

UNIVERSAL SALVATION.

EZEK. xiii., 22.—“Because with lies ye have made the hearts of the righteous sad, whom I have not made sad; and strengthened the hands of the wicked, that he should not return from his wicked way, by promising him life.”

Whatever may be said against the theory of universal salvation, we must admit it has great antiquity to plead in its favor, if aught favorable can be drawn thence. It is always safer, however; to judge anything by its nature than its age. It is sometimes attempted to defend the worst systems by their antiquity; and if this could ever be done, universalism is undoubtedly defensible, for it is very ancient. The first universalist preacher was Satan, and the first sermon upon the subject of which we have any account was preached in the Garden of Eden, when he said to our first parent: “Thou shalt not surely die.” That is a long time ago; but so far from the antiquity having established the doctrine, the nature of it has forever stamped the preacher as the “Father of Lies.” And so, in the words of the text: “These false prophets strengthen the hands of the wicked by promising him life, and thus prevent him from returning from his wicked ways.” God Almighty remonstrates with them, saying, “Because with lies ye have made the hearts of the righteous sad, I will deliver my people out of your hand, and ye shall know that I am the Lord.”

The defences of universalism are very plausible, but very various, and the views of the different champions of the system are sometimes not reconcilable one with another. Some maintain immediate salvation at death; some a partial state of suffering, but ultimate restoration of all men to happiness and bliss;