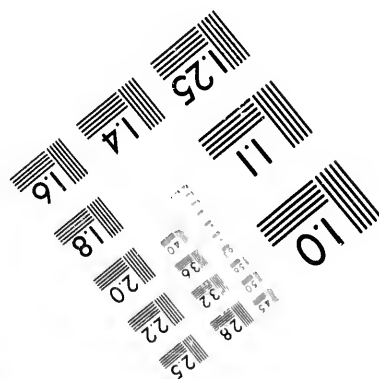
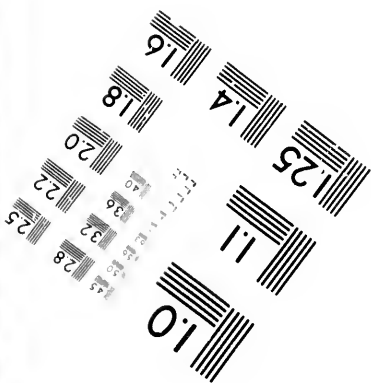
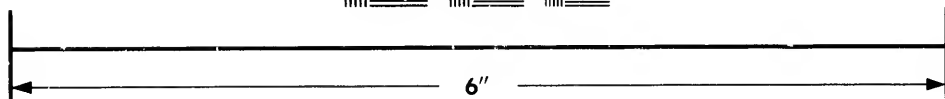
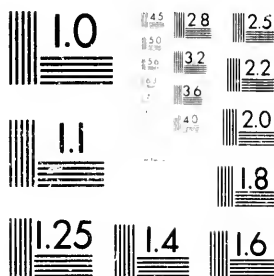


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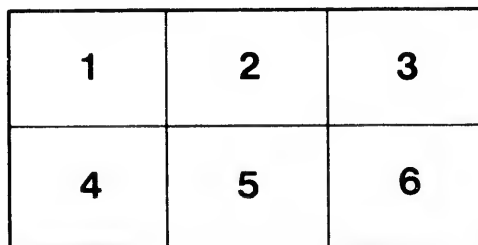
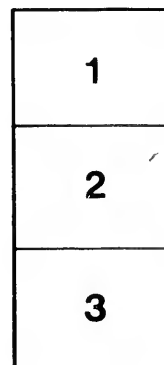
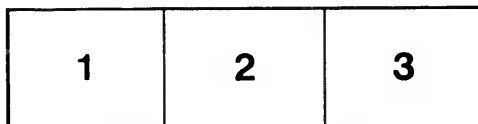
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# A SERMON

ON

THE DOCTRINE OF

## Everlasting Punishment;

PREACHED IN

ST. ANDREW'S SCOTCH NATIONAL CHURCH,

Halifax, N. S.

BY THE

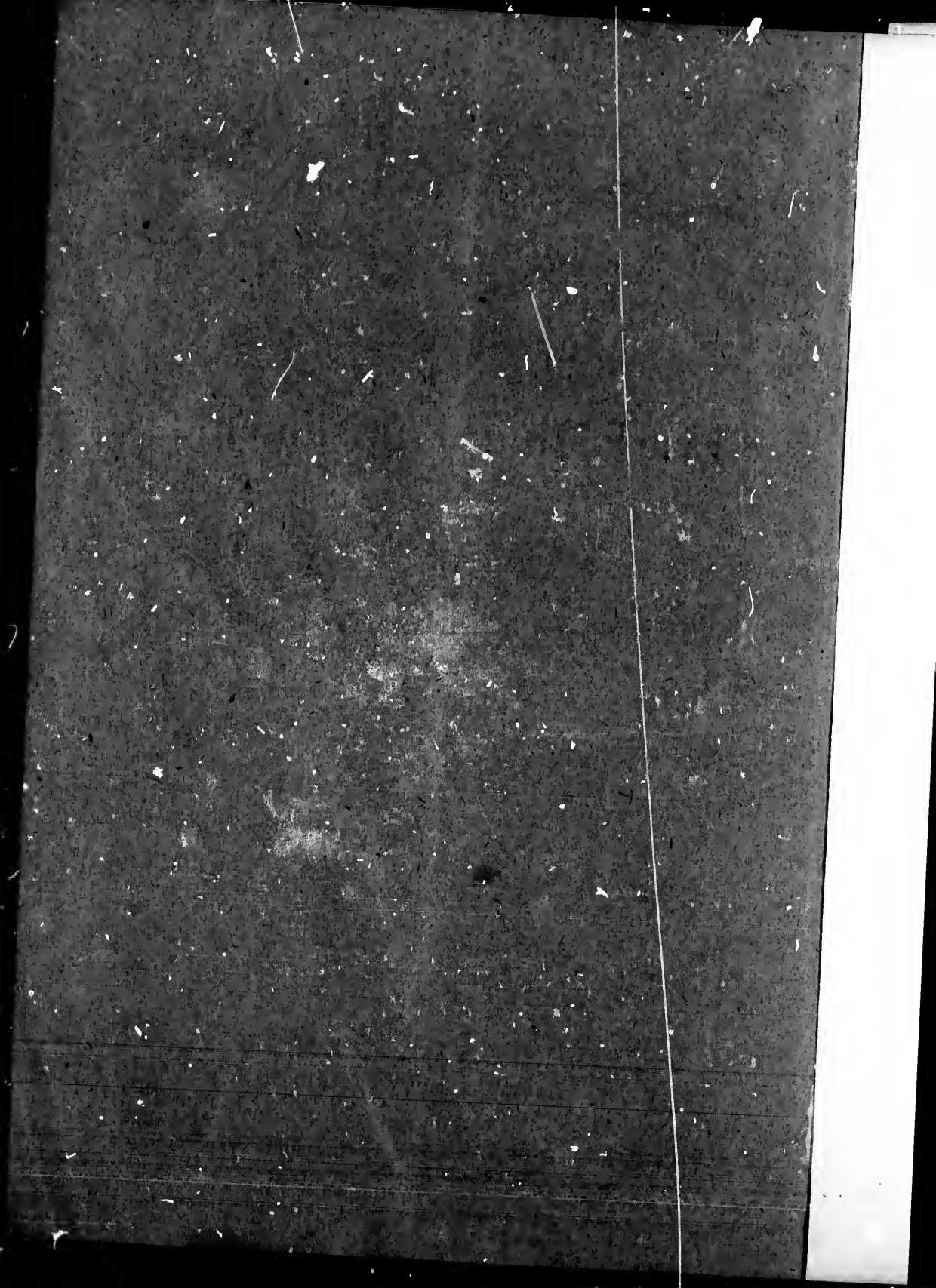
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# SERMON.

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"And these shall go away into everlasting punishment."—MATTHEW, xxv. 46.

THE doctrine of the salvation of all—irrespective of merit or principle—is, in my humble conception, as untair as it is illogical and untenable. That it is the mere vegary of the fancy, and the evidence of that pride natural to the human heart, I think I shall be able to show. I ask of you, therefore, kind reader,—and I feel confident I shall receive it,—your free and uninterrupted attention through the following pages. This I solicit, as it is necessary to the realization of the subject I am about to discuss.

The first question I shall endeavour to answer for you is the very natural one—"What is Universalism?"

Now, brethren, that is about the only question connected with the subject I have never been able satisfactorily to answer for myself. What do the Universalists believe? is a question which they themselves cannot answer—at least they never have answered. Individuals will give you, most glibly and nimbly, what they themselves believe in the great matter of salvation, but does *that* express the voice of the body calling itself *the Universalist Church*? Most assuredly not. Nor do those things called individual opinions in any Church carry the slightest authority with them, nor can they be taken in any measure to express the Church's opinion. There are doctrines preached by ministers of our own Church to which I by no means subscribe—opinions held which I repudiate, and books written by ministers of the Church which are fit only for the fire; the authoritative writings of any Church are those of her standards, and of these Universalism has none. One man saith he believeth all things; another, who is weak, believeth nothing.

These facts, then, must be the explanation and defence of my taking up the matter only in a general way. All I can say in a positive and emphatic manner with reference to *Universalism* is, that it asserts the salvation of all, whether worthy of salvation or not. Their acknowledged belief seems to be summed up in two propositions :—

(1.) There is no such thing as eternal punishment, notwithstanding the words of the text. And be it noted, the word translated “ Everlasting ” is as strong a term as the Greek language can supply, meaning, emphatically, without end.

(2.) The final salvation of the human race is a certainty, quite irrespective of individual character and life ; “ because,” forsooth, they say, “ God is a merciful God—a God of love, and thus He cannot consign to everlasting death any soul of man.”

Now at the outset, let me say, I would like to believe this doctrine *if I could*—BUT I CAN'T. I would like to be able to stand in this Church and announce it to the world that it is true of the human race that none can possibly be lost ; *but again I say I can't*. It is a doctrine most awfully pernicious, because at the first sight and to thoughtless persons, it carries with it a certain measure of plausible recommendation to the *feelings* of the sinner—though certainly not to the head or the heart. *Herein consists its danger*. It is liable to be accepted by the unthinking. It comes in upon those who, in religious matters, though perhaps not in matters of the world, are unthinking and unreflective, steals away their faith from the good old paths which led their forefathers home to God, and kept them from the snares of the devil and the pains of eternal death,—with results spiritually disastrous, in a measure too awful for contemplation.

I.—I cannot believe in this doctrine, *because it is contrary to common sense*.

I make no hesitation in declaring this as my firm conviction in the matter. God never asks men to believe in that which plain and simple reason shows to be a contradiction in terms. This I make no hesitation in declaring the Universalists' theory of eternal life to be. Consider, for one moment, what their theory of Heaven is. Just this,—a place where the souls of the departed shall be together forever and ever in peace. *It is just here I quarrel with them*. I say such a condition of things *would not be peace*. It would not be



peace *for the good*, because they would be brought into continual contact with the wicked, and such every good man knows would be misery worse than death. I have a right to speak for myself in this particular, decidedly and emphatically. In reference to myself, I can assure you of this—(and I do so not in words of levity, but in words of profoundest solemnity and deepest reverence), if I am to be brought into contact with beastly Tom Paine in Heaven,—if blaspheming Voltaire and flippant Rousseau are to be there,—if Heaven is to be filled with those who deny the existence of a personal God, who laugh at Divine Revelation, and who declare the Lord Jesus Christ the greatest impostor the world has ever seen,—which He is, if He is an impostor at all; if rogues and swindlers and cheats—if persons of foul words and unclean lives are to be there,—if there are to be in Heaven those who sneer at holiness of life, and who call all true religion hypocrisy, who weary of prayer, and who sleep under instruction, who are selfish, and as unlike the Lord Jesus as they can be,—if these persons are to be in Heaven, and if I am to be compelled to be in intimate fellowship with them throughout eternity, *then into such a Heaven I have no desire to enter.* Such a Heaven would be to me, and to all who feel as I do, simply a place of everlasting punishment.

Such a place would be no Heaven of rest and peace to any child of God. Rest for the Saint of God in contact with spiritual ruffianism from which his soul recoils! *that* never could be. The Saint is brought into contact with sin here, but for the following reasons he bears with it without murmuring:

(1.) The contact is only for a short time.

(2.) It is his to endeavour to win the sinner from his sin. But to be put down for eternity with those from whom one's soul recoils, would indeed be misery untold, incalculable, and in view of which the soul, with its desires and longings after rest, would be justified in murmuring. Rebellion, under such circumstances, would deserve commendation. The soul would rightfully declare that it was not dealt with truthfully; for in it there are longings after eternal rest which, in a Heaven such as we are considering, (a Heaven in which the evil and the good are eternally commingled, and in which they never shall be separated), is necessarily denied. This Heaven is not a place of rest for the good. *That is plain.*

Again: Would such a Heaven as the Universalists believe in be a place of rest *for the wicked*? Let those who experience the worship of God to be either uninteresting or unprofitable here, just think what it would be to them to be kept serving God either by good works, which they abhor, or by spiritual worship, which they hate, for one continuous year! Would they not be wretched and miserable in a measure which they are unable to comprehend? This produced to all eternity would represent their misery and woe in that heaven of theirs in which good and bad are to commingle in an eternal fellowship.

To the good and to the bad alike such a Heaven would be a place of endless torment,—a place whose worm dieth not, and whose fire is not quenched. In plain words, the Heaven of the Universalist becomes a Hell of perpetual torment to all eternity, to the righteous and to the wicked alike.

This I think plainly convincing, that the doctrine of the Universalist is *one contrary to common sense*. The theory lands us in this position, that, in affirming Universal Salvation to all alike—to the good and to the bad—to those who believe in God and to those who deny Him,—you affirm not Universal Salvation, but Universal Reprobation; not eternal life, but eternal death; not a Heaven for all, but a place which corresponds, in almost every particular, to the Hell of the Scriptures, and the place of woe in which orthodox christians believe that the finally impenitent are consigned to that everlasting punishment which they deserve, and which they have brought upon themselves, that which they shall experience to all eternity wherever they are.

I have treated this head of the subject without reference to Scripture, as I wish to discuss it (in the first place) not as a matter of Revelation at all, but as a point made clear by *reason alone*. And the foregoing thoughts have kept my own mind from swerving from the truth, and I trust they will keep yours also. And I think they have brought us to this conclusion on the matter, viz. :—In denying eternal punishment, as the desert of the finally impenitent, they affirm the woe of everlasting misery upon good and bad, pious and impious alike. In trying to escape Scylla, they fall into Charybdis. In trying to escape one thing, they fall upon another, a thousandfold more terrible, more awful, more disastrous. In denying the punishment of the finally impenitent, they would consign *all* to everlasting misery and spiritual death.

But we must let the Universalist speak for himself. He says that the soul is punished here for sin, and that the punishment is completed hereafter, and, when justice is satisfied, the soul is admitted into Heaven. But I ask him where does he get his information? Not from Scripture, as we shall see presently; and not from experience, for I would ask him, does punishment reform the spirit? Was there ever a spirit regenerated in the world by mere punishment? I maintain there was not. Punishment may deter from crime through fear, but that is all. The soul is unaffected by it. Take one of our Rock-head criminals; tell him, as you liberate him, that there is to be no further punishment of *crime*, and with what result? This: that he would now give full scope to his wicked nature, and the last state of that man would be worse than the first.

So with souls in the Universalist's Heaven. A Heaven filled with the souls of such men—with characters unchanged from their condition on earth, is not the Paradise of the blessed. And thus I maintain, whatever it may be, it is not a doctrine of common sense.

There is one other argument used and urged against the commonly received doctrine of eternal punishment. It is this: "How can God," they say, "being a God of love and benevolence, permit a large proportion of the immortal souls of the world to be punished forever in the misery and woe of everlasting death?" "How can this be?" To this I can give no reply. How can it be, is a question which man will perhaps never be able to answer, not even when we come to know "*even as we are known.*" But I can tell you how some of the human race may be made supremely happy throughout eternity, *i. e.*, in the enjoyment of the companionship of God and Christ, and the good and godly of all ages—*separate from all evil and sin, and evil and sinful men*, and the way to this is open to all through Jesus Christ. There is, however, one condition on which alone the Universalist's doctrine may be made true in the future, *by all men coming unto the Lord Jesus!* Would God we could dream of such a glorious consummation of the world!

In one word, by the generally received doctrine, *some* can be made happy, though some who deserve it shall be forever punished. On the doctrine under consideration (as shown) you subject *all* to the wretchedness already pointed out.

As to the numbers saved and the numbers lost, we have nothing to

do. One soul lost is the same to God as ten thousand souls, because one soul's duration is infinite—it never ends. So that one lost soul means the same, in the eye of God, as the loss of a myriad. He to whom one day is as a thousand years, and to whom a thousand years are as one day, values the happiness and peace of one soul as he does the accumulated joy of all the saved. For, just as one *infinite* straight line cannot be said to be shorter than any number of accumulated *infinite* straight lines, so the accumulated happiness or misery of one soul cannot be said to be less than that of any number of immortal souls.

II.—I cannot believe in the Universalist's doctrine, for it is contrary to the Sacred Scriptures.

Hitherto I have not appealed to Scripture at all; for I wished to test the truth apart from the revealed word of God. We have done so and we have found it decidedly wanting. And yet, notwithstanding the many passages (such as our text), in which the doctrine of the everlasting punishment of the finally impenitent is shown, our friends, like drowning men, catch at straws. They meet us with texts of Scripture, and notably with that one from Paul's 1st Epistle to the Corinthians, xv. 22, "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." True; but that is a far different doctrine from that of Universal Salvation, irrespective of life and character. The subject is death and life. Adam the source of the one, Christ of the other. Who are subject to death? Those who are in Adam, *i. e.*, the human race. Who are to be made alive? *Those who are in Christ, surely.* Show me that all men have been and now are *in Christ*, and I am henceforth a Universalist. But then, what of those who have died and are still dying impenitent and unforgiven? I fear there must be a Hell for them, after all.

On the other hand, turning to Scripture, we find it plainly taught that the good and the wicked are to be separated at the final consummation of the world. *Nothing is plainer than that.* See the Parables of our Lord. Those who are thrust from the presence of the Lord as unworthy, are represented invariably as suffering misery, woe, remorse and shame. And there is not one word in Scripture to show that these shall ever terminate. No purgatorial flames can cleanse when once the day of Grace is past, and no pity can melt the heart that withstood for a life-time the Love of the Lord Jesus

Christ. And in speaking of this separation, the very strongest terms are used in Scripture—terms which signify nothing but duration without end. The figures used in Scripture as plainly as possible signify this endless duration. “The fire that shall not be quenched,” “The worm that never dieth,” “The smoke of their torment arising forever and ever,” the tares and the wheat, the corn and the chaff, the net taking every kind of fish, the good kept, and the bad cast away, the rich man and Lazarus, are figures, every one of which teaches us the doctrine of final separation and condemnation. The unpardonable sin is neither to be forgiven in this world nor the world to come.

III.—I do not believe this doctrine, because it is not according to the doctrines of this Church :

“The end of God’s appointing this day (last Judgment) is for the manifestation of the glory of His mercy in the salvation of the elect, and of His justice in the damnation of the reprobate, who are wicked and disobedient. For then shall the righteous go into everlasting life, and receive the fulness of His joy and refreshing which shall come from the presence of the Lord : but the wicked who know not God, and obey not the Gospel of Jesus Christ, shall be cast into eternal torments, and be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power.”

These things being taken for granted—being taken as proven, I think I should rather say—it becomes us to reflect over the subject for a few moments.

(1.) Of the three points adduced, the second (Scripture) is the most important—it is our supreme standard of appeal.

(2.) Are those who profess this doctrine noted for fervent piety ? and is the doctrine one which tends thereunto ?

(3.) Would you, as fathers, like to instil into the minds of your children the doctrine that, do what you may, it will be all the same in another world ? Isn’t the risk too great a one ?

(4.) Would you as mothers, with quiet consciences, teach your daughters that purity, chastity, and all the sweet charms that go to make up our conception of woman, are mere bugbears, sent here to frighten humanity into an unreal and forced piety ? Would you like them to be brought up to think that the future world will right all the wrongs of the present, and that God is too good—too characterless, (*i.e.*)—to make any difference.

(5.) Husbands and wives, would you accept as the sacred truth of God, that which teaches that God makes no difference concerning that of which you make all the difference in the world—your faithfulness to each other?

I think you must recoil from all such ; and if so, betake you to the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ, and all will be well.—AMEN.





