

an atonement for sin; nevertheless, the fruits of His redemption tend to their benefit. God will, in the "dispensations of the fulness of times," by the death of Christ, gather into union and harmony *all holy beings* whether angels or men, with Christ as their Head and Lord.

The arguments for the universal restoration of men to the favour of God based on these passages are ruled out by the emphatic phraseology of each of the texts. It is only of "things in heaven" and "things in earth" of which the Apostle speaks. There is no mention of hell here. True, Christ is Lord of *all* worlds; but when Scripture speaks of His general kingship there is mention made of the world of woe. True, that "At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, *and things under the earth.*" But there is a marvellous difference between the mere acknowledgment of Christ's universal sovereignty, and loving sympathy with His person and loyalty to His laws. This is just the difference between all holy intelligences, and the rebellious part of God's creation. The question of Universalism, in any of its varied forms of development, finds no countenance from these texts; and must, therefore, be decided without any reference to these particular Scriptures. What then, are the lessons to be learned from this subject?

1. First. *That all moral beings stand in peril from which the atonement of Christ, by means of its conservative force will effectually protect all who have passed their probationary period in the love of virtue and loyalty to God.*

We have two striking illustrations of the fallibility and peril of pure moral beings in the case of angels and men. Among the myriads of beings who surrounded the heavenly throne, a vast multitude were unfaithful to their powers and privileges. For these there is no redemption. (Will you pardon me if I turn aside here for a moment. I have asked myself as no doubt you have done "How is it that man was redeemed while the angels who sinned were not?" I have thought it might be because the angels were each a separate creation, while mankind sprang from a federal head, and the race to which we belong must therefore stand in a somewhat different relation God and His law to what the fallen angels do. Whether this be the solution of the question or not, the fact itself is indisputable, and, from what we know of the character of God, we are bound to conclude there was some just and good reason for the difference though at present we are not able to discern it. But to return.) The angels sinned against such light and love, there is, for them, no possibility of recovery. Their great gifts increased their responsibility and their peril; and now, in misery commensurate with

their crime, they await "the vengeance of eternal fire." Adam the federal head and representative of the human race fell from the high position and the holy estate in which his Maker placed him.

Absolute freedom from liability to fall belongs alone to God. Freedom of will is essential, inherent in the nature of all moral agents. To say that an agent is free is to admit the *possibility* of failure. Well has it been said that "In finite beings freedom to do right involves freedom to do wrong always and everywhere." Do I then believe that saints or angels in heaven may fall into sin. I believe that they retain the *power* to sin, but sin is not so much a question of *ability* as of *will*. What I think this subject teaches is this: Such will be the influence of redemption on the minds of the angels and saved men that they will have no *will* to sin. "The pure spirits who shall have, through a sufficient probation, maintained their integrity and entered upon their reward in the very presence of God, with all about them and all within them mightily tending to strengthen all goodness, shall be, though not naturally, nor absolutely, yet in fact and in effect, incapable of transgressions." This leads us to another thought suggested by this subject:

2. *To accomplish this end the atonement of Christ contemplates the gathering together into one kingdom all holy intelligences, "Whether they be things in earth or things in heaven.*

All pure moral beings retain their freedom in heaven, but the conservative influence of the death of Christ renders it not only *probable* but *certain*—that they will never exercise it in the guilt and folly of rebellion. The angels are represented as diligent students of the mysteries of redemption. They have been Christ's chosen instruments in working out His purposes in reference to man. They are to be the companions of redeemed men through the unending years. Their interest and service in connection with human redemption acts with a gracious reflex influence on their own destiny.

There are two ways of preventing the commission of evil. I wish, for instance, to prevent a child learning to swear; I cut out his tongue, or I destroy his power of hearing; that is one way; or I instruct the child in the folly and sin of such conduct, and set before him the example of my own life until this sin becomes an abomination unto him. In other words I may prevent sin by lessening the power of a moral agent, or I may do it by strengthening the powers he has and fortifying his motives and love of virtue, that is another and a better way of attaining the same end. Throughout eternity good men and angels will retain all the powers they now possess, but such will be the influence of redemption on their minds,