A

DISCUSSION

OF THE

CONJOINT QUESTION,

"Is the Doctrine of Endless Punishment taught in the Bible?" or, "Does the Bible teach the Doctrine of the Final Holiness and Happiness of All Mankind?"

In a Series of Letters

BETWEEN

EZRA STILES ELY, D.D.,
PASTOR OF THE THIRD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, PHILADELPHIA,

AND

ABEL C. THOMAS,
PASTOR OF THE FIRST UNIVERSALIST CHURCH, PHILADELPHIA.

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Luke xiii. 3, 5: "I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."

Luke xiii. 23, 24: "Lord, are there few that be saved? And he said unto them, Strive to enter in at the strait gate; for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able."

Luke xiii. 27, 28: "Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out."

Luke xvi. 19—31: "There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day; and there was a certain beggar named Lazarus," &c.

John iii. 3: "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

John v. 28, 29: "The hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, to the resurrection of damnation."

Acts xvii. 31: "He hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained."

Romans ii. 12, 16: "As many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law; and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law . . . . . in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel."

2 Corinthians v. 10: "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."

2 Thessalonians i. 6—10: "When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power."

2 Peter ii. 4—9: "For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment," &c.

Jude 7: "Even as Sodom and Gomorrah . . . . . are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire."

Revelation xx. 12, 13: "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God . . . . . and the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them; and they were judged every man according to his works."

Revelation xxi. 8: "The fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers . . . . . shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death."

THE PRINCIPAL TEXTS

Introduced in this Discussion, in proof of the doctrine of Universal Salvation.

Genesis xxii. 18; xxviii. 14; Acts iii. 25: "In thee and in thy seed shall all the nations, families and kindreds of the earth be blessed."

Psalm xxii. 27, 28: "All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord; and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee."

Isaiah xxv. 8: "He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces."

Matthew xxii. 29, 30: "Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God; for in the resurrection . . . . they are as the angels of God in heaven."

Luke xx. 34, 35, 36: "The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage; but they who shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: neither can they die any more for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection."

John i. 29: "Behold the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world."

John iii. 35; vi. 37: "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hands . . . . All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."

John iv. 42: "This is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world."

John xii. 32: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me."

Acts xxiv. 15: "And have hope toward God . . . . . that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust."

Romans v. 20: "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound."

Romans viii. 21: "Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God."

Romans xi. 32, 36: "For God hath concluded all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all . . . . . For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever."

1 Corinthians xv. 22, 28: "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive . . . . And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all."

2 Corinthians i. 18, 19, 20: "Our word toward you was not yea, and nay, but in him was yea. For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, to the glory of God by us."

2 Corinthians v. 19: "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them."

Galatians iii. 8: "And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed."

Ephesians i. 9, 10: "Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure, which he hath purposed in himself; that in the dispensation of the fulness of time he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth."

Philippians ii. 9, 10, 11: "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name; that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

Philippians iii. 20, 21: "For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ; who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things to himself."

Colossians i. 19, 20: "For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell; and, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things to himself."

1 Timothy i. 15: "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners."

1 Timothy ii. 4: God our Saviour "will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time."

1 Timothy iv. 10: "For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, especially of those who believe."

Hebrews ii. 9, 14: "We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour, that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man . . . . That through death, he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil."

1 John ii. 1, 2: "If any man sin we have an advocate with Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."

1 John iii. 8: "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil."

1 John iv. 14: "We have seen and do testify, that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world."

1 John v. 10, 11: "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 believed not the record that God gave of his Son. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son."

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THEOLOGICAL DISCUSSION.

TO EZRA STILES ELY, STEPHEN H. TYNG, WILLIAM T. BRANTLEY, AND ALBERT BARNES.
Clergymen of the City of Philadelphia.

Brethren—Of all subjects ever presented for the consideration of man, that which relates to our final destiny is unquestionably the most important. The concerns of time are not worthy to be compared with the affairs of eternity. A few more years, and the present generation will be numbered with those that have gone before us to the world of spirits. And no one who accredits the doctrine of "life and immortality" can be altogether insensible to the importance of the question, What shall be the future condition of man?

You believe that a part or portion of the human race will be doomed to future endless punishment. You believe that this doctrine is revealed in the Bible, and that the Scriptures not only authorize but command you to proclaim it as the truth of heaven.

On the other hand, we expressly deny that said doctrine is true. We expressly deny that it is taught in the Bible, and hereby declare our solemn conviction, that *you cannot prove the endless punishment of any part or portion of mankind.* And we farther certify you, that we feel ourselves obligated to believe whatever doctrine can be fairly and clearly established by Scripture testimony.

With these views, and prompted solely by a desire to extend the knowledge and influence of Divine truth, we are induced respectfully to invite your attention to the following proposals:

Will you (or either of you) *deliver a series of Lectures in our churches respectively, during this winter, in proof of the doctrine of future endless misery?* Not more than two of said Lectures to be delivered each week—that is, one in

each of the churches, on any day or evening excepting Sunday. On our part, we will engage to invite our congregations respectively to attend said Lectures, and to attend ourselves. On your part, we shall expect you to give notice after each Lecture, that it will be reviewed by the Pastor of the Church in which it was delivered, on an evening which shall then be named; and we shall also expect you to invite your congregations respectively to attend.

Should the foregoing proposals not receive your approbation, we respectfully offer the following:

Will you (or either of you) *allow us* (or either of us) *to deliver a series of Lectures in your churches respectively, during this winter, in proof of the doctrine of the final salvation of all men?* The *spirit* of the preceding conditions to be preserved.

If it should be inquired why we have specially directed this letter and these proposals to you, this is our answer: We believe you are better qualified to sustain the doctrine of endless punishment, than are any other clergymen of Philadelphia; and we are desirous that ourselves and our congregations should hear the *strongest* arguments that can be advanced on that side of the question.

With sentiments of affectionate regard,

We are respectfully yours, &c.

ABEL C. THOMAS,
Pastor of the 1st Universalist Church.

S. W. FULLER,
Pastor of the 2d Universalist Church.

Philadelphia Dec. 9, 1833.

TO EZRA STILES ELY, STEPHEN H. TYNG, WILLIAM T. BRANTLEY, AND ALBERT BARNES.

Brethren—The importance of the subject of the previous letter, (addressed to you through the "Messenger and Universalist,") in connexion with our earnest desire to learn something definite in relation to our proposals, will,

we trust, be considered a sufficient apology, if any be needed, for the present communication. Our object is, simply, to be definitely certified of your determination in reference to the proposals adverted to. May we not then, expect a line from you touching the matter?

With sentiments of affectionate regard,

We are respectfully yours, &c.

ABEL C. THOMAS,

Philadelphia, Jan. 22. S. W. FULLER.

TO MR. ABEL C. THOMAS.

Philadelphia, Jan. 23d, 1834.

Dear Sir—The LETTER addressed to myself and three of my brethren in the ministry, *in the Messenger and Universalist*, on the 14th of December last, never met my eye until some time near the 6th of January; when the paper containing it was sent me through the post office. I have not conferred with the other gentlemen, whom you have addressed; and leave them to answer in any way which they may think proper.

With yourself I have some slight acquaintance; and permit me to say, that I entertain for you sentiments of respect. I do not withold from you the title of *Reverend*, for any other reason than this, that I use it to denote one whom I regard as a minister of Christ; and I cannot acknowledge any one who denies the future punishment of the wicked as sustaining that official character. I am glad that you have addressed me without any other title than that of *Brother*, and I very cordially salute you in return as a *brother in the human family*. Let the withholding of titles be no offence between us. Let us waive all dispute with each other about character, office, and every thing personal.

I decline making the pulpit or any place of worship the theatre of a public disputation; because I think few persons would be likely to become convinced of the truth by

hearing alternately two opponent preachers. We might make *partisans*, but I should think few *converts* to righteousness.

I propose to you to publish in *The Philadelphian* and any *Universalist newspaper* which you may select, a discussion between you and myself on the doctrine of universal salvation; on condition that you will first distinctly inform me which of the many prevalent systems of universal salvation you judge to be true. It is to be understood, however, that each editor of the papers concerned may cease from publishing the controversy whenever he may think it no longer profitable to his subscribers. Of course, you and I shall cease from the controversy when we choose. If either of us shall wish to proceed, when the other declines to answer, he will undoubtedly have the right to publish any thing he may write in any pages to which he can gain access.

My design is not useless disputation, nor have I any desire to excite unpleasant feelings. If I could, I should be glad to convince you of the truth of what I believe to be the gospel: for I fear that you may perish from the presence of the Lord for ever. I should be delighted could I be the means of effecting such a revolution in your sentiments as would prepare you to become an orthodox preacher of the gospel. On the other hand, you feel confident that I shall reach heaven; because all men, agreeably to your theory, will be saved.

I have only to add on the present occasion, that no one of our several pieces, if we wish them to be read, ought to exceed two columns in the Philadelphian.

Yours respectfully,
EZRA STILES ELY

TO MR EZRA STILES ELY.

Philadelphia, Jan. 27, 1834.

Dear Sir—I feel not a little satisfaction in being ena-

bled to testify to the frankness and courteous diction of your letter of the 23d inst. I have so repeatedly had cause to complain of the uncandid and ungenerous treatment received from opposing brethren, that the Christian spirit evinced by you is doubly gratifying to my feelings. I freely acknowledge that it is no more than I expected, and no less than I had reason to expect, from a gentleman of your character and standing in society. And I sincerely hope that the time may not be far distant, when a correspondent good feeling will be uniformly manifested by all the opponent sects in Christendom, and when an honest difference of opinion will prevent no one from "*endeavouring* to keep the unity of the spirit in he bond of peace."

I cordially unite with you in saying, "Let the with holding of titles be no offence between us. Let us waive all dispute with each other about character, office, and every thing personal." And while on this point, allow me to observe, that, in my opinion, the title "Reverend" belongs exclusively to the Supreme Being—that I do not prefix it to the names of my Universalist brethren, and that I *never* apply it to *man*, excepting in cases where the non-application of the title might be considered a mark of disrespect.

I am sorry you decline accepting either of the proposals contained in the letter of December 14. I am sorry, because I am confident that a public disputation, in the manner proposed, would excite little partisan feeling, were you one of the opponent preachers and myself the other. And more attention would thus be directed to the disputed question, than we can reasonably expect to excite by a written controversy.

You propose a written "discussion between you and myself on the doctrine of universal salvation."

It appears to me that your proposal should have allowed a choice of questions—because the joint proposal of S. W. Fuller and myself left it entirely optional with you, whether you would deliver a series of lectures in our churches in proof of endless punishment, or allow us t

deliver a series in *your* church in proof of the final salvation of all men. Should not your proposal have been so stated as to allow correspondent option on my part?

Moreover, you say, "I should be glad to convince you of the truth of what I believe to be the gospel . . . . . I should be delighted, could I be the means of effecting such a revolution in your sentiments, as would prepare you to become an orthodox preacher of the gospel." In view of this statement, the proper question would be, *Is the doctrine of endless punishment taught in the Bible?*

If this question should not meet your approbation, I propose annexing thereto the following: *Or does the Bible teach the final holiness and happiness of all mankind?* This joint question would, I apprehend, as equally divide the affirmative labour as either of us could desire.

In relation to "which of the many prevalent systems of universal salvation" I "judge to be true," I need only observe, that I believe the Bible furnishes no evidence of a punishment beyond the present life. I doubt not you will inform me, with equal frankness, whether you predicate endless punishment on the sins of this life, or on endless sinning.

On your part, you have proposed *The Philadelphian* as a medium of communication. On my part, I propose the *Messenger and Universalist*. You are editor of the former, and I am one of the editors of the latter. It is of course understood that both sides of the controversy shall appear in both papers. I perfectly agree with you, "that no one of our pieces, if we wish them to be read, ought to exceed two columns in The Philadelphian." And as to the length to which the controversy may be protracted, I shall have no objection to any equitable arrangement.

In concluding this letter, I shall adopt your own language: "My design is not useless disputation, nor have I any desire to excite unpleasant feelings." I have no worldly interest to subserve by advocating the doctrine of Universalism. I solemnly believe it to be the truth of God, and feel myself bound to bring into exercise my every energy in its proclamation and defence. And I am

strengthened and encouraged in the labour of love, by an unwavering confidence, that even my opposing brethren shall not "perish from the presence of the Lord for ever." In *them* I behold the ransomed of the Lord. In *them* I recognise the children of our common Father. And I rejoice in believing that the whole race of mankind shall eventually bow to the life-giving sceptre of the Prince of Peace.

Yours respectfully,
ABEL C. THOMAS

TO MR. ABEL C. THOMAS.

Philadelphia, Jan: 31st, 1834.

Dear Sir—I desired to know, distinctly, what scheme of universal salvation you believe to be true, that our controversy might be brought within reasonable limits. The Universalists who are called *Restorationists*, have proved, I think, unanswerably from the Bible, that there shall be punishment experienced by sinful men in a state of existence after the present. They have also attempted to show, without success, in my judgment, that after future punishment has been experienced for some finite, but indefinite, time, there will be, in the lapse of everlasting ages, a restoration of all human beings to happiness.

From your last letter I learn that you are not of their number. You have furnished me with two propositions which you are willing to support.

First, you assert, in your letter of December 9th, 1833, that you feel yourself OBLIGATED TO BELIEVE WHATEVER DOCTRINE CAN BE FAIRLY AND CLEARLY ESTABLISHED BY SCRIPTURE TESTIMONY. This I adopt as one of the settled principles on which our discussion is to rest.

Secondly, you assert, in your letter of January 27th, that you "BELIEVE THE BIBLE FURNISHES NO EVIDENCE OF A PUNISHMENT BEYOND THE PRESENT LIFE."

This doctrine is held by some, in connexion with an opinion that this is man's only state of existence, and ac-

cording to their theory, there is no future state for mankind, either of happiness or of misery; because man at death ceases to exist.

Others hold, that all men who arrive at the moment of death without having repented, will thereafter be annihilated; and so on the principle of the *Destructionists*, will escape all future punishment

Others teach, that in the moment of entering the future spiritual state of existence, every man not before converted to God will become a renewed person, a child of God, a lover of holiness, and so will escape all future punishment.

Others again teach, that the present is the only state of retribution for man; that the judgment is already past; that strict, full, and final justice is done to all men in this life; and that the life to come is a state of happiness resulting from the mere, unmingled mercy of God, irrespective of the claims of justice, which have all been satisfied in relation to each individual before his death, by the punishment of his sins in his own person.

Others, finally, teach, that when men come to die, whatever may have been their sins, and whether they have repented of them or not in this world, Christ has, by his mediatorial work and full satisfaction for all the sins of all men, secured to them an immediate introduction to heaven. This is what they call universal salvation by free grace.

I should like to know upon which of these grounds you judge, that *there is no punishment beyond the present life:* or if you have some other scheme of universal salvation from all future punishment, which has not been named, that you would frankly disclose it. If you choose, however, you will undoubtedly have the right to resort to any one or all of these theories, which I deem *refuges of lies.*

That you may not take the trouble to argue against doctrines which I disclaim, I shall freely state my CREED on such subjects as I suppose may be involved in our present discussion.

I believe, then, that the one, only, living and true God, the Maker of man, exists, a wise, just, kind, and good moral governor of all rational beings—that his creature man is the intelligent, sensitive, free, accountable, efficient author of all his own moral actions—that every accountable, free, moral agent, of the human family, has freely, and without any compulsion, necessity, or divine efficiency, exerted in the case, sinned against his Moral Governor, by acting in opposition to God's law—that the present life is a state of trial, preparatory to a future state of endless retribution—that in the present life the providence of God causes much natural good and evil to mingle in every man's lot—that all the pains of this life are indicative of God's displeasure against sin; and that all the favours men receive from Heaven are indications of God's goodness—that in the present life obedience to the moral law is not fully and perfectly rewarded, nor disobedience universally and completely punished—that if men repent and become the friends of God, while in their present state of trial, all their sins will in the moment of such repentance be pardoned, for the sake of Christ's mediatorial work, so that they never more shall experience any pains which are not fatherly corrections, intended to improve them—that if men do not repent of their sins in the present life and become children of God by that great moral change which the Saviour describes as a *new birth*, they suffer pain in this life, and will suffer in a future state of being, and will suffer for ever, unpardoned, and accursed of their Maker—that all the sufferings of any one unpardoned sinner, after the present life, will be exactly proportioned to the amount of his crimes in this life; and will correspond to the measure of his continued sinning in the life to come—that no lost sinner in the future life will ever there repent and be pardoned—that all pain is an attribute of feeling, and that all the punishments of the damned will consist for ever in the feelings of their own minds—that sinful feelings are in their own nature, or their speedy mental results, painful—that all the sufferings of the lost are deserved and

suitable vindications of God's essential justice and moral government—and that no sinner will ever be damned of God one moment longer than he continues an obstinate rebel against the justice, mercy and goodness of God manifested through Jesus Christ.

It may be important to add, that I believe *mind* to be a distinct substance from matter; that *spirit* is *mind* conceived of as capable of subsisting and acting independently of bodily organization; that the souls of men are active, sensitive, intelligent and efficient agents, in a state of spiritual existence, called *the intermediate state*, between death and the resurrection of the body; that a particular personal judgment passes on each spirit of a man so soon as it permanently leaves the body; and that there shall be, in the end of the world, a resurrection of every human body, not before raised from the dead; in order that each spirit may inhabit for ever its own former body, resuscitated, and adapted to its endless state.

If you will deal with equal candour, give me your creed, and let our readers know how far we agree in sentiment; it may prevent much useless argumentation.

Should I meet you on the ground of *reason* and *analogy*, I should say, God is as good *now* as he will be at any future time; and yet his wisdom, power and goodness have not prevented all sin and suffering now; and therefore there is no reason to conclude these same attributes will preclude rebellion and misery at any time hereafter.

I might add, that man's wisdom and goodness do not prevent him from being wicked and miserable now, and there is no reason to infer that they will in future; for all experience shows that *wicked men and seducers wax worse and worse.*

We come, however, to the Bible, and I am glad our inquiry is to be, *What saith the Scripture?*

The Bible throughout presents to my mind a contrast between the present character, and the future prospects of the righteous and the wicked. It sets in opposition salvation and damnation, heaven and hell. We read,

The Lord preserveth all them that love him: but all the wicked will he destroy," Psalm cxlv. 20. "The way of the wicked he turneth upside down," Psalm cxlvi. 9. "The ungodly," we are told in the first Psalm, "are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment:—the way of the ungodly shall perish." In the second Psalm, kings and judges are exhorted to "kiss the Son, lest he be angry; and *they* perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little." "The Lord is known by the judgment which he executeth: the wicked is snared in the work of his own hands. The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God," Psalm ix. 16, 17. "The Lord trieth the righteous: but the wicked, and him that loveth violence, his soul hateth. Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and a horrible tempest: this shall be the portion of their cup," Psalm xi. 5, 6. "The Lord shall swallow them up in his wrath, and the fire shall devour them," Psalm xxi. 9. Now to *destroy* the wicked, to turn their way upside down, to drive them away like chaff, not to let them *stand in the judgment*, to turn them into hell, and to have snares, fire, brimstone and tempest for their portion, must mean any thing rather than universal salvation.

I remain yours respectfully.

EZRA STILES ELY.

TO MR. EZRA STILES ELY.

Philadelphia, Feb. 8, 1834.

Dear Sir—In my last letter, I proposed the following joint question as the basis of our discussion, viz. *Is the doctrine of endless punishment taught in the Bible? or does the Bible teach the final holiness and happiness of all mankind?* As you have not objected to this proposition, it is presumable that you accede to it. This, then, I shall consider a settled point.

When you desired me to state "which of the many prevalent systems of universal salvation" I "judge to be true," I supposed, and felt myself justified in supposing, that you simply wished to know whether I did or did not hold to punishment in the future state. I frankly certified you that "I believe the Bible furnishes no evidence of a punishment beyond the present life." But it seems that this answer did not cover the entire ground of your query. You ask me whether I hold to the *annihilation* of the human race; or whether I believe with the Destructionists, that the wicked shall be blotted out of existence. All this you ask in full view of the fact, that I had engaged to sustain, on Bible testimony, the final *holiness* and *happiness* of *all mankind!*

After noticing five theories, including the two above referred to, each of which you seem to consider worthy the name *Universalism*, you say, that if I have any other system of universal salvation, you would like me to disclose it—and then you add, "If you choose, however, you will undoubtedly have the right to resort to any one or all of these theories, which I deem *refuges of lies*."

Let us suppose that in my last letter to you I had drawn a faithful portraiture of Mahommedanism—another of Mormonism—another of original Calvinism—another of Arminianism—and a fifth of Arminio-Calvinism. And suppose that, having placed these several theories before you, I should have added, "If you have some other scheme of endless punishment, which has not been named, I desire you frankly to disclose it. If you choose, however, you will undoubtedly have a right to resort to any one or all of these theories, which I deem *refuges of lies*."—In this case what would have been your judgment? I am satisfied you would have said, in effect, 'What does all this amount to? It is any thing but argument. By classing the system of an opponent with theories which you know he abhors, and then styling them *refuges of lies*, you may excite prejudice against him—but you cannot reasonably expect, by such a course, to subserve the interest of the truth of God." Such, I am

persuaded, would have been your judgment—and your judgment, in my opinion, would have been just.

There are but three systems of Universalism. 1st. Calvinism Improved—chiefly differing from Calvinism in supposing a *universal vicarious* atonement, and in the consequent salvation of all men. Edward Mitchell, of New York, is, I believe, the only public advocate of this form of Universalism in the United States.*

2d. Arminianism Extended—the system advocated by Winchester, Chauncey, and others. It extended probation into the future state, and allowed of future limited punishment, resulting in the final holiness and happiness of all mankind. This system is held by many Universalists—and *prominently* by the "Massachusetts Restorationist Association."

3d. In noticing the third system, I shall give you my own views—premising that they are the views of a large majority of American Universalists. 1st. I believe that God "will render to every man according to his deeds," that is, according to *his own* deeds, Rom. ii. 6;—consequently I reject the doctrine of *vicarious* atonement. 2d. I believe that "the righteous shall be recompensed IN THE EARTH, *much more* the wicked and the sinner," Prov. xi. 31;—consequently, "I believe the Bible furnishes no evidence of a punishment beyond the present life." 3d. I believe that God "will reconcile all things to himself," that "God may be all in all," Col. i. 20; 1 Cor. xv. 28. And this salvation I believe to be "the gift of God, and not of works, lest any man should boast," Ephes. ii. 8, 9.

Although I have been thus particular in stating my *Bible creed*, I wish to have it distinctly understood, that in the present controversy, I shall confine my remarks to the two prominent doctrines of endless punishment, on the one hand, and the final holiness and happiness of all mankind, on the other. With topics of minor importance I shall have nothing to do, excepting so far as they

* Edward Mitchell departed this life on the 8th day of August 834.

may have a *direct bearing* on the general issue I shall expect you to furnish such Bible testimony in proof of endless punishment as you may deem conclusive; and I shall produce Bible testimony in proof of the final salvation of all mankind. I shall use all honourable means to convince you that the passages by you cited do not establish the point to be proved; and in like manner you will be called on to show wherein the evidence by me ad duced, fails to establish the doctrine I have engaged to sustain.

You are aware that all I desired you to state, was, "whether you predicate endless punishment on the sins of this life, or on endless sinning." The CREED with which you have furnished me was therefore uncalled for, excepting so far as it gave me to understand your views on that particular point of doctrine. And in my view, any thing farther was wholly unnecessary. Until the joint question mentioned in the first paragraph of this letter, is disposed of, I shall not consent to discuss the doctrines of original sin, total or partial depravity, necessity or free will, moral or physical ability or inability, vicarious atonement, the trinity, materiality or immateriality, intermediate state—or in short any other doctrines than those mentioned in the question. My reasons for confining the present discussion to these limits, are briefly as follows:

The original proposal stated, that "of all subjects ever presented for the consideration of man, that which relates to our *final destiny* is unquestionably the most important." Our readers are primarily interested in coming to "a knowledge of the truth," in relation to the momentous concerns of eternity. They feel comparatively little interest in minor points of theology. If you can prove the doctrine of endless punishment, they will mourn over the prospective doom of the children of humanity; but if I can clearly establish the doctrine of the "reconciliation of all things," and thus vindicate the ways of God to man, they will "rejoice with *joy unspeakable* and *full of glory*." They have fixed their eyes upon us, and are saying in

their hearts, "Brethren, do not perplex our minds with the subtilties of polemic theology. We wish you to keep the two prominent doctrines constantly in view. We wish to know, definitely, what will be the final destiny of ourselves, our children, our relatives, and of the world at large. We beg you to leave minor points out of the question. We wish the discussion to be of definite character. Let the inquiry be, *What saith the Scripture?* Exercise Christian charity and candour, and we have little doubt that the truth of the matter will be clearly revealed."

As to the passages quoted in the concluding paragraph of your letter, I have only to remark, that you will most probably introduce them, in their proper place, as proofs of the doctrine you suppose them to teach; and they will then receive the attention they justly deserve.

I shall expect your next communication to contain as many of your proofs of endless punishment as to you may appear expedient.

Respectfully yours,
ABEL C. THOMAS.

TO MR. ABEL C. THOMAS.

Philadelphia, Feb. 17th, 1834.

Dear Sir—You have distinctly informed me, in the letters already received from you, (1.) that in your opinion, we are bound to believe whatever doctrine can be fairly and clearly established by Scripture testimony; (2.) that the Bible furnishes no evidence of a punishment beyond the present life; (3.) that in the present life God fully and finally recompenses the righteous and the wicked, according to each person's own deeds; (4.) that the Bible teaches no doctrine of a *vicarious* atonement; and (5.) that the Bible asserts the final holiness and happiness of all mankind in a future state. On each of these points except the first, we differ in our judgment.

The Bible furnishes much evidence of a punishment beyond the present life, which shall be experienced by all who die without having been born again. This punishment includes their being deprived of the happiness of the righteous in heaven, and all the painful feelings which will be experienced in hell, whatever may be the occasion or the instrumental cause of those pains.

Our Saviour says, "Except a man be born again he cannot see——he cannot enter the kingdom of God," John iii. 3, 5. These words imply, that some men are not in the kingdom of God; that some men have not been born again; and that unless they should be born again, they shall for ever remain excluded from the kingdom of God. If all men are born again, or will be born again, it was absurd for Christ to frighten men with the idea of their not entering the kingdom of God.

"God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life," John iii. 16. Here PERDITION and EVERLASTING LIFE are exhibited in contrast. These words clearly teach, that if God had not given his Son, men would all have perished; but that now believers, and believers alone, shall escape perdition and enjoy everlasting life. This corresponds with another saying of Jesus, Mark xvi. 16, that "he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." Before his death, Christ asserted the *manner*, the *necessity* and the *design* of it, saying, "as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life," John iii. 14 15. If there are none who will remain in unbelief, the threat of perdition was idle, and unworthy the Saviour. Had Christ believed the doctrine of universal salvation, it would have been natural for him to have said, "he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be saved." Or he might have caused it to be written, "he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; and all shall believe and be baptized." This last

statement, however, would have been contrary to known truth; for in every past age multitudes have neither believed nor been baptized. Why should Christ say any thing about *damnation* or *perdition*, if it is certain, in his mind, that all will be saved? Why should he have said, "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" Matt. xxiii. 33. The *damnation of hell* surely does not mean the *salvation of heaven* and had Christ, who as God knows all things, known any way of escape from hell for the hypocrites to whom he addressed the interrogation, his interrogation would have proved himself a deceiver. "Ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation," ver. 14. These same persons Christ accuses of not entering the kingdom of heaven themselves, and of not suffering others to enter.

Would you, sir, dare to accost Christ and say, "You knew well enough how that generation of vipers would escape the damnation of hell, and enter the kingdom of heaven! You knew also, that none will be prevented from entering the kingdom of heaven; for all shall enter and be saved." On the supposition that all are to be saved, one of these vipers might have replied, "Who will *not* escape the damnation of hell?" Will you attempt to prove that *damnation* does not mean *damnation*, but something tantamount to *salvation?*

"He that being often reproved hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy," Prov. xxix. 1. Here sudden destruction is denounced against some; and it is declared that there is no remedy for that destruction. This passage cuts off all hope from those who assert *that there* is *a remedy*, and a restoration ultimately, to be expected in the future life. If the hardened sinner spoken of is to be destroyed merely in the present life, and then is to be restored to Divine favour, the declaration is not true, *that he shall be destroyed without* REMEDY.

I cannot but think this passage in Proverbs refers to the same destruction which Christ spoke of when he said, "Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to

kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell," Matthew x. 28. This is a destruction *after* the dissolution of soul and body; a destruction of the whole man in hell. How, then, say some among you, that there is no hell; or that there is no evil experienced by any of the human family after the present life? If there is no such thing as God's destroying both soul and body in hell—that is, in some state after the termination of our earthly course by natural death, we must regard our Saviour as resorting to imposition, when he exhorted men to fear unreal objects of dread and alarm. Would any honest person warn a man to fear that which is not to be feared; or to avoid an evil to which none are exposed?

In Ezekiel xviii. 31, 32, God remonstrates with sinners, saying, "Why will ye die?"——"for I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye." Natural death, or the dissolution of soul and body, is inevitable. It would be mockery to approach a gasping mortal and ask him, Why wilt thou cease to breathe? It is of a death, that may be avoided; of a spiritual, second, and everlasting death in sin and to all holiness, that Jehovah demands, *Why will ye die?* Had I the sentiments of Universalists, I might very lawfully and consistently with myself reply to my Maker, "Do not trouble yourself to expostulate with me, nor endeavour to excite groundless alarms; for my Lord is well assured that NONE WILL DIE. ALL WILL BE SAVED; and be saved by himself too! Why, then, should he take the trouble to swear by himself, saying, *As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked?*" Ezek. xxxiii. 11.

On the supposition that there is no death after natural death, every such solemn and tender warning of our merciful God must be regarded as a solemn farce. That there is a *second death*, which consists in an everlasting separation from the enjoyment of God and the society of the good in heaven, is clearly taught in Revelation xxi. 7, 8, "He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will

be his God, and he shall be my son. But the fearful and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death." Here the pen of inspiration has drawn a contrast between the future state of one who overcometh this sinful world, and persons of a different character: but if all men will be saved immediately after leaving the present state of being, there is no second death, and then he who overcometh, and all who die impenitent, liars, murderers, idolaters and unbelievers, shall alike *inherit all things;* and none have their part in a state of punishment symbolized by a lake of fire unquenchable. Poetry I know proves nothing; but the sentiment expressed in the last cited text of Scripture is admirably expanded in the following stanzas:

'Far from the utmost verge of day
Those gloomy regions lie,
Where flames amid the darkness play,
The worm shall never die.

The breath of God—his angry breath
Supplies and fans the fire:
There sinners taste the second death,
And would, but can't expire.

Conscience, the never dying worm,
With torture gnaws the heart;
And wo and wrath in every form,
Is now the sinner's part!

Sad world indeed! ah, who can bear
For ever there to dwell?
For ever sinking in despair,
In all the pains of hell!'

It is my prayer that you may never have personal experience of the truth of these lines.

Were there no other passage of the Bible on the subject of controversy between us than the parable of the *good seed and the tares*, I should think that sufficient for the refutation of your opinion: for Christ, in explaining

his own meaning, said, "The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one; the enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of the world. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father," Matt. xiii. 38—43. Here our Saviour tells us what shall take place in the end of the world: that then there shall be among men two sorts of children;—the children of the kingdom of God and the children of the wicked one, the devil; that the children of the wicked one having grown like tares in God's kingdom of this world, the field, shall be gathered out of it;—that the glory, honour, and happiness of the righteous, who are the children of God, shall then be comparable to the clear shining of the sun; and that the sufferings of those who have done iniquity, and have continued tares to the end of the world, are fitly described by wailing, gnashing of teeth, and the tortures that would result from casting persons into a furnace of fire.

All this I believe as firmly as that there is any future state for man; and I affectionately and respectfully, therefore, entreat you, dear sir, and all who may read our letters, to *flee from the wrath to come* on all who die the second death. Make your calling and election sure, and then while many perish in their sins, you will be glorious with our God.

Other proofs of the future punishment of persons, who die unpardoned, and NOT "meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light," will be presented, if the Lord permit, in some subsequent letter.

Yours respectfully,
EZRA STILES ELY.

TO MR. EZRA STILES ELY.

Philadelphia, Feb. 22, 1834.

Dear Sir—In attempting to prove any particular doctrine by the Bible, due caution should be observed in the selection of the testimony. Such passages only should be quoted as are supposed unequivocally to prove the doctrine in question. And I have little doubt, that in endeavouring to establish the doctrine of endless punishment, you have cited the passages which to your mind appear most conclusive.

Before I proceed to an examination of your proofs, allow me to observe, that it would not be courteous in either of us to charge the other with a denial of the Scriptures. I am satisfied that our differences in sentiment arise, not from a rejection of the Bible on either hand, but from our different apprehensions of the import of its language. And it should be remembered that my opinions do not more widely differ from yours, than yours do from mine. An intimated charge of infidelity by either party would, therefore, be equally indecorous and unjust.

As it is understood to be mutually conceded that the parties to the discussion accredit the testimony of the Bible, according to their respective apprehensions of its meaning, the simple quotation of a Scripture passage should not be considered sufficient proof of a position. An attempt should, in all cases, be made to show, that the passage establishes the point to be proved.

In proof of endless punishment, you quote John iii. 3, 5: "Except a man be born again he cannot see—he cannot enter the kingdom of God." But you assume that the *kingdom of God* here mentioned, appertains to a future immortal existence. This is the point to be proved. LIGHTFOOT, whose general orthodoxy you will not question, says: "That the kingdom of God, or of heaven, are terms convertible in the evangelist, is obvious to every one that will take the pains to compare them; and that by the kingdom of God, or of heaven, is meant the kingdom and times of the Messiah, is so plain, that i

needs no argument to prove it. . . . Speech is there had (John iii. 3,) of Christ's kingdom of heaven upon earth, or the state under Christ." So also BEZA, WHITBY, &c.

John iii. 14—16, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world," &c. That *to perish* does not signify to suffer endless punishment is obvious. "There is a *just* man that *perisheth* in his righteousness," Eccl. vii. 15. "The *righteous perisheth*," Isa. lvii. 1. "It cannot be that a *prophet perish* out of Jerusalem," Luke xiii. 33. You say, however, that *to perish* and to *have everlasting life* are exhibited in contrast. Granted. But in thence arguing the doctrine of endless punishment, you assume that the everlasting life mentioned in the text appertains to a future immortal existence. "*This* is *life eternal*, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent," John xvii. 3. "He that believeth on him that sent me HATH everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but IS PASSED from death unto life," John v. 24. "He that believeth on me HATH *everlasting life*," John vi. 47. The believer enjoys *everlasting life* in *this* world, and the unbeliever *perishes* in *this* world. The former lives on the knowledge of God—the latter perishes with moral hunger.

Mark xvi. 16, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned." As you apply this passage to a future state, and speak of it in an unrestricted sense, you cannot justly object to being tried by it. "These signs shall follow them that believe; in my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover." As these signs do not follow *you*, you cannot be a believer, and of course you must be damned, according to your own showing! And if to be damned signifies to be doomed to endless punishment, such must be your fate. But the

truth is, the passage, in my judgment, had its fulfilment in the age of miracles. To that age were confined the particular salvation and damnation spoken of, inasmuch as to that age were confined the signs of believers. As to the word *damn*, Dr. CAMPBELL remarks, that in the text it corresponds exactly to the English word condemn,—and affirms that the passage has no reference to a future life. So also HORNE. If Jesus had intended to teach endless punishment, he would have said, "He that believeth and is baptized in *this* world, shall be saved in the next—and he that believeth not and is not baptized in *this* world, shall be eternally damned in the *next*."

Matt. xxiii. 14, "Ye shall receive the greater damnation." You have not attempted to prove that this "greater damnation" signifies endless punishment. On the parallel passage, Mark xii. 40, PEARCE remarks, "Rather judgment or punishment; by which is meant, that they should suffer more severely than other sinners, when the Jewish state should be destroyed."

Matt. xxiii. 33, "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" You have not attempted to prove that the hell here spoken of is in a future state of existence. You have simply quoted the passage, relying on the prepossession of the reader for the application you desire. Be it known that I as firmly accredit the testimony of Jesus as you can possibly do. The question is simply on the *import* of the testimony. If you can prove that the damnation or punishment of *gehenna* [the word translated *hell*] was to be inflicted in a future state of existence, I will yield the argument, but you cannot reasonably expect me to believe your unsupported assertions. I am prepared to meet you in discussion of all that the Bible says about gehenna. Before you said, "The *damnation of hell* surely does not mean the *salvation of heaven*," and before you put the question, "Will you attempt to show that *damnation* does not mean *damnation*, but something tantamount to *salvation?*" you should have attempted to show from the Bible that damnation means misery in a future state, and that the dam-

nation of hell surely means endless punisnment. Let me respectfully entreat you to forbear *assuming* the predicates of your arguments.

Proverbs xxix. 1, "He that being often reproved hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy." I have frequently been surprised to hear this passage seriously urged in proof of endless punishment. When we say of a man in the last stages of consumption, "he will certainly die, and that without remedy,"—or of a house enveloped in flames, "it will certainly be destroyed, and that without remedy;" do we mean that either the man or the house will be miserable in a future state? Solomon says of a "naughty person," that "his calamity shall come suddenly; suddenly shall he be *broken without remedy*," Prov. vi. 15. Of the "chief of the priests and people," it was said, "they mocked the messengers of God . . . . . until the wrath of the Lord arose against his people, till *there was no remedy;* therefore *he brought upon them the king of the Chaldeans*, who *slew their young men*," &c, 2 Chron. xxxvi. 16, 17. The most that can be said of the text and the two foregoing cases is, that death was inevitable—there was no remedy—no escape.

Matt. x. 28, "Fear not them that kill the body," &c. The parallel is Luke xii. 4, 5. You remark in effect, that if *your view* of the text be not correct, our Saviour exhorted men to fear unreal objects of dread! This is assuming that he taught endless punishment in the passage before us. And it supposes also, that, in your opinion, there is no object of dread besides endless punishment. Whatever be the object of dread mentioned in the text, it is certain that the *disciples* alone are exhorted to fear it! *No such language was ever addressed to any but the* DISCIPLES *of Christ.* Be it noticed, also, that whatever is *destroyed* ceases to exist, and of course ceases to suffer or enjoy. Moreover, if *God* be intended by the word *him*, (which is questionable,) it should not be forgotten that his *ability* to do certain things is not sufficient authority for affirming that he *will do* them. He "is able of these stones to raise up children to Abraham," Matt. iii. 9, but you do not sup-

pose he ever *will* do so. So soon as you present your arguments in proof that *gehenna* is in the immortal state of existence, and that *there* soul and body *will be* destroyed, I will attend to your reasoning—but I am not willing to rest the controversy on your apprehension of the signification of a text.

Ezekiel xviii. 31, 32: xxxiii. 11: You say, and correctly that "natural death, or the dissolution of soul and body is inevitable"—but it does not follow that death by famine, pestilence, and the sword, was inevitable to the house of Israel—nor that "a spiritual, second, and everlasting death in sin and to all holiness," is spoken of in the passage referred to. I do not find the word *spiritual* in either of those passages, nor do I find aught said about a "second and everlasting death." Nor have you furnished any proof that such a death is intended. And allow me to assure you, that if you "had the sentiments of Universalists," you would not have the slightest cause to address the Deity in the manner you have stated. As we propose basing our discussion on *proofs*, I shall expect you to furnish your reasons for supposing that "a spiritual, second, and everlasting death" is taught in the cited passages.

Rev. xxi. 7, 8: This passage speaks of "the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death." You have a very summary method of proving the doctrine of endless punishment. You say that "here the pen of inspiration has drawn a contrast between *the future state* of one who overcometh this sinful world, and persons of a different character." Yet you have not so much as attempted to prove that *the future state* is referred to! I do not pretend to know much about the Apocalypse, and must therefore request you to furnish your reasons for supposing that this lake of fire is in the eternal world. In Rev. xix. we read of eating the flesh of kings and others—of a battle between the beast and him that sat on the horse and their respective armies—that the beast and false prophet were cast alive into "*a lake of fire burning with brimstone*," and that "the remnant were slain, and all the fowls were filled with their flesh." I can see no propriety

in referring such language to a future state. Nor indeed do I see the propriety of urging so confessedly hyperbolical a book as the Apocalypse in proof of any important doctrine.

As you acknowledge that poetry *proves nothing*, I need not notice the stanzas you have quoted. In discussing the question before us, I wish to have nothing to do with the sallies of poetical imagination.

> "The poet's eye, in a fine phrensy rolling,
> Doth glance from earth to heaven, from heaven to earth:
> And as imagination bodies forth
> The forms of *things unknown*, the poet's pen
> Turns them to shapes, and gives to *airy nothing*
> A local habitation, and a name."

Matt. xiii. 38—43: In your remarks on the parable of *the good seed and the tares*, you have assumed two important points: 1st. That by the phrase "end of the world," is signified the destruction of the *material* world. Are you aware that two words of essentially different signification are each translated *world* in the parable before us? "The field is the *world*," (κόσμος.) "The end of the *world*," (αἰωνός.) On the latter phrase, PEARCE says, "Rather end of this *age*, viz. that of the Jewish dispensation." And on verse 41, "This is spoken, not of what shall happen at the end of the [material] world, but what was to happen at the end or destruction of the Jewish state." The same phrase occurs in Matt. xxiv. 3; 1 Cor. x. 11; Heb. ix. 26. In the latter it is said that Jesus "appeared in *the end of the world* [age or dispensation] to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." I need not enlarge.

2d. You assume that the furnace of fire, spoken of in the parable, is in the eternal world. You are aware that *Egypt* is called a *furnace*, Jer. xi. 4. And it is said, Isa. xxi. 9, "He shall pass over to his strong hold for fear, and his princes shall be afraid of the ensign, saith the Lord, whose *fire is in Zion*, and HIS FURNACE IN JERUSALEM." And again, Ezek. xxii. 18—22, "Son of man

the house of Israel is to me become dross; all they are brass, and tin, and iron, and lead, in the midst of the furnace. . . . . I will gather you *into the midst of* JERUSALEM. As they gather silver and brass *into the midst of the* FURNACE, to blow the fire upon it to melt it; so will I gather you in mine anger and in my fury, and I will leave you there and melt you. . . . . As silver is melted in the *midst of the furnace*, so shall ye be melted in the midst thereof," viz. in Jerusalem, as in ver. 19.

Moreover, the parable says that "all things that offend and them which do iniquity" shall be gathered "*out of his kingdom*." How could they be gathered *out of it*, if they were never *in it?* And were such characters ever in the kingdom in a future state of existence?

I have thus noticed all the passages you have adduced in proof of endless punishment. I regret having so frequently found it necessary to call your attention to points which you have not attempted to prove. It is presumable that neither of us can quote a Scripture passage of the existence of which the other is ignorant. Nor can either of us quote a passage which the other denies. It is therefore of much importance that the bearing of every passage on the doctrine it is quoted to establish should be clearly pointed out.

As our object is not useless disputation, I shall present only a *few* proofs of the final holiness and happiness of all mankind, in each letter—being persuaded that such a course will prevent the confusion that might be consequent of citing a multiplicity of passages.

Colossians i. 19, 20: "For it pleased the Father tha in him [Christ] should all fulness dwell; and having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to *reconcile* ALL THINGS *unto himself;* by him, I say, whethe. they be things in earth, or things in heaven." In my judgment, this passage distinctly teaches the final holiness and happiness of all mankind—inasmuch as it teaches the *reconciliation of all things to God.*

From the language of the text I feel myself authorized to believe and teach, that it as perfectly pleased the Fa

ther "to reconcile all things unto himself," as it did that "in Christ should all fulness dwell." And I suppose you do not feel disposed to deny, that he who is reconciled to God must be happy.

If it be objected, as it probably will, that the phrase "*all things*" does not mean *all mankind*, but simply *believers*, I reply, 1st. That the reconciliation of believers is specially spoken of in verse 21: "And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet *now* HATH *he reconciled*." This *special* reconciliation of believers cannot justly be supposed to militate against the *universal* reconciliation before spoken of. In 2 Cor. v. 18, 19, we read: "And *all things* are of God, who HATH *reconciled* us [believers] *to himself* by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ *reconciling* THE WORLD *to himself*, not imputing their trespasses unto them." By which non-imputation, I understand, that God did not consider the trespasses of the world any objection to their reconciliation—for he who is sinless *needs* no reconciliation.

2d. In the verses preceding the text, we read as follows: "For by him were ALL THINGS created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: ALL THINGS were created by him, and for him. and he is before ALL THINGS, and by him ALL THINGS consist. And he is the head of the body, the Church; who is the beginning, the first born from the dead; that in ALL THINGS he might have the pre-eminence,"—and then come in the words of the text. In the above quotation the phrase in question is used *five times*—and in each of these instances you allow that the meaning is unlimited. Why then limit the phrase in the declaration, "by him *to reconcile* ALL THINGS *to himself?*" By what rule of interpretation would you feel authorized to urge a limitation in the latter instance, while you acknowledge *universality* in he former?

Philippians ii. 9—11, "Wherefore God also hath

highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name, that in the name of Jesus *every knee* should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that *every tongue* should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." If the phrases "every knee," and "every tongue," do not express *universality*, I am at a loss to conceive what words could be used to convey the idea.

If it be objected, that though all mankind will thus bow the knee and thus confess, many will do it unwillingly, and to their own shame and endless condemnation, I remark, 1st. That nothing like this appears on the face of the text. We are not certified that some will bow and confess willingly, and others unwillingly—nor that some will thus bow and confess to their eternal happiness, and others to their endless condemnation. Far from it. In whatever manner and with whatever feelings, *one* will bow and confess, "*every* knee shall bow and *every* tongue shall confess." 2d. The text does not inform us that any will bow and confess that Jesus is Lord to their own endless condemnation—but "*to the glory of God the Father*." And we read, Psalm l. 23, "Whoso offereth *praise* glorifieth me." And surely endless condemnation would not be subject matter of praise. We further read, 1 Cor. xii. 3, "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Spirit."

In concluding this letter, let me affectionately entreat you and all our readers, to receive, believe and rejoice in this gracious testimony. The precious records of Divine love, and the faithful promises of our God, fill my own soul with the peace that passeth understanding. And though I have not the smallest doubt of your final blessedness in Christ, I am desirous that you should enjoy the present happiness of believing in the ultimate reconciliation of all things. Blessed are the people who know the joyful sound. They walk in the light of God's countenance, and thus to walk is heaven.

Respectfully yours,

ABEL C. THOMAS.

TO MR. ABEL C. THOMAS.

Philadelphia, March 7th, 1834.

Dear Sir—The pages of the Bible are so replete with the doctrine, that some of our race die in their iniquities, and are punished in the future state of being, that in my former letters I have cited passages not because I judged them to be the most conclusive, but because providentially my eye was turned upon them at the opening of the book.

Frequently the simple quotation of Scripture, if it be understood in its plain and obvious meaning, is "sufficient proof of a position;" and commentary and criticism are needful to those alone who wish to believe a different doctrine from that taught by the holy Spirit of inspiration. For instance, these propositions, "there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men,"—and "these shall go away into everlasting punishment," are so simple and conclusive, that none but an Atheist will require elucidation to satisfy him, that the Bible asserts the being of one God: none but a Romanist will need criticism to show that there is no other Mediator than the Lord Jesus Christ; and none but a Universalist will demand comment to establish the doctrine of the everlasting punishment of the wicked.

That there are many texts of Scripture which require reference to the context, and sometimes to the original language in which they were written, that we may ascertain their meaning, is readily granted. Especially has 'our beloved brother Paul also, according to the wisdom given unto him,—written unto you—some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, unto their own destruction;" not only in *time*, as you admit, but during *everlasting ages*.

That the *kingdom of God* sometimes denotes the church in the world, consisting of all professors of the true religion together with their children, is true; but it also signifies that domain of God in glory which is called heaven

Now if none can enter the kingdom of God in the world without being born of the Spirit, surely none can enter the *dome of the king* in glory without first having experienced a spiritual renovation.

There was a just man who *perished in his righteousness*, from the steamboat William Penn, the other day; and *the righteous perish* daily, from the earth, when they die; but surely Christ did not intend, that "whosoever believeth in him should not *perish*" from a steamboat, or from the face of the earth. Believers as well as unbelievers *perish from the earth*, by heat, cold, fire, water, and all the procuring causes of the dissolution of soul and body. *To perish*, therefore, does not in every instance signify to suffer endless punishment; but when one is threatened with *perdition* as an evil the very opposite of everlasting life, *that perishing* does mean nothing else but everlasting death.

Paul speaks of *the dying* of the just man, which is *his perishing* from the earth, as *falling asleep* in Christ; and says, that if there be no resurrection, "then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are *perished*," 1 Cor. xv. 18. Now if *to perish* means nothing more than *dying*, then you would make Paul say, that if there is no resurrection, they who have fallen asleep, *i. e. died* in Christ, have *died!* Paul was not wont thus to trifle by repeating truisms. He speaks of a perdition that might succeed natural death.

When Christ foretold, that he should die, that believers *should not perish*, he referred we think, to the "perdition of ungodly men," (2 Peter iii. 7,) which is to succeed "the day of judgment;" and which will fulfil the predictions of Scripture, that "the hypocrite's *hope* shall perish," (Job viii. 13;) that the *desire* of the wicked shall perish, while the righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance, (Ps. cxii. 6, 10;) that he who speaketh lies shall perish, (Prov. xix. 9;) and that many other persons "shall utterly perish in their own corruption." Now if the perishing here denounced, means nothing but natural death, then the righteous and the wicked, and all

mankind alike, are to *perish in corruption*, and to experience the perdition of their *hopes* and *expectations*.

That *the everlasting life* which believers shall experience in "a future immortal existence," is begun in this world, and that every actual believer now *hath* it, is a glorious truth. All who have believed, and they alone, have "*passed* from death unto life;" and to *know* God and Jesus Christ aright, not only secures, but so far as *spiritually knowing* is concerned, is a part, an incipient portion, of life everlasting. Because, however, *believers* have the promise and experience of everlasting life, begun here, and to be perpetuated for ever in a future state of existence, it does not follow *that they who believe not* have eternal life at all. Nor is it true, that everlasting life is confined to the present world, because all believers have it here. On the other hand, the very words teach as clearly as language can speak, that the holy, spiritual living, commenced in this world, shall be continued so long as the immortal subjects of it shall endure.

The power of working miracles did follow many that *believed the gospel* in the first age of the Christian church; but the Saviour never promised that all believers, who shall escape damnation, should be thus endowed. If he had said, "These signs shall always follow every one who believeth," your mode of explaining away the declaration, "he that believeth not shall be damned," would have been useless.

If the destroying of him who hardeneth his neck, means nothing but "that death was inevitable," then we may read Proverbs xxix. 1, in this manner, "he that being often reproved hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy; and all other persons shall be destroyed likewise; but perhaps not suddenly;" for all, of every name and character, the best and the worst, will find *that death is inevitable*. This mode of explaining Scripture would make every threatening and denunciation of evil lose its force, because it would then bear equally against *all men who must die*. Such a result, no doubt, many desire; for thus the law would lose all

its penal sanctions, and the righteous and the wicked would be both equally saved and damned together.

God is *able*, popularly speaking, it is true, to do many things which he will never do; but when he exhorted his *disciples* "to fear him, which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell," we must think, that the destruction did not mean merely natural death; and that other people who are not his disciples have quite as much reason as they to fear the same doom; especially when he in pursuing his discourse said, "WHOSOEVER, therefore, shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But WHOSOEVER shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven," Matthew x. 32, 33. To be denied disowned, and rejected of Christ before his Father in heaven, as not worthy of him, nor of his society, is a constituent part of the endless punishment which is elsewhere called the damnation of hell. Can you think, sir, that it would consist with universal salvation for Christ to disown or deny any one, before his Father and his angels, saying, as he has said he will to the unwise virgins, "I know you not?" Matt. xxv. 12.

The world is in some sense Christ's kingdom; and so is the Church in the world; and *out of either of these kingdoms of God*, the tares may be gathered to be burned. Their having been in the visible kingdom of God, without serving him in conformity with their opportunities, will render the flames of the furnace into which they shall be cast more intense. You say, "Be it noticed, also, that whatever is *destroyed* ceases to exist, and of course ceases to suffer or enjoy." How can this agree with your doctrine of the final holiness and happiness of all mankind in a future state? That which *ceases to exist*, has no existence any where; and of course, when the Lord "having saved the people out of the land of Egypt afterward *destroyed* them that believed not," (Jude 5,) they ceased to exist; they were annihilated; and yet agreeably to your teaching they were made finally holy and happy If this is true, then your final state of blessedness is af

firmed of that which is not; and your heaven must be a nonentity.

The passages which you have cited or may cite to prove that all mankind shall experience final and everlasting reconciliation to God in a state of holy happiness, I propose to consider in some future letter. At present, I shall be content with remarking, that when the sacred Scriptures are correctly translated and interpreted, no passage can contradict any other passage; for the revelation of God to man must be consistent with itself. No one truth can ever be contravened by any other truth. So long, therefore, as we do not make two seemingly opponent passages agree in sentiment, it is manifest, that we mistranslate, or misinterpret, or misunderstand either one or both of them. The system of Divine revelation, whether by the constitution of the human mind, Divine providence, or the written oracles of the Most High, is one grand, harmonious whole.

In further proof of the punishment of some sinners after the present life, I refer you to a few additional portions of the Bible. Of Christ it was said by Moses, "every soul which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people," Acts iii. 23. If this meant natural death, then all who hear and all who hear not that prophet, die, and are destroyed without distinction. If a violent death, or death by famine, or pestilence, was threatened, all who heard not that prophet were not thus destroyed either from the Hebrew church, or from the earth.

"When the wicked spring as the grass, and when all the workers of iniquity do flourish; it is that they shall be destroyed for ever," Psalm xcii. 7. If you say that this destruction refers wholly to this life, then the wicked and righteous fare alike; while the text evidently was intended to show, that when it shall be *well* with the latter, it shall be *ill* with the former. Such attempts to prove, that being *destroyed for ever* is nothing more than the natural death appointed for all men, I fear will come under the condemnation of Malachi ii. 17, in which place it is

written, "Ye have wearied the Lord with your words. Yet ye say, wherein have we wearied him? When ye say, every one that doeth evil is good in the sight of the Lord, and he delighteth in them; or, where is the God of judgment?" If there are, or ever have been people on earth to whom these words are applicable, I mean no personal disrespect when I say, they must be to those who deny any future judgment and perdition of ungodly men. "Yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith; [or rather, *the just by faith shall live*,] but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul," Heb. x. 37—39. Here *perdition* is contrasted with *the saving of the soul;* and evidently means the *not saving* or the loss of it; concerning which the Saviour has asked, "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"

To you and all our readers, I would say, "Enter ye in at the strait gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it," Matt. vii. 13, 14.

Remembering "that it is as far from your house to mine, as from mine to yours," I continue yours with the best wishes.

EZRA STILES ELY

TO MR. EZRA STILES ELY.

Philadelphia, March 15, 1854.

Dear Sir—There can be no doubt that, in some cases, the quotation of Scripture, "if it be understood in its plain and obvious meaning," is sufficient proof of a position But in the discussion of the all-important ques

tion before us, something more than the simple citation of the written testimony will be required. We may multiply quotations from the Bible—but if we make no attempt to show their bearing on the matter in hand, our labour will be in vain; and we would respectively be justified, in the light of all equitable rules of argumentation, were we severally to refrain from offering a word of comment on the passages so quoted.

The second paragraph of your letter, is, in my judgment, very exceptionable. Suppose that, in my previous communication, I had written as follows: "These propositions,—'there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all men to be testified in due time,' and 'it pleased the Father by him to reconcile all things to himself'—are so simple and conclusive, that none but an Atheist will require elucidation to satisfy him that the Bible asserts the being of one God; none but a Trinitarian will need criticism to show that God is *indivisibly one*, and Jesus Christ *a man;* and none but a Partialist will demand comment to establish the reconciliation of all things." If I had penned a paragraph like the foregoing, you would most probably have proceeded to inform me, that Trinitarians believe God to be essentially *one;* that in their view Jesus Christ was both God and man, by hypostatical union; and that they do not suppose the reconciliation of all things to contradict the everlasting punishment of the wicked. And you would have closed the merited rebuke, by cautioning me against using language which might be retorted.

Now be it remembered, that Universalists most sincerely believe all that the Bible says about everlasting punishment. We have ever held, (and I am happy in being enabled to adopt your own language,) "that when the sacred Scriptures are correctly translated and interpreted, no passage can contradict any other passage; for the revelation of God to man must be consistent with itself. No one truth can ever be contravened by any other truth. So long, therefore, as we do not make two seem-

ingly opponent passages agree in sentiment, it is manifest that we mistranslate, or misinterpret, or misunderstand either one or both of them. The system of Divine Revelation, whether by the constitution of the human mind, Divine Providence, or the written oracles of the Most High, is one grand harmonious whole."

There is another item in your second paragraph, which demands a passing notice. You say, that "commentary and criticism are needful to those alone who wish to believe a different doctrine from that taught by the Holy Spirit of inspiration." From the connexion in which this sentence occurs, the intimation is obvious, that in your opinion, the Atheist, the Romanist, and the Universalist, are equally desirous to "believe a different doctrine from that taught" in the Bible. If there was either argument or propriety in such imputations, no good reason could be assigned why either of us should not resort to them. Why should you class the Universalist with the Atheist and the Romanist? I might with equal propriety and civility, class the Presbyterian with the Pantheist and the Mormonite. But what argument would this procedure furnish? Nothing farther, than that I was willing to disregard the injunctions of the charity that thinketh no evil, in order to perpetuate the prejudices of sectarianism.

I do respectfully assure you that Universalists have no desire to "believe a different doctrine from that taught by the Holy Spirit of inspiration." We solemnly believe that the Holy Scriptures most unequivocally teach the doctrine of the final reconciliation of all things. Nothing that we can imagine would be more desirable, and for nothing better do we wish. And if we feel disposed to consult "commentary and criticism," in elucidation of the truth of heaven, we must consult the works of *your own* commentators and critics. You do not suppose that *they* desired to believe what the Holy Spirit had not revealed—nor can you, with any plausibility, charge the Universalist with such a desire, when the energies of his mind are devoted to an examination of the word of God

and when he calls to his aid the commentaries and criticisms of LIGHTFOOT, PEARCE, WHITBY, HORNE, MACKNIGHT, and others, whose piety will not be called in question.

You readily grant, that "there are many texts of Scripture which require reference to the context, and sometimes to the original language in which they were written, that we may ascertain their meaning." Then why find fault with me for consulting the connexion of the passages by you cited in a former letter? Will you allege that it is because those passages, "in their plain and obvious meaning," teach the doctrine of endless punishment? Give me leave to state that, in relation to many of the passages you have quoted, the best *orthodox* critics and commentators the world has ever produced, are decidedly against you. But aside from all this, I remark, that, with the exception of some of the purposely disconnected writings of Solomon, every portion of the Bible should be considered with especial reference to the connexion in which it stands.

In quoting part of a sentence in Matt. xxv., "these shall go away into everlasting punishment," you intimate that this declaration, "if it be understood in its plain and obvious meaning," is sufficient proof of endless punishment. It may be sufficient proof to convince *your own* mind—but you are not writing to convince *yourself*, nor indeed to convince any one who is already convinced. In order to convince *me* and the thousands of Universalists who read our letters, you should have proceeded to show *when* and *where* the judgment spoken of in Matt. xxiv and xxv was to take place; and you should also have brought into view the circumstances by which the discourse commencing Matt. xxiv. 4, was elicited. I hope you will attend to this suggestion.

Speaking of those who wrest the Scriptures, "unto their own destruction," you remark, "not only in *time*, as you admit, but during *everlasting ages*." Of this you have not furnished a word of proof.

You have not yet attempted to show that the phrase

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kingdom of God, in John iii. 3, "signifies that domain of God in glory which is called heaven." On a re-examination of your remarks, you will discover that your *argument* is predicated of your *opinion*. I have never supposed that *any one* can enjoy the beatitude of immortality without "a spiritual renovation." You suppose, however, that they who do not enter the gospel kingdom in *this* world, will be eternally wretched in the next—which remains to be proved.

That "believers as well as unbelievers perish from the earth by heat, cold, fire, water," &c, is most true—but I do not find it written that believers thus perish because of their sins. The testimony of our Lord, in Luke xiii. 1—5, affords some light on this subject. Jesus was told of certain "Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices," and he took the opportunity to say, "Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, Nay; but except *ye* repent, *ye* shall all *likewise* [in like manner] *perish*. Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay; but except *ye* repent, *ye* shall all LIKEWISE *perish*." If Jesus had intended to teach endless punishment, he surely would not have introduced the cases, with special reference to which he added the solemn warning above noticed. He spake of perishing *likewise*, in case of impenitence—and there he left the matter, without so much as hinting at a retribution in the future world.

It is true, that in John iii. 16, perishing is placed in opposition to the possession of everlasting life—but you have not quoted a single passage in proof that the Scriptures speak of everlasting life in reference to the immortal existence. You say, indeed, that "the very words teach as clearly as language can speak, that the holy spiritual living commenced in this world, shall be continued so long as the immortal subjects of it shall endure"—but you cannot reasonably expect that I should thence infer the doctrine of endless punishment. If you are correct in this mat-

ter, you can easily furnish "the law and the testimony" as vouchers. I beg of you to adduce the passages in which the phrase in question is supposed to confirm your view of the subject. You admit that *the believer* HATH *everlasting life*—but is it thence to be inferred that a part of mankind shall suffer endless punishment?

I think your citation of 1 Cor. xv. 18, was unfortunate for the position you have taken in relation to the meaning of the word *perish*. You think that Paul there "speaks of a perdition that might succeed natural death." In this case we ought to read, that *if there be no resurrection*, then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are *eternally damned!* Surely the premises do not justify this appalling conclusion. In my judgment, Paul intended to say, that if Christ was not risen, there was no ground to hope that even those who had fallen asleep in Christ would ever be raised from the dead.

As to the "perdition of ungodly men," 2 Peter iii. 7, and "the day of judgment" mentioned in connexion therewith, I may simply remark, that the future reference of the latter phrase remains to be proved. And as to the perishing of the hypocrite's *hope*, Job viii. 13, and of the *desire* of the wicked, Ps. cxii. 6, this does not establish the endless punishment either of the *hypocrite himself* or of the *wicked*. The additional verses you have cited, in which the word perish happens to occur, need not be specially noticed. You might quote scores of equally irrelevant passages.

The connexion of Mark xvi. 16, is very explicit—"These signs shall follow them that believe." If you confine those signs to the age of miracles, to the same age the particular condemnation spoken of must also be confined.

You have not correctly understood my remarks on Proverbs xxix. 1. And yet I see not how you could have misapprehended my meaning. I quoted Prov. vi. 15, and 2 Chron. xxxvi. 16, 17, (in which passages phraseology similar to the language of the text occurs) in order to show that premature natural death was the declared conse

quence of iniquity, according to the representation of Solomon. Your remark, that, "all, of every name and character, the best and the worst, will find that death is inevitable," has no bearing on the question. To place this matter in its proper light, we should remember that David and Solomon considered *long life* a blessing attendant on righteousness. "With *long life* will I satisfy him, and show him my salvation," Psalm xci. 16. "The Lord will preserve him, and *keep him alive*, and he shall be *blessed upon the earth*," Psalm xli. 2. Of wisdom it was said, "*Length of days* is in her right hand," Prov. iii. 16. "Hear, O my son, and receive my sayings, and the years of thy life shall be many," Prov. iv. 10. Indeed, the first commandment with promise, had the blessing annexed, "that thy days may be long in the land." I might fill a column with similar proofs. Now in opposition to length of days as the promised reward of righteousness, premature death, or destruction from the earth, is spoken of as the consequence of iniquity. Your insinuation that Universalists desire the law to lose its penal sanctions, passes for no more than it is worth.

In relation to what our Saviour said about confessing or denying him, it should be noticed, that the object of his discourse, of which that was a constituent part, was to strengthen and encourage his disciples in the performance of the duty assigned them. They were to go forth and preach the gospel of the kingdom. They would encounter much opposition and persecution—but they were still to be faithful. They were not to be ashamed of or deny their Master. In case they denied *him*, he would deny *them*—if they were ashamed of *him* he would be ashamed of them. "Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, *when he cometh* in the glory of his Father with the holy angels. Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power,' Mark viii. 38, ix. 1. [Compare Matt xvi. 27, 28, xxiv

29—34.] These passages are parallel with Matt. x. 32, 33, and fully explain the *time* when the denial was to take place, and *where*. It was at that time he would say to the foolish virgins, "I know you not," Matt. xxv. 12. I earnestly request you to avoid assuming that the coming of the Son of man, so frequently spoken of by our Lord, is a yet future event. In Matt. x. 23, from which chapter you have quoted two verses about denying or confessing the Master, Jesus said to his disciples, "When they persecute you in this city flee ye into another; for verily I say unto you, ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till *the Son of man be come.*" And then follow the instructions before referred to.

In commenting on my remarks on the parable of the tares, you do not attempt to show that I erred in relation to the time signified by the phrase *end of the world;* and you proceed at once to assume that the *furnace* spoken of is in the immortal state of existence. *Prove* this point and I will yield the argument.

When I said, that "whatever is destroyed ceases to exist, and of course ceases to suffer or enjoy," I had in view your supposition that the destruction of soul and body belonged to a future state. When the body ceases to exist as such, it ceases as such to suffer or enjoy; and if the spirit as such be destroyed, as a spirit *it* can neither suffer nor enjoy. When the Lord, "having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterwards *destroyed* them that believed not," they were simply destroyed as men in the flesh—they were taken away from the earth—but what has this to do with a future state of existence? If you can prove that they were destroyed in a future state, then I will acknowledge that they were annihilated—and in this event, it would be as foolish in you to assert their endless punishment, as in me to affirm their final holiness and happiness.

These remarks will equally apply to Psalm xcii. 7, which you quote. If you insist that the being *destroyed for ever* there spoken of, refers to the future state, you must be understood to teach the *annihilation*, and not the

endless punishment of the wicked. I might refer you to Ezek. xiii. 22, with no less impropriety than you can me to Malachi ii. 17.

As to Acts iii. 23, I remark, that Peter must not be understood to attach a meaning to the language of Moses that Moses never intended to convey. If you are disposed, you may consult Deut. xviii. 15—20. I ask you to quote a single passage from all that was communicated to Moses at Horeb, in which any thing like future punishment is so much as clearly intimated. To destroy a man from among the people, plainly signifies no more than to cut him off from the land of the living. (See Lev. xviii. 29.)

Heb. x. 37—39: That "*perdition* is here contrasted with the *saving of the soul*," is certainly true; and I freely allow that it "evidently means the *not saving*, or the loss of it, concerning which the Saviour has asked, 'What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?'" The latter quotation is from Mark viii. 36. But do you seriously suppose that the word *soul* here used signifies more than *natural life?* In the verse preceding, precisely the same original word is twice used, and is translated *life* in both cases. So also in Matt. xvi. 25, though in verse 26, as in the text above it, it is rendered *soul*. The plain meaning is, "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own life? or what shall a man give in exchange for his life?" So PEARCE, CLARKE, and others.

You have cited Matt. vii. 13, 14, without comment. Why is this so? I knew that passage was in the Bible before I saw it in your letter. I will acknowledge that you are right and I am wrong, if you will prove, 1st. That the *destruction* there mentioned signifies endless punishment; and 2d. That the *life* there spoken of is the blessedness of immortality.

I regret that you have not deemed it expedient to notice the passages by me cited in my last letter, with the comments thereon, in proof of the final holiness and happiness of all mankind. You promise, however, to attend

to them in some future communication—but it appears to me that it would be well for us respectively to finish our work as we proceed. Whatever course you may think proper to pursue, I shall continue, as opportunity presents, to furnish the Divine testimony in proof of the eventual blessedness in Christ of the whole human family.

1 Cor. xv. 22: *For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.* By dying in Adam, I understand dying in the mortal constitution of the first man, who was of the earth, earthy—and by being made alive in Christ, I understand a resurrection from the dead in the image of the Lord from heaven.

That the death in Adam is a natural death, you will admit—and that the chapter in which the text occurs, treats of a resurrection into an immortal existence, will not be disputed.

The word *all* in the latter clause of the sentence, is co-extensive in signification with the word *all* in the *first* clause. As many as die in Adam, will be made alive in Christ—for the declaration is, "*even so.*"

If it be objected that *all* do not die in Adam, inasmuch as Enoch and Elijah were translated, I reply, 1st. They must have undergone a change *equivalent* to death; and 2d. They who in no sense die in Adam, if any, will not require a resurrection.

If you say that *believers* only shall be made alive in Christ, I remark, 1st. The text says nothing about believers, but simply that "as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." 2d. If none but believers die in Adam, then none but believers shall be made alive in Christ.

If it be objected, that the text simply states, that all men shall be raised from the dead, I answer, that "all shall be made *alive* IN CHRIST." And "if *any man be in Christ* he is *a new creature*, old things are passed away, behold all things are become new," 2 Cor. v. 17.

Moreover, Paul says, it is sown in corruption, dishonour, and weakness; it is raised in incorruption, glory and

power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. All have borne the image of the earthy; and all shall bear the image of the heavenly.

If it be objected that Paul says, "But *every man* in his own order: Christ the first-fruits; afterward they that *are* Christ's at his coming"—I remark that the apostle adds, "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule, and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. . . . And when ALL THINGS shall be *subdued unto him*, then shall the *Son* ALSO *himself be subject* unto him that put all things under him, that GOD MAY BE ALL IN ALL." Amen, Alleluia!

Remembering, as I do, "that it is as far from your house to mine, as from mine to yours"—or in other words, that your opinions differ as widely from mine as mine do from yours—I cordially reciprocate your good wishes, and remain,

Respectfully yours,
ABEL C. THOMAS

TO MR. ABEL C. THOMAS.

Philadelphia, April 3d, 1834.

Dear Sir—I have refrained from replying to many things contained in your letters, not from disrespect, but from a desire to avoid undesirable length in any one of my communications. At present I will refer to some of your past quotations and remarks.

To prove that there shall be no punishment beyond the present life, you have quoted Prov. xi. 31: "Behold the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth: much more the wicked and the sinner." Now it will not follow from the fact that the righteous and the wicked meet with a suitable recompense ON THE EARTH, that they will not also meet with a similar course of dealing from their Ma

ker in the future state of existence. The fact of their being recompensed *here*, furnishes one of the strongest probabilities that they will also be recompensed *hereafter*; for why should God, who now makes the way of the transgressors hard, render it in future more pleasant? If his justice and goodness now require him to punish transgressors and reward the obedient, these attributes remaining the same will for ever secure similar results. An unchanging God, whose principles of moral government are fixed, and who recompenses men according to their conduct now, will certainly treat them according to their respective characters in all future times. Before this passage can be of any avail to the cause of Universalism, it must be shown that God fully, and perfectly punishes all the wicked, and all sinners, in the earth for all the sins they have committed or ever will commit, so that justice can inflict no more penalty upon them.

It is not true, that in THE EARTH, or in the present life, perfect distributive justice takes place. The righteous, as a general rule, find wisdom's ways to be pleasantness, and godliness to be profitable unto all things; but still there are numerous instances in which they are injured and oppressed, and spend nearly the whole of their lives in suffering. On the other hand, the wicked generally experience the way of transgressors to be hard, and vice to bring in itself much misery; and yet in many cases the wicked prosper, triumph, and die with their bones full of marrow, and with hearts at ease in stupidity. The text cited from Proverbs, therefore, cannot mean that in this world God *makes a final end of recompensing* either the righteous or the wicked. Did he make a full and final retribution, it could not be said that "MUCH MORE" will he recompense "the wicked and the sinner." Perfect retribution in each case, would preclude the possibility of such a comparison.—He will to a certain extent, and as a general law of his proceedings, recompense the righteous in the earth; but *much more*, to a greater extent, and more invariably, will he recompense the wicked in the earth. This corresponds exactly with the experience

of mankind, for God does more uniformly punish sin, than reward virtue in this life. The Lord's dealings with us, show, that he loves obedience and hates transgression; that it shall be well with the righteous, and ill with the wicked; and that from his imperfect retribution begun and carried on in this world, a perfect consummation of distributive justice may be expected in the day of judgment.

That salvation is "the gift of God," to all of those who are saved, and results not to them from the merit of their own good works, is granted, so that no man should boast, but ascribe all the glory of his being pardoned, sanctified and glorified in heaven, to "our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us."

The passage of Scripture on which you seem to rely with the greatest confidence is Colossians i. 19, 20, 21. "*It pleased the Father, that in him should all fulness dwell, and having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. And you that were sometime alienated, and enemies in your mind by wicked works; yet now hath he reconciled.*" I am not, indeed, disposed to deny that he must be happy who becomes reconciled to God, by a change in his state and mental operations, so that he is a pardoned sinner and loves God. But you insist that ALL THINGS are to be reconciled; and seem to think they will be, or now are so reconciled as to become happy. "In my judgment," you say, "this passage distinctly teaches the final holiness and happiness of all mankind—inasmuch as it teaches the *reconciliation of all things to God.*" ALL THINGS, are words, which if taken without restriction mean more than ALL PERSONS. Every object of conception, and every act of mind, is a THING. You surely do not mean to insist, that the stones of the street, the birds of the air, the cattle of the hills, the air we breathe, the winds and waves, are to be *reconciled* to God, in any such sense, as to render them capable of endless happiness. Inanimate objects are not capable of being *reconciled* to God, in the exclusive sense of which you

write, meaning a reconciliation in mental, moral, and legal estate, or in disposition of mind; and yet they come under the general class of "all things." *Not all things*, absolutely, are to be reconciled to God, then, in any such sense as to secure to them everlasting or even any happiness. If there is any single thing, a man, an apple, or a pebble, to be excluded from the class of all things to be reconciled, so as to be happy, your argument from absolute *universality* in this passage is lost. *Reconciliation* here must mean something different from a change of mental or moral state, preparatory to future bliss, or else the *all things* to be reconciled must be understood in a restricted sense. You may take which of these alternatives you choose. If you say that *a thing* may be *reconciled to God*, without being secure of everlasting happiness, then I subjoin, that the sinner may be that thing, and may in the sense of the text be reconciled to God, without ever being happy. If you say that *all things* are to be understood as denoting something less than absolute *universality of being;* then I add, that God will undoubtedly reconcile unto himself all the persons and all the things that are to be reconciled unto himself.

Moreover, the holy angels, which have not sinned, are comprehended under the expression *all things;* and they being referred to, as "things in heaven," have no need of such *reconciliation* as consists in a change of estate from condemnation to pardon; or a change of mind from rebellion to submission, from enmity to love. Hence we infer, that the *reconciliation* here spoken of does not necessarily imply any such change as is requisite to prepare the wicked for heaven, by making them holy in heart and life.

It would be easy to show, from the most learned lexicographers and commentators, that the word rendered *reconcile* primarily signifies *to change any thing from one state to another;* and hence, secondarily, when a man's mind is changed from enmity to love, in relation to any one, he is said to be *reconciled* to that individual. It is the primary sense of the word that is employed when it is

said, the Greek being literally translated, "For it seemed good, that in him all fulness should dwell, and to reconcile all things to him, he having made peace through the blood of his cross; by him, whether the things on the earth, or the things in the heavens." In consequence of Christ's having died on the cross to complete the work of redemption, it pleased God that in him as Mediator all the fulness of the Godhead should dwell, and that all things should be transferred to his dominion; so that he should be head over all things to his church. Dr. McKnight considered it a correct expression of the original, to say *unite*, instead of *reconcile*, all things to him.

There is yet another interpretation which would make the word *reconcile* mean nothing more than laying the foundation for actual reconciliation. Thus it is said, "if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God," i. e. we were *atoned for*, or the groundwork of reconciliation was done, "by the death of his Son, much more being reconciled" in our hearts and state, "we shall be saved by his life," Rom. v. 10. Here sinners for whom the price of redemption is paid, are said to be reconciled to God, while they yet continue in a state of enmity; but subsequently they become actually reconciled by the renewing of their minds.

You refer to Coloss. i. 16—18, in which it is said of the "image of the invisible God," that "by him were *all things* created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth—*all things* were created by him and for him: and he is before *all things*, and by him *all things* consist. And he is the head of the body, the Church—that in *all things* he might have the pre-eminence." In these five instances you think I will allow the expression *all things* to be unlimited; and ask why then I should limit the declaration immediately after made concerning God's reconciling *all things*. I answer, that the *all things* created, are limited to all *creatures;* for while *all creatures* were made by him, there were some things in existence which were not made by him; such as the essence of the Deity, infinite space, and the action of free agents. He is before *all things*

that ever began to be, but not before all *things* absolutely, for that would make him to be before himself.

That all unbelievers as well as believers shall be reconciled to God, so as eventually to be holy and happy, you argue from 2 Cor. v. 18, 19, in which place we read, "All things are of God, who hath reconciled us [believers] to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ reconciling THE WORLD to himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." Because God is in Christ, by his word and Spirit, *reconciling* the world to himself, it does not follow that every individual of the world of mankind now is, or ever will be, actually reconciled. The process of reconciliation is going on in *the world*, but it has not been consummated. So far as Christ actually reconciles men to himself in the state of their souls, he does not impute their sins to them, but pardons them; but the ministry of reconciliation has not yet extended to every individual of the world of mankind, and therefore you have no reason to conclude that actual reconciliation has outstripped the progress of the means. *The world* and the *whole world* frequently mean any complete system of things; and hence we read of *a world of iniquity* in the tongue; of *a world lying in sin*, from which the apostles and saints were exempted; and of *the world* gone after Christ, while multitudes never went after him. There is a world of believers and a world of unbelievers.

In Philippians ii. 9, 11, we are informed, that in consideration of his work of redemption God hath highly exalted Christ, "and given him a name which is above every name: that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Hence you infer the *universality* of holiness and happiness. You have forgotten that some *confessed* Christ and *bowed the knee* before him, acknowledging him to the glory of God the Father, who said, "Jesus, thou Son of God, art thou come hither to torment us before the time?"

The bended knee is but an external token of subjection; and when some shall say, "Lord, Lord, open to us," to be told, "depart accursed," they will confess Christ in such a way that God the Father will be glorified in their damnation. We grant that "whosoever offereth praise glorifieth" the Lord: but equally true it is that the wrath of man shall praise the Lord; and the remainder thereof, or that which would not glorify him, he will restrain.

No man can say, from the heart, with faith, hope, and love, *that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost;* but a parrot might say "Jesus is the Lord," without the least intelligence, and a man may say it with as little meaning as a parrot, ten thousand times, and then perish for ever. As "no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed," so no man makes a truly evangelical confession of the supreme Deity of Jesus, who has not been savingly taught and renewed by the Holy Spirit.

In your letter of March 15th, you assure me "that Universalists sincerely believe all that the Bible says about everlasting punishment;" and yet you hold that the Bible says nothing about it!

You think Luke xiii. 1—5, proves that unless men repent, they shall perish "IN LIKE MANNER," as those perished on whom the tower in Siloam fell, or those persons whose blood Pilate mingled with their sacrifices. Can you believe, that if men do not repent in this life, they shall all come to *their death* by some violent means; by the fall of a house, or by some bloody persecutor? If this were the case, we should regard such a general rule of perishing from the earth, as a strong indication of everlasting vengeance. We regard the declaration, that those who do not repent shall all *likewise* perish, as teaching nothing about *the mode of their natural death*. It simply means, that those who repent not shall so PERISH, being taken away in God's displeasure, by whatever death, as those persons on whom the tower in Siloam fell, or those persons whom Pilate murdered in the midst of their religious rites Here the *perishing* or PERDITION threatened must refer to something else than the mode of dy-

ng, if all who repent not shall perish, as you agree, in "like manner" as they perished. That you are correct in your explanation of the word *likewise* in the passage under consideration, is admitted; for although the English word *likewise* frequently signifies *also*, yet the two Greek words (ὡσαύτως) and (ὁμοίως) which are translated *likewise* in verses 3d and 5th of Luke xiii, certainly denote the perishing to be *in like manner*. They who perished in consequence of the falling of the tower of Siloam, and the cruelty of Pilate, were not worse than other sinners, who lived to old age and died in their beds: but says our Saviour, *except ye repent ye shall all perish*, as they perished; for he who dies without repentance, perishes from the gracious presence of the Lord.

You aim "to show that premature natural death was the declared consequence of iniquity, according to the representation of Solomon," and that this is the *perdition* denounced against the wicked, when it is said they shall perish. It is granted, that frequently the wicked do not *live out half their days*, which they might live were they moral in their conduct; and that in general, obedience in childhood, and virtuous conduct in after life, tend to prosperity and length of days. Still we read of a sinner's being accursed, when a hundred years old, Isa. lxv. 20; and our own observation must have taught us, that many sinners, instead of coming to a premature death, die in old age, in their iniquities, "being wholly at ease and quiet."

The 1 Cor. xv. 22, proves nothing more than this, that in and through Adam, all mankind have become subject to natural death, and that in and through Christ, all men shall be raised from the dead at the last day. Paul is arguing against those who denied the resurrection from the dead, and he asserts that the resurrection through Christ shall be as extensive, as death by Adam. *As in Adam all die*, says he, *even so in Christ shall all be made alive;* and he is careful to add, in the next verse, "but every man in his own order." Now in this order, *Christ* arose as *the first fruits; afterwards* shall arise *they that are Christ's a*

his coming; and finally all the wicked shall arise to immortality and damnation at the same time. Then all things, and among them *death itself*, shall be subdued to Christ, without entering heaven.

Some shall as certainly be made alive *in*, or *by* Christ, to an immortality of misery, as others to an immortality of blessedness. In proof of this doctrine of a resurrection from the grave to a future judgment, and of some men to all the miseries of hell, in body and in spirit for ever, I adduce the following texts: "Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever," Daniel xii. 2, 3. Here, among those who are to arise from their graves, there is to be a distinction between those who are wise and all the unwise. The wise are to shine, with different degrees of glory, according to the measure of their holy obedience, and are to experience everlasting life; while all persons of an opposite character are to be the subjects of shame and everlasting contempt.

In the fiftieth Psalm, we have a prophetic description of the future general judgment. *Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath* already *shined* in the glory of his gospel, which reveals to us the end of the world. *Our God shall come*, in awful majesty, as a destroying fire and tempest to the wicked. But in relation to others he shall say to his angels, "Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made covenant with me by sacrifice. And the heavens shall declare his righteousness, for God is judge himself."

Concerning this scene, "Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied,—saying, Behold, the Lord coming with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them, of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners ave spoken against him," Jude ver. 14, 15. When the

ungodly are thus convinced, and judgment is executed upon them, every mouth will be stopped; every knee will bow, every tongue will confess, and God will be glorified in manifesting his justice, goodness, and forbearance, even in relation to the sinner's doom.

In Jude we also read, concerning the Lord, that "the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day. Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire. Likewise, also, these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities." These Jude, or Judas, the brother of James, styles "wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever." Here the spirit of inspiration gives us instances of endless punishment in the angels who sinned; in the inhabitants of the plain of Sodom, who suffer, after the shower of fire had swept them from the earth, *the vengeance of eternal fire;* and in those ungodly men in the days of Judas, who denied the only Lord God, turned the grace of God into lasciviousness, and were ordained to condemnation.

In 2 Cor. v. 8—10, Paul says, that he is willing to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord, for which presence "we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him: for we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." Here our appearing before the judgment seat of Christ is represented as taking place after our spirits are unclothed of the earthly house of this tabernacle, and clothed upon with a house not made with hands, so that mortality is swallowed up. When we live to die no more, having risen from the grave, then shall we appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that we may receive our portion for ever.

"God shall bring every work into judgment, with every

secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil," Eccles. xii. 14. "God shall judge the righteous and the wicked," Eccles. iii. 17.

"In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel," saith Paul, then "as many as have sinned without law, shall also perish without law; and as many as have sinned in the law, shall be judged by the law,"—"for there is no respect of persons with God," Rom. ii. 11, 12, 16. In this same chapter, Paul says, "we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth," and then exhorts to a preparation for it, as a future "revelation of the righteous judgment of God; who will render unto every man according to his deeds." He does not affirm that God *does it now*, but that he *will do it, in that day* of wrath, against which, by their hardness and impenitent heart, many treasure up wrath; *in that day*, in which he will render glory, honour, immortality, eternal life, to them that patiently continue in well doing; *in that day*, in which he will render to the contentious who do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, "tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doeth evil."

Paul told the Athenians, that God "hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained," Acts xvii. 31. If the day of judgment was the day of giving the law, or any time prior to the apostle's teaching the Athenians, there was no propriety in saying, that God hath *appointed a day* in which *he will* judge the world. In that case he might have said, "he has judged the world, without appointing any day for the judgment."

As an inducement to men to deny themselves, take up the cross and follow him, Jesus said, in reference to gaining the world and losing one's own soul, "for the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels; and then shall he reward every man according to his work," Matt. xvi. 27. *Then*, when he shall thus come, and not before, will he perfectly reward every man. In proof of his coming to judge the world in the last day

agreeably to this declaration, Jesus then informed his disciples, that they should not all die, before he would come in his spiritual kingdom on earth. "There be some standing here which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom." John lived to see the full establishment of Christianity in the world; and the Saviour's coming to judge Jerusalem and call the Gentiles; but this was a widely different thing from his coming to judge the world in the last day.

I shall refer you, at present, to one other passage, of fearful import, and in my opinion conclusive on the subject of our controversy.

"It is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; and to you who are troubled, rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day," 2 Thes. i. 6—10. "In that day," the day of final judgment, "WHEN he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe," THEN "the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and the glory of his power." In this way Christ will recompense tribulation to those who persecute his people, and rest to those who suffer trouble for his sake. Thus to give sinners and saints, persecutors and the persecuted, their respective portions, is a "righteous thing with God."

I accuse you, sir, of no prevarication nor of intentional misrepresentation; and thank you for the repeated instances in which you have given me advice concerning

the manner in which I ought to manage my part in this discussion; but really this last passage of the word of God which I have cited, must for ever prevent me from becoming a Universalist.

I remain yours respectfully,

EZRA STILES ELY.

TO MR. EZRA STILES ELY.

Philadelphia, April 7th, 1834.

Dear Sir—I am much pleased with the spirit and general tenor of your last letter. Controversialists have frequently allowed a difference of opinion to engender feelings of animosity, which have been evinced in their deportment one toward the other; and thus, instead of subserving the interests of truth, they have embittered their own reflections, caused heartfelt sorrow in their friends, and furnished grounds for reproach to the despisers of the gospel of Christ. I sincerely hope that in the discussion of the question before us, we shall be enabled to convince the controversial world, that opponent opinions do not necessarily involve the creation of opponent feelings.

You commence your letter with some remarks on Prov. xi. 31—which passage I quoted without comment, in my *Bible creed*. Before I proceed to examine the bearing of those remarks, allow me to observe that the question is simply, "Is the doctrine of endless punishment taught in the Bible? or does the Bible teach the final holiness and happiness of all mankind?" You are not required to prove, by direct argument, that the wicked are *not* fully recompensed in this world, nor am I required to prove that they *are*. You are called upon to show that endless punishment is a doctrine of the Bible—in which event it will of course be established, that the wicked are not adequately recompensed in the present life. And I have engaged to prove the final holiness and happiness of

all mankind—in which event it will follow, that the doctrine of endless punishment is false.

When it is said, "the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth," are we to understand that they shall be recompensed *only in part*, in this life? A recompense is a compensation, a countervail, an equivalent. When you engage men to labour for you, with the assurance that they shall be recompensed in Philadelphia, you do not suppose it necessary to use the word "*fully*;" nor do they imagine that a part of their recompense will be paid in Boston. Whether it be paid to-day, or to-morrow, or next week, it must be paid *in Philadelphia*—or your assurance is void. Now the simple declaration, that "the righteous shall be *recompensed in the earth*," is equally emphatic with your supposed assurance above noticed. "In the earth," then, the righteous shall be recompensed—that is, they shall, in the earth, receive a reward equivalent to their labours of love.

You lay considerable stress on the phrase "*much more*," and so do I—but our inferences are widely different. It appears to me that the expression is used by way of emphasis. Let us compare a few passages.

Luke xii. 28: "If then God so clothe the grass, which is to day in the field, and to morrow is cast into the oven, how MUCH MORE will he clothe you, O ye of little faith?" Here a *fact* is stated, viz., that God *does* clothe the grass of the field—and the words "much more" were introduced to render the conclusion more *emphatic*, viz., that God would certainly clothe the disciples. So in Matt. vii. 11: "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how MUCH MORE shall your Father which is in heaven, give good things to them that ask him?" Here the phrase "much more" is plainly used by way of emphasis. Even parents who are evil give good gifts to their children. From this *fact* Jesus argued that God would *certainly* give good things to them who ask him. Neither fact is contravened by the other.

So in the text. It is a fact that "the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth" and the *certainty* that such

shall also be the case with "the wicked and the sinner,' is rendered emphatic by the use of the words "much more." Throughout the chapter of which this passage is a portion, the blessedness of the righteous and the wretchedness of the wicked in the present life, are placed in contrast—and the whole is concluded with the language under consideration.

The fact, then, that the wicked are recompensed *here* furnishes [not only] one of the strongest probabilities [but one of the strongest proofs] that they will" *not* be recompensed *hereafter*" for the sins of this life.

I have ever contended that "the way of transgressors is hard," and that so long as man is sinful, just so long he will be miserable. But you *assume* that some of mankind will be sinful in the future state—which I desire you to attempt to prove by the Bible. Rom. vi. 7.

You say, "an unchanging God, whose principles of moral government are fixed, and who recompenses men according to their conduct now, will certainly treat men according to their respective characters in all future times." But you have informed us that neither the righteous nor the wicked are adequately recompensed in *this* world—and so, according to your analogical reasoning, you should allow that they *never will* be thus recompensed!—for "the principles of the [Divine] moral government are fixed." If an "imperfect retribution" *now*, is consequential of *fixed principles*, why should you analogically argue a subsequent *perfect* retribution?

It is true, that many of those denominated the righteous are called to endure much suffering; and many of those who are popularly styled the wicked seem to prosper in their outward concerns—but the former would not consent to exchange situations with the latter, even supposing this life to close the existence of both. I have no reason to doubt that

> "Oft shining cares in rich brocades are drest,
> And diamonds sparkle on the anxious breast;"

that "the wicked are like the troubled sea that cannot

rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt—there *is* no peace to the wicked, saith my God;" and though a man accumulate wealth, and be crowned with all the honours and plaudits of the world, if he be not a disciple of the Lord Jesus, peace is a stranger to his mind, and his soul is the scene of conflicting passions which cannot but render him an object of pity rather than of condemnation

On the other hand, I have as little reason to doubt that

> "The soul's calm sunshine, and the heartfelt joy
> Is virtue's prize;"

that the sufferings not consequent of guilt are incidental to our mortal existence; that happiness is primarily dependent on the state of the mind; and that he who learns of Jesus, *will* find rest to his soul. "*In* keeping the commandments there is great reward." "Great peace have they who love thy law, and *nothing* shall offend them." They enjoy a peace which all the blandishments of the world must ever fail to yield; and which the frowns and reverses of fortune can never take away. Christian! is not this the record of *thy* experience?

Your remarks on Col. i. 19, 20, do not, in my judgment weaken the force of the text in proof of the final holiness and happiness of all mankind. You allow that "he must be happy who is reconciled to God, by a change in his state and mental operations so that he is a pardoned sinner and loves God." Now that the reconciliation signified in the declaration, "by him to reconcile all things to himself," is of this character, appears evident from the consideration, that it is immediately added, "And *you* HATH *he reconciled*." The reconciliation in the one case must be of the same general character, as that of the other. The believers who *had been* reconciled, were a kind of first fruits of the all things, whom it pleased the Father to reconcile to himself.

Reconciliation always supposes previous *irreconciliation*. If "the stones of the street, the birds of the air, the cattle of the hills, the air we breathe, or the winds and

waves," were ever *unreconciled*, they are embraced in the all things to be reconciled—but not otherwise. None but rational beings can be reconciled in the sense of the text. Those who *had been* reconciled were of the same race of beings intended by the phrase all things. "And you that were sometime *alienated* and *enemies* in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled." If "an apple, a pebble, the essence of Deity, infinite space, and the actions of free agents," were never *alienated* and never *enemies* by wicked works, then they are not among the all things to be reconciled.

When Jesus said, "preach the gospel to *every creature*," do you suppose he intended the message to be delivered to "the stones of the street, or to the cattle of the hills?" John writes as follows: "And *every creature* which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever," Rev. v. 13. Do you suppose this eulogium was pronounced by the birds of the air, the winds and waves, or the fishes of the sea? Do you suppose it was pronounced by any other than rational beings? Yet the phrase "*every creature*" is used. Professor Stuart, of Andover, in his letters to Channing, p. 100, says, "Things in heaven, earth, and under the earth, is a common periphrasis of the Hebrew and New Testament writers for the Universe, *το παν* or *τα παντα*. I may remark that *τα παντα* is used in the text, and is translated *all things*. Dr. Geo. Campbell, whose orthodoxy you will not question, says, in speaking of the periphrasis mentioned by Stuart, that it includes "*the whole rational creation*." Diss. vi. part. ii. sec. 6. You thus perceive that the "all things" to be reconciled include those only who can be unreconciled—viz. the whole *rational* creation.

You give us a primary and a secondary sense of the word *reconcile*, and suppose that the primary sense is employed in the text. Your secondary sense is thus stated: "When a man's mind is changed from enmity to love, in

relation to any one, he is said to be *reconciled* to that individual" This surely is the sense in which the word is used in the passage under consideration—for the apostle says "And you that were sometime *alienated* and *enemies* in your mind by wicked works, yet *now hath he reconciled.*" Their minds were changed from enmity to ove. And this is the change denoted in the declaration, "by him to reconcile all things to himself"—for I have shown that the reconciliation in one case must be of the same general character as that of the other. Dr. Camp bell, in his note on Matt. v. 9, quotes Col. i. 20, and says that the word here used signifies "actively to reconcile, to make peace." And he adds, that "etymology and classical use also concur in affixing thereto the sense of *reconciler, peacemaker.*"

The other interpretation which you mention cannot, I think, have any material bearing on the sense of the text. You say, "There is yet another interpretation which would make the word *reconcile* mean nothing more than laying the foundation for actual reconciliation." The *foundation* for the reconciliation of all things is stated in the text—"And *having made peace through the blood of his cross.*" Then follows the prospective *result*—"By him to reconcile all things to himself."

The tenor of Rom. v. 1—11, clearly shows that in the death of Christ, the great love of God was manifested to a sinful world. So soon as any one was brought to realize this great love, and believe with all his heart, so soon was he reconciled to God. No one in a state of enmity can thus be reconciled, unless it be in a prospective sense. The Christians in Paul's time could safely and truly say, "We also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom WE *have now* received the reconciliation," or atonement. "Being reconciled," they knew they should be saved from the wrath, tribulation and anguish that must come on every unreconciled soul. The *death* of Christ was unquestionably the foundation of reconciliation—for in his death the unbounded love of God was revealed. And it is in the Saviour's *life* that the believer

lives. Hence says Paul, "Always bearing about in the body the *dying* of the Lord Jesus, that the *life* also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body," 2 Cor. iv. 10.

2 Cor. v. 18, 19, considered in connexion with Col. i. 20, certainly argues the final reconciliation of the whole race of man. Be sure "we see not yet all things put under him; but we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for *every man*," Heb. ii. 8, 9. It is true that the process of reconciliation has not yet been consummated—but ere the kingdom shall be delivered up to God the Father, all things shall be subdued unto Christ—the Son also shall be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all, 1 Cor. xv.

In order to set aside my reasoning on Phil. ii. 9, 11, you refer to the case of the two men who said, "What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time?" Matt. viii. 29. And you also inform me, that "a parrot might say, 'Jesus is the Lord,' without the least intelligence," &c. But do you seriously suppose, that it would be "to the glory of God the Father," for a crazy man, a man possessed of demons, to say, "Jesus, thou son of God?" Or do you suppose that a parrot which should say, without intelligence, "Jesus is Lord," would in the least degree glorify God? The language of the text is explicit: "That in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and that *every tongue* should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, *to the glory of God the Father*." Surely a confession of this description could not be to the glory of God the Father, unless it were grounded in the conviction of the understanding, and offered in sincerity of heart. In this manner, and with such feelings, "no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Spirit."

Professor Stuart, after commenting on the periphrasis before alluded to, says, "What can be meant by things in heaven. that is. beings in heaven, bowing the knee to

Jesus, if spiritual worship be not meant?" And after noticing the same periphrasis in Rev. v. 13, he says, "If this be not spiritual worship, and if Christ be not the object of it here, I am unable to produce a case where worship can be called spiritual and divine."

How any can "confess Christ in such a way that God will be glorified in their damnation," is beyond my conception; and you have certainly furnished no proof of the supposition that such will be the case. Besides the remarks already offered, allow me to repeat, that with whatever feelings *one* knee shall bow and *one* tongue confess, *every* knee shall bow and *every* tongue shall confess—for the apostle makes no distinction as to the manner or result.

The "wrath of man" can praise the Lord in no other way, than in being so overruled by the benevolent purpose of God as to furnish ground for thanksgiving and gratitude.

The paragraph of four lines, in which you endeavour to make it appear that I have contradicted myself in relation to the phrase "everlasting punishment," was inserted, in my judgment, without due reflection. Surely you do not suppose that I am unacquainted with *the letter* of the Bible. Give me leave to assure you that we *know* what the Bible says about everlasting punishment; and to re-assure you "that Universalists sincerely *believe*" what it says. We also sincerely believe what it says about the everlasting priesthood of Aaron, the everlasting covenant of the law, the everlasting possession of Canaan, and about other everlasting things which have no reference to a future existence. In the light of these remarks you will perceive what it is your duty to perform, in relation to the phrase "everlasting punishment," in Matt. xxv. 46

Your argument predicated of Luke xiii. 1—5, rests on two assertions—the one direct, and the other implied: 1st. That "he who dies without repentance, perishes from the gracious presence of the Lord," by which you mean that such a one will be doomed to endless punishment; and 2d. That the Saviour's language, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish," is of universal appli

cation. The connexion of the passage shows that it was confined to the Jewish people. So PEARCE—"Except ye the nation of the Jews, repent, your state shall be destroyed." So ROSENMULLER—"This was fulfilled at the last passover, a most fatal day to the Jews." So CALMET—"Jesus Christ here predicts those calamities which overwhelmed them, when Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans; for then very many impenitent and unbelieving Jews were buried together under the ruins of their most miserable nation." So also WHITBY, &c.

I think I succeeded in showing, in my last letter, "that premature natural death was the declared consequence of iniquity, (as in Prov. xxix. 1,) according to *the representation of Solomon.*" And I aimed to show, that language quoted from Solomon's writings, must be viewed in the light of this representation. As to the sinner being accursed when a hundred years old, you can draw no argument therefrom in proof of endless punishment—for it is written, "he that is hanged is accursed of God," Deut. xxi. 23, which language Paul quotes in reference to the crucifixion of our Lord, Gal. iii. 13. The same apostle says, "I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren," Rom. ix. 3.

In commenting on 1 Cor. xv. 22, you seem to have overlooked the declaration, that "even so IN CHRIST shall all be made alive." And Paul, as quoted in a former letter, declares, "If *any* man be *in* Christ, he is a new creature; old things have passed away, behold all things have become new," 2 Cor. v. 17. In the light of this testimony, how can you suppose that some shall "be made alive *in Christ* to an immortality of misery?"

To justify yourself, you quote Daniel xii. 2, 3. The connexion of this passage is as follows: "*And at that time* shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people; and there shall be *a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time:* and AT THAT TIME thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. And many of them that sleep in the dust of the

earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt . . . . . *When* he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished."

In Matt. xxiv. 15, 21, our Saviour quotes the prophet Daniel, and refers the language above *italicized* to the period of the destruction of Jerusalem, "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation spoken of by *Daniel* the prophet . . . . *then* let them which be *in Judea* flee into the mountains . . . for *then* shall be *great tribulation*, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be." As our Saviour thus fixed the reference of Daniel's language, it becomes us to avoid contradicting his testimony.

Compare Dan. xii. 2, 3, with Eph. v. 14. "*Awake* thou that *sleepest*, and arise from the *dead*, and Christ shall give thee light." Also with Phil. ii. 15, ... "In the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom *ye shine as lights in the world.*"

You say, and properly, that "Christ arose as the first fruits; afterwards shall arise they that are Christ's at his coming;" but you add, "and finally all the wicked shall arise to immortality and damnation at the same time." Of this, however, the apostle says not a word. His language is, as quoted in my last, "then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father . . . . and when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son *also* himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that GOD MAY BE ALL IN ALL."

You affirm that "*death itself* shall be subdued to Christ, without entering heaven." Paul's declaration is, not that death shall be subdued to Christ, but that death shall be *destroyed*, and swallowed up in victory.

"In the fiftieth Psalm," you say, "we have a propnetic description of the future general judgment." It would have been becoming in you to have furnished the proof of such reference. The same remark is applicable to your quotation of Jude 14, 15. Similar language, in many

respects, and equally terrific, is found in Isa. xiii. 6, 22 Joel ii. 1, 11. See, also, Psalm xcvi. 13. There is nothing in any or all of these passages which is not perfectly referable to the things of time. Comp. Ps. l. 5, and Matt. xxiv. 31, and connexion.

The fate of the angels [or messengers] who sinned, and that of Sodom and Gomorrha, are not to your purpose. Jude adduces these instances of the judgment of God as *examples* to the "filthy dreamers," who disgraced the Christian Church. GILPIN aptly remarks, that the apostle mentions the destruction of the cities of the plain, "as a δεῖγμα, something that was *a visible example* to all. That word, deriving from δείκνυμι, to show or exhibit, properly signifies to give a sample of something to be sold." So also BENSON, HAMMOND, WHITBY. The phrase "even as" clearly shows that the case of the angels [or messengers] who sinned, was also adduced as a visible example. You will not pretend that torments in the invisible world, can be a visible example to men in the flesh. So soon as you evince a desire to enter fully into the consideration of this subject, as a part of the discussion, you will find me ready. You must not, however, assume as granted, that the inhabitants of Sodom suffered the vengeance of eternal fire "*after* the shower of fire had swept them from the earth" —nor must you assume that the angels mentioned in the preceding verse were superhuman beings, nor that endless punishment was their doom.

If you will read 2 Cor. v. 10, without the words supplied by the translators, (which are always printed in *italic*, and for which there is no Divine authority,) you will perceive that your argument therefrom in proof of a future general judgment is not so strong as you may have supposed. Paul speaks of being *absent from the body*, and present with the Lord; but he also speaks of being at *home in the body*—and it was with reference to the latter situation that he said, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things [not *out* of but] IN BODY, according to that he hath done, whether good or bad." He says, in Gal. vi

7, "For whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." He who sows a field of grain in Pennsylvania, does not expect to reap the crop in France. He will reap where he sowed.

In Luke xxi, our Saviour, in discoursing of events connected with his coming to destroy Jerusalem, speaks of standing before the Son of man. All this was to be in the earth. Why then should it be supposed that the judgment seat of Christ is in the immortal world? Jesus told his disciples that he should COME to judge the world—not that the people should GO into the future state to be judged.

It is true, as you quote, that "God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing," Eccl. xii. 14; it is true that "God shall judge the righteous and the wicked," Eccl. iii. 17; and it is equally true that "He is a God who judgeth in the earth," Psalm lviii. 11.

In your comments on Rom. ii. you (unintentionally, I presume,) misquote verse 7. You make it declare that "God will render glory, honour, immortality, eternal life, to them that patiently continue in well-doing." The text reads thus: "To them who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory, honour, immortality, eternal life." I have shown in previous letters that the believing ARE in possession of eternal life, and that "glory, honour, and peace," are the present consequences of righ doing.

You rest much of your argument on the alteration above corrected, and also on the declaration, "*in the day* when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel." This declaration is nothing to your purpose, unless you prove that the day referred to appertains to a future existence. The expression, "the day of wrath," furnishes no such proof. In Zeph. i. we read, "The great day of the Lord is near . . . . that day is *a day of wrath*, a day of trouble and distress, a day of the trumpet and alarm against the fenced cities," &c. So we read in Rom. ii.—"indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doeth evil." The former

passage might be applied to a future state with as much propriety as you have thus applied the latter.

Acts xvii. 31, in my judgment, affords no proof of the position you quoted it to establish. Jehovah says, "I am the Lord which exercise loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth." Jer. ix. 24. God committed all judgment to the Son, John v. 22. It is recorded, Isa. xxxii. 1, "a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment." Jesus said to his disciples, Luke xxii. 29, "And I appoint you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me, that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel." As God who judgeth in the earth, committed all judgment to the Son, and appointed him a kingdom, it was requisite that a day (or time to reign) should also be appointed, (the gospel day or dispensation, Isa. xlix. 8; 2 Cor. vi. 2,) in which God should judge (or rule) the world in righteousness *by that man* whom he had ordained. See Psalm xcvi. 10—13. "Say among the heathen that the Lord reigneth," &c. This surely does not argue that *God himself* had not previously judged the world in righteousness.

In quoting Matt. xvi. 27, 28, you suppose that verse 27 relates to a yet future coming of Christ to judge the world, while you acknowledge that verse 28 refers to his coming in his spiritual kingdom, to judge Jerusalem and call the Gentiles. But the proof of such a transition of reference in the cited verses remains to be produced. Our Lord frequently spake of his coming, and by comparing the language of the text with other passages, we shall arrive at some definite conclusion on the subject.

Luke xxi is chiefly devoted to the consideration of events connected with the coming of the Son of man—and all those events have a direct relation to the destruction of Jerusalem. "When ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh . . . . . And there shall be signs in the sun, and the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power

and great glory." In the verses following, this coming is confined to the then existing generation. See verse 32.

In Matt. xxiv similar events are predicted, connected with the same coming "in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory," and the whole is expressly confined to the generation then existing. See verse 34.

In Matt. xvi. 27, 28, language of the same import is used—"For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels, and then he shall reward every man according to his works. Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here which shall not taste of death till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom." Before the close of the then existing generation, Jesus was to come in the kingdom which God had appointed him, and then was to begin the day appointed in which God was to judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he had ordained—and in that day, also, Jesus, as the King who was to reign in righteousness, was to render to every man according to his works. This was the gospel day—the day referred to in Rom. ii. &c.

I will only add, that the passage in question is explained as above by PEARCE, HAMMOND, ROSENMULLER, Dr. ADAM CLARKE, and others.

You rely with all confidence on 2 Thess. i. 6—10, as being "conclusive on the subject of our controversy." But if you will re-examine your remarks, you will perceive that the entire force of the passage in proof of endless punishment, depends on the supposition that "the day of final judgment" is referred to. You say, "IN THAT DAY, the day of final judgment," &c. The *time* specified by the apostle is, "*when he shall come*;" "*when* the Lord Jesus shall be *revealed* from heaven." I have already shown when Jesus was to *come*, viz. before the close of the generation in which he lived. No doubt Paul's language, when written, had a future reference—but I cannot allow you to assume that it is *yet* future. Jesus said to his disciples, Luke xvii. 30, 31, "Even thus shall it be *in the day when the Son of man is revealed*. IN THAT DAY he which shall be upon the house top, and his stuff in the

house, let him not come down to take it away; and he that is in the field, let him likewise not return back. Remember Lot's wife," &c. Similar directions are given in Matt. xxiv. 15—18. So also in Luke xxi. 20—23; in all which places the time of tribulation to Jerusalem is obviously referred to. Jesus said, "Then shall be great *tribulation*," and "These be the days of *vengeance*, that all things which are written may be fulfilled." In 2 Thess. i. which you quote, it is written, "It is a righteous thing with God to recompense *tribulation* to them that trouble you . . . . . taking *vengeance* on them that know not God," &c.

As the passage now under consideration was once by me considered a strong proof of endless punishment, and as it appears to be a prominent objection in *your* mind against Universalism, allow me to propose a *full* examination of its merits. Four questions present themselves. 1st. *Who* troubled the Thessalonians? for they were the persons to be punished in the manner stated, 2 Thess. i. 6—10; Acts xvii. 5—9. 2d. *When* were they to be punished? This question I have already attempted to answer. 3d. *Where* were they to be punished? "*From* the presence of the Lord," &c. The Jewish use of this phrase should receive due attention, 2 Kings xiii. 23; xxiv. 20. 4th. In *what* was the punishment to consist? "In everlasting destruction *from* the presence of the Lord," Jer. xxiii. 39, 40. This is simply a sketch of the subject, which I am prepared fully to discuss, so soon as you feel disposed to furnish your proofs that the passage refers to the future state.

As this letter has already been extended beyond desirable limits, I defer the presentation of additional testimony in proof of the final holiness and happiness of all mankind. I wish not to quote a text without proceeding to show that it has the bearing I suppose it to have. And I may add, that a *few* passages to the point are of more value than *many* of an equivocal or doubtful character.

With assurances of continued respect

I am yours, &c.

ABEL C. THOMAS.

TO MR. ABEL C. THOMAS.

Philadelphia, April 16th, 1834.

Dear Sir—If "*reconciliation* always supposes *unreconciliation*," then it is manifest that the ALL THINGS to be reconciled are to be understood as not meaning ALL THINGS absolutely. If there are some things not to be reconciled, then you and I have come to this agreement, *that it pleased the Father that in Christ all fulness should dwell, and having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile* ALL THINGS *unto himself, that are to be reconciled, or ever will be reconciled by him.* You affirm, however, that not *all things* absolutely, but all unreconciled human *persons* shall be reconciled. This I deny, for some die in their sins; have never forgiveness; never see life; but the wrath of God abideth on them, after they go to their own place.

You refer the whole of Matt. xxiv to the coming of Christ to judge the Jews and Jerusalem; and think it is in this life alone that we are to appear before the judgment seat of Christ. In the third verse of that chapter it is recorded, after Jesus had predicted the destruction of Jerusalem, that his disciples came to him on the mount of Olives, saying, "Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" These questions Christ answered. From the 4th to the 35th verse he gives the signs of his coming to judge Jerusalem; and tells them that "this generation," to wit, of Jews, or Hebrews, "shall not pass till all these things shall be fulfilled." True it is, also, that all then living did not pass to their graves before Jerusalem was destroyed; and equally true that this generation of Jews still exists in a state of dispersion. In the 36th verse Jesus begins to answer the question concerning "the end of the world," saying, "BUT OF THAT DAY," a different day from that of his coming to judge Jerusalem, of which he had before spoken, —"of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only." He proceeds to say concerning this last "coming of the Son of man," that it shall be sudden an

unexpected as his coming in the days of Noah, by the judgment of the deluge. He exhorts to watchfulness in relation to the coming of *that day*, and assures us concerning each unfaithful and unwise servant, that his Lord "shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with hypocrites"—"where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

I freely confess that I believe in the existence of *devils*, and that in the time of our Saviour's residence on earth, many devils peculiarly possessed some sinful mortals; and that by compelling them to confess Jesus Christ, while they dreaded and hated him, God the Father was glorified. Freely I confess, too, that I believe in other *holy angels* than merely *human messengers* dwelling on earth, in the flesh; and yet I admit that *any one sent* on any errand whatever, may be called *an angel*.

You incidentally quote Heb. ii. 9, as evidence that Christ will reconcile all men to himself so as to save them. "We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every *man*." The word man is not in the original. He tasted death ὑπερ παντος (*huper pantos*) *for every* ——; leaving some noun in the masculine gender to be supplied from the context. What that noun is, the next verse shows. "For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through suffering." Hence we see that the word *son* is to be supplied after παντος, thus, "that he by the grace of God should taste death for every *son*;" that he might bring many sons to glory. If, however, we admit that Christ tasted death for every human being, it will not follow that all will be saved from hell. He may have tasted death for every man, so as to have obtained the right of raising every man from the dead in the last day He may have *tasted death for every man*, so as to become in his Mediatorial character Lord of all men. He died for all men in some sense, without dying to *save* all men from impenitence and ruin.

The *Michael* named in Daniel xiith, is taken to be the *Angel of the Covenant;* the Jehovah sent, or the Lord Jesus Christ himself; so that his standing up for the children of his people at *that time of trouble* to all the wicked, which shall exceed all former times of trouble, is no proof that the day of judgment will not then have come, in which some shall awake to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.

You think I have either misquoted or misinterpreted Rom. ii. 7. The first ten verses of that chapter convey to my mind the most explicit declaration of a retribution future to the present life. "Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art, that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest, doest the same things." If a man has knowledge and conscience enough to judge his neighbour, he thereby evinces the righteousness of condemning him, when he does the very things which he condemns in others. "But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth, against them which commit such things. And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God? Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; who will render to every man, according to his deeds: to them who by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life: but unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness; indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil; of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; but glory, honour, and peace to every man that worketh good; to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile; for there is no respect of person with God."

Here the apostle teaches 1st, *that there is a day of wrath*

and of the revelation of the righteous judgment of God coming; against the coming of which men may *treasure up* wrath. If all their wickedness is punished as it is committed, they treasure up nothing against any day of wrath to be subsequently revealed. 2d. That in this day of wrath, when his righteous judgment shall be revealed, God WILL RENDER unto every man according to his deeds. 3dly. That in rendering unto every one according to his deeds, God *will render* ETERNAL LIFE, GLORY, HONOUR, and PEACE, to them who by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, and honour, and immortality. If men do not by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory, honour, and immortality, it is implied that HE WILL NOT render to them *eternal life.* 4thly. That in the day of the revelation of his righteous judgment, HE WILL RENDER to them that are contentious and do not obey the truth, but do evil, the righteous retribution of *indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish.* 5thly. That this retribution both of the good and bad is to be *universal* when the day of wrath and judgment shall be revealed; for it will equally respect Jews and Gentiles. Were it true that God now renders full and perfect retribution, there would be no occasion for promising what *he will do* on a future day, yet to be revealed.

Other matters about which we have severally expressed our opinions already, I consent to leave to the judgment of our readers. I proceed to adduce further proof of a future state of punishment, which some of the human family shall experience.

Jehovah says, "I will not justify the wicked," Exod. xxiii. 7. Of course God will *condemn* the wicked. The Lord "will keep the feet of his saints, and the wicked shall be silent in darkness," 1 Sam. ii. 9. Here the destiny of saints and the wicked is contrasted; and this silence in darkness I take to be a description of interminable gloom and despair. "The wicked is reserved to the day of destruction. They shall be brought forth to the day of wrath," Job xxi. 30. If the *present life* is the day of destruction, and the day of wrath, I see not how the

wicked are reserved in this life to a future day of punishment. If they are punished invariably as they do wickedly, and pass along in life, there is no *reserving* of them to the day of destruction and wrath. If the *destruction* to which the wicked is *reserved*, is merely natural death, and all are saved so soon as they die, then this text instead of being a solemn threatening, as it was evidently intended to be, becomes a precious assurance that the wicked is *reserved to salvation*. This I know comports with your views, but it seems to me a most manifest contradiction of all those passages which promise *good to the righteous*, and by way of contrast, denounce *evil to the wicked*. If *perishing* and *perdition* mean but a passage through death into heaven, why should the Scriptures continually represent the character and destiny of two classes of persons as widely different? Of the wicked it is said, "Surely thou didst set them in slippery places: thou castest them down into destruction. How are they brought into desolation, as in a moment! they are utterly consumed with terrors," Psalm lxxiii. 18, 19. Now if all at death enter immediately into the perfect bliss of heaven, then the righteous and the wicked are alike set in slippery places, and need not fear being cast down into destruction and consumed with terrors; for the sooner they are cast down, destroyed, and consumed, the sooner they arrive at perfect happiness! Judas, according to this theory, was a happy man, and enjoyed advantages superior to those of his fellow apostles, who toiled and suffered during many years after his ascension to bliss before they experienced the same honour.

Of him, however, the Scriptures teach that having betrayed his Lord, he went and hanged himself; and probably the rope having broken, that "falling headlong he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out." "Judas by transgression fell" from the "ministry and apostleship"—"that he might go to his own place," Acts i. 18, 25. *His own place* after he hung himself was undoubtedly the grave for his body. But whither went his soul? You teach that he was made holy and happy, im

mediately, in spirit, so that *his own place* for his immortal soul's residence was paradise. Happy man, to be thus translated to the abode of the spirits of the just made perfect! But, to the destruction of this theory, Jesus called Judas "the son of perdition," John xvii. 12; said he was "LOST;" and added, "The Son of man indeed goeth, as it is written of him: but wo to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! Good were it for that man if he had never been born," Mark xiv. 21. We deem those accursed, lost, miserable for ever, who die under the wo of the only Saviour and Judge of sinners. You think Judas was *blessed* perfectly, so soon as he strangled himself. It must have been a *blessed wo*, then which Christ pronounced on him; and thus you call evil good, and good evil. Finally, if Judas entered heaven at death, and has been perfectly happy ever since, and will continue so, through everlasting ages, it was a very good thing indeed for him to have been born; and he ought to contradict the Saviour in this matter, through everlasting ages. I remain, dear sir, yours, with the best wishes for your salvation.

EZRA STILES ELY

TO MR. EZRA STILES ELY.

Philadelphia, April 21, 1834.

Dear Sir—That "*reconciliation* always supposes previous *unreconciliation*," is too obvious to require proof—and that "the stones of the street and the cattle of the hills" can never be reconciled to God, is equally obvious—for they never were and never can be *unreconciled*. When it is said, "It pleased the Father that in Christ should *all fulness* dwell," you do not suppose that all the fulness of irrational beings and of inanimate matter is referred to, but, "all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." So when it is written, "It pleased the Father to reconcile all things to himself," I understand the testi-

mony to declare, that it is the purpose and pleasure of the Father to reconcile to himself *all the rational beings* that ever were, or ever will be, in a state of unreconciliation. The remarks in my last letter, together with the quotations from CAMPBELL, STUART, and the BIBLE, were intended to establish this position.

To the cited conclusion you object, because, to use your own words, "some die in their sins; have never forgiveness; never see life; but the wrath of God abideth on them, after they go to their own place." In this sentence you have given us isolated parts of four Scripture passages, to which *your opinion* of their reference is appended, without attempting to show that they have the slightest bearing on the point in debate. I am aware that those passages are applied to the future state, and that they are deemed conclusive on the subject of our controversy, by a majority of the Christian community. But I am also sensible that the question before us is not to be determined by ballot. So soon as you attempt to prove that the texts you have partially quoted stand in opposition to the final reconciliation of all mankind, I will attend to your reasoning.

In endeavouring to destroy the force of my remarks on Matt. xxiv, and parallel passages, you allow that from the 4th verse to the 35th, "Jesus gives the signs of his coming to destroy Jerusalem." But you add: "In the 36th verse Jesus begins to answer the question concerning the 'end of the world,' saying, 'BUT OF THAT DAY,' a different day from that of his coming to judge Jerusalem," &c. I should be pleased to learn your reasons for supposing that "a *different* day" is referred to. In Luke xvii. 24—36, the deluge and the destruction of Sodom are undoubtedly spoken of, as illustrative of the sudden and unexpected coming of the Son of man to destroy Jerusalem—and until you present some proof to the contrary, I shall be justified in assuming that the same is true of the deluge as mentioned in Matt. xxiv. 37 et seq.—especially as the passages are confessedly parallel.

You may perhaps be disposed to rest your proof on the

phrase "end of the world." In my remarks on the parable of the tares, in a former letter, I endeavoured to show that the phrase συντελεία των αἰώνων signifies, not the end of the *material world*, but the *end of the age*. And I quoted the Scriptures in proof of the position. The testimony of your own commentators was added by way of confirmation. As you have hitherto neglected to notice this important branch of our discussion, I beg leave respectfully to suggest that it be now attended to. It should not be forgotten that Jesus appeared in the *end of the worlds* (συντελεία των αἰώνων) to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself, Heb. ix. 26. See also 1 Cor. x. 11. I sincerely hope that your next letter will contain your reasons for supposing that I have erred in the interpretation given of the phrase in question. I also desire you to furnish your reasons for applying *any* part of Matt. xxiv to the concerns of a future life.

In your confession of belief "in the existence of devils," you give us to understand, that God may be glorified by an *extorted* acknowledgment of Jesus Christ! You say, "In the time of our Saviour's residence on earth, many devils peculiarly possessed some sinful mortals; and that by compelling them to confess Jesus Christ, while they dreaded and hated him, God the Father was glorified." According to this statement, *devils* COMPELLED *sinners* to speak the truth—(which was rather out of character in any one connected with the father of lies)—and God the Father was glorified by an extorted confession of Jesus Christ, coming from the lips of those who dreaded and hated him! In *my* view, sir, the Supreme Being can only be glorified by a sincere and heart-felt acknowledgment of the truth, based in the conviction of the understanding.

As to the two men possessed of demons, who confessed that Jesus was the Son of God, they were unquestionably persons of disordered minds, who had heard of the fame and miracles of the Messiah. They were soon restored to the proper use of their intellect, and sat at the feet of Jesus in their right mind. The popular superstition

which supposes that fallen angels ever possessed any of human kind is equally destitute of foundation with the traditionary error of the Jews, namely, that the spirits of dead men inhabited the bodies of the living.

It is true that the word *man* is not in the original of Heb. ii. 9, but I cannot agree that the word *son*, as a substitute, would express the meaning of the apostle; nor do I think it would accord with the scope of the context My reasons are as follows:

We are certified that "the head of *every man* is Christ," 1 Cor. xi. 3—in which passage the pen of inspiration has not omitted a word, to be supplied by individuals to whom the record might descend. If Christ be the *head* of *every man*, it is reasonable to suppose that he *tasted death for every man.*

In 1 Tim. ii. 6, it is written of Jesus, that he "gave himself a ransom for ALL ὑπερ παντων to be testified in due time." In verse 4th we read, that God our Saviour "will have ALL MEN παντας ανθρωπους to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth." If you allow that the *will* here mentioned is a determinate purpose of the Almighty, then the doctrine I have engaged to sustain is established. If you allege that it is simply a will of *desire*, you must either allow that Jesus gave himself a ransom for all men absolutely, which is equivalent to tasting death for every man; or attempt to show how God can desire the salvation of any for whom Jesus did *not* give himself a ransom.

If Jesus did *not* give himself a ransom for all men—then upon your own grounds, it is *impossible* that *all men* should be saved. This will run you into the doctrine of the "Confession of Faith," namely, that the number of angels and men elected from all eternity to everlasting life, "is so definite and certain, that it cannot be either increased or diminished." In this case, you will explain your reasons for calling on *all men to believe*, with the assurance that all men *may be* saved.

There would be no impropriety in reading Heb. ii. 9 thus: "That he by the grace of God should taste death for ALL."

The context of the passage cannot, in my judgment, justify any other than the foregoing interpretation. "Thou hast put ALL THINGS *πάντα* in subjection under his feet. For in that he put ALL *τὰ πάντα* in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. [God excepted, as in 1 Cor. xv. 27, and as some old MSS. read on the text under examination, 'that he should taste death for ALL, God excepted.'] But now we see not yet ALL THINGS *τὰ πάντα* put under him." I ask whether it is reasonable to suppose that the apostle, after penning this explicit testimony, should intend to say that Jesus did not taste death for the *all things* to be put in subjection under him?

Your principal argument is drawn from the fact that "*many* SONS" are spoken of in the 10th verse. But this special reference to those who had already been brought into subjection to Christ, must not be misunderstood to militate against the universal subjection previously declared. The apostle had stated expressly, that the disciples did not yet see all things subdued to the Messiah—but the train of his reasoning shows that this universal subjection would certainly be accomplished. The "many sons" who had been brought to glory were the first fruits, —as in verse 11; "for both he that sanctifieth and they who ARE sanctified are all of one." So in 1 Cor. vi. 9—11, after mentioning a number of evil characters, and declaring that such should not inherit the kingdom of God, the apostle adds, "And such *were* some of you: but ye *are* washed, but ye *are* sanctified."

Indeed, the verse in which the "many sons" are spoken of confirms the foregoing view of the subject. "For it became him, for whom are ALL THINGS, *τὰ πάντα*, and by [through] whom are ALL THINGS, *τὰ πάντα*, IN BRINGING *many sons* unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through suffering." *When* was Jesus made perfect through suffering? Plainly, "*in bringing many sons*," the first fruits of *all things*, "to glory." It is written, Rom. xi. 36, "For of him, and through him, and *to him*, are all things." Do you suppose that Jesus still suffers? Do you suppose he is not yet made perfect? To be brief:

In my judgment, Jesus was made perfect "*in bringing many sons* to glory;" that in his Mediatorial character he is Lord of all; and that, by him, God will reconcile all things to himself.

In Rom. viii, the same apostle presents testimony in confirmation of the above view of the subject. He speaks of the sons, the children, who had already received the spirit of adoption, and says, "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us, [that is, the sons, the believers.] For the earnest expectation of the *creature* [rather *the creation*] waiteth for the manifestation of the SONS OF GOD. For the creature [the creation] was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, because the creature [the creation] itself ALSO *shall be delivered* from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For WE [the sons] know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And *not only* they, but *ourselves* ALSO which *have the* FIRST FRUITS *of the Spirit*, even *we ourselves* groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." I have been particular in emphasizing these passages; and you will perceive that the words *also* and *first fruits*, as used by the apostle, add peculiar force to the train of his reasoning. The *sons* who had the *first fruits* of the Spirit; and the *creation*, which should *also* be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the same glorious liberty—embrace, in my estimation, the whole race of mankind.

Your remarks on Dan. xii, will be of no advantage to your argument, unless you show that our Saviour, in citing Daniel's prophecy, in Matt. xxiv. 15—21, misapplied it to the period of the destruction of Jerusalem.

Your reasoning on Rom. ii. 1—10, rests chiefly on the supposition that those verses contain a yet future reference. You say, "Here the apostle teaches, that there is a day of wrath and of the revelation of the righteous judgmen of God *coming*." It should not be forgotten, that because

a passage *when written*, had a future reference, it does not follow that it *still* has a future reference. You say, moreover, "Were it true that God now renders full and perfect retribution, there would be no occasion for promising what *he will do* on a future day, yet to be revealed." But I cannot allow you to assume that "a future day, YET to be revealed," is spoken of in the passages before us. Paul certified that the things mentioned in the ten verses which, in your judgment, teach a retribution future to the present life, should be accomplished, "in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men BY JESUS CHRIST according to my gospel." In my last letter, on Acts xvii. 31, I endeavoured to show that the day here mentioned was the reign of Christ in the kingdom appointed him by the Father. "God has appointed a day in which He will judge the world BY THAT MAN whom He hath ordained.' This declaration was future in its reference when written for it pointed to the coming of the Son of man in his kingdom. That coming was to be before the disciples had gone over all the cities of Israel, Matt. x. 23—before John's departure, John xxi. 22—before the generation in which Jesus lived, should have passed away, Matt. xxiv. 29—34.

When it is written that, under the gospel, God would judge the world BY JESUS CHRIST, are we to infer that *God* had not *previously* judged the world HIMSELF? When we are certified that God committed all judgment to the Son, are we to conclude that God had not previously exercised judgment in the earth? John v. 22; Jer. ix. 24; Psalm lviii. 11.

There can be no doubt that God will condemn the wicked—but it does not follow that He will condemn them to endless punishment. There can be as little doubt that the Lord "will keep the feet of His saints, and the wicked shall be silent in darkness;" but it does not follow that you are correct, when you say, "this silence in darkness, I take to be a description of interminable gloom and despair." *I* take it to be a description of calamity *in the earth*.

You quote Job xxi. 30—"The wicked is reserved to the day of destruction. They shall be brought forth to the day of wrath." And you add, "If the *present life* is the day of destruction, and the day of wrath, I see not how the wicked are reserved in this life to a future day of punishment." Answer: Korah and his company were reserved until the people had departed "from the tents of those wicked men"—and then the earth opened and swallowed them up, with all that appertained to them, Num. xvi. The Sodomites were reserved until Lot had departed from the city—then they were destroyed, together with all that grew upon the ground, Gen. xix. The antediluvians were reserved until Noah and his family were safe in the ark—then came the day of destruction, and every living thing died that moved upon the face of the earth, Gen. viii. You thus perceive that the wicked are reserved to the day of destruction, and of wrath, in the present life.

When you allege that according to my views, "the wicked are reserved to salvation," you forget that there is such a thing as the *retort courteous.* I might say to you, that, according to *your* views, God was so *kind* to the saints of Israel, to righteous Lot, and to Noah, as not to permit them to be destroyed, in the judgments of which they were witnesses respectively—so *very kind* to them, that He was determined they should linger a life of wretchedness in this evil world—and so *exceedingly gracious* to them ward, that He was not willing they should go to heaven, either by a gap in the earth, a flood of water, or of fire! I am satisfied that ridicule or satire, when properly used, is as lawful an argument as is to be found in the vocabulary; but I wish not to use it, not even in self-defence, if I can avoid it. You have, however, resorted to this weapon; particularly in your remarks on the case of Judas, in connexion with a quotation from Psalm lxxiii. 18, 19—and you cannot reasonably find fault, if I should so far imitate your example, as to show that the sword of satire is a two-edged blade.

You say, in speaking of the death of Judas, "Happy

man, to be thus translated to the abode of the spirits of the just made perfect!! You think Judas was *blessed* perfectly. so soon as he strangled himself. It must have been a *blessed wo*, then, which Christ pronounced on him; and thus you call evil good, and good evil."

Allow me to call your attention to a few cases recorded in Scripture. In Deut. xxxii. 48—52, it is thus written: "The Lord spake unto Moses that self-same day, saying, Get thee up into this mountain . . . . . and die in the mount whither thou goest up, and be gathered unto thy people: as Aaron thy brother died in Mount Hor, and was gathered unto his people; BECAUSE YE TRESPASSED AGAINST ME among the children of Israel." Following your example, I might say, "Happy men, to be thus translated to the abodes of the spirits of the just made perfect, *because they trespassed* against the Lord! You teach, that Moses and Aaron were *blessed* perfectly, so soon as they died. It must have been a *blessed punishment*, then, which God pronounced upon them; and thus you call evil good and good evil."

In 2 Kings xx. 1, it is written that the good king Hezekiah was sick, nigh unto death—but God, as a token of favour, added fifteen years to his life. Miserable man! to be kept out of heaven for fifteen years, as a favour!

Paul, in Phil. ii. 27, says, in speaking of his fellow labourer in the gospel, Epaphroditus, "For indeed he was sick nigh unto death; but God had mercy on him; and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow." Cruel mercy! not to allow Epaphroditus to go to heaven! And how unfeeling was Paul, to say, that he should have had sorrow upon sorrow, if his fellow labourer had been so unfortunate as to have died and gone to heaven!

And now, dear sir, allow me to say, in all sincerity and affection, I regret having been under the necessity of thus plainly pointing out the results of your own reasoning. I humbly trust that circumstances of a like character will not again occur, in the progress of our friendly controversy.

Your *arguments* on the case of Judas, are 1st. John xvii 12, "While I was with them (the disciples) in the world, I *kept* them in thy name; those that thou gavest me I have *kept* and none of them is *lost*, απωλετο, but the son of *perdition*, απωλειας; that the Scripture might be fulfilled." But do you seriously suppose it was essential to the fulfilment of the Scripture, that Judas should be doomed to endless punishment? What is meant by Christ having hitherto kept his disciples in his Father's name? Plainly, that he had, as yet, preserved them faithful in his cause. What is meant by his having lost none? Simply that none, with the exception named, had abandoned it. What is meant by one being lost? Plainly nothing more than that one had abandoned the cause of Christ. You are aware that the words translated *lost* and *perdition* are the same, excepting that the former is the verb, and the latter the noun. "None of them is *lost* but the son of *perdition;* that *the Scripture might be fulfilled.*" The Scripture here noticed is Psalm xli. 9. Jesus had quoted this Scripture in the early part of the evening. "I speak not of you all, I know whom I have chosen; but that the Scripture may be fulfilled. He that eateth bread with me, hath lifted up his heel against me," that is, he has become my adversary.

2d. You quote from Acts i,—"that he might go to his own place." On this you should have attempted to show, 1st. That these words were spoken of Judas. Many of the best critics and commentators, HAMMOND, GALPIN, CLARKE, &c., allege that they were spoken of Matthias, who was elected to fill the place vacated by the defection of Judas. 2d. That, even allowing the words to be spoken of Judas, "his own place" signified a state or place of endless punishment. I am not disposed to allow much force to inferences of an equivocal character. See Judges ix. 55; Numbers xxiv. 25.

3d. Your strongest argument is drawn from the Saviour's declaration, "Good were it for that man if he had never been born." But it should be remembered that this was *a common proverb* among the Jews, and also among

other nations. Doctor ADAM CLARKE, in his Commentary on Acts i, quotes many examples from SCHOETTGEN, which clearly show the Jewish use of the proverb to imply no more, than that such a one was a wretched, miserable creature. KOECHER informs us, that "the very phrase, *it is better not to be born*, is used by the best Greek authors to signify a miserable condition or calamity." ROSENMULLER says that GATAKER has quoted similar expressions from the heathen writers, both of Rome and of Greece.

But we need no other light than the Bible affords, on this subject. Solomon says, "If a man beget a hundred children . . . . and his soul be not filled with good, and also that *he have no burial*, I say that *an untimely birth is better than he*," Eccl. vi. 3. See also Eccl. iv. 1—3. Job cursed the day of his birth, Job iii. 3—16; x. 18, 19; Jeremiah also, Jer. xv. 10, 17—yet you do not suppose tha either of these individuals was doomed to interminable wretchedness.

Should any of our readers feel disposed to examine this subject more minutely, they may consult Dr. ADAM CLARKE on Acts i,—who, although an unwavering believer in, and an advocate of, the doctrine of endless punishment, declares his conviction "that there is no positive evidence of the final damnation of Judas in the sacred text." And I need scarcely add, that in the discussion of a question of so much importance as the one before us nothing but positive evidence should be admitted.

I regret exceedingly that you have declined entering *fully* into an examination of some of the passages you have cited in proof of endless punishment. It is impossible to do entire justice to a dozen passages in any one letter. I am especially solicitous that you should consent to discuss 2 Thess. i. 6—10 in detail—inasmuch as you deem that passage "conclusive on the subject of our controversy," and inasmuch also as you say, it "must for ever prevent you from becoming a Universalist."

With many sincere wishes for your continued health and happiness, I am respectfully yours, &c.

ABEL C. THOMAS.

TO MR. ABEL C. THOMAS.

Philadelphia, April 28th, 1834.

It is my design, my dear sir, to avoid prolixity and learned references as much as possible, because I wish our discussion may be read by persons who must decide according to the common sense which God has given them, whether your system of doctrine or mine is conformable to the obvious meaning of the sacred Scriptures It seems, however, absolutely necessary for us to recur occasionally to the original words employed by the inspired penmen; and any of our readers who do not understand Greek and Hebrew must judge from the general tenor of any passage referred to, which of us is right in his interpretation of any disputed terms.

In Heb. ix. 26, we read of Christ, "but now, once, in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." The original expression is not συντελεια τυ αἰωνος, *the end of the age, or of the world*, but συντελεια των αἰωνων, *the ending together of the ages*. The former expression would refer to the time of Christ's second coming; but the latter describes the time when he actually came to make atonement. An interminable past duration preceded his appearing, and an interminable duration is to succeed. For everlasting portions of duration are represented as coming together at the point of the Saviour's residence on earth. The word αἰων you know signifies *being always*. If there is any word in the Greek language which denotes endless continuance, it is this. It is the term employed to express the eternity of the Deity, and the duration of heavenly happiness. Because Christ came in the *joint ending of the ages* of past and future eternity, it does not follow, that he will not come again in the closing scene of this world, to judge the whole race of man in righteousness.

The disciples asked after the signs of Christ's coming to destroy Jerusalem, Matt. xxiv. 3, and *also* of the end of the world. Here τυ αἰωνος, in the singular, is used, and evidently refers to something different from the duration

of the temple, or the generation of Jews then living; because they inquired "When shall these things be?" in relation to the desolation of the holy city, and then subjoined their interrogation about *the end of the world.* Had the end of the world, and the destruction of the temple been the same thing, their second question would have been merely a repetition of the first. Besides, Christ, having spoken in reply to the first question, when he comes to the language of the 36th verse, "But of that day," evidently contrasts *that day* of which he subsequently discourses with the time of which he had been previously speaking.

In Acts xv. 18, all God's works are said to have been known to him, *απ' αἰωνος*, *from eternity*. Here the word denotes the whole of past duration. In Matt. vi. 13, in which it is said "thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory *for ever*," *εἰς τους αἰωνας*, the expression means the whole of God's future duration. While God exists, let him be glorified.

That the word translated *for ever* and *everlasting* is sometimes employed to denote the *whole duration* of things which are not strictly speaking *everlasting*, is granted; but this accommodated use of the term cannot destroy its original meaning of *endless existence.* The hills are indeed called *everlasting*, because they are to last so long as the earth; but it will not hence follow, that the existence of God, or of the human soul, or of the happiness of the saints, or of the punishment of the lost, is not absolutely *interminable.* The *everlasting punishment* of a human person is punishment to be continued while that person shall last; just as the everlasting mountains of the earth, are mountains to last as long as the earth itself. In Matt. xxv, the Saviour tells us, that the *reign of the heavens* may be likened to the dealings of a bridegroom with ten virgins, five of whom were unwise, and who not being prepared to enter with him into the hall of the wedding entertainment, were for ever excluded. Against them "the door was shut." Afterwards they came, "saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not." Now if the

bridegroom of the church should thus treat all who are without the oil of Divine love in their hearts; if he shall disown them and exclude them from his presence, when he shall bring his bride, the Lamb's wife, into his paradise above, they will experience, wherever they may exist, all that we mean by the damnation of hell. The application which Christ made of his parable of the ten virgins was this, "Watch, therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh." To this he subjoins another illustration of his dealings with mankind: "For he," meaning the Son of man, not *the kingdom of heaven*, which words were supplied by the translators, "is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods." This *far country* to which the Son of man is gone, is heaven; whence he shall return to reckon with his servants according to every man's several ability, and the talents intrusted to each. Those who have made a right use of their talents, he informs us, shall enter into the joy of their lord. But among the servants, one slothful and wicked one was found, who entertained the most unreasonable prejudices against his master, and made no right use of the talent intrusted to him. Figuratively speaking, he wrapped his talent in a napkin and hid it in the earth. From him, therefore, his lord took away the talent, saying, *from him that hath not* used his talent aright, *shall be taken away even that which he hath;* "and cast ye the unprofitable servant into utter darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." In this way Jesus Christ has said that he himself will deal with mankind, in exercising his reign, the reign of the heavens over them. Lest, however, there should be any erroneous opinion indulged on the application of this parable of the talents, our Lord immediately continues to say, "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him;" which cannot mean his coming in judgment on Jerusalem, nor any coming except his last, for at no time have *all the holy angels come* with him to our world; "then shall he sit upon the throne of his glo-

ry." He came to our world in the time of the incarnation, not *in his glory*, but in his *humiliation*. He came not with all his holy angels, nor with any of them *in glory*, when he came as the babe of Bethlehem and the man of sorrows. The time of this coming is clearly shown to be future in the next sentence, for it is said "and before him, shall be gathered all nations." Never yet has he come to our world with all his holy angels, and gathered all nations before him. When he came to destroy Jerusalem after his ascension, he came merely in the exercise of his kingly authority to one nation, to visit them with great national judgments; he came without his holy angels, by the Roman sword, famine, pestilence, and civil war; and he did not gather all of one nation before him.

Besides, when he shall be thus seated on his throne of glory and of judgment, and shall have gathered all nations before him, then "he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats." A shepherd having through the day suffered his sheep and goats to run together promiscuously, was wont at night, having gathered all together, to separate them one from another, that they might be folded in separate folds through the night. Thus, in the close of the day of this world, the Son of man, acting as the Judge of human character and persons, having assembled all the nations of mankind before him, will divide them into two great classes according as they have used aright, or have not used aright, the talents intrusted to them. "And he," the Son of man, acting as an eastern shepherd, "shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left." Here Christ applies the terms of sheep and goats to the two great divisions of mankind that shall be manifested in the judgment. Having effected this separation according to his discernment of character, "then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."—"Then shall he say unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed into ev-

erlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."—"And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal." I confess, that I know not how the Lord Jesus could have taught more explicitly the doctrine, that there shall be a final judgment of all nations by himself; that in that coming judgment he will divide some portion of mankind from the rest; and that while some are received to *everlasting* life, others shall be doomed to *everlasting punishment*, which is symbolized by *everlasting fire*. This fire is said to have been originally *prepared for the devil and his angels;* and of course it means such an everlasting punishment as will be inflicted on spiritual beings. In the Greek, one word, αἰωνιον, is used to denote the duration of the *fire*, the *punishment*, and the *life*. If the *life* is to be without termination in futurity, so is the *fire*, so is the *punishment*. The word, you know, is compounded of two roots, which signify *always being*, or ever continuing. If the life of the *sheep* is *eternal* in the heavens, then the *punishment* of the goats is *eternal* in *eternal fire;* for the same duration is divinely predicated of each.

To show that αἰωνιον, rendered *everlasting* and *eternal*, primarily and naturally signifies duration without end, I refer to Matt. xix. 29, in which place Christ promises ζωην αἰωνιον, *everlasting life*, to all who in this world for his sake shall leave houses, brothers, sisters, fathers, mothers, children and lands. This is to be their portion "in the regeneration" of the world of mankind, by which they are to be raised from their graves, "when the Son of man shall sit upon the throne of his glory," v. 28. "Verily I say unto you, that ye who have followed me, in the renovation, when the Son of man shall sit upon the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." Ye, who shall reveal my will to man, shall, by your word thus revealed, judge all the visible people of God to whom your word shall be sent; and then, *every one* who so believes this gospel as to suffer the loss of all worldly friends and possessions for my sake, shall have everlasting life; though not all

shall have equal honour with the apostles, for whom thrones of judgment are prepared. In Luke xviii. 30, we read that no one hath forsaken house, &c, "who shall not receive manifold more in this present time," εν τω καιρω τουτω, meaning in the time of his continuance on earth; "and in the world to come life everlasting;" τω αιωνι τω ερχομενω ζωην αιωνιον; *in the endless duration to come, endless* or always being *life*. "We have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal (αιωνιον) in the heavens," 2 Cor. v. 1. The same word is used, when Timothy is exhorted to "lay hold on eternal life," (1 Tim. vi. 12,) and when God promises that *eternal life* (Rom. ii. 7.) which you say all men shall possess. It is this very word which is applied to Jesus Christ when he is said to be "the true God, and the Life eternal," 1 John v. 20. "And as many as were ordained to eternal (αιωνιον) life believed," Acts xiii. 48. The same word is used to denote "the eternal Spirit," Heb. ix. 12, 14, and "the eternal redemption," which Christ shed his blood to procure; and this is "the eternal life" which he has promised us, 1 John ii. 25.

The Greek of the New Testament, it is well known, is the same language in which the Septuagint Translation of the Old Testament was written, which was often read in the Synagogues and quoted by Christ and his apostles; and in the Septuagint the eternity of God is expressed in the very words which teach the endless punishment of the wicked. In the xcth Psalm, v. 2, for instance, it is said of Jehovah, "from everlasting," απο του αιωνος, from the *always being*, εως του αιωνος συ ει, to the *always being* thou art, that is from eternity to eternity, thou art. In short, I repeat it, that if any word in the Greek Septuagint or New Testament expresses, unequivocally, interminable duration, that word is frequently applied to teach the everlasting punishment of some sinners. I could cite a hundred passages in which this truth is confirmed, but it would render this discussion tedious. If the righteous when they die are to be received into "everlasting habitations" of blessedness, (Luke xvi. 9,) then it is equally

certain that when the Son of man shall be revealed from heaven, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, the wicked shall go away into everlasting punishment. They are not to continue on earth, and experience, as some feign, αἰωνιον, *punishment* in this world, but they are to GO AWAY from the throne of the Saviour's glory into everlasting punishment.

This same punishment is spoken of by Jesus Christ in Matt. xviii. 8, and is compared to one's being cast into το πυρ το αἰωνιον, "the fire that is everlasting." In verse 9th, of the same chapter, the place and nature of this punishment are compared to the valley of Hinnom, and the fires there. "And if thine eye offend thee," or rather cause thee to offend, or to become a scandal, "pluck it out, and cast it from thee: it is good for thee to enter into life having one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into the hell of fire," εις τη γεεννα του πυρος, into the gehenna of fire. This is one of the most forcible descriptions of the state of future punishment found in the Bible; and γεεννα is pre-eminently our Saviour's word for *hell*, a state and place of future punishment, in which the sufferings of the damned are symbolized by the burnings of unquenchable fire and the gnawings of a never dying worm. Some of the original words in Hebrew and Greek translated *hell* do not always mean either a state or place of punishment, we allow, but the state of departed spirits; the invisible future world; in which there is a *paradise*, and a *gehenna;* a place of holy happiness, and a *tartarus* of moral pollution and misery.

I propose to pursue this subject in my next letter, which I may publish in The Philadelphian of the next week, without waiting for your reply to this. Your letters to me, however, shall be inserted as soon as possible after they come to hand. In this way I will hope to have our letters shorter, by reason of the increase of their number.

Earnestly wishing to convince you that Universalism makes no man the better for believing it, reforms no immoral persons, and has a tendency to drown men in perdition, I remain your friend,

EZRA STILES ELY.

TO MR EZRA STILES ELY.

Philadelphia, May 9, 1834.

Dear Sir—I perceive with pleasure that you have practically renounced a sentiment contained in your letter of March 7; viz. that "commentary and criticism are needful to those alone who wish to believe a different doctrine from that taught by the Holy Spirit of inspiration." And I am not without hope that some of the passages by you cited, to my remarks on which you have made no reply, have also been rejected as furnishing no proof of endless punishment.

You have distinctly conceded, that from the 4th to the 35th verse, inclusive, of Matt. xxiv, our Saviour mentions the signs that should precede, and the circumstances that should attend his coming to destroy Jerusalem and put an end to the Jewish polity. Your *only* argument in proof of the position that a transition of reference commences at the 36th verse, is drawn from the expression, "*But of that day*," meaning, in your judgment, a *different* day from the one previously spoken of. This *argument*, however, is predicated of your *opinion*. As you have hitherto wholly neglected my reasoning on this point, I will patiently direct your attention thereto in detail.

Keeping in view your concession that to the 35th verse inclusive the day of tribulation to Jerusalem is referred to, let it be noticed that Jesus immediately added, "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only." Is it more reasonable to infer that a different day from the one of which the Saviour had just spoken is here intended, than that the same day of calamity, of which so particular an account had been given, is referred to? This question is directed to the common sense that would sit in judgment on the reference of similar language found in any other book. Jesus had expressly certified his disciples, that all the things of which he had spoken should transpire ere the close of the generation then existing—but as to the pre-

cise day and hour he acknowledged his inability to inform them.

You seem to think that in Matt. xxiv. 3, the disciples asked our Saviour several separate and distinct questions —so separate, indeed, that one, in your judgment, referred to events which were to transpire within forty years, viz. the destruction of Jerusalem; and another to be distant in its reference as many thousand centuries, viz. the end of the material world. Let us attend to the following considerations.

1st. In Mark xiii. 4, the questions before adverted to are thus recorded: "Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign when all these things shall be fulfilled?" In Luke xxi. 7, "When shall these things be? and what sign will there be when these things shall come to pass?" In these citations nothing is said of "the end of the world," συντελεια του αιωνος, yet you will not deny that the record of the questions in Matthew, Mark, and Luke, substantially expresses the same desire on the part of the disciples. Surely, if you are correct in your interpretation of the phrase in question, Mark and Luke would have recorded something in relation to the subject.

2d. There are but *two* questions in Matt. xxiv. 4. The disciples are not represented as inquiring for the sign of the end of the world, as a distinct matter. "When shall these things be?" that is, when shall the temple be so destroyed that one stone shall not be left upon another? This is the first question. "And what shall be the sign of thy coming AND of the end of the world?" thus inquiring for the sign of simultaneous events. This is the second question. To the 28th verse inclusive, Jesus speaks in reply to the first question, with a bearing on the second. At the 29th verse it is written, "IMMEDIATELY after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened. . . . . and *then* shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven. . . . and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven." This sign was the sign of his "coming *and* of the end of the world," for the face of

the question shows that these were to be simultaneous events.

3. Without any intimation that he was about to speak of another coming, Jesus proceeds with his discourse. He mentions his *coming* in verses 37, 39, 42, and 44, of chapter xxiv, and in verses 13 and 31 of chapter xxv, which is a continuation of the discourse commenced Matt. xxiv. 4. Your exposition of the instructions in question must therefore be considered out of place, until you prove that *two different* comings are spoken of in the cited chapters. You will not pretend that more than *one* coming is mentioned in the question, "What shall be the sign of thy coming?" and you are aware that the coming of the Son of man is distinctly stated in the part of Matt. xxiv, which you apply to the destruction of Jerusalem.

4th. In my last letter I stated, what you will not deny, that Matt. xxiv. 36—41, and Luke xvii. 26—37, are parallel passages—that they have reference to the same period and the same events—that the latter refers unquestionably to the circumstances attending the destruction of Jerusalem, and that such of course must be the reference of the former. These statements and arguments you have allowed to pass unnoticed—and thus they have shared the fate of much that I have written. I must therefore bring this matter more fully into view—although by so doing I incur the risk of being charged with prolixity.

In Matt. xxiv. 36—41, we read as follows—the same being by you applied to a yet future judgment: "But of that day and hour knoweth no man; no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. . . . *Then* shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken and the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken and the other left." [*Where* shall they be left?]

In Luke xvii. 26—36, it is thus written: "And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. . . . Even thus shall it be in the day

when the Son of man is revealed. In that day [*what* day?] he which shall be upon the house top and his stuff in the house, let him not come down to take it away; and he that is in the field let him likewise not return back. . . Two women shall be grinding together; the one shall be taken and the other left. Two men shall be in the field; the one shall be taken and the other left. And they answered and said unto him, *Where*, Lord? And he said unto them, Wheresoever the body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together."

You will at once perceive that the cited passages are perfectly parallel. They refer to the same period of time and to the same events. And you will not allege that the quotation from Luke refers to something yet future. The directions concerning those who might be on the house-top or in the field, are found, nearly *verbatim*, in Matt. xxiv. 17, 18, which verses, together with the connexion in which they stand, refer alone to the period of the destruction of Jerusalem, according to your own acknowledgment. So also of the language concerning the eagles. See Matt. xxiv. 28. With what appearance of propriety, then, can you apply two confessedly parallel passages, the one to the destruction of Jerusalem, and the other to a period of time yet future?

5th. The Saviour, having declared that all the things of which he had spoken in the previous part of Matt. xxiv, should come to pass before the close of the generation in which he lived, proceeded to certify his disciples that of the precise day and hour he himself was ignorant—but of this they might be certain, it would be unexpected and sudden as was the coming of the deluge. Then properly followed an exhortation to watchfulness and faithfulness, with a statement of the consequences that would attend a contrary course of conduct. This closes chapter xxiv, though the discourse is continued, being broken only by the modern divisions of the Bible into chapters and verses.

Chapter xxv commences with the adverb "*Then*," which calls for the question *When?* And the answer

must be sought in the previous declarations concerning the coming of the Son of man. The parable of the virgins closes with another exhortation to watchfulness. The parable of the talents was designed to encourage fidelity. And these two parables were obviously intended to illustrate what is recorded in the closing part of Matt. xxiv. The parable of the sheep and goats, being a summary of all the previous instructions, commences at verse 31. "*When* the Son of man shall come." The *time* is not stated, for *that* had previously been plainly and unequivocally confined to the then existing generation, though of the precise day and hour even Jesus himself could not inform the disciples.

Your only remarks which bear in the least against the foregoing view of the subject, are four in number.

1st. You say that Christ did not come *in his glory*, either in his incarnation, as the babe of Bethlehem, or as the man of sorrows—and hence you argue that the coming mentioned in Matt. xxv. 31, must be yet future, inasmuch as the coming there mentioned is a coming *in glory*. Have you forgotten your own acknowledgment that Matt xxiv. 30, referred to the coming of Christ to destroy Jerusalem? and have you overlooked the fact, that the coming there mentioned was to be "with power and *great glory?*"

2d. You say, in effect, that the angels did not accompany our Lord to destroy Jerusalem. In Matt. xxiv. 30, 31, which, I again repeat, you apply to the coming above mentioned and to no other, it is written, "they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send *his angels*. . . . and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, etc. The elect who were thus to be gathered, are mentioned in Matt. xxv, under the figure of the sheep.

3d. You say that at no time has the Saviour "gathered all nations before him." Once more I shall quote testimony which refers, according to your own concession, to events connected with the destruction of Jerusalem. "And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven

and then shall *all the tribes of the earth mourn*. . . . . And he shall send his angels. . . . and they shall gather his elect from the four winds, [or as in Mark xiii. 27, 'from *the uttermost part of the earth*,'] from one end of heaven to the other," Matt. xxiv. 30, 31. If you can determine in what sense this language was used, and in what sense it was fulfilled more than seventeen centuries ago, you will be at no loss to determine how all nations were gathered before the Son of man when he came to destroy Jerusalem.

4th. You depend somewhat on the future tense of the verb, in the declaration, "Before him *shall be* gathered all nations." I have repeatedly certified you, that a passage which was future in its reference when spoken or written, is not necessarily future now. But of this fact you take not the slightest notice. In Matt. xxiv. 31, it is written, "he *shall send* his angels," but notwithstanding the future tense of the verb, you apply the passage to the destruction of Jerusalem.

It is not necessary at present, nor am I required, to enter into a detailed explanation of the parable of the sheep and goats. It is sufficient that I have shown the reference thereof to events which long since transpired.

I am desirous that we should enter into a full examination of the period denoted by the coming of the Son of man, as mentioned in the passages before us. You are sensible that much depends on the decision of this matter—inasmuch as the events in review were to transpire when the Son of man should come in his glory. If you feel yourself competent to sustain the positions you have assumed, you will accede to this proposal.

And while on this point, allow me to observe, that for either of us to cite a Scripture passage, offer a word of comment thereon, and then proceed to cite other testimony, without even noticing the views and arguments presented by the other on the passages previously adduced, is not, in my judgment, either a candid, equitable, or profitable mode of procedure. In reviewing your criticism on the Greek noun αιων (*aion*) and its derivative ad-

jective, I wish our readers distinctly to remember two particulars. 1st. Your argument rests on the supposition that αἰων signifies eternity, or endless duration of being. If you yield this supposition, your entire argument is lost. You say, "if there is any word in the Greek language which denotes endless continuance, it is this," αἰων. 2d. No adjective can express any more than is expressed by the noun to which it is relative. The adjective *gloomy* cannot express more than is expressed by *gloom—lovely* than *love—proud* than *pride*. A thousand similar illustrations might be adduced. From hence it will follow, that if the noun αἰων does not strictly signify eternity, the adjective cannot, in itself, express an endless duration.

The following considerations justify me in assuming that the noun αἰων does not, and cannot signify eternity, or an endless duration.

1st. We read of the *beginning* of αἰων—but eternity can have no beginning—therefore αἰων does not signify eternity. John ix. 32, "Since the world began," εκ του αἰῶνος. In Rom. xvi. 25, Paul speaks of the mystery of the gospel "which was kept secret since the world αἰῶνιοις began."

2. The noun in question is used in the *plural* number, and there are several forms of expression which denote the existence of more than one αἰων—but eternity is an individual; there cannot be two eternities—therefore αἰων cannot signify eternity. 1 Cor. ii. 7, "The hidden wisdom which God ordained before the worlds πρω των αἰῶνων began." Eph. iii. 9, "The mystery which from the beginning of the worlds απω των αἰῶνων hath been hid in God." Col. i. 26, "The mystery which hath been hid from *ages* and from generations," απω των αἰῶνων και απω των γενεων. We read also of the cares, the wisdom, the men, the things of *this* αἰων (*aion*,) implying *another*; and of the αἰωνες (*aions*) to come, implying more than one *future* αἰων (*aion*.) But two or more eternities is a contradic- on.

3d. We read of the *end* of αἰων (*aion*)—but eternity can have no end—therefore αἰων (*aion*) cannot signify eternity

In Matt. xxiv. 3; xiii. 39, 40, and other passages, in which the phrase "end of the world" occurs, the word for world is not κῶσμος, but αἰον. The very phrase συντέλεια του αἰῶνος, end of the world, on which you so confidently rely for proof of your positions, pointedly contradicts your views. You must either allow that αἰων does not signify eternity —in which case your entire argument would be lost—or attempt to define what you mean by the END *of eternity*.

4th. We read of the end and the ends of the αἰωνες (*aions*,) plural. 1 Cor. x. 11, "And they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the worlds των αἰῶνων ARE come." Heb. ix. 26, "But now once in the end of the worlds συντέλεια των αἰῶνων, hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." In your comments on the latter passage, you say, that "Christ came in the *joint ending of the ages* of past and future eternity." But a *past* eternity is a contradiction. You also say, "an interminable past duration preceded his appearing, and an interminable duration is to succeed." But an interminable duration is a duration without termination—yet according to your statement, there was a *termination* to the *interminable* duration that preceded the coming of Christ! The phrase "end of the worlds," you interpret to mean the ending together of two eternities—but besides the total absence of authority for such interpretation, allow me to suggest, that, according to your views, Christ offered himself on the cross between the *ending* of *one* eternity, and the *beginning* of *another!*

From the foregoing considerations the conclusion is obvious, that, of whatever words the *noun* αιων may be formed, it does not signify eternity; and consequently its derivative *adjective* cannot, in itself, signify an endless duration.

In perfect agreement with these facts, we find, that the word *everlasting* is applied, in the Septuagint, to the priesthood of Aaron, which was abolished to make room for the priesthood of Christ; to the *everlasting* covenant of the law, which was superseded by the gospel covenant; to the *everlasting* possession of the land of Canaan, which

the Jews do not now possess—and to other everlasting things, which not only had *no reference to a future existence* but were *temporary* in their characters, and limited in their duration. Allow me to say, that a Jew uses the very same argument to prove that Christ was an impostor and the gospel a fabrication, that you have adopted to prove the doctrine of endless punishment. Were I to allow the validity of your argument and conclusion, I should be compelled to admit the same in relation to the reasoning of the Jew.

Besides—you have yet to prove that Matt. xxv. 46, has any reference to the immortal state of existence. I am aware that ζωὴν αἰῶνιον is placed in contrast with κολασιν αἰῶνιον—but I deny that *either* of these phrases belongs to the incorruptible life. The faithful and obedient *have* everlasting life, in the present world, as I have abundantly shown in previous letters. To my arguments on this point you have failed to reply.

The duration signified by the adjective αἰῶνιον must always be determined by the subject or thing to which it is applied. Adjectives are but relative terms. The adjectives tall, great, long, deep, &c, have no meaning in themselves. We say a long arm, a long pole, a long day—a tall man, a tall tree, a tall steeple—and so of other adjectives. They are indefinite in themselves, and must always be considered in connexion with the things to which they are applied.

I grant that the word everlasting is applied to the Almighty, and in this case it signifies an endless duration, for God is "without beginning of days or ending of years." But it is not the application of the word everlasting to the name of the Supreme Being, that proves to us the infinite duration of his existence. He is "the incorruptible God," ἀφθάρτου θεου, Rom. i. 23.

I freely allow also, that in 2 Cor. v. 1, the word αἰῶνιον expresses an unlimited duration, not however in itself considered, but because of the subject to which it is applied. "We have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." But the terms used

in 1 Peter i. 4, are much stronger than the adjective αἰῶνιον. "An inheritance incorruptible, ἀφθάρτον undefiled, and that fadeth not away," αμαραντον.

Jesus was made a high priest for ever εις τον αἰωνα after the order of Melchizedeck, Heb. vi. 20. But in Heb. vii. 16, there is a much stronger term than the one in question: "Who is made after the power of an endless life," ζωης ακαταλυτου.

You say, "if any word in the Greek Septuagint or New Testament expresses, unequivocally, interminable duration, that word is frequently applied to the everlasting punishment of some sinners." I have shown that αἰῶνος is *not* unequivocal in its signification; and I will add, that your argument in proof of endless punishment will be *essentially* improved, if you can find the words αφθαρτος, αμαραντος, ακαταλυτος, or either of them, applied to punishment in the Bible. I wish you either to present an instance of this character, or acknowledge that such an instance cannot be produced.

To show that αἰωνιον signifies endless duration, you refer to Matt. xix. 29, and Luke xviii. 30. In the former passage, Jesus promised everlasting life to those who should forsake houses or lands for his sake. The defect in your argument arises from taking for granted, that "in the regeneration," referred to the future state. In the latter passage, Jesus promised that those who faithfully followed him should "receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting." Your interpretation supposes "this present time" to signify this earthly pilgrimage, and "the world to come," the incorruptible existence beyond the grave. But the phrases in question have no such reference. The Jews prominently spake of the age or world, under the *law*, and the age under *the Christ*. *Olam ha bo*, the world to come, is a constant phrase among the Jewish writers for the times of the Messiah. We should not overlook the fact that Jesus uttered the language in review previously to the close of the age under the law. At that time the age under the Messiah was prospective; it was *to come*. "This

present time" signifies the former; "the world (or age) to come" the latter.

You again incidentally introduce 2 Thess. i. 6—10; and from this circumstance I feel impelled to invite you, for the third time, to enter fully into an examination of that passage. There certainly can be no propriety in repeatedly citing a text of this description, while an unwillingness exists to bring its claims and character fully into view.

I have a similar remark to offer in reference to your observations on the word gehenna. I informed you in a former letter, that I was prepared to meet you in discussion of all that the Bible says about this matter. I desired you to furnish your reasons for supposing that gehenna is in the immortal state of existence. But all I have said has been wholly disregarded. You proceed to assume that gehenna is "a state and place of future punishment," &c, without offering a word of proof. You say that the gehenna of fire "is one of the most forcible descriptions of the state of future punishment found in the Bible"—yet you do not condescend to furnish any evidence that these statements are true.

You indeed certify me, that you will pursue the subject in your next letter, which may be published in The Philadelphian, without waiting for my reply—but I must be allowed to enter my protest against such procedure It seems to intimate that you do not intend to notice what I have already written; and that your only duty, so far as this controversy is concerned, is to make your statements and draw your conclusions, without the slightest reference to the views and arguments by me presented. I respectfully request that *some* attention should be given to these remarks.

Another thing I desire to mention. Entire justice cannot be done to several important subjects in any one letter. I propose, therefore, that you select any topic you please—either the coming of Christ, the word αἰων, (*aion*,) *gehenna*, or any other—and let *that* be the subject of discussion until we have fully examined it then pass to ano

then In this way the minds of our readers would no become confused by a multiplicity of subjects; and some hope might be entertained that advantages of moment would be consequent of our labours. Nevertheless, be it as you judge expedient.

Earnestly desiring to convince you and all our readers who are not already convinced, that the doctrine of endless punishment is not taught in the Bible, and that "the living God is the Saviour of all men, especially of those who believe," I am respectfully yours, &c.

ABEL C. THOMAS.

TO MR. ABEL C. THOMAS.

Philadelphia, May 9th, 1834.

Dear Sir—The divinely inspired Paul informed the Athenians, that God who made the world, and all things therein, "now commandeth all men every where to repent; because he hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness; by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance to all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead," Acts xix. 30, 31. Paul did not affirm that God HAD judged the world, but that he hath appointed a day in which he WILL do it. You cannot say that the day of judgment thus appointed to take place at some time after Paul's speech in the midst of Mars-hill, was the time of Christ's coming in judgment on Jerusalem; for Paul was speaking to Greeks who had no special interest in that city; and he informed them that God required *all men every where* to repent, because God had appointed a day in which he will judge all mankind, whether Jews or Gentiles. He alleges, moreover, that Christ's resurrection from the dead was sufficient proof of the truth of his assertion concerning the future judgment of the world; thereby clearly implying that the world of mankind are to be raised from the dead as Jesus was, that they may be judged. In

this way the Athenians evidently understood the apostle, for "when they heard of the resurrection of the dead some mocked."

In this judgment the apostle John prophetically "saw the dead small and great, stand before God: and the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell (*hades*) delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works," Rev. xx. 13. All who are under the power of death are to be restored to life; and all who are in *hell*, *hades*, the state of departed spirits, are to be brought forth to judgment; and after this resurrection there is to be no more natural death, nor any one subsisting in a disembodied state in the world of spirits. In this sense *death and hell* are to be destroyed; and therefore it is added in figurative language, "and death and hell were cast into the lake of fire." That this *hell hades*, which is to be destroyed, does not mean the future state of punishment, I allow. It is granted also, that this word *hades*, rendered hell, primarily denotes the state of departed spirits, whether they are blessed or miserable, and not necessarily any place or state of punishment, in that state of departed or disembodied souls; for Christ *descended into hell* (*hades* in Greek, *scheol* in Hebrew,) and God *did not leave his soul in hell*, that is, in the state of disembodied spirits, but raised him out of it, and reunited his soul to his body, without suffering his body *to see corruption*.

Although, however, *scheol* and *hades*, rendered *hell*, do not always imply the misery of those who are in the state of departed spirits, yet frequently it is manifested that there is a *gehenna*, a *hell of fire*, a state of punishment in *hades*. There is a *paradise*, and there is *a hell of fire* in the state of departed souls of men.

When it is said, Psalm ix. 17, "the wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God," the word *hell*, *scheol*, of itself would not prove that a state of punishment is intended; for Jacob said, "I will go down into the grave, [*scheol*, *hell*,] unto my son mourning," Gen xxxvii 35; but since the wicked and the nations that for

get God are contrasted with others, and it is evidently the intention of the Psalmist to denounce some evil upon them, we must think that by *turning the wicked into hell* he means something more than the dying of the righteous and the wicked. If punishment in *scheol*, hell, or the state of the dead, is not intended, the wicked might answer, "Well, what then? If *we* are to be turned into hell so are the *righteous*, and they and we shall come to the same glorious end. The nations that forget God shall fare as well as those that remember him."

That *scheol*, *hades*, *hell*, frequently denotes a state of punishment in a world of spirits is evident from many passages of Scripture. In Deut. xxxii. 22, Jehovah says of the idolatrous Israelites, "a fire is kindled in mine anger, and shall burn unto the lowest hell." In the Septuagint it reads, εως ἅδου κατω, *to the lowest hades*. The highly favoured Israelites, who, without excuse, "have moved me to jealousy by that which is not God," I will punish, saith Jehovah, by reducing them to the lowest state of misery in the world of departed spirits. In connexion with this burning of his wrath against them in hades, and as a prelude to it, he denounces those temporal judgments which were to bring them down to hell. "Mine anger," saith he, "shall consume the earth with her increase, and set on fire the foundations of the mountains. I will heap mischiefs upon them: I will spend mine arrows upon them. They shall be burnt with hunger, and devoured with burning heat, and with bitter destruction. To me belongeth vengeance and recompense; their foot shall slide in due time. See now that I, even I am he, and there is no god with me: I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal; neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand; for I lift up my hand to heaven and say, I live for ever. If I whet my glittering sword, and mine hand take hold on judgment; I will render vengeance to mine enemies, and will reward them that hate me." Do these things denote no worse evil than natural death, which shall come alike on the righteous and the wicked? If temporal judgments alone were intended, why should

as remind us that *he lives for ever*, as if the vengeance taken by him were to be experienced for ever, in the lowest hell?

The dying thief upon the cross was assured by Christ that on the day of his death he should be in *paradise* with his Lord. Christ died, and entered *hades*, the world of spirits; and so did the penitent thief. But while in *hades* Christ was in *paradise*, and so was the pardoned malefactor. That *paradise* in *hades* means a state of pure and perfect happiness, you do not deny. That in *hades* there is a state of suffering and punishment you deny; but in 2 Peter ii. 4, we read, that "God spared not the angels which sinned, but having cast them down to hell in chains of darkness, hath delivered them to be reserved unto judgment." Here the expression rendered *having cast them down to hell*, is *tartarosas*, having cast them down, or turned them into *tartarus*. The term refers not to the grave or natural death merely, but to a state of punishment in the invisible world, which, in the days of Peter, the Greeks and Romans called *tartarus*. The heathens doubtless entertained erroneous notions about the locality of this *tartarus*, and have written many unscriptural things about it, but still it was the name of a state of punishment, a prison of despair in the world of spirits; and the spirit of inspiration by using it has clearly taught, that there is a state of punishment to which the angels which sinned have been confined, that may properly bear that ancient and classic name. For our present purpose it is a matter of no importance to decide whether these angels were spiritual beings never incarnate, or the souls of some who once were messengers on earth: some angels are in tartarus; and there in a state of confinement are reserved to a future judgment. PARKHURST says, "The ancient Greeks appear to have received by tradition, an account of the punishment of the fallen angels, and of bad men after death; and their poets did, in conformity, I presume, with that account, make tartarus the place where the giants who rebelled against Jupiter, and the souls of the wicked, were confined. Here, saith HESIOD, the

rebellious *Titans* were bound in penal chains. But as the Greeks imagined the earth to be of a boundless depth, so it must not be dissembled that their poets speak of tartarus as a vast pit or gulf in the bowels of it." HESIOD calls it

"Black tartarus within earth's spacious womb."

In Homer's Iliad viii, Jupiter threatens any one of the gods who should assist the Trojans, saying, "I will throw him into darksome tartarus," and declares that he will bind him in chains under darkness. In another part of the same Iliad, Pope translates the father of the Grecian poetry thus:

"No sun e'er gilds the gloomy horrors there,
No cheerful gales refresh the lazy air,
But murky tartarus extends around."

Indeed had Peter been a learned man, independently of inspiration, we should have thought he was quoting Homer as literally as Paul did some of the *Athenians* and *Cretans*, (Acts xvii. 28, and Titus i. 12,) but as he was not, we come to the conclusion that the Holy Ghost introduced this *tartarosas* into the sacred oracles on purpose to refute the false doctrine that *hell* means nothing but *the grave* or the state of the dead.

"On the whole, then," says PARKHURST, "ταρταρουν in St. Peter is the same as ριπτειν εις ταρταρον, to *throw into tartarus*, in Homer, only rectifying the poet's mistake of tartarus being in the bowels of the earth, and recurring to the true original sense of that word above explained, which, when applied to *spirits*, must be interpreted *spiritually;* and thus *tartarosas* will import that God *cast* the apostate angels out of his presence *into that* ζόφος τοῦ σκότους, *blackness of darkness* (2 Peter ii. 17; Jude ver. 13,) where they will be for ever banished from *the light of his countenance.*"

This *tartarus*, or state of future punishment of which Peter speaks, is called by Christ *the hell*, or *gehenna of fire* and both expressions refer to the same thing. Christ

derived the name which he employed to denote the state of future endless misery from scenes familiar to the Jews; and Peter from the conceptions of the Greeks and Romans. The *gehenna* or *hell of fire* is the very opposite to the *paradise of God*, to which the soul of the repentant thief went with the Redeemer on the day of the crucifixion.

In Matt. v. 29, 30, Christ twice employs the word *gehenna*, when he warns men to pluck out a right eye, and cut off a right hand, lest the "whole body should be cast into *hell*." Had he employed the word *hades* it might have denoted the *grave*, or merely the world of future existence; but to be cast into *gehenna* was to be cast into a state of which the *valley of Hinnom* was a fit emblem. It is in this *gehenna* in the state of the dead, in which Christ says God is able *to destroy* both soul and body, Matt. x. 28. It is *the damnation* or the judgment of *gehenna*, *hell*, and not of *hades*, merely, which is spoken of by our Saviour, when he asks hypocrites, extortioners, persecutors, murderers, and unclean persons, "How can ye escape the damnation of hell?" Matt. xxiii. 33. By the damnation of *gehenna*, and by *destroying soul and body in gehenna*, after men had killed the body, our Saviour certainly meant some dreadful evil. *Gehenna* we allow was a compound word from two Hebrew words which signify *Vale of Hinnom*. So *spirit* literally signifies *air*, *breath*, and *wind*; and *heaven* the *sky* or azure vault over our earth. *Man* also literally means *red earth*. Shall we therefore assert that gehenna, spirit, heaven, and man mean now in common language nothing more than the natural objects whence the names were derived?

"This *valley of Hinnom*," says PARKHURST, "lay near Jerusalem, and had been the place of those abominable sacrifices in which the idolatrous Jews burned their children alive to Molech, Baal or the Sun. A particular place in this valley was called *Tophet*, and the valley itself the valley of *Tophet*, from the *fire-stove*, Hebrew *Topheth*, in which they burned their children to Molech From this valley having been the scene of these *infer*

nal sacrifices, and probably too from its continuing afte the time of King Josiah's reformation a place of abomin able filthiness and pollution, the Jews in our Saviour' time used the compound word *gehinnom* for *hell*, the place of the damned." This appears from that word being thus applied by several Jewish comments, called *Targums*, to which he refers. The truth of this representation may be learned by reading 2 Kings xxiii. 10, in which place it is said o Josiah, "he defileth Topheth, which is in the valley of the children of Hinnom, that no man might make his son or his daughter to pass through the fire to Molech." 2 Chron. xxviii. 2, 3, Ahaz "walked in the ways of the kings of Israel, and made also molten images for Baalim. Moreover, he burnt incense in the valley of the son of Hinnom, and burnt his children in the fire, after the abominations of the heathen." From Jeremiah xix, we learn that the prophet was sent by the Lord to prophesy in this valley and say, to those who built "the high places of Baal, to burn their sons with fire for burnt offerings unto Baal—behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that this place shall no more be called Tophet, nor the valley of the son of Hinnom, but the valley of slaughter. And the houses of Jerusalem, and the houses of the kings of Judah, shall be defiled as the place of Tophet." It is evident from these passages that *gehenna* was the name of a place of pollution, punishment, and the service of false and cruel gods. What more expressive or suitable term could have been chosen to denote the state of sin and misery, and irreligion beyond the grave? The expression *gehenna of fire*, was probably chosen to denote the punishment of hell, because of the fires employed in the service of Molech, and the fires subsequently employed perpetually in burning the offals of Jerusalem.

"The Rabbins assure us," says CALMET, "that this idol [Molech] was of brass, sitting upon a throne of the same metal, adorned with a royal crown, having the head of a calf (or steer), and his arms extended, as if to embrace any one. When they would offer any children to him

they heated the statue within by a great fire; and when it was burning hot, they put the miserable victim within his arms, which was soon consumed by the violence of the heat; and that the cries of the children might not be heard, they made a great noise with drums and other instruments about the idol."

Having compared the future state of the wicked to *gehenna*, and their punishment and pollution to fire and worms, Christ assures us of the perpetuity of all the three, by declaring that their worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched. "If thy hand offend thee, cut it off; it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, (gehenna,) into the fire that never shall be quenched: where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: where their worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out; it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire: where their worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched," Mark ix. 43—48.

In my apprehension it has thus been sufficiently proved, that in *hades*, the world of departed spirits, there is a *paradise*, a state of holy happiness with Christ, for all his people, and a *gehenna of fire*, γεννα του πυρος, into which the wicked are cast: and that the *fire* of punishment in this *gehenna of hades*, this hell of the future state, is everlasting; for it shall never be quenched.

My heart's desire and prayer to God, is, that you and I, and all for whom we should pray, may escape this dreadful hell.

EZRA STILES ELY

TO MR. EZRA STILES ELY.

Philadelphia, May 17, 1834.

Dear Sir—I have repeatedly stated that a passage whic was future in its reference *when spoken* or *written*, is no necessarily future in its reference *now*. Disregarding this statement and its obvious bearing, you again cite Acts xvii. 31, and argue, that if God HAD judged the world, Paul would not have declared that "he hath appointed a day in which he WILL judge the world in righteousness." I have several times referred you to the fact, (by emphasizing the passage) that God was thus to judge the world, under the gospel, 'BY THAT MAN whom he had ordained;" or as in Rom. ii. 16, "In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men BY JESUS CHRIST, according to my gospel." But this surely does not suppose that God had not previously judged the world HIMSELF. It is written, "He is a God that judgeth in the earth," Psalm lviii. 11. The Father, however, "committed all judgment unto the Son," John v. 22; appointed him a kingdom, Luke xxii. 29, and a day or time to reign —in proof of which, numberless passages might be adduced, were it necessary. Jesus came in his kingdom before the close of the generation in which he lived, Matt. xvi. 27, 28. Then commenced the day in which God was to judge the world in righteousness BY THAT MAN to whom all judgment had been committed. Paul certified the Athenians, not that mankind should be raised from the dead to be judged in the manner stated, but that God had raised his Son from the dead as an assurance that he *would* judge the world *by that man* whom he had ordained.

In reference to your citation of Rev. xx. 13, I may remark, that I profess little acquaintance with the hyperbolical instructions of the Apocalypse. Commentators of every sect have acknowledged their ignorance as to the meaning of many portions of the book; and neither of us would lose any thing, in the estimation of judicious persons, were we to unite in a similar acknowledgment. Though I shall not attempt to explain the meaning of the

passage you have quoted, I may call your attention to the following considerations:

1st. The passage contains nothing that will justify you in assuming that the *literally dead* are spoken of—nor that the dead were restored to life before they were judged. John saw the "DEAD stand before God"—not the *living*. The difficulty is removed by allowing that the *morally dead* are signified.

2d. In another part of your letter you state, that *hades* is the place of departed spirits, in which there is a *paradise* and a *gehenna of fire*. But the passage before us declares, that not only *death* and *hades*, but THE SEA gave up the dead. You do not suppose that *the sea* is a place of departed spirits—how then could the sea deliver up what it did not contain? To affirm that the sea simply gave up *dead bodies*, is to yield your whole argument—for you proceed on the assumption that departed spirits were the subjects of the judgment.

3d. You allege that "it is added in *figurative language*, 'and death and hell were cast into the lake of fire.'" What authority have you for supposing that one part of the matter is *figurative* and the other *literal?* In endeavouring to remove a difficulty which you were aware would arise, you have destroyed your entire argument—for it is obvious, that, if the casting of death and hades into the lake of fire be understood *figuratively*, the giving up of the dead by death, hades, and the sea, must *also* be understood figuratively. Where, then, is your argument?

4th. In the previous chapter we have some account of a battle between the beast and him who sat on the horse. The beast and the false prophet were taken, and "cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse . . . . and all the fowls were filled with their flesh." Here the lake of fire is spoken of—but no one discovers the propriety of applying such language to the concerns of a future state of being.

5th. In the first verse of the Apocalypse it is written

"The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants things which must SHORTLY COME TO PASS." And in the *last* chapter we read as follows: "Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book for *the time is at hand* . . . . And behold I COME QUICKLY, and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be."

6th. You have certified us, that in hades there is a paradise and a gehenna of fire. According to your statements of the destruction of *hades*—the paradise of which you speak, and tartarus and gehenna, are to be destroyed and exist no more. Why, then, do you contend that tartarus signifies a state or place of endless punishment? Why do you make the same use of the word gehenna? And why do you quote passages, in which the word *hades* occurs, in proof of endless punishment? You have told us that *hades*, and *consequently tartarus* and *gehenna*, are to be destroyed, blotted out of existence. Where, then, is your endless hell? You will say, perhaps, "*it is the lake of fire.*" You can have no other answer. Why, then, do you cite passages in which *hades*, *gehenna*, or *tartarus* occurs? According to your own argument, *the entire proof of endless punishment* rests on the phrase "lake of fire." And now, sir, I respectfully and earnestly solicit you to present your reasons for supposing that this lake of fire is in the immortal state of being. I beg you to remember, that you must either prove this point, or admit that *the Bible knows of no endless hell.*

You quote Psalm ix. 17, and Deut. xxxii. 22. In these passages the word *scheol* occurs. Dr. Campbell says: "In the Old Testament the corresponding word [corresponding to *hades*] is *scheol*, which signifies the state of the dead in general, without regard to the goodness or badness of the persons, their happiness or misery . . . . It is plain that in the Old Testament *the most profound silence* is observed in regard to the state of the deceased their joys or sorrows, happiness, or misery." 6th Prelim. Diss. Part ii. § 2, 19.

Dr. Jahn says. "The belief of the ancient Hebrews on

this subject was, that the spirits of the dead were received into *scheol*, which is represented as a large subterranean abode, Gen. xxxvii. 35; comp. Num. xvi. 30—33. Deut. xxxii. 22. Into this abode, we are told, that the wicked are driven suddenly, their days being cut short; but the good descend into it in tranquillity, and in the fulness of their years." Archaeology, § 314. He further states, that as to a difference of situation in *scheol*, in the opinion of the ancient Hebrews, it "cannot be proved by *direct testimony*." He adds, "We have not authority, therefore, decidedly to say, that any other motives were held out to the ancient Hebrews to pursue the good and to avoid the evil, than those which were derived from *the rewards and punishments of this life*."

Dr. ALLEN, President of Bowdoin College, in commenting on Ps. ix. 17, says: "The punishment expressed, is cutting off from life, destroying from the earth, by some special judgment, and removing to the invisible state of the dead. The term [*scheol*] does not seem to mean with certainty any thing more than the state of the dead in their deep abode."—Lecture on Universal Salvation.

The above are the opinions of men who strongly advocated the doctrine of endless punishment. In addition thereto I remark, that Ps. ix is evidently a thanksgiving ode for victory and deliverance from the heathen, who had risen up against David. The theme is the Lord's judgments in the earth, coupled with a declaration, tha the wicked and the heathen shall be "driven into *scheo*, i. e. pursued by victorious enemies till they are destroyed."—NOYES's Translation, note on the passage in review.

Whoever will read Deut. xxxii. 22, with attention, will perceive that your exposition thereof is without authority. "A fire is kindled in mine anger, and shall burn unto the lowest *scheol*, AND shall consume *the earth* with her increase, and set on fire the *foundations of the mountains*. I will heap mischiefs upon them . . . . . *the day of their calamity* IS AT HAND," verse 35. No doubt this is strong figurative language, denoting the dreadful evils

that should speedily come upon the Israelites for having forsaken the Lord, and broken his statutes.

I have not granted, nor do I allow, "that *paradise* in *hades* means a state of pure and perfect happiness." *Hades*, corresponding with *scheol* of the Old Testament, signifies simply, "the state of the dead in general, without regard to the goodness or badness of the persons their happiness or misery." Paul speaks of a man who had been "*caught up* into paradise," 2 Cor. xii. 4; and here I allow that the word signifies "a state of pure and perfect happiness"—but you will notice that it was not "a paradise in *hades*," the state of the dead, but "in *the third heaven*," to which the individual referred to was *caught up*. Christ descended into *hades*, or as Paul expresses it, "into *the lower parts of the earth*," Eph. iv. 9. And if the paradise mentioned in our Lord's address to the thief, be in *hades*, it must be somewhere in the bowels of this earthly ball. But I have yet to learn, that either revelation or natural philosophy teaches the existence of a place or "state of pure and perfect happiness," in "the lower parts of the earth."

The same general remarks are applicable to *tartarus* and *gehenna*, both of which you place in *hades*.

As to the word *tartarosas*, it occurs but *once* in the Bible—and for the want of parallel passages, we may not be enabled to determine precisely the meaning attached thereto, by the apostle. You may, if you think proper, adopt the fables of heathen mythology, in relation to tartarus—but in this case, you must receive the ridiculous stories of Ixion, Sysiphus, Tantalus, and others of the like character. And you must also search for this fabulous place of torment, not in the future state of being, but "within earth's spacious womb."

For my own part, I profess to build my faith on the testimony of *the Bible*. Peter was instructed to "search the *Scriptures*," namely, of the Old Testament—and it is not reasonable to suppose, that he used the word *tartarus* in any other sense, than that in which the word *scheol* was used in "the law and the prophets."

You say "that the Holy Ghost introduced this *tartarosas* into the sacred oracles on purpose to refute the false doctrine that *hell* means nothing but *the grave* or the state of the dead." If this be true, then the Holy Ghost introduced a word into *a single passage of the Bible*, on purpose to contradict and refute all that had been written previously in relation to the state of the dead!

I have already quoted from Drs. CAMPBELL, JAHN, and ALLEN—and I will add thereto, another citation from CAMPBELL. He says, "In my judgment, it [the word *hades*] ought *never* in Scripture to be rendered HELL, at least in the sense wherein that word is now universally understood by Christians....It is very plain, that neither in the Septuagint version of the Old Testament, nor in the New, does the word *hades* convey the meaning which the present English word *hell*, in the Christian usage, always conveys to our minds." He proceeds to say, as before quoted, that the word in question signifies simply "*the state of the dead*, without regard to the goodness or badness of the persons, their happiness or misery." And I apprehend that Peter, in using the word *tartarosas*, attached to it precisely the signification of *scheol* or *hades*.

I approve of much that you have written in relation to gehenna. You are correct in your derivation of the word, and I thank you for having informed our readers that it primarily signified the Valley of Hinnom, which lay near Jerusalem. In this valley, sacrifices were offered to the Ammonitish idol, Molech. It was subsequently defiled, being selected as the depot of the filth of Jerusalem. Here malefactors were put to death—worms were constantly feeding on putrid carcasses, and a fire was continually kept burning to consume the filth. I might mention many particulars appertaining to this subject, which would perhaps be interesting and profitable to our readers—but a desire to be as brief as possible admonishes me to forbear.

In my judgment, your argument in proof of endless

punishment, drawn from the use of the word gehenna, s very deficient, being based, as I shall proceed to show, n groundless suppositions.

After giving a brief but correct definition and description of the valley of Hinnom, you add, "It is evident from these passages that *gehenna* was the name of a place of pollution, punishment, and the service of false and cruel gods. What more expressive or suitable term could have been chosen to denote the state of sin and misery and irreligion beyond the grave?" But you first take for granted that there *is* a "state of sin and misery and irreligion beyond the grave," and then inquire what more suitable term than gehenna could have been chosen to *denote* that state. The *reality* must be proved, before the *emblem* can properly be chosen.

You continue: "The expression *gehenna of fire*, was probably chosen to denote the punishment of hell, because of the fires employed in the service of Molech, and the fires subsequently employed in burning the offals of Jerusalem." Here you assume the whole matter in debate, and then inform us, that "the expression *gehenna of fire*, was *probably* chosen to denote" it. We should have nothing to do with *probabilities*, but only with positive *proofs*.

I could select other portions of your remarks, to which similar exceptions might be taken—but the foregoing will answer the purpose for which they were introduced.

Your *arguments* are two in number. 1st. You quote PARKHURST, who says, "The Jews, in our Saviour's time, used the compound word *gehinnom* for *hell*, the place of the damned. And you add, "This appears from that word being thus applied by several Jewish comments, called *Targums*, to which he [PARKHURST] refers." On this I remark, 1st. Jesus came "to fulfil the law and the prophets." He condemned the Scribes and Pharisees for having made void the law of God through their *traditions*. He continually quoted from the Old Testament, which is a *key* to the New. The meaning of words and phrases, as found in the *New* Testament, must be learned

rom the *Old*, and not from the opinions of the Jews, any farther than those opinions accorded with "the law and the testimony." In the Old Testament, the valley of Hinnom and every thing connected therewith, is used as an emblem of the temporal judgments coming upon the Jewish people. If you deny this statement, I will prove it. And I call upon you to adduce a single instance from the Old Testament, in which the valley of Hinnom is used as an emblem of any other than *temporal* judgments and punishments. But 2d. It remains to be shown that *any Jewish Targum* is of an earlier date than the second century of the Christian era. You will perceive, that your argument drawn from the usage of the word gehenna in the Targums, is nothing to the purpose, if you fail to establish the position I have just disputed.

Your second argument is predicated of the language in Mark ix. 44, "Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not [or never shall be] quenched." Allusion here is unquestionably made to the fire and worms in the valley of Hinnom. Our Lord quotes Isa. lxvi. 24: "And they shall go forth, and look upon *the carcasses* of the men that have transgressed against me: for *their worm shall not die*, neither shall *their fire be quenched;* and they shall be an abhorring *unto all flesh.*" I desire to repeat, that our Lord quoted this language in Mark ix. 43, et seq., on which passages you so confidently rely for proof of endless punishment. You will not dispute that the quotation from Isaiah referred to temporal punishments, and to temporal punishments alone. Why, then, should you apply *the same language*, when uttered by our Lord, to a future state of wo?

Concerning Idumea it is written, "The streams thereof shall be turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into brimstone, and the land thereof shall become burning pitch. *It shall not be quenched* night nor day; the smoke thereof shall go up for ever; from generation to generation it shall lie waste," Isa. xxxiv. 9, 10.

Of Jerusalem it is recorded, "I will kindle a fire in the gates thereof, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusa

lem, and *it shall not be quenched*," Jer. xvii. 27. Again "Mine anger and my fury shall be poured out upon this place, upon man, and upon beast, and upon the trees of the field, and upon the fruit of the ground; and it shall burn, and *shall not be quenched*," Jer. vii. 20. See also Ezek. xx. 47, 48.

I need not inform you, that the above passages treat of things *temporal* and *temporary*—nor need I mention the bearing of the argument thus furnished.

In closing this letter, I will direct your attention to the following important facts, not one of which will be by you disputed.

1st. The word *gehenna* occurs twelve times in the New Testament—seven times in Matthew, thrice in Mark, once in Luke, and once in James. Christ and James are the only persons who use the word.

2d. We have no evidence that the word *gehenna* was ever used in addressing the *gentiles*. John wrote his gospel for the use of the gentiles—he does not record a syllable about *gehenna*. Paul was emphatically the apostle to the gentiles—he preached thirty years and wrote fourteen epistles—yet the word in question does not occur in any of his writings. Why is this so, if the gentiles had any concern in the matter?

3d. The word *gehenna* was twice used by our Saviour in addressing the unbelieving part of the Jewish nation. The remaining nine times it was used in addressing the disciples, and the disciples alone. Why is this so, if, according to your views, gehenna signifies a state or place of endless punishment? Why should that word have been but twice used in addressing the *unbelieving* part of the nation?

I might add other facts, and propound other queries—but the foregoing will be found sufficient, if they are attended to; and if they are neglected, such would also be the fate of as much more as I might write.

It is of course understood that I consider you grossly in error, so far as your belief in endless punishment is concerned; and hope I shall give no offence when I say

that, in my judgment, your error in this respect is intimately connected with the error of the Sadducees. They supposed, as their conversation with our Saviour clearly shows, that if there *was* a resurrection, mankind would there possess the same passions they possess in the present life. "Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God," were the corrective instructions of the great Teacher.

Your general argument, I perceive, assumes that no renovation is to be effected by the power of the resurrection—or as popular opinion expresses the sentiment, "as death leaves us, so judgment finds us; there is no change after death." Hence you argue concerning the eternal destiny of any individual, from the condition in which he was when he died. You inquire how he laid down in the grave, and with what feelings and in what estate he departed this life. But in the days of Paul the queries were, "*How are the dead* RAISED UP? *and with what body do they* COME?" 1 Cor. xv. 35. The answer is given in the voice of inspiration: It is raised in *incorruption, power*, and *glory; a spiritual body*, in the image of the glorified Redeemer. "For as *in Adam* ALL *die;* EVEN SO *in Christ shall* ALL *be made alive.*" And "if *any* man be *in Christ*, he is *a new creature*," 2 Cor. v. 17. It is written, "The dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be *changed.*" It was in prospect of this great and glorious change, that the apostle could HOPE for the resurrection even of THE UNJUST, Acts xxiv. 15. He surely could not have *hoped* for the resurrection of the *unjust* if he had believed they would be raised from the dead simply to suffer the unutterable pangs of endless torment! The doctrine of the Messiah was, "In the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection," Matt. xxii. 29, 30. In prospect of a resurrection of this glorious and sublime character, we may truly "rejoice with *joy unspeakable* and *full of glory.*" And I feel confident, judging from your known benevolence and

philanthropic views, that a consummation of the description referred to, must be peculiarly congenial to the feelings of your heart, even supposing it to be contrary to the convictions of your understanding.

Sincerely desiring that such a revolution may yet be effected in your sentiments, as will direct your acknowledged talents and influence to the proclamation and defence of what I esteem "the faith once delivered to the saints," I am affectionately yours, &c.

ABEL C. THOMAS.

TO MR. ABEL C. THOMAS.

Philadelphia, July 25th, 1834.

Dear Sir—Several of the periodical papers of the Universalists have conjectured, very reasonably, that my deep concern in the ecclesiastical controversies now pending in the Presbyterian Church, has caused my delay in answering your two last letters, and in pursuing our amicable discussion. The newspapers published by your denomination of persons in the United States, seem to be almost exclusively devoted to one *object*,—that of convincing all men, that however they may live and die, they shall all infallibly be holy and happy in an immortal future state of being. Your example, in most of these publications, of sending forth weekly some sermon with the proper name of the author attached to it, I deem worthy of imitation. Our newspapers take a more extensive scope, and treat of every thing, by turns, in which our fellow men may be supposed to be interested. *The Philadelphian*, you are aware, is of this general character; while its peculiar bearing is on the ecclesiastical concerns of that church of which the editor is a minister. I cannot, therefore, pursue any one subject of discussion to the exclusion of twenty other objects of attention. And yet, could I suppose any considerable number of Universalists likely to be convinced, by the plainest assurances of the word of

God, of the truth that some shall be lost for ever, and thereby induced to prepare to meet their God in peace, I should think myself happy in editing a paper for their sole benefit.

It has often occurred to me to ask, what profit can Mr. Thomas expect will be derived to any one from his doctrine, even if it is true? Men may be saved, and certainly will be saved, if his theory is correct, whatever may be their opinions about Universalism. Belief in his doctrine is not at all connected with salvation. It is not, therefore, as a means of salvation that he would write and preach on the doctrine of universal salvation. His gospel, if it is a gospel at all, is not the power and wisdom of God unto salvation, for salvation would come to all men independently of any knowledge of this good news.

It has also occurred to me to inquire, if Mr. Thomas has ever known the preaching of the doctrine of universal salvation to be the means of reforming the moral conduct of any wicked man? I do not deny, that a Universalist may teach many of the truths of the Bible, and that they may be the means of amending the life; but did the proclamation, that all men, live and die as they may, shall infallibly be happy in heaven, ever bring any sinner to repentance; ever make any drunkard become a sober man; ever render any polluted mortal chaste—or ever incline a prayerless and graceless man to pray, and serve God in a spiritual manner? I do not *affirm* that this never was the case, but I ask for the candid testimony of a Universalist on this subject. A gospel which does not make a transgressor cease from doing evil and learn to do well, is not profitable for the life *which now is*, even if it should show all to be safety in that *which is to come*.

I do not honestly apprehend, that Universalism is productive of any other benefit than that of quieting the consciences of the wicked, and filling them with hope of final safety, though they continue impenitent in the practice of the worst crimes to which they are inclined. While there are allowedly respectable and moral people in the

ranks of Universalists, I seriously ask you, sir, if the mass of any Universalist congregation of your acquaintance can be declared equal in point of sobriety, industry, and good general moral character, to the mass of any congregation of equal numbers in which the doctrine of future punishment is inculcated?

But I am reminded, that the question is, *What say the sacred Scriptures?* Do they teach the future, everlasting punishment of some of the human family? or the future holiness and happiness of every individual? I affirmed the former; you the latter. We have been running on collaterally, each in the citation of Scripture to prove his own proposition, and to disprove that of his opponent. I confess, freely, that my object has been, and still will be, not so much to discuss passages critically, for the benefit of the learned, who may not thank us for our labour, as to present in a popular form such plain and scriptural arguments, citations and illustrations, as in my judgment ought to convince every unprejudiced reader of the Bible, that some sinners will be miserable for ever. If in some instances I have slid further into critical disquisition than I had originally intended, it has been with a desire to convince you, sir, of the truth. Mainly I have written for the generality of our readers; I presume you have done the same: but at times the aspiration arises, *Oh that he were wise: that he understood these things; that he would consider his latter end!*

My *opinion* that a part of Matt. xxiv refers to a future state, is founded on the fact that the disciples asked two questions: 1st. What shall be the sign of thy coming? 2dly. What shall be the sign of the end of the world? and on the language of our Saviour's answer. Had they not proposed an inquiry concerning *the end of the world*, as distinct from the time of his coming at the destruction of Jerusalem, we might not have looked for an answer. He told them of his coming in the last verse of the preceding chapter; and in the 2d verse of this chapter he assured them concerning the buildings of the temple, "there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be

thrown down." It was therefore very natural they should ask, *When shall these things be*, that thou hast predicted? *What shall be the sign of thy coming*, of which thou hast just spoken? And, as they supposed the world was then to come to an end, *What shall be the sign of the end of the world?*

You agree with me, that from the 4th to the 35th verse, Christ answers the question concerning his coming to the destruction of Jerusalem: concerning which he said, "this generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled." By *generation* here you seem to understand the Jews then living; and all of them did not pass before Jerusalem was destroyed. This, however, is not the exclusive sense of a *generation*, in the Bible, for all the Jews, from the beginning to the end of the world, constitute *one generation* of men: and all lying and wicked men belong to one generation of vipers. You affirm that the latter part of the 24th chapter, from the 36th verse to the end, refers also to the same coming of Christ to destroy Jerusalem. I think it refers to a future coming of Christ, because it is an evident answer to the last question which his disciples had asked, and because by the disjunctive conjunction he turns from the time of which he had been speaking, and says, "But, of that day and hour knoweth no man." He then proceeds to say, that "as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." He shall come on mankind suddenly, when they do not expect him; and shall sweep multitudes away, dividing some from others. He does not say, that all these things, spoken after the 35th verse, but all those spoken of before it, shall take place, "before this generation pass." Because Christ shall come unexpectedly to the final judgment, he commands all his disciples, saying, "Therefore, be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh." "THEN," when the Son of man shall come as the flood in the days of Noah, "shall two be in one field; the one shall be taken and the other left:" or separation shall be made even between persons engaged in the same field of labour; and then shall the lord of the un-

faithful servant "cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." "THEN," also, says Christ in the next chapter, "shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins," five of whom were foolish, had no oil in their vessels, were unprepared for the coming of the bridegroom, "and the door was shut." Afterward they came crying, "Lord, Lord, open to us: but he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. Watch, therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour, wherein the Son of man cometh."

How can they be saved who are not prepared to meet Christ at his last coming to our world, and whom he will not acknowledge?

"For he is as a man travelling into a far country," says Christ of himself, Matt. xxv. 14, for *the kingdom of heaven*, as I have before remarked, is erroneously supplied in italic print by the translators: "For he [the Son of man] is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. After a long time the lord of those servants cometh and reckoneth with them." The Son of man who has gone away into heaven, that country far from earth, and who has intrusted us with all the different talents we possess, will act in like manner; will come to judge all his subjects. "Then," to wit, in the end of the world, "he that had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee, that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed," &c. His lord answered and said unto him, "Thou wicked and slothful servant," and finally gave commandment, "Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Pursuing the same theme, and still answering the question concerning the signs of the end of the world, the Redeemer says, in simple verity, without a parable, "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate

them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left." It has never been shown by yourself, or any one, that this which you call a *parable* of the sheep and goats, to whose separation at night allusion is made, has reference to events which have long since transpired. Why need I quote any more? To the end of the chapter Christ teaches in the clearest terms how he will act in the end of the world, when all nations shall be gathered before him. This is an event which has not yet arrived, and refers to a judgment yet to come on all mankind. If you assert, that the nations have ever yet all been gathered before the Son of man, and divided according to their character, I ask you when? and where? It is not until we arrive at the first verse of the xxvith chapter, that we learn Jesus "had finished all these sayings," which he uttered after coming out of the temple, being pointed to its massy stones, and having predicted its demolition. From the 36th verse of the xxivth chapter to the end of the xxvth, Jesus discourses in reply to the last inquiry of his pupils. If you can make the declaration, "these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal," mean temporal judgments brought on the Jews, I must think your principles of interpretation wrong, because they render the Bible an uncertain, unmeaning rule of faith.

I do not admit that Christ ever acknowledged *his inability to inform* his disciples of the time when the end of the world shall be. Your favourite M'KNIGHT may show you that Christ said, *no man maketh known that day*. It was revealed to no mere man, and Christ did not see fit *to make known* the precise time "when he shall appear the second time, without sin, unto salvation." This *second* time of his appearing, I may remark, when he shall come not as a sin offering but as a judge, is to be after men have died, for "as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment; so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many: and unto them that look for him

shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation," Heb. ix. 27, 28.

Because Mark and Luke record one of the questions which the disciples asked Christ, it does not follow that Matthew was not correct in stating two or three. Several true witnesses may testify to several different circumstances, and all which they all attest is to be credited. In Luke xvii. 20—37, Christ discoursed about the destruction of Jerusalem in answer to the Pharisees, and used expressions very similar to those which he employed on another occasion, when his *disciples* asked about the end of the world. I DO NOT ADMIT, therefore, that Matt. xxiv. 36—41, and Luke xvii. 26—37, are parallel passages. This, however, is true, that the coming of Christ at the end of the world shall in many particulars be like his coming to judge Jerusalem in the time of her destruction by the Romans; and this has led many to conclude that Christ's prophecy concerning his coming must have a *double* meaning and a two-fold accomplishment.

It is true, that to your arguments intended to prove, that the faithful and obedient have the whole of everlasting life in this world, I have failed to reply; for if you mean that to know God and Jesus Christ is everlasting life begun in the soul, I agree; but if you mean that everlasting life is not a benefit promised to all believers to be enjoyed for ever and ever after it is begun here, why it seems to me needless and trifling to undertake to show that everlasting life does mean everlasting life, and not merely the life which the good live in this fleeting state.

You wish me to know, that the Almighty is to be regarded as *endless* in duration, not because some derivative of the Geek word αἰων (always being) is applied to him, but because we read of αφθαρτου θεοι the *incorruptible* God, Rom. i. 23.—You confess that αἰωνιον expresses an unlimited duration in 2 Cor. v. 1, but think that the terms used in 1 Peter i. 4, such as αφθαρτος, incorruptible, and αμαραντος, unfading, and in Heb. vii. 16, ακαταλυτος, endless, are much stronger.

The very passage you quote from Heb. vii. 16, if you

add the next verse, will prove that this is a false pretence: for Jesus is said to be made a priest after the power of an *endless life*, ζωης ακαταλυτου, for this reason, that God had testified, thou art a priest *for ever*, εις τον αἰωνα. Thus his *endless life* as a priest, resulted from his being made by Divine appointment a priest *for ever*, εις τον αἰωνα. A life, indissoluble, that is ακαταλυτος, is the result of an αἰωνιον decree, or appointment. Αἰωνιος, therefore, is stronger than ακαταλυτος, according to the author of the epistle to the Hebrews. It is "because he continueth ever, he hath an *unchangeable* priesthood," Heb. vii. 24.

You say, "I have shown that αἰωνιον is not unequivocal in its signification; and I will add, that your argument in proof of endless punishment will be essentially improved, if you can find the words αφθαρτος, αμαραντος, ακαταλυτος, or either of them applied to punishment in the Bible."

I reply, that ακαταλυτος signifies *without dissolution*, or not *to be dissolved;* and ζωης ακαταλυτος, a *life without dissolution*, is freely rendered *endless* in Heb. vii. 16, in opposition to one's death, or dissolution: but the words employed to denote *punishment* could not, without great incongruity, and confusion of metaphor, be coupled with these terms which you pronounce more unequivocal than αἰωνιος, *endless.* The sacred writers had too much good taste to write of *incorruptible fire*, *indissoluble burnings*, or *unfading punishment.* We may with good sense and taste speak of *endless* or αἰωνιον fire, burnings, punishment, death, and life; hence we read, Matt. xxv. 46, "these shall go away into *endless punishment*, εις κολασιν αἰωνιον, but the righteous εις ζωην αἰωνιον into endless life." The words θανατος, *death;* ολεθρος, *destruction;* πυρ, *fire;* κολασις, *punishment;* απολειας, *perdition;* θλιψεις, *tribulation;* κρισις, *damnation;* and the like, I repeat it, may well be qualified by *interminable*, *endless*, and *everlasting;* but it would be a violation of congruity to qualifiy them by *incorruptible*, *unfading*, and *indissoluble;* as much so as to speak of an *audible sight*, or of a *tangible vision.* It is unreasonable, therefore, to require that the doctrine of endless punishment shall be proved, if proved at all, by finding incongruous affinities, and violations of

propriety in the sacred oracles. In connexion with the fire of punishment threatened, the term *unquenchable* is used, and has the same force as *indissoluble*, when connected with life; for a fire *never quenched* and a life *never dissolved* must each be *endless*. Moreover, in Mark ix. 43 and Matt. xviii. 8, *το πυρ το αἰωνιον*, and *το πυρ το ασβεςον*, that is, *αἰωνιον* or *everlasting fire*, and *unquenchable fire*, are used as synonymous.

If my life is spared, it is my design to pay some attention to your last letter in my next.

Yours respectfully,
EZRA STILES ELY.

TO MR. EZRA STILES ELY.

Philadelphia, August 2, 1834.

Dear Sir—Your remarks and inquiries concerning the influence and tendency of Universalism would be very proper, were they relevant to the question in debate. But they are *not*—for our present inquiry is simply, *Is the doctrine of endless punishment taught in the Bible? or does the Bible teach the final holiness and happiness of all mankind?* I am utterly indisposed to countenance the introduction of matters foreign to the point at issue. So soon as our present question is finally disposed of, I will be ready and willing to meet you in discussion of the influence and tendency of our sentiments respectively, should you feel disposed to engage in such discussion.

Lest, however, your remarks should make an unfavourable impression on the minds of some of our readers, I will so far gratify you as to say, distinctly, that, in my judgment, the practical utility of any doctrine is the strongest presumptive evidence that can be given of its truth; that a demoralizing doctrine should neither be believed nor taught; that I believe Universalism to be the doctrine of God, who revealed it, and commanded it to be preached to all nations for the obedience of faith; that I prize it for

its moralizing tendency and comforting influence; and that I *know* it has been instrumental in converting the drunkard, the profane swearer, the profligate, and other vile persons, from the error of their ways. I further certify you, that I solemnly believe such conversions to be the legitimate effects of the doctrine of Universalism. Moreover, I feel much satisfaction in being enabled to testify, that the societies of Universalists in this city and elsewhere *can* be, and are, hereby "declared to be equal in point of sobriety, industry, and good general moral character," to any societies in which the doctrine of endless punishment is inculcated. I say, *equal*—and will add, if they are not *better*, better men, women, parents, children, neighbours, citizens, they do not come up to the standard of the faith.

On the other hand, I sincerely believe that the doctrine of endless punishment is exceedingly baleful in its influence—dishonourable to God—injurious to mankind, and detrimental to human enjoyment. I believe its natural tendency to be, to corrupt and circumscribe the operations of that love which is greater than faith or hope—to make of man the enemy of man—to foster spiritual pride and self-righteousness—to make sad the hearts of the righteous whom the testimony of Jesus will *not* make sad—and to strengthen the hands of the wicked that he should not return from his wicked way, by putting afar the day of evil, and by promising him an escape from the just demerit of his iniquities. I believe that all the persecutions, which have filled the world with blood, and groans, and tears, originated in the principles of partialism. In a word, I am fully persuaded that the doctrine of endless punishment stands directly opposed to the nature, perfections, will and promise of God—that it is at war with the spirit and principles of the gospel of Christ—that it composes no part of Divine Revelation—that it is repugnant to right reason and to all the noliest aspirations of the human heart—and that its natural tendency is to evil in all its protean forms. I

say these things, not by way of retaliation, but because I am solemnly and sincerely convinced of their truth.

You ask me what good can be derived to any one from Universalism, even if it is true. You seem to think that as all men will eventually be saved, (according to this doctrine,) it matters not what evils they may suffer in the present life!! Besure, you use other language—but such is the substance of your remarks. Allow me to ask you, why any one should desire to be cured of a painful disease, seeing that his body will suffer no pain in the grave? Why should a blind man wish to see, a deaf man to hear, a dumb man to speak, or a lame man to walk, each being fully satisfied that his malady can afflict him only in the present life? You possess too much discernment to overlook the bearing, and too much candour to deny the force of these queries. You speak of salvation as of a matter *wholly* pertaining to the immortal state of being. In this you err. Allow me to assure you, that Universalism *is* "the power of God unto salvation to every one who believeth," and to no other persons—for "he that believeth not shall be *damned*"—and "this *is* the *condemnation*, that light is come *into the world*, and men love darkness rather than light."

There is one other part of your irrelevant observations which I desire to notice. You speak of Universalist periodical publications as being "almost exclusively devoted *to one object*—that of convincing all men, tha however they may live and die, they shall all be infal libly holy and happy in an immortal future state o. being." Why did you not add, for the information of your readers, that though "*the restitution of all things*, which God had spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began," is the prominent and leading doctrine of our papers, other and correlative subjects engage our earnest and constant attention? You, sir, have not perused our written labours to so little profit, as to be ignorant of the fact, that we incessantly urge the utility of, and the necessity for, "repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ."—We "affirm

constantly, that they who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works," for "these things are good and profitable unto men." We hold that "the grace of God which bringeth salvation to all men, hath appeared—teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, and righteously, and godly in the present world"—for he alone can be truly happy, who is a practical disciple of "the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world."

I have thus noticed many of your remarks, which obviously do not belong to the point at issue; and I beg leave o repeat, that I will not consent to discuss these matters .n detail, until our present question shall have been finally disposed of. You will not dispute the propriety of this determination.

Your argument on Matt. xxiv. et seq. is substantially the same as presented in previous letters. You have neglected to notice my reasoning on many points connected with the coming of the Son of man. I therefore propose to bring the subject more fully into view. Its importance is obvious—for, having admitted that a part of the chapter refers to events which transpired at the destruction of Jerusalem, and believing that the remainder refers to the immortal state of being, you found it necessary to point out the verse at which you suppose the transition of reference to take place. You selected verse 36. You could not have chosen any other—for the preceding context shut you out entirely; and you clearly perceived that the *adverb of time*, in Matt. xxv, required you either to stop at verse 36 of Matt. xxiv, or to allow that neither of the chapters furnishes any proof of the point you desire to establish. This, then, is a plain statement of the case. Let us proceed to the argument.

1st. You say, the disciples "proposed an inquiry concerning *the end of the world*, as distinct from the time of his coming at the destruction of Jerusalem." In reply, I remark, 1st. I have several times desired you to notice the fact, that the word translated *world* in the phrase "end of the world," is not κωσμος the *material* world,

but αἰων the age. Therefore, the assertion that the disciples "supposed the [material] world was to come to an end" at the coming of the Son of man is groundless, and your argument is lost. 2d. In verses 6, 13, 14, of Matt. xxiv, "*the end*" is distinctly spoken of in immediate connexion with the signs that should precede the destruction of Jerusalem. Ye shall hear of wars . . . . . but THE END [*what* end?] is not yet. . . . . There shall be famines and pestilences . . . . all these are the *beginning* of sorrows, [*what* sorrows?] *Then* shall they deliver you up to be afflicted . . . . but he that shall endure unto *the end*, [*what* end?] the same shall be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto *all nations*, [see Matt. xxv. 32, in which it is declared that *all nations* should be gathered before the Son of man,] and then shall *the end* come. *When* ye, *therefore*, shall see the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet, ... *then* let them which be *in Judea flee into the mountains:* let him which is on the house top not come down to take any thing out of his house," &c. Who can avoid perceiving that all these things, including *the end* spoken of, were to transpire at the destruction of Jerusalem? But 3d, the disciples asked only *two* questions: "When shall these things be?" viz. the desolation of the temple; "and what shall be THE SIGN *of thy coming* AND *of the end of the world?*" thus inquiring for THE SIGN of *simultaneous events.* It was "IMMEDIATELY *after* the tribulation of those days," viz. the destruction of Jerusalem, that "THE SIGN of the Son of man" was to appear in heaven, verse 30, and then the Son of man would be seen coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. That was also THE SIGN *of the end of the world* under the law. Then the old covenant was to be abolished, and the reign of Christ in the kingdom which the Father had appointed him, was then to commence.

2d. You offer some remarks on the word "generation," but the state of the case is not altered thereby—for you have admitted that all of the persons "then living

did not pass to their graves before Jerusalem was destroyed;" and you have conceded that to the 35th verse inclusive, the language of Jesus referred to that destruction, and not to any thing yet future. I desire you to remember, that you do not suppose any transition of reference until you reach the 36th verse of the chapter At that point your argument commences; and you seem to think that the disjunctive conjunction "*but*," settles the question as to said transition. "*But of that day*"—WHAT *day?* Plainly, the day of which our Saviour had so particularly spoken in the preceding verses.

31. You say, in answer to a remark of mine, that Jesus did not "acknowledge his inability to inform his disciples" of the precise day and hour of his coming. You quote M'KNIGHT, and call him my *favourite.* The object of so doing is obvious. But allow me to say, that the author you mention is *your own* favourite, and not *mine.* I believe I have not once quoted him in this controversy—I have quoted Dr. CAMPBELL *against* him. But this is a matter of small importance. CAMPBELL, WAKEFIELD, NEWCOME, CLARKE, and a host of others, stand opposed to M'KNIGHT on the passage in question. I believe the received version gives a correct rendering of the original. The entire context discountenances any other rendering. "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only." The parallel in Mark xiii. 32, is still more emphatic. "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, *neither the Son*, but the Father." It would have been foolishness to have said, *no man maketh known that day*, for no man knew when it was to be—and how could any one make known to others what he did not know himself?

4th. You say, "I DO NOT ADMIT that Matt. xxiv. 36—41, and Luke xvii. 20—37, are parallel passages." You are aware that *to admit the parallel would be to destroy your whole argument drawn from* Matt. xxiv and xxv. You admit the similarity of language, and the only reason you assign for denying the parallelism is, that in the

one case Jesus was addressing *his disciples*, and in the other *the Pharisees!* I cannot think you are satisfied with this reason. But allowing that you are, I must inform you that *Jesus was addressing his disciples in both cases.* See Luke xvii. 22. "And he said *unto his disciples*, The days will come," &c. The consequence is, that your argument is lost.

5th. You say, "many have been led to conclude that Christ's prophecy concerning his coming must have a *double* meaning and a two-fold accomplishment." But will *you*, sir, pretend that such a conclusion is correct? Will you risk your reputation as a biblical expositor, by contending for said *double meaning?* In another part of your letter you pronounce certain principles of interpretation erroneous, because, in your judgment, they would "render the Bible an *uncertain*, *unmeaning* rul of faith." Are you sure that this would not be consequent of admitting a double meaning in Christ's prophecy concerning his coming?

I may add, while on this point, that WHITBY, PEARCE, HAMMOND, KENRICK, CLARKE, and others, acknowledge the parallel which you deny. I might furnish many interesting extracts from their notes, but must be content with the following from WHITBY, on Matt. xxiv. 40, 41: "That it relates not to the final judgment, but to the time of the destruction of the Jews by the Roman army, is evident from the same words recorded in Luke xvii. 35, 36."

As your *entire argument* drawn from Matt. xxiv and xxv, rests on the supposition that verse 36 of chap. xxiv, commences the reference to events which are yet future I desire your particular attention to the proof of that supposition.

Your quotation of Heb. ix. 27, 28, will be of no service to your argument, unless you can show, 1st. That natural death is signified in the expression, "And as it is appointed unto τοῖς ἀνθρώποις THE MEN once to *die*, (see preceding verses, and Heb. vii. 28;) and 2d. That the se-

cond appearance of Christ, spoken of in verse 28, refers to any other than the present world.

I agree with you that it would be "needless and trifling to attempt to show that everlasting life means everlasting life." Everlasting life is simply the knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ, John xvii. 3. The believer enjoys it in the present life, as you admit. But I desire you to prove, if you can, that the blessedness of the immortal state depends, in any sense, on the faith of the believer. Neither the belief nor unbelief of man can affect the promise and purpose of God. Paul testifies that "every knee shall bow, and every *tongue* confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father;" and this great consummation of the reign of Jesus cannot be thwarted by the present unbelief of any part of mankind.

You deny that ἀκατάλυτος, endless, is a stronger term than αἰωνος, everlasting—and you affirm that the latter is stronger than the former, because "Jesus is said to be made a priest after the power of an *endless life*, ζωης ακαταλύτου, for this reason, that God had testified, thou art a priest *for ever*, εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα. A few remarks will show the fallacy of your reasoning. 1st. The priesthood of Aaron was αἰωνιον, everlasting—but you will not pretend that it was *endless*, indissoluble. 2d. The priesthood under the law was "*after the order of Aaron*," but God testified of Christ, "Thou art a priest for ever, *after the order of Melchisedec*." 3d. The *Aaronic* was a *changeable* priesthood, inasmuch as the priests "were not suffered to continue by reason of death;" but Christ "because he continueth *ever*, εἰς τον αἰωνα, hath an unchangeable priesthood," that is, there is no succession in the priesthood, for the Son, as High Priest, "is consecrated *for ever more*," εἰς τον αἰωνα. 4th. The *priesthood of Christ is not endless*—for he was made a priest for ever "AFTER (*or according to*) *the* POWER *of an endless life*;" but it does not follow that his life, *as a priest*, is endless. Moreover, Paul certifies that the Son shall deliver up the kingdom to the Father, and be himself subject, that *God may be all in all*, 1 Cor. xv. 28. His

mediatorial kingdom *will close*, when all things are subdued unto him and reconciled to God. So the very argument you bring to prove that αἰωνιος expresses endless duration, disproves the position.

Here let it be understood that the adjective in question derives its force primarily from the noun αἰων, to which it is relative; and secondarily, from the nature of the thing to which it is applied. Now, as I showed in a previous letter, αἰων cannot signify *eternity*—for we read of the *beginning* and *end* of αἰων, of αἰωνες plural, and of the *ends* of αἰων. Consequently, the *adjective* does not, and cannot, in itself, express an endless duration. Why have you failed to notice my reasoning on this important point? I really attach some consequence thereto, and hope you will honour it with special attention.

In asking you to adduce your proofs of endless punishment, I did not think of making an unreasonable demand. I did not expect you to find "incongruous affinities and violations of propriety in the sacred oracles." And the two facts, 1st. That there would be incongruity in the phrases *incorruptible torment*, *indissoluble death*, &c; and 2d. That no such phrases are found in the sacred oracles —these two facts, I say, furnish strong proof to my mind, that the doctrine of endless punishment is not taught in the Bible. There would be no violation of good taste in saying, "indissoluble life of misery," "incorruptible existence in torment"—but you will not pretend that either ἀφθαρτος, or ἀμαραντος, or ἀκαταλυτος, is, *in any manner or form*, found in the Bible in connexion with *misery*. The immortal existence is one of purity and happiness; not of impurity and wretchedness—for "*in the resurrection* they are *equal unto the angels*, and are the children of God, *being* the children of the resurrection." This testimony of Jesus answers to Rom. viii. 21, "The creature itself also *shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption* into the glorious liberty of *the children of God*."

I desire you to produce a single passage, if you can, in which any word of *equal force* with αφθαρτος, ἀμαραντος, or ἀκαταλυτος, is applied to punishment, either in the Old Tes

tament or the New. The adjective αἰώνιος, will not answer your purpose—for that this word is *not unequivocal* in its signification, is evident from the fact, that the spirit of inspiration frequently applies it to things which were temporary in their nature and character. For example, the priesthood of Aaron, the law of Moses, the possession of Canaan, &c.

The word *unquenchable*, which you mention, is *also* not to your purpose—for we read in Isa. lxvi. 24, "They shall go forth and look upon the *carcasses* of the men that have transgressed against me; for their worm shall not die, *neither shall their fire be quenched;* and they shall be an abhorring *unto all flesh.*" The phraseology here used confines the whole matter to the present life. It was said of the fire that destroyed Idumea, "*It shall not be quenched*" —yet it *was* quenched thousands of years ago. It was likewise said of the fire to be kindled in the gates of Jerusalem, "*It shall not be quenched.*" But it *was* quenched. So you perceive that the word in question is not definite as to the duration it signifies. It is certainly synonymous with αἰώνιος in the passages by you cited—but Scripture writers apply both words to things which have long since ceased to be.

Respectfully yours,
ABEL C. THOMAS.

TO MR. ABEL C. THOMAS.

Philadelphia, August 21, 1834.

Dear Sir—You are aware that the expression "*for ever and ever*," is used forty-three times in the English translation of the Bible, and in thirty-eight of these instances, you will grant that εἰς τοὺς αἰωνας τον αἰῶνων denote an interminable duration. If God is to *reign*, is *blessed*, is to be *praised*, and is to possess the kingdom *for ever and ever*, equally plain and certain is it, that the impenitently wicked are to be "tormented day and night,

for ever and ever." and figuratively speaking, the smoke of their torment is to ascend for ever

If all men are to be saved, Christ had a fine opportunity of saying so, when one asked, Luke xiii. 23, "Lord, are there few that be saved?" Instead of saying, "No, all men will be saved," he implied that there is great danger of failing of salvation; and replied, "strive to enter in at the strait gate; for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. When once the master of the house has risen up, and has shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence you are; then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets; but he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out." At the time when the Saviour uttered these words, the persons whom he addressed were members of the visible church in the world. He spoke, therefore, of a different kingdom of God from that to which they then belonged; and of one in which they should see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who had long before died and gone to the world of spirits. From that kingdom of God to which these patriarchs had gone, Jesus said that his unbelieving auditors should be for ever excluded. They were to be rejected by the Lord when they should, at too late a period to obtain salvation, make application for admission to the kingdom of heaven. They were at a future time to weep and gnash their teeth; when they should see their patriarchal fathers, whom they could never have seen on earth. In short, it seems to me that nothing but the grossest perversion of the Bible, can make this passage teach any other doctrine than this, that some of the human family, who were members of the kingdom of God in the world, shall in the future state where they

shall see the departed ancients, experience endless disappointment and misery.

In Luke xi. 26, the Saviour said of a man possessed of devils, "the last state of that man is worse than the first." Now there is no state to a man after his *last;* and the last state of this man is not one of holiness and happiness, for it is worse than his first state when possessed with one devil instead of many. This *last state* denotes the same thing as *the end* of the wicked, spoken of in the book of Psalms, and by Paul in Philippians iii. 18, 19, where he says, "for many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ; WHOSE END IS DESTRUCTION, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things." To show that himself and others of a different character should have a different END, he adds, "for our conversation," or rather, "*our* πολίτευμα *citizenship* is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ; who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself." Now your theory is, that these very persons *whose end is destruction*, are to share the same destiny with the citizens of heaven. Why should Paul, then, warn his brethren against these enemies of the cross, and say, "brethren, be ye followers together with me—for our citizenship is in heaven," while the end of these sensual persons, whose god is their stomach, shall be destruction. I do not honestly believe that the apostle Paul ever indulged in the least expectation that all men in the resurrection, will be fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body, and so be saved by God's almighty power. He says expressly, that some shall experience *destruction*, and shows that by this term he intends the very reverse of a glorious salvation.

Christ says, Luke xiv. 27, "whosoever doth not bear his cross and come after me, cannot be my disciple."

How can a man be saved, without becoming a disciple of Christ?

"I say unto you, that none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper," Luke xiv. 24. Since all the benefits of the gospel are shadowed forth by a sumptuous entertainment, of which some shall never partake, having rejected the invitation, how can all be saved?

In Rev. xiii. 8, we read, that all who dwell on earth, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, shall worship the beast which opened his mouth in blasphemy against God; and from Rev. xx. 15, we learn by a prophetic vision and history, that when the dead small and great shall stand before God to be judged, according to their works, then whosoever shall not be found written in the book of life, shall be cast into the lake of fire. "This is the second death." Now can any be saved, whom the Judge does not purpose to save; and who are therefore said not to be enrolled in the book of life?

In your letter of the 17th of May last, you refer this judging of the dead small and great, as you do every thing else about the last final judgment, to some occurrence, you hardly seem to me to know what, in the present life. John, you say, saw the *dead* stand before God—not the *living;* whence you infer that the *morally dead*, not those who have *literally died*, were the subjects of the judgment here spoken of.

I reply, that John describes a vision which he had of that which shall occur after the thousand years of millenial glory in the church shall have passed. He saw in vision those who had died live again in body after that event, being the subjects of the resurrection. When the thousand years were expired, and after Satan had been subsequently loosed out of his prison to deceive the world again for a little time, and after Satan had finally been "cast into the lake of fire and brimstone," he "saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away." Then he

saw *the dead small and great*, that is, all persons who had ever died, living again and standing before God; and the dead, not remaining still dead, but restored to life, "were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works." Nothing can be clearer than that this judgment, prophetically seen by John, is to take place after the destruction of the Papacy, and Mohammedanism, and after the church shall have occupied the whole earth for a thousand years. Preparatory to this judgment, and that the dead might all live again in their whole complex nature, "the sea gave up the dead that were in it;" that is, all the bodies of persons buried in the sea were raised; and *death and hell*, or *hades*, the state of the dead, "delivered up the dead that were in them," the spirits of men coming out of their separate state of existence consequent on death, and being again reunited to their resuscitated bodies; and in this sense, death being vanquished, and *hades*, a state of departed spirits, destroyed, they, the once dead, but then revived, small and great, "were judged, every man according to his works." When the spirits of men no longer exist in a state of separation from their bodies, their heaven, their paradise, will no longer be in *hades*, but in that state of bodily and spiritual existence which is to succeed the judgment of the great day. After that time the wicked will no longer be in *tartarus*, a prison of despair in the state of departed spirits, but in that *gehenna fire*, in which God will destroy both soul and body for ever; where the devil and the beast and the false prophet "shall be tormented day and night FOR EVER AND EVER." A state of disembodied spirits evidently can continue and be predicated of men no longer than they continue in a disembodied state; and because the bodies and souls of men both are to be cast in a state of punishment after the resurrection, the Lord Jesus said, "fear not them that kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell," Matt. x. 28. This destroying of both *soul and body in hell*, Christ appre-

hended to be a real evil to be dreaded; but if your doc trine is true, no worse evil can come on any sinner, ever from God, than the destruction of his body in the grave. Surely you need fear, if you are unwavering in your belief, nothing but men that kill the body, for there is no God who will destroy either the soul or body in any hell subsequent to natural death.

I have seen no evidence whatever, that when Christ spoke of the *fire of hell*, or of *the gehenna of fire*, he either quoted or referred to Isaiah lxvi. 24, or xxxiv. 10 He merely used language similar to that employed by that evangelical prophet of the Old Testament, and by Jeremiah vii. 20, and Ezekiel xx. 47, when they described such judgments upon the wicked as were to bring them down to endless pains. If, as you say, the word *gehenna* was never used in addressing the gentiles directly in the New Testament, I shall admit that there was a peculiar propriety in speaking to the Jews of punishment under the term of *fires of gehenna*, because they were familiar with the symbols. There was also an equal propriety in addressing the churches scattered throughout Europe and Asia, in the use of the word *tartarus*, as a symbol of the state of misery appointed for wicked spirits. The persons addressed by Peter in his general epistles, would be as likely to derive just ideas from the expression of *casting down to tartarus*, as the Jews from the declaration, that *both soul and body* should be cast into the *gehenna of fire*.

I not only deny that Christ quoted Isaiah lxvi. 24, in Mark ix. 43, but also that the passage in Isaiah refers to "temporal punishments alone." In this chapter the Lord reveals the restoration of the Jews, the universal spread of the gospel, the gathering of all the nations into the church; and the judgments of Jehovah upon all the wicked previous to this desired event. He promises to extend peace to his church like a river, "and the glory of the gentiles like a flowing stream and the hand of the Lord shall be known towards his servants, and his indignation towards his enemies. For behold the Lord

will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire, and by his sword will the Lord plead with all flesh; and the slain of the Lord shall be many." After this shall new heavens and a new earth be made, *and all flesh come to worship before Jehovah.*

Then "it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, they shall go forth, (meaning all flesh that worship God) and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me; for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh." These were evidently not literal carcasses, worms and fires, seen month after month in the valley of Hinnom. The passage undoubtedly means, that after the universal spread of the gospel, the people of God shall in all their religious services contemplate the judgments of God brought upon the wicked, and their endless destruction from the presence of the Lord, shadowed forth by symbols taken from the literal Tophet. The church in her millennial glory will not cease to remember the millions of men, self-destroyed, whose conscience will for ever be as a gnawing worm, and whose sufferings, like those produced by unquenchable fire. The universal church will for ever abhor the remembered wickedness of all nations that have forgotten God, and will be turned into hell. All past generations that have rebelled against God, and died in their sins, will be contemplated as carcasses cast out into the place of polluted idolaters, to become the food of worms and flames.

In the 34th chapter of Isaiah, not only *temporal* but *endless pains* are denounced against Idumea, and "upon all nations," in highly figurative language. In "the day of the Lord's vengeance, and the year of recompenses for the controversy of Zion," it is said the Lord's "sword shall be bathed in heaven, filled with blood," and "made fat with fatness." In the same style it is said, that the

streams of Idumea, the dust and the land shall become burning brimstone and pitch, which shall never be quenched, and through which none shall pass for ever and ever; to denote the utter destruction of that country and the endless punishment of its wicked inhabitants The same is true when God says of the wicked Jews, whom he has long since destroyed in hell, that his anger and his fury shall burn against them and shall not be quenched. Merely temporal fires must burn out, if not quenched, but God symbolizes his punishment of wicked nations and individuals by streams of burning brimstone and pitch that shall never be extinguished. These very passages of Isaiah and Jeremiah, instead of destroying the force of our Saviour's expressions concerning the unquenchable fires and gnawing worms of hell, show that he employed terms familiar to the Jews, and frequently used by their own prophets to denote the interminable vengeance of the Almighty.

The Idumea that was denounced has been destroyed; "none shall pass through it for ever and ever;" and the fire of wrath kindled upon those Idumeans is burning now, and the smoke thereof shall go up for ever.

In Jeremiah vii. 20, Jehovah says of his anger, it shall burn, and shall not be quenched; and surely it still burns against those idolatrous Israelites whom he slew in his wrath. He caused tens of thousands of them to be cast, as to their bodies, into a literal Tophet; and this external punishment was but the figure of that which he brought upon their souls in tartarus.

The fire which God kindled in the gates or among the rulers of Jerusalem, was the fire of his wrath, and not a literal flame kindled upon the doors in their walls. The fire of his wrath in due time laid Jerusalem waste, and still burns against her wicked kings, nobles, and common people; and of this fire he said, Jer. vii. 20, "it shall not be quenched."

In short, where you find in God's most awful denunciations nothing but natural death and endless blessedness

immediately following, I see temporal destruction as a prelude to endless pains.

You complain, that I have disregarded your statement, "that a passage which was future in its reference *when spoken* or *written*, is not necessarily future in its reference *now*." This I grant, but I deny that the remark is applicable to those portions of Scriptures which speak of the general Judgment. Some events predicted by Christ as future when he spake on earth have been fulfilled, and now we may speak of them as *past*; but other events yet remain to be fulfilled. It is for instance, "appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." Now some have died, and gone to judgment; but to you and myself, and millions of mankind, death and judgment are still future events.

Moreover, "Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation," Heb. ix. 27, 28. If Christ appeared in the destruction of Jerusalem, there are *others that still look for him*; among whom I profess to be one; yes, there are hundreds of thousands of persons who still look for him, to whom on his second coming to our world in his bodily presence he shall yet appear, for we have not seen him; and he shall come, not bearing sin as a sin-offering, as he did when he first came, but without sin unto their salvation who are prepared to meet him in his judicial capacity.

You make what seems to me a desperate effort to show that Acts xvii. 31, refers to some past time, or else to the whole of the dispensation of the gospel, and not to a future General Judgment. Paul was addressing the Athenians concerning *the true God*, who was "the unknown God" to them, and he assured them that "he hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained." It is not at all likely that he referred these Greeks to any temporal calamities about to come on Jerusalem. He did not say, God is now judging you by causing the gospel of Christ to be preached to you. Nor did he say God has

already judged the world; but God has appointed a day in which he will do it by Jesus Christ, to whom the Father hath committed all judgment The Judge of men in the last great day is to be God manifest in the flesh. Immanuel, or God in our nature, and hence Paul said that God hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world by that man whom he hath ordained. According to the gospel preached by Paul, "God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ," in the last day, when all the dead shall have come forth from their graves. This is the real meaning of Rom. ii. 16, for Paul does not there intimate that his preaching of the gospel was God's judging of the world by Christ. The 13th, 14th and 15th verses of Rom. ii, are evidently a parenthesis, and are so marked in the most accurate edition of the New Testament. Omit this parenthesis in reading, and you will find that Paul asserts in this chapter, that "God will render to every man according to his deeds;" to some who "seek for glory and honour and immortality—eternal life; but unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness,—indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish." At the same time he tells us God in judging the world will be no respecter of persons, but regard as he ought the different circumstances and talents of mankind, so that "as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law; and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law." If you ask, when shall this equitable judgment of all who have not heard the gospel, take place, the answer is, "in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel." In preaching the gospel, Paul told men, that God had appointed a day in which he would judge the world in righteousness: this judging of the secrets of men in the last day, by Jesus Christ, was therefore according to the gospel of every other person who preaches the same doctrines which Paul and Jesus Christ did.

Your attempt to prove, that there is no future general judgment of the assembled world of mankind after the general resurrection to take place, because God is a Judge,

and to a certain extent executes righteous judgments in the earth, I cannot think deserves any serious regard. I deny that God has ever yet judged *the world collectively*. He hath committed the judgment of the world of mankind to be collected after the resurrection from the dead to Jesus Christ; and that judgment he is to execute at the appointed time, when he shall descend from heaven with the trump of God.

Concerning the effects of the resurrection from the dead, I have learned without going to the Sadducees or Pharisees for instruction, that "in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven," spiritual, active, intelligent immortal beings, who have entered on their final state; and that in this resurrection some arise to damnation. It is true, though no sacred Scripture; and since you have first quoted the saying, I must avow my belief, *that as death leaves us, so will judgment find us;*—that after death there is no saving moral change wrought in any impenitent sinner;—and that in the grave, or the state of the dead, no works are done preparatory to the settlement of one's final destiny.

The questions, *How are the dead raised up? And with what body do they come?* were attributed by Paul to "some man" of infidel character who wished to raise some philosophical objection against the possibility of any resurrection. Paul stopped the mouth of the "fool," by referring him to the resurrection of a new stalk of grain from the seed buried in the earth. It is just as easy, "thou fool," for God to raise up out of the body laid in the grave a real body, differing in many respects from that which was corruptible and corrupted, as to raise up a green blade of wheat from a bad grain of wheat sown in the furrow.

The apostle then proceeds to show that real bodies differ from each other in many of their attributes, and that the bodies of mankind, when raised out of their graves, will differ from what they formerly were before death; and yet be real, material bodies

All who die suffer *dishonour* in body, by being returned to the dust on account of Adam's sin; and these same bodies in honour of Christ, shall be raised up in all the glory of never dying frames. Through *weakness* these bodies were dissolved, but they shall be endowed with such *power* after the resurrection as will fit them for their everlasting estate. Every *natural body* of a man will be changed into an *etherialized* or *spiritual body;* so called from its possessing many powers resembling those which appertain to spiritual beings.

To save all discussion on these points, I agree with you, that as *by* and *through* and *in* Adam, all die a natural death, so *by*, *through* and *in* Christ as head over all things to his church, shall all men be made alive in the last day, the day of resurrection. Christ, in virtue of authority vested in him as King of the Church, will raise every man: *but every man in his own order*. These orders will be widely different: and yet, every body of every good, of every wicked man, shall be rendered incorruptible, immortal, powerful, and glorious in comparison with what it was before death. Every body shall resemble *a spirit* in the *powers* it will forever exercise, and therefore may be called a *spiritual* body, which in many respects will bear a resemblance to the body of the Lord from heaven. All this is taught in 1 Cor. xv. In relation to all men, death will be thus vanquished and the grave destroyed by Christ.

Other passages of Scripture which I have already cited, clearly prove that some of these immortal, incorruptible, powerful, spiritual, and in some respects glorious and heavenly bodies will be inhabited by restless, sinning and accursed spirits forever. They may be glorious in some respects, as *angels of light*, and yet be doomed in body and in spirit to the blackness of darkness forever.

Many glorious and powerful, and naturally lovely attributes of body and mind belong to multitudes who are in their hearts the enemies of God; and all the natural advantages and glories that will accrue to the wicked from the resurrection will but prepare them for endless pun-

ishment. Indeed they must be rendered immortal, or they could not endure endless misery. With all their power, glory, and immortality, being made like to the angels, being spiritual existences resembling the heavenly body of Christ, the wicked shall go away into everlasting punishment, among those principalities and powers which are spiritual wickedness in high places.

It was however of the church of God, of the sanctified in Christ called to be saints, that Paul said 1 Cor. xv. 49, "as WE have born the image of the earthy, WE shall also bear the image of the heavenly." While all after the resurrection shall be immortal like Christ, none but saints will like Christ be fitted for a heavenly home.

Because it is said "in Christ Jesus shall all be made alive," and also, "if any man be in Christ he is a new creature," you infer, that all who shall be restored to life in the last day by Christ, shall be renewed persons, fitted in the state and exercises of their souls for everlasting blessedness.

You insist, again and again, that all who are so *in Christ*, as to be restored to life, are also *in him* in such a sense that they are holy persons, the subjects of the *new birth*, of a saving *change*, for "the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be *changed*."

You are undoubtedly aware, that the apostle Paul speaks of all saints as associated with himself; and of such as shall be alive at the last day, not having experienced natural death, he says, "we shall be changed." He says, "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we," that have not died, "shall be changed." Here is no intimation of mental, moral or spiritual change; but a simple assurance that all who shall be living at the time of the general resurrection, shall be changed in body, so as to become immortal and incorruptible, like those who have passed through the grave.

I admit that in the same sense in which all men are *in Adam* so as to die in him, they are also *in Christ* so as to

be made alive by him from the dead; but a man may be *in Christ* in different scriptural senses; and being *in him* so as to experience a resurrection by him, is not inconsistent with awaking "to shame and everlasting contempt;" for himself has said, "the hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth: they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation," John v. 28. In John xvth, Jesus compares himself to a vine and his professed disciples to branches in him. But of his Father he saith, "Every branch IN ME that beareth not fruit, he taketh away." Some branches do not *abide in him*, and "if a man abide not *in me* he is cast forth as a branch and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned." Thus will multitudes be in Christ so as to be raised by him from the dead; and having been always unfruitful in good works, will be cast into the fires of hell.

All, therefore, who are in Christ by baptism and a visible church relation, and all who are in him so as to be raised by him from the dead, should hear his counsel; "abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can you except ye abide in me."

If any man is in Christ, by a living faith, by a vital union, so as to derive from him saving spiritual influences; if any man is so in Christ as to "abide in him;" "walk in him," "as he also walked;" and bring forth the fruits of holy living, he is indeed *a new creature;* and shall never perish; but except a man become thus united to Christ by what our Saviour calls being *born again*, which is a very different thing from the resurrection of the body, he cannot see, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.

Your reference to Acts xxiv. 14, 15, seems to me peculiarly unfortunate for your cause. Paul said to the Roman Governor Felix, "this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law

and the prophets; and have hope toward God, which they themselves [the Jews his accusers] also allow that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust." Here Paul speaks of the dead as being still *some of them just, and some unjust.* They retain, then, these distinct general moral characteristics, after they go to the grave and the world of spirits; and they remain respectively members of the class of the righteous, or of the wicked, unto the resurrection; when they are all to come forth at the sound of the Archangel's trump. But you infer, that the *unjust* will be changed into *just* persons, by the resurrection, because otherwise you think Paul would *not* have regarded the resurrection of the dead as an object of *hope*. Your argument derives all its force from the difference between your feelings and those of Paul. He had *hope* toward God that there shall be a resurrection of the dead. His accusers allowed that this hope is reasonable and scriptural; for they were Pharisees and believed in a world of spirits and the general resurrection from the dead. In this resurrection he and they knew that the just and the unjust were both to arise, that the judge might render to every one according to his deeds an everlasting award. This, however, did not destroy his hope. He knew how important it is for the vindication of the just themselves, and for the glory of divine justice, that the oppressors should stand in judgment with the oppressed. Fully satisfied that the Judge of all the earth will do no wrong, but manifest his equity, goodness, patience and forbearance in relation to the wicked, before the assembled universe, he still hoped for the general resurrection. The people of God still have the same hope, and look for the Saviour's appearing, even while assured that the unjust shall be raised, and that to them the judge will be revealed in flaming fire taking such vengeance as belongs to Jehovah. The punishment of the unjust is not in itself an object of complacency, any more than the sacking of Jerusalem was; but he who wept over Jerusalem and yet destroyed it; may say, as I live, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked;

yet, the soul that sinneth it shall die. While we *pity* sinners, we may *hope* that God in due time will vindicate himself, and his dishonoured, defied government.

In commenting on Matt. xxii. 29, 30, and Mark xii. 25, you seem to have abandoned your doctrine, that by *angels* the Scriptures mean nothing more than *human messengers;* for otherwise your argument would be without foundation. All men shall be holy, happy, and saved after the resurrection, you intimate, because then they shall be as the angels of God in heaven. Christ has taught tha Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are still living persons, and have God for their God; and that in due time all the dead shall be raised, when they will neither marry, nor be given in marriage, but shall be "as the angels which are in heaven;" possessed of spiritual bodies which shall need neither food nor drink; shall never sleep; shall be incorruptible; and shall be endowed with wonderful powers, such as are common to celestial beings. Matthew and Mark say merely that "in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven." These angels they may resemble in many important particulars, and yet be miserable for ever. The devils resemble these angels of heaven, and yet are miserable. It is no where intimated that all who are raised from the dead shall be like the angels of heaven in their *holiness*, or service of the Almighty. Your quotation from Luke xx. 34—36 is more favourable to your position than any which I have yet seen. "And Jesus answering said unto them, the children of this world marry, and are given in marriage: but they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage; neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels, and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection." Our Saviour seems to me in this place to contrast *this world* with *that world*, or earth with heaven; and he says "*that they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world*," shall be *the children of God, and equal to the angels.* These words imply

that some shall NOT be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and so are not to become the children of God by being the children of the resurrection. This clause concerning them which shall be "accounted worthy to obtain," spoils the whole passage for your use, and confirms me in the judgment, that some shall rise to go away with the devil and his angels into endless punishment. But for this clause this text would render me a Universalist. Unworthy as they are of any resurrection, and of *that world* where Jesus lives and reigns, he will, nevertheless, raise them from the dead, "for we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ: that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad;" and this too, after "our earthly house of this tabernacle" shall have been dissolved, 2 Cor. v. 1—10.

Should it, nevertheless, be conceded, that all mankind shall be called *the children of God*, on account of their being raised by him from the dead; it will not follow that all will be holy and happy children; for God is the father of the whole human family by creation, and preservation, as well as the resurrection; and including himself with "all nations of men," who dwell on all the face of the earth, Paul says, with certain of the Athenian poets, "for we are also his offspring." Hence he argues, "for as much then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device." Many of his hearers, notwithstanding, did thus think, and were actuated by no sentiments befitting the offspring of the Infinite Mind. Just so, millions who will be children of God by the resurrection from the dead, will be undutiful and rebellious children for ever; whose portion will be the blackness of darkness.

Your doctrine, that those who are not changed before by true repentance, are to be savingly changed by the resurrection from the dead, so as to experience everlasting salvation, is contradicted by the general tenor of gospel admonitions. "While ye have light, believe in the

light, that ye may be children of light." If your theory is correct, whether men believe in the light or not while they have light, they will become the children of light by the resurrection; and thus Christ's warning was vain. "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near:" which you render null by teaching that whether men ever seek God or not in this life, they will all be sure to find him, and to be reconciled in soul to him by the saving change of the resurrection from the dead. "We then as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain. For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee; behold, now is the accepted time: behold, now is the day of salvation." Needless solicitation and vain admonition are here, if the day of salvation will never pass until all are saved; and if all men will at last be fitted for heaven, whether they call upon God in an accepted time or not: or if the accepted time in relation to every sinner will extend to the day of judgment and then all be savingly changed. To some Christ said "Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life;' but you add, "until the resurrection, and then the last rebel will come, and enjoy life everlasting."

In further confirmation of the scriptural doctrine, that some will endure endless sufferings after the present life, I allege that all are sinners; that God has revealed his mode of pardoning sinners; that if sinners are not pardoned they must perish; that some will never receive forgiveness; and that of course some will perish for ever. To prevent all misapprehension of my meaning, I define scriptural pardon or forgiveness to be the remission of the penalty of the law to a sinner, which he has incurred by his crimes, in consequence of his redemption by Christ Jesus. If a sinner is not pardoned he must suffer endless punishment, which is the penalty of the violated law; and some shall never be pardoned. If this should prove true in relation to none but the blasphemers of Christ's day it would destroy your whole theory of universal salvation

Aware that some Universalists deny any remission of sins, I must remind you that David said, for well he knew, that "blessed is he whose transgressions is forgiven, whose sin is covered: I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sins. For this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found," Psalm xxxii. Christ has taught his disciples to pray, saying, "forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors;" and added by way of solemn caution, "if we forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."

Now indispensable as pardon is to everlasting salvation, Christ assures us that some shall never be pardoned, and of course shall never be saved. When asked, "Lord how oft shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him?" Jesus answered, "I say not unto thee, until seven times: but, until seventy times seven." Then he added a parable concerning the wicked servant who would not forgive his fellow servant, and was delivered to the tormentors; and concluded with, "So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses," Matt. xviii. 35. That some men live and die, without forgiving or being forgiven, with the spirit of malice and revenge in their hearts, is as evident as the day light. Because the scribes said, "He hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of devils casteth he out devils." Jesus said, "He that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of," or obnoxious to, "eternal damnation," Mark iii. 22—29. In Matt. xii. 31, it is written, "but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men: whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come." This blasphemy is the sin unto death, concerning which we may not lawfully pray that it may be forgiven. Of course I consider it as settled, by Christ

himself, that every blasphemer against the Holy Ghost will be the subject of endless punishment.

This fate does not belong to the bold blasphemer alone, for "Verily I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein," Mark x. 15. "Then said Jesus unto his disciples, if any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me." Many never do this, but live and die avowed contemners of Christ. "For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works." Then it is added, because Christ's coming and setting up his kingdom in the world is confirmation strong of his finally coming to judge the world in righteousness; when and not before he shall reward EVERY MAN, Jew and Gentile, according to his works, "Verily I say unto you, there be some standing here which shall not taste death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom," Matt. xvi. 24—28. The establishment, and continued progress of Christianity in the world, through the Christian church, ought to confirm every one in the truth of Christ's coming at the last day to judge the world in righteousness, and to distribute to mankind endless rewards. That which we have seen and known of his kingdom in the world, should make us willing, in any circumstances which may render it necessary, to sacrifice our life in this world, for Christ's sake, that we may find everlasting life in the heavens. Natural and temporal life should be cheerfully resigned to preserve spiritual and everlasting life. And if a man will preserve his natural life at the expense of duty, let him know that his immortal life may be regarded as lost, for it will not be blessedness.

Expecting to meet Christ when he shall come to our

world again, in the glory of his Father; and being assured, that when *the just and the unjust* shall have been raised by him out of their graves, in the land or the bed of the ocean, he will reward every man according to his works, I send you this epistle, and pray that you and I both may prepare to meet God, the Judge of all the earth

EZRA STILES ELY.

TO MR. EZRA STILES ELY.

Philadelphia, August 27, 1834.

Dear Sir—In my last letter I pointed out the error of your *only reason* for denying that Matt. xxiv, 36—41 and Luke xvii, 22—37, are parallel passages. I had previously shown, that an acknowledgment of said parallel would destroy your entire argument drawn from Matt. xxiv and xxv. I stated, and the position cannot be successfully controverted, that a failure to establish a transition of reference at verse 36 of the former chapter, would require an admission that no part of either of the chapters can be fairly applied to any other events than those connected with, or immediately succeeding, the destruction of Jerusalem. Inasmuch as you have virtually acknowledged said parallel, by wholly neglecting to adduce any thing farther in denial, I feel justified in assuming that you have yielded the point.

For similar reasons I feel at liberty to assume, that you conceded the correctness of the conclusion consequen of the facts stated in relation to the noun αἰων, namely that the adjective αἰωνιος cannot, and does not, in itself, express an endless duration. The extent of duration i signifies, must in all cases be determined by the nature of the subject or thing to which it is applied.

The duration expressed by the phrase "for ever and and ever," must be determined in the same way. When applied to things confessedly pertaining to the immorta state, or to subjects which by o her testimony are proved

to belong to the incorruptible life, then, in such cases, it should not be limited as to the duration it signifies. So far as our present inquiry is concerned, it matters little how often it is applied to God or to things of an indissoluble nature. You are required to adduce as many passages as you can, in which the phrase in question is connected with punishment—remembering that said punishment must be shown to belong to the future state of existence. The passage quoted from the Apocalypse is of no advantage to your argument—for it speaks of the alternations of DAY AND NIGHT, which appertain solely to the concerns of *time*.

On your argument drawn from Luke xiii, 23, I remark, 1st. You assume that in the question, "are there few that be saved?" the querist had in view the salvation of the immortal state of being. This I deny. 2d. No one save a Calvinist of the ancient order will contend, that only *a few* of mankind will be the recipients of endless felicity. You, sir, have advanced rather more than three thousand cubits into the waters of Ezekiel's vision; and I am not without hope that you will continue to advance, until you find that the waters are risen, waters to swim in, but not to be passed over. *You* do not believe that of the whole human family, *the few* will be saved and *the many* lost. Why then do you speak of the question in review as of a matter pertaining to the future state? 3d. You assert that the persons addressed in our Saviour's answer, were "members of the visible church in the world," and that therefore Jesus "spoke of a different kingdom of God from that to which they then belonged." But you err in the premises, and your argument is lost. The Jews were in a certain sense "the children of the kingdom," Matt. viii. 12, for they were the children of the patriarchs to whom the promises were made—but they were not Christians in any sense, for they did not believe in Jesus as the Messiah. 4th. In Matt. viii. 5—12, it is plain, that the Jews were the persons who were to be excluded from the kingdom of God, the gospel kingdom, which they shut up against men, neither en-

tering themselves, nor allowing others to enter; and that the Gentiles were to be admitted to the privileges and blessings of that kingdom. See Matt. xxi. 43—"The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof," viz. to the Gentiles. The judicious Lardner states, that the declaration, "Many shall come from the east," &c. signifies the calling of the Gentiles to gospel privileges; and Whitby informs us, that "to lie down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven, doth not signify to enjoy everlasting happiness in heaven with them, but only to become the sons of Abraham through faith." Indeed, "it seems to me that nothing but the grossest perversion of the Bible can make this passage teach any other doctrine than this," that the Jewish people, in consequence of their rejection of the Lord Jesus Christ, were themselves to be rejected from, and the Gentiles admitted to, the privileges of his kingdom on earth.

Only two states of the man spoken of in Luke xi. 26, are mentioned. The first, when he had *one* demon—the last, when he had *seven*—both states pertaining to the present life. It remains to be shown that either the first or the last was the *immortal* state of that man.

You infer endless punishment from the declaration, made in reference to certain persons whose god is their stomach, "whose end is *destruction*." Your argument rests on the meaning you affix to the word destruction. But when Esther said, "How can I bear to see the *destruction* of my kindred," you do not suppose she meant to say, how can I bear to witness their interminable wretchedness! The truth is, that many men, when speaking of religious subjects, affix a meaning to certain words which those words would not convey, if used in conversing or writing on any other topic. We frequently say of a man who is idle, extravagant, and intemperate, that his end will be destruction—and no one misunderstands us to have eternity in view. Of another we say, he is rushing headlong to destruction, and our meaning is not misapprehended. But when the word in question is

found in the Scriptures, there are many wl ose minds are immediately drawn to a contemplation of something unutterably dreadful in the resurrection state. To this unwarranted popular prejudice, and to others of a like character, you have frequently appealed in the course of our friendly controversy.

To the Hebrew Christians Paul said, "Ye *are* come unto Mount Sion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem;" and to the Ephesians "Now, therefore, ye are no more strangers and foreigners, [alluding to their former condition as Gentiles,] but *fellow-citizens* with the saints and of the household of God." The Philippians were citizens of the same heavenly Jerusalem, and as such enjoyed the happiness ever consequent of faith in the promises of the gospel. They were members of that "kingdom of God which is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit." And the apostle contrasted the soul inspiring faith and glorious joys of the Philippians, with the sensual gratification of those who minded earthly things. The desires and pleasures of the latter were earthly and sensual —but the hopes and pleasures of the former were spiritual, heavenly, and divine. They looked in faith for the Lord Jesus, "who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able to subdue even all things to himself." In this testimony Paul only mentions *the ability* of Christ "to subdue all things to himself," but he certifies us in 1 Cor. xv. 28, that such *universal subjugation* WILL BE the issue of the gospel economy. "And when ALL THINGS *shall be subdued* unto him, then shall *the Son* ALSO *himself* be subject (or subdued) unto him that put all things under him, that *God may be all in all*" Be sure, the Christian believers did not "see all things put under him;" but they saw the exaltation of Jesus, who "by the grace of God tasted death for every man;" and they believed that this exaltation was connected with the determinate purpose of the Almighty, that "in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, and that every

ongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

It is certainly true, as you allege, that he who does not bear his cross cannot be a Christian disciple—but it is not thence to be inferred that he will be doomed to endless punishment.

It is also true that the blessings of Christ's kingdom on earth are shadowed forth by a sumptuous entertainment—and that those who were bidden to come, and refused, were not allowed to partake of the supper—but you have yet to show that in the whole matter there is any reference to the future state. LARDNER, GILPIN, WHITBY, and others, agree in considering it descriptive of the rejection of the Jewish people, and the calling and acceptance of the Gentiles. Why do you persist in assuming the predicates of your arguments?

In your remarks on certain passages in the Apocalypse, you have failed to notice many of my arguments thereon; and you have also assumed many of the points which remain to be established. You utterly neglect to inform me why you consider one part of the matter figurative and the other literal; or why nothing is said therein of a reunion of departed spirits and dead bodies; or why you suppose the dead delivered up by the sea were of a kind different from those delivered up by death and hades; or why *the sea* only, and not *the earth*, is said to give up the dead that were in it. You neglect to notice my statement that the lake of fire and brimstone is mentioned in the close of chapter xix. connected with things obviously pertaining to the present world. You overlook the fact, that after the judgment spoken of in chapter xx. John "saw that great city, the holy Jerusalem, *descending out of heaven from God*," which language forbids your supposition, that after said judgment the saints were to *ascend up to heaven* TO GOD. The bride, the Lamb's wife, the holy city, the new Jerusalem, the tabernacle of the gospel covenant, *came down* from God *out of heaven*, not that the Church *ascended to God from the earth*. Of this holy city, this new Jerusalem, all believers were to

be, and are, the inhabitants. Paul said to the Hebrews, as before quoted, "Ye *are* come to Mount Sion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem." Of every one who should take away from the words of the prophecy, it was declared, "God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city"—that is, he should be excluded from the privileges of the new Jerusalem, the gospel kingdom. The *time* referred to cannot easily be mistaken. "The Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to show unto his servants the things which must *shortly be done*. . . . . Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book, for *the time is at hand*." Daniel was commanded to "shut up the words, and seal the book," because the time was *not* at hand—but John was commanded *not* to seal the book, because the time *was* at hand. Daniel was informed that "when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, [the Jews] all these things shall be finished." He speaks of "a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time," which language our Saviour quotes in Matt. xxiv. in reference to the destruction of Jerusalem; and Daniel adds, "and *at that time* thy people shall be delivered, *every one that shall be found* WRITTEN IN THE BOOK." I think these remarks throw much light on the reference of the Apocalyptic vision. I should be pleased to pursue the subject—but a desire to be as brief as possible, admonishes me to forbear.

In connexion with your remarks on Rev. xx. you introduce Matt. x. 28—"And fear not them which kill the body," &c. I noticed this passage in a former letter, and endeavored to show, which I think I succeeded in doing, that no argument in proof of endless punishment is thence deducible. I informed you that the language in question was addressed to the disciples of our Lord, and to no other persons; that I dispute any reference therein to the Supreme being; that *ability* to destroy does not imply determination so to do; and that γέεννα, as used in the Bible, does not apply to any state of being beyond

the present. Until you see proper to attend to these particulars, I feel at liberty to omit any notice of your groundless conclusions. Besides—you have informed me that *gehenna* and *tartarus* are both in *hades;* and you concede that hades is to be destroyed. Consequently, *the lake of fire* is the only hell you have remaining; and it will be of no avail to cite passages in which either *gehenna* or *tartarus* occurs, unless you revoke your concession in relation to the destruction of *hades.*

In your comments on the passages in the Old Testament in which the expression, "shall not be quenched," occurs, you make sweeping work. First of all, you deny that Jesus in Mark ix. 43, either quoted or referred to Isa. lxvi. 24. In this denial you are unsupported by any commentator with whose writings I am acquainted. Dr. George Campbell is pointedly against you, Diss. xii. P. I. § 30. You say, Jesus only used language similar to that found in Isaiah. It is *more* than similar—it is nearly *verbatim.* Parkhurst says, "Our Lord seems to allude to the worms which continually prayed on the *dead carcasses* that were cast out into the valley of Hinnom, γέεννα, and to the *perpetual fire* kept up to consume them." Professor Stuart says, that in gehenna "perpetual fires were kept up in order to consume the offal which was deposited there. And as the same offal would breed worms, hence came the expression, 'where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.'"

But even admitting (what I do *not* admit) that Jesus in Mark ix. only used similar language to that found in Isaiah lxvi, it is nevertheless certain, that the signification of words and phrases in the New Testament must be learned from the Old. Our Master condemned the Scribes and Pharisees for having made void the law of God through their traditions. He came not to destroy the law and the prophets, but to fulfil. The disciples, (to whom, and to whom only, the language in Mark ix. 43, et seq. was addressed) were to "search the Scriptures;" and it is from *them*, namely, from the Scriptures of the Old Testament, that we are to learn the signifi-

cation of words and phrases in the New. Now the disciples knew, that the expression, οὐ σβεσθήσεται *it shall not be quenched*, was thrice used in reference to the fire on the altar of the old covenant, Lev. vi. 9, 12, 13.

But you say that in Isa. lxvi. 24, xxxiv. 10, Jer. vii. 20, and Ezek. xx. 47, the evangelical prophets "described such judgments upon the wicked as were to bring them down to endless pains"!! I am utterly astonished that a man of your reputation as a biblical critic, should have given utterance to an assertion so destitute not only of proof but of plausibility. But let us examine the passages in the order in which you have referred to them.

Isaiah lxvi. 23, 24, "And it shall come to pass that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord. And they shall go forth and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me; for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh." Now, in order to sustain your argument, you must either admit that there are *new moons*, *sabbaths*, *carcasses*, *worms*, and *fires*, in the immortal state; or show that these are altogether figurative expressions, and that they appertain to the concerns of an incorruptible life. Your saying that *undoubtedly* such is the case, is not deemed equivalent to proof. I make the same remarks on Jer. xix. 6, 9, "The days come, that this place shall no more be called Tophet, nor the valley of the son of Hinnom, but the valley of Slaughter. And I will make void the counsel of Judah and Jerusalem in this place; and I will cause them to fall by the sword before their enemies, and by the hands of them that seek their lives: and their *carcasses* will I give to be meat for the *fowls of heaven*, and for *the beasts* of the earth."

Isaiah xxxiv. 10. I ask you to point out a single word in this passage which can even be tortured into the semblance of proof of the doctrine of endless wo. The connexion of the passage affords as much evidence that cormorants bitterns, owls, thorns, brambles, dragons, wild

beasts, vultures, and ravens, will be doomed to endless punishment, as that such was the fate of any inhabitants of Idumea.

Jer. vii. 20, proves as clearly that beasts, trees, and the fruits of the ground were driven into endless despair, as it does that such was the doom of the dwellers in Jerusalem. In verses 29, 34, the judgment that was to come upon the land is plainly pointed out; and any one who will examine those passages will perceive their entire correspondence with Isa. lxvi. 24, and Jer. xix. 6, 9, and also their irrelevancy to a future state. In Jer. xvii. 27, it is written, "I will kindle a fire in the gates thereof, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and it shall burn and not be quenched." He who can discover any proof of endless punishment in passages like the foregoing, must possess a theological eyesight of which I acknowledge myself entirely destitute. Sure I am, that were I to adduce equally irrelevant testimony in proof of the final holiness and happiness of all mankind, my brethren in the faith would be ashamed of their co-worker in the gospel.

Ezek. xx. 47, furnishes as much proof that endless punishment was to be the doom of "the forest of the south field" and of "every green tree" therein, as it does that endless misery will be the destiny of any of our race.

You continue to insist that the fire and worms in the valley of Hinnom, are used by Scripture writers as emblems or symbols of interminable wo. You asserted in a former letter, that such is the sense in which gehenna was used in the days of Christ, which point you thought you had proved by appealing to the Targums. But when I desired you to cite a passage from any respectable Jewish Targum of an earlier date than the 2d century of the Christian era, you discovered that you could furnish no such citation, and silence on this important point is the only answer I received. Allow me to repeat, however, that the Old Testament is the expositor of the meaning of the language of the New; and that the *reality* must

be proved before the *emblems* can properly be chosen. It will be time enough to select the emblems or symbols of endless punishment, after said doctrine shall have been clearly established.

You will perceive by turning to my last letter, that I deny the reference of Heb. ix. 27, 28, to *natural death*. I conceive that the allusion is to the appearance of Christ in the capacity of a *priest*, and not in the character of a *judge*.

"You make what seems to me a desperate effort to show that Acts xvii. 31 refers to some" yet future general judgment. In reply, I remark, that Paul, in addressing the Athenians, did not refer the Greeks to any temporal judgment coming on Jerusalem—nor to any past judgment—nor to any then present judgment—but to the then future gospel day, in which God should judge or rule the world in righteousness *by that man* whom he had ordained. When Paul preached at Athens, Jesus had not yet come in the kingdom which the Father had appointed him. Nevertheless, our Lord had said, "The Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels, [and this, as in Matt. xxiv. 30, was to be 'immediately after' the tribulation that came on Jerusalem,] and then he shall reward every man according to his works. [He was TO COME to do this—not that people were TO GO into another world to be judged.] Verily, I say unto you, there be some standing here which shall not taste of death till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom," Matt. xvi. 27, 28. This coming of Christ to rule or judge the world, is the one to which Paul alluded, as well in writing to the Romans as in addressing the Athenians.

You say, "I deny that God has ever yet judged *the world collectively*." The point for you to prove is, that *he ever will* thus judge the world, and that endless punishment will be a part of the judgment.

Your reasoning on the resurrection is ingenious, but I deem it sophistical, and think that a few plain remarks will show the fallacy of your conclusions.

You admit that all mankind will be raised from the dead; that they will be made alive *in Christ;* that this universal resurrection will be in incorruption, glory, power; that it will be a resurrection in a spiritual body; and that all men in the resurrection will be freed from the appetites, propensities and passions of the flesh. A denial of the latter statement would be Sadduceeism—for the Sadducees supposed that if there *was* any resurrection, men in that state would possess many, if not all, the attributes of the animal body. The question proposed to our Saviour was predicated of this error.

Passing by several minor particulars, which you mention more as matters of opinions than as positions established, I shall proceed to notice all your arguments.

You cite John xv. 2, 6, "Every branch *in me* that beareth not fruit, he taketh away. . . . If a man abide not *in me*, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them and cast them into the fire, and they are burned." From this testimony you argue, that many of those who shall be made alive *in Christ*, will subsequently be cast off, having ever been unfruitful in good works.

But to be in Christ in this mutable state, surrounded by temptation, exposed to the power of deceptive influences, and liable each moment to be led into sin, is a very different matter from being in Christ in an unchanging state, removed from the influence of tempting and corrupting circumstances. He who is in Christ, even in this life, is a new creature—for he "has put off the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts," and has "put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness"—but he may revert to his former estate, and be cast off as an unfruitful branch Now, if you can prove that any one who will be made alive *in Christ*, in incorruption, and in a spiritual body, and who is therefore a new creature, will not *abide* in Christ, or will ever again put on the old man which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, then you will have

proved that such an one will be cast off—but not otherwise.

Besides—"In the resurrection they shall be the children of God, *being* the children of the resurrection." But you allege, that because many men in this world entertain unworthy conceptions of the Infinite Mind, being at the same time the offspring of Deity, therefore "millions who will be the children of God by the resurrection from the dead will be undutiful and rebellious children forever." Setting aside the insufficiency of the reasoning from which this conclusion is drawn, I feel much satisfaction in being enabled to inform you, that "the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the GLORIOUS LIBERTY of the *children of God*," Rom. viii. And that this *glorious liberty* excludes the idea of sin and suffering, is too apparent to require proof.

You seem to think that by the simple, abstract resurrection of all mankind, death will be destroyed; and that this is all the apostle meant by saying, "the last enemy shall be destroyed, death." But according to your theory of endless punishment, their is *a later enemy* than the last!

You think that the expression, "as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly," is restricted in its reference to believers. On the contrary, I consider it expressive, in a more explicit form, of the sentiment of the declaration, "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." Throughout the chapter, the apostle presents the condition of mankind while in the flesh, in contrast with what their condition will be in the resurrection state. *In Adam*, the first, who was made a living soul—corruption, dishonour, weakness, animal, earthy. *In Christ*, the quickening spirit, the Lord from heaven—incorruption, glory, power, spiritual, heavenly. And he argues, that as mankind in Adam have borne the image of the earthy even so in Christ they shall bear the image of the heavenly.

But you say, that to be raised from the dead in an incorruptible, glorious, and spiritual body, is a different matter from being born of God. Allowing (what is not allowed) that there is some force in this remark, I must inform you, that "every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord," which no one can do without believing; and it is written, "whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is *born of God*," 1 John, v. 1.

In noticing the expression, "but every man in his own order," you say, "These orders will be entirely different." But you err in supposing that any other than an *order of time* is alluded to—for the apostle proceeds to say, "Christ the *first* fruits; *afterwards* they that are Christ's at his coming. Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy shall be destroyed, death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith, all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when *all things* shall be *subdued* unto him, then shall *the Son* ALSO *himself* be *subject* [or *subdued*, for the original word is the same] unto him that put *all things* under him, that GOD MAY BE ALL IN ALL." In view of this unequivocal and heart-rejoicing testimony, how can you feel justified in asserting, that "all the natural advantages and glories that will accrue to the wicked from the resurrection, will but prepare them for endless punishment?" Will any one be prepared for endless punishment, after being subdued unto Christ in the same way that Christ will be subdued or subject to the Father?

In the light of the foregoing remarks and conclusion, we perceive that Daniel xii. 2, and John v. 28, 29, have no reference to a resurrection into an immortal state of being. We agree in believing that these passages refer to the same event—and I clearly showed, in my letter of April 7, that the connexion of the passage in Daniel

was quoted by our Saviour, and applied to the period of the destruction of Jerusalem. The passage in John refers to the same period. It is true, that being in *the graves* is spoken of—but in Ezek. xxxvii, *the whole house of Israel* is represented as being in *the graves*, which only signified their state of bondage in Babylon, from which the Lord promised to bring them out, and to place them in their own land.

The word *resurrection* in the passage in John, affords no proof that the allusion is to a rising into an immortal state—for, as Dr. Campbell justly observes, "this is neither the only, nor the primitive import, of the word ἀνάστασις. It denotes simply, being raised from inactivity to action, or from obscurity to eminence, or a return to such a state, after an interruption." Note in Matt. xxii. 23. I do not feel required to explain either of the passages in question, until you attempt to prove that they refer to the immortal state of existence.

You say that the Pharisees believed in the resurrection of all mankind; and this is the predicate of your argument on Acts xxiv. 15. But you err in the premises, and your argument falls to the ground. The only resurrection acknowledged by the Pharisees was, as Prideaux calls it, "a Pythagorean resurrection, that is, a resurrection of *the soul only, by its transmigration into another body;*" and even this resurrection, or transmigration, was by them confined to such as they denominated *the just*—and these were chiefly Hebrews. Josephus says, that "*the souls of good men only* are removed into other bodies." Thus far and no farther, the Pharisees allowed a hope of the resurrection of the dead—but Paul hoped for the resurrection *both of the just and of the unjust.* It was with him a matter of rejoicing—of desire, of faith, and consequently of hope. He neither desired nor believed that *any* man would be raised in an unjust, inglorious, corrupt character. He did not *desire* it—for he was a *benevolent man;* and he did not *believe* it, for he was a Christian. As a Christian disciple, he believed that "in the resurrection they are as the angels

of God in heaven;" and as a Christian apostle, he declared that all shall be made alive in the image of the heavenly.

It is true that Jesus wept over Jerusalem, yet Jerusalem was destroyed. And from the fact, that in weeping over it he spake *only* of temporal calamities coming upon the devoted city, Luke xix, 41—44, I infer two unanswerable objections to the doctrine of endless punishment. 1st. Men of wisdom do not overlook the *major* calamity and deplore the *less*. Consult the passage above cited, and Luke xxiii. 27—30, compared with Matt. xxiv. 19, and then say, whether, if Jesus had believed in endless punishment, he would have so wept over temporal misery without once hinting at the doctrine of interminable woe! 2d. Of Jesus it is said, he "is the same to day, yesterday, and for ever." Think you that he who wept over the temporal wretchedness of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, could behold the undying agonies of millions of our race, without shedding tears of blood?

But the destruction of Jerusalem was not an *ultimate evil*, as endless misery would undoubtedly be—and consequently, the comparison you introduce is not allowable, and the illustration, as such, is sophistical.

I have not denied the existence of super-human beings, termed angels. But I *have* denied, and you have not proved, that such beings are referred to in the passages quoted from Peter and Jude.

After citing Luke xx. 34—36, you say that, but for the expression, "they which shall be accounted worthy,' this text would render you a Universalist. In this state of the case, I feel encouraged to hope that I shall yet succeed in convincing you of the truth of Universalism At least I am satisfied that (provided you do not consent to leave this matter, as you have left many others, entirely to the judgment of our readers,) I shall succeed in proving that you cannot consistently believe the doctrine of endless punishment.

You will discover, on a re-perusal of the conversation between our Saviour and the Sadducees, that the latter

only desired to know whose wife the woman should be in the resurrection. Their question did not call for information as to the number which should be raised from the dead. The answer of Jesus certified *them*, and certifies us, that all who shall be raised shall be as the angels of God in heaven. If you confine the resurrection, as did the Pharisees, to a part of mankind, you must yield the doctrine of endless punishment, unless you can prove that doctrine without first admitting a resurrection from the dead. But as you allow that all shall be made alive in Christ, I do not believe you can consistently deny that in the resurrection all mankind shall be as the angels of God in heaven.

In speaking of those who shall be accounted worthy to obtain the resurrection from the dead, Jesus did not intend to countenance the doctrine of the Pharisees, viz. that only a part of our race shall ever be raised; neither did he deem it necessary, in answering a question which pertained only to *the condition* of men in the resurrection, to say *how many* would be raised. He simply taught the general truth, that all who shall be raised, shall, in the resurrection, be equal unto the angels, being thus introduced into "the glorious liberty of the children of God." In the Christian economy, all who have borne the image of the earthy and have died in Adam, are considered worthy of being made alive in Christ, in the image of the heavenly.

2 Cor. v. 10, was noticed in my letter of April 7, and I shall not feel required to notice it again, until you attempt to answer the reasoning already offered thereupon.

Among several passages which have no bearing on the question in debate, you cite the language of Christ, to the Jews—"Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life." The same exalted personage said, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, *will draw all men* to me." It remains to be proved that the temporary unwillingness of man shall finally defeat the purpose of the will of Christ

All that you say in relation to the forgiveness or remission of *punishment*, is out of place. I cannot be diverted from the question in debate. If you can cite any law of God with the penalty of endless punishment annexed, you will have proved your point. I may add, however, for your information, that the only Divine forgiveness in which I believe, is the *forgiveness of* SIN.

In proof of endless punishment you quote the declarations of Jesus touching the sin of blasphemy, which, in your judgment, is *the sin unto death*. But you assume all the points on which the supposed relevancy of this testimony rests. You assume that αἰώνιος κρίσις, aionion condemnation, necessarily belongs to the future state. The aionion priesthood of Aaron, the aionion covenant of the law, and other aionion things mentioned in the Bible, appertained not to the incorruptible life. It is therefore plain, that the simple connexion of aionion with condemnation does not establish your theory of endless punishment.

But perhaps you will urge the declaration, "neither in this world, neither in the world to come." But you assume that the meaning of this expression is, "neither in this present life, neither in the immortal life to come." Such is not the import of the declaration. *Olam ha bo*, the *world to come*, is a constant phrase among the Jewish writers for the times of the Messiah. PEARCE says—"*Neither in this world*, &c. Rather, neither in this age, nor in the age to come; i. e. neither in this age, when the law of Moses subsists, nor in that also, when the kingdom of heaven, which is at hand, shall succeed to it." To the same import, see WHITBY, ADAM CLARKE, WAKEFIELD, &c.

You assume that "the sin unto death," is a sin unto *endless* death. You have furnished no proof of this position.—HORNE, WHITBY, ROSENMULLER, CLARKE, and others, unite in considering the expression applicable only to the *death of the body*.

I might add other remarks—but those already offered are deemed sufficient to show. that you were not justi-

fied in saying, "Of course, I consider it as settled, by Christ himself, that every blasphemer against the Holy Ghost, will be a subject of endless punishment."

GILL, CAMPBELL, WHITBY, and others, state that the phrase "kingdom of God," in Mark x, 15, refers not to the future state, but to the gospel kingdom on earth.

I have shown, in previous letters, that the question, "what is a man profited if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" alludes only to *natural life.* The word ψυχη is thus twice translated in the preceding verse. CLARKE says, "I am certain it means life in both cases." To the same import, PEARCE and WAKEFIELD.

I have also shown in previous letters, that verses 27, and 28 of Matt. xvi, refer to one and the same coming. There is no plausibility in the supposition that verse 27 refers to a yet future event, since it is acknowledged that verse 28 alludes to the coming of Christ "immediately after" the tribulation which came on Jerusalem, Matt. xxiv. 30. The simple reading of the verses in connexion will evince the fallacy of supposing a transition of reference. See ADAM CLARKE, CAPPE, ROSENMULLER, &c.

Thus have I endeavoured fairly to meet, and candidly o examine, every argument presented in your long yet friendly epistle. In so doing, this letter has been made to occupy more space than was contemplated in your original proposal for a written discussion. It matters little, in my judgment, how much either of us may write in any one communication, provided it be in defence of particular positions previously stated, or in refutation of particular arguments previously advanced—but I deem it inexpedient to introduce *new topics* of discourse, however much bearing they may have on the general issue, if by so doing any letter be protracted to an unreasonable length. If the Lord will, we shall have time enough fully to discuss the question in debate without confusing the minds of our readers.

Rejoicing "with joy unspeakable and full of glory," in "the faith once delivered to the saints;" realizing that in my heart dwelleth the COMFORTER, even the Spirit

of Truth, whom the world cannot yet receive because of the blindness of their minds; desiring that this epistle may be so blessed as to bring many to the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus; and firmly believing that you, and I, and the whole world of mankind, shall ye rejoice together in the salvation of the Lord, I subscribe myself affectionately yours, &c.

ABEL C. THOMAS.

TO MR. ABEL C. THOMAS.

Philadelphia, December 23d, 1834.

Dear Sir—When I have once denied a proposition, it is an unwarranted assumption for any one to assume that I have yielded the point, because I wholly neglect "to adduce any thing further in denial." As much as possible I would avoid going over the same ground with you twice in argument; and after we have each exhibited our views, illustrations, and arguments on any matter in debate, I am contented to leave it to the judgment of our readers. You "may feel at liberty to assume" also, that I *concede the correctness of your conclusion*, that *everlasting* (aion) does not mean primarily and radically an interminable duration; but I protest once for all against any such assumed concessions.

The question in Luke xiii. 23, "Are there few that be saved?" certainly does not prove that the whole number of the human family saved at last will be few; but it implies, that some doubt existed on the minds of those who proposed it to our Saviour, or that they desired his opinion on an unsettled point in their religious belief You deny that "the querist had in view the salvation of the immortal state of being." To what salvation, then, except the endless salvation from sin and misery, did he refer? Did he ask, are there few Jews who will be saved from being cast out of the church on earth? Christ's answer forbids such a supposition; for he replied, "Strive

to enter in at the strait (i. e. difficult) gate; for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in and shall not be able."

Here they were required to *strive to enter*, and not to avoid *being cast out*. *Salvation* always implies a *deliverance from something;* and if the question, Are there few that be saved? referred to the Gentiles, we ask again, from what were they to be saved? Are there few that be saved from Gentilism? If this was the question, the answer of Christ, "Strive to enter in," &c, would be irrelevant, for he was not speaking to Gentiles, but to Jews in one of their synagogues, and to people in the Church of God, who could say, *We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets.* These persons he exhorted to strive to enter in at the strait gate, in reply to a question about the number of persons who should be *saved*, evidently from "everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord;" because he foreknew, as he foretold, that *When once the Master of the house had shut to the door, many of them will begin to knock, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us; to whom he will say,* "Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity." To be rejected by Christ for being workers of iniquity, I regard as endless punishment; unless it can be proved from Scripture that there will be a restoration of sinners to Christ after the door of mercy has been *shut to* against them, and they have been appointed to receive their portion with hypocrites and unbelievers for ever.

"The last enemy" of man in the present world, is death, and death shall in relation to every man *be destroyed*, by his being raised from the dead by Jesus Christ. It is not necessary therefore, to suppose that there is *a later enemy than the last* experienced in this life: but there is a death after natural death, and in the life to come an endless enemy, that succeeds the last enemy which can assail us. I shall in my next proceed to support this doctrine, without replying to your last letter any further; because that is but a reply to my preceding

letter, and there must be an end somewhere to our controversy.

In this discussion I have intentionally had little to do with commentators, and decline any attempt to harmonize them, or derive a system from their opinions, because I deem the Bible to be the only infallible rule of faith and practice, and judge that each of our readers will form his own conclusions from his own understanding of the sacred volume.

If you choose to abound in citations from LARDNER, GILPIN, WHITBY, CAMPBELL and LOCKE, or even from much better commentators, such as HENRY, PATRICK, SCOTT, DODDRIDGE, and M'KNIGHT, I cannot object; and those who please may weigh their arguments and criticisms: but common people must certainly be able to gather the fundamental doctrines of our holy religion from the common translation of the Bible, or else that translation should be repudiated as no longer the rule of our faith. I do not deny that learned criticism may help the learned to confirm those doctrines which are fundamental, and which are so plainly written on the sacred page that he who runs may read; but any doctrines that no reader of the English translation of the Bible, or of the Greek and Hebrew original, would ever think of finding there until he should be drilled into minute criticism, I hold to be no important doctrines of revelation, even if they are contained therein, or may be logically inferred from the Bible. The doctrines which my correspondent teaches appear to me to be of this description. If the doctrines which I defend concerning future punishment are not plainly obvious, and even frequently inculcated in the Bible, I should expect every one to reject them, because all the good and all the bad would very cheerfully receive the tenet of universal salvation, were it written in the book of God. If I add more, I shall be obliged to defer this letter for another week.

Yours respectfully,

EZRA STILES ELY.

TO MR. EZRA STILES ELY.

Philadelphia, December 27, 1834.

Dear Sir—It is certainly true, that "there must be an end somewhere to our controversy"—but should we proceed as you practically propose, we shall *close* our *correspondence* without *finishing* our *discussion*. In declining to answer the arguments presented in my last letter, and in desiring to leave what we have already written "to the judgment of our readers," you virtually define our controversy to be simply the *written expression* of our several *opinions;* and our letters, in this view of the matter, should be considered as only so many *essays* on controverted theological points. *My* idea of a controversy embraces the free examination of opponent positions and arguments—the patient *discussion* of *doctrines*, and not merely the expression of opinions. You say, indeed, "As much as possible I would avoid going over the same ground with you twice in argument"—and with this I find no fault. But the greater part of my last letter you have not yet touched. I have therein presented many arguments and much reasoning, to which I really attach some importance. You stated that but for the expression, "they which shall be accounted worthy," the testimony of Jesus in Luke xx, would make you a Universalist. I penned my remarks on this passage with special reference to such desirable result; and I flattered myself that you would either attempt a refutation of my reasoning on that point, or acknowledge the truth of the doctrine you had previously opposed. The issue of our conjoint question rests entirely on the scriptural representations of the resurrection state; and I respectfully desire to direct your especial attention to my proofs and observations on this particular subject as contained in my last letter. I have therein attempted to refute all your arguments on 1 Cor. xv; and except you endeavour to show that I have failed in the attempt, our controversy, as before hinted, is virtually resolved into nothing more than the written expression of opponent opinions.

In citing passages from the works of eminent commentators and critics, I have only intended to show, that many men of the greatest erudition, talents, and piety, understood a multitude of scriptural passages very differently from your interpretation of them, although they as firmly believed in endless punishment as do the Calvinistic or Arminian clergymen of the present age. The latter quote innumerable passages in proof of endless wretchedness, which the former could not, and did not, so apply. *I go for the Bible*, and I believe the Bible to be the best interpreter of its own meaning. Nevertheless I shall continue, as suitable opportunity presents, to extract occasional passages from eminent commentators and critics *who believed in endless punishment*, and our readers will yield to such testimony no more attention than such testimony deserves to receive. I may add that *your* exposition of any Scripture text, is not by *me* considered of any more weight than the exposition of HORNE, LARDNER, WHITBY, or CLARK. I desire you to remember, that I have not quoted BALLOU, BALFOUR, or WHITTEMORE, in confirmation of any of my views. These are Universalists, and their expositions of Scripture might be rejected on that account; but I have quoted the testimony of men who were sound in the faith of endless punishment. Whether such testimony has any weight, and if any, how much, our readers will judge.

I have said, that I believe the Bible to be its own best interpreter. By this standard I have endeavoured to test the word *everlasting*, and thus explain the duration it signifies. I have stated, that the Bible applies it to the priesthood of Aaron, to the covenant of the law, to the possession of Canaan by the Israelites, and to other things, which were not only temporary in their character, but had no reference whatever to the future state. Whether the fact that you declined noticing these and similar remarks, did or did not justify me in assuming that you granted the conclusions consequent of the argument, it becomes not me to decide I submit to the judgment of impartial men

In your letter of July 25, you denied that Matt. xxiv 36—41, and Luke xvii. 20—37, are parallel passages, because in the former case Jesus was addressing his disciples, and in the latter the Jews. In my reply, I showed, from the express and positive language of the passages, that Jesus was addressing his *disciples in both cases*. Consequently your argument was entirely lost. Of this important fact—important, because thereon rests the decision of the reference of Matt. xxiv and xxv—you took not the slightest notice. In my last letter, I assumed that you had yielded the point—and I believe that every principle of fair disputation justified me in so doing. But as you have *not* yielded the point in question, I should be happy to see you attempt to sustain it.

You still contend that the inquiry, "Are there few that be saved?" refers to salvation from endless wo. But before you can properly contend for such salvation, you must first prove that endless wo is a doctrine of the Bible. This, indeed, you *infer* from the tenor of the text and its connexion—but the word *saved* furnishes no authority for said inference. Peter said, "Save your selves (not from endless wo, but) from this untoward generation," Acts ii. 40. Jesus said, "He that endureth unto the end, the same shall be saved"—which language, in Matt. xxiv. 13, you admit refers to the destruction of Jerusalem. And he added, verse 22, "Except those days (of great tribulation) should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved." In these cases, you agree that the word *saved* refers to salvation from temporal calamity only. And such, also, in my judgment, is the reference of the question, "Are there few that be saved?" There were but *few* saved, or delivered, from the great tribulation that came on Jerusalem—and these were saved by entering "into the strait (i. e. difficult) gate" of the gospel kingdom by faith in Christ; by watching for the coming of the Son of man; and by fleeing from the devoted city when the predicted sign of that coming appeared, Matt. xxiv. 4—35. When Cestius Gallus came agains Jerusalem, many Christians were shut up in it—but

"those days were shortened," else "no flesh could have been saved." The siege was strangely raised, and "the Christians had scarcely time to leave the city, before the Romans returned under the command of Titus, and never left the place till they had destroyed the Temple, razed the city to the ground, and slain upwards of a million of those wretched people, and put an end to their civil polity and ecclesiastical state." (See Dr. ADAM CLARKE, on 1 Peter iv. 18.) Thus comparatively few were saved, and these were they who endured unto the end, as in Matt. xxiv. 13—22. When the gates of Jerusalem were closed, and the city hemmed in on every side, by the Roman army, the door of the gospel kingdom was shut against the Jewish nation. And though some might knock, and say, "We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and *thou hast taught in our streets*," (Jerusalem,) yet it was too late—the day of judgment had arrived—and the sword, famine, and pestilence, brought upon that unbelieving generation "the time of tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to that time, no nor *ever shall be*," Matt. xxiv. 21. If so great a tribulation shall never be again, the supposed tribulations of eternity are certainly imaginary.

You again incidentally introduce 2 Thess. i. 9. I have thrice desired you to come up to a full investigation of that portion of sacred Scripture; but silence is the only answer I have yet received in relation thereunto. I am the more solicitous to examine this subject, because you have certified me, that said passage must for ever prevent you from becoming a Universalist.

Paul in affirming that "the last enemy shall be destroyed, death," does not make any exception. He simply declares, that *the* LAST *enemy* shall be destroyed, and states that *death* is said last enemy. It is written, that Jesus took part of flesh and blood that he might *destroy*, not only *death*, but the *devil*—yea, the Son of God was manifested that he might destroy the *works* of the devil, Heb. ii. 14. 1 John iii. 8. In furnishing the promised proof that there is an enemy *later* than the *last* men

tioned by Paul, it would be proper, I think, to keep the foregoing testimonies in view.

Believing, as I do, that Universalism is the plain and obvious doctrine of the Bible, I desire that both the good and the bad may receive it. I ask the *good* to receive it, because I am persuaded it would make them better and happier; and I am satisfied that were it heartily and sincerely embraced by the *bad*, it would induce them to "break off their sins by righteousness, and their iniquities by turning to the Lord."

Affectionately yours,
ABEL C. THOMAS.

TO MR. ABEL C. THOMAS.

Philadelphia, December 31, 1834.

Dear Sir—The account which our Saviour gives, Luke xvi. 19—31, of the rich man and Lazarus, is designed to be the subject of the present letter. This *account* is not called a *parable*. I regard it as being Christ's statement of some events of which he had perfect knowledge. But had the narration been introduced by the preface, *Jesus spake unto them this parable*, I should say, that a parable is but an extended similitude, or illustration, designed not to introduce fancies, but to exhibit and enforce truth.

"There was," really, "a certain rich man," whom Jesus knew, "which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day." His riches are not represented as having been a crime, or any thing undesirable. He is not censured for his elegant and neat attire; nor was it any offence to God that he partook plentifully of the bounties of Divine Providence. Some have imagined a thousand evil things against this rich man, but in my judgment Christ drew the most amiable and inoffensive character of a mere worlding that the reality of the case would allow. He intended to present the most favourable circumstances in which an ungodly man

could be placed, and contrast them with the most abject poverty of a true Christian.

"And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, and desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores." Probably Lazarus had in his own past experience found that it was well for him to seek charitable assistance at this rich man's door, and therefore desired again to be laid there. There is no proof that the rich man was hard hearted, and refused him the pittance which would relieve his wants. Even the dogs of this establishment were friendly to the beggar, who must have been countenanced by the family, or instead of licking his sores, they would probably have torn him to pieces.

Mark the contrast between these two individuals in this life: one was rich, the other poor; one was well, the other sick; one was clothed in purple and fine linen, and the other in the rags of a beggar; one fared sumptuously, and the other presumed to ask for nothing but the crumbs; one was sound in body and lovely in his appearance, while the other was loathsome from his sores.

Now follow these same individuals out of this present world. "And it came to pass that the beggar died." "The rich man also died, and was buried," probably with pomp and solemnity; but whether the beggar was buried or not, has been left untold. His body was probably carried without ceremony, to some place of deposit. Each of these individuals was removed from the face of the earth.

But what became of their souls? For "there is a spirit in man;" and when "the golden bowl is broken, or the pitcher is broken at the fountain"—"then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it." The Saviour proceeds to inform us what became of their spirits or souls; of that part in these human beings which we call *themselves* They both had a conscious existence immediately after death. That in them which thought remembered, rea-

soned, desired, and felt either pleasure or pain, had a continuous duration; but leaving their bodies, they found themselves in widely different circumstances in the world of departed spirits. Both were in the state of the dead; both knew whence they had come, and whom they had left behind them on earth. One of them was in a state of misery, in which he was surprised to find himself; in which he experienced fruitless desire, disappointment and despair. "The beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom;" into a holy, happy society, in which he enjoyed the friendship, confidence, and love of Abraham, the father of the faithful: for *Abraham's bosom* is but an emblem of all these social benefits.

"The rich man also died, and was buried; and in hell," in the state of the dead, or world of departed spirits, "he lifted up his eyes," just as a man in his dreams may be said to do, thereby denoting his surprise, "being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom." They were both so situated in the state of departed spirits, that they could recognise each other still, as well as they once did on earth: and the rich man knew that Lazarus was a companion of his patriarchial ancestor Abraham. In this state the rich man, surprised to find himself lost, had not ceased to experience natural affection for himself and his kindred. He desired deliverance from his misery, and as some religionists do on earth, instead of immediately calling on God, he began to pray to one of the saints. "And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue: for I am tormented in this flame."

It was necessary for the Saviour, if he described the torments of the lost spirit at all, so that men could understand him, to use similitudes. He symbolizes, therefore, the torments of the damned, by comparing them to pains produced by intense and unquenchable fires. He presents the rich man as desiring the least relief of which we can conceive under the parching thirst which he experienced. He asked but the cooling of his tongue by

means of the moistened finger of one of his former acquaintances. To show that the lost sinner is without any prospect of relief, the Saviour proceeds in his narrative to say, "But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted and thou art tormented." Here Christ presents a contrast between the rich man *in this life*, and *after this life*. He tells us how different were the portions allotted to these persons after they were dead, from the portions which they experienced while they were alive on earth. In his lifetime on earth the rich man had good, and Lazarus evil things: but now, beyond the present life, Lazarus was *comforted*, and the rich man was *tormented*.

To show that none who die unprepared to pass to the society of Abraham, can after death exchange their miserable for an improved state, it is added, "besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed; so that they which would pass from us to you cannot: neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence." Here the purpose of God in the future condition of the righteous and the wicked, of those who go to Abraham's bosom and of those who awake in torments, is denoted by an impassable gulf situated between two places. As men on one location would for ever be separated from men on an opposite location by an impassable, bottomless abyss, so they who pass from earth to the torments of the world of spirits are for ever separated from the state and happiness of the blessed. I know not how the Saviour could have taught the future, endless punishment of some, who will die without true piety, in clearer, plainer, stronger terms.

To represent the lost in a state of future misery, as being still possessed of human nature, memory and sympathy, whose natural affections, lawful as they are, and even commendable, will still afford no relief to their misery, we have a further dialogue between Abraham and the rich man.

"Then he said, I pray thee, therefore, father, that thou

vouldst send him to my father's house: for I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them lest they also come into this place of torment." Here we learn that there is a *place of torment* for some human beings after they have died. This *place of punishment*, and the state of endless misery, we call *hell;* using the word to denote not merely "the hell," or state of the dead to which Christ's spirit departed, when he expired on the cross, but that *hell* or *tophet*, or *tartarus*, or prison of despair, for which Christ selected the names of the valley of Gehinnom, *gehenna*, and *hell fire*, as suitable emblems.

"And Abraham said unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them."

Deceiving himself, as sinners on earth have always done, the lost rich man replied, "Nay, father Abraham; but if one went unto them from the dead they will repent."

And Abraham said unto him, "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead."

In this representation of the world of saved and of lost spirits there is nothing unreasonable; and in our interpretation of it nothing strained. We think every candid reader would naturally come to the same conclusions that all orthodox Christians have ever done.

To make the passage appear to teach any other doctrine has ever required all the ingenuity of the Universalists, and will doubtless engage one of the most active and bold of their society in the present day. I refer to my correspondent, whose talents I respect, and who in perverting Scripture by Scripture, seems to me to have no superior on earth.

EZRA STILES ELY.

TO MR. EZRA STILES ELY.

Philadelphia, Jan. 3, 1835.

Dear Sir—The perusal of your exposition of Luke xvi. 19—31, has afforded me not a little pleasure. Heretofore you have frequently simply cited a passage of Scripture, depending on the prepossessions of our readers for the acknowledgment of its relevancy to the point in debate; but in reference to the account of the rich man and Lazarus, you have, in the main, pursued a different (and I will add, a commendable) course. You have attempted to show that said account is properly considered descriptive of the condition of men in a future state; and in endeavouring to establish this position, you have taken a tolerably comprehensive survey of the whole subject. This is right. It is precisely what I have repeatedly desired you to do with many passages by you introduced into this discussion; and I hope that you will continue practically to acknowledge the propriety of the course adverted to.

The conclusions to which you have arrived bear the semblance of just deduction. It is generally true, that "he who is first in his own cause seemeth just;" yet it is equally true, that when "his neighbour cometh after and searcheth him," a different aspect may be given to the whole matter. In attending to this subject I shall have occasion to search many of your statements, with special reference to the general issue; and also to bring to light a number of important considerations which you have entirely overlooked.

First of all, I will mention a few particulars, which I desire you to consider as so many preliminary objections to your exposition.

1st. You cite the testimony of Solomon, that when a man dies, "the dust shall return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it." *This is pure Universalism.* Allow me to inquire, whether the spirit of the rich man *returned unto God* who gave it, when it was *sent into an endless hell?*

2d. In your letter of May 15, 1834, you distinctly state that *hades*, hell, is to be destroyed. You affirm, indeed, that in hades there is a paradise and a gehenna of fire; but it matters not how many apartments you may suppose it to contain—for hades is to be destroyed, however numerous its divisions may be. This you allow—and yet, as if purposely to contradict yourself, you contend for the doctrine of endless punishment, on the ground that the rich man is represented as being in hades! Can you conceive of endless punishment in a place that is to be destroyed?

3d. Your whole exposition is predicated of the supposition, that the subject matter before us is "Christ's statement of some events of which he had a perfect knowledge." You consider it a history, an account of literal facts. Yet you have interpreted much of the language in a parabolic sense! You consider *Abraham's bosom* an *emblem*—and in so considering it you have abandoned the entire groundwork of your argument—for if Abraham's bosom be a figure, or parabolic representation of something else, the same may be said of Lazarus, and also of the rich man. If by Abraham's bosom be not signified the literal bosom of that patriarch, you have no right to assume that either Lazarus or the rich man was a real personage. If *one* part of the account be literal, such also must be the character of the *entire relation*. If *one* part be emblematical, the *whole* must be interpreted parabolically. Yet you have assigned to the several portions just such character, symbolical or literal, as you thought would best comport with your general views of the subject. I cannot allow you this privilege. If either Lazarus or the rich man was a real personage, who died a literal death, then Abraham's bosom was the literal bosom of that patriarch; and the rich man was tormented in literal flames of fire; and literal water was called for; and there was a literal gulf—and so on to the end of the chapter. You assume that the torments of the rich man were *symbolized* "by comparing them to pains produced by intense and unquenchable fires." And if this part of

the account be symbolical, the whole relation must be interpreted parabolically.

4th. Your exposition of the subject required you to make many unauthorized assumptions. I shall say nothing of the assumptions that Lazarus was "a true Christian," and that the rich man was "a mere worldling," "an ungodly man." I find no such intimations in the record. But I pass to notice, 1st. You assume that *Lazarus was buried.* The text does not say so. You indeed found it necessary to assume this point, in order to make out your case—but I shall presently show that the truth of the matter does not require, but rather forbids, the assumption in question. We are simply certified, that "the beggar died, and was carried into Abraham's bosom." 2d. You assume that the subject refers to the *spirits* or *souls* of the two characters mentioned. Nothing of the kind is intimated in any part of the account. I grant that such assumption is an essential item of your exposition—but I desire to receive the record as it stands, being satisfied that we need not either take from, or add to, the testimony, in order to arrive at its true signification.

Your attention is now solicited to a few considerations, which shall presently be more particularly noticed. 1st. Why was *Abraham's* bosom especially mentioned, if so be that the society of the blessed hereafter is signified by that expression? Why not the bosom of Elijah, or Enoch, or Isaac, or Jacob? In *my* view of the subject, this question is satisfactorily answered, as I think my correspondent will yet acknowledge. 2d. Why does the rich man give the endearing appellation of *Father* to Abraham? and why does the latter acknowledge the affinity by addressing the former as his *Son?* It is worthy of notice, that the rich man calls on no one but *Abraham*, and that he does not speak of Lazarus as his *brother.* I shall account for these facts presently. 3d. Abraham is represented as directing the five brethren to consult *Moses and the prophets.* Does not this fact incontrovertibly prove that none but the tribes of Israel had part in the

matter? I mention these points as preliminary inquiries. They will lead our minds into profitable investiation.

We must now attend to the consideration of the general character of the subject. Is it "Christ's statement of some events of which he had perfect knowledge?" that is, is it a relation of literal facts? or is it a parable? If it be the former, you must so interpret it in all its parts, and I must yield the argument, so far as future punishment is concerned. If, however, it be a parable, Lazarus was not a real personage but simply the parabolic representative of some nation or people, of whom his condition was a striking figure. The same must also be true of the rich man. Carrying out the parabolical interpretation, we shall discover that their deaths respectively, and hades, and the flame, and the gulf, and Abraham's bosom, are not to be understood literally, but only to be viewed as figures of things which they symbolically represented.

You say, "this *account* is not called a *parable*." True; —neither is the account of the prodigal son called a parable—nor are we informed that Jesus spake parabolically when he uttered the language concerning the lost piece of silver—nor did Jotham inform the people that he spake a parable when he told of the time when the trees went forth to anoint a king over them, Judges ix—and though, in introducing the account of the hundred sheep, the *historian* says, "And he spake this parable unto them," yet we are not certified that *Jesus* called it a parable. In introducing the account of the Pharisee and publican, the historian says, "He spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous and despised others," but we are not authorized to affirm that *Jesus* called it a parable. He began by saying, "Two men went up into the temple to pray." Indeed, so common a thing was it for our Lord to communicate instruction in parables, that it is written, "Without a parable spake he not unto them, that it might be fulfilled which

was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables," Matt. xiii. 34, 35.

That the subject before us *is* a parable, and not a history, is contended by LIGHTFOOT, WHITBY, and HAMMOND —than whom never lived stronger advocates of endless punishment. But the simple fact that to interpret the whole account literally, or as a history, would involve contradictory and absurd results, argues conclusively that it is a parable. I repeat, that I cannot allow you to assign to this part a historical, and to that a symbolical meaning. It must either be wholly literal, or wholly figurative. It cannot be partly one, and partly the other.

I agree with you that "a parable is but an extended similitude, or illustration, designed not to introduce fancies, but to exhibit and enforce truth." And the question now to be answered, is, What truth did Jesus intend to exhibit and enforce in the parable before us? I reply—he intended to illustrate the truth, that if the Scribes and Pharisees would not accredit the testimony of the miracles by him wrought in attestation of the divinity of his mission, "neither would they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead."

I will now state, that I consider the rich man the parabolic representative of the unbelieving Jewish people, especially of the Scribes and Pharisees; that Lazarus is the parabolic representative of the publicans and sinners, whether of Jewish or Gentile extraction; that by Abraham's bosom is symbolized the gospel kingdom; and that hades is symbolically used, as in other parts of the Bible, to represent the miseries and torments experienced by those of whom the rich man is the parabolic representative.

You now have the outline of what I consider the only true exposition of the subject; and I desire you to observe, that I shall not give a figurative interpretation to one part, and a literal signification to another. Viewing it as a parable, as such it shall be wholly explained.

I consider the death spoken of as being solely and alone a *national death*. I beg you to suspend judgment on this

statement, until you bring to remembrance that the prodigal son is stated to have been DEAD, even while he lived in the flesh. "This my son *was* DEAD, *and is* ALIVE *again*." And I think I shall be enabled to show, that said prodigal son, and the lost sheep, and the lost piece of silver, and Lazarus, equally stand as the parabolic representatives of the publicans and sinners, whether of Jewish or Gentile extraction.

In the beginning of Luke xv, it is written, "Then drew near unto him *all the publicans and sinners* for to hear him. And *the Pharisees and Scribes* murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them." Then commences our Lord's discourse FROM THIS TEXT; and said discourse, comprising a series of pointed parables, is continued to the close of Chap. xvi. Publicans and sinners, on the one hand, and the Pharisees and Scribes, on the other, composed his audience.

In the parables of the lost sheep and the lost piece of silver, our Saviour sets forth the unjustifiable character of Pharisaic murmuring. He gives the murmurers to understand, that as the shepherd and the woman respectively rejoiced when they had recovered the things severally lost, so every one should rejoice that Messias came to save sinners, to seek and to save that which was lost. In the parable which follows, the same general instruction is conveyed. The elder brother is the representative of the Scribes and Pharisees—the prodigal son of the returning publicans and sinners. The character of the former is inimitably represented by the elder brother. He murmured because the prodigal was received into favour —"he was angry, and would not go in." I cannot avoid remarking incidentally, that he who says, "if all men are to go to heaven, I do not wish to go there," may behold his image in the spirit of the elder brother.

The parable with which chapter xvi commences, was addressed to the disciples, the same audience being present. Therein the Scribes and Pharisees (who sat in Moses' seat) are represented by the unjust steward. To them had been committed the oracles of God, and they

were the administrators of the law covenant They were unfaithful to their trust, and were therefore to be discharged. At verse 14, it is written, "And the Pharisees also, who were covetous, heard all these things; and they derided him." They felt the power and application of the parable. Our Saviour then proceeded to show them, that as they had been married to the law, they were bound to be faithful thereunto. "Moses in the law and the prophets did write" of Jesus of Nazareth; and now that he was come, they were under obligations to receive him as the Messiah. Continuing to dilate on the subject matter before him, our Lord introduced the parable of the rich man and Lazarus; and in this parable he kept his eye on the truth he designed to enforce, namely, that if the Scribes and Pharisees still disbelieved the divinity of his mission, "neither would they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead." A *real* Lazarus had been raised—Jesus himself subsequently rose—and the truth he designed to enforce in the parable was fully verified.

In Isaiah i. 6, the people of Israel are figuratively represented as being full of "wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores." In the same sense, the Scribes and Pharisees considered the publicans and sinners as being covered with the sores of sin. For this reason they murmured that Jesus should receive sinners, and eat with them. Those publicans and sinners figuratively laid at the gate of the temple, and desired to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich steward's table. The woman of Canaan who besought our Saviour to heal her daughter, was told that it was "not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs." Her answer was, "Truth, Lord; yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table," Matt. xv. 26, 27. I refer to this example for the purpose of showing that the figurative use I have made of the fact, that the publicans and sinners desired to be fed with the crumbs that fell from the table of the Scribes and Pharisees, is altogether admissible.

Our Master, in the parable of the man who commanded his two sons to go into the vineyard to labour, said to the Scribes and Pharisees, "The publicans and harlots go into the kingdom of God before you. For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not: but the publicans and harlots believed him: and ye, when ye saw it, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him," Matt. xxi. 31, 32. When the publicans and sinners believed in Christ, they died a *national death*—that is, they were no longer either Jews or Gentiles, but Christians. They died *a national death*, BUT THEY WERE NOT BURIED—they "were translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son," Col. i. 13, where "there is neither Jew nor Greek," *as such;* "for ye are all one in Christ Jesus," Gal. iii. 28. And said *translation* into the kingdom of God's dear Son, is signified by the expression, "carried into Abraham's bosom;" for the apostle adds, "And if ye be Christ's, then are ye *Abraham's seed.*" It is also written, "They which be of *faith*, ARE *blessed* WITH *faithful Abraham*," Gal. iii. 9. The publicans and sinners, *in their lifetime as Jews or Gentiles*, received "evil things." But when they died the national death before mentioned, they entered into *the spiritual life of the gospel;* and in the kingdom of God's dear Son, they were comforted by the faith of Abraham. Were I to imitate your example, I should say, that "every *candid* reader would naturally come to the same conclusions," in reference to this subject. But I will not make so sweeping a declaration. I will only say, that *I do not perceive* how any one who carefully examines the matter, can come to a *different* conclusion.

I stated that, in my judgment, the rich man was the parabolic representative of the unbelieving Jewish people, specially of the Scribes and Pharisees. They "shut up the kingdom of heaven against men." They neither went in themselves, nor suffered those who were entering to go in. In shutting up the gospel kingdom, they shut themselves out. And what was the consequence? They entered not into the faith of Abraham, and of course

were not partakers of its joys. But more than this When they had filled up the measure of their iniquities by crucifying the Lord of life and glory, decay seized on the vitals of their civil polity; and in the final overthrow and destruction of their city and temple, and consequently the abrogation of the law covenant, *they died a national death.* Before Jerusalem was hemmed in on every side, they who had been translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son, saw the black thunder cloud of judgment lowering over the devoted city—and they escaped to the mountains of Judea. The unbelieving Jewish people, of whom the rich man is the parabolic representative, not only died a national death, but they were buried. They were dead and buried in the same figurative sense that the same people were dead and buried during their captivity in Babylon. The vision recorded in Ezekiel xxxvii, places the latter subject in its proper light.

Continuing the parabolic interpretation, I desire to say, that the Jews opened not their eyes to behold the utter hopelessness of their case, until their city was surrounded and besieged by the Roman army under Titus. Our Saviour had foreseen and foretold this difficulty. He wept over the city, and said, "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong to thy peace; but now *they are hid from thine eyes.* [The Scribes and Pharisees lifted up their eyes afterwards, and saw those things—but it was too late—they were in torment.] For the days shall come upon thee that thine enemies shall *cast a trench about thee,* and compass thee round, *and keep thee in on every side;* and shall lay thee even with the ground, and *thy children within thee,*" Luke xix. 41—44. These obstacles, interposed between the believing Christians and the unbelieving Jewish people, in the destruction of the city and temple, are symbolized by *the great gulf.* Hence Abraham is represented as saying, "they which would pass from hence to you *cannot* · neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence." Such was strictly

the fact at the period of the siege and overthrow of Jerusalem; and a symbolical gulf still interposes between Christians and Jews. The latter have ever been a distinct people; and whoever will consider their present condition, will perceive the existence of a gulf of separation between the Christian community and the house of Israel.

They of whom the rich man is the parabolic representative, died a national death, and *were buried in hell.* Dr. ADAM CLARKE certifies us that, in his old MS. Bible, the passage reads thus: "Forsothe the riche man is dead; and is buried in helle." This reading is supported by several versions—and I verily believe it expresses the true signification of the text. The unbelieving Jewish nation were buried bodily in the hell to which their city and temple were thrust down: the same hell mentioned in Luke x. 15. "And thou Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shall be thrust down to hell, *hades*; that is, from a state of prosperity and opulence, that city was to be thrust down to degradation and wo. In the very same hell the Jewish people "lifted up their eyes, being in torments." It was a hell of fire, in the scriptural figurative sense of that expression. The Lord declared by the mouth of a prophet that he would make Jerusalem as Tophet, Jer. xix; and Isaiah says, "Tophet is ordained of old . . . the pile thereof is fire and much wood; the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it," Isa. xxx. 33. Where that fire was to be kindled, we learn from Isa. xxxi. 9: "And he shall pass over to his strong hold for fear, and his princes shall be afraid of the ensign, saith the Lord, *whose fire is in Zion, and his furnace in Jerusalem.*" This furnace of fire is mentioned in Matt. xiii. 42—50; in which passages the reference is the same as in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. See also Ezek. xxii. 19—22: "I will gather you *into the midst of Jerusalem* . . . . . and blow upon you *in the fire of my wrath*, and ye shall be melted in the midst thereof." *In Jerusalem*, therefore, the flame of fire was kindled in which

they, of whom the rich man is the parabolic representative, were to be tormented.

The fact that the rich man is represented as calling upon "*Father Abraham*," argues conclusively that *the Jews* were the persons so tormented. Nothing was, or is, more characteristic of a Jew, than the pride with which he speaks of Abraham as the progenitor of the Jewish nation. "*We have Abraham to our father*," was an expression in common use among that people See Matt. iii. 9; John viii. 39. In the parable before us, Abraham is represented as acknowledging the relationship, in calling the rich man "*Son*"—for the Jews were the lineal descendants of that patriarch, according to the flesh. I desire you to notice also, that Abraham speaks of "Moses and the prophets" as the testimonies to which the five brethren should attend. The Christians on the one hand, and the house of Israel on the other, are the only people who ever accredited those writings. Our Saviour, on a certain occasion, said to the Scribes and Pharisees, "Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father: there is one that accuseth you,—even Moses, in whom ye trust. For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me—for he wrote of me," John v. 45—47. How remarkably this answers to the closing part of the parable before us! "They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. . . . . If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead."

This language certainly implies that Moses and the prophets had spoken of the torment which the rich man is experiencing. But I ask you to cite a single passage from either Moses or the prophets, in which there is any intimation of future endless punishment. Dr. George Campbell says. "It is plain that, in the Old Testament, *the most profound silence* is observed in regard to the state of the deceased. their joys or sorrows, their happiness or misery," 6th Prelim. Diss. P. ii. §19. Dr. Jahn confirms this statement—for he says, "We have not authority decidedly to say, that any other motives were

held out to the ancient Hebrews to pursue the good and avoid the evil, than those which were derived from *the rewards and punishments of this life*," Archeology, §314. In view of your exposition of the parable before us, I ask, how could the five brethren of the rich man learn any thing from Moses and the prophets in relation to a place of endless torment, concerning which Moses and the prophets observe the most profound silence?

But Moses and the prophets both speak plainly of the torment to be endured by those of whom the rich man is the parabolic representative. I have already cited several passages on this subject from Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel; and I will now direct your attention to the language of Moses in Deut. xxxii: "For a *fire* is kindled in mine anger, and shall burn unto the lowest hell, (*scheol*, Heb., *hades*, Gr.,) and shall consume the earth with her increase, and set on fire the foundations of the mountains. I will heap mischiefs upon them; I will spend mine arrows upon them. They shall be *burnt with hunger*, and *devoured with burning heat*, and with bitter destruction." This is figurative language—and such were the symbolical torments set forth in the parable; and Abraham is therefore properly represented as saying, "They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them."

David was a prophet. He says, Psalm lxxxvi. 13: "Great is thy mercy toward me, and thou *hast* delivered my soul from the *lowest hell*," scheol, hades. He explains his meaning in Psalm cxvi. 3: "The sorrows of *death* compassed me, and *the pains of hell gat hold on me:* I found trouble and sorrow." Such was the hell in which the Jewish nation "lifted up their eyes, being in torments." It was in Jerusalem. There the fire of the Lord was kindled; and there they were "*burnt with hunger*, and *devoured with burning heat*, and with bitter destruction."

No reason can be assigned why the kingdom of heaven was likened unto *ten* virgins—nor why *one hundred* sheep is the number mentioned in the parable—nor why the

woman is represented as having lost *ten* pieces of silver. So neither can a perfectly satisfactory reason be assigned why *five* is mentioned as the number of the rich man's brethren. In interpreting parables, the *moral* is more t be regarded than the *details* of the story.

I have thus given an extended exposition of the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. With "perverting Scripture by Scripture," I have nothing to do. I have humbly endeavoured to compare spiritual things with spiritual, and thus allow *the man of my counsel*, the Bible, to be the interpreter of its own meaning. If I am in error, there is no one more competent than my respected correspondent to show me wherein I have erred, and to set me right. I can assure him, that however "bold and active" I may be in disseminating the knowledge of Immanuel's love, I do no more than my duty. I am sensible that were I to become the advocate of a limited salvation, I should be honoured of men, and avoid multiform reproaches which I have already suffered, and must continue to suffer. "But none of these things move me; neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God."

Affectionately yours,
ABEL C. THOMAS.

TO MR. ABEL C. THOMAS.

Philadelphia, Jan. 7, 1835.

Dear Sir—Whilst I live, I confidently expect to oppose the erroneous doctrine that all mankind will in a future state of existence be perfectly happy, so that it is highly probable, that "we shall close our correspondence without finishing our discussion." You have seen fit to complain a good deal about my mode of managing my part of the controversy in which we are engaged; but I have

no disposition to return the compliment. I am conten that you should manage your part of the discussion according to your pleasure, and I take the liberty to do the same.

"The written expressions of our several opinions" must, indeed, make up our *Letters;* and I have no objections that they should be considered as good natured opponent *Essays*. We give our *opinions* about passages of Scripture, about arguments on them, and sometimes about opinions of others. If your opinions are supported by the statements of truth in the Bible, they ought to prevail; if my opinions are most scriptural, they ought to be adopted to the exclusion of yours. There is very little reasoning among men that amounts to demonstration; for in a demonstration every step must be either a self-evident proposition or some necessary inference from such a proposition. On the subject of *testimony*, which is the sole object of faith, such demonstrative reasoning is not necessary. Syllogistic reasoning would be of little use in helping us to ascertain what God has said, and what is the plain and obvious meaning of his declarations. All attempts to show what he ought to have spoken, will go for nothing, if we can learn what he has actually said.

A good illustration, explanation, or reconciliation of seeming inconsistencies, which commends itself to the common sense of mankind, is often worth a hundred syllogisms, and a pamphlet of verbal criticisms.

Hitherto, in our discussion, I have made it my business "to go ahead" in supporting the position, that there will be some future punishment of men who die impenitent and unpardoned in their sins: you have principally confined yourself to following me, with what you deem refutations of my sentiments: if you please I should like that you would now *take the lead* in establishing your tenets: and as far as I may think it desirable and am able, I will follow you with such considerations as may show that your scheme of theology is not built on the foundation of the Bible.

Let me take turns with you in acting on the defensive and perhaps we shall both grant that it is easier to pu' down a house than to erect one that is impregnable.

In the mean time, permit me to ask, what language could be employed in the Bible to teach the doctrine of an endless hell, if it were granted by you that there is any such thing? According to your mode of interpreting Scripture, it would seem impossible for God to reveal any knowledge of everlasting punishment to men on earth, even if he intended to inflict it; because in speaking to us he must employ the names of things with which we are acquainted to express the idea of an endless hell, or else use no intelligible language. We see no possibility of avoiding the use of figurative language on this subject, any more than in relation to the soul of man. Because the name of *spirit* literally signifies *breath* or *air*, or *wind*, shall we conclude that there is no *spirit* in man but the air inhaled into his lungs? Because the name of a *soul* literally means animal life, shall we say there is no rational, immortal soul in man?

Because there were literal fires and worms in the valley of Gehinnom, and a literal valley of the son of Gehinnom, shall we conclude that by hell-fire, unquenchable fires, and the worm that never dies, we are to understand nothing more than those terms literally mean? This mode of interpretation would banish all figurative language from the most highly figurative style of writing and would render the Bible a nullity. God himself, because his names literally signify breath, wind, infinite existence, and the like, would be rendered as to his deity a nonentity.

I remain yours, respectfully,
EZRA STILES ELY

TO MR. EZRA STILES ELY.

Philadelphia, January 10, 1835.

Dear Sir—Your virtual pledge to oppose the doctrine of Universalism so long as you live, simply implies tha you at present believe said doctrine to be false. I desire rou to remember that I am as confident of the truth of Universalism as you can possibly be of the truth of endless punishment. And I judge it to be a more reasonable supposition that *you* will yet become a Universalist, than that *I* shall become a believer in the doctrine of interminable wo. You will pardon me for mentioning the grounds of this statement. 1st. You have discarded the old fashioned idea that the greater part of mankind will be irretrievably lost—nay, if I have understood aright, you believe in the final salvation of about three-fourths of our race. And it seems more reasonable to suppose that your faith will yet embrace the salvation of the remaining fourth, than that I shall adopt the belief of endless punishment in any form. 2d. The word of faith which *I* preach is in your *heart*, if not in your *head*—for you fervently desire and pray that Universalism may prove true. On the other hand, the word of faith which *you* preach is neither in my heart nor head—for I neither believe, nor desire, nor pray, that a part of our race may be cast off for ever. 3. You have stated, that but for the expression, "they which shall be accounted worthy," the testimony of Jesus concerning the resurrection would make you a Universalist. This single expression, then, is all that stands between you and Universalism. But there are *thousands* of scriptural expressions which stand between me and the doctrine of endless punishment. I might mention other grounds for the statemen in question—but the foregoing may suffice.

I have indeed complained, and I think justly, of your mode of managing your part in our friendly controversy; and I am satisfied that in so doing I have not rendered myself obnoxious to the rebuke in Rom. ii. 1. In your controversy with "the high school brethren of the

Presbyterian Church," you reason precisely as I should be happy to find you reasoning with *me*. You take up their positions and arguments; and I have ofttimes admired the dexterous manner in which you bar their deductions by pointing out the fallacy of their premises. You are not satisfied with stating your *opinions*, nor with writing *essays* on the particular topics which are now unhappily distracting the Presbyterian Church, and alienating the affections of brethren of a common faith. You do more than this. You endeavour to show them, by straight forward argumentation, that they are certainly in the wrong. When they attempt to rebut your reasoning, you are careful to publish a rejoinder—from which course you do not desist until the point in question has been fully and mutually canvassed. This, in my judgment, is right—and had you pursued a similar course with your Universalist brother, he would have sincerely rejoiced.

With the exception of the first sentence, I cordially concur in the sentiments of the second paragraph of your letter to which this is a reply. The third paragraph meets my entire approbation.

In your sixth paragraph, you ask, "What language could be employed in the Bible to teach the doctrine of an endless hell, if it were granted by you that there is any such thing?" This is my answer: If you can adduce any scriptural representation of the *immortal resurrection state*, in which it is declared that there is a hell of misery in that state—or if you cite Bible testimony in which the word *endless*, or any term of equal force, is connected with punishment—or if you refer me to any sacred Scripture which, in treating of the things of the immortal state of being, connects even the equivocal adjective *everlasting* with misery,—then, in either of these cases, I will yield the argument. It is a plain principle, both in law and logic, that "the testimony must be equivalent to the declaration, or the point to be proved is not sustained. If the testimony be not to the point, it must be set aside." Your declaration is, that

the Scriptures teach the doctrine of endless punishment in my judgment, you have not yet adduced testimony equivalent to the declaration.

But you say, that according to my "mode of interpreting Scripture, it would seem impossible for God to reveal any knowledge of everlasting [endless] punishment, even if he intended to inflict it." In reply, allow me to state, that *you* find no difficulty in expressing your faith in endless punishment—but you have not yet expressed it in Bible language. You do not find it necessary to coin any new words or phrases, expressive of your doctrinal views. And I will add, that if God designed to teach the doctrine of endless punishment, he would have found positive and unequivocal language to teach said doctrine. God's language in the Bible is perfectly intelligible to me, without supposition on my part, that he intended "to express the idea of an endless hell."

Your queries in relation to the fact, that "the name of spirit, literally signifies breath, or air, or wind," affect not my views. I hold to no future "life and immortality" save that which will be consequent of a resurrection from the dead. "God only hath immortality in himself."

Your questions in reference to the valley of Hinnom, touch not my argument. I have shown in previous letters, that said valley, and Tophet therein, and the abominations thereof, are used by the inspired writers as symbols of temporal calamities which came on Jerusalem and the Jewish people more than seventeen centuries since. You are therefore desired to remember, that "the mode of interpretation" by me adopted, would *not* "banish all figurative language from the most highly figurative style of writing," nor would it "render the Bible a nullity." My mode of interpretation is simply to explain Scripture by Scripture. When we have agreed that any passage is figurative, it does not follow that it is symbolical of things to transpire in the resurrection state. The question of reference is an important item in the examination of testimony.

You state that you have hitherto laboured to establish the doctrine of endless punishment; and it is your desire that I should now take the lead in an attempt to prove the doctrine of Universalism. This is certainly equitable, and I am entirely disposed to "take turns with you in acting on the defensive." There are, however two objections to proceeding immediately with this work. I will state them for your consideration. 1st. You have not replied to my letter on the rich man and Lazarus. This is an important branch of our discussion, and I much desire to hear your objections to my exposition of that subject. My scriptural proofs of the doctrine of Universalism will, I think, demand undivided attention. 2d. You have certified me that 2 Thess. i. 9, must for ever prevent you from being a Universalist. You have not yet specially introduced said passage into this controversy, and I am loath to proceed with any thing else until we have thoroughly examined that portion of sacred Scripture. Otherwise I might labour in vain—for how can I reasonably expect to convince you that Universalism is the truth of the Bible, so long as there exists a passage which must for ever prevent you from being a Universalist?

Besides: I have already introduced a number of scriptural proofs, with comments thereupon, which you have not condescended to notice. In some instances, you have entered your objections to my views, and to those objections I have replied, without receiving the slightest attention. I verily believe that the arguments by me advanced in reference to Prov. xi. 31, destroy the doctrine of future punishment in all its forms; and the evidences presented concerning the resurrection state, in my judgment, fairly and fully establish the doctrine of Universalism. It is my earnest desire that the testimonies referred to should receive some attention. If you wish it, I will again introduce said proofs in a condensed form, with such an abstract of your objections and my replies, as will bring the matter more fully into view. In this way, our readers will be enabled to judge of the bearing

and weight of the Universalist argument, without being confused w.th a multiplicity of topics.

Respectfully yours,

ABEL C. THOMAS.

TO MR. ABEL C. THOMAS.

Philadelphia, January 15, 1835.

Dear Sir—The following remarks are intended as my reply to your letter of Jan. 3d.

Because at death *the spirit* of every man *shall return to God that gave it*, none can infer, with any shadow of reason, that every spirit will be happy in the immediate and sensible presence of its Maker. Its return to God after death does neither imply any incorporation into the essence of the Deity, as the Hindoos feign; nor any transformation of its nature or moral habits, or free exercises, which should render the immediate presence of God a source of delight. It has been, in my judgment, sufficiently evinced that the spirit returns to God to undergo a particular and personal adjudication either to endless life or endless death.

I have admitted, that after the resurrection of the bodies of the dead, the spirits of men that have died will be united to their risen bodies, and no longer exist in a separate state; so that in this sense *hades*, spoken of primarily as the state of separate human spirits, will be no more. No other destruction of *hades* has been admitted by me; for the Scriptures clearly teach that beside *human*, there are *other*, spirits, in existence, in what we commonly call *the world of spirits*. Because there will be no more spirits of men in a state of separation from their bodies after the resurrection, and no more *a hades* in this sense, it will not follow that there is no *paradise* of God in which the whole complex persons of the saints, consisting of spirits united to glorified bodies, will be happy with God: nor will it hence appear, that

there is no state of misery in which the whole complex persons of the immortal wicked ones will be equitably punished for ever. You ask, if I can *conceive of endless punishment* in a *place that is to be destroyed:* and I answer, that *place*, meaning position, point, or portion, in infinite space, will never be destroyed. Infinite space is as indestructible as that God whom we could not conceive of as infinite, and omnipresent, without necessarily admitting such a thing as unbounded space.

While infinite space exists there can be no such destruction of *place* as will preclude a *state* of misery, or prevent any place from being hell where any being can be found who experiences unmingled misery, and is assured of its perpetuity.

By regarding many expressions in a history as highly figurative, we do not invalidate the truth of that history. In speaking of the battle of the Nile, one might say, that Nelson's cannon *breathed* out flames and grape-shot. Would it follow from this figure of *breathing* that there was no battle of the Nile? Just as unreasonable would it be to infer from the figurative expression of Abraham's *bosom*, that Christ gave no true history of events with which he was acquainted.

Your whole argument, designed to show that the account of the rich man and Lazarus is a parable, is founded on this false principle, that if *one part*, or word, of a history be used figuratively, the whole history must be deemed a parable. No principles of interpretation could be more absurd; for it would follow that if any figures of speech are used in the history of General Washington, then there was no real Washington, and no revolutionary war, but Washington's name was the symbol of some fancy, and the American revolution was but an emblem of some Don Quixotic rencontre.

Every one will see the utter fallacy of the inference, that if *Abraham's bosom* was an emblem of the society of that father of the faithful, then Lazarus must have been a figure, instead of a real beggar, and the rich man no man at all, but a symbol of the Scribes and Pharisees.

Your whole attempts to disprove the s atement that Christ gave a simple narrative of facts, of which he had knowledge, rest on your assertion, that "If *one* part be emblematical, the whole must be interpreted parabolically." This I deny.

Your strained, unnatural paraphrase of the whole ac count, were it a parable, would be sufficient to discard your scheme, which appears sufficiently ridiculous, without further remarks from your friend,

EZRA STILES ELY.

TO MR. EZRA STILES ELY.

Philadelphia, January 22, 1835.

Dear Sir—Were I to answer one of your communica tions with the sweeping declaration, that your premises are false and your deductions ridiculous, you would most probably inform me, that I had disregarded the principles of controversial courtesy, and rendered myself obnoxious to the rebuke, that he who is at a loss for argument frequently resorts to the assertion that his opponent's reasoning is unworthy of attention. I verily believe that the exposition I have given of the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, is the only true biblical interpretation thereof; and on a subject of so much importance as this, it especially becomes us severally to manifest a disposition fully to investigate the evidences presented in the case. Brevity in composition will not compensate for lack of argument, nor is assertion the equivalent of proof. In replying to your letters, I have invariably proposed the examination of every point which had even the semblance of a bearing on the conjoint question in debate; and I am aware that in so doing, my communications have sometimes occupied more space than yours. f an apology be necessary, it may be found in my fervent desire thoroughly to canvass every position and ar gument introduced into this discussion.

You concede that on the demise of each individual of our race, "the spirit returns unto God who gave it." In view of this concession, Universalism is established beyond the reach of cavil, unless you can prove one or other of the following points: 1st. That spiritually to abide with God in his heavenly court does not necessarily imply unmixed enjoyment; or, 2d. That some of the spirits which return to God will be ejected from his sensible presence. The *first* point you will not attempt to establish—for it is written, "In thy presence there is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for ever more," Psalm xvi. 11; and the *second* is not susceptible of proof. On the contrary, it is written, "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hands. . . . . All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will *in no wise cast out*," John iii. 35; vi. 37. You say, indeed, "It has been, in my judgment, sufficiently evinced, that the spirit returns to God to undergo a particular and personal adjudication either to endless life or endless death"—but I have not yet seen any testimony equivalent to this declaration. Be sure, you have endeavoured to establish the doctrine of a future general judgment and of endless punishment—but I cannot refer to any part of our correspondence in which you have so much as attempted to prove "a particular and personal adjudication" of the spirit. Besides: in your exposition of the parable before us, you suppose that *immediately after* the death of the rich man, his spirit entered into a state of misery! In this case you intimate nothing concerning "a particular and personal adjudication," nor does it appear from your paraphrase of the subject, that the spirit of either the rich man or Lazarus returned unto God who gave it.

In your remarks in relation to the destruction of *hades*, you have in some measure abandoned the views advanced in your letter of May 9th, 1834. In that letter, you consider *paradise* a *department* of *hades*; and consequently in whatever sense *hades* is to be destroyed, *paradise*

will also cease to be. Yet in the communication before me, you speak of *paradise* as the immortal abode of the saints with God! Besides: you allege that "*place* meaning position, point, or portion, in infinite space, will never be destroyed." Granted—but on the grounds hitherto assumed by you, *hades*, meaning a place or state of departed spirits, will, *as such*, be destroyed. It follows, then, according to your own showing, that *hades*, with your *supposed* divisions of it into *paradise* and *gehenna*, will, *as a place or state of departed spirits*, be destroyed. Consequently you must either yield the doctrine of endless punishment, or show that there is another hell of misery in "infinite space." You assume the latter position—but your correspondent respectfully awaits the proof. I desire you to remember that the scriptural use of the word *hades* will not assist you in your attempt to establish the doctrine of endless punishment—for *hades*, as a place or state of departed spirits, is to be destroyed. And though it does not hence appear, "that there is no state of misery in which the whole complex persons of the immortal wicked ones will be equitably punished for ever," neither does it follow that there *is* such a state of misery. I am not required to show that there is *not*—but you are required to show that there *is*, or you fail to establish your position.

In special reference to the case of the rich man, I again repeat, that *hades*, however numerous its divisions may be, will *cease* to be, as a state or place of departed spirits, according to your own showing; and the inquiry recurs, Can you conceive of endless punishment in a place that is to be destroyed? If you cannot, you must concede that the case of the rich man, even in your own view of the matter, furnishes no proof of *interminable wretchedness.*

Your remarks on the impropriety of disallowing the use of figurative expressions in historical relations, are in the main correct. But, in my judgment, they touch not the general principles by me advanced, in reference to the parable in discussion. I will attempt an exposition o

the point in question, by noticing the illustrations by you introduced.

"Nelson's cannon *breathed* out flames and grape-shot." Here the word *breathed* is obviously a *figurative expression*, and the historical relation is not invalidated thereby. But suppose you consider the *cannon, the thing itself*, a figure—how then? Plainly, it would follow that the "flames and grape-shot" must also be understood symbolically; and in this case, the entire account would lose its historical character. Again: suppose you had been an eye-witness of the battle of the Nile, and in your account thereof you should say, "I saw Nelson afar off, and a diamond pin in his bosom." I would understand you to mean, that you really saw Nelson, and really saw the diamond pin, and that said pin was really in Nelson's bosom. This, you perceive, is a case parallel to the one in the parable before us.

You refer to Don Quixote. Suppose his battle with the wind-mill to be a historical relation of fact. In this case, would you suppose that the Don and the proverb-loving Sancho were only representatives of characters of corresponding description? Plainly not—for if you view the rencontre with the wind-mill as a real circumstance, you must concede that the Don and his valet were real personages.

And now for the application. You allow that Lazarus, and the rich man, and Abraham, were real personages, and that there was a real dialogue between the two latter. You concede that the rich man really *saw* Abraham afar off. With what shadow of propriety, then, can you allege that Abraham's bosom is a figure? Look at the language: "And seeth Abraham afar off, AND Lazarus in his bosom." As distinctly as he saw the one, he saw the other. He saw Abraham—he saw Lazarus—he really saw them both; and if this be a relation of facts, the rich man really saw Lazarus *in Abraham's bosom*. Farther: you contend that the rich man really "lifted up his eyes," and really conversed with Abraham. In this case, every just principle of interpretation requires you to al

tow that the rich man's *tongue* was as real as were his *eyes*. Now if this be so, the *finger* of Lazarus and the *bosom* of Abraham must be understood in a literal sense. If, in any account whatever, several members of the body, whether animal or spiritual, be literally spoken of, we have no right to construe the mention of any other member symbolically. If, in speaking of Nelson's cannon literally, you mention the touch-hole, or the carriage on which the deadly weapon is carried from place to place, we are bound to understand you in the same literal sense. So if we speak literally of Abraham as a man, and then speak of the bosom of Abraham, no one is justified in giving to the latter a symbolical sense. Once granted that the bosom of Abraham is a figure, it is established that Abraham stands but as a parabolic representative; and so also of Lazarus and of the rich man. You are respectfully desired duly to weigh these considerations, and to furnish your reasons, if any you have, why the conclusions consequent of the argument should not be admitted.

You have not attempted to prove that what I term a parable is a literal relation of facts. I have stated *many* reasons for considering it a parable, and you have stated none for understanding it literally. You have the affirmative of the question, and should therefore present your evidences in the case.

On comparing my exposition of the parable with your reply, you will discover many facts and illustrations to which you have given not the slightest attention. In addition thereto I present the following: On the supposition that the account of the rich man and Lazarus is a literal relation of facts, I wish to be informed of what crime the rich man was guilty? You have given him a very fair, honourable character. He was truly charitable—and charity is greater than faith or hope. His riches, sumptuous fare, and gorgeous apparel, are not mentioned as any thing worthy of condemnation. All that is said about him is, that in his lifetime he had received his *good things*—but that these were the fruits of unjust dealing is not so much as intimated. It is written, "The *up-*

right shall have *good things* in possession," Prov xxviii. 10 I cannot allow you to infer that the rich man was a sinful wretch because he was damned—for this would be reasoning in a circle—it would be proving the thing to be proved, by itself.

On the other hand, what were the virtues of Lazarus? There is not a word said commendatory of his character, in the whole account. He suffered *evil things*—and it is written, "Whoso keepeth the commandment shall feel *no evil thing*," Eccles. viii. 5. He was covered with sores, a beggar, and in want—and the face of the record, allowing it to be a history, gives me as much authority for declaring that he was a lazy, unclean sinner, as it does you to affirm that he was a righteous man.

In the parabolic view of the subject, all these difficulties are readily solved; and however *unnatural*, *strained* and *ridiculous* my exposition may appear in your sight, it is the only interpretation of the subject, which, in my judgment, can be fairly sustained by the record of the word of God. And I am persuaded that such will yet be the conviction of my respected correspondent.

Affectionately yours,
ABEL C. THOMAS.

TO MR. ABEL C. THOMAS.

Philadelphia, Feb. 3, 1834

Dear Sir—I never pray for the salvation of those whom I believe to have entered the state of the miserable in the world of spirits; nor the pardon of those who have committed the unpardonable sin; because the Spirit of inspiration teaches us not to pray for such persons. I have never prayed that *Universalism* may prove true, for that, in my esteem, would be praying that a most pernicious *false* system might prove true. In submission to the will of God, I pray for the conversion, and thereby the salvation of all men who are yet prisoners of hope: and I

doubt not that the time will come, when for a thousand years, true piety will be as extensively spread through the wide world as irreligion and false religion have been.

I have never said that nothing but one expression or clause of Scripture prevents me from becoming a Universalist; for the Bible seems to me from beginning to end to be full of the doctrine of the future, interminable punishment of a multitude of impenitent, unpardoned sinners. If, however, I could be persuaded that any one passage of the Bible was intended by the Holy Spirit to teach the doctrine of the future salvation and happiness of all mankind, I must admit the doctrine, and construe all other passages of the Bible in consistency with it, or reject the whole. In like manner, if convinced, as I am most clearly, that any one passage of the sacred oracles teaches the everlasting punishment of some of the human family, I must construe all the other parts of the divinely inspired volume in consistency with that doctrine, or reject the only infallible rule of faith and practice.

That you, sir, are not at all likely to give up your only hope of future blessedness, founded in the belief that all mankind will be rendered happy, merely by being raised from the dead and rendered immortal, I am constrained, reluctantly, to believe.

The language in which I teach the doctrine of endless misery as the portion of some after the resurrection of the dead, is the very language of the Bible; and yet you believe it not; but ascribe to every plain assertion of future misery some far fetched, inconsistent, or absurd meaning. The coming of the Son of man, to gather all nations before him, and then divide the righteous from the wicked, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats, when about to fold them for the night with you is something already past, while you know that neither you nor I, nor any of the living nations have yet been gathered together in the presence of the Judge. With you the coming forth of some to "the resurrection of damnation," is no damnation after the resurrection.

Why then should we do any thing more than state our opinions, with such reasons for them as we may think proper, and then leave the controversy?

To meet you, and my high church brethren, and all others who choose to assail me at every point, would require at least nine collateral lives in one man. My high church brethren belong to the same family with myself, and I feel free to handle them, therefore, with more severity than any one whom I regard as a stranger to the Christian community. I would argue with a Christian brother closely and pungently, and rebuke him sharply, if I saw there was need, while we walked side by side, and while each thought his side of the grand highway of holiness the nearest and the best to heaven; but were I attending some poor malefactor in his white frock and cap, trimmed in black, to the gallows, I should observe unusual tenderness in all my discourse, for fear of needlessly wounding his feelings, and preventing all good effects of the gospel which I might preach to him.

A brother might get good from a little friendly severity; but pity, compassion, and the utmost tenderness of handling, belong to one who is under sentence of death, and on his way to the gallows, but so disordered in mind as not to know it.

You hold, it seems, to no future life and immortality, but what is consequent upon the resurrection of the dead; but I hold to the continued existence of a man's spirit when it goes out of his body at death, until the resurrection; and that, independently of the resuscitation of the body, the spirit of every man, once created, is according to the Divine purpose as immortal and everlasting as himself. From your premises, which are not true, you naturally enough infer that after death the rich man was not in torment, and that Lazarus was not in the blessed society of the faithful, because when they died they became nothing until new made at the future resurrection. My theory, however, happens to be that of the Bible and the Saviour, that there is a spiritual existence of the soul of man between the dissolution of his body and the fu-

ture, general resurrection; and according to this doctrine it was perfectly natural to talk of the righteous and the wicked immediately after death, as being happy or miserable; and to say, that some are "the spirits of the just made perfect," while "the rich man also died, and was buried, and in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments."

You ask for proof, after I have given it repeatedly, that *in the immortal resurrection state* there is a state, or hell, of endless misery. I certify to you and all concerned, again, that "when the Son of man shall come in his glory and all the holy angels with him," and shall "sit upon the throne of his glory, and before him shall be gathered all nations," which event has not yet occurred, THEN "he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats," and *then*, "these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal." The *punishment* shall last as long as the *life*, for the duration of each is expressed by precisely the same word in the original language of our Saviour.

Let me not, however, travel over the same ground twice in this amicable controversy. To your "TWISTIFICATION" of the *account* of the rich man and Lazarus, I have already made all the reply which I think it deserves. No man would ever be absurd enough to adopt your explanation and perversion, had he not previously settled it in his own mind that there shall be no sinners in a future state of existence and suffering. Any sober critic will think a smile a sufficient answer to all your laboured endeavours to make the rich man to represent the Scribes and Pharisees, and Lazarus publicans and sinners. You may summon LIGHTFOOT, and HAMMOND, and WHITBY, to your aid, but after all I must tell you that your comment, to my mind, is quite as ridiculous as that of the spiritualizer of the Bible, who made *three flocks of sheep lying by a well in the field, to denote the trinity;* and the well to be the unity of the Deity; who, when he came to his improvement of the discourse, said, "behold, a well in the field--oh, my hearers, what a mercy it was that the

field was not in the well, instead of the well in the field!" Gen. xxix. 2.

You refer me to a passage in 2 Thess. i, which I have already quoted, from the sixth to the tenth verse, and wish that I should enter into a more full discussion with you concerning its application to the matter in dispute. To me the passage seemed so clear, after all your attempts to heap difficulties upon it, that I thought further comment needless. I will, however, answer some of your questions on that text. You ask, "*Who* troubled the Thessalonians? for they were the persons to be punished in the manner stated." I answer, Somebody — some wicked persons; we do not certainly know who. Whoever they were, they have been punished with destruction which will prove everlasting. From your citation of Acts xvii. 5—9, you seem to think they were Jews. I think some of them may have been Jews, but that in general they were the countrymen of the Thessalonian Christians; for to "the Church of the Thessalonians" he says, 1 Thess. ii. 14, "ye also have suffered like things of your *own countrymen*," which the churches in Judea have suffered from their unbelieving countrymen the Jews. This seems clearly to intimate, that native Greeks of Thessalonica, who never were at Judea, were the persons to be punished when the Lord should come.

At the time when Paul planted the gospel in Thessalonica, he preached at first in the synagogue of the Jews, and when *some of them* believed, their unbelieving brethren the Jews, "moved with envy, took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort, and gathered a company, and set all the city in an uproar, and assaulted the house of Jason." But besides some few Jews, of the devout Greeks a multitude believed, and were organized into a Christian church, "and of the chief women not a few." Now when Paul, at a subsequent time, wrote to the Church of Thessalonica of the sufferings which they had endured, probably since he last visited them, there is no evidence that he referred principally to Jews; but rather much reason to conclude that the unbelieving Greeks

were the principal persecutors, who were to be punished when Christ should come, not to Thessalonica, nor to Jerusalem, but to judge the world in righteousness. The time, moreover, when Christ should come to be glorified in his saints and to recompense tribulation to them who troubled pious Thessalonians, is shown by 2 Thess. ii, to be subsequent to the erection and the destruction of the papal man of sin. Paul cautions his readers not to think that the day of recompense of which he had been speaking, was near at hand; for says he, *that day*, meaning the day when the Lord Jesus should be revealed from heaven, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, "shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself against all that is called God." Now this papal son of perdition, who pretends to sit in the temple of God and show himself as an object of worship, whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders, was not revealed for several hundred years after Christ's coming judicially by the Roman army to the destruction of Jerusalem.

This shows that your attempt to make the time of our Saviour's coming, "in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ," to the time of Jerusalem's destruction, is perfectly futile.

You ask "*When* were they to be punished?" I answer, *when*, after the rise and fall of the papacy, the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels:—when he shall gather all nations before him, and shall divide the righteous from the wicked, to consign the first to everlasting life, and the last to everlasting punishment, originally prepared for the devil and his angels.

Then they who have not received "the love of the truth, that they might be saved," and to whom for their love of lies, God has sent strong delusion, that they should believe a lie, shall be damned, with all who believed not the truth but "had pleasure in unrighteousness." You

ask, "*Where* shall they be punished?" I answer, wherever they are, or may be in a state of banishment from the blissful and gracious presence of the Lord. I answer, in hell, which is any and every place in which any one experiences unmingled and hopeless misery.

Finally, you ask, "In what was the punishment to consist?" In such *tribulation* as God shall *recompense* to them; in such *vengeance* as he shall take on them; in *everlasting destruction from his presence*, not from existence, because then their everlasting tribulation would be impossible; and in being excluded for ever from the society of the saints who shall be glorified with their Redeemer.

All the passages of Scripture which you have hitherto adduced in support of your utterly false and pernicious system, have received in my view ample attention.

Having thus spoken my sentiments freely and candidly, I shall not complain if you should employ equally strong language in giving your views of what I hold to be the solemn and awful truth of God concerning the endless damnation of the impenitently wicked. If I have taken my gloves off to write the present epistle, remember that you have invited me to make as free with you as with my high church Presbyterian brethren, who with all their faults, are Christ's ministers still.

Yours, without one particle of unkind feeling, however I may seem severe. EZRA STILES ELY.

TO MR. EZRA STILES ELY.

Philadelphia, Feb 7, 1835.

Dear Sir—There is, in my judgment, a great want of candour and charity in many parts of your letter to which this is a reply. You say, that my "hope of future blessedness is founded in the belief that all mankind will be rendered happy *merely* by being raised from the dead, and rendered immortal." Surely you cannot have either overlooked or forgotten my reiterated declaration, that man-

kind will be rendered happy hereafter by being *made alive in Christ*, in *incorruption, power, glory;* in a *spiritual body*, in the *image of the heavenly*. This is the express testimony of Divine Revelation; and as such I receive it in the love of the truth.

Your illustration and implied comparison of the "poor malefactor in his white frock and cap," savours as little of Christian charity as of courteous wit; and as I am willing to believe you penned it without due reflection, I will pass it by without further remarks.

In speaking of the *rich man and Lazarus*, you intimate that I deny your exposition, "because when they died they became nothing until new made in the resurrection." Surely you have not so carelessly perused my letter as to receive the impression, that I acknowledge the account in question to be a literal relation of facts. In my exposition of that subject, neither natural death, nor a resurrection into life, is so much as hinted at.

In reference to the same subject, you utter a sentence which might perhaps be returned to you with the alteration of *one* word—as follows:—"No man would ever be absurd enough to adopt your exposition and perversion, had he not previously settled it in his own mind that there shall be *some* sinners in a future state of existence and suffering."

You seem to think that a smile is sufficient answer to my scriptural exposition of the parable in question. Allow me to assure you, that as I was not *laughed into* that view of that subject, it is not probable I shall ever be *smiled out* of it. I have at least *attempted* to establish every point of my exposition by sacred Scripture; and it appears to me that your respect for the Bible, if not for your correspondent, should induce you to give serious attention to the matter. I should consider it as unbecoming in me to mourn over the prospective salvation of all our race, as it would be in you to crack a joke in view of endless damnation.

You denounce Universalism as an "utterly false and pernicious system," and you employ other offensive epi-

thets in expression of your views and feelings. As I suppose you adopted this measure in order to satisfy your Presbyterian brethren that *you are not going over to the Universalists*, I will simply remark, that the letter before me will, in my judgment, be amply sufficient for that purpose; and I therefore hope you will strive to avoid all offensive language in future.

When I desired you to reason with your Universalist brother as you do with your high school brethren in the Presbyterian Church, you surely could not have so misapprehended my meaning, as to suppose that I wished you *to take off the gloves of Christian charity*. I sincerely assure you, that I do not feel disposed to use as "strong language" to you as you have used to me. You are not ignorant of the fact, that your correspondent is not altogether unacquainted with the use of the two-edged sword of ridicule and satire—but he hereby re-assures you, that he prefers to wield the "sword of the Spirit, which is the *word of God*." It is his humble desire and prayer, that in the last hour of his earthly pilgrimage he may enjoy the satisfaction of knowing, that in this discussion he has not written a line, or used an expression, which he could wish to erase.

Having thus briefly noticed a few incidental items of your letter, I shall proceed to examine whatever seems to have a bearing on the question in debate.

It appears you "have never prayed that *Universalism* may prove true." I think I may safely add, you have never prayed that it may prove *false*, however false you may *believe* it to be. Consequently, though you do not pray *for* Universalism, you do not pray *against* it. You are not *with* us in faith and preaching—and in this respect you are *against* us, Matt. xii. 30. But in the matter of prayer and desire, you "are on our part," Mark ix. 40—for "*he that is not against us is for us*," Luke ix. 50. And I am not without hope that you will yet cease to preach what you cannot pray for; and that you will then determine to proclaim the doctrine against which you cannot find it in your heart to pray. I must acknowledge nevertheless

that if the final holiness and happiness of all mankind would, in your judgment, be so awful and pernicious a consummation as your language seems to intimate, I cannot see what there is to prevent you from praying against it.

Your incidental mention of the "*unpardonable* sin," as you choose to term it, comes too soon. My letter of Aug. 27, 1834, contained some important remarks on that subject, to which you have not yet deigned to reply.

You say, "I have never said that nothing but one expression or clause of Scripture prevents me from becoming a Universalist." You are aware, however, that in your letter of Aug. 21, 1834, you introduce the expression in Luke xx, "they which shall be accounted worthy"—and you add, "*But for this clause, this text would render me a Universalist.*" In my reply, I endeavoured to remove the obstacle referred to, by citing other Bible testimony on that point; and I have several times desired you to state wherein the argument failed to satisfy you—but you have hitherto allowed the matter to rest. I am really solicitous to hear from you on this subject—for if I can succeed in convincing you that the clause in question does not impair the force of the passage in proof of Universalism, you will of course "admit the doctrine, and construe all other passages of the Bible in consistency with it, or reject the whole."

The "far-fetched, inconsistent or absurd meaning," which I ascribe to the testimony by you adduced in proof of endless misery, happens to be stated in the language of the Bible. As to the "resurrection of damnation," by you mentioned, that matter is scripturally explained in my letter of Aug. 27, 1834; and the events connected with the coming of the Son of man are particularly noticed in my communications of May 9, and August 2, 1834. If you will re-peruse the latter, you will discover that the supposed transition of reference in Matt. xxiv, is therein largely considered; and you will also discover that your then only remaining argument in proof of said transition

was swallowed up and destroyed by the express and positive testimony of our Lord.

But in the letter now before me you say, "Neither you nor I, nor any of the living nations, have yet been gathered together in the presence of the Judge;" and hence you infer that the language, "before him shall be gathered ALL NATIONS," is still future in its reference. In reply, I need only repeat what I stated in former letters, that from the 4th to the 35th verse inclusive of Matt. xxiv, you apply to the period of the destruction of Jerusalem; that at verse 14 of said chapter, Jesus declares that the gospel of the kingdom should be preached in "*all the world* for a witness to ALL NATIONS," previously to said destruction; and that in verse 30 he declares, that when he should come in his glory with his angels, (which you have admitted belongs to the period of the aforesaid destruction,) "ALL THE TRIBES *of the earth*" should mourn. Now, sir, if you can conceive how the gospel was preached "IN ALL THE WORLD for a witness to ALL NATIONS," previously to the destruction of the Jewish polity; or how "ALL THE TRIBES *of the earth*" mourned when the sign of *the coming of the Son of man* appeared in heaven—you surely need not be at a loss to know how "ALL NATIONS" were gathered before him at the period of his coming. Your declaration that this "event has not yet occurred," is unsupported by scriptural authority. I affirm that Jesus declared it *should* occur before the close of the then existing generation, during the natural lifetime of some of his immediate disciples; and I have adduced his explicit prophecies in proof. Your statement that "in *the immortal resurrection state*, there is a state or hell of endless misery," is therefore groundless, so far as Matt. xxv is concerned; and the common-place remark that the words *everlasting* and *eternal*, in the last verse of that chapter, are the same in the original language of our Saviour, is nothing to the purpose—for I deny that either the *eternal life* or *everlasting punishment* there mentioned, pertains to the future state. The judgment, in the prophetic relation of which those phrases occur, was to take place at *the coming of the Son*

of man. See Matt. xvi. 27. 28. Compare Matt. xxiv. 29. 30 and xxv. 31. And as to the adjective *everlasting*, the Scripture writers apply it, as I have repeatedly stated, to the priesthood of Aaron, to the covenant of the law, and to many other things, which not only had no reference to the future state, but were temporary in their relations and character.

I am much pleased that you have at last, after four distinct and urgent solicitations, introduced and briefly commented on 2 Thess. i. 6—10. You stated in your letter of April 3, 1834, that in your opinion said passage is so "conclusive on the subject of our controversy," that it "must for ever prevent your becoming a Universalist." Desiring our readers to remember these particulars, I proceed to notice your argument.

The persons to be punished as stated in verse 10, are mentioned in verse 6. "Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to *them that trouble you.*" No other persons than those who troubled the Thessalonian believers, had, or can have any part or lot in the matter of the punishment. It is true that those believers suffered much at the hands of some of their own countrymen—but it is plain that the unbelieving Jews at Thessalonica were the *instigators* thereof, as well as the *principal persecutors* in person. This is obvious from Acts xvii. 5—9, and 1 Thess. ii. 14—16.

In endeavouring to fix the *time when*, you assume that by "the man of sin" the papacy is intended. This is altogether gratuitous. Paul speaks of "the mystery of iniquity" as being *already* at work when he wrote. He declares that the events by him spoken of should occur *when the Lord Jesus should be revealed from heaven—when he should come*, Luke xvii. 30, 31, is to the point. "Even thus shall it be *in the day when the Son of man is revealed.* IN THAT DAY, he which shall be upon the house top, and his stuff in the house, let him not come down to take it away; and he that is in the field, let him likewise not return back." Similar directions are given in Matt. xxiv. 15- 18, and in Luke xxi. 20—23; in all which places the

time of tribulation to Jerusalem is obviously referred to —"*When he shall come.*" See Matt. x. 23; xvi. 27, 28; xxiv. 29, 30.

The persons signified by the word WHO, and the *time* WHEN, being thus settled by the plain and unequivocal testimony of the Bible, only two questions remain. WHERE were they to be punished? You say, *in hell*—meaning a hell of misery in the future state. But Paul does not say so. He says, "who shall be punished *from the presence of the Lord.*" David uses the following language: "Whither shall I flee from *thy presence?* If I make my bed *in hell* thou art there," Psalm cxxxix. 7, 8. Cain went out *from the presence of the Lord*, Gen. iv. 16. Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish *from the presence of the Lord*, Jonah i 3.

In solving this seeming difficulty, we should remember that in the phraseology of the Bible *the presence of the Lord* is frequently considered as something *located.* The Shekinah, that dwelt between the cherubims which overshadowed the mercy seat of the altar, was under the old covenant specially considered *the presence of the Lord.* Hence said David, "Thou that dwellest between the cherubims, shine forth," Psalm lxxx. 1. The land of Judea, and particularly the temple, was by the Jews considered the place of God's peculiar presence. Jonah fled *from the presence of the Lord* unto Tarshish, where he supposed the presence of the Lord was NOT. And where he believed the presence of the Lord to be, we learn from chap. ii. 4: "I am cast out of thy sight; yet I will look again *toward thy holy temple.*" There dwelt the presence of the Lord, and there the glory of his power was displayed. And with these facts in view we already perceive in WHAT the punishment of the persons mentioned in 2 Thess. i. 6, consisted. It consisted in *everlasting destruction* FROM *the presence of the Lord* and FROM *the glory of his power*—that is, in the overthrow of Jerusalem, the consequent destruction of the temple and the ejection of the Jews from the land of Judea.

In confirmation of this statement, see 2 Kings xiii. 23.

"And the Lord was gracious unto them, and had compassion on them, because of his covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and would not *destroy* them, neither *cast them from his presence as yet.*" This was spoken of the Jews. God speaks of *destroying* them, and of *casting them from his presence.* What he here says, that *as yet* he would not do to this people, in the following passage we find that he did. "For through the anger of the Lord, it came to pass in Jerusalem and Judah, until he *had cast them out* FROM HIS PRESENCE, that Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon," 2 Kings xxiv. 20. The same is repeated, Jeremiah lii. 3. During their seventy years captivity in Babylon, the Jews are said to have suffered *destruction from the presence of the Lord.* Paul, in writing to the Thessalonians, speaks of the same people. and uses similar language in description of similar judgments.

But you will say, perhaps, that Paul speaks of "*everlasting* destruction." True—and Moses speaks of the everlasting covenant of the law, and of the everlasting priesthood of Aaron; and the land of Canaan was promised as an everlasting possession to the house of Israel. Besides, it is written, Jeremiah xxiii. 39, 40, "Therefore, behold, I, even I, will utterly forget you, and I will forsake you, and *the city* that I gave you and your fathers, and *cast you out of my presence;* and I will bring an *everlasting reproach* upon you, and a *perpetual shame,* which shall not be forgotten." This everlasting reproach and perpetual shame the Jewish people are now experiencing; and so also of the everlasting destruction mentioned by Paul.

In view of the question, "In what was the punishment to consist?" you say—"I answer, in such *tribulation* as God shall *recompense* to them; in such *vengeance* as he shall take on them." Very true; and in reference to the overthrow of Jerusalem, prior to the banishment of the Jews from Judea, it is written—"For then shall be *great* TRIBULATION, such *as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no nor ever shal*

be," Matt. xxiv. 21. And in reference to the same period, we find the following record: "Then let them which be in Judea flee to the mountains . . . . for these be the days of VENGEANCE, that all things which are written may be fulfilled . . . . there shall be great distress in the land, and WRATH upon this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be *led away captive into all nations;* and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles," Luke xxi. 20—24. Paul, in speaking of these events, says, in addressing the Thessalonians, "For the WRATH is come [rather *is coming*—MACKNIGHT, HAMMOND, and others,] upon them *to the* UTTERMOST," 1 Thess. ii. 16.

I need not add any thing further, at present, on the passage in question. You may perhaps assert that my *scriptural exposition* of the subject is "strained, unnatural and ridiculous;" and perhaps you may deem a "smile" a sufficient reply to what I have written. Such procedure would undoubtedly excite some prejudice against your correspondent, and against the doctrine of which he is an advocate, in the minds of some of our readers—but, in my judgment, an attempt on your part to overthrow my conclusions by Bible testimony, would more effectually subserve the interests of truth, and better comport with just ideas of controversial equity between man and man.

Affectionately yours, &c.
ABEL C. THOMAS

TO MR. ABEL C. THOMAS.

Philadelphia, March 5, 1835.

Dear Sir—I have now published your last letter, which I believe is one more on your side of the controversy than on my own. I shall here desist from all further regular correspondence, because I expect soon to start for a journey of two months at the least, and all my time

before my departure will be required in preparation Your letters in The Philadelphian are sufficient to show my readers what is the present scheme of Universal Salvation, and what are the chief arguments by which it is supported: my letters, published in many of your papers, (to the editors of which I make my respectful acknowledgements,) will show all who read them the principal scriptural arguments which are adduced in proof that some of the human family will be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and the glory of his power.

On the score of politeness you have the advantage of me, for you very complaisantly feel confident that I am sure of reaching heaven: you are satisfied also of the final salvation of all whom you style Partialists; while I am compelled to say, that I have personally known but a very few Universalists who were persons of good moral character; and I verily believe there is no device of the devil so well calculated to blind men to their ruin, and harden them against all the admonitions of heavenly wisdom, as your scheme of universal holiness and happiness, resulting merely from the resurrection of the dead to a state of immortal existence.

That our discussion should thus close, without any unfriendly personal litigation, is to me a matter of satisfaction.

I pray you to flee from the wrath to come, while you beg me to be assured of everlasting bliss beyond the resurrection.

Yours respectfully,
EZRA STILES ELY.

TO MR. EZRA STILES ELY.

Philadelphia, March 13, 1835.

Dear Sir—I find on examination that as many *letters of argumentation* have appeared on *your* side of the

controversy as on *mine*. Your last, and it would seem *final*, communication is not of a controversial character, yet it demands a reply—to the publication of which I think I am entitled. I desire to assure you, however, that I care little about having the last *word*, so long as I can be satisfied, as I am at present, that I have had the last *argument*.

I regret exceedingly that you have determined to "desist from all further regular correspondence.". I have enjoyed not a little satisfaction in knowing that the readers of *The Philadelphian* were in a fair way of becoming measurably acquainted with the doctrine of Universalism. I have even been sometimes encouraged to hope, that my learned and respected correspondent would himself be brought to a knowledge of the truth, and become an advocate of the faith he has vainly attempted to destroy. And my regret in being certified that the discussion on your part is closed, is increased by the consideration, that neither you nor your readers have yet had more than a glimpse of the scriptural arguments in proof of the final holiness and happiness of all mankind. The few passages by me introduced and commented upon in this discussion, were only *specimens* of the precious testimonies of Holy Writ. The treasury is full. The riches of Christ are unsearchable. Most fervently do I desire to direct your attention to the height, and length, and depth, and breadth of the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that you might be filled with all the fulness of God!

It appears to me that your contemplated absence of two months is not a sufficient excuse for discontinuing the discussion in its present condition. In endeavouring to establish the doctrine of endless punishment, you have cited a multitude of passages; and to your arguments thereupon I have given respectful and serious attention. And it does not seem to comport with received ideas of equity between man and man, that I should be debarred the privilege (not to say the right) of appearing in the columns of *The Philadelphian* in proclamation

and defence of Universalism. Besides: your rejoinders would be faithfully and punctually copied into nine or ten Universalist papers, and in this way you would be more likely than in any other to reach the numerous believers of the doctrine, and peradventure deliver some of them from what you consider a most ruinous "device of the devil." You could not ask, you cannot conceive, a more favourable opportunity than is here presented, for exposing the falsity and the blinding and hardening influence of Universalism. Were you to receive information that an island had been discovered, the thousands of whose inhabitants were going headlong to perdition, you would be among the first to present their deplorable case to the friends of missions. And were you to be assured that those inhabitants were not only willing but desirous to listen to the gospel testimony as you understand it, you would insist upon the immediate selection of a suitable missionary. And yet, when thirty thousand Universalists are anxious to hear what you have to say on the passages I might cite in proof of the ultimate reconciliation of all things to God, you plead a projected absence of two months as a sufficient excuse for discontinuing the discussion! Can it be possible that you fully realize the awful responsibility to which you so frequently refer? Are you sure that you could stand before the Judge of the quick and dead, and say, "I embraced every favourable opportunity to convert the Universalists from the error of their ways?" But I will not enlarge on this subject. Your own sense of religious obligation will haunt you with the reflection, that you have failed in the performance of your solemn duty as an anointed servant of the Most High God.

You concede that I have the advantage of you on the score of politeness. You are right—and I feel happy in being enabled to inform you, that the advantage referred to is given to me by the doctrine I profess. You are my brother. As such I love you. I behold in you an heir of immortal blessedness. I confidently expect to meet you in a world of holiness, there to embrace you in the

fulness of love divine. You and I will there behold and adore the glories of the Lamb that was slain, and mingle our praises with the hallelujahs of the redeemed of the Lord. The thought is ineffably glorious and sublime! We have one Father and one Redeemer—and why should I treat you otherwise than as a brother?

I am sorry that you thought proper to say, in your closing letter, that you "have personally known but a very few Universalists who were persons of good moral character." I might say, with equal propriety, that I have personally known but a very few Presbyterians who were persons of good moral character. The truth is, your personal acquaintance with Universalists is as limited as is mine with the Presbyterians; and unbiassed readers will at once perceive the impropriety of impliedly denouncing an entire denomination of Christians, on the ground of a personal acquaintance with a very few of its members. Besides: the question at issue has been, not what is the general moral character of either Universalists or Partialists, but "Does the Bible teach the doctrine of endless punishment?" I am sensible that Universalists are not a whit better than they ought to be; and I suppose you might safely say as much of the Presbyterians. But when we are investigating a question pertaining to doctrinal truth, the topic of relative moral character is irrelevant to the point in debate.

I cordially unite in your expression of satisfaction that our controversy should close without any unfriendly personal litigation.

In closing this communication, I desire to mention that I propose to continue this discussion in a series of letters addressed to you, as heretofore. My object in so doing is, to present my scriptural arguments in proof of the final holiness and happiness of all mankind. I am perfectly satisfied that the arguments to be thus adduced, will be of an incontrovertible character; and this consideration gives me some encouragement to hope that you will yet be induced to take up the cross, and be-

come an efficient advocate of "the faith once delivered to the saints."

Affectionately yours,
ABEL C. THOMAS.

TO MR. EZRA STILES ELY.

Philadelphia, June 19, 1835.

Dear Sir—Previously to presenting the scriptural argument in proof of the final holiness and happiness of all mankind, I feel at liberty to devote one communication to some general remarks, in the form of a review.

And I begin by commending your practical disregard of a principle of policy by which the mass of your brethren in the faith of endless punishment have hitherto been governed. Your acquaintance with the "sayings and doings" of the several prominent sects in Christendom, must long since have satisfied you, that *the Universalists anxiously desire a thorough investigation of the merits of the doctrine they profess.* The use of our meeting-houses, as you very well know, has frequently and urgently been tendered to the opposers of the sentiment in which we rejoice; and the columns and pages of our periodical publications have ever been open to the controversial communications of the opponents of our faith. You are aware that these evidences of our disposition to "try the spirits whether they are of God," have seldom been so regarded as to induce a compliance with our respectful solicitations; and you are also aware, that it has been the general policy of the Partialists to avoid and discourage all direct discussion with the Universalists. You, sir are an honourable exception. In consenting to discuss a conjoint question in reference to the final destination of man, you acted consistently. You faithfully re-published the epistles of your correspondent; and though you abruptly closed the discussion, thus excluding my proofs of Universalism from the columns of *The Philadelphian*, I

heartily thank and commend you for having engaged in the controversy, and for having so long continued to present my letters to the readers of your paper.

In repeatedly citing scriptural passages in a way which intimated that I either denied the doctrine they teach, or was ignorant of their existence; in likening me to a malefactor on his way to the gallows; in stating that in your judgment I "have no superior on earth" in the matter of "perverting Scripture by Scripture;" in pronouncing some of my expositions ridiculous and absurd, without attempting to show wherein;—in these particulars, and in a few others, to which I need not refer, you treated your correspondent with much disrespect; yet, on the whole, your demeanour in our controversy was fully as courteous as the principles of your doctrine would allow, and rather more so than many of your brethren appeared to approve. And as you have conceded that I have the advantage of you on the score of politeness—(which advantage I have already desired you to place to the credit of Universalism,) I am disposed to accept that concession as a sufficient apology for your occasional incivility. Permit me to add, that I have long entertained an exalted opinion of your character and talents; and I hope ever to esteem and love you as a brother in the human race, however much in darkness I may suppose you to be.

In styling Universalism "a most ruinous device of the devil;" in classing it with Atheism, Deism, and Romanism; and in using other offensive terms when speaking thereof, you manifested a spirit which in the calm hours of reflection you must certainly condemn; and in view of your implied aspersions of the moral and religious character of the denomination of Universalists, you cannot avoid deploring the indiscretion of your zeal. You have implicitly stated that we "desire to believe a different doctrine than that taught by the Holy Spirit of inspiration;" and though you have *very charitably* conceded that there are *some* upright men among us, you declare that you have "personally known but a very few Universalists who were persons of good moral character"

The former statement involves the charge of gross hypocrisy, and the latter of general iniquity. Be sure, you do not *say* that Universalists *generally* are vile persons; and I am aware that such is not the grammatical import of your language. And I will add, that if to the declaration specially commented upon, you had appended the remark, that your personal acquaintance with Universalists has ever been limited to a very few members of the denomination, the aspersion would have been so effectually nullified as to have displayed but the blindness of the spirit by which it was dictated Nevertheless, the statement, as it stands in your letter, was *calculated* (I will not say *designed*) to perpetuate the influence of an unwarranted, unrighteous prejudice against the denomination to which I belong. As a friend and a brother, I beseech you to avoid such occasions of offence in the future; and while you continue zealously to oppose whatever you deem erroneous in doctrine, carefully avoid impugning the motives, and sedulously guard against aspersing the moral and religious character of your opponents.

In reviewing the plan of argumentation by you adopted, I find little to commend. It is undeniable that you evinced much talent and tact in endeavouring to establish the doctrine of endless punishment. You adduced as strong evidence in proof of that doctrine as any man can furnish from the sacred oracles; and your reasoning was frequently plausible, and your conclusions seemingly just. Nevertheless, in my judgment, you did not adduce a single *sound argument* in proof of the dogma of endless torment. You seldom attempted to show that the scriptural passages by you introduced, have reference to the future state; and whenever I specially called your attention to this radical defect in your argument, you either maintained a discourteous silence, offered some reasons predicated of your opinion, or consented to leave the matter to the judgment of our readers! I am not versed in the logic of the schools—but to my mind it is manifest that the testimony must be equivalent to the declara

tion; and if the testimony be not to the point, it must be set aside.

When you cited the closing part of Matt. xxv, I stated that the citation is the conclusion of a discourse which commences at the fourth verse of chap. xxiv; that much of the discourse treats of events pertaining to the destruction of Jerusalem; and that unless you could prove a transition of reference from things temporal to things incorruptible, the citation was not pertinent. In reply, you conceded that from the fourth verse to the 35th inclusive of Matt. xxiv, events connected with the destruction of Jerusalem are pointed out and dilated upon; and that at verse 36, there is a transition of reference to a day of future general judgment. In my rejoinder, I stated that Matt. xxiv. 36—41, and Luke xvii. 26—36, are parallel passages; and that as the latter *obviously* referred to the period of the destruction of Jerusalem, such must also be the reference of the former. You plainly perceived that to admit said *parallel* would prove the overthrow of your entire argument; and so you denied it—because in the one case Jesus was addressing his *disciples*, and in the other the *Pharisees!* This pretence availed you nothing—for I furnished you the express testimony that Jesus was addressing his disciples *in both cases.* Instead of acknowledging your error, and making such admissions as said acknowledgment would involve, you offered no remark thereupon; and subsequently rebuked me for assuming that you had yielded the point!

I might refer to many examples of like tenor, in which the radical defect of your reasoning is equally apparent, and in which also the irrelevant character of the proofs you presented is clearly evolved. Space, however, will allow me to notice but one other case.

Having assumed that the account of the rich man and Lazarus is "Christ's statement of some events of which he had perfect knowledge," you proceeded to interpret parts of it *parabolically.* When the propriety of this course was called in question, you resorted to *sophistical* τεμπα ιωον, (which is the curse of logic;) and when the

fallacy of your premises and arguments was pointed out, you neglected to reply! You indeed pronounced my paraphrase of the subject "strained, unnatural, and ridiculous;" stated that a smile was a sufficient answer thereto; and closed your remarks with a profane *joke!* But all this was as destitute of argument as it was discordant with the serious nature of the subject. It contained no proof that the account of the rich man and Lazarus is a historical relation—which position being neither established by you nor conceded by me, all your inferences therefrom are null and void.

I will add, that the *parabolic character* of the entire relation in question, is conceded by SCOTT, GILL, HENRY, JOHN BROWN, MCKNIGHT, WHITBY, CAMPBELL, BURKITT, DODDRIDGE, HORNE, LIGHTFOOT, HAMMOND, TILLOTSON, NEWCOME, and others. And I desire you to remember, that in contending for the historical view of the rich man and Lazarus, you stand in opposition to the best commentators the world has ever produced—several of whom have long been considered oracles in the church of which *you*, sir, are so prominent and active a member.

There are other important particulars in our amicable discussion which I should be pleased to notice; but an aversion to prolixity admonishes me to forbear. I will therefore only subjoin, that, in my judgment, you totally failed to establish the doctrine of endless wo; and I exceedingly regret that your life should be devoted to the promulgation of a sentiment, which not only constitutes no part of the revelation from God, but is destructive of the peace and the happiness of man.

Yours respectfully,
ABEL C. THOMAS.

TO MR. EZRA STILES ELY.

Philadelphia, June 22, 1835.

DEAR SIR: Inasmuch as any doctrine which cannot be

fairly established by a few pertinent citations from the sacred oracles is, in my judgment, unworthy to be considered a part of the Christian *credenda*, the scriptural passages which I shall adduce in proof of the final holiness and happiness of all mankind will not be numerous, though I am entirely satisfied they will be found to stand, as does the faith of the Universalist, "not in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God."

In Gen. xxii. 18, we find it recorded, as the language of the Lord to Abraham, "In thy seed shall *all the nations of the earth* be blessed." In the same promise confirmed to Jacob, it is written, Gen. xxviii. 14, "In thee and in thy seed shall *all the families of the earth* be blessed." And when cited by Peter. in Acts iii. 25, it is on this wise—"In thy seed shall *all the kindreds of the earth* be blessed." Paul, in Gal iii, terms this promise the *gospel:* "And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith. preached before the Gospel to Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed" And he adds—"Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, and to seeds, as of many; but as of one, and to thy seed, *which is Christ.*"

In the light of these concurrent testimonies we discover, that the eventual blessedness in Christ of all the nations, families and kindreds of the earth, is guarantied by the promise of the Almighty, who "is not a man that he should lie, neither the son of man that he should repent. Hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?" Numbers xxiii. 19. Moreover, "When God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he sware by himself . . . . For men verily swear by the greater; and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife. Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: that by *two immutable things*, in which it was *impossible* for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us," Heb. vi. 13–18.

That the language of the promise conveys the idea of *universality*, you will not be inclined to dispute—inas-

much as no individual can be found who belongs not to some nation, family, or kindred. In the angelic annunciation of the advent of Messias, the truth of such tidings as embrace the final blessedness of all our race, is implied: "Fear not: for behold I bring you *good tidings of great joy*, which shall be to *all people*," Luke ii. 10. Indeed good news, or glad tidings, is the literal import of the term *gospel*—and, as before shown, Paul thus denominates the preaching of the Lord to "faithful Abraham."

In what way will you attempt to evade the force of t testimony in proof of the final holiness and happiness all mankind?

Should you allege that the blessedness indicated in promise was to be enjoyed *through faith*, and that as f is not exercised by all the nations, families and kind of the earth, so the prospect of universal blessedne Christ is an illusion—this is my reply:

1st. The promise is the thing to be believed, and as is either true or false If it be *false*, no one can just required to believe it; and if true, its verity cannot fected either by the faith or disbelief of man. Yo gument virtually involves the absurdity, that faith c the *object* of faith—in other words, that the promise we are required to believe is not true until we belie The promise in question is either *absolute* or *condi* If it be *absolute*, the doctrine of universal salva clearly established thereby; if it be *conditional*, c ency requires an acknowledgment of the aforesa surdity. If you deny that the promise is the thin believed, I remark, (1.) That with equal propriet might deny that *the gospel* is the thing to be believe when God made *promise* to Abraham, he preach *gospel*, saying, in thee shall all nations be blessed, 8. (2) The *gospel* was thus preached, that the h might be justified *through faith*. Faith in what tainly in the doctrine preached. And will you c that any man can be justified by faith in that whic true before it is believed?

2d. It is written, "They which be of faith *are with* faithful Abraham," Gal. iii. 9. How was A

blessed? Plainly in believing that in his seed all the nations, families and kindreds of the earth should be blessed. *His* blessedness was consequent of faith in *universal* blessedness—and the presupposition is, that the fulfilment of the promise was not, in any sense, dependent on the exercise of faith *by him*. And as they who believe the same gospel *are* blessed in like manner, it follows that the alleged conditionality of the promise is based in error.

Jesus said, "Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad," John viii. 56. He saw it by faith; and the righteousness of his faith was predicated of the *absolute* character of the promise which announced the coming of the Saviour.

In 1 John v. 9—11, we read as follows: "If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son. 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. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son." It is the province of a witness to make that known which is already true, and by disbelieving his testimony we impeach his veracity. Now the record of God is simply, that he has given us eternal life in his Son; and the fact that the unbeliever, by not accrediting the record, makes God a liar, (that is, impeaches the Divine veracity,) proves that God has given eternal live to the unbeliever. The *gift* is *absolute*—"for what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith [rather faithfulness] of God without effect? God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar," Rom. iii. 3, 4. It is written, "for God hath concluded *all* in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all," Rom. xi 32 And in view of this glorious object, most heartily can the true disciple exclaim, "O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! . . . . For *of* him, and *through* him, and *to* him, are ALL THINGS: to whom be glory for ever. Amen."

I feel no disposition to deny that conditions are appended to many Divine testimonies—such, for example, as the

following: "If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall e the good of the land; but if ye refuse and rebel, ye sha be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the Lo hath spoken it." Isaiah i 19, 20. And I also hold, th while the promise of universal blessedness in Christ *absolute*, our present happiness is, in a great measure, pendent on the hearty acknowledgment of the tr Nevertheless, should every soul of our race live and d total ignorance of the promise in question, the ultim purpose of the Almighty would not be defeated he And I am satisfied that this statement is fully sustaine the arguments already presented.

In 2 Cor i. 18—20, Paul writes as follows: "B God is true, our word toward you was not yea and For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was pre among you by us, even by me and Sylvanus and theus, was not yea and nay, but in him was yea I *the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen* the glory of God by us." Now, sir, it appears to m your doctrine of conditions to be performed by th ture, contradicts the spirit of this sacred Scripture affirm, in effect, that if the promises be believed th be *yea;* but if disbelieved they will be *nay*. So, of averring with the apostle that all the promises in Christ are *yea and Amen*, you virtually conte they are either *yea or nay*, according to the faith o lief of man! Your doctrine of conditions goes than this: It involves the Atheistical ground, that vine promises are *neither yea nor nay*, until they a acknowledged or denied!

Jesus said, "And I, if I be lifted up from th will draw all men unto me," John xii 32. In guage our Lord does not intimate that he wou those only to himself who in after times should b his name; but he states, positively, that he wou *all men* unto him, if he should be lifted up from t So soon as the condition was performed, the de was numbered with the promises of the Lord, v *yea and Amen.*

The language of the Almighty to Abraham, is and unequivocal. No conditions are expressed-

ditions are implied. "In thee and in thy seed *shall* all the nations, families and kindreds of the earth be blessed." The thing promised is clearly expressed; and unquestionably the Lord has at his disposal all the means which are essential to the fulfilment of his purpose. I am "fully persuaded that what he has promised he is able also to perform;" and consequently I "stagger not at the promise of God through unbelief," but am "strong in faith, giving glory to God." Sin indeed abounds—but grace abounds much more than sin, Rom. v. 20. Unbelief prevails—nevertheless "he is faithful who promised," Heb. x. 23. Men are in bondage—but "the creation itself also *shall be delivered* from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God," Rom viii. 21.

In the Scriptures which treat of the immortal condition of man, the thing to be accomplished is as clearly stated as heart can desire it to be; and that the Supreme Being, either mediately or immediately, will accomplish the work in his own time and way, is a prominent doctrine of Divine revelation. The serpent's head will be bruised, yea, the devil and all his works will be destroyed—but *not by man.* The enterprise will be accomplished by *the seed of the woman*, the SON OF GOD, Gen. iii. 15; Heb. ii. 14; 1 John iii. 8. "The dead shall be raised incorruptible"—but *not by the power of man.* The energies of the quickening spirit of the Most High, will clothe us upon with immortality, that mortality may be swallowed up of life. Death will be swallowed up in victory, and tears will be wiped from off all faces—but *not by man.* "The LORD OF HOSTS . . . . will swallow up death in victory; and the LORD GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces," Isaiah xxv. 8. In these passages, and in others of correspondent tenor, everything essential to the final blessedness of all our race, is clearly pointed out; and the eye of faith is directed to the ALMIGHTY, as the being by whose power the glorious consummation will be effected. So, when the Lord preached the gospel to Abraham, he promised no more than he was abundantly able and definitely determined to perform. He clearly perceived what difficulties, if any, would arise; and wisely adapting his means to the production of the end he designed, the work

is being prosecuted in the manner which seemeth good in his sight; and the issue will prove the righteousness of the faith of the "Friend of God."

Yours respectfully,
ABEL C. THOMAS.

TO MR. EZRA STILES ELY.

Philadelphia, June 25, 1835.

Dear Sir—In 1 Timothy ii. 4—6, Paul declares, that God our Saviour *will have* πάντας ἀνθρώπους *all men* to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom ὑπερ πάντων *for all*, to be testified in due time.

Previously to offering any comments of my own on this explicit testimony, I will direct your attention to the following remarks by Dr. WHITBY, whose general orthodoxy you will not be disposed to dispute. He says:

"These verses contain several convincing arguments that God wills the salvation of all men in particular, and that Christ thus died for all. For, 1. The apostle here enjoins us to pray for all men, because *God will have all men to be saved.* Now it is unquestionably the Christian's duty, and was the constant practice of the church, to pray for all men in particular, and therefore the reason here assigned of this duty must reach to all men in particular. 2. The apostle reasons thus: *God will have all men to be saved*, because he is the God of all, the common Father, Creator, Governor and Preserver of all men. Now thus he is the God of all men in particular; and so this argument must show that he would have all men in particular to be saved . . . . . 3. He *will have all men to be saved*, saith the apostle; *for there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all.* Now if the argument from one *God* was, as we have proved, designed to show that he is the God of all men in particular, the argument from this one *mediator* must also

prove Christ the mediator of all men in particular. Hence he is here emphatically styled *the man Christ Jesus*, to intimate unto us, that having taken upon him the nature common to us all, to fit him for this office, he must design it for the good of all who were partakers of that nature; for as he was a man, he surely was endued with the best of human affections, *universal charity*, which would excite him to promote the welfare of all. As he was a man, he was subject to the common law of humanity, which obliges us to endeavour the common benefit of men." *Annot. in loc.*

Such is the annotation of WHITBY, on the passage before us; and the argument is, to my mind, equivalent to demonstration. Nevertheless, the learned commentator believed in and advocated the doctrine of endless punishment—with which, however, his reasoning is radically irreconcilable. I fully unite in his explication of the will of God; and will now proceed to notice the objections you may perhaps feel disposed to urge thereunto.

And the first I shall name is the Arminian cavil, that the expression, *God will have all men to be saved*, simply denotes the *desire* of the Almighty that such may be the issue of the Divine economy. Although a Calvanist, you are compelled to adopt this view of the subject—for, should you admit that the *will* mentioned is a *determinate purpose* of the Lord, you must either concede the truth of Universalism, (which you term a "most ruinous device of the devil,") or grant that the determinate purpose of God will be eternally thwarted by the iniquity of man. The latter position is as discordant with enlightened reason as it is with the Bible doctrine of the Divine efficiency; and you therefore must totally disallow it. And as you are not yet prepared to concede the truth of Universalism, you must adopt the Arminian cavil before adverted to. You have no alternative.

But you are in no better condition, in this state of the case, than you were before—for, since you admit that God *desires* the salvation of all men, you must either concede that all men will be saved, or deny that "the desire of the righteous shall be granted," Prov. x. 24. Now, sir, it appears to me that he who "openeth his hand and

satisfieth the desire of every living thing," Psalm cxlv. 16, will certainly so arrange matters as to satisfy his own. Besides: how does it consist with true theology, to allege, that the Supreme God *desires* a consummation which he has not *purposed* to effect? or that he *wills* a result which he does not desire?

Should you deny that God desires the salvation of all men, you must admit one of three positions: 1st. That he is wholly indifferent to the fate of the children of humanity; 2d. That he desires the endless wretchedness of all our race; or 3d. That he desires the salvation of a part or portion of the human family, and the interminable misery of the rest. The first and second positions are exploded by the testimony that Jesus "gave himself a ransom"—which argues against indifference, and proves a Divine desire for salvation to *some* extent; and the consideration that he "gave himself a ransom FOR ALL," demands a reply to the question, how the *one Mediator* could consistently give himself a ransom for a greater number than the *one God* desired to save?

Moreover: since Jesus "gave himself a ransom for all," you must either admit that all will be restored, or consent to the appalling conclusion that Christ died in vain! Now, sir, the Bible instructs me to believe, that our blessed Master "shall see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied," Isa. liii. 11; and that he who "tasted death ὑπερ παντας *for all*," Heb. ii. 9, shall finally "subdue all things to himself," and deliver up the kingdom to the Father, "that God may be all in all."

I have thus attempted to show, that even should the *will* of God named in the text be considered expressive only of *desire*, the argument is conclusive in proof of universal salvation. Nevertheless, I hold that the declaration, *God will have all men to be saved*, expresses the *determinate purpose* of the Almighty. *He* WILL HAVE *all men to be saved*. Were the Bible to declare that he will have all men to be interminably wretched, I would not presume to advocate the salvation of any, on scriptural grounds; and I see not how you can consistently contend for the endless perdition of even a single soul, so long as you are certified by Divine revelation that God πάντας ἀνθρώπους θελει

σωθηναι, "will have all men to be saved." When Jesus said to the leper, θελω, I WILL, be thou clean," Matt. viii. 3, his will was a determinate purpose; and the same remark is applicable to the testimony of Paul in Ephes. i. 9—11: "Having made known unto us the mystery of his WILL, according to his GOOD PLEASURE, which he hath PURPOSED *in himself*, that in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one *all things* in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth, even in him: in whom also we *have* obtained an inheritance, being predestinated *according to the purpose* of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will."

In this passage you perceive, 1st. That the WILL, GOOD PLEASURE, and PURPOSE of God are associated—which fact destroys the supposition that his *will*, in reference to the final destiny of man, is only a matter of *desire*; 2d. That the *will*, *good pleasure* and *purpose* of God embrace the final gathering of *all things* into Christ; 3d. That God purposed this, not in man, (for if dependent on the creature it might fail,) but IN HIMSELF, in the *immutability* of his own nature; and 4th. That he who revealed this glorious and ineffably sublime mystery, "*worketh all things* (not according to the imaginings, faith or works of men, but) *after the counsel of his own will.*" The inference is that *he* HAS *a will*—yea, that HIS *will is primary and independent.* This accords with the testimony in Isa. xiv. 27: "The Lord of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it? and his hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back?" Also it harmonizes with the fervent prayer of the Christian's heart, "Thy will, O God, be done."

Collateral evidence of the final universal in gathering pointed out in the preceding testimony, is furnished in abundance by the voice of inspiration. Jesus said, "For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me," John vi. 38; and we have seen that he who sent the Messias, "will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." In accordance with the spirit of his mission, our Saviour said, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw

all men unto me." John xii. 32. The fulfilment of this glorious purpose, is guarantied by the promise, and the oath, and the power of God. Confirmatory of this conclusion, I cite the following: "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given πάντα *all things* into his hands," John iii. 35. "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out," John vi. 37. The reason assigned of the latter declaration, is stated in the passage first cited in this paragraph. How beautifully this testimony harmonizes with the promise in Psalm xxii. 27, 28: "All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord; and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee. For the kingdom is the Lord's; and he is the governor among the nations."

As I consider you virtually an Arminian, though nominally a Calvanist, I feel at liberty to notice an objection to the foregoing doctrine of Divine revelation.

We are frequently told that God will not do aught in violation of human agency—and that, as *all men do not will to be saved*, universal salvation cannot consistently be effected—inasmuch as said result would imply the aforesaid infringement.

In reply, I remark, that, in the judgment of Universalists, man is a moral agent; that all the agency he possesses is the gift of God; and that to said agency no violence will ever be offered by the Giver. Nevertheless, we hold that he who is the Author of, has the power to give to, the agency of man such impulse, and to his will such a direction, as infinite benevolence may prompt; and to do this in such a way as not to contravene the liberty of the human mind. No violence was offered to the agency or will of Saul of Tarsus—yet that prominent persecutor of the saints, became an eminent apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ, not primarily by, but in conformity with, his own will. And we heartily believe, and *rejoice* in believing, that the Divine efficiency which accomplished this work in the *chief of sinners*, will never lose its power; and that it will go on conquering and to conquer, until the will of every son and daughter of our race shall bow in meek submission to its life-giving energy, and partake

of the celestial joys which nought but the grace of the Lord can bestow.

Yours respectfully,
ABEL C. THOMAS.

TO MR. EZRA STILES ELY.

Philadelphia, July 7, 1835.

Dear Sir—Certain Samaritans believed in the Saviour on the testimony of a woman with whom he had some interesting conversation near Jacob's well: others were indisposed to believe until they had heard him themselves. They heard, and conviction was sealed to their understandings—for they said to the woman, "Now we believe, not because of thy saying; for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is *the Christ, the Saviour of* THE WORLD," John iv. 42. I consider this evidence valuable, chiefly because it corroborates the testimony of the inspired apostle who recorded it: "We have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be *the Saviour of* THE WORLD," 1 John iv. 14.

In order to nullify the force of this sacred Scripture in proof of the final holiness and happiness of all mankind, you will be disposed to deny either that *the world* embraces the whole of our race, or that the object of the Father in sending the Son will be accomplished. To these alternatives our attention will therefore be directed.

In the first place, I suppose you to deny that *the world* comprises the whole of our race. A clause in your letter of April 3, 1834, furnishes information touching the general grounds of said denial. You say, "*The world* and *the whole world* frequently mean any complete system of things; and hence we read of *a world of iniquity* in the tongue; of *a world lying in sin* from which the apostles and saints were excepted; and of *the world* gone after Christ, while multitudes never went after him. There is a world of believers, and a world of unbelievers."

Before proceeding to review these statements, I desire to notice a conclusion to which your reasoning unquestionably leads. In denying that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the entire world of mankind, you virtually affirm, either that some *may be* saved *without* a Saviour, or that salvation for *all men* is IMPOSSIBLE. And it matters little whether that impossibility be consequent of a fixed decree of absolute reprobation, or of the fact that provision has been made for the salvation of only a limited number. The moment you concede that *all men may be saved*, you admit that provision has been made for the salvation of all; and this admission is an acknowledgment, in effect, that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of all.

Allow me to enlarge on this subject. Do you admit, without mental reservation, that it is possible for all our race to be saved? I say, *without mental reservation*—for I am suspicious that some of your Calvinistic brethren, while they proclaim the doctrine that *all may be saved who will*, keep back that very abhorrent feature of their creed, to wit, that *none but the elect can will to be saved*. This, sir, is so obviously a bitter mockery of the sinner's wo, and so palpably a violation of gospel principles, that I cannot, and do not, lay the sin to your personal charge. I assume that you either admit, or deny, unequivocally, that all men *may be* saved. If you admit the bare possibility in question, you must concede that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the whole human family; and if you deny the possibility of salvation for all, you must grant that said impossibility is fixed by a decree of reprobation,—or, what is equivalent thereto, that for the salvation of a part or portion of our race, not the least provision has been made! This, I am satisfied, is substantially the doctrine of your Confession of Faith. "By the decree of God, for the manifestation of His glory, some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life, and others predestinated unto everlasting death. These angels and men, thus predestinated and foreordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed; and *their number is so certain and definite that it cannot be either increased or diminished*." But you teach that

all men *may be* saved; and whether you can or cannot reconcile this idea with the explicit doctrine of your creed, I see not how you can consistently or conscientiously deny that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the whole world.

You say, however, "there is a world of believers, and a world of unbelievers." But did the Father send the Son to be the Saviour of a *world of* BELIEVERS? No, sir, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world *to save* SINNERS," 1 Tim. i. 15. "They that be *whole*, need not a physician, but they that are sick . . . . . I am *not come* to call the *righteous*, but SINNERS to repentance," Matt. ix. 12, 13. "The Son of man is come to save that which is LOST," Matt. xviii. 11. "Christ died for the UNGODLY"—for SINNERS—for his ENEMIES, Rom. v. 6, 8, 10. Who were *believers*, who were *righteous*, when Jesus came into the world? Sir, it is manifest that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of a world of unbelievers and sinners. Thus John saw—thus John testified—and this is the testimony of your correspondent, and of all his kindred in the faith. When the beloved disciple says, "If *any man* sin we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for *our* sins, and not for ours only, but *also* for the *sins of the* WHOLE WORLD," 1 John ii. 1, 2, do you understand him to mean that Jesus is the propitiation for the sins of *believers* only? How many believers were there in the world when Messias "gave himself a ransom for *all*?" how many *saints* when he tasted death for every man? Your doctrine of limitation cannot stand. It is contradictory of the plainest passages of the Bible.

I freely grant that *the world* sometimes signifies a limited number—as in John xii. 19: "The world is gone after him." In other places it may mean a complete system of things, as you state. The scope of the context and reason, must determine the signification. I have already attempted to show that reason affixes the idea of *universality* to the term in 1 John iv. 14—inasmuch as limitation thereof would involve the most revolting conclusions. In 1 John v. 19, to which you refer,

it is written—"And we know that we are of God, and *the whole world* lieth in wickedness." Here the disciples are plainly excepted—but you wiil not contend for any other exception. And I desire you to remember, that Jesus Christ the righteous is declared to be the propitiation for the sins of the persons excepted, and not for theirs only, but *also* for the sins of *the whole world.*

In this state of the argument, you may be disposed to introduce some expressions in the memorable prayer of our Lord, recorded in John xvii. You will contend that the salvation of the whole world of mankind was not contemplated in the mission of Christ, inasmuch as he said. "I pray for *them* [the disciples]; I pray *not for the world*, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine." But the intercession stops not here. If it did, no consistent exposition could be given of the prayer offered by our Lord in the last hour of his earthly career —"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," Luke xxiii 34. The intercession is thus continued: "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that *the world* may believe that thou hast sent me." All I now contend for, is, that the salvation of all mankind was contemplated in the mission of Christ; and this position has, in my judgment, been established beyond the possibility of reasonable dispute. But to "make assurance doubly sure," I repeat, that should you persist in denying what appears to me so perfectly obvious, you must cling to the distinctive doctrine of ancient Calvinism, namely, that there is no possibility for the salvation of any of our race, excepting a number of men and angels which is so certain and definite that it cannot be either increased or diminished. And the abhorrent corollary unavoidably follows, that an equally certain and definite number of men and angels were created to be fuel for hell-fire for ever!

My knowledge of the Christian benevolence of your heart, and of the general character of your public ministrations and editorial labours, justifies me in assuming that you will prefer the previous alternative, namely, that

the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of all mankind. In this case you must either admit the truth of Universalism, or deny that the purpose of the Father of Mercies will be accomplished. Supposing you still inclined "earnestly to contend" against what I believe to be "the faith once delivered to the saints," I shall proceed to show that the preferred alternative is unworthy your support. This work was attended to, in part, in a previous letter—but the Arminian denial of the Divine efficiency is so completely interwoven with popular theology as to justify a farther exposure of its fallacy and infidelity.

To allege that God has commenced an enterprise which he *will not* effect, is an impeachment of his wisdom and immutability—for it implies that circumstances will arise which will induce him wholly to relinquish his purpose, or essentially to modify his plans; and the assertion that he has purposed what he *cannot* effect (no matter what the obstacles may be), is so palpable a denial of his infinite power, that I marvel exceedingly when any one advances the infidel hypothesis. It places the Supreme God in the pitiable condition of a man who begins to build, and is not able to finish. "Which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? Lest haply, *after he hath laid the foundation*, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish," Luke xiv. 28 30. According to the showing of Arminians, God laid the foundation of universal salvation, in sending his Son to be the Saviour of the world; and subsequently discovered that he had not sufficient means to complete the work! I shudder, sir, to think of this profanation of the holy attributes of the Most High God. In my judgment, it is tantamount to treading Immanuel under foot, counting the blood of the covenant an unholy thing, and doing despite to the Spirit of redeeming grace!

To deny that God has made sufficient provision for the salvation of all our race, is to admit the monstrous conclusion before dilated upon—namely, that either by the decree or (with reverence be it said) the neglect of

the Almighty some men and angels will certainly be doomed to endless wo; and to grant that sufficient provision has been made for the salvation of all, is equivalent to an admission that all men will be saved—for the *sufficiency* of the *means* employed, can only be determined by the *accomplishment* of the *end* designed. The gospel, the Divine plan of salvation, views *man as he is*, A SINNER—and the removal of whatever perversity there be in the human will, and of all difficulties which exist, of whatever kind, is provided for in the economy of heaven. Infinite wisdom devised the plan in conformity with the dictates of infinite love, and infinite power will effect the purpose of unbounded grace.

Yours respectfully,
ABEL C. THOMAS.

TO MR. EZRA STILES ELY.

Philadelphia, July 9, 1835.

Dear Sir—Your inattention to my arguments on several passages of sacred Scripture, introduced in the early part of our amicable discussion, will exonerate me from the charge of impropriety in presenting them again. You indeed attempted to invalidate your correspondent's exposition of some of those passages—but when he rejoined and [as he then thought and still thinks) refuted your objections, unwarrantable silence was all the answer he received. I cannot countenance any such disregard of the proofs of the doctrine in which the Universalist rejoices with unutterable joy.

Colossians i. 19, 20: "For it pleased the Father that in him [Christ] should all fulness dwell; and. having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him *to reconcile* ALL THINGS *to himself*, by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven."

In your attempt to set this testimony aside, as a proof of Universalism, you first admitted that "he must be happy who becomes reconciled to God, by a change in his state and mental operations, so that he is a pardoned sin-

ne" and loves God," and then laboured to show that the reconciliation mentioned in the text is not of this description. You say that "the word *reconcile* primarily signifies to change any thing from one state to another; and hence, secondarily, when a man's mind is *changed from enmity to love*, in relation to any one, he is said to be reconciled to that individual." You contend that the word is used in its *primary* sense in the passage before us. To this I reply, 1st. That the reconciliation referred to is a change from enmity to love—for in the verse following, the disciples are thus addressed: "And *you* that were sometime *alienated* and *enemies in your mind* by wicked works, yet *now* HATH HE RECONCILED." The reconciliation previously spoken of must be of the same general character—inasmuch as the verb is the same in the original Greek 2d. Dr. GEORGE CAMPBELL in a note on Matt v. 9. writes as follows: "This word [ειρηνοποιοι] is not found in any other part of Scripture, but (which is nearly the same), the verb ειρηνοποιεω, of the same origin, occurs Col. i. 20, where the *connexion shows* that it cannot signify to be gentle, to be peaceable, but *actively to reconcile, to make peace.* Etymology and classical use also concur in affixing the sense of *reconciler, peacemaker*, to ειρηνοποιος" You undoubtedly unite in this view of the word translated *having made peace*, in verse 20; and as the connexion of every passage must be consulted and the general scope of the place regarded, it is manifest that your argument on the word *reconcile* is wholly fallacious. And I consider it established beyond plausible denial, that the reconciliation in question is of the description which, you acknowledge, must secure the happiness of all persons who participate therein.

The import of the phrase *all things* is the only point that remains to be considered. Were we discoursing of a less momentous subject, I should be disposed to query whether you seriously allege, as an objection to the *universality* of the phrase, that "the stones of the streets, the birds of the air, the cattle of the hills, the air we breathe, and the winds and waves," are *things*. And it might also be questionable whether you were serious in saying, "If there is a single thing, a man, an apple, a

pebble, to be excluded from the class of all things to be reconciled, so as to be happy. your argument from absolute *universality* in this passage is lost." You do not suppose that the apostles were to preach the gospel to the birds of the air or the cattle of the hills—yet *preach the gospel to* EVERY CREATURE, was the Divine command. That *rational* creatures only are referred to, is implied. And as *rational things only* can ever be in a state of enmity to God, such beings only are included in the class of all things to be reconciled.

In the preceding context, the phrase in question occurs five times : "for by him were *all* things created . . . . . *all things* were created by him, and for him ; and he is before *all things* ; and by him *all things* consist ; and he is the head of the body . . . . . that in *all things* he might have the pre-eminence." I consider it but a quibble, when you say, that "there are some things in existence which were not made by him ; such as the essence of the Deity, infinite space, and the actions of free agents." There is good sense, however, in your remark, that "the *all things* created are limited to *all creatures*." To which I add, that as *to reconcile all things* signifies but the reconciliation of such things as were, are, or may be "alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them," Eph. iv. 18, so you and I have come to this conclusion : "It pleased the Father that in Christ should all fulness dwell, and by him to reconcile to himself all alienated rational beings."

The expression "things in earth, and things in heaven," is simply a periphrasis of πάντα, all things. It is used by way of emphasis, or of *intensity*, as Professor STUART would say. As I cannot conceive of alienation from God in any of the celestial inhabitants, so I judge that the expression is merely a figurative superaddition, designed to show that the pleasure of the Lord embraces the reconciliation of all alienated beings, wherever they may exist.

When we read that "the Father loveth the Son, and hath given πάντα, *all things* into his hands," John iii. 35 ; that Jesus "gave himself a ransom ὑπερ πάντων *for all*, 1 Tim. ii. 6 ; that he hath been "appointed heir of πάντων *all things*," Heb. i. 2 ; that "he is Lord (or owner) πάντων

of all," Acts x. 36; that "it pleased the Father by him to reconcile τα πάντα *all things* to himself." Col i. 20; and that "τα πάντα *all things* shall be subdued unto him," 1 Cor xv. 28,—we naturally give to the word or phrase in question the unrestricted sense it bears in the declaration, God "will have πάντας ανθρώπους, all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth," 1 Tim. ii 4

Philippians ii. 9, 11: "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name; that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Professor STUART says, that "things in heaven, earth, and under the earth, is a common periphrasis of the Hebrew and New Testament writers for the universe." Letters to Channing, p. 100. He refers to the text before us, and also to Rev. v. 13. Dr. GEORGE CAMPBELL, in reference to the same passages says, that καταχθονιοι is a word of the same import with the phrase ὑποκατω της γης, *under the earth*, in the Apocalypse; and with the επουρανιοι and επιγειοι, *celestial* beings and *terrestrial*, include THE WHOLE RATIONAL CREATION That they are expressly enumerated as including the whole, will be manifest to every one who attentively peruses the two passages referred to." Diss. VI. p. ii. Sec. 6. To which I subjoin, that this conclusion will be equally manifest to any one who will give to the expressions, *every knee* and *every tongue*, their obvious signification.

From the fact thus established, in conjunction with the declaration, "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost," 1 Cor. xii. 3, I infer the final holiness and happiness of all mankind. You object to this conclusion, 1st. Because "a parrot might say, 'Jesus is the Lord,' without the least intelligence"—but as that confession only can be to *the glory of God the Father* which is made in conviction of the judgment and sincerity of heart, the objection is fallacious, and may therefore be dismissed. 2d. You assert that some of our race "will confess Christ in such a way that God the Father will be glorified in their damnation." This is merely an as-

sertion and as such does not justly deserve consideration —nevertheless let us look at it in the light of the text. (1.) Paul furnishes no intimation that same shall bow and confess in one way and the rest in another. He makes no distinction as to manner or result; and therefore you might as properly assert, that the Father will be glorified in the damnation of *all*, as that *some* will confess Christ in such a way as to glorify God in their doom of despair (2.) In order that the confession, *Jesus Christ is Lord*, may be to the glory of the Father, it must be made *in faith*—inasmuch as the God of truth cannot be glorified in the confession of that which is not believed It is written, "Whosoever *believeth* that *Jesus is the Christ* is *born of* God," 1 John v. i. (3.) Professor STUART, on the text before us, says—"What can be meant by things in heaven, that is, beings in heaven, bowing the knee to Jesus, if *spiritual worship* be not meant?" Referring to Rev v. 13, he writes as follows: "If this be not spiritual worship, and if Christ be not the object of it here, I am unable to produce a case where worship can be called spiritual and divine." Permit me to add that this universal bowing down, and universal confession, indicate the consummation of the Divine purpose, that Christ shall subdue all things to himself, reconcile them to the Father, and subsequently be himself subject, that God may be all in all.

I will conclude this epistle with a few examples in illustration of the statement, that in connexion with many of the testimonies pertaining to the final holiness and happiness of all mankind, there is either a direct mention or obvious implication of the special, present, blessedness of believers.

In Colossians i 21 (the context of which proves the doctrine of universal reconciliation to God, as I have attempted to show), it is thus written: "And *you* [the saints and faithful brethren at Colosse] that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet *now* HATH HE RECONCILED"—that is, those disciples had already experienced such a change in their state and mental operations as brought them into the enjoyment of celestial peace. In 2 Cor. v. 18, 19, the fact that "God

was in Christ *reconciling* THE WORLD *unto himself*." is thus introduced: "And all things are of God, who HATH RECONCILED US [the disciples] to himself by Jesus Christ." The same general truth is taught in James i. 18: "Of his own will begat he *us* [the primitive disciples] by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of FIRST FRUITS of his [rational] creatures." I say *rational*, because the character of the harvest, the lump, is indicated by the first fruits. Romans xi. 16. In Rom. viii 18-23 (to my remarks on which you have not yielded the slightest attention), this subject is also illustrated: "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in *us* [the believers] For the earnest expectation of the creature [the creation] waiteth for the manifestation of *the sons of God*. For the creature [the creation] was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope. Because *the creature* [the creation] *itself* ALSO *shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God*. For we know that *the whole* [rational] *creation* groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And *not only they*, but *ourselves also*, which *have the* FIRST FRUITS *of the Spirit*, even *we* ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body."

In this remarkable passage of Holy Writ, the *disciples*, the *believers*, are set forth, on the one hand, as having the *first fruits* of the Spirit, and as being in the present enjoyment of the blessing which must ever be consequent of believing and obeying the truth. On the other hand, the promise is communicated, that the whole rational creation, which is in the bondage of corruption, shall be delivered therefrom, and introduced into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

It is my fervent desire, that *you*, sir, together with all who unite with you in opinion as to the final destiny of man, may be so turned from the power of darkness unto light, as by faith to enter into the immediate enjoyment

of the blessedness which is reserved in heaven for the ransomed of the Lord.

Yours respectfully,

ABEL C. THOMAS.

TO MR. EZRA STILES ELY.

Philadelphia, July 13, 1835.

Dear Sir—In this letter I propose considering the doctrine of the resurrection of mankind into an immortal existence as taught in the Bible. Perhaps I should rather say, I propose a *re-consideration* of that subject—inasmuch as it was discoursed of, at some length, in the progress of our controversy. It is desirable, however, that the substance of what has been said on that especially important branch of the discussion, should again be brought into view.

In 1 Cor. xv. 22, it is thus written: "For as *in Adam* ALL die, even so *in Christ* shall ALL be made alive." You admit that the word ALL, in each member of this sentence, is expressive of *universality*—for though Enoch and Elijah were translated, they must have underwent a change which was equivalent to death.

By *Adam*, in the passage before us, I understand the mortal constitution of the first man, who was of the earth earthy. All the children of humanity bear his image, as a mortal being; and in that image they must return to the dust whence they were taken. By *Christ* I understand the quickening spirit, the Lord from heaven, the heavenly. By being *made alive in Christ* is signified the resurrection into a state of incorruption, power, glory; in a spiritual body; in the image of the heavenly, who is declared to have been "the image of the invisible God."

As it is not optional with man whether he will or will not die in Adam, so I judge it to be not a matter of choice with him, whether he will or will not be made alive in Christ. The promise is *absolute*, and in the fulfilment

thereof, man is necessarily *passive*. "For as in Adam all die, even so *in Christ* SHALL *all be* made alive."

Thus far there is perfect unity in our views of the resurrection—but you assert that some will be *made alive in Christ* to an eternity of misery—while inspiration avers, that "if *any man* be *in Christ* he is a new creature," 2 Cor. v. 17. From this testimony, in connexion with the text, I deduce the doctrine of ultimate universal blessedness in Christ. To this conclusion you object, because Jesus said, "Every branch *in me* that beareth not fruit he taketh away. If any man *abide not in me*, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them and cast them into the fire, and they are burned," John xv 2–6; and thence you infer that many of those who shall be made alive *in Christ* will subsequently be cast off, having ever been unfruitful in good works. I rejoin, that I will admit your conclusion, if you will prove the all important postulate, that *some will not abide in Christ in the resurrection state*. The fact that some men are not in Christ in the present life, is not to the purpose—for, however they may live or die, they will all be made alive in Christ, in incorruption, power, glory; in a spiritual body; in the image of the heavenly. As I said in my letter of August 27, 1834, so I say now, that "to be in Christ in this mutable state, surrounded by temptation, exposed to the power of deceptive influences, and liable each moment to be led into sin, is a very different matter from being in Christ in an unchanging state, removed from the influence of tempting and corrupting circumstances. He who is in Christ, even in this life, is a new creature—for he "has put off the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts," and has "put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness"—but he may revert to his former estate, and be cast off as an unfruitful branch. Now, if you can prove that any one who will be made alive *in Christ*, in incorruption, and in a spiritual body, and who is therefore a new creature, will not *abide* in Christ, or will ever again put on the old man which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, then you will

have proved that such an one will be cast off—but not otherwise.

1 Corinthians xv. 28: "And when τα πάντα, *all things*, ὑποταγῇ, *shall be subdued* unto him, then shall *the Son* ALSO *himself* ὑποταγήσεται be subject [or subdued] unto him that put all things under him [or rather that subdued all things unto him] that GOD MAY BE ALL IN ALL." You will perceive that the word ALSO debars the popular cavil that some will be subdued in one way, and the rest in another; and I know of no rational exposition of the language, *that God may be all in all*, if a part of our race are to be eternally excluded from the enjoyment of his love.

Jesus said to the Sadducees, as recorded in Matthew xxii. 29, 30: "Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God: for in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven." In the parallel place in Luke xx. 34–36, it is thus written: "The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage; but they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage; neither can they die any more; for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection." In your letter of August 21, 1834, you say, that "*but for this clause* [namely, 'they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world and the resurrection from the dead'], *this text would render me a Universalist.*" This frank statement induced me to hope that I should succeed in convincing you of the truth of the doctrine I advocate; and I accordingly endeavored to make you acquainted with the true import of the clause in question. Although you did not notice my exposition thereof, I presume you were not satisfied therewith. Allow me to repeat the substance of the argument.

The Sadducees did not accredit the doctrine of immortality, and the case they presented was merely designed to perplex our Lord. Their inquiry assumed that conjugal affinities must exist in the future life (if a future life there be), as in the present; and that *there* men would

possess many, if not all, the passions which are *here* developed. Hence they desired to know whose wife of the seven brethren the woman should be in the resurrection The supposition that our Lord evaded the inquiry, is not admissible; and since it will freely be conceded that his reply was pertinent, I conclude that it referred directly to the resurrection state. He contrasts this present state of being, in which matrimonial alliances are contracted, with the incorruptible and spiritual life, in which no such ties are formed.

If you allege that some of our race shall not be accounted worthy to be raised from the dead, you must discard the doctrine of endless punishment, unless you can conceive of endless punishment without a resurrection. But since you grant that all mankind shall be the children of the resurrection, you must admit that they will all be the children of God. Your assertion that some of the human family "will be undutiful and rebellious children for ever," is exploded by the declaration, that "the [rational] creation shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the *glorious liberty* of the children of God," Rom. viii 21.

In his address to the Sadducees, our Lord simply intended to correct their error as to *the condition* of men in the future state. They supposed, as previously mentioned, that the passions which men possess in *this* world, they would possess hereafter; and they imagined that the difficulties of the case they presented furnished an unanswerable objection to the doctrine of immortality. The premiss was false. Hence said Jesus, "Ye do err not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God." Then properly followed a correction of the error referred to.

In replying to an inquiry pertaining solely to the *condition* of men, that is, to their *mode of being*, in the resurrection state, our Saviour did not feel called upon to say *how many* would be raised from the dead. The doctrine of the *Pharisees* (some of whom were present) restrained the resurrection to *the just*, which restriction our Lord did not see proper directly to deny on that occasion. Neither did he then deny the Pharisaic notion of the transmigration of souls. Indeed, he did not, at that

time, expressly dispute *any* doctrine of the Pharisees—otherwise the Scribes would not have commended his remarks, Luke xx. 39. But are we thence to infer, that he countenanced their notion, that only a part or portion of our race will be raised from the dead? Certainly not. He was replying to a question of *condition*, and not of *number*. He certified the Sadducees, and he certifies *us*, that as many as shall be raised shall be equal unto the angels; and the assurance that they shall be the children of God, is predicated of the fact, that they shall be the children of the resurrection. Moreover: Christianity teaches that all who bear the image of the earthy, and die in Adam, are by the Supreme Being accounted worthy to be made alive in Christ, in the image of the heavenly. Hence Paul could HOPE *for the resurrection even of* THE UNJUST, Acts xxiv. 15. He *expected* it—he *desired* it; and the conjunction of *expectation* and *desire* produced in him a hope full of immortality. He looked in faith "for that *blessed hope*, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ," Titus ii. 13, "who shall *change* our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things to himself," Philippians iii. 21. He speaks of *the change from mortality to immortality* as a VICTORY OVER DEATH—as the means of introducing the whole family of man into a state of ineffable bliss, where "the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces," 1 Cor. xv. 54, 55; Isaiah xxv 8. And he enjoyed so clear a view of this sublime consummation of the reign of Christ, that he was enabled abundantly to "rejoice in hope of the glory of God," Rom. v. 2.

There are many important considerations connected with the Bible doctrine of the resurrection, which I should be pleased to notice, but I will confine my remarks to the following particulars: 1st. The testimony of Jesus, that "in the resurrection they are the children of God, BEING the children of the resurrection," destroys the popular notion, that the condition of man in the future state will be determined by his character or conduct in this. Our Saviour does not say, 'In the resurrection they are the

children of God, *having been* my disciples in the present world.' No. The assurance that they shall be *the children of God*, is predicated of the simple fact, that they shall be *the children of the resurrection*. 2d. The Holy Spirit does not speak of the future blessedness of individuals, *as such*. All the members of the human family constitute *the body* of which Jesus is the head. "The head of *every man* is Christ," 1 Cor. xi. 3. He tasted "death for *every man*," Heb. ii. 9. "In Christ shall ALL be made alive." God "will have ALL MEN to be saved." "*Every knee* shall bow." These and similar forms of expression plainly show, that the Holy Spirit has revealed the future condition of mankind *as a whole*, and not as *individuals*. 3d. The Scripture doctrine of the resurrection, exposes the folly of the inquiries which are so frequently made as to the condition in which a man has died. Is it sown in corruption? it shall be raised in incorruption: is it sown in weakness? it shall be raised in power: is it sown in dishonour? it shall be raised in glory: is it sown an animal body? it shall be raised a spiritual body: has the person died in Adam? he shall be made alive in Christ: did he bear the image of the earthly? he shall also bear the image of the heavenly. The questions should not be, How do mankind die? in what condition do they depart? but, "How are the dead RAISED UP? and with what body do they COME?" Allow the sacred Scriptures to furnish the reply, and the believer of the record will rejoice in the assurance, that in the resurrection *universal humanity* shall walk forth in the beauty of holiness, redeemed and regenerated by the quickening spirit of the living God.

Yours respectfully,
ABEL C. THOMAS.

TO MR. EZRA STILES ELY.

Philadelphia, July 18, 1835.

Dear Sir—The divinely inspired apostle Paul, in ad-

dressing Timothy, uses the following emphatic language: "For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, *who is the Saviour*, πάντων ἀνθρώπων, of ALL MEN, *especially of those who believe* These things command and teach," 1 Timothy iv. 10.

I desire you to notice, that God is here declared to be *the Saviour of all men.* There is no plausibility in the supposition, that this testimony merely expresses the Divine willingness or desire that all men should be saved—nor yet simply that he has provided a Saviour for all. The declaration is explicit and absolute. No objection can be inferred from the present tense of the verb. The living God *is* the Saviour of all men, in the sense that he "calleth those things which be not as though they were," Rom. iv. 17. So Abraham was styled "the father of many nations," previously to the birth of Isaac, in whom his seed was called. God is in purpose the Saviour of all, though it is manifest that there are thousands who have not yet been born into the kingdom. In like good sense he is the Creator of all, even of those who as yet exist only in the Divine purpose And as God acts independently in constituting himself the Creator of mankind, so I judge that he is voluntarily and absolutely the Saviour of all.

The human race is a family of which the Creator is the Father; and we are therefore the children or offspring of God, whatever may be our views or characters. There is also a sense in which the disciples of our Lord can claim special affinity with the Supreme Being. Every Israelite is a son of Abraham, while "they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham" in a spiritual relation, Galatians iii 7. So every one who bears the image of Adam, is a child of the Universal Father, whatever his character may be; while "as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God," in a more exalted sense, Rom. viii. 14. *Those* are the children of God by simple creation; *these* are "the children of God by faith in Jesus Christ," Gal. iii 26. But *all men are* NOW *in the purpose of heaven*, what they *all* SHALL BE *in fact*, the children of God in a still more exalted relation. "In the resurrection they are equal unto the an-

gels, and are the children of God, *being* the children of the resurrection." In the *first* named sense, mankind *are* and in the *last* they *shall be*, unconditionally and absolutely, the children of God. Hence there is equal propriety in declaring that he is the *Saviour* of all men, as in acknowledging that he is the *Creator* of all. And hence again, it would be equally improper to affirm, that God is the Creator of some who will never exist, as that he is the Saviour of a greater number than will actually be saved.

I hinted above, that the disciples of our Lord can claim special affinity with the Supreme Being. So in the passage before us, God is declared to be *specially* the Saviour of *those who believe*—which he could not be were he not *actually* the Saviour of *all*.

Paul wrote to Timothy as follows: "The cloak that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comest, bring with thee, and the books, but *especially* the parchments," 2 Tim. iv. 13. It is manifest that Paul wished to receive the cloak and books notwithstanding this special mention of the parchments. Again: "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, *especially* they who labour in word and doctrine," 1 Tim. v. 17. If the declaration that *God is the Saviour of all men* be nullified by the testimony that he is *specially* the Saviour of those who believe, it will follow, by parity of inference, that none of the elders were to "be counted worthy of double honour," *excepting* those who laboured in word and doctrine! Indeed, according to the objector's view of the text, the apostle intended to say, that God is *not* the Saviour of all men, but *only* of those who believe!

The popular estimate of faith, and of the benefits accruing therefrom, is radically erroneous. I stated in a previous letter, that faith does not, and cannot, create any truth—and I will add that faith is simply the result of evidence which the mind deems conclusive. Whether the statement presented be true or false, it is not, it cannot be, affected either by acknowledgment or denial. Truth exists independently of the evidence of it, and independently also of the action of the mind. So when we read that God is specially the Saviour of those who be-

lieve, we properly inquire for the truth the belief of which confers a special salvation.

Opposers of Universalism frequently speak of the essential truths of the gospel—by which they mean, that there are truths the belief of which is essential to the happiness of the future state. What are those truths? Are they the trinity, vicarious atonement, or imputed righteousness? *You* will not answer in the affirmative—for you admit that many persons will be saved who do not believe those items of your creed. Is the doctrine of endless punishment the essential truth for which we now inquire? If you reply that it is *not*, I ask, why do you so strenuously contend for a non-essential doctrine? But if you reply that it *is*, you must hold that it is not *possible* for any Universalist to be saved! Yea, and you must adopt the most contradictory and absurd conclusions. You grant that all men *may be* saved; and you hold that salvation is consequent only of believing or coming to the knowledge of the truth. Now suppose that all men were to become true believers—would they not all be saved? Certainly. Then surely if endless punishment be the thing to be believed, all men would be saved by believing *a lie!* Are you prepared to admit that universal faith would falsify any Bible truth? If you are not prepared for this admission, you must grant that the belief of endless punishment is not essential to salvation—yea, that it is not in any sense an essential doctrine. And, sir, a faithful examination of this subject, in the light I have presented it, will satisfy you, that the happiness of the future state is not dependent on the exercise of faith in any doctrine whatever. The reception of immortal blessedness, by any of our race, depends solely and alone on the accomplishment of the gracious purpose of the living God. Were it otherwise—were the immortal condition of man contingent of faith or of the performance of good works, there would be no *certainty* of the salvation of any of our race! For, even should it be conceded that they who fulfil the alleged conditions will certainly be the recipients of endless bliss, the uncertainty that even a single soul *will fulfil* those conditions, involves equal uncertainty of the final destination of mankind. There can

be no certainty that a specified *end* will be attained, unless it be certain that the requisite *means* will be adopted. To contend that some of the human family will *certainly* be saved, is to admit the absolute purpose of God to that effect, excluding all contingency; and to *deny* that *some* of our race will *certainly* be saved, is to admit the *possibility* that *all* may be irrecoverably lost! This conclusion is so discordant with all that we know of Divine benevolence, and so utterly irreconcilable with the governing providence of God, as to condemn the doctrine to which it belongs.

Should you desire to know in what the special salvation of believers consists, this is my reply: In believing the glorious truth that *God is the* Saviour of all men, they "enter into rest," Heb. iv. 2; they are filled "with joy and peace," Rom. xv. 13; they "rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory," 1 Peter i. 8. In believing the truth, they enjoy the presence and the blessing of "the COMFORTER," which is "the *Spirit* of truth," John xv. 26. Their faith works by love, and purifies their hearts, Gal. v. 6; Acts xv. 9. Enjoying "the full assurance of *faith*," they possess also "the full assurance of *hope*," Heb vi. 11; x. 22; and they can set their seal to the truth of the record, that "*perfect love* casteth out fear, because fear hath torment; he that feareth is not made perfect in love," 1 John iv. 18. Theirs is *a living faith*, because it is a faith in *the living God*; and *in believing* that the living God is the Saviour of all men, they enjoy the special salvation mentioned in the text. Blessed, thrice blessed are *they* who know the joyful sound

Universalists are frequently assailed with the following foolish objection: "If Universalism be true it is strange that the apostles should so zealously and perseveringly labour to make the people acquainted with the fact, since it is manifest that such acquaintance with the doctrine could have no influence on the final destination of our race. It is strange that they should be willing to labour, and to be reproached and persecuted by wicked men, if they believed that the final holiness and happiness of all mankind is secured by the absolute purpose of God." To this I reply, that the minister of labours of

the apostles, and the reproaches they suffered. are assigned of their faith in Universalism! "For *therefore* we *both labour* and *suffer reproach*, BECAUSE *we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, especially of those who believe.*"—Moreover: the objection assumes, that no man can consistently labour to promote the temporal well-being of humanity! The history of JOHN HOWARD (than whom, in my judgment, no better man has lived since John the Evangelist died), evinces how much a philanthropist may be willing to do and suffer to meliorate the condition of men in the present life. He heard the cry of the prisoners, and the clanking of the fetters forged by "the inhumanity of man to man;" and he went down into the gloomy dungeons to wipe away the tears of sorrow, to speak a word of comfort to the children of suffering, and to smooth down the straw pallets on which they reclined. He heard the groaning of the victims of "the pestilence that walketh in darkness, and that wasteth at noonday;" and he went into the kingdoms of disease to stay the ravages of the angel of death. Eventually he was himself smitten of the plague, and died, a martyr in the cause of humanity. And if *he* could thus labour and die for the good of men, without reference to their immortal destiny, is it strange that the inspired servants of the Most High God should devote their lives and all their energies to the promotion of human happiness in the earth? Sir, I sincerely pity the man who is either so ignorant or perverse as to urge the objection in review.

Having already shown you in what the special salvation of the believer consists, I desire to direct your attention to an argument thence deducible in proof of Universalism. Since "the Spirit of truth" is styled "the *Comforter*," there can be nothing tormenting in the Christian faith. On the contrary, he who believes "the truth as it is in Jesus," enters into rest; is filled with joy and peace; yea, he rejoices with joy unspeakable and full of glory. And now, sir, will you pretend that faith in the doctrine of endless wo, in any of its modifications, can fill the soul with the peace of God? Will you pretend that the prospect of interminable wretchedness for any of our race, can cause the believer to rejoice with unutterable joy?

To what heart is the spirit of eternal wrath the Comforter? Let me come a little nearer to you: you love your children. He who touches *them*, in the way of injury, touches the apple of their father's eye. You rejoice in their happiness. Your heart is inclined to them in all the tenderness of paternal love. Can you bear the thought that any of them shall be the subjects of endless damnation? Can you rejoice in believing that a son or daughter shall be sentenced to the doom of darkness and despair for ever? Pardon me for asking these questions. You have a father's heart, and I *know* that rejoicing is a stranger to your soul, whenever you mentally grant that some of your offspring *may* be eternally lost!

But even supposing you to be satisfied that yourself, your wife, your children, your parents, will certainly be saved, is there not still an aching void in your heart? Are you *filled* with joy and peace? Believing that any number of mankind will be miserable world without end, can you rejoice with *joy unspeakable* and *full* of glory? In contemplating the endless ruin, the undying agony, of millions of your brethren in the human race, do you experience the celestial influences of the Comforter! But why should I press these questions? Are you not a man? and do you not possess the feelings of a man? Yet, if you are not comforted by faith in the doctrine of endless torments—if you rejoice not with unspeakable joy in believing that a part of mankind will be doomed to unutterable wo,—either the doctrine in question is false, or your heart is not right in the sight of God! The allegation that you expect *hereafter* to rejoice in the damnation of the impenitent, is nothing to the purpose—for, in the first place, if you believe the *truth* you will be comforted *now*, you will rejoice *in* believing; and in the second, I have yet to learn that the resurrection will change man into a fiend!

But I gladly turn from the contemplation of a doctrinal system devised in the wisdom of the world, which is foolishness with God—a system fraught with the most blasphemous and revolting conclusions; and with the most unfeigned respect I invite you to take a view of the doctrine of illimitable grace. "Behold the Lamb of God

who taketh away *the sin of* THE WORLD," John i. 29 Behold in faith the triumphs of redeeming love! Behold the issue of the reign of Christ!

"Then the end: beneath his rod
Man's last enemy shall fall;
Alleluia! Christ in God—
God in Christ is *all in all!*"

In dwelling on this glorious theme the heart grows warm in gratitude and love, and the kindling glow of the Comforter, the Spirit of truth, is felt in the soul. Truly the believer can "rejoice with *joy unspeakable* and *full of glory*," in anticipation of the blissful era, when the hand of the living God shall wipe the tear from every eye, and hush in every breast the rising sigh for ever. And herein consists the special salvation he enjoys. It is a salvation from the fear that ha h torment--it is a deliverance from the bondage of the fear of death, Heb. ii. 14. It is the result of unwavering confidence in the fulfilment of the absolute promise of the Almighty, that all the nations, families and kindreds of the earth, shall eventually e blessed in Christ.

In drawing this series of epistles to a close, you will allow me to express my desire, that you may yet be enabled to take your correspondent by the hand, and to unite with him in saying, in spirit and in truth, "For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, especially of those who believe"

Yours respectfully,

ABEL C. THOMAS.

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