

we but imitate God; it follows therefore that the doctrine of endless punishment is false! And not only does this follow; the text clearly demonstrates that God is not only negatively good, but that he is positively good—he blesses his enemies; and, according to our author's 'stereotyped argument,' which he employs again in winding up his remarks on this text—God being immutable and without variableness, he can do nothing less than bless them to all eternity!

It is but vain to seek exceptions to the truth of our text, as Mr. Hall does, by referring to the judgments of God in the earth. He is our Father, and being infinite in Wisdom and Goodness, we are bound to believe that in all his judgments and inflictions of punishment upon his offspring he is actuated by the kind and benevolent feeling of a Father. It is impossible that God should be influenced in his government of mankind by any other feelings than such as are strictly in accordance with parental love, or that he should ordain or permit an evil which does not eventually terminate in a greater good.—Just so certain as God is God, just so certain are his chastisements and punishments intended for good, even to those who suffer them! For if it be true that God our Father is possessed of unerring Wisdom, almighty Power, and infinite Goodness, it is just as impossible for him to ordain afflictions which are not on the whole for our good, as it is for him to lie, swear himself, or do any other act impossible to his nature! We are short-sighted mortals at best; and shall we say, because we do not understand the judgments of God—because we cannot 'see the end from the beginning,' as he does—because we cannot tell, and do not know, how such afflictions and punishments can result in good, or be consistent with paternal benevolence—that therefore they must be evils? Shall we thus measure the designs and providential dealings of the Almighty by our own ignorance? Such conduct is as unphilosophical as it is irreverent and impious! We are bound to admit the above conclusions, or deny the Attributes and Perfection of the Deity!

But let us notice Mr. Hall's 'stereotyped argument' a moment. On page 44 he argues again, that as God 'is just as good now as he ever will be,' and as he allows thousands to live and die, wretched, miserable and degraded, and 'go into eternity a heap of moral corruption—unless he should become more benevolent in future than he is now, they must remain damned eternally.' Here it is again! the same old three and sixpence! According to this we may just as well say that as God allows all men to live and die in this world, subject to sickness, pain and death, and finally to 'go into eternity a heap of physical corruption'—therefore, 'unless he should become more benevolent in future than he is now, they must necessarily remain in this state eternally!' Consequently, there can be no resurrection, no immortality, no incorruptible, spiritual and heavenly body—neither for the righteous nor the wicked! And, as God allows men to live through this world, and die, and go into eternity untripped of justice, that is, without receiving a 'just recompense of reward'—unless he becomes more just in the future than he is now, they must remain so eternally! Consequently

there will be no future judgment nor endless punishment. Thus has our friend formed a weapon which cuts his own throat; yes, I may say which takes his head clean off! I know this 'stereotyped argument' would be his ruin yet! Poor man! if there be no future Judgment, nor endless punishment, he is ruined! his hopes are vain!

Now according to this argument one of three things must be true: 1st either God punishes men in this world for their sins; or 2d, if he does not in this world, he will not in the next; unless, 3d, he undergoes a change in the future from what he is now. Here Mr. Hall is compelled to hang upon one or the other horn of an inflexible dilemma—or rather trilemma, 'either of which will gore him to death.' You may, therefore, without the least hesitation, set this down as 'Mr. Hall against himself.'

But in the very next paragraph he says 'God loves his enemies as long as there is any prospect of their salvation—but when they become incorrigible, he gives them over to believe a lie and be damned—which he would not do if he continued to love them.' Now we might believe this, had we any evidence other than Mr. Hall's word. I should like to know where he obtained his information, and who authorized him to disclose the fact to the public! God loves the sinner as long as there is any prospect—any hope of his salvation! I thought God was as wise now as he ever will be: but it seems according to this that he grows wiser occasionally! At one time he thinks there is a prospect of a sinner's salvation—he hopes that he may be able to save him; but by and by he sees that he was mistaken—loses all hope, and then instead of continuing to love him, turns round and hates him!—This is ascribing a pretty character to the Almighty! Talk about a Being who is infinite in Wisdom and Knowledge, and who holds all Power in his own hands, being deceived in regard to 'prospects!' God hopes, indeed! What daring, impious folly to thus bring the Infinite Jehovah down upon a level with mortal man! and all too, for the purpose of avoiding the force of a plain text of Scripture! 'The man who can thus argue must have but a very limited idea of God, to say the least of it.

But says our author, God does not 'continue to love them.' Then of course he is 'changeable,' 'mutable,' and is not the same yesterday, to day, and forever.—The reader will recollect that Mr. Hall's 'stereotyped argument' rests for its whole force upon the fact that God is immutable and unchangeable: thus, 'God does not save every body now, therefore he never will, for he is immutable—will never change,' &c. But here you perceive he abandons his fortress. Fancying there is no enemy near, he comes out, and takes new ground! God changes now: he ceases to love those 'enemies' he once loved! Thus Mr. Hall virtually destroys his great, his 'stereotyped' argument himself by assuming a position, which if true, contravenes the very point upon which the whole force of his argument rests!—He not only allows that God is often deceived in regard to 'prospects,' but that when he discovers there is no more 'prospect' of loving his 'enemy,' he changes

about, and takes another course! Yes, he loves the sinner while he thinks (perhaps!) he can save him; but when he finds out his mistake—when he discovers there is no more prospect, he gives him over, and ceases to love him! Is this your boasted champion! This the man to demolish Universalism! Fie on such a champion! You may mark this down as another example of our friend Hall against himself.

Having seen that our author's attempt at argument has been a complete failure, I must be allowed again to claim this text as 'strong ground in favor of Universalism.' We are commanded to love our enemies—to do good unto them; and bless them, because God does so. He blesses all alike—'makes his sun to shine on the evil and on the good, and sends rain upon the just and the unjust.' God is unchangeable; he is never deceived by 'prospects' and circumstances; whom he loves now, and blesses, he will always love and bless. And when we shall appear in the bright world to come, when 'both the just and the unjust' shall be born from the dead, and shall stand forth in the habiliments of Immortality, we shall still see and know and feel, but to a greater extent, that God is good unto all, and blesses all. And though there may, as doubtless there will be, diversities and degrees in holiness; some may be in advance of others—more exalted and glorious, yet all will be happy according to their capacity and measure of enjoyment, God's sun of righteousness and glory will shine alike upon all, the high and the low; and the gentle showers of his grace will distill upon all—even the humblest—causing all to grow up in the beauty and strength of the Lord and of his righteousness.

Let us therefore give heed to the divine injunction of our Savior—to love our enemies, bless them that curse us, and do good to them that hate us, and pray for them that despitefully use and persecute us, remembering that in so doing we but imitate the GOD AND FATHER OF ALL.

J. M. J.

How can he be Saved who Dies in Sin?

The question is often asked, 'How can a man who dies in sin be saved?' It is a question which is supposed to present insuperable difficulties. But we are unable to see the least force in it whatever. All the force it has, rests on false assumptions.

It assumes that God has set a bound to the work of salvation, and declared that it cannot be effected after a specified time.—It takes for granted the couplet of Watts, that

"Life is the time to serve the Lord,
The time to ensure the great reward"

But if such were the divine arrangement, we should suppose that as a good and an impartial being, he would have given all an opportunity of being saved. And yet perhaps not more than a fourth part of the world have now any means of knowing Christ. In almost all past ages, the great mass of mankind have not had the light of revelation! How can it be that a righteous God would make such an arbitrary arrangement; that he would place men in bonds of heathen darkness, and then doom them to endless misery in consequence of their ignorance? The thought is horrible, and I shudder to think that men will as-

cribe such conduct to the Infinite God! Why should such an arrangement have been made? Justice did not require it, for all its ends could be accomplished without any such cruel and partial arrangement.—The divine honor did not require it, for that can neither be displayed nor promoted by any arbitrary law. While it was not required by either the divine justice or honor, it was at variance with all we know of God's goodness, mercy, love and grace, for these are impartial and would grant equal favor to all.

Again,—this theory assumes that sinners when they die, go to a place of endless torture. But where in the Bible is the authority for such an idea? I have read the Bible with patient and faithful care; but I have never yet found any proof of such a fact. From the Old Testament I learn that the old world were destroyed for their sins; that the people of Sodom and Gomorrah were also destroyed for their sins; but there is no intimation that they were doomed to an endless hell! Ministers tell us that the heathen by hundreds are daily dropping into hell; but the Bible says nothing of the kind. They tell us that Ananias and Sapphira were struck dead and sent to hell; the Bible says they were struck dead, and there it leaves them.—They tell us, that Judas hung himself and went to hell; the Bible says he went to his own place. It is not a singular fact, that in all the accounts we have the death of sinners, not a word is said of their going to a place of misery, providing there is such a place? There is not an exception save the rich man, but what is said of him is a parable, and of course proves nothing with regard to the point under consideration.—We read of eternal damnation, everlasting fire, everlasting punishment, everlasting destruction; but all these are represented as being experienced upon the earth. The language of the Bible is, all at death go to one place; the body returns to the dust as it was, and the spirit to God who gave it.

Again,—this theory assumes that the soul cannot be changed after death. But why not? There is nothing in the nature of the soul which prevents it. What is it which here renders conversion so difficult? Is it anything more than the unfavorable circumstances under which sinners are placed? Is it not because their appetites have obtained the mastery over them? and is it not because their evil companions hold them in their snares? Death will destroy these appetites. Those who are impelled on in the career of sin by evil influences will be freed from their dominion by death. Death, too, will remove them from the company of those like themselves, besotted and degraded. We hear, I know, a great deal said about our being drunkards and extortioners and revilers in eternity. You might just as well say we shall be farmers, and mechanics and merchants. That which originates with the flesh will cease with the flesh. I do not say the mind may not be stained by its connection with the body.—Neither do I say it will not be dwarfed and stunted from the accursed influence to which it has been subjected. But I do say, and he that knows anything of human nature, knows that I am right, that the mind can no more be enslaved by earthly appetites and passions, and chained by them to sin as it is here, after death, than the lips can give utterance to the thoughts after they are cold in death.