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FUTURE PUNISHMENT;

OR,

THE UNIVERSALIST REFUTED.

No benevolent being delights in the suffering of others, for its own sake; but it is one of the clearest dictates of reason, that sin should be visited with punishment. Men may differ widely in opinion as to what sin is, in regard to many particulars, but every one sees and feels the propriety of punishing crimes, which he acknowledges to be such, in proportion to their evil. Indeed, it would be difficult to give a definition of sin which does not involve this idea; and a better definition of moral evil could not easily be given, than that *it is that which deserves punishment*. None are found, therefore, who, while they acknowledge a difference between virtue and vice, deny that the latter deserves punishment. And as all sinful acts are not of equal malignity or turpitude, it will be agreed by all, that, in justice, every one ought to receive according to his deeds; and that he whose sins are less, should not suffer equally with him whose sins are greater.

Whether the end of punishment is always the good of the sufferer, is disputed. On this point it may here be observed, that that intuitive perception, which exists in every mind, of the connection between sin and punishment, has no respect whatever to the good of the guilty person. Punishment, according to the clearest and simplest idea of its nature, is some pain or loss to the person who endures it. Suffering, which brings no injury to the sufferer, can scarcely be called punishment in a strict sense. In our intuitive, original judgment of the connection between sin and punishment, we regard nothing but the nature of the crime, the demerit of the act. No man needs to know more, or think

of more, in determining that punishment is deserved, than that a crime has been committed. We may conclude, or rather conjecture, that the reason why we are so constituted as to be under the necessity of forming such a judgment, is because sin obstructs the general good, or is injurious to others, as we see that this is its tendency; but this enters not into our original conception. It is a clear dictate of the human mind, that if there be a crime, some punishment is due to it; and when the sin contemplated is atrocious, there is not merely a dispassionate judgment that it ought to be punished, but an earnest demand, an indignant feeling, a vehement desire that the guilty perpetrator of the act should suffer condign punishment. These are the genuine feelings of nature, experienced by all men, in all countries, and in all ages; and no one is conscious, that when they rise in his breast, they are excited by a regard to the welfare of the guilty person. The truth is, his welfare is so far from being regarded, that, as far as he is considered as deserving of punishment, we do not consult his felicity; but, on the contrary, our judgment is, that his happiness ought to be lessened, or taken away, to the extent of his guilt.

Although we are so constituted as to perceive and feel that sin deserves punishment according to its evil, yet we have no precise standard of the *degree of punishment* which any sin deserves. Reason cannot tell how much pain is due to any particular offence: its clear perception goes no further than to the general proposition that it ought to be punished according to its desert, whatever that may be. Yet it has appeared exceedingly evident to most men, that although some degree of punishment follows sinful actions in this life, yet men do not receive here a full retribution for their crimes; since very often great transgressors are prosperous, and some of them die in the commission of atrocious sins. This has furnished the strongest of all the arguments which reason can discover, for a future state of existence. Indeed, admitting the fact that men are not rewarded and punished here according to their respective

deserts, the conclusion is inevitable, if God be just. But some moral Deists who could not deny the difference between virtue and vice, and that the former ought to be rewarded and the latter punished, held that virtue is its own reward, and vice its own punishment. That is, that good men, in the performance of good actions, and in the consequences which naturally follow them, have their reward; and that wicked men, in the remorse which attends the commission of sin, and in its effects, suffer all the punishment which they deserve. Therefore they maintained that there is no future existence to be expected or feared. This theory, however grateful it may be to the wishes of wicked men, as freeing them from all apprehension of a future judgment, has found but few abettors. The reason is, that the evidence against its truth is obvious. All men must see, if they have even a small share of discernment and impartiality, that crimes are not punished in this life according to their demerit.

But in our times, and in our country, a new phenomenon has appeared in the religious world. A sect has risen up, calling themselves UNIVERSALISTS, who profess to receive the Bible as the word of God, and yet utterly deny all future punishment. From early times there have been a few persons, among whom were some men of learning, who entertained the opinion that the punishment of the wicked in a future world would not be strictly eternal, or without end; but they all held that the impenitent would certainly suffer condign punishment after death. This scheme was defended on various principles, by different persons; and the arguments of the same persons were *not* commonly *consistent with one another*. At one time, they asserted that it would be *unjust* in the Ruler of the universe to make his creatures eternally miserable on account of the sins committed here in the course of a short life. But again, not satisfied with this ground, they resorted to the *mercy and goodness* of God as revealed in the Gospel, and endeavored to prove, that as God loved all his creatures equally, and

that as Christ died equally for all, all would certainly be saved, if not here, yet, without doubt, hereafter. These topics of argument were popular, and many would have been the converts to this system, had it not been for a number of plain and stubborn texts of Scripture, which these men, with all their critical efforts, found to be rather intractable. Most people, too, feared to trust their eternal salvation on the criticisms of fallible men. They did not know but that at last it might be found, that the words *everlasting* and *eternal* might mean endless punishment. Moreover, it was demonstrated by the defenders of the orthodox doctrine, that the two grand topics of argument used by the Universalists, were perfectly incompatible with each other: for if, in the nature of things, it was *unjust* to punish men with eternal misery, there was *no need for a Saviour* to come into the world and die, to prevent the Almighty from doing an act of flagrant injustice. Upon this principle, universal salvation would have occurred in due time, as a matter of course; and therefore the death of Christ was unnecessary, and there was no occasion for mercy or pardon. But if they built their argument on the principle of God's *mercy* and Christ's death, and ascribed the salvation of all men to free-grace, then it was manifest, that, had not this mediatorial scheme intervened, men must have perished for ever; for there is no mercy or grace in redeeming from misery to which men were never exposed. This, therefore, which was the principal argument, could not be employed without recognizing the *justice* of condemning men to endless punishment for their sins. But if that was the punishment to which men were condemned by the Law, no reason could be assigned why rejecters of the Gospel might not be left to suffer what was before due to them. Upon this ground, there was no presumption against the plain, literal interpretation of those texts which seem to represent future punishment to be eternal. And that which perplexed the subject still more, was the fact, that no punishment mentioned in the Scriptures, was so great as that

threatened against those who refused to believe the Gospel: whereas, according to this theory, the penalty of the law ought to be endless punishment, and the misery actually inflicted on those redeemed from the curse of the law, ought to be something very different. Indeed it was difficult to explain why they should suffer in the future world at all, if Christ died for them, so as to free them from the curse of the law; especially, it was almost incredible that they should suffer so long, as the phrases used in Scripture, limit them as they would, must import. It was also a perplexing point to determine whether those severe sufferings for *ages of ages*, were *penal*, *expiatory*, or merely *castigatory*. If they maintained the first, how could they reconcile it with their cardinal position, that Christ redeemed all men from the curse of the law? If, after all, sinners might be left to suffer part of the penalty, why not all? But if the sufferings of the wicked in a future world are held to be expiatory, then they are saved independently of Christ; or their expiation must be added to his: both of which suppositions are derogatory to the Saviour, and inconsistent with the radical principle of their system, that all are saved by grace, through the merit of Christ. And finally, if the punishment which sinners endure in hell is merely castigatory, why is it so long and so tremendously severe? This idea, however, is manifestly repugnant to the whole tenor of Scripture, which uniformly represents the sufferings of the damned as destructive, and never as salutary.

But even on the supposition that the punishment due to each sin was limited, and as short as any one might choose to make it; yet the punishment of the sinner might be justly without end, because, being a moral agent still, and under obligations to obey his Creator, from which he never can be released, he may be *continually contracting new guilt*; so that if one should suppose that the punishment of one sin was momentary, yet if the sinner in hell is every moment committing fresh sin, it does not appear how he can ever be released. There is no way by which this conclusion

can be evaded but by supposing that men and devils in hell are incapable of sinning, or that the sins which they commit there do not incur any additional punishment. But neither of these positions can be maintained. That men whose nature is sinful, and who by long custom have formed inveterate habits of sinning, when removed to another world should cease to commit sin, is an unreasonable supposition; and to suppose that sin, in a future state, does not incur the curse of the law, or the displeasure of God, is equally unreasonable. God, from the holiness of his nature, must hate sin wherever it appears, and he always acts agreeably to his nature. To suppose men in hell to be divested of their moral agency, would be to suppose them in such a condition as scarcely to be capable of suffering for their sins. No doubt the devil sinned when he tempted our first parents, and in all his other temptations; otherwise he could not be called a murderer from the beginning, and a liar, and the father of lies. Indeed, no one who believes that there is a devil, doubts that he is continually sinning and rebelling against God; and I think it can scarcely be doubted that he will suffer punishment for these sins. Then what reason can be assigned why the reprobate from among men will not continue to sin in another world, and to heap up fresh wrath upon their guilty souls?

Other formidable difficulties encumber this scheme of universal salvation. It was not easy to understand *how the inmates of this prison were to be released*: whether by a due course of law, they should come out after having suffered the full demand of justice, and after having paid the last farthing, as the Scriptures speak; or whether the offers of the Gospel should follow them there, and they should not be delivered until they cordially embrace the terms of salvation. Each of these plans has its peculiar difficulties. According to the first, Christ and his merits are completely set aside, and the sinner gets to heaven upon the strict principles of retributive justice; just as, among us, the convict comes out of the penitentiary and enjoys his liberty and

the rights of a citizen when he has served out his time, in pursuance of the sentence of the law. But if the sinner comes out of hell by believing the Gospel, then the Gospel must be preached in hell, but by whom does not appear. And its efficacy there must depend on the Holy Spirit, or on the freewill of the creature. If the former, the Holy Spirit (I tremble to write it) must be poured out in hell; if the latter, it remains to be shown that severe pain will make men willing to believe. But if it depend on our freewill, and this may resist for *ages of ages*, why not for ever? It may happen then, after all, according to this theory, that some sinners, by their obstinacy, will never be saved. And if efficacious grace rescues them, what reason can be assigned why that grace did not operate effectually in this world to prevent them from going to that infernal prison?

But the difficulties do not end here. Suppose the prison doors thrown open, and the law to make no further demands, how is the miserable *sinner to be fitted* for the pure and blessed society of heaven? Whatever hell may be in other respects, surely it is no school of virtue—no place to acquire holy habits, and relish for the praises of the heavenly hosts; unless ages of blasphemy should be thought to prepare a sinner for the exalted hallelujahs of heaven, or the society of devils to qualify for the society of angels and the spirits of just men made perfect; since it is true for ever, that *without holiness no man shall see the Lord*, and it is demonstrable that there can be no enjoyment in that pure and blessed place, for those whose minds are full of malignant passions. Universalists must therefore make it a part of their system to have the soul purified by regeneration and sanctification by the Holy Spirit. Or will they cast indignity on the office and work of the Holy Spirit, as before on that of the Redeemer, by maintaining that his peculiar work can be performed by the fire of hell? It is very remarkable that the holy Scriptures shed a clear light on the path which leads to future misery, but not a solitary ray on the way of *escape* from that dismal place. Yet, if this

is a doctrine of the Scriptures, it is marvellous that they have never mentioned the case of any one saved from hell, nor left us a single hint respecting the method of passing the wide gulf which separates the two places. When the rich man in torment begged Abraham for a drop of water, we surely might have expected some word of encouragement to the poor sufferer, if that venerable patriarch had known any thing of a passage from hell to heaven. But no; he seems to preclude all hope of the kind. "Between us and you," says he, "there is a great gulf fixed: so that they who would pass from hence to you, cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence." Call this discourse a parable, or what you will, it matters not: no word is spoken respecting a way of escape from torment. Nor is there, from the beginning to the end of the Bible, one word to inform us of the method of being delivered from hell, and prepared for heaven, for those who once go away *into everlasting punishment*.

There was still another defect in this scheme, which, I doubt not, has had, practically, more efficacy in exploding it than all the rest. It cannot be concealed, and perhaps will not be denied, that the *primary motive* which has led men to Universalism, is the desire of removing from the minds of worldly and wicked men, the dreadful apprehension of endless torments. I say worldly and wicked men, for the true Christian does not need this doctrine for his consolation. He is safe without it. Therefore the humble and devout Christian is not commonly, if ever, the advocate of this system. It was a doctrine invented for the lawless and disobedient; a doctrine to bring comfort, not to penitent believers, but to impenitent sinners, who are not willing to forsake their sins. Now, it is manifest that the old scheme of Universalism, which admitted not only of future punishment, but of a duration of punishment which might, in some sense, be called *everlasting*, did but half answer the purpose contemplated. When the abandoned profligate, the murderer, the robber, the debauchee, the defrauder of the or-

phan and widow, and every description of ungodly men, saw eternity approaching, supposing that they firmly believed their own tenets, the prospect before them was appalling. What, to lie for *ages of ages* in fire, or in torment comparable to fire! The thought was intolerable. This subject brings to recollection a fact which occurred more than thirty years ago. A popular preacher of universal salvation thought it necessary to guard his doctrine against the common objection, that its tendency was to encourage wicked men to continue in sin, whereupon he undertook to represent to his hearers how long future punishment might possibly last. And he took the illustration so often used by preachers who wish to give some faint idea of eternity, of a bird taking one grain of sand from the earth every thousand or million years, until the whole was taken away, and bringing it back, grain by grain, after the same intervals: "so long," said he, "may some atrocious and obstinate sinners have to suffer in hell." A young man who had become a convert to this flesh-pleasing doctrine, upon hearing this representation, was struck with horror. No idea of a duration *so long* had ever before entered his mind, and he began to be seriously concerned how he should escape from sufferings so tremendous. And it is said that his conviction of danger was only removed by a believing application to the Lord Jesus Christ. But, as might be expected, he was no longer an advocate for the salvation of impenitent sinners.

The reader, I think, will now be able to understand why Universalists* in this country—or at least some of them—have forsaken their old ground, and are now endeavoring to build on an entirely new foundation. They certainly avoid the last-mentioned difficulty of their predecessors. They now have made their doctrine palatable enough

* The Universalists of the old school have recently separated from those of the new school, and have taken the name of RESTORATIONISTS, leaving the old name UNIVERSALISTS to those who deny all future punishment.

to the worst of sinners. There is no danger that the new doctrine, by its terrors, will drive any poor sinner to seek refuge in a crucified Saviour. They preach no appalling doctrine of burning torments in hell for *ages of ages*. According to the new theory, ALL THAT THE MOST ENORMOUS SINNER HAS TO FEAR OR SUFFER, IS CONFINED TO THIS WORLD. Even if he should die blaspheming; by his own hand, as Judas; or in the act of giving command to commit complicated murder, as Herod, it matters not, all is safe: there is no judgment after death, no casting of soul and body into hell, except what takes place here; for as to hell itself, what is it, they ask, when critically explained, but the *valley of Hinnom*, outside of Jerusalem? Sinners, if this doctrine be true, may dismiss all their foreboding apprehensions. They may, indeed, "eat, drink, and be merry:" and if they will only make up their minds to bear the inconvenience which sin may bring upon them here, (and few are restrained from the indulgence of revenge, ambition, avarice, and lust, by this consideration,) they may give full swing to their corrupt inclinations, and be just as wicked as they please. And indeed, if there be no future reckoning, the principal source of uneasiness to the sinner here will be removed, namely, the fear of judgment to come. This is, indeed, a glorious doctrine for impenitent sinners. They may even set their Maker at defiance, for they have nothing to fear from him after this life. Nothing which they can do will either retard or hinder their eternal happiness.

I was perhaps wrong in calling this a new doctrine. It is as old as the fall of man, and was distinctly preached in the garden of Eden, when the tempter said to the woman, *Thou shalt not surely die*; and it has had a willing reception in the minds of many abandoned profligates and hardened apostates from the truth; but I do suppose they never anticipated the time when it should be gravely preached to them from the Bible, as the very essence of the Gospel. In this respect, then, it may be called *new*; for surely no sect before our times, who professed to receive the Scripture

in whole or in part, whether in the church or among heretics, ever held and taught such a doctrine as this.

What I propose further in this Tract is, to show that THIS DOCTRINE HAS NOT THE SHADOW OF EVIDENCE FROM THE WORD OF GOD TO SUPPORT IT.

But here, I confess, I feel a difficulty in the very commencement. What, am I called upon to prove that doctrine false, which maintains that the New Testament teaches that the impenitent sinner will not be punished for his crimes after death? Why, it would be almost as reasonable to be required to refute the assertion that there were neither words nor letters in the Bible, or to demonstrate that he spoke falsely who should declare that there was no such book in existence. Some things are so manifest, that it would be ridiculous to attempt their proof by reasoning. In fact, reasoning and argument are not intended for truths so plain that he that runs may read them. Who would undertake to refute the fool who should insist upon it that the sun did not shine at noonday? Much like this, it seems to me, is the task I have taken upon myself. When I first heard of men who professed to believe the Scriptures, and at the same time denied all future punishment, I knew not how to believe it. But since that time I have had evidence enough of their existence, and have had the humiliation to be convinced that many follow their pernicious ways. But it may be asked, Why do these deceivers connect their doctrine with the BIBLE? Would it not be much easier to take the ground of infidelity at once, and depend upon reason for support, instead of Scripture? It would seem so at first view, but this ground has been heretofore occupied without success. Infidelity is out of fashion, and as most people have a veneration for the Bible, they wish to avail themselves of these common sentiments in favor of the Scriptures; and by this means they get a handle for working on the credulity and prejudice of unstable souls, who are ever gaping after something new and strange in religion: "ever

learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth." By the perversion of the sacred Scriptures, also, they are able to promise their followers not only exemption from future misery, but positive felicity in heaven, which they could not do on the principles of infidelity.

Let us see, then, in what way the advocates of the complete and unconditional salvation of impenitent sinners attempt to defend their doctrine. The texts relied on are such as these :

1. "All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn unto the Lord ; and all the kindreds of the nations shall come and worship before him"—"all nations whom he hath made shall come and worship before him, and glorify his name." Now, this text has nothing to do with the subject, more or less. It is obviously a prophecy of the universal spread of the Gospel in the millennium, or glorious latter days of the church. This is a kind of universalism in which we rejoice to believe ; for it is predicted by Him who cannot lie, that the earth shall in those latter days be full of the glory of God. *Then, indeed, shall* "the ends of the earth turn unto the Lord, and all the kindreds of the nations come and worship before him." But I ask, What has this to do with the future salvation of those who never turn unto the Lord, nor render him any worship, but die in their sins ? Whether the language of this prophecy is to be taken in its most unlimited signification, is a matter of no consequence. If not one unconverted sinner should, in those blessed times of gospel grace, be found upon earth, that will have no effect on the condition of those who continue in their obstinate rebellion until death. The text asserts nothing respecting past times, nor any times that may intervene before the blessed era of universal grace shall commence.

2. "The righteous shall be recompensed in the earth ; much more the wicked and the sinner." This, I find, is a favorite text with the advocates of the doctrine under consideration. They have caught at the words *recompensed in the earth*, as if they furnished a proof that the sinner re-

ceived, in this world, a full retribution for his crimes. But they must be very short-sighted critics, or must be confident that their followers have no discernment at all, or they would never have selected this passage of Scripture as the corner-stone of their fabric. The plain meaning of the wise man in this text is, that in the righteous dispensations of divine Providence, the righteous man shall receive some recompense for his good deeds, and much more will the wicked and the sinner be visited, even here, more or less, with divine judgments, by which a holy God testifies his displeasure against their evil ways. But does the text assert that their whole recompense shall be received in this world? It does not. And if it did, it would contradict the whole tenor of Scripture. But these pretended critics, in their haste to prove that the wicked sinners receive their whole recompense in the earth, forget to notice that the words are spoken primarily of the righteous, and therefore, if the bare use of the word *recompense* proves that the wicked receive all their punishment here, then the righteous, as they receive their full recompense here, must expect no felicity hereafter. And so we have got round to the conclusion of the atheist, or moral deist, that there is neither good nor evil beyond the grave. And let them escape from this conclusion if they can. But this is not all. Their interpretation of this text utterly sets aside the Gospel of Jesus Christ. There is, according to this, no manner of need that Christ should die to atone for sin, or rescue the sinner from its punishment; for he bears the whole himself in the earth. He has his full *recompense*, and what need of a Saviour to interfere in his behalf?

3. A third text alleged in proof of the non-existence of future punishment is, "The Lord is good unto all, and his tender mercies are over all his works." Now it is plain, if this text furnishes conclusive proof that there will be no punishment of sin in the *future* world, it is equally as strong to prove that there is no punishment of sin in *this* world; and so it overthrows their fundamental principle, that sin

is recompensed here. If sin deserves punishment, it is no how inconsistent with God's goodness to inflict it; and it is as little incompatible with this amiable attribute to inflict deserved punishment in the future world as in the present. All that it is requisite to be assured of is, that the pain inflicted is just. Manifestly, then, nothing can be inferred from this, and similar texts, unless we will draw conclusions in direct opposition to plain facts, and also to principles acknowledged by those who use the argument. Declamation concerning the goodness and tender mercy of God may beguile the simple, but will have no effect on those who know that the name of Jehovah, as given by himself, is, "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abundant in goodness and truth—but *will by no means clear the guilty.*" Exod. 34 : 6, 7.

4. Another text adduced in favor of the salvation of all without future punishment, is, that Christ "must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet; the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." But what has this to do with the question, whether the impenitent sinner shall be punished in a future state? And who before ever thought, that, in order to subdue an enemy, and put him under one's feet, it was requisite that he must be made completely and everlastingly happy? The apostle Paul, in this chapter, is treating of the resurrection of the bodies of believers to immortality and glory, and says nothing of the unbelieving and impenitent. But even if we should admit, that by the *all made alive in Christ*, the whole of mankind should be understood, the only consequence that can legitimately be derived from the words is, that all men will be raised from the dead by the power of Christ: a doctrine clearly taught in other parts of Scripture. But because all men shall be raised from the dead, that they may be judged according to the deeds done in the body, it does by no means follow that they shall all be received into heaven; for some will rise, as our Saviour declares, *unto the resurrection of damnation.*

5. The only other text which I shall now consider, is,

that "all things shall be reconciled to God." There are many texts in the Bible in which general expressions of this sort are used; but it is very evident that they are not always intended to embrace every individual of the human family. If we should interpret them without limitation or qualification, wherever they are found, we should inevitably be involved in contradictions and absurdities. According to this mode of interpretation, it might be proved as easily that all men will be lost, as that all will be saved. Every good interpreter of the Bible feels the necessity of comparing Scripture with Scripture, and deducing such a meaning from each passage as shall not be repugnant to the plain dictates of the Spirit in other places. Because it is said that *the whole world lieth in wickedness*, we do not so understand the apostle, as if he meant to teach that every man in the world was lying in wickedness, and that there was no Christian sanctified in part; but this is spoken of the greater number of men, or rather of the heathen nations, who are commonly called the *world* in the New Testament.

But we will now adduce TEXTS OF SCRIPTURE SUFFICIENT TO CONVINCE ALL CANDID INQUIRERS, THAT THE DOCTRINE OF UNIVERSALISTS IS IN UTTER CONTRADICTION TO THE WORD OF GOD.

1. Our blessed Saviour says, "Fear not them that kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." The same awful truth is repeated in Luke: "But I will forewarn you whom you shall fear: fear him, which, after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell." Matt. 10: 28; Luke 12: 5. Here *the casting into hell* comes after the death of the body, and must therefore mean future punishment beyond the grave. The truth is so plain, that argument or comment seems to be superfluous: it cannot be made more evident. Feeling, however, a curiosity to know what gloss these deniers of all future punishment could put on a text so plain, we turned to a pamphlet written by one

of their most popular preachers, and found that by *being cast into hell*, he understands, being thrown into the valley of Hinnom, near Jerusalem. The body, indeed, after being killed, might have been cast into this valley, but how the soul could be punished in this valley, he has not explained; nor has he assigned any reason why being cast into this valley is so much more fearful than having the body killed by men. Such an interpretation is too absurd to require refutation.

2. "The hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall come forth: they that have done good, to the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, to the resurrection of damnation." John 5:29. These are also the words of him who is TRUTH itself, and they teach as clearly as words can teach, that after the bodies of the wicked have lain for a time in the grave, they will come forth *unto the resurrection of damnation*. Is not this future punishment? What evasion can the most perverse ingenuity find here? They tell us, that by *graves* we are not to understand literal graves, and that the death here spoken of is a *moral*, not a *natural* death. Well, then, what is the import of the passage? What, according to this interpretation, is the meaning of the *resurrection to damnation*?

3. "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." "These shall go away into everlasting punishment, and the righteous into life eternal." Matt., ch. 25. Is there no reference to future punishment in these solemn declarations of our Lord? If not, then there is no reference to the future blessedness of the righteous. If ten thousand persons were set to read this portion of Scripture, and each to declare what he believed to be the plain import of the words, can it be believed that there would be found one individual who would doubt whether or not future punishment was threatened here? Certainly not, unless he had been perverted by the false glosses of Universalist teachers.

One of them, whose words are now before me, calls this a *parable*: "It is supposed," says he, "to furnish an argument in favor of endless happiness on the one hand, and ceaseless perdition on the other. But is there any thing said in the parable about either endless happiness or ceaseless misery? No, there is not." What unblushing assurance must the man possess, who could allow himself to utter and print such a declaration. With such, all reasoning is useless; and if Scripture testimony, of the clearest and most solemn kind, can be set aside by a positive denial of the plain, common meaning of the words, surely, it is vain to cite Scripture in proof of any position. But these opposers of the truth, when a text is too evidently against their doctrine, and when they are not satisfied with their own attempts at perverting its meaning, do not scruple to call its authenticity in question. Thus, in regard to this text, the writer already referred to, after denominating the whole passage *a parable*, and denying that it contains the doctrine of endless happiness and ceaseless misery, apparently dissatisfied with his own exposition, says, "If Mark, Luke, and John believed that Christ taught the awful doctrine of endless woe and misery to any part of the human race, why did none of them record the parable? But neither the parable of the *tares*, nor any part of the 30th chapter of Matthew, is to be found in either of the other evangelists. If they had known any thing about these parables, and believed that they contained proof of so awful a doctrine as that of ceaseless perdition, would they have passed them over in silence?" Here the disregard to the authority of Scripture is manifest. Is not the clear testimony of one inspired apostle sufficient to establish a doctrine? A great part of what is read in the gospel of John, is not recorded by any of the other evangelists; must it, on this account, be rejected? And if the passage does not teach the doctrine of future punishment, why are they so solicitous to get rid of it?

4. Our Lord, in the explanation of the parable of the

tares, Matt. 13 : 40-43, says, "As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so shall it be in the end of the world. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth." And in the parable of the net cast into the sea, in the same chapter, Matt. 13 : 47-50, our Lord, in the application, says, "So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth." In these passages the punishment threatened is to be inflicted by the ministry of angels at *the end of the world*, and must, of course, be future punishment. And as this tremendous punishment of being cast into a furnace of fire, is threatened to all workers of iniquity, it must be endured after the resurrection. There is here no need of exposition. Every word is as plain as it is terrible. There is no room for plausible evasion. The Universalist may say, as in the former case, that there is no account of this in the other evangelists. If that was an argument of any force, we might as well lay aside the Bible; but one "thus saith the Lord" is enough: the testimony of one inspired apostle will satisfy every one who believes in the inspiration of the sacred Scriptures. But although these parables are not repeated by the other evangelists, the same doctrine of future punishment is inculcated with equal clearness by them all, as will appear by the following testimonies.

5. Mark, chapter 9, records a discourse of Christ, in which the certainty and perpetuity of future punishment are taught as explicitly and strongly as they can be in words. "And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched; where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." And to give emphasis to this awful declaration, our Lord

repeats it three several times. Surely, it becomes us to tremble at the word of the Lord, and to obey his voice, by denying ourselves and repenting of our sins, rather than to invent such glosses as would make him speak in a way totally unworthy of a divine teacher.

6. Our next testimony for future punishment shall be taken from the gospel of Luke, chapter 16 : 19–31. Here we have set before us the different conditions of men in the state after death, in the case of two persons—the rich man and Lazarus. It matters not whether this be considered the history of real personages, or a parable ; the doctrine inculcated is the same. If the plainest words can teach any thing, we are here taught that, to some, the state after death is a state of misery—hopeless, excruciating misery. The man here spoken of, is expressly said to be dead and buried ; and what our Lord testifies that he suffered, was after his death and burial. “The rich man also died, and was buried ; and in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments.” The dreadful nature of his suffering is strongly described in the words which he is represented as employing in his address to Abraham : “Send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue ; for I am tormented in this flame.” And the hopelessness of his miserable condition may be learned from Abraham’s answer : “Besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed : so that they which would pass from hence to you, cannot ; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence.” If this discourse of our Lord does not teach that there is misery to some men after death, then we may give up all hope of learning any thing from his plainest and most pointed discourses.

7. The evangelist John also records clear and frequent testimonies of this doctrine. We have already cited one testimony from him. We give another : “He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life ; and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.” John 3 : 36. Here there is no room for any doubt

on account of the import of particular terms. That the life here spoken of, is life in a future state, cannot be denied, for it is expressly called *everlasting life*; and it is expressly asserted, that unbelievers shall not partake of this life. Now, if they are deprived of life in the future world, they are deprived of happiness; there is no medium between life and death, happiness and misery. Unbelievers must, therefore, be miserable in the future world. And this seems to be asserted strongly in the last words quoted: "And the wrath of God abideth on him." These words do not merely signify that the final unbeliever is under wrath while in this world, but that this is an *abiding* state. It is the contrast to the possession of eternal life. While the wicked are in this world, they are, indeed, under a sentence of wrath, but the execution of this wrath is reserved for a future state. The greatest sinners and most obstinate unbelievers live in ease and pleasure here, and do not suffer the wrath under the sentence of which they lie. But it will *abide upon them*, and the vials of this divine wrath will be poured out upon them to all eternity.

8. "I said, therefore, that ye shall die in your sins; and whither I go, ye cannot come." John 8 : 21. With this may be connected several other testimonies in which it is clearly implied, that the wicked cannot escape future punishment: "Strive to enter in at the strait gate; for many shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able." "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" "For what is a man profited, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" Luke 13 : 24; Heb. 2 : 3; Matt. 16 : 26.

9. "But the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. Whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come." "There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it." Matt. 12 : 31, 32: 1 John, 5 : 16. But if there is no future punishment, then this sin must be forgiven; or forgiveness is of no consequence to obtain future happiness.

10. "But woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed; it had been good for that man if he had not been born." Matt. 26 : 24. But if there will be no future punishment, Judas will fare as well as the greatest saint. Indeed, his case was more eligible than that of any of the apostles; for they lived in the midst of persecution, while he was enjoying pleasure. How, then, could it have been good for him never to have been born? According to Universalists, he has an eternity of bliss before him, and therefore, if he had suffered a thousand ages of years, it would be an infinite benefit to be born.

11. Let us now attend to a few testimonies from the apostle Paul. "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord." Rom. 6 : 23. Here the just rules of interpretation require us to consider death, as it stands in contrast with eternal life, to be *eternal death*.

"For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ; whose end is destruction." Phil. 3 : 18, 19. This destruction, which comes at the end of the sinner's course, cannot be natural death; for to this all are subject, the friends as well as the enemies of the cross. It is certainly a destruction which is peculiar to the wicked, and as it is their *end*, must be future punishment, or the second death.

"And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God? Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? but after thy hardness and impenitent heart, treasurest up wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will render to every man according to his deeds: to them who, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, and honor, and immortality, eternal life; but unto them that are contentious, and obey not the truth, but

obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil ; of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile ; but glory, honor, and peace, to every man that worketh good ; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek ; for there is no respect of persons with God. For as many as have sinned without law, shall also perish without law ; and as many as have sinned in the law, shall be judged by the law." Rom. 2 : 3-12. The apostle is here laying down the principles on which the whole world will be judged at the last day ; and can there be a doubt in any mind, that the wicked are here threatened with future punishment ? "When the Lord shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power, when he shall come to be glorified in his saints." 2 Thess. 1 : 7-10. The punishment here threatened is of the nature of vengeance—*taking vengeance* : it is to be inflicted on all who obey not the Gospel when the Lord shall come ; that is, at the day of judgment. The duration of the punishment is *everlasting*. In whatever sense this word is understood, the argument is equally conclusive in favor of future punishment. No testimony can be made more direct and explicit to prove future punishment than these words of Paul. We should be at a loss, if required to frame a declaration which should fully express the doctrine of the future punishment of the wicked, to invent one more clear and positive.

"For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. For we know Him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." Heb. 10 : 26, 27, 30, 31. Perhaps we have adduced more texts than are

necessary ; for if one were to rise from the dead and testify that there was a dreadful hell, these Universalists would not believe him. They will not believe Moses and the prophets ; yea, they refuse to give credit to the repeated declarations of Christ himself and his inspired apostles. It is to be feared, that some of them are of the number whom God hath given up “to believe a lie” in just judgment, because they were unwilling to obey the truth. In regard to such, our labor will be altogether in vain ; but there are many others who have been induced to lend a favorable ear to this flesh-pleasing doctrine, who have yet some respect for the holy Scriptures, and whose consciences are not yet seared as with a hot iron. To pluck some of these as brands from the burning, may be practicable. But our chief hope is, to secure those from falling into the snare of the devil who are exposed to this soul-destroying heresy.

THE LEGITIMATE AND PRACTICAL CONSEQUENCES OF THIS DOCTRINE are of such an appalling nature, that if the propagators of it were not reckless of consequences, they would pause in their course, and hesitate about casting around them firebrands, arrows, and death. Greater mischief cannot be done to men, than by disseminating among them such erroneous opinions as remove from their minds those salutary restraints which preserve them from giving indulgence to sin, or such as lull them into a false security, and persuade them to neglect attention to that preparation which is necessary to fit them for death and judgment. And if any opinion is dangerous above all others to the best interests of men, it is the one which I have refuted in this Tract. Among the many evil consequences of this doctrine I would mention the following.

1. *It does violence to the holy Scriptures*, and perverts the plain and obvious meaning of numerous passages which speak of the future punishment of impenitent sinners. And if in one case we may thus set aside the express and repeated declarations of God, to accommodate the doctrine to our

own reason or inclinations, the volume of inspiration is dishonored and rendered useless; for upon these principles we may reject every fundamental truth of the Bible. If the doctrine of future punishment is not taught in the Bible, neither is the doctrine of future happiness; for they are commonly inculcated in the same passages, and in similar language.

2. If it be true that sin is not punished in the future world, then it would follow that God exercises *no moral government over the world*; for in the present life the wicked often live at ease and are prosperous, while the virtuous are afflicted. This doctrine goes far to annihilate all difference between virtue and vice, for we must judge of these according to the treatment which they respectively receive from the Supreme Ruler; but if there be no future punishment, there is no strong mark of disapprobation set on vice. A doctrine which involves such a consequence as this, must be false and dangerous.

3. If this doctrine should become general, *human society could not exist*. Like atheism, to which it is near akin, its malignant tendency is not fully seen while society at large is under the influence of a contrary belief. But take away from the minds of all men the fear of judgment and eternity, and this world becomes a scene of violence—an aceldama. All confidence among men would be destroyed; all the bonds of civil society would be severed. Do not say that vice might be coerced by the civil law—a vain hope. Where the whole mass is corrupt, laws are useless. What means of ascertaining the truth in courts of justice will remain, without which justice cannot be administered, if no man fears the consequences of perjury? Suppose a man who has no fear of judgment, to be solemnly called upon to declare the truth in a case where his own honor and interest, or that of some friend, is at stake; what is there to prevent him from perjuring himself? Or if he can gratify secret malice, by swearing against the life of an enemy, what shall restrain him? He may reason with himself thus: “I know

this is a wicked act, but it will serve my purpose, it will enable me to gratify my revenge; I have nothing to fear. Detection here is impossible, and hereafter I am sure of heaven, do as I will." What security should we have that our food and medicine would not be mingled with poison in every house? The men who propagate such doctrines, are manifestly pursuing a course destructive to the peace and good order of society. I would fully as soon have an atheist to bear witness against me on oath, or to sit in judgment as a juror, as one of these new-fangled Universalists.

4. If there is no future punishment, *the wicked*, who are driven away in their wickedness, are *happier than the righteous* who are preserved to suffer. The wicked antediluvians who perished in the flood, had a better portion and a richer reward than Noah; for they all escaped the troubles of life and went to heaven, while Noah and his family were subjected to innumerable hardships for some hundreds of years. The inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah were better off, though they were destroyed by fire from heaven, than righteous Lot, who escaped; for they were released at once from all pain and sorrow, but his afflictions were many. The wicked Canaanites were too bad to live upon earth, and therefore God enjoined it on Joshua to extirpate them; but not too bad to be admitted at once to heaven without any repentance or sanctification! Their lot was, therefore, greatly preferable to that of the Israelites, who endured many toils and sufferings. Upon this theory, Judas was rather benefited than injured by his base and ungrateful crime of betraying his Lord, and by his suicide. Indeed, if there be no future punishment, and the next world be better than this, not only will suicide be innocent and beneficial, but there can be no great harm in *murder*. It only ushers a fellow-creature into superior bliss a little earlier than if he were left to die a natural death.

5. Upon the supposition that this doctrine is true, *repentance is useless; neither is there any need of sanctification*. Heaven is the sinner's *right*, without any condition or prep-

aration. How the ungodly will be pleased with the place and its exercises, is another question. Whether dying will take away their disrelish for devotional exercises, is not explained. But there is no need of undergoing the sorrows of repentance for sin. This the Universalist acknowledges. A writer before referred to declares, that "there is not the least occasion for solicitude about salvation, neither is it in our power to promote or hinder it." We did suppose that the advocates of this doctrine would have pleaded for *repentance*, which is nothing else but a turning from sin to God, as useful to prevent evil in this life; but we find that in this we mistook their views, for the same writer asserts, concerning the evils which sin produces here, that "these consequences are inevitable, and cannot be escaped, even by repentance." What these men can preach, or why they should preach at all, we do not see.

6. Upon this theory there is *no need of religion of any kind*: no connection exists between religion and salvation; between the man who loves and serves God, and him who hates him and despises his service. Atheism is as good as piety; idolatry and heresy as safe a way to heaven as truth and righteousness. *The one thing needful is, to be fully persuaded that nothing is needful.* If men are only informed that there will be no future reckoning, no condemnation of the wicked, no future punishment, they need know nothing else; and whether they believe it or not, all are in the safe way to heaven! We presume that the principal preaching of Universalists is on the single point, that the wicked have nothing to fear on account of their sins; for why should they disturb their hearers about believing or doing other things? But the benefits of this system will, in the future world, be as fully enjoyed by those who oppose the doctrine, as by those who believe and preach it.

7. This doctrine encourages men to continue in sin, by *removing all fear of future judgment and punishment.* In this respect its tendency is as bad as atheism itself; for the most impious denial of a divine Being cannot promise more

to its foolish votaries than exemption from judgment and future punishment. This species of Universalism is fraught with the very worst poison of atheism. It tells the sinner, that, let him act as wickedly as he will, or as he can, there is no fear of future misery. Indeed it is in some respects worse than atheism, for it not only promises exemption from punishment, but the reward of eternal happiness to the impenitent sinner. It says to the atrocious murderer and cruel assassin, "You need fear no evil hereafter: though you should die in the commission of the foulest deeds, heaven, with all its glory and happiness, is yours." Is not this shocking to every honest mind? And what must the effect be on profane, cruel, and abandoned profligates? How pernicious its influence in the hour of temptation! Suppose an inexperienced youth in a place of trust to have imbibed this doctrine. An opportunity occurs of defrauding his employer of a vast sum of money, with the prospect of escaping detection. Well, what shall hinder him from enriching himself at once? If the belief of a future judgment were now to rise in his mind, he would be ready, like Joseph, to say, "How can I do this great evil, and sin against God?" But having no apprehension of any judgment to come, and sure of heaven let him do what he will, he is led into temptation, and is deprived of every consideration which would lead him to resist it. Even the faint hope that there is no future punishment, has a powerful effect in leading corrupt men to commit atrocious crimes, although this hope is contrary to all that they have ever been taught; but who can calculate the influence of a persuasion that there is no future punishment for the greatest crimes, derived from men who pretend to be preachers of the gospel? Doubtless a large portion of the most abominable crimes that ever were perpetrated, owe their existence to a secret belief or hope of the truth of the very doctrine which Universalists preach.

8. It is a horrible consequence of this doctrine, that it puts it in the power of the sinner to *set God himself at de-*

fiance with impunity. The malignant, ungrateful wretch, instead of praising, may blaspheme the great Jehovah every day of his life, and may die with horrid blasphemies on his lips, and yet he shall be rewarded with everlasting happiness! Indeed, as all the punishment of sin is supposed to be in this life, when a sinner commits some horrible crime in the last moments of his life, as in a late case where a man first shot an innocent person, and then blew out his own brains, where or how will he receive his due punishment? His death is but the pang of a moment, and if there be no retribution for such crimes in the government of God, it cannot be believed that he is a righteous moral Governor.

9. But *how are sinners prepared* for the enjoyment of the pure and elevated pleasures of heaven? The Scriptures everywhere teach the necessity of a change of heart, before sinners can enjoy the kingdom of God; and this is not an arbitrary appointment, but arises from the nature of the case. Reason and experience assure us, that there must be a congruity between the state of the mind and those objects from which it derives its pleasure. Where no such suitability exists, there is a natural incapacity for that particular species of pleasure. This is a fact so evident and so well understood, that it stands in no need of illustration. How, then, we ask, can men of depraved habits, all whose moral sensibilities have been blunted by a long course of sinning, relish the pure and sublime joys of heaven without a change? Such men cannot endure the mention, much less the participation of holy exercises while here; nothing is so much the object of their detestation as spiritual religion. And there is no ground for the opinion, that death can make any radical change in the moral character and feelings. The wicked, therefore, who die in impenitence, never can go to heaven; and if admitted, they could have no real enjoyment themselves, while they would disturb the harmony and interrupt the felicity of that high and holy place.

10. This doctrine renders *totally unnecessary the medi-*

ation and atonement of Jesus Christ. For if the sinner be fully recompensed for his sin here, what need of a Saviour to die for those sins, the punishment of which he himself endures in this world?

But if the Universalist should choose to rest his doctrine on the ground that sinners would have suffered hereafter if Christ had not atoned for their sins, I would ask how long they would have suffered? Or in other words, what is the original penalty of the law of God? Now, if it can be shown that any future punishment in the Scriptures is threatened, it will be easy to show that the rejecters of the gospel, or impenitent sinners, will suffer that punishment; for what can be plainer, than that the heaviest penalties, and those most clearly and repeatedly expressed in the word of God, are those denounced by Christ against them who refuse to believe his doctrine? If, then, men were exposed to any future punishment before Christ came, it is most evident that the impenitent are still exposed to the same, and greater. Therefore the Universalist doctrine cannot rest on this ground. And it is clear as any thing can be, that, according to this system, there was no need of a Saviour. Christ came without an errand, and shed his blood for no purpose, which is blasphemy.

In conclusion, I would solemnly warn all who may cast their eyes on these pages, to beware of this pernicious doctrine, and not to encourage those who go about the country preaching this soul-destroying error. Only suppose for a moment that their doctrine is false, and in what a deplorable condition are their disciples! How dreadful their mistake! These deceivers endeavor to seduce men from the doctrine of Christ by a great show of philanthropy and benevolence. They call the doctrine of endless punishment cruel and unmerciful, and rail against pious and orthodox ministers who hold it and preach it, as monsters of cruelty. This is a cheap way of showing benevolence. It is just that sort of philanthropy which an unfaithful watchman would exhibit.

who should pertinaciously insist that there was no danger near, even when the enemy was in sight, and boast of his kindness because he would not suffer the citizens to be awakened from their sleep; or the physician, who should lay claim to the character of peculiar benevolence, because, when a pestilential disease was destroying the lives of the citizens, he should obstinately maintain that no such disease existed, and that every measure recommended for preventing its extension, or curing the sick, was unnecessary. The belief that many millions of our race are living in misery, and that all of the hundreds of millions now on earth will, in a short time, be cut off by death, is no evidence of a want of philanthropy. Benevolence does not consist in holding and teaching that men are liable to little or no misery, but in active exertions to relieve them from that evil which they suffer, and to arouse them to flee from the misery which impends. Which, then, I ask, are the friends of men; they who endeavor to lull them into a fatal security in regard to the future, or those who faithfully warn them of their danger? Are they to be reckoned the truly benevolent, whose doctrine tends to encourage men in sin, and to induce them to think that repentance and reformation are useless; or they who labor to bring their fellow-creatures to forsake sin, and live piously and justly? Suppose the latter even to be mistaken, their error is on the safe side, and will hurt no body: but if the Universalist should be in error, what imagination can conceive the dreadful consequences of his mistake? They say that the doctrine of endless punishment is "cruel and unmerciful;" but this is not true, unless it is unjust—and this they cannot prove. It is customary with them to appeal to the tender feelings and sympathies of their hearers, and to conclude that if a parent would not inflict such a punishment on his children, much less will God on his creatures. But this is a false method of reasoning. An amiable child shudders at seeing a criminal suffer the just punishment of the law, but this is no argument against the punishment of the guilty.

It would be easy to persuade a set of convicted felons that the law which condemned them was cruel and unmerciful, because they are deeply interested persons, and do not take into consideration the important ends to be answered to the public by their punishment. Thus wicked men are easily brought to believe that the penalties threatened in the Scriptures are cruel and unmerciful; but such opinions ought to have no weight with the candid and impartial inquirer after truth. All comparisons on this subject fail; for neither parents, nor civil rulers, nor any other beings in the universe, except the Supreme Ruler, are under obligations to punish sin according to its merit. "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord." No other is capable of estimating the evil of sin, and of inflicting punishment in exact proportion to its evil. If reasoning from the sympathies of our nature, and especially from the tender feelings of parents, were of real force, it would be as conclusive against the judgments of God on individuals and communities in this world, as against future punishment. For what benevolent parent would subject his children to the innumerable forms of evil and suffering which are everywhere witnessed in our world? How many perish by shipwreck, by pestilence, by earthquakes, by oppression, by war, and by persecution! But because a kind earthly father could not endure to see his children suffer such things, must we conclude that it is an unrighteous thing in the Governor of the universe to recompense the wicked by such judgments? Or will these men deny that God has any thing to do in bringing these evils upon men?

How is it possible that reasonable men, with the Bible in their hands, can believe in the doctrine of Universalists? If they would only listen to the dictates of conscience, they never could think that there was no future punishment for sinners of the deepest dye. The very heathen, as many of them as believe in a future state, hold the doctrine of future punishment for the crimes of a wicked life. There never before was a sect of heretics who altogether denied the doc-

trine of future punishment. Even the Mohammedans maintain the doctrine of eternal punishment. Most Unitarians, however they may hesitate about everlasting punishment, teach the doctrine of future punishment. The maintenance of a tenet so absurd and dangerous, seems to have been reserved for these last times, and is even now almost entirely confined to these United States. It seems to be the most desperate effort of the father of lies. As we said before, this doctrine had its origin in paradise, and was the very doctrine by which the grand adversary murdered our whole race; but never, until recently, could any number of men be found of sufficient hardihood to avow it as the main article of their creed. It contains within itself the virulent poison of all other errors and heresies; yea, it leaves in the distance every form of infidelity. Atheism, black and blasphemous as it is, is not so dangerous as this doctrine; for it as completely removes all restraint from the sinner as atheism, assuring the vilest sinners that they have nothing to fear hereafter; and not only so, but promising them the rich reward of eternal life. The prevalence of this soul-destroying error, in some parts of our land, is truly alarming. Every patriot, as well as every Christian, is bound to use his best endeavors to check the progress of an error fraught with so many dreadful consequences.