

THE
DOCTRINE
OF
UNIVERSAL SALVATION
EXAMINED AND REPUTED.

CONTAINING,

A CONCISE AND DISTINCT ANSWER TO THE WRITINGS
OF MR. RELLY, AND MR. WINCHESTER, UPON THAT
SUBJECT.

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The Doctrine of Universal Salvation Examined and Reputed.

Solomon, after a vast and extensive search into the nature of things, says, lo, this only have I found, that God made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions. How many he could not tell, nor any other man. Had the inhabitants of New-England been told, ten years ago, that said doctrine would soon be preached up, and have an extensive spread among them, who could have believed it? Yet this is now become a notorious fact, by the following means: Mr. John Murray, from England, having preached for some time in places south of New-York, came from thence into New-England in the fall of the year 1772; and has preached in these parts to the present time. For a while he concealed his design under many good words and fair speeches; and when he began plainly to preach general salvation, his greatest admirers rather wished than believed the doctrine to be true. At length they procured the re-printing of a pamphlet from London, in 1779. Which was privately dispersed in the country, and has intangled many souls. Since which

Mr. Ethan Winchester, who was born near Boston, and, by his itinerations from thence to South Carolina, had obtained an extensive fame for being a powerful and successful preacher of the gospel, has fallen in with said doctrine, under another form, which has caused its influence to extend much farther than it had before. And its advocates now glory in it as unanswerable, because a distinct answer thereto has not appeared among us. A sight of this and not hearing that any others were engaged therein, has constrained me to offer my mite in the affair; hoping that it may encourage and excite others to step forward in the cause of truth to better purpose.

The pamphlet referred to, which was re-printed at Boston, in entituled, "Union: Or, a Treatise of the Consanguinity" and Affinity between Christ and his Church. By James "Relly." Union is the life of the universe, and to act against it is an infinite evil; but though his title is so important, yet if the treatise should be found to contain a scene of disunion and confusion, all lovers of truth and peace will see cause to reject it. Whether it be so or not, we are now to enquire. The rule he prescribes for us to go by is thus expressed; Says he, "if mankind have any true notion of justice and equity, though but in the smallest degree, then what is contrary to this, is much more so to God, whose justice and truth is infinite, pure and eternal." Preface, p. 9. "This simple voice of nature differs from revelation only as the lesser light which rules the night, differs from the greater

which rules the day. If it is possible those our ideas of the divine perfections should be wrong, then have we no rule, whereby to discern between good and evil." Book, p. 45. If he meant that, like the moon, we are always to receive light from the sun, and to let the same shine before others, in word and practice, Jesus has inculcated this duty upon us in a clear manner, but to imagine that our ideas of the divine perfections may not be entirely wrong, or that, if they were so, we should have no rule left to correct and direct us, is a most dangerous delusion. Mat. vi. 23, 1 John ii. 4-11, and iii. 20, 21, Jude 10. All men of sense know, that written laws and contracts, which shall be their own interpreters, are very necessary in the administration of justice; and that a discretionary power ought not to be allow to the best of judges, without great caution and circumspection. And if a gift doth blind the eyes of the wife, and pervert the words of the righteous, how can debtors and criminals be suitable judges in their own cause? And these are the cases before us.

Protestants, as this author observes, generally hold, "that man, being a debtor and transgressor, and unable to save himself, Jesus Christ became surety, under an engagement to pay his debts, and to bear his punishment; the equity of which is generally resolved into the sovereignty of God, or accounted for from the willingness of Christ (as an independent divine Person) to suffer in the sinner's stead." Preface, p. 9. These ideas Relly rejects, "1. Because (says he) contrary to truth, which declareth

that every man shall die for his own sin. 2. It is contrary to justice to afflict the innocent: To punish and destroy him is cruelty and injustice." Book, p. 3, 4. To confirm these strange assertions, he says, I know not of any human laws, which admit of suretyship in capital offences; and sin is not only a debt, for which suretyship is sometimes admitted, but a transgression, a crime, capital in the highest sense, only atoned for by the shedding of blood; by the death, yea, by the eternal death of the sinner; which justice must inflict, before it can be properly satisfied; nor can it possibly admit of a surety here." P. 5. Truth is here held in unrighteousness to a most surprizing degree! The nature of sin, and its just desert, are well expressed; but how daring is it for a guilty criminal to assert, that Jehovah cannot possibly admit of a surety here! Did he never read, that Jesus was made a Surety? Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost, that came unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. Heb. vii. 22, 25. If men should admit of sureties in capital cases, a double injury would ensue; namely, the loss of an innocent person out of the community, and the continuance of a guilty one therein, who would be likely to do more mischief himself, and also to encourage the like of others; which are sufficient reasons why they do not admit to sureties in such cases. But infinite wisdom has cause mercy and truth, righteousness and peace, so to meet in Jesus, who had power to lay down his life, and power to take it again (John x. 18.) that no loss is sustained to

the community; while the evil of sin appears greater in his sufferings, than it could have done in the eternal damnation of all the human race. O! how gloriously does a true sight of him relieve the guilty polluted criminal, raising his soul up to the union and grateful obedience, while it demonstrates that sin cannot go unpunished, since it could not escape the vengeance of the Father, when found upon his darling Son! But how far was our opponent from such views, union, or obedience?

Because Adam was created with the whole of human nature in him, and after Eve was formed she became one flesh with him, called by one name, and under one law, Relly says; "similar with this, the church existed in Christ; according as he hath us in him, before the foundations of the world, having this purpose and grace given us in him, before the world began. The man and woman, under this consideration, had but one name: He called their name Adam. So Christ and his church in this union bear one name; both are called the Lord over righteousness. He, Jer. xxiii. 6; she, Jer. xxxiii. 16: We the righteousness of God in him. 2 Cor. v. 21. The Lord God covenanting with Adam, as the head of the earthly creation, as having the woman in herself, drew a figure of his covenant with Christ, as having the church existing in him, he as the head engaging for his members; as the husband for his wife, as the king for his subjects, as the root for its branches," &c. P. 11, 12.

How surprizing is this! Union in nature, prior to choice, and union by choice and free contracts,

are as distinct things as any in the world; yet here they are *confounded* together, and his whole scheme is built upon this *confusion*. The original of all union in the sacred Three, who are eternally one in nature, prior to any idea of choice, and ever freely act according to the nature. In six days he created the heavens and the earth, and all things therein, *by the word of his power*. Of the earth it is well said, that, “ever since the week of creative wonders, God hath ordered all these creatures to fill the world with inhabitants of their own kind; and they have obeyed him in a long succession of almost six thousand years. And it is evident, that he has kept a reserve of *sovereignty* to himself, and has displayed the ensigns of it in some important hours. Nature is the art of God, and it must forever be unrivalled by the sons of men. *Yet man can produce a man*. Admirable effect, but artless cause! A poor, limited, inferior agent! The plant and the brute in this matter are his rivals, and his equals too. The human parent and the parent-bird form their own images with equal quill, and are confined each to his work. — Let the atheist then exert his utmost stretch of understanding, let him try the force of all his mechanical powers, to compose the wing of a butterfly, or the meanest feather of a sparrow; let him labour and swear, and faint, and acknowledge his own weakness; then let him turn his eye, look at those wondrous composesures, his son or his little daughter; and when their infant tongues shall enquire of him, and say, *father, who made us?* let him not dare to assume the honor of that work

to himself, but teach the young creatures that *there is a God*, and fall down on his face, and repent and worship*.”

The man I am answering was very far from such distinct views or dispositions; for having quoted 1 Cor. xi. 11, and 1 Tim. ii. 14, he says of Adam and Eve, “his union unto her made it equitable for the curse and condemnation of her folly to fall upon him; and that *without* the consideration of his consent and compliance with her. In like manner, Christ the husband was not deceived; but his wife, the church, being deceived, was in the transgression. Yet as the union was such, that Christ was not without the church, nor the church without him§, at any time, it was equitable for her curse and condemnation to fall upon him.” P. 13. To which I answer, that to pretend that after Eve was formed she became one flesh with Adam, without mutual choice, is unscriptural and irrational; and it is more so, to imagine that her sin could have become his without his consent; and to declare, that our sin and its curse could have fallen upon Christ, without his free choice, is such an absurdity and such blasphemy as will forever want a name! A man cannot be made our *flesh* with a harlot without his consent; but he that is joined to the Lord is one *Spirit*. 1 Cor. vi. 16, 17. And though men com

* Watts’s Philosophical Essays.

§ Had the creature a real existence from eternity!