

THE GOSPEL MESSENGER,

OR UNIVERSALIST ADVOCATE.

["AND THE ANGEL SAID UNTO THEM, FEAR NOT, FOR BEHOLD I BRING YOU GOOD TIDINGS OF GREAT JOY WHICH SHALL BE UNTO ALL PEOPLE."—Luko 2. 10.]

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Review of Hall on Universalism.

1st. ALL MEN SHALL BE DRAWN TO CHRIST; And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. Jno. 12. 32. [No. 22—p. 58.]

Our author thinks that before we can make this text favor our doctrine, we must prove the following points:

1. That the drawing here referred to is compulsory; 2. That it is to be accomplished in eternity, and not in time; 3. That the lifting up of Christ from the earth, here referred to, has not yet been accomplished, and will not be till the resurrection of the dead; 4. That all men means the whole human family; and 5. That "will draw" is unconditional.

To which I reply—If by "compulsatory" he means compulsory—that is, that men are to be "drawn" contrary to their wills. I shall not attempt to prove it, for I do not believe it. Men, all men, may be drawn to Christ, and there be nothing compulsory about it—that is, without being forced in opposition to their wills. It is not necessary to say that this must be done in eternity; it matters not when or where it is done, whether in time or in eternity, so it is done within, or during the reign of Christ. The third proposition we do not believe, and therefore I shall not attempt to prove it. Christ was lifted up from the earth, when he was nailed to the cross—and thus was fulfilled the "if"—the only condition in the declaration. It is just as evident that all men means the whole human family, as that the whole human family means all men!—consequently it is not necessary to prove the fourth proposition. The fifth will stand as true until proved to be otherwise.—It is not customary, I believe, to have two conditions in a simple declaration like the text. The condition is, *If I be lifted up*—which has been fulfilled, as before stated; we have, therefore, the best assurance in the world that the declaration will be fulfilled also—that all men will be drawn to Christ. It is by no means necessary that we prove these points, as our author supposes, in order to make this text support Universalism; some of them are self-evident—the others we do not believe, and of course do not wish them to be true.

The word draw is used in the sense of invite, and hence cannot be compulsory.

"Cannot be compulsory?" Wonder where he found this word compulsory?—As he is a man of undoubted genius, I suppose we may safely consider it a word of his own invention! But the word draw means invite, does it? Let us then read the text in that way: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will invite all men unto me!" Need there be anything said in order to refute this ridiculous idea? or does it not sufficiently refute itself? And what authority does he give us for this? None but that of Alexander Hall!

All men does not necessarily mean the whole human family. Universalists cannot prove that it has this meaning in any passage in the Bible, except when it speaks of God as creator of all men.—p. 59.

I am aware that the phrase does not always mean an entire whole—it never does when used in a historical sense, as where it is said "All men counted John, that he was a prophet." (Mark 11: 32.)—but let it be understood that when it is used in reference to a point of doctrine it means all—the whole human family. And if it be true, as our author admits, that it means ALL when it is said that God is the Creator of all men—that he will have all men to be saved—that Christ died for all men—that he rose from

the dead for all men—that in him all men shall be made alive—and, as in the text, when it is said he will draw all men unto him. It is just as easily proved that all men means the entire human family in each and all of these declarations, as it is to prove that it has that meaning when it is said God is the Creator of all men. This every rational and honest man will admit. The phrase in all of these places is used in a doctrinal sense, and must, according to the rule before laid down, mean the entire whole.

"Will" is frequently used conditionally; and so it undoubtedly is in this case, "I will draw all men unto me"—i. e. if they will come.—p. 60.

I challenge Mr. Hall, or any other man, to find an instance where "will" is "used conditionally" in a declaration which has a condition expressed, as in the text under consideration. It is impossible to conceive of two conditions in a declaration like the text. The condition—*If I be lifted up*—has been fulfilled as before stated; and it was upon the fulfillment of this condition that the balance of the declaration depended—I will draw all men unto me. To say that "will" is here "used conditionally" is the very height of absurdity, and sets common sense at perfect defiance!

But suppose we should admit that Christ will be lifted up—at the general resurrection; &c.—p. 60.

But suppose you don't "admit" it until you are asked to do so! Where in all the world did you ever hear of a Universalist who said that Christ would be lifted up at the "general resurrection"—and that he would then draw all men unto him?—Such imposition and barefaced deception deserves the unqualified contempt of every honorable and high minded man, let his religious sentiments be what they may! No Universalist ever asked you to admit such a preposterous idea;—or, so far as I know, ever contended for such a thing! All the remainder of your paragraph, based upon this irrational and never-before-heard-of hypothesis, may go for what it is worth. It is only calculated to excite the contempt of every Universalist who sees it!

In conclusion I would remark upon this text, that there can be no question as to the absolute character of the phrase *will draw*; we have seen that from the very nature of the declaration there can be no condition attached to it, that being expressed in the fore part of the expression *all men*, would be as absurd to deny the universality of the phrase in Tim.—where it is said God "will have all men to be saved"—or in Heb. 2. "He tasted death for every man"—or in 1 Jno. 2, "He is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world"—or in 1 Tim. 2, 6, "He gave himself a ransom for all." These all, except the first refer to the one offering on the Cross, as well as the text; and if there is universality in one, there is in all, for all refer to the same thing. The passage then in review is a promise, rendered absolute by the fulfillment of the condition—"if I be lifted up"—and embraces ALL. It may therefore be numbered with the promises in Christ Jesus, all of which are true, and in him, AMEN.

2d. ETERNAL LIFE THE GIFT OF GOD: The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Rom. 6: 23.—(No. 27—p. 73.)

Here we have a specimen of profound erudition and abstruse reasoning, such as are not often to be met with.

Does it follow, because eternal life is a gift, that therefore it is unconditional? Not

at all, but quite the reverse, as you shall now show. The word gift presupposes a giver; and the word giver presupposes a receiver; and the word receiver presupposes reception, which to all intents and purposes is a condition. There can be no gift without a giver; and there can be no giver without a receiver; neither can there be a gift possessed or enjoyed by the receiver, without the condition of reception. Hence eternal life being a gift, is the very strongest argument imaginable in favor of its conditionality.—p. 73.

Well, well, if this is the condition, we have no objection to it—we will admit it. This is very conclusive, and reminds me very much of another splendid argument perpetrated by our author, which I saw some time ago. It will be recollected that when giving an exposition of the Promise to Abraham, I maintained that it was unconditional (on our part,) adding at the same time that the condition was fulfilled by Abraham. No sooner does Mr. Hall see this, than he comes out on me in his "Proclamation," and boasts very loudly that I have admitted just what he contended for, viz: that the Promise was conditional, for I had admitted as much in saying that Abraham fulfilled the condition! I considered this quibble entirely unworthy of notice at the time I saw it; and I should not refer to it now, were it not that it is so very similar to the one just quoted, and I thought that I might as well preserve the two together, while I was about it, as rare specimens of logic for future reference! It makes no difference to him in what way or sense a promise or a gift is conditional, so that it is conditional! Although the Promise to Abraham is absolute and unconditional on the part of mankind, yet as Abraham fulfilled the condition, the Promise is in reality conditional, some how or other, and Mr. Hall has gained his point! And in order to have a gift, there must be a giver, and a receiver, and the thing must be received: therefore, a gift is conditional—some how or other—no matter how—but it is conditional, and this is all he cares for!

Now, he is perfectly welcome to all this argument claims for him. If this is the way he understands the conditionality of a promise and a gift, why we will admit it, if such admission will do him any good—for in reality there is not much difference between us, and I think he might just as well have no condition—for it all amounts to the same thing at last! I have no doubt the reader will laugh at the desperate efforts of our author in endeavoring to show how a gift is conditional—and be forcibly reminded of the drowning man catching at straws! The gift of eternal life is conditional! Very well; have it so, but recollect, "the word gift presupposes a giver; and the word giver presupposes a receiver; and the word receiver, in connexion with giver, presupposes reception, which to all intents and purposes is" absolute and unconditional. "As certain as eternal life is a gift to men, just so certain must they accept it, or never have it." yes, and I will add, as certain as eternal life is a gift to men, just so certain will they accept it.—"There can be no gift without a giver, and there can be no giver without a receiver," consequently, eternal life being a gift, it will be received—or Mr. Hall's fine spun argument is good for nothing! You are welcome to the condition, so the thing is done; you can take the shade, while we have the reality.

God sometimes gives men certain things which they never possess, from the fact that they will not have them. As an example of this kind we refer to the fact of God giving the land of Canaan to the children of Israel, for their disobedience. He never let them pos-

sess it. Thus testifies the Lord by the mouth of the prophet: "Yet also I lifted up my hand unto them in the wilderness, that I would not bring them into the land which I had given them." Ezek. 30: 15.—p. 75.

The difficulty here will vanish when it is recollected that this "land" was not, at that time, given, but only promised; besides, you must recollect, also, that "there can be no gift without a giver, and there can be no giver without a receiver"—consequently the land of Canaan was not a gift, until it was received and possessed. This is the gentleman's own argument, and I hope he will not recede from it!

The phrase "through Jesus Christ our Lord," we claim as diametrically opposed to the Universalist assumption of unconditionality. The meaning is the same as if he had said, "The gift of God is eternal life, in obedience to Jesus Christ our Lord." When Paul says, "through this man is preached to you the forgiveness of sins," (Acts 13: 38,) does he not mean to be understood the same as if he had said, "In obeying this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins?"

I answer No. Paul was not so great a fool as that! The forgiveness of sins was obtained "in obedience to this man," but the preaching of forgiveness had nothing to do with "obedience." This any one with a grain of sense can see. Paul might, and often did, preach forgiveness "through Jesus Christ," without his hearers obeying his preaching, and consequently, without their receiving the forgiveness—still, the preaching of forgiveness was through Jesus Christ.—What a miserable perversion of language, and of common sense! and what may we not expect of a man who could be guilty of the like? "I feel to pity his conscientiousness, as well as his sense of honor."

"The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life, through our Lord, Jesus Christ." How beautifully this corresponds with the passage in 1 Jno. 5: 10—"and this the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son;" and with the promise to Abraham, that in or through Christ "all nations, families, and kindreds of the earth should be blessed;" and with the declaration that "as in Adam all die, even so, in or through Christ, shall all be made alive."—They all refer to the same glorious result, and I will only add in the language of the apostle, (1 Jno. 5: 10,) "He that believeth on the Son of God, hath the witness in himself; he that believeth not God, hath made him a liar, because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son."

3rd. THE ANNUNCIATION; And the angel said unto them; Fear not, for behold I bring you glad tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people; for unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. Luko 2: 10, 11.—(No. 18, p. 30.)

Our author here sets out by remarking that "it is one thing to bring good tidings of great joy to a man, and another thing for him to accept them." He then proceeds to illustrate the matter by supposing twelve men to be sentenced to the penitentiary for life—but after a few years the Governor pardons them.—A messenger bears the good news to the unhappy convicts, and tells them they are pardoned.—"Six of them gladly receive his word, obey the call, and come out of the prison," but the other six refuse to go out—saying the governor is too good a man to see us die here, he will come and carry us out.—So they remain in their cells "till they die"—and thus "never enjoy the benefit of the glad tidings which were brought to them from the governor." So he says it is in relation to