laughs to scorn the terrors of such a theology. Practically, then, this preacher, from his pulpit, proclaims no hell. Hosea Ballou affirms, that after being among Universalist preachers for more than twenty years, he never heard this doctrine of the Restorationists preached but once, and then the preacher said so little about it as scarcely to convince his hearers that he himself held the sentiment. We cannot, therefore, be doing the preacher any wrong in treating his theology as we would that of modern Universalism generally.

Now, as to the eternity of the sufferings of the wicked who die impenitent, it may be safely affirmed, that, with very rare individual exceptions, it has been the doctrine entertained by mankind in all the past ages of the world. It was the doctrine of the Jews. It is the doctrine maintained in the writings of the heathen classics:

“There sits, and *eternally* will sit,
The unhappy Theseus.” *Virgil’s Æneid*, vi. 617, 618.

And, above all, it is that of the Christian Church, through all her long centuries of suffering and trial. It was taught by her martyrs, who shed their blood in her holy cause. It was held by the Reformers and later worthies, whose praise is in all the Churches, and whose learning and piety shine in the church like the stars in the firmament. Now, what ought to be the character of the men who would attempt to overthrow a doctrine almost universally accredited, as taught by revelation, and which has hitherto found a place in almost every form of religion, whether among nations learned or unlearned, or savage or civilized, throughout all ages? Surely men of the most ardent and self-denying piety, of the most profound and extensive learning, and talents of almost angelic order, are the only ones, who could be supposed to be equal to the task? Is such the character of the founders of Universalism? Let History pour her light upon this head. The founders of modern Universalism, who are they, and what?

Mr. Murray, who is styled by modern Universalists the father of Universalism, came from England to this country in the month of September, 1770. In early life he was a believer in the doctrine of election; afterwards, he became a preacher in the Wesleyan Methodist connection; subsequently, he became attached to Mr. Whitfield. Repairing to London, he soon forgot the character of a minister. Good company, music, dancing, Vauxhall and the playhouses, intoxicated him. He says, "I plunged into pleasure;" and then he became a Universalist. Though a believer in the doctrine of Universalism, he disguised his sentiments for nearly three years. During this time he preached as an orthodox man, in various parts of the country. With Congregationalists he passed for one of their number. When with the Presbyterians or Baptists, or the Methodists, he was supposed to belong to the sect in whose society he happened to be.

The disguise was first stripped from him in Upper Freehold, New Jersey, by the Rev. Mr. Tennant. Mr. Murray was thrown off his guard, and a complete knowledge of his principles obtained. He soon afterwards became an open advocate of Universalism, and then found his true level.

That Mr. Murray had any just claims to superior learning we have no evidence. Of his lack of fervent piety, and of his want of that stability of character which should belong to the man who should attempt to extirpate a doctrine which had stood deeply rooted in human nature and in human sentiment in all past ages, and among all nations, there is abundant evidence, in his changes of ministerial connection, in his plunge from religion to dissipation, and from dissipation to Universalism, and in his duplicity and deception in endeavoring to pass among the Churches as an orthodox man. His, then, is doubtless and undeniably the character of the unstable. Universalism, in this country, has several fathers. Mr. Murray is the father of it as it was; Mr. Ballou, the father of it as it is. Mr. Ballou informs us that he was led to adopt his views on religion by reading a Deistical book. It is well known that Mr. Ballou is a man of little reading, and his knowledge of books limited. He had, at the beginning of his public life, barely a common education; and though, after preaching several years, he began to study English grammar, any one who hears him will soon be convinced that he must have abandoned the attempt soon after the commencement. He had neither personal influence, nor intellectual power, sufficient to make his notions popular. Though he published them to the world, they met with little attention among his associates. About this time, which to Mr. Ballou and the cause of Universalism was a time of need, Walter Balfour professed conversion to Universalism. He adopted Mr. Ballou's sentiments, and carried them out with a bold hand. He went far beyond Mr. Ballou, and asserted such strange doctrines and unheard-of notions, that he claims a place among the fathers of Universalism. He professed to be a scholar. He talked about *sheol*, *hades*, *tartarus* and *gehenna* to such a degree, that his associates, unable to decide whether he was a learned man or a pretender, granted his claims, and shared his praise.

Mr. Balfour was brought up in the doctrines of the Church of Scotland. He renounced them, and became a Haldanite, and as such came to this country. He did not visit this country as a man of distinction. He was not, as Universalists represent him, a popular

orthodox preacher. He was an open-communion Baptist, and the body of which he was a member was feeble, and almost unknown. Soon after he reached this country, he introduced himself to the Rev. Dr. Morse, of Charlestown, and made known the purposes of his mission. In a short time after Mr. Balfour changed his ground, and became, and avowed himself to be, a Congregationalist. Still he failed to secure the position which he thought his talents ought to command. He soon left the Congregationalists, and announced himself a Baptist. But his standing among the Baptists was not what he wished, and soon he left them. He next became a Puritan Baptist, and celebrated the communion every Sabbath, and washed his disciple's feet. Making a hurried descent through Unitarianism and Restorationism, he came down to Universalism, and was hailed and embraced by Universalists as one of the greatest and most learned of men. Such is the history of the founders of Universalism, which presents each of these fathers either as an unstable or an unlearned man.

Abner Kneeland, although not honored as among the fathers of Universalism, yet for a time rendered himself conspicuous as an advocate and a defender of the system. He was a man whose attainments in literature were of a very contracted and superficial order. But having acquired a knowledge of the Greek and Hebrew alphabets, so as, by the help of lexicons, in which the meaning of the words in those languages were given in English, he soon became acquainted with the terms *sheol*, *hades*, *tartarus* and *gehenna*, *aion* and *aionios*, and a few others, and undertook a translation of the New Testament, which he made out from the common English version, and from other translators and expositors of the Scriptures. When he accomplished his task of translation, he had become prepared, by certain principles of interpretation which he had adopted, not only to expunge hell, heaven, eternity and the human soul, from the sacred pages, but to find revelation, to him, as dark as the sunbeams to Samson with his eyes out, and himself unable to discover in them the being of a God. Thus it was, in the Tartarian night of Universalism, he wandered into the slough of Atheism, where his feet stuck in the mire, until death came for his rescue, and conveyed him, through the light of eternity, into some other world.

Such are the sires and the champions of Universalism, who fully correspond with the apostle's description, as unlearned and unstable men. From the instruction of our text we are to expect that they, as unlearned and unstable men,

II. *Wrest the Scriptures.*

The great work which Universalist preachers appear to consider it their duty to perform, is, to convince the world that there is no eternal retribution in the Scriptures, generally understood to be designated by the term Hell. Now, as has already been affirmed, this doctrine was held by the Jews as well as by the heathen nations. If Jesus Christ and his precursor, John the Baptist, came into the world principally to enlighten men on this subject, as Universalists suppose, then they ought plainly to have taught them, that in the belief of endless punishment for final impenitence, the whole race of man was in error. This is the doctrine Universalists now teach, and it is the doctrine Jesus Christ and John the Baptist would have taught had they been Universalists. But how different from this did they preach! John said, "O generation of vipers! who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?"

Christ preached thus: "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" If Christ and John had been Universalists, who believed themselves commissioned of God to correct the error of the whole world on the doctrine of eternal torments, could they, as honest men, thus liberally have dealt out hell, damnation, and a wrath to come, without any intimation of a final release from the woes of the terrible retribution conveyed in those awful words? If Christ and John were in very deed Universalist preachers, is it not passing strange that they failed to make any one of their professed followers know that they were such, until some eighteen hundred years afterwards, when Mr. Murray discovered the secret, which became still better understood by Messrs. Ballou and Balfour, and is made to Universalists as clear as a sunbeam by our learned preacher of the Congregationalist Church, New Orleans? Brethren, the truth is, our Saviour and his forerunner John were not Universalists, nor can they be made to appear such, but by wresting the Scriptures. If they were such in fact, in preaching as they did, they were traitors to their own principles.

Universalists evidently wrest the Scriptures, when they contend that *sheol*, in the Hebrew, and *hades*, in the Greek, never mean a state of future retribution, because they sometimes mean the grave. In the seventeenth verse of the ninth psalm, it is said, "The wicked shall be turned into hell (*sheol*, in Hebrew, and *hades*, in Greek), and all the nations that forget God." Hell, in this scripture, cannot mean the grave, because it is true of all men, whether wicked or righteous, and of all nations, whether they forget God or not, that they must descend to the grave. But it will, perhaps, be said, *hades* primarily means grave. Be it so. But does it necessarily follow that it never means anything besides? On this principle of interpretation, we can prove that there is no heaven for the abode of the righteous, since the primary meaning of the word *heaven*, in the original Greek, means atmosphere.

Universalists wrest the text which says, "These shall go away into everlasting punishment," when they contend that everlasting (*aionion*), in this scripture, does not signify unending, because, as they allege, *aionios* is sometimes used to express only the duration of a life-time. This principle of interpretation obliterates from the Bible the unending beatitudes of the righteous, as well as the interminable misery of the wicked. In the same sentence with the text just cited, we are informed, that the righteous shall go into life eternal. The original word, here rendered *eternal*, is also *aionion*. Now, we appeal to the good common sense of our hearers, whether that must not be a very evident perversion of the Book of God, which enshrouds the face of the heavens with the same darkness in which it buries the abyss of hell?

If we quote the text, "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" Universalists will tell us, that because the original word, here rendered *soul*, sometimes signifies life, and primarily breath, it does not here signify soul; but as, in this passage, the whole context requires it here to mean soul, is it not a perversion of the Word of Truth to render it either life or breath? Especially since, by the same canon of criticism, I can prove that there are no spirits in the universe, of any grade, since the word spirit primarily signifies breath.

In the same manner Universalists prove that there is no such beings as angels are supposed, and generally understood to be, since the original of the term *angel* primarily means

messenger; that there is no devil, in the usual acceptation of the term; and that the devils of our Saviour's time were the Jews, because bad men are sometimes called devils. Thus, in the spirit of Universalist interpretation, heaven, hell, the soul of man, angels, devils, and every grade of created spirits, whether good or evil, are expunged from the Scriptures. Thus, as Samson grasped the pillars of the castle, so these unlearned and unstable men seize the pillars of truth, and in their blindness imagine, that, by their prodigious strength, they subvert the heavens, and bring down, in one tremendous crash, angels, principalities, thrones, powers and dominions, and display them before their disciples as lying here, on earth, in a huge pile of ruins. Having accomplished so much, they feel prepared to war, like the fabled giants, with God himself. As a denomination, the Universalists have not yet dethroned and decapitated the Almighty One; but individuals, such as the famous Abner Kneeland, have fully proved the weapons of their critical warfare entirely equal to the achievement. Such Universalists as Kneeland was, do not find it necessary to pile Pelion on Ossa, like Homer's Sons of Tartarus and Terra, as a means of climbing the heavens, to assault Jehovah on his throne, since, by a very simple figure of speech, they can satisfactorily, to themselves, bring down to earth both God and his throne. In the Scriptures, men are sometimes styled gods. This admitted, these unlearned and unstable critics persuade themselves, and teach others, that there is no God but man himself. Their course is downwards—through all the grades of mental aberration, and scriptural distortion—until they find their soundings in Atheism, from which they can make but one plunge more to find their lowest deep.

III. *These men wrest the Scriptures to their own destruction.*

It is unnecessary, my hearers, to consume your time in proving what, on Bible principles, must be the end of such men themselves, unless they repent. It is sufficient for us to know, that the reward of wresting the Scriptures is "destruction." The term "destruction" itself is a word of fearful import. It blackens with all the darkness, flashes with all the fires, and wails and roars with all the anguish and terror with which the Word of God threatens the doom of lost souls. Elsewhere, it is described as everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and the glory of his power. The wresting of the Sacred Oracles incurs a fearful responsibility. The last warning contained in the book of God's mercy to lost man, is in the import of the following language: "If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book; and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life."

But the ruin which follows Universalism does not terminate in the perdition of the unlearned and unstable men, who wrest the Scriptures to compel them by force and violence to sustain their false doctrines, and to leave Heaven's laws without a sanction, and the will of man without restraint.

It makes a far wider range. It is like the pestilence, which infects the whole atmosphere around it, and brings death to human well-being both in this world, and that which is to come. Unlike godliness, it is not profitable for anything, having neither the promise of the life that now is, nor of that which is to come. Universalism, especially, as at present advocated, injures a man's conscience, and thus weakens, if not wholly destroys, all his sense of

responsibility to any being beyond himself and his fellow man. He therefore cannot, on these principles, but feel himself at liberty to do his whole pleasure, so far as he can, without subjecting himself to punishment from the enactments of human law, or from the infliction of human power. When, in the history of Josephus, he sees Herod on his death-bed, plotting the murder, and so far as the turpitude of the deed is concerned, consummating the murder of some innocent men out of every family among the most respectable Jews, as the only means of securing a funeral lamentation, on the event of his own death, and learns that Herod could not have received in this life the punishment due a crime so inhuman and monstrous; and when, all around him, he beholds many a wicked one flourishing like the green bay tree. With more than heart could wish, he cannot practically believe that punishment always overtakes guilty men in the present life; and then, if, as a Universalist, he has settled, in his own mind, that there is no retribution beyond the grave, he can have no fear of God before his eyes, to restrain him from the gratification of any passion that may chance for the time being to be dominant in his mind. According to Thucydides, at the time the great plague prevailed at Athens, the people, by the universal desolation produced by the epidemic, had become to believe that the gods made no distinction between the virtuous and the vicious; and as they knew there was no power then to enforce human justice, they became reckless and desperate in crime. “Neither the fear of the gods,” says the historian, “nor the laws of men, laid any restraints upon them. On the one hand, seeing all perishing indiscriminately, they decided there was no difference between piety and its contrary; and on the other, no one expecting to live sufficiently long to render punishment for his enormities, and especially as the most terrible calamity hung over their heads, they judged it proper *that they should enjoy all the pleasure they could, before it should fall upon them.*” This is precisely the condition to which Universalism would bring the world, in all cases in which the wicked would feel themselves beyond the reach of the penalties of human law, if it were possible, that it could uproot human nature, subvert orthodoxy, and become the ruling religion of our race. The principles advocated by these unlearned and unstable men, if they could universally prevail, would convert this globe into an Aceldama, and eventually exterminate our race. Only permit Universalism to become the reigning sentiment of the world, and hell would bury this globe in the darkness of its own night—from pole to pole, would scathe the earth with the scaldings of its sirocco breath—and with one tremendous gorge, swallow down all the families of man.

From this subject we learn, how to estimate Universalian pretensions to scholarship. It is a matter of no small wonder how the learned pastor of the Congregational Church, in New Orleans, could have rushed from the midst of the stars of orthodoxy, which span the world with a wide arch of radiance, like the galaxy in the heavens, and sink down, down, down, to seek light from the phosphorescent excrescences that protrude from the rottenness of Universalism, or from the flashes of the *ignis fatuus*, which arises from the putrefactions and the stench of Atheism!!

Hence we may also see, how little intellectual or moral benefit can be expected from the Universalist fathers. Not a scintillation of piety appears in their pages;—nothing to impress

on the sinner the fear of the Lord;—nothing to draw from the transgressor’s eye the tear of penitence. On the contrary, like the ancient false prophets, they cry to all classes of sinners “Peace!—peace!” To the publican, to the thief, and the assassin, they preach peace and pardon, not only without money and without price, but also without faith and without penitence, which is tantamount to telling them, that if they can only endure their sins during the present life, all will be well with them, since at death they will be released from all unhappy consequences of transgressions committed in the present life!! To expect either intellectual or moral benefit from the works of such men, and especially from such works, is as vain as to hope to draw light out of darkness, or to expect wisdom out of folly.

May Infinite Mercy save us from both the theory and practice of false religion!—Amen.

THE SPIRIT OF UNIVERSALISM TRIED:

A Discourse delivered in the Presbyterian Church corner of Carondelet and Perdido streets, New Orleans, on 21st May, 1848,

IN REPLY TO THE REV. THEODORE CLAPP.

BY THE REV. ALEXANDER CAMPBELL.

1 *John*, iv. 1: “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.”

THE scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the only rule by which we are authorised to try spirits in religious controversy. If we submit any question in debate, on the subject of religion, to any one man, however wise and good, he is still but an erring mortal like ourselves; or to two, or any number more, or to any body of men, even if they should style themselves the Church, still they are but a number of frail, erring men. And increase the number as we may, to millions, we only increase the discord. To decide, then, whether any spirit be of God, or not, it is necessary to go to the law and to the testimony; assured, that if it speak not according to these, it is because there is no truth in it. Let us, then, proceed, with the Holy Scriptures as a standard, to try the spirit of Universalism.

The main position assumed by modern Universalism, and the one we intend, on the present occasion, principally to try, is, that there is, after death, no suffering endured as a consequence of sins committed in the present life. We are aware that they who were formerly denominated Universalists have become subdivided into two sects—one denying all retribution in a future world, and the other holding a limited disciplinary retribution in a state beyond the grave,—the latter denominating themselves Restorationists, and the former Universalists. But as we have shown, in a previous discourse, that practically there is little, if any, difference between the two creeds, especially when they adopt the same modes of interpreting the Scriptures, and when they agree in repudiating the supreme divinity of the Saviour, the natural depravity of man, and other cardinal doctrines of the Christian system.

To ascertain whether Universalism, as just stated, be of God, let us try whether it can be sustained by the proofs of Holy Writ. There are certain texts adduced by the advocates of the system, for its support, which we now proceed to examine.

“I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.”

“And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.”

“He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord shall wipe away tears from all faces.”

“For as the rain cometh down, and the snow, from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater, so shall my word be, that goeth out of my mouth: it shall not return to me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.”

“I have sworn by myself; the word has gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall swear. Surely, shall one say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength.”

For the Lord will not cast off forever.”

Now, not one of these texts say that there shall be no future retribution for the wicked, or that there shall be disciplinary punishment of the wicked only of a limited duration. Either of these doctrines can be deduced from these texts only as an inference; and whether that inference is just or not, must depend upon the fact of its being taught more plainly in other portions of the Scriptures, or not, and so plainly as to amount to moral certainty. These texts, you perceive, are all adduced from the Old Testament. Now the Old Testament either does not reveal a future existence of man, or it does. If Universalists say it does not, then all the promises of that portion of the Scriptures, according to their own canon of interpretation, must be confined to the present world, and cannot prove anything about a life beyond the grave, and the texts which they quote from it to prove their system are totally irrelevant. And on the other hand, if they admit, as they undoubtedly ought, that the Old Testament does reveal a future existence, then the text in Daniel, xii. 2—“Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and *everlasting* contempt”—proves their inferences for Universalism wholly erroneous. There, the everlasting blessedness of the righteous, and the everlasting punishment of the wicked, are alike and directly declared in express terms; whereas it must be acknowledged, that the Universalist doctrine, if taught at all, is confessedly very ambiguously expressed, in any of the texts which they cite, as we have shown, from the Old Testament. And if we admit, what cannot be intelligently denied, that when there is an apparent conflict between different portions of Scripture, the texts of ambiguous import must yield to those which are plain and unequivocal, then it follows, that the dark inferences of Universalism are dissipated by the text in Daniel, like the shades of night by the rising sun: so that, whether Universalists choose to say that the Old Testament teaches the doctrine of a future state, or that it does not, the texts which they quote from it, in support of their system, fail to prove their doctrine. Choose which side of the dilemma they may, the Old Testament refuses to support them. Did time permit, other considerations might be presented, to show, that the application of these texts to the cause of Universalism is a monstrous perversion of scripture. But the limits of a single discourse do not permit us to descend further into particulars; nor is it necessary that we should, since, without it, the argument is complete.

Let us now hear them on the New Testament:

“Whom the heavens must receive until the restitution of all things.”

The all things here are limited, by the text, to the things which God had spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began. Now, whether the text supports Universalism, or not, depends upon the fact, whether, or not, the holy prophets taught that there should be no eternal retribution. Certainly, the text does not, in so many words, inform us that there shall be no eternal punishment endured by the wicked who die impenitent, and we have just seen that the Old Testament writers, whether prophets or others, teach no such doctrine.

“Who will have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth.”

Certainly, God wishes all men to be saved; but to be saved on the principles of the holy gospel, by becoming holy. But do all men regard the will of God, and become holy? No. Then, for aught we know, some men may never regard the will of God, so as to become the fit subjects of salvation. God says, “I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked.” Yet do not the wicked die?

“We trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, especially of those who believe.”

But God *is*—*is* now, at the present time, the Saviour of all men. But is God now the Saviour of all men, in such a sense as to preserve them, in this world, from evils which befall them, as a consequence of their own imprudence, or of their own crime? No. Then what evidence is there that he will ever become such to men, should they continue to sin throughout eternity?

“As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive.”

This text does indeed say, that in Christ all the dead saints shall arise, but does not say that all men shall be saved. The Universalist doctrine finds no warrant whatever from this text. In the language immediately following the text, the apostle cuts up the doctrine of Universalism by the roots. Hear his words:

“But every man in his own order: Christ the first fruits: afterwards, they that are Christ’s at his coming.”

But who are Christ’s? They who have the spirit of Christ; for such as have not the spirit of Christ are none of His. They of whom the apostle here speaks, in regard to the resurrection, are they who have the spirit of Christ, and no others. Now, have the wicked the spirit of Christ? No. Then the resurrection of the wicked is not expressed in the text. It is, indeed, taught elsewhere, in the Scriptures, that the wicked, as well as the righteous, shall arise from the dead, but it is not taught in this text. But suppose we take the all, in the text, who are to be made alive, to mean all men, indiscriminately. What then? Nothing to the purpose. It is not then said, that all will be raised to a life of happiness and glory. Suppose it be here taught that all shall be raised from the dead, it is not said that all will be raised to the same destiny. The Universalist’s doctrine, that they will, is but an inference; and an inference, too, in direct opposition to the express declaration of Jesus Christ, who teaches, that all in their graves “shall hear His voice and come forth: they that have done good to the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil to the resurrection of damnation.”

“For he must reign till he hath put all his enemies under his feet.”

“The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.”

The fact that Christ will reign as a mediatorial king, until he shall subdue all his enemies, and that, in raising the dead, he shall overcome the last enemy, death, is one thing, and is literally taught in the text; but that the wicked shall be raised to happiness is quite another, and, as all must admit, is not literally taught in this passage. His enemies, the wicked, are all put under His feet, when they are turned into hell. The ancient conqueror put his feet on the necks of his enemies, when subdued, as indicating their subjection and his triumph. All men must become subject to the mediatorial king whom God has set on His holy hill of Zion; they who will not submit to the sceptre of His grace, must yield to the sceptre of His power. It is an assumption which violates the laws of language, to maintain, that this passage of scripture teaches the eternal salvation of the wicked. Honor and glory the ancient conqueror awarded to his friends; subjection and degradation to his enemies. Strange, most unnatural, and forced language, has the apostle here used, if he meant to teach Universalism, according to which, treading his enemies under his feet means elevating them to thrones, and putting crowns on their heads, and sceptres in their hands, and making them kings and priests to God!!

“And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.”

This text simply teaches us, that when Christ shall have triumphed over all opposing powers, and finished the work of mediator, he will cease to act as such, and that the Godhead will then rule without any mediator, and, so far as we can discover, makes not the most distant allusion to the question as to whether the wicked will be saved or lost.

“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.”

Now, Universalists believe that the Book of Revelation, from which this text is cited, describes scenes and events that were accomplished some eighteen centuries ago, none of which relate to the future at all; or they believe that they describe scenes and events yet to come, among which are those of the judgment day. If they hold the latter opinion, then the eighteenth verse of this chapter, which describes the lake which burns with fire and brimstone,—into which the devil, the beast, and the false prophet are cast,—and which burns forever and ever, subverts their whole fabric built on the fourth verse. On the other hand, if they hold the things described in that book to be all past, why quote the text to prove the salvation of the wicked who die impenitent? Take, then, which horn of the dilemma they may, they cannot but suffer a logical rout, and a defeat of argument.

Thus, we have shown that Universalism, in any form, is wholly unsustained by any one text adduced by its advocates for its support. Its doctrine is not taught in the Bible, and is not of God.

Now, let us examine the arguments which its founders and advocates deduce from the light of nature and reason.

God is said to be the father of all men. It is then asked, Can a father, tender-hearted and kind, permit any of his children to be miserable for ever?

The answer is, the analogy presumed in this argument is wholly set aside by facts of every day's occurrence. What tender father would drown his children? Yet God drowned the old world. What father, of humane feelings, would burn his children to death? Yet God did burn Sodom and Gomorrah. What compassionate father would every day inflict upon his children every kind of earthly calamity, poverty, reproach, disease, and death itself? among which are afflicting our race with all these evils, and has thus done, through all ages past. Yet God is daily and nightly. Then, if God may do all this, and still be a kind and beneficent father, it must be true that we do not clearly comprehend what is proper for God to do to us, his children—that we cannot comprehend the movings of the Almighty, whose ways are sometimes in the deep waters, again in the thick clouds, and again in the dazzling of the solar blaze. But certain, for aught we know, if, as a kind and amiable father, it is proper for him to permit us, on account of our moral delinquencies, to be unhappy for a lifetime, it may, for aught we know, be equally consistent, with the possession of those attributes, to permit us to be unhappy, as long as we choose to continue our sins. But the assumption, that God bears to sinners exactly the relation of a father, is not sustained by the Scriptures. In a state of rebellion against God, sinners forfeit their right as sons. When, like the prodigal, they leave their home, and waste their substance, God, as a righteous father, may permit them to suffer with hunger, and seek to be fed on husks with the swine. And if they should continue their prodigality and folly forever, he may, for aught we know, permit them to endure forever the appropriate consequences of their folly. Indeed, without he should divest them of the high attribute of accountable agency, we do not understand how he could arrest them in the course of misery, which, in all moral agents, follows sin as the shadow follows the substance. Men become reinstated to their full rights as children of God, only when they, by adoption, can cry, "Abba, Father!"

Universalists urge the mercy of God as an argument.

But what is mercy? Mercy is kindness shown to the undeserving and the guilty. But as, on their principles, man is not a subject of moral depravity by the fall of our first parents, nor by his own personal doings—since they hold sin to be no evil in the government of God—man, who, if their opinions be correct, is not unworthy nor guilty, cannot be an object of mercy. To claim for men exemption from punishment, on the ground of mercy, on the principles of Universalism is perfectly incomprehensible: mercy can find no place in their theology.

They found another argument on the nature of punishment.

They contend, that men are punished for their own good only, and not at all for the good of others. When we say God may permit the renitent to suffer forever, as a means of warning to all holy worlds throughout eternity, of the evils of sin, they deny our principles, and maintain that the only legitimate object of punishment is the reformation of the offender, and that, if it is known that future torments will never reclaim the wicked, then they could not be justly indicted. This objection appears to take it for granted that the torments of the lost

are not principally the natural and necessary consequences of sin upon the sinner's own soul, but wholly an afflicting appliance of God from without, which is probably wholly a mistake, and one, too, which materially changes the whole aspect of the subject. But without insisting on the consequences of this mistake, it is sufficient to be able to say, that according to the apostle Peter, the old world was destroyed, and the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, not for the good of the men destroyed, but to make them an "*ensample to those who should after live ungodly.*"

The doctrine opposed in this sermon is argued from the work of Christ, as a Saviour who is styled the Saviour of all men, the Saviour of the world, and who is said to have given himself a ransom for all.

But if sin is *no* evil in the government of God, as Universalists suppose, and if God does not pardon sinners at all, as maintained by the reverend pastor of the Congregationalist Church, in this city, it is not easy to conjecture in what sense Christ can be set forth as a Saviour, or a ransom at all, by the advocates of modern Universalism. Be that, however, as it may, they deliver themselves from the benefit of this argument, when they say, as they do, in the Plain Guide, page 254, "The evils from which Jesus came to save men *are in this world*, and for this reason he came into this world to save them." It is plain, then, that Christ, as a Saviour, ought not to be cited by Universalists as saving men from eternal perdition.

Universalists found another argument, on what they style the impartial goodness of God.

But, unfortunately for their argument, this world does not exhibit that equal distribution of good and evil, for which they contend. We often see virtue in want, while vice is fed. Among individuals, races, and nations do we find this Utopian equality? No! Where, so far as we know, does it exist, except in the brain of the theorist?

" — ask mother Earth why oaks were made
Taller and stronger than the weeds they shade?"

If, then, there is no future retribution, vice frequently goes for ever unpunished, and virtue unrewarded.

The relation of man to each other is converted into an argument for universal salvation.

It is said, the saints in heaven would themselves be made miserable, if their children, near relatives, and beloved ones, should be known to be in the eternal world of woe.

The argument assumes, as truth, what is denied by all experience. Men in this world, who are pious, do enjoy happiness, although other men, for their crimes, are enduring the prison and the gibbet. So good men will be happy in the celestial kingdom, although the wailings of the wicked, and the smoke of their torments, will ascend forever and ever. They will bear ever in their mind, that God is a God of equity and mercy, and that he doth not afflict willingly, or grieve the children of men, and that he is right when he condemns, and clear when he judges.

To support their theory, Universalists find it necessary to maintain the monstrous position, that the present is a life of perfect retribution.

We see in this world many a Lazarus, covered with rags and afflicted with sores, and many a rich man, clothed in purple and fine linen, and faring sumptuously every day. This theory is in the face of all facts. All observation and all history testify, that, in the present state the innocent not only suffer with the guilty, but, generally, more than the guilty. Who, on Universalist principles, is harmed the most, the incendiary, who lifts the torch, fires a village, and is killed in the act by a well-directed bullet, and is sent, as they generally teach, to glory; or the innocent inhabitants, who escape barely with their lives, turned out by him to endure the cold and storms of midnight, helpless, penniless, without a home, and without even a shelter?

The influences of Universalism are totally different from the influences produced by the teachings of the Bible. The preaching of the Saviour warned men of sin and danger: Universalism teaches men that they are not sinners, and that they are in no danger from the consequences of sin. Men, under his preaching, were convicted of sin, and pricked to the heart. What assembly ever became thus affected by the preaching of Universalism? In short, under the preaching of Christ and the apostles, sinners became alarmed. When Peter preached, thousands, alarmed, cried out, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" When Paul preached, the jailor exclaimed, "Sir, what shall I do to be saved?" Do sinners thus cry under the preaching of Universalists? No. But if they should, how would our Universalist friends answer the question, What shall I do to be saved? What?—why, Do nothing at all;—do, or not do, willing, or unwilling, you will be saved! Live as you may, and die as you may. Live, if you choose, pirates, and die suicides. Fear not; give yourselves no farther trouble; not only your calling and election, but your eternal salvation is made sure.

The preaching of the gospel, in all ages, reformed men, and still continues the good work.

In another discourse, on the subject now before you, we adverted to the fact, that the preaching of Universalism never was known to reform one sinner. I am now prepared to confirm my own observation, by the testimony of Mr. Matthew Hale Smith, who was for twelve years a preacher of Universalism. His testimony is, that the preachers of that denomination never, like Paul, reason on righteousness, temperance, and a judgment to come, so as to make the wicked tremble; but that, instead of this they chant in their ears the Siren song, which assures them, in the notes of the blandest melody, that live as they may, in ease and luxury, like the rich man in the gospel, clothed in purple and fine linen, with hearts, no matter how unfeeling for the wants of the sons and the daughters of misfortune, poverty, disease, sorrow and pain, and with ears, no matter how deaf to the cries of the Lazaruses who may lie at their gates,—nay, with tongues, no matter how false, and with hands, no matter how bloody—at death, all will be well; and, exhort them not to be alarmed—to take their ease—eat, drink, and be merry—enjoy their sins; and if to-morrow they should die, they assure them that after death there is no judgment to come, no hell, no eternal retribution; and that, in a future world, there is no moral difference between the penitent, who mourns over his sins in this world, and the desperado, who, in triumph, brandishes his dagger, dripping with a brother's blood. "I have known," says this writer—"I have known moral men to embrace Universalism, and continue moral. I have known them

to embrace it, and become immoral. I have known bad men to embrace it, and continue as bad as ever. But never, in a single instance, have I known a bad man to be reformed by attending the preaching of Universalism. Nor do I believe that the united labors of all the advocates of Universalism, under any of its forms, for the past fifty years, have produced ten cases of reformation, if they have so much as one!!” What an astounding fact! Our brother, of the Congregationalist Church in this city, states, in his discourse on Hell, that in the United States there are some two thousand preachers of Universalism; and we are told, by a competent witness, that their united labors, for a whole half century, have not reclaimed a single profane blasphemer, nor reformed a single drunkard, nor turned a single son of licentiousness from the sink of pollution and depravity. This is, of itself, proof, less equivocal than a voice from the sun, in the brightness of noon-day, that the spirit of Universalism is not of God.

Mr. M. H. Smith also testifies, that the system is not only theoretically, but practically, adverse to devotion.

“It is not a system of prayer.” “It does not tend to a serious and prayerful reading of the Bible. Many, indeed, read it, but it is to find proof texts for their opinions, but not for the purposes of reformation and devotion. No minister of the sect, whom I ever knew, maintains family prayer. I have known many to ridicule the custom, but no one to observe it. I have been often in the families of the principal advocates of Universalism, and passed the night. I found no family devotions at their dwellings. They have been at my house. They expressed no surprise at not finding an altar at my fireside. That Universalist preachers would pray in a family, if asked to do so, is most probable. Of this, of course, I do not speak, but the custom of regular family prayer is not to be found in any preacher’s family, with which I ever had an acquaintance.”

The doctrine of the Bible on this subject is that men ought always to pray, and not faint. If, then, the Bible be from Heaven, the spirit of Universalism is not of God.

The whole history of Universalism proves its doctrinal progress ever to be downwards, towards Deism and Atheism.

Mr. Murray was in all respects a Calvinist, except that he held that the retribution of those who die impenitent will not be absolutely without termination. He and his coadjutor, Mr. Mitchel, of New York, held the denial of the supreme divinity of Jesus Christ to be the total rejection of the Christian faith. But, adopting the same mode of biblical exposition by which Messrs. Murray and Mitchel rejected the doctrine of unending misery, before Mr. Murray’s death, Mr. Ballou, taking the first step, rejected the divinity of our Saviour.

In his second step, in 1818, he maintained, that the Scriptures begin and end the history of sin in flesh and blood, and that, beyond this mortal existence, the Bible teaches no other sentient state, but that which is called by the blessed name of life and immortality.

In the third step, taken soon after, sin was declared to be NO EVIL—the existence of the devil was denied, the immortality of the soul was set down as a relic of heathenism, and the passages of scripture which speak of angels, became to be regarded as figures of speech, intended to represent messengers or ministers who preach the gospel, and the idea of angels

in the usually accepted and time-honored sense, was erased from the Bible.

In the fourth step, the institutions of the Bible were assailed,—the Sabbath was accounted an institution of expediency, and not of divine appointment,—labor on the Sabbath might be considered improper, but ought not to be held sinful; and, as a consequence, journeys of pleasure on the Sabbath were soon begun, and by the officers of Universalist churches secular employments were engaged in, on the principle that the Sabbath is a human institution. Stick up, said Rev. Abel C. Thomas, a Universalist preacher, to printers who hesitated to labor on the Sabbath in printing his book,—stick up a little curtain at the window, so as not to disturb any body, adding that he had done it many a time, and that there was no harm in it! This idea well quadrates with the sermon of our friend of New Orleans, published not long since. Such doctrine, delivered in a bold, pompous, and impassioned style, on Sabbath morning, will well prepare the sons and daughters of fashion and pleasure for a wholesome and a frolicsome ride on the Shell-road, or in the pleasure boat, on Sabbath afternoon, and for the various theatres on Sabbath night, and will afford to the less fashionable and refined, all the licence their hearts can desire, to devote the remainder of God's holy hours to worship in the shrine of Bacchus, Venus, Mammon, or in that of any other deity, supernal or infernal, that may best suit their taste or convenience.

The institution of the Lord's Supper is, by some Universalists, wholly rejected, as no more binding on us than circumcision, or any other Jewish rite; and by others supposed as a rite which, although Christian, is long since abolished, as it was to continue only until the coming of our Lord, which, they say, occurred in the destruction of Jerusalem; whilst others, who observe the Supper, deny that there is in it any peculiar sacredness.

The latter class contend that it is open to all, of every character, and that all who are fit to attend meeting are fit to partake at the communion table. And, although all the barriers which guard the sanctity of the communion table are thus cast down and trampled under foot; and the way to the Holy of Holies made wide, for the whole crowd of the unbelieving, the lewd and the profane, yet there appears to be so much latent orthodoxy in the minds of even such a community, that the fear of incurring the curse denounced by the apostle, when he says, "He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself," deters the mass from treading the holy ground, and profaning the holy thing, although urged by the preachers to do so, and thus, by observing this ordinance like other denominations, to wipe away the reproach of the sect being infidel.

Rev. M. H. Smith informs us, that when, a pastor of the Universalist Church at Salem, Massachusetts, he urged the members of the congregation to come to the communion, some laughed at him; some told him that this would be carrying the joke too far; others would say they were Universalists if they were anything; but the many, in spite of all that he, and other Universalist preachers, had taught them to the contrary, thought that a *change of character was necessary to salvation*, and, therefore, in their present state, were unwilling to incur the guilt of eating and drinking unworthily. Although crowds will flock to Universalist churches as hearers, yet few become confirmed believers in the doctrine, and still fewer are prepared to become members of their communion. The average number of members in their churches,

even in cities, is not over twenty. These facts at once prove, both that the interpretations of scripture, and the principles of philosophy advocated by Universalist preachers, are at variance with the dictates of common sense and the laws of human evidence, and that the spirit of the system is not of God.

The principles of modern Universalism, and those of modern Infidelity, are the same.

Mr. Ballou, of Boston, has acknowledged that he agrees with Miss Fanny Wright in the sentiments which she advanced in her lectures, except in one thing—what she called religion, he called superstition: a difference only in the use of a term. Miss Fanny, when requesting the use of one of the Universalist churches in Boston, for her lectures, wrote, in her note of request,—“It would please me, more especially, to occupy that of Mr. Ballou, for whose character I entertain high respect.”

A young man of respectable connexions, who, in Springfield, Mass., by a disease contracted by dissipation, died a professed Atheist, and bold blasphemer, ridiculing the idea of a future state. At his funeral, a Universalist minister, to a large concourse of young people, eulogised the character of this dissolute young infidel, as a pattern for their imitation—as of one who had finished his allotted work on earth, and gone to heaven. His death was held up as the triumph of Universalism in a dying hour. Wherein, then, does Universalism differ from Infidelity? They profess the doctrines of Infidelity, as consistent with a belief in the Bible, whilst the others, holding the same doctrines, more consistently with themselves, and more logically on their own principles, reject the Bible. The former is the naked wolf, and the other the wolf in sheep’s clothing.

Universalism tends downward to impiety, as naturally as heavy bodies tend to the center of the earth.

A professor in a church becomes cold in the concerns of religion. The prayer in the closet is neglected; then prayer in the family; then social prayer; then comes attendance on public worship only on a part of the Sabbath day; then an occasional visit to the Universalist meeting house; then some violation of Christian morals, which is followed by excommunication; then professed Universalism. What sort of a Christian he then becomes, we learn from the following extract:

“Men may join a Universalist church as they would a lyceum, and leave it in the same way. A profession of faith throws over them no new restraint. It imposes no new obligation. Profaneness is no disqualification for church membership; Deism is none; Atheism is none. In all the Universalist churches in Boston, and the vicinity, there may be found men habitually profane. Indeed, it is true of all the churches of that sect with which I have any acquaintance.”

Can the spirit of such a religion be of God?

Universalism promotes impiety.

The following is from a Universalist paper styled “The Trumpet”:

“Our confidence is in God. Sin is misery—it is hell—it is punishment. But God can change the foulest heart—he can make the vilest clean. Though our sin is as scarlet, he shall make it white as snow; and though it be like crimson it shall be like wool. So saith the Word.

Neither death nor sin can have any dominion beyond the resurrection. God hath promised it. We depend on him. ALL LIVE UNTO GOD. The lamp holds out to burn forever in his presence:"

Here, it appears that *all*, no matter how they live, whether soberly, righteously and godly, or unsoberly, unrighteously or ungodly—it matters not how diversely they live,—*all* live to God, and beyond the resurrection there will be no more sin or suffering. If this be all true, what difference is there between him that serveth God, and him that serveth Him not? A single case may serve to exemplify the influence of this doctrine. A young man, religiously educated, and a strict observer of the Sabbath, is, through the persuasion of a Universalist minister, brought over to that sect, and in six months from the date he became such, his moral sense was so impaired that he used to work on the Sabbath day.

The tendency of the system is to positive licentiousness.

The non-credenda of the Freethinkers was so often repeated at Mr. Mallet's table, that it became, in due time and in due form, the creed of the inferior domestics. The fellow who waited at table, under a practical conviction of no retribution in a future state, made off with several things of value, particularly the plate. When caught, brought back with his prey to his master's house, and examined before a few select friends, being urged to give a reason for his infamous behavior, he resolutely replied to his master,—“Sir, I had heard you so often talk of the impossibility of a future state, and that after death there is no reward for virtue, nor punishment for vice, that I was tempted to commit the robbery.” “Well, but, you rascal,” replied Mallet, “had you no fear of the gallows?” “Sir,” said the fellow, looking sternly at his master, “what is that to you, if I had a mind to venture that? You had removed my greatest terror—why should I fear the less?”

“Common observation must convince any man, that the profane, the intemperate, and the licentious, love this doctrine. They call it their own—they support it—they defend it.

“Go where it is a novelty, and announce the preaching of Universalism. Into what places will the intelligence carry sadness?—into the bar-room, the dram shop, or the gaming room? Who will be made sad?—the Deist? the Sabbath breaker? the intemperate? the adulterer? Will not these rather, with scarcely an exception, rejoice in the intelligence, and mostly make up the audience?”

Why do they thus?—to be rebuked or reformed? No! But to receive encouragement in the evil of their doings. This they desire and expect. In a bar-room, in the front of a Universalist preacher, who was discoursing much to the satisfaction of all present, sat a large man, bloated with intemperance, and of an appearance indicating sottishness, and familiarity with vice, listening with attention most intense and undivided, who, at the close of the argument, brought his hands together, exclaiming, “Good!—landlord, bring us another horn.” The effect of that scene never left the preacher till he left Universalism.

The loud pretensions of Universalism to love and benevolence are not sustained by deeds of mercy and good will to man.

“What benevolent plan has it originated, to ameliorate the condition of man—promote the interests of the race? What generous, noble, catholic enterprise, tells of its liberality or

benevolence? Not one. Which of the benevolent institutions, so peculiar to our age, has it ever aided? Not one. What has it done for the heathen? Nothing. Universalists have constantly ridiculed the exertions of those who are engaged in sending or carrying the gospel to the heathen. Neither have they, as a sect, contributed one cent towards the distribution of the Bible.”

And its forces stood in close phalanx, incessantly opposed to Sabbath schools, Bible classes, and temperance societies, until these institutions won their way to popular favor, and opposition became odious.

So far is Universalism from promoting the cause of benevolence, it breathes nothing but bitter hostility and hatred to all who differ from its communion. The organs of the sect have long been noted for their scurrility and abuse of all good men. The manner in which they speak of the benevolent operations of the day, the missionary and philanthropic movements of the age, are too familiar to those who read their publications, to require repetition here. Their blasphemous opposition and ridicule to revivals of religion, speak the temper of their minds. So powerful is the hatred which Universalism inspires for evangelical religion, that, in many cases, it has destroyed natural affection, and made the parent like “the ostrich, who is hardened against her young, as if they were not hers.”

The daughter of a Universalist in Salem became a believer in Christ, and requested the consent of her father to make a profession of religion in an orthodox church. He refused, and when she ventured to obey God, rather than her parent, he banished her from his house, and held her in banishment for years. At length, however, on being sick, and supposing himself to be near his end, he sent for his daughter.

“She flew to his bedside, and devoted herself to his wants. She wiped away the clammy dampness of disease from his brow, spoke to him in soothing tones, uttering no complaints, and treating him as if he had been one of the tenderest of parents. The father recovered. But, notwithstanding, never from the hour that daughter united herself with the church, up to the present time, has he allowed her to eat with him at the table. *Universalism destroys natural affection.*”

The spirit in which the apostles of Universalism labor in the cause, in the production of Universalist books, may be learned from the following confession of Mr. Balfour:—

“Few, if any, among Universalists, have published more books of this kind than myself.” “So far from my publications being a profit to me, they have only been a bill of expense, and much perplexity, in addition to all my labor in writing them; so much so that I have been tempted to curse the day I ever published a book.”

He adds—

“I am heart-sick of it, and to be told that my books have contributed much to the spread of Universalism, has no tendency to remove this kind of sickness.”

If this be dissimilar to the language of Paul, when speaking about his labors, it is because dictated by a different spirit from that of Paul. Paul fought the good fight, and kept the faith for a crown of glory from the Lord, the righteous Judge; Mr. Balfour wrote, it appears, for MONEY.

Universalism tends to suicide.

If death terminates the present woes of all men, and conveys them to the shores of never-ending beatitudes, then how foolish not to end life whenever made burdensome by the insults of pride, by the injustice of wickedness, by the oppression of power, by disappointment, disease and pain? Why suffer, when, by making the plunge over the precipice of time, one may

“ _____ end
The heart-ache, and the thousand natural shocks
That flesh is heir to?”

Let there be no dread of future retribution, and

“Who would bear the whips and scorns of time,
The oppressor’s wrong, the proud man’s contumely,
The insolence of office, and the spurns
That patient merit of the unworthy takes,
When he, himself, might his quietus make
With a bare bodkin?”

A Universalist in the city of Utica, New York, unhappy in his marriage, purchased two pistols, and resolved to take his own life. He then sent for his preacher. The preacher came, bringing an associate with him. To his minister he said, “Whither shall I go when I die?” “To Heaven,” was the reply. “Have I anything to fear beyond death?” “Nothing,” was the response. “So I believe. I am tired of this world, and mean to seek a better.” He laid his hands upon his pistols, and as he raised them his spiritual guides took the alarm. “Stop!” cried one of them; “*there may be a hell, after all.*” The desperate man gave them a look of withering indignation, and exclaimed, “You do not believe the doctrine you preach. You are a deceiver. But I believe that all men will be happy at death. I will convince you that I thus believe.” He raised both pistols to his head. They flashed in the pan, and immediately he was secured. Before they parted, he informed his preachers that he had done with them; that, now, he had an opportunity of judging their sincerity.

Universalists have never denied the facts stated above. They attempt to traduce the character of the man; but they dare not deny the statement.

Mr. Jotathan Cilly, a member of Congress, who was killed by Mr. Graves, in a duel, some years since, in conversation with a lady in Washington, the night before he was shot, confessed, that with the religious views which she entertained, he would be deterred from fighting the duel. But, as a Universalist, he had nothing to fear. If he shot his antagonist, the world would justify him; but if he, himself, should be killed, his soul would immediately ascend to heaven.

The popular Universalist preachers, Mr. Richards, of Philadelphia, and Mr. Basset, of Dedham, died suicides. It is true, men of other creeds have become destroyers of their own lives; but they have become such in spite of their own principles, while Universalists become such by the direct influence of their own principles.

To the pernicious influence of Universalist principles, our whole nation owes the loss of Mr. Cilly, who, in the short space of time during which he stood on the floor of Congress, gained a reputation as an able debater and an accomplished orator—as a sound and enlightened statesman—as a zealous and powerful advocate of the rights of the people, and as a scholar and a gentleman, such as would be worth the labors of a whole life-time. Had this gentleman been so fortunate as to have imbibed the principles of orthodoxy, on his own confession, he would not have accepted the challenge to the combat which terminated his valuable life. Had he lived to the present time, as he probably would but for that unfortunate duel, he, then a star but just risen above the verge of the horizon, and just entered our political sky, would now be culminating in the brightest constellation of our orators and statesmen. But alas! the mischievous, blighting, and demoralizing influence of Universalism dragged him from our heavens, and buried his fair fame forever deep in its own darkness. The Genius of his country, leaning on his tombstone, waters his grave with her tears; whilst Universalism, standing by, brandishes her gory falchion, and exults in her triumph. Can such spirit be the religion of Jesus?

Should Universalism ever become the prevailing sentiment of our country, and be carried out in the legitimacy of its practical tendencies, the powers of our political heavens would soon be shaken, our stars fall like figs from the tree, and the blackness of moral and physical desolation, like a starless, cheerless, cold, black and hideous midnight, cover the beauteous face of our whole land.

If, for our sins, a just Heaven must chasten us, let Him send famine and pestilence—let him send civil discord and foreign war—let our fields be scathed with rust and mildew—let murrain cut off the herds from the stall—let the footfall of death be heard on every threshold, and in every dwelling, the silence of midnight be disturbed by the voice of lamentation and wailing—let our cities be wrapt in flames, and our lands drenched with blood,—since, even then, we may repent and find mercy; but let us not be given up to the delusion of Universalism—to believe a lie—and, after dragging down upon our own heads all these dreadful calamities, then, by this fallacy, impenitent and unprepared for penitence, to be adjudged by Infinite Justice to an endless retribution in the world of woe!—Amen,

A DISCOURSE ON FUTURE RETRIBUTION,

*Delivered in the Presbyterian Church at the corner of Carondelet and Perdido streets,
New Orleans, on Sabbath evening, June 4th, 1848,*

In reply to a discourse on same subject by Rev. THEODORE CLAPP, published
in the Picayune of Sabbath, 28th May previous:

BY THE REV. ALEXANDER CAMPBELL.

Romans, ii. 6: "Who will render to every man according to his works."

THAT every offence should receive its just recompense of reward, is engraven, as with a diamond, upon the heart of man. A feeling of the desert of praise and blame, and of reward and punishment, is a living, ever-abiding, and an elemental principle in the soul. The text refers to the judgment day, when the righteous shall be rewarded with crowns and thrones, in a glory and splendor corresponding with the grade of character which the searching light of that awful day shall reveal; and when the wicked shall also be subjected to the scrutinizing eye of the Omniscient Judge, and be sentenced to those grades of unending retribution which are adapted to the character of each.

The doctrine clearly taught in the text is the perfect equity of the decisions of the Judge of the World.

According to the text, no one of all the unnumbered hosts, whether of angels or men, throughout the whole progress of eternity, whether in the glorious grades of heavenly bliss, or in the graduated depths of dark perdition, can have just cause to complain of the impartial justice of that tremendous day. God has so constituted man, that he is necessarily, when separate from the hopes and fears, the joys and sufferings, of earth, happy or miserable, according to the character of his doings. The righteous leave this world with the seeds of heaven, the elements of eternal felicity, in their souls, which, in heaven, spring up and bear the fruits of eternal life. The wicked also carry with them into the eternity of the future world, the elementary principles of unending pain and anguish, and all the guilty diseases of the soul which breed the undying worm, and kindle the unquenchable fires, and attract the harpies of despair,—

“Which around their torrid temples flap
Their fiery wings, and breathe upon their lips
And parched tongues, the withered blasts of hell.”

The decision of the judge, which simply delivers men over to the happiness or the misery, that, according to the laws of their mental and moral being, results from their own works,

must be, and in the sunlight of eternity will appear to be, just and equitable, so that every mouth shall be stopped, when a profane and scoffing world shall stand guilty before God. As, in a discourse delivered recently in the Congregationalist Church in this city, on this text, the preacher advocates a doctrine at variance with the views here maintained in regard to the duration of the sufferings of the wicked in a future state, we shall so far depart from the usual mode of treating this text as to refute some of the positions assumed in that sermon.

I. In opposition to the endless punishment of those who die impenitent, it is said that the Bible affirms, that "*all punishment shall, sooner or later, produce the peaceable fruits of righteousness, in all those who are exercised thereby.*"

We must here deny that the Bible teaches any such doctrine. The words marked in italics in that discourse are not the exact language of the Bible. An allusion is evidently made to the eleventh verse of the twelfth chapter of Hebrews, which reads thus:

"Now, no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby."

The word *all* is not found in the text, nor the term punishment. The context proves that these blessed effects of chastening, *not punishing*, are produced on true believers, who are styled sons, and not on the wicked, who are styled bastards. The interpretation which we oppose, is a gross and evident perversion of the Scripture. The word in the original, translated chastening, literally signifies the discipline which a parent exercises over his children, and not punishment in general.

II. It is objected to our doctrine, *that if true, sin must be an infinite evil*, which is denied as impossible, because, says the objector, "man is a being of finite powers, and, therefore, incapable of doing an infinite evil."

This objection is based on the assumption that the unending sufferings of those who die impenitent are infinite—an assumption wholly destitute of truth, and therefore wholly incapable of demonstration.

Those sufferings are not infinite in degree, because the human powers are finite, and therefore unable to sustain infinite suffering; nor are they infinite in duration, because no torments, however protracted, can ever arrive at the *sum total* of infinity. If the torments of a lost soul should continue as many millions of years as there are atoms in this globe, added to the number of all the rays of the sun, and of all the stars of light that have illumined the heavens since the creation morning, still they could be numbered; and could not fill the sum total of infinitude; and if this immense number should be squared and cubed, these woes could be but finite, and infinite duration would still remain undiminished and unimpaired; and the same must be true of any period in eternity which you may choose to name. Has our learned objector become aware of the incompetency of the human mind to grasp the dimensions of infinitude? Has he become aware that even the term infinitude conveys to the human mind an idea less definite than the signs in algebra, employed to denote unknown quantities?—less definite, because, whilst the quantities for which these signs stand are limited by the conditions of the problem, the very term infinity overleaps all boundaries? If

he be aware that to find definite relations and proportions between unknown quantities is beyond the reach of the human powers, he ought also to be aware that to draw precise conclusions from a comparison of infinite magnitudes, as well as from a comparison of infinite numbers, is still further beyond the reach of those powers.

We can conceive globules of the diameter of a hair, of infinite number, placed in rows of infinite length. We can imagine another row of the same description placed at its side, and we may style this twice an infinite number. We may add similar rows, until we triple, quadruple and even quintuple infinity; nay, we may fancy row added to row, until we have the surface of infinity squared to the depth of a hair's diameter; and then, by another effort of combination, we may consider infinity cubed. Then we may suppose, and apparently very logically, too, that we prove infinite space to be in the form of a cube. This might seem as clear as demonstration, yet when we have done, can we believe our own deduction? Why? Because our conclusion is too definite for infinity. A cube is a block of six equal sides. Having shape, it must have limits. Having limits, it cannot be infinite. The idea of infinity is something without limits.

Again, we may form in our own minds globules as large in diameter as the space between our planet and the sun, and place them in rows of infinite numbers, and carry them through all the arrangements and combinations of the globules which we have just described, and then conclude with the appearance of accuracy, as before, that as the number of globules of a hair's breadth in each row is *infinite*, and also the number of globes of a diameter equal to the distance between the earth and sun in each row is also *infinite*, so the diameter of each globule is equal to the diameter of each globe; and so that we may infer as we please, either that the sun is within a hair's breadth of the earth, or that the diameter of a hair, although apparently so small, is notwithstanding equal to the distance between the earth and the sun, which is ninety-five millions of miles. Again, what sane man, after such a demonstration, although it might appear fair, would credit his own conclusions? We have been thus particular to demonstrate, as clearly we with a sunbeam, the absolute futility of the refutation drawn from our reverend brother's very loose, vague and confused ideas of infinity. But does he object that our demonstration is mathematical, and therefore foreign to the subject, whilst he used the term in a moral sense? Our reply is, that even in a mathematical sense—even in the sense of a science whose glory is exactitude—we have shown that infinity is a term too undefined to be made the basis of any legitimate conclusion, and feel ourselves warranted in maintaining, that in a moral sense, its meaning is even less understood. What definite ideas have we of infinite wisdom, infinite power, or of infinite benevolence, or of infinite wrath, or infinite despair? The very use of the term infinite is proof positive that the idea is beyond our comprehension. Now, as the unending perdition of those who die impenitent is but *finite* misery, so it is not necessary to estimate sin, of which it is a consequence, but a *finite* evil. Yet, so far as I know, the old orthodox idea, that sin is an infinite evil because committed against God, a Being of infinite majesty and excellence, has never been refuted, and probably never can be, except so far as it can be shown generally that our reasoning on infinities cannot be depended on as correct. But arguments founded on infinities are, however, as legitimate in

our hands as in the hands of our adversaries. If they insist that the sufferings of the lost, which, although eternally progressive, never reach the sum total of infinity, are nevertheless infinite, we may, by the way of offset, with equal justice maintain, that according to the mode of reasoning, sin is an infinite evil, and on their own principles must require infinite duration in suffering.

III. *Our objector repudiates our doctrine as opposed to the infinite benevolence of Deity.*

We have just shown how little confidence can be reposed upon any argument based upon human ideas of infinity. But while we object to infinity being made the basis upon which to found correct conclusions on any subject, still we are firm believers in the infinite benevolence of Deity, and fearlessly maintain that orthodoxy illustrates, whilst Universalism darkens the attribute of infinite goodness. No spectator, with the whole history of our race in his hand, can look upon this world without beholding a Supreme and Almighty Providence exercised over us for good. All things around us, whether in ocean, earth, or air, are wisely adapted to our well being, whilst every thing in us is found subservient to the same benevolent end. Not a joint or muscle, or even fibre, in the human body, nor a power, capability, or susceptibility of the human mind, the healthful exercise of which does not afford pleasure and not pain. The eye is ever delighted with seeing, and the ear with hearing. And nature spreads before us fields of perpetual beauty, and in her full chorus chants in our hearing melodies as solemn and as sweet as the music of the spheres. Man, unless stupid, debased, and embruted, cannot but feel that he may rightfully say in the inspiration of the bard—

“Annual for me the grape, the rose renew—
The juice nectarous and the balmy dew;
For me the mine a thousand treasures brings;
For me health gushes, from a thousand springs;
Seas roll to waft me, suns to light me rise—
My footstool earth, my canopy the skies?”

But above and beyond all, the infinite benevolence of Deity appears in his so loving the world as to give His only begotten Son, that whomsoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

O love divine! O mercy infinite!
O love all height above, all depth below!
Surpassing far all knowledge, all desire,
All thought—the Holy One for sinners dies!
The Lord of life for guilty rebels bleeds!
Quenches eternal fire with blood divine!
Abundant mercy! overflowing grace!”

Nature and revelation are both vocal with language of love from Heaven to man, so that God's unmeasured goodness to our race can no more be doubted than his infinite wisdom or

his Almighty power. And when we contemplate God only in his unbounded goodness, his illimitable wisdom, and his abundant power, we cannot resist the conclusion, that as His benevolence is infinite, He must desire the greatest good of the whole universe in general, and every being belonging to it in particular; that as His wisdom is unbounded as His nature, He must have planned the structure and the control of the universe, so as to exclude all misery and secure perfect happiness; and that, as His power is Almighty, He actually so created and now so governs the universe, as to bar out all evil and secure all good. This side of the picture is all beautiful and fair, and we hasten with delight to the conclusion, that sin has never defiled the surface of this globe with her polluting tread, and that misery has never disturbed our peaceful atmosphere with sounds of lamentation, wailing and woe. But alas! we can no more sustain our reasonings from moral than from mathematical *infinities*. Facts, living, audible, visible, and tangible facts, rise up in crowds around us, and overspread the surface of our entire globe, and darken the very heavens over our heads, and pronounce our conclusions futile and false. And when we examine this side of the picture, what do we behold? Our world a vast graveyard; its mountains white with bleached bones; its oceans baptized with blood; its valleys stained with human gore; its history, a history of crime, of rapine, murder, war and death, unrolling its long lists of tyrants, oppressors, executioners, and victims, and, presenting, even at this moment, tens of thousands of this world's unhappy children wasting with disease, writhing with pain, and agonizing in death. Now, how shall I reconcile the apparent discrepancy of these two opposite sides of the picture? And especially when I so frequently see suffering Virtue in tears and rags, and Vice roaring its broad laugh; and strutting in robes of purple and fine linen—and especially when I so often see Virtue leaving this world unrewarded, and as often Vice escaping from the earth unpunished.

This is a state of things which grinds to powder and casts to the winds the arguments of the Universalist, founded on his notions of *infinite* benevolence, *infinite* wisdom, and *Almighty* power. It proves that the theory of orthodoxy is built not only on the Bible, but also on the facts of the case, whilst it shows that Universalism rests on neither the one or the other. Orthodoxy accredits the goodness and mercy; as well as the wisdom and the power of the Creator; but when, seeing that, contrary to what might be supposed, on meditating merely the goodness, wisdom and power of the Supreme ruler of the world, sin does exist and misery does abound, it accounts for sin in man's agency—abused; and it accounts for misery as a necessary concomitant of sin, designed in the infinite benevolence of God, as a means of reclaiming the sinner himself from his wanderings, and to prevent others from pursuing his course. Thus, on the theory of orthodoxy, order is deduced out of confusion, and light out of darkness, and God is shown making the wrath of man to praise Him, and restraining the remainder of that wrath. In all this, as God ever knew the end from the beginning, and co-eternally with this knowledge designed the whole system of agency according to the best moral possibilities of preventing sin, and promoting virtue and happiness, the harmony of his plan is not in the least broken, his objects not at all frustrated, nor He in any way disappointed.

If earthquakes and tempests break not Heaven's design,
Why then a Borgia or a Cataline

In short, God's benevolence is gratified in the amount of good resulting from the existence of his moral universe; and doubtless, to an eye that could see the stupendous whole in all its bearings, relations, and dependencies, the evil resulting from the abused agency of sinning beings would appear, in comparison with the whole, but as the drop of the bucket, or the dust of the balance.

Orthodoxy finds in the universe around a mixture of virtue and vice, and of enjoyment and suffering, and, as has already been stated, accounts for vice in the free agency of man, and imputes misery as a corrective for sin to the benevolence of God. And since Deity permits sin and misery now to exist, upon the principles just defined, it knows no reason—since He is the same yesterday, to-day and forever—it knows no reason why he should interpose, by his omnipotence, in a future world any more than in this, to reclaim sinners in violating their agency; nor why sinners, if left to the undisturbed exercise of their agency, in that world, should not remain unreclaimed, as they, in the abuse of their high attributes of moral agency, did when here; nor, finally, why—since the punishment of sin is, according to the pastor of the Congregationalist Church in New Orleans, the “necessary” exercise of a sinner's mind—why this punishment might not be permitted to continue as long as the sinner should continue his transgression. According to the theory of orthodoxy, already stated, the Deity, in his benevolence, applied this punishment of sin as a means, both of reclaiming the transgressor himself, and of warning others to avoid his sin. But after the sinner fights his way, and passes through this world unreclaimed, what reason is there to believe that God will save him from his sins in a future state, should he continue impenitent, and unwilling to return to the obedience of the just? Unless God should deprive him of his agency by annihilation, he will, for anything we know, continue to sin; and if he continue to sin, his sin will continue to render him unhappy. We see no reason why the very benevolence of the High and Holy One should not even require him, as a means of promoting the general happiness of the universe, to permit the sinner to endure *the punishment which is the “necessary” exercise* of his mind as a transgressor, throughout his endless existence—should he continue so long to sin—as a means of warning all the holy spectators in all the worlds of light in the universe to avoid his doom by avoiding his doings. But is it still said, that infinite benevolence in God renders endless punishment impossible? If, however, the argument prove anything, it proves too much for the facts of the case—it proves there can be no punishment at all—whilst the admitted fact is, there is some punishment.

Our objector must admit, either that the punishment of sin endured in the present life, and the limited disciplinary punishment which he professes to believe will follow sin in a life to come, are inconsistent with the infinite benevolence of God, or they are not. If they are not, then God does not now act, in the infliction of this punishment, in accordance with His infinite benevolence, and then, how can we know that He ever will? And for aught we know, he may—notwithstanding His infinite benevolence—He may permit transgressors to be sufferers forever. On the other hand, if they are consistent with His infinite benevolence,

then what argument is there to prove that it may not be consistent with the same benevolence that punishment should continue forever? If the infinite benevolence of God either permits or requires me to suffer for one moment, it may for two, or three, or an hour, or a day, a year, or throughout eternity. If the Universalist admits that the infinite benevolence of God permits or requires me to suffer at all, can He, by any warrant, either from reason or Scripture, name the moment, the hour, the day or the year, when infinite benevolence will require my suffering, as a sinner, to cease? If, then, our Congregationalist brother cannot say to the sinners of his congregation, how much or how little space will be required as the duration of their sufferings in a future world, if they should die impenitent, how vaguely must he utter the denunciations of future woe? Suppose he should utter, in their hearing, that if they pass from the world impenitent they shall go to hell, (our brother repudiates the charge of preaching no hell), and one of them should rise up and ask, How long?—a year?—a day?—a minute?—a second? What answer could he return? Why, he does not know. Surely, if his doctrine be true, the Bible is very defective in revealing it. This is, of itself, proof sufficient that his theory is not a doctrine of revelation, and, added to the total absence of any countenance received by that theory from the Bible, it is much more than sufficient.

It seems incredible, that God has revealed for those who die impenitent, a temporary and disciplinary punishment in a future world, and yet has left untold what—of all things relating to the subject, is most important to be known—the duration of this threatened penalty. Or is it said, that He has left this momentous point to be decided by every sinner, for himself? Then, the sinner who esteems sin somewhat as it really is, a very great evil, and in some degree shuns it, as the abominable thing which he believes God hates, will adjudge to himself, on condition he should die in his sins, even for his comparatively few sins, a long disciplinary duration in the prison-house of the universe; whilst the cold-hearted, deceitful; cruel-minded villain, who tramples on human rights, and sports with human wrongs,—who wades in blood,—laughs at the groans of the distressed and the agonies of the dying, and reckons sin but a trifle, will esteem the sentence which consigns the wicked into hell, to be fully executed in the performance of an exploration tour to the great gulf of future retribution, similar to the descent of Æneas to the lower regions, as described by Virgil; or by making a visit to the lake of metaphorical fire, but little more afflictive and prolonged than a pleasure ride on Sabbath afternoon, on the shell road from New Orleans to Lake Pontchartrain. Now, if the doctrine of future retribution be admitted at all, the design of revealing it, and of preaching it, must be to present it to the fears of men as a motive to deter them from transgression. On this principle, the motive will be strong or weak, according as each sinner will determine the proper deserts of his sin to require the duration to be longer or shorter. On this theory, the judgment of each transgressor, in regard to the turpitude and deserts of sin, will constitute the standard by which he will estimate the duration of his future retribution. He who estimates sin a very great evil, fears a long and dreary retribution; whilst he who counts sin scarcely an evil at all, proportionally diminishes the duration of the term of punishment. Hence, the operation of the theory is, that the less a man is a sinner, the stronger his motive

to repent, and the more he is a sinner, the less his motive to repent. Thus, the doctrine makes the sinner's motive to reform in the inverse ratio of his moral turpitude! Can God have intended to reveal a doctrine so at variance with common sense, so violently in opposition to the general principles of his moral administration, and so unwisely adapted to influence men to turn from sin to righteousness? The doctrine bears the image and superscription of human folly. Its spirit is too unwise to be of God. The idea is preposterous. By the whole convention of Universalists in this country, the theory is considered as renounced, with the exception of some six or eight, who came out, in 1831, from the main body, and formed themselves into a different organization. Our preacher of this city must abandon it; sooner or later he will abandon it. It is a doctrine which receives no countenance, either from reason or revelation. It is a baseless fabric, floating in the air, with neither the light of heaven, nor the support of earth. Its locality is in the mists and fogs, midway between orthodoxy and scepticism. In the days of Murray and Winchester it might be permanently entertained, but it cannot bear the light of the theological science of the present day. By any man of reading, reflection, and a sound, well-balanced mind, it can, at this day, and in this enlightened land, be held no longer than to be thoroughly examined and properly understood. If our preacher does not abandon it, and return to orthodoxy, he will, like his illustrious predecessors, Abner Kneeland and Hosea Ballou, leave it behind him in the rapid progress of his descent to general scepticism. We hope to be pardoned for not confining ourselves, in our arguments, to his notions of restoration, so airy, so vague, so dark, and, withal, already begun to be exploded. We have considered his descent in progress, and shall not be surprised soon to be informed that he has fallen from the clouds and night of Restorationism down to the level of Ballou and Balfour, into the sloughs of Materialism, and of that of Universalism, which denies all future retribution. We have thought it well to have some arguments in readiness to await his arrival at this grade of the descent of his destination.

How very inefficaciously would the doctrine of future retribution, if preached at all, fall on the ears of sinners, when the preacher cannot tell whether it be for one moment, or more. The fact is, the doctrine is too tame to bear preaching as a motive to repentance and reformation, and hence Universalist preachers generally, as we have stated in a former discourse, omit it altogether. Practically, then, however the charge may be repudiated, the pastor of the Congregationalist Church in this city preaches, already, *no hell*. So his hearers, so far as we are informed, generally understand him. And hence, we have treated his theology as abolishing all the terrors drawn from a future world, and we are solemnly convinced that this is its true character. It strews the way to hell with flowers, and when sinners pass along, in their ears it whispers, "Peace!" Thus, we have shown that the benevolence of Deity requires that the wicked, who die such, should go away into everlasting punishment, and that the smoke of their torments should ascend, to warn all holy worlds, for ever and ever, of the terrible evil of rebellion against the righteous, holy and Almighty Maker. For anything we can tell, and for anything all the Universalists on earth can tell, angelic messengers may herald, throughout unnumbered worlds, not only the Saviour's cross and the Saviour's crown, and the number of sinners saved by His great redemption, but also the number of the souls lost

by resisting His Spirit, despising His cross, and trampling on His blood. For aught we, or they, or any mortals, know, under the wise administration of God's almighty throne, the eternal torments of every lost sinner may, by warning the holy universe of the evils of sin, be the means of establishing the entire inhabitants of some holy world in eternal obedience, and unending glory. And if this may possibly be true, can Universalists for a certainty know, that there is not more benevolence in God's punishment of the impenitent forever, for the sake of confirming all unfallen worlds in their rectitude, than in removing from the eyes of the Holy Creation all the terrors of future retribution exhibited in the eternal torments of lost souls, and thus, for the sake of saving from deserved misery those who choose to die in rebellion against God, whose number, compared with that of all holy worlds, may be as a drop compared with the ocean, or an atom compared with our globe—permit world after world, and system after system, to fall into moral ruin, until the plains of immensity should be strewn with the drifts and wrecks of lost beings? Is there not more benevolence in saving the many with the loss of the few, than in saving the few by the loss of the many? Let it not be assumed that God punishes sinners only for their own benefit. The angels who kept not their first estate, were cast down to hell. Sodom and Gomorrah were consumed by fire, and the inhabitants of the old world swept from the earth by a flood, not for their own benefit, but to be an example to those who afterward should live worldly. But the objector chooses to go back to the period in duration when Deity existed alone, and when there was no nature of things, and ask us why He so constructed the moral universe as to require that there should be unending misery of sins, as a means of promoting the general good. As our time this evening is not sufficient for the thorough discussion of this question, we shall for the present only answer by asking another, which is, Why did God so construct the moral universe, as to permit any suffering or punishment at all? Why is there sickness, or pain, or death? And if you say these are means of creating a greater good, then I ask, Is not God's aim Almighty? Why, then, did he not prepare all men for heaven without permitting sin and impenitence in any, to require sufferings in the present world, and disciplinary torment in the world to come, to prepare them for heaven? Could he not then have secured the good without the evil? If our objector answer these questions correctly, he will then have our answer to his.

Having noticed the principal topics which, in the discourse under consideration, immediately relate to the subject of future retribution, and passing by, as unimportant to the general argument, the preacher's notions in regard to the remission of sins, which he puts forth on his own responsibility, unsupported by a single text from the Bible, a book which he informs us he very profoundly reverences, but which it is presumed, from his not quoting it, contains nothing particularly favorable to this part of his theology,—passing by these notions, which he very pathetically opposes to the Scriptural doctrines of orthodoxy on the subjects of forgiveness of sins and salvation through the redemption of Jesus Christ, let us direct your attention to a matter which ought not to have been introduced into this discussion, and that is the preacher's own *dear self*. It is said of the great Roman orator, Cicero, that whatever might have been his theme of eloquence, he never forgot himself. Judging from the two last published discourses of our preacher, it appears that in this particular, at least, he resembles

this great master of Roman eloquence. We cannot but regard the coincidence in this instance, however, as unhappy. We had hoped to be able to discuss this subject with perfect courtesy towards the person of our opponent, still allowing ourselves perfect liberty to treat his arguments as in our judgment they deserve. But now, since the reverend gentleman has put *himself* up in the place of argument, we have no alternative but to treat himself as we would his arguments—as we think he deserves. If, then, there should appear in our remarks a want of courtesy, we shall regret to have to say, that this gentleman's want of respect for himself puts it out of our power to do justice to the cause of truth, and at the same time to maintain that blandness of manner which ought at all times, as much as possible, to appear in controversy, especially on the subject of religion.

1. The gentleman intimates, that on account of his publishing his views on “the subject of eternal punishment,” he and his adherents are assailed by a loud and violent storm of popular prejudice, and persecuting clamor, and that this discussion has exposed him to the scorn and contempt, the obloquy and the misrepresentation of a vast majority of those in this and other States of the Union, who profess to be the disciples of Christ. This is truly a lugubrious representation. It is hoped, not only for the honor of religion, but for the cause of humanity, that the preacher is mistaken in the facts. What are the facts? This gentleman, not satisfied with promulgating his theological hobbies from the pulpit, commences publishing his sermons on the “Institution of the Sabbath,” and on “Future Punishment,” in the *Picayune*, a very widely circulated secular newspaper, in which he caricatured, not only the doctrines of orthodoxy, but also the orthodox clergy. Yet nobody thought of terming this persecution. And now that his arguments are met, although in the severity of truth, yet generally by all parties in a calm and courteous manner, he cries out at the top of his voice, “Persecution—persecution?” Persecution, indeed! If the gentleman's cause is now bleeding under the lash of persecution, it is probably the first time in the history of Universalism in which it has been known to attain the honor of being persecuted. And now, the smarting of the thongs would be much assuaged if it could, by any possibility, be supposed to be endured for righteousness' sake. But this persecution, or whatever else it may be styled, is endured for what? Not for the testimony of Jesus, but for subverting the truth of God and opening the flood-gates of licentiousness. In our last war with England, at the time the City of Washington was about to receive a visitation of the enemies' troops, in our bands, sent to impede their march towards the capitol, was a gentleman, one of the very first among the orators, lawyers, and statesmen of our land, who, although as bold as a lion, was wholly deficient in military experience, clothed in official costume, with a shining blade dangling at his side, mounted on a mettlesome steed which had all the inexperience of his master, with none of his bravery. At the outset of the fight the horse took fright, ran off in spite of his master, and carried him hard on the enemies lines. He then took another fright, and endeavored to return. The master this time succeeded in reining him up, and turning around, he cursed the whole British army as *barbarians*, for shooting at a man when his horse was running away with him!!! If our friend of the Congregational Church mounts his theological charger, after having fired upon us all his grape-shot, canister, and bombs, and brandishing

his lances, takes the field as a polemic, we cannot but consider it very ungallant in him, because his own war-horse, not sufficiently tutored, becomes refractory, carries him disadvantageously upon the ranks of orthodoxy, to denounce us all as barbarians and persecutors, for not silencing our batteries until he should recover his steed from his fright, and obtain a more favorable position for another assault!

2. "But," he says, "it is one glorious peculiarity of my present position, that *those whose favor is important to me in a secular point of view*, cannot be overborne and driven like chaff before the loud and violent storm of popular prejudice and persecuting clamor." "A glorious peculiarity!" Universalism may be driven away as chaff before the storm, and its cause ruined, but, "glorious peculiarity," the parson's pot can still boil. In the midst of this terrible, cruel, and relentless persecution, which, it seems from his report, rose through our skies like the tempests of winter, in this "glorious peculiarity" there is abundant consolation. The preacher still has friends, who, whatever may become of Universalism, *will not see him want money!*

Oh, money! "glorious peculiarity!" The apostle Paul, when enduring persecution, looking at the things that are unseen, rejoiced that the light afflictions produced by persecution, worked out for him a far more and exceeding weight of glory. The apostle of Universalism in New Orleans, looking at the things that are seen, rejoices that the rage of persecution cannot exceedingly diminish the weight of his pocket! The apostle Peter, when smarting under the same rod, says, "Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God, commit the keeping of their souls to Him." The apostle of Universalism, when professing to be writhing under the same kind of suffering, says, "Wherefore let them who suffer, according to the principles of Universalism, commit their pecuniary concerns to them *whose favor is most important in a secular point of view*. This glorious peculiarity is not that in which Paul or Peter gloried! The generous citizens of New Orleans, who, under all circumstances of report, whether good or evil, sustain that gentleman as their pastor, really deserve something better than the weekly potations of moral poison which are served out to themselves, their sons, and their daughters, on every Sabbath morning. He who can find it in his heart to abuse such pure and liberal confidence, incurs no light responsibility.

3. He informs his hearers, that some more than a year since, when, in bad health, he supposed himself to be on the verge of eternity, the thought gave him *much pain*, that he had neglected to write and publish accounts of his researches on the subject of eternal punishment!

Lucian, in his dialogues, represents Jupiter's head to have become *pained* by the vast amount of wisdom which had conglomerated about the region of the brain. To be relieved, the god is said to have supplicated Vulcan to strike his head with an axe, to make an aperture for the escape of the excess of this accumulation. When Vulcan gave the blow, and opened the aperture from Jupiter's brain out leaped Minerva, the goddess of Wisdom, and the god then enjoyed relief from his pain. Since the issue of the "Discourses on Hell" and Retribution, it is hoped that the preacher's pain is materially relieved, although we regret to have to say, that in the wisdom issue of the affair, the analogy fails. It is thought, that, even by the gentleman's greatest admirers, it must be conceded, that on the subject of eternal

punishment, although it is confessed to be the fruit of some twenty-five years' study of the Scriptures, in the original Greek and Hebrew, there is not found in those two sermons one original idea. Every idea advanced in them, is to be met with in other Universalist writers. If the preacher had left the world without having spoken a word, or written a line on that subject, neither religion, nor letters, nor philosophy, nor even Universalism itself, would have lost one idea. On comparing the result with the amount of labor, reported by the author to have been employed in the research, we are reminded of these lines of the poet:—

The mountains labor'd with prodigious throes,
And lo! a mouse, ridiculous, arose.—*Francis' Trans. of Horace.*

4. The preacher appears anxious to obtain evidence for his doctrine, by in forming his hearers, that he was impelled to write, by a thought which occurred when he supposed himself to be on the confines of the eternal world; and that, while writing, he placed himself before the bar of God. Now, to minds imbued with the ideas of orthodoxy, there is something awfully solemn and deeply impressive in such representations; but, on Universalist principles, what do they mean? Almost nothing at all. This very man wholly denies a future judgment. How much meaning then, does he intend to convey to our minds, when he tells us, that in composing these discourses, he placed himself at the bar of God? He teaches the salvation of all men, and therefore, on his supposed death-bed, according to his principles, he could not have thought that the souls of any of his charge, or of any part of the human family, could be lost by his neglecting to write his views on the eternity of future punishment. Then, what great principle of benevolence could be the motive to the thought which he represents as productive of so much pain? These are all crocodile tears, or else the gentleman does not practically believe the doctrine which he preaches.

All this farce which the gentleman shows off, when he resents himself as his main and climax argument, indicates his own want of confidence in his other means of proof. How wretched must be the state of that man's mind, who feels himself driven before the power of truth, to resort to that defense which is tantamount to saying, "Have pity on me!—have pity on me! O ye, my friends!"

But let us not be deceived by such artifices. It makes doctrines no less errors, nor any more truth, that they are the result of long research, or that they are indulged in sickness, or on the supposed verge of eternity. Some men are ever learning, but never able to come to the knowledge of the truth, and go down to the chambers of death with a lie in their right hand. The man who, in the days of health and opportunity, abandons the scriptural, self-denying and holy principles of orthodoxy, and embraces the unscriptural, self-indulging and licentious principles of Universalism may, and probably will, even on the bed of death, be deserted by the Holy Spirit, so often resisted, insulted and denied, and thus, in this solemn and awful hour, left to the power of his own delusion, he may, in his infatuation, cling to his error like the drowning sailor to his anchor, although it can but drag him down deeper in the abyss of the unquenchable fire, and the undying worm.

But let us hope better things, while we thus speak. The true gospel of God is powerful. It may yet influence our wandering brother to return. The history of recent years abounds with glorious triumph of redeeming grace, in the return of a number of wandering brethren from the darkness of Universalism, to the light of the gospel of Christ. And so may it continue to be!—Amen.