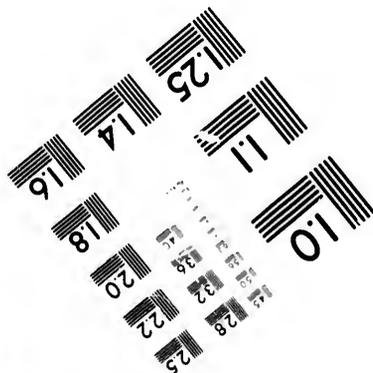
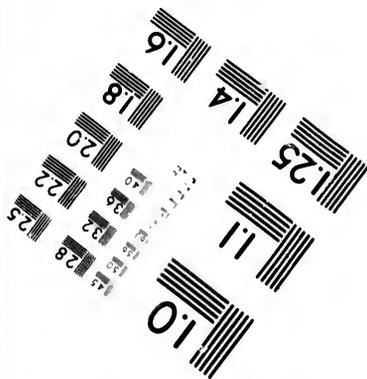
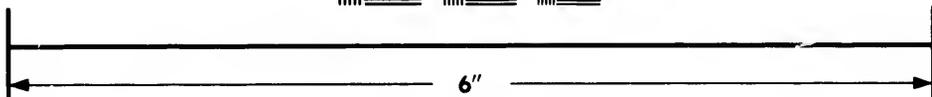
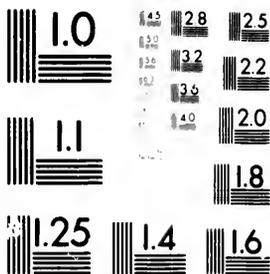


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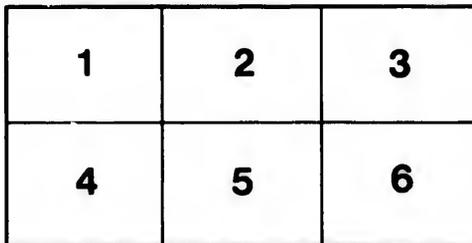
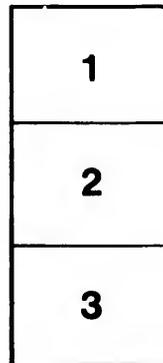
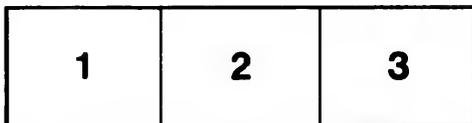
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Universalism Antiscriptural;

A SERMON,

PREACHED IN ST. JAMES' CHURCH, DARTMOUTH,

ON

SABBATH, MARCH 14, 1875.

BY

REV. ALEXANDER FALCONER.

HALIFAX :
NOVA SCOTIA PRINTING COMPANY.
1875.

THE HISTORY OF THE
CITY OF BOSTON

FROM 1630 TO 1800

BY

JOHN B. BOWEN

NEW YORK

1845

Published by
G. P. Putnam & Co.,
110 Nassau Street, N. Y.

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1875.

DARTMOUTH, March 20th, 1875.

REV. DEAR SIR,—

Having heard with much pleasure and profit, the sermon recently delivered by you on the errors of universalism, we respectfully request that you will permit us to have it published for the instruction of our own congregation, and possibly for the benefit of the community at large. We believe that so clear and complete a refutation of unscriptural opinions extensively prevalent in Dartmouth, cannot fail to be useful in arming our youth against the arguments of every assailant.

Yours respectfully,

CHARLES ROBSON,
ALEXANDER JAMES,
EDWARD TAYLOR,
JAMES H. AUSTEN,
GEORGE DUSTAN,
WM. HENRY WADDELL,
JAMES THOMPSON.

} *Elders.*

DARTMOUTH, March 23rd, 1875.

Messrs. Charles Robson, Alex. James, Edward Taylor, James H. Austen,
George Dustan, Wm. H. Waddell and James Thompson.

DEAR BRETHREN,—

Your request for the publication of my discourse, recently preached on Universalism, has been received. The sermon, as delivered, was somewhat hastily prepared, without the most remote idea of publication; and indeed scarcely written in full. It may, therefore, require some slight recasting and perhaps a little enlarging, to make the argument on some points more complete. With these changes, not materially affecting the discourse, as delivered, it is placed at your disposal, in the hope that it may, in some little measure, benefit the cause of truth.

Yours Truly,

ALEX. FALCONER.

SERMON.

Isaiah viii : 20. "To the law and to the testimony ; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them."

The question of the eternal punishment of the wicked, is just now exciting a little interest in our midst. The controversy has been thrust upon us. I have no desire, for the mere sake of controversy, to enter upon the discussion of this subject ; and would not do so at present, were it not for the circumstances, in which we are placed, as a congregation. Probably universalism is numerically stronger in our town, in proportion to its population, than it is in any other part of the Province. Our principles therefore are likely to be frequently assailed by the advocates of this dangerous and deadly error, and hence the greater necessity that we be able to give a reason for the faith that is in us, regarding the doctrine of Scripture on this question, as most surely believed among us.

The subject is one that is overwhelmingly momentous, and inexpressibly solemn. It involves some of the most affecting aspects of God's moral government. On such a theme it becomes us all, therefore, to speak with the deepest reverence, and the greatest humility, and carefully avoid the bitterness of controversy. But instead of this, what do we sometimes see and hear ? Man, weak, sinful, short-sighted man, daringly rushing into the region of these awful and mysterious truths, and irreverently asserting, what the Almighty can or cannot do, in connection therewith ; positively maintaining that the Eternal Being *must* act in a certain way, and in no other, to preserve the integrity and consistency of his moral character ; going indeed so far as to declare, that if the Bible could be proved to contain the doctrine of eternal punishment, that in itself would be sufficient reason for them to cast it aside.

Let us endeavour, however, to come to the discussion reverently, honestly accepting the utterances of God's word upon the subject. It is clearly, one of the questions which God himself must decide, and if he has spoken, it is surely our duty, seriously and earnestly to enquire into his utterances. For what value is the book of truth to us, if it is not employed to regulate our faith in divine verities ? And where is

our reverence for the Father of lights, if we hearken not to the voice of his word, in all that we believe concerning his character and work? "To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them."

We may, however, here observe, that though we bring this question to be tested by the scriptures, as our sovereign standard, yet we are not afraid of the result of an appeal to sound reason. There is no unwillingness on the part of the defenders of this Bible doctrine, to meet those who advocate universalism at the bar of reason, and listen to its voice as far as it has a right to speak. But the ultimate appeal must be to the word of God. Far above, and after all, the voice of the Almighty himself, in the scriptures, must be heard; and by the right interpretation of these Holy Oracles, must this question be settled.

WHAT THEN SAY THE SCRIPTURES?

In reply to this question, we have not the slightest hesitancy in saying, that the doctrine which we advocate, stands upon the very face of the book of God, and pervades the entire scope of the divine word. It is there set forth with the clearness of a sunbeam, and in almost every variety of utterance.

1.—The doctrine of future punishment is frequently expressly stated in the scriptures. The most superficial reader of his Bible, cannot fail to observe how numerous and emphatic God's utterances are upon this doctrine. "He that blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation." "These shall go away into everlasting punishment:" "Cast into everlasting fire:" "To whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever:" "To whom the mist of darkness is reserved forever:" The word fairly abounds with such startling imagery as the following "lake of fire," "bottomless pit," "place of torment," "outer darkness," "worm that dieth not, and fire that is not quenched." Such is a mere specimen of the appalling descriptions which we find in the Bible, regarding future punishment.

It is sometimes said that these threatenings and punishments were peculiar to God's government, during the old economy, but that Christ introduced a milder system—a reign of love. But what is the fact? The New Testament is the part of the sacred scriptures, where the most pointed declarations are found, upon this awful theme; and of

all those who have spoken, none have uttered such terrible language, as that which fell from the lips of our loving Saviour. It is said, that of the *one hundred and thirty times* that this doctrine is taught in the New Testament, no less than *fifty-two* of them, are distinct utterances of Jesus Christ himself. What other voice ever spoke of future punishment, as the Great Teacher did? Parable after parable sets it forth; and in a certain discourse, these momentous words ring out, and roll along, once, twice, thrice, "Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." Surely then, looking at this emphatic testimony, in plain speech and figurative language, any candid mind that accepts the scriptures as inspired, must regard the evidence upon which this doctrine rests, as most conclusive.

But the advocates of universal salvation tell us, that we misinterpret the language used: that the question is one to be settled by the meaning which we attach to words. Well, so be it. I am perfectly satisfied, that the terms employed in scripture to describe future punishment, when fairly interpreted, can mean nothing short of proper eternity. The words used are "everlasting," "eternal," "forever." Now these words are used indiscriminately, when applied to future woe and future blessedness. We have "eternal weight of glory," "eternal inheritance," "everlasting kingdom," "eternal redemption."—These on the one side. On the other we have "everlasting fire," "eternal damnation," "everlasting destruction" &c. It is quite apparent then, that the same phraseology is used on both sides of the great alternative,—heaven or hell; and that whatever be the import of the words on the one side, they must bear the same meaning upon the other.

What then is the universally accepted rule of criticism by which we are to test this case? What says common sense? "That terms ought to be taken in their proper sense, unless there be something in the subject itself, or in the connection that requires them to be taken otherwise." Now, is there anything in the case before us, which renders it necessary to understand it in a limited or restricted sense, either in regard to punishment or blessedness? As to the connection, when our opponents take up the *one hundred and thirty* instances in which the doctrine is taught in the New Testament, and satisfactorily show us that in every case the context demands limitation, we will give up the controversy, and declare our cause to be indefensible.

But they cannot possibly do it. Then, as to the subject itself, is it not enough to say, "the soul is immortal?" The nature of the case, then, does not call for a limitation. Besides, any one can at a moment's glance perceive that, if from the nature of the subject, you take away the eternity of the one, you take away the eternity of the other. If the sufferings of the one shall come to an end, so shall the happiness of the other.

But it is said that these terms are sometimes employed in Scripture, in a limited sense. And we readily admit, that, in a few instances, this is so. But this admission, instead of weakening, rather strengthens our argument. The following is the passage that is perhaps most frequently brought forward, and may be taken as a fair example: "The everlasting mountains were scattered, the perpetual hills did bow." The word is, without doubt, here used in a restricted sense. But this creates no difficulty. It is just in accordance with the universally accepted rule of interpretation above mentioned. The nature of the subject to which it is applied, necessarily limits it, and prevents it being understood.

The attempt, therefore, to limit the import of the terms used, must prove a failure. It is simply endeavouring to cover up a difficulty under words; and to those persisting in it, the voice of rebuke may be uttered, "Who is this that darkeneth counsel, by words without knowledge." Are not the terms employed, the very strongest that can be used to express everlasting duration—the very words in which the eternity of the glory of God, and the blessedness of Christ are set forth? The line of argument, therefore, based upon the words used, that would limit the duration of the punishment of the wicked, would overthrow the eternity of the Divine Being. Or we might ask Universalists, if the preparation of the Bible had been committed to them, would they have allowed it to speak as it does on this question? How many passages would they have suppressed, or modified? Nay more, we venture to ask, if they now had their way, how many expressions would they erase or qualify? In view, therefore, of the language used throughout the Scriptures, we may well ask, if the Almighty intended to teach the doctrine, what other language could he have employed in doing so? If it is possible for words to give certainty to any divine truth, they have done so in regard to this doctrine.

2.—Besides being directly stated, the doctrine of eternal punishment is implied in the whole tenor of the word of God. This opens a very wide field, which we can do little more than touch. What mean all the warnings of Scripture, all the calls to repentance and faith, all the pressing invitations and entreaties of the Gospel, if there be not a perpetuity of punishment? We read of men who have "their portion in this life," clearly implying that there is no salvation for them in the world to come. "He that believeth not the Son, shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." What is the plain meaning of these words? What but that the wrath of God abides for evermore upon the man dying in his sins? If the time comes, however remote, when his sufferings terminate, then this passage ceases to be true. The wrath of God no longer "abides upon him." He *will* "see life." Of Judas, our Lord said, "It had been good for that man if he had not been born." Could anything more hopeless have been uttered? If after an indefinite period of suffering, there is to be enjoyed an eternal duration of blessedness, then such affirmation could never have been made. In short, according to the Universalists' theory, God's teaching cannot be relied upon, for he will by-and-by clear the guilty; he will save those who believe not; he will gather the tares into the garner; he will not destroy the chaff: there is no such thing as a bottomless pit, or an impassable barrier, to prevent the wicked from passing over into the region of blessedness. True, God says there is no such transition. But the exigencies of Universalism demands the denial, and so the authority of God must be set at defiance. Into such straits are the advocates of these anti-scriptural tenets driven.

3.—The word of God teaches, that if the soul is to be saved, salvation must be secured in the present life. Man as he passes out of this world passes away forever, beyond all remedial means. He is separated eternally from all mediatorial influences. There is not the slightest indication given anywhere in the Bible, that the day of probation will extend beyond the limits of the present life. What mean all the earnest pleadings, calling upon the sinner immediately to accept the offers of mercy, if salvation in the future is certain? "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold now is the day of salvation." "To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your heart." "Strive to enter in at the strait gate, for many I say unto you shall

seek to enter in and shall not be able." All these warnings and invitations proceed upon the assumption that salvation involves a change that must take place now—in the present life, or never.

And does not the Apostle Paul tell us, in speaking of the resurrection, that after that "*cometh the end*, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father?" His mediatorial reign is at an end, and he resigns the sceptre into the hand of the Father, clearly indicating that the day of salvation is over, when the Gospel dispensation terminates, at the close of time.

And what is the solemn and impressive language with which the Divine record closes? "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still." Evidently this passage sets forth, that the character with which we sink into the grave at death, is the character which will adhere to the soul through that interval which separates the day of our death from the final judgment, when it will again stand forth, the very image of what it was, to receive its final doom. There can be but one conclusion drawn from this, that death forever separates the sinner from the means of grace,—that beyond the period of the present life, his condition is irreversibly fixed. Can we for one moment believe, in view of the fulness of Scripture testimony on this point, that the jubilee cry shall yet be heard ringing throughout the regions of the lost, "the day of thy final deliverance is come!" Ah, no; however sad the thought, we must come to the conclusion that God puts the seal of *fixedness* upon the impenitent soul, dying in its sin. In the world of woe, the hopelessness of dark despair "reigns in eternal silence." Bearing this truth in mind, we observe—

4.—That the provision that has been made for the redemption of the sinner implies the eternity of sin's punishment. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Beyond all comparison, the gift of his Son is the most wonderful display of divine benevolence which our world ever saw; and his life and death the most extraordinary events that have ever occurred on this earth—so overwhelming indeed, as at times almost to extort the question, "Can these things be?" And does not the nature of this provision throw light upon the desert of sin? The provisions of infinite wisdom must ever be commensurate with the necessities of the case. Who can for

one moment think of the Father making the immense sacrifice involved in the incarnation of his Son, and his death upon the cross, without seeing that the evil from which this provision was intended to deliver, was of the most desperate character ?

But how does the doctrine of Universalism harmonize with this provision ? There may be some diversity of sentiment among them, but I presume that Universalists generally, substantially hold, "that good men go directly to heaven at death ; and that the impenitent shall, after death, meet with the punishment due to their sin, and after bearing that punishment for longer or shorter periods, and being thereby reformed, shall be all finally brought to happiness." Now, how does this doctrine conform with the gospel plan of redemption ?—Universalists will probably tell us, that they hold that it is through Christ all are to be saved,—that there is no salvation without him. But it is surely very difficult to see how Christ's work effects the recovery of those who die impenitent. They tell us that such suffer punishment for a time, that this punishment is corrective, and that thus having borne the penalty themselves, they enter heaven. From what then does Christ save them ? Not from eternal punishment, for this, according to their theory, was never intended ; not from temporary punishment, for this they have suffered to the full—they have exhausted it. Obviously then, Christ has saved them from nothing.

It is therefore clear, that according to the notion of Universalists, there is at least one class—those who are after death reformed by their own corrective suffering—who do not owe their redemption to Christ. And to what a derogatory view of the work of God, and of Christ, does this lead us ? The doctrine makes God's gift of his Son an unnecessary act of the greatest suffering. And who can think of the Father involving the Son in the pain and ignominy to which he was subjected through all his life, till he bowed his head upon the cross, if man could have been brought to heaven by an endurance of the penalty on his own part ? No, if temporary punishment could have expiated human guilt, there would have been no death of the Son of God—the terrible scenes of Gethsemane and Calvary would never have been witnessed in our world. But that is not all. If, by their suffering, the wicked are to be finally saved, then it follows that suffering does more in the way of saving souls, than Christ's incarnation and death. For those who have been saved by his death would have been

saved in the end, at all events, as the result of temporary suffering ; and those who would not be saved by Christ, suffering in the end saves.

Besides, this idea of salvation through suffering, subverts the very foundation upon which the whole scheme of Christian truth rests. The gospel plan is, salvation by the substitutionary work of Christ. Its language is "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life ; and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life." But according to the notion of punishment working out a release, the sinner stands upon his own merits, having borne the penalty. This belief may be found in the creed of a Universalist ; it has no place in the system of revelation. If sinners, by temporary suffering, may at last reach heaven, they go there as the result of the bearing of the penalty themselves, and so, self-purified, they stand upon their rights—they can demand salvation—admittance to heaven becomes the subject of claim. Their songs must, therefore, be discordant with those which we are told the redeemed shall sing. Whatever songs they sing, they cannot take up the strains "Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood"—"Salvation unto him that sitteth upon the throne."

Were it deemed necessary, we might join issue on the philosophy of punishment being naturally corrective. We have been accustomed to regard purgatory as a philosophical absurdity. Penal sufferings are not considered to be a very good converting agency. "Sin when it is finished, bringeth forth death." This is its natural result, when left to itself. When in mercy God afflicts the christian, spiritual improvement may follow, but apart from Divine grace, the tendency of suffering is to harden, and lead to a defiance of the Almighty.

5.—There is still one other argument to which we may advert, though we cannot dwell upon it at any length : namely, that law insures future punishment. If law is to reign at all, then punishment must follow transgression. Law would be a perfect farce if this were not so. Now we find law, natural and moral, everywhere prevailing. Wherever we turn, natural law confronts us. Violate its precepts, and the penalty will follow. "Can a man go upon hot coals and his feet not be burnt?" There is also moral law. Moral government is as apparent to the eye of the conscience, as the sun to the bodily eye. Its design is the cultivation of holiness, and the preservation of peace. But if the law be violated, and no penalty inflicted, then these ends

cannot be realized, and moral government is nothing more than a name. Separate suffering from wrong, and the moral universe will become a scene of anarchy and confusion. If there be sin in our world, it is therefore not only right, but *gracious*, that there should be suffering. Let it be borne in mind, then, that God does not govern arbitrarily. Had it been so, he might have repealed the decree that sin should meet with everlasting punishment. But such is not the nature of his government, and therefore its decisions must remain binding.

Christ interposes in behalf of man. The Son of God suffers in the room of the sinner. But is the supremacy of the law violated? Verily no. The agonies of the cross proclaim the inviolable character of law. Only through faith in Christ, the substitute, can man escape the penalty of law, and this we have already seen can be accomplished only in time.

It is evident then, that the Bible does not teach the doctrine of universal salvation. It never can be made to teach it. If the Bible teaches anything at all, it teaches the doctrine of the eternal punishment of the wicked. Indeed we unhesitatingly assert, that this doctrine is as clearly expressed, in the language of the scriptures, as it ever has been in any human system of belief.

The enquiry now becomes appropriate; if Bible teaching is so clear upon the subject.

HOW DID THE HERESY OF UNIVERSALISM ARISE?

Various replies might be given to this question, among them the following,—

1.—It has arisen from low estimates of the evil of sin. As a general rule, we require only to know a man's views of sin, to ascertain the peculiar shape his system of theology will take. If he has low views of sin he will have crude and erroneous notions about redemption. Let a man once see sin as the Bible sets it forth, and especially as it indicates itself in the light of the Cross, and he will see the fitness, between its desperate character, and the attached penalty of eternal punishment. Let the soul rest under a deep consciousness of sin, and you hear no more complaining of its awful deserts. Sensible that the Bible sentence of "everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord" is just and righteous, it agonizingly urges the

cry, "what must I do to be saved?" Low thoughts of sin and of the justice of God, have given rise to erroneous views of the atonement, and a denial of the Divinity of Christ. And it is significant how rapidly universalism is drawing towards unitarianism. A true and deep sense of sin, the eternity of the punishment of the wicked, a divine Saviour and a divine atonement, are necessarily identified with each other.—They stand or fall together.

2.—Is it too much to say, that in many cases this doctrine has sprung from the love of sin, and hatred of holiness? Men love sin. They desire the indulgence of their evil appetites and desires. But the threatenings of God's law lie in their way. Conscience is ill at ease. A restraint is thereby placed upon sinful inclinations. The wish therefore arises, that "the terrors of the Lord" might be abated: and as desire influences the judgment, is there not reason to believe, that the conclusion to which many arrive on this question is greatly influenced by their feelings? And in view of the large numbers everywhere, who relish not vital godliness, the wonder is not that this belief exists, but that the roll of universalism does not lengthen out more rapidly. That it does not, is surely a proof that this doctrine so congenial to depraved human nature, has no place in the Bible.

3.—The doctrine may have arisen from unduly consulting the feelings of nature. Without doubt this is an awful theme. It is terribly sad to think of any of our fellow-creatures being "punished with everlasting destruction from God's presence." But our minds are specially moved, when we think of such a result, in connection with those to whom we are united by nature's most tender ties—father, mother, brother, child. No man, therefore, who has a heart to feel, but must have the sensibilities of his nature deeply stirred in view of this doctrine. And no wonder if, at times, feeling might have biassed his judgment. But this is a question not to be settled by feeling. Appeals to our sensibilities are aside from the true issue. It must be borne in mind that the natural feelings of humanity are not now what they were in man's innocence; and we have no right to attempt to settle it by asserting what we could or could not endure the thought of, in our present condition. We may be sure that God will fully prepare every redeemed soul in the future world, to look with satisfaction upon all his transactions, and heartily say of every

one, "true and righteous altogether." I simply accept what revealed truth says, firmly believing that the Judge of all the earth has done right, and is fully able to vindicate his righteousness.

4.—But probably erroneous views of the character of God have had more to do with the production of this belief, than any other cause. God, we are told, is too good, merciful, and loving, thus to punish those whom he has made. Most gladly do we admit that God is merciful—ininitely merciful. "He delighteth in mercy." But it might be appropriate to ask, where did the Universalist get his information that God is good?

(1.)—Did the light of nature teach him? Then let him account for many things to be seen everywhere around him in God's providential dealings. Who can reach the end of the roll of "lamentation, mourning, and woe" that is continually unfolding itself in the world? If we could only reckon up all the misery that prevails here, from crime and poverty, sickness and death—if we could see the waves of sorrow as they roll over communities, as they surge in family circles, and as they agitate the individual soul, where all is calm to the outward observer, how inexpressibly fearful would the prospect be! Will the Universalist please reconcile all this with his peculiar notions of God's character and government? At the same time let him give us some of his ideas about the destruction of the old world by a deluge—the overthrow of Sodom and the neighboring cities—the overwhelming of Pharaoh and his host in the Red Sea. When he has settled these problems, arising out of God's providence, it will be time enough for him to talk glibly about eternal punishment being inconsistent with the goodness of God.

(2.)—But did he learn that God was merciful from the book of revelation? Well, let him explain the mystery of the Cross. Most assuredly there is there an exhibition of love. Never was mercy more strikingly exhibited than upon the tree. But the Cross reads us other lessons than those of mercy; it teaches us other truths than those of the love and goodness of God. What mean the piercings of the thorny crown? What mean the buffeting and contempt of priests and people? What mean those rude nail-marks in his hands and feet? What means that terrible travail of soul—that awful agonizing, getting vent in that wild, piercing cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Or what mean those arrows of death, as

they strike fatally home into that sinless soul? They all tell of the judgments of God against sin. They all most loudly proclaim that sin cannot go unpunished. They all tell how bitter the cup of wrath was which he, as the substitute of the sinner, must drink. The Cross then, reveals God, not as a God of goodness merely, but as a God of truth, justice and holiness.

Suffering, then, exists under the government of God. Men may argue as they please about the love and goodness of God, but there is the fact. Is the existence of misery here inconsistent with the attributes of the Divine character? And if not so now, how can it be shown that it will be so hereafter?

But then it is said that eternal punishment is altogether out of proportion to the desert of sin. The objection takes this form: "Is it fair to punish forever an offence committed in a moment of time," — "to doom to endless woe for sins committed in this brief life." Now surely this is an absurd standard by which to estimate the demerit of any offence. Was there ever a system of law enacted, which graduated the punishment for offences, according to the time taken in the perpetration of the deed? No, the momentary act of the homicide is punished with imprisonment for life, whilst another deed, not involving the same guilt, but occupying very much longer in the perpetration, is punished with a few hours incarceration.

Besides, who is to be the judge of what sin deserves? We are all parties in the case, and consequently entirely disqualified from forming a correct opinion. Indeed, it is the highest presumption in man, to say what the Great God should do, or not do, in such a case. Was ever the anomaly seen in human courts, of a guilty man becoming his own judge and jury, and fixing the penalty of his crime? Much less can we admit man to decide this question, where he is an interested party and necessarily biassed, and being guilty, entirely incompetent to form a correct conception of the enormity of sin.

We are therefore brought back to the plain testimony of the Word of God. The judgment must be with him, against whom the offence has been committed. We must again confront the Word: "To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them." And we have surely seen, that God has uttered no uncertain sound in the Bible.

What then of the conclusion to which we have been led? Is it one, the settlement of which fills us with pleasure and delight? Assuredly no. It is calculated to fill the heart with sadness. The terribleness of the conception is beyond the power of the "tongues of men or of angels" to express. It may verily overwhelm us in dismay. But as already said, we must guard against making feeling the standard here. God has spoken. It is for us therefore to bow reverently and accept his righteous judgment. "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"

Several practical thoughts suggest themselves in connection with this solemn theme. We can do little more than mention two or three.

1.—We see cause for alarm on the part of the sinner. If the situation of the impenitent be, what we have seen the clear representations of God's word describe it to be, what verily must be his condition! Corrupt and polluted—alienated from God—exposed to his righteous displeasure—eternally banished from the presence of the Lord, if repentance and faith prevent not,—such, saith the Divine Word, are his condition and prospects. And this being the case, how great the folly, on the part of dying men, to allow the pleasures and possessions of time and sense to engross their attention, to the exclusion of the salvation of the soul!

2.—We see reason to thank God for the provision made for man's redemption. Man's condition as a sinner is indeed fearful. But he need not perish. The Divine helper is near. "Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners." Oh what gratitude should such "glad tidings" awaken in the breast of the sinner! The sinner's guilt may well arouse his fears, and no wonder, if at times, it should lead the thought onward to the borders of dark despair; but this very thought will only increase the value of the provision, when hope, through faith in the Redeemer, has dispelled the darkness.

3.—We also learn from this subject, the responsibility resting upon us as the professed followers of the Lord Jesus Christ. Anxiety for the salvation of men, is a characteristic of every christian heart. How any one can lay claim to the appellation of christian, and feel no ardent longing for the salvation of others, is not a little astonishing. How can the man who "knows the terror of the Lord," neglect to "persuade men?" How can he who believes in "the wrath to come," and who

realizes, that thousands around him, are hastening on to the experience of that wrath, remain callous and indifferent? Oh then let the sense of our responsibility deepen upon us. Men are perishing by our side; they are in danger of going down to death eternal. And will not the thought of this fact urge the cry, "Lord what wilt thou have me to do?" If conscious of unfaithfulness in the past, let our prayer now be, "cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy Holy Spirit from me; restore unto me, the joy of thy salvation and uphold me with thy free spirit. Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee."



