

LECTURES ON UNIVERSALISM

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Lectures on Universalism by Joel Parker

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JOEL PARKER

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UNIVERSALISM**

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BY

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PRESIDENT OF THE UNION THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, NEW YORK.

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P R E F A C E .

THE most successful method of overcoming error, is by the exhibition of truth. The student, that would be thoroughly furnished, and prepared to contend with all the Protean forms of false doctrine, must, it is true follow it *per ambages*, and understand all its hateful shapes. But, to attain the most important ends of popular instruction, the symmetrical form and luminous aspect of truth must be mainly exhibited. Error may be presented. But she should be seen only as a sly and ugly hag, peeping out from her lurking places, while Truth, the "daughter of the skies," should step boldly forth, and walk up and down before the eyes of the reader, displaying her golden robes, her lovely countenance, and all her winning attractions.

The following pages were, in great part, written about thirteen years since. They were first delivered

to the Third Presbyterian Church in Rochester. Until their publication had been earnestly solicited by numerous friends, no such disposal of them had been anticipated. An edition of one thousand copies was very quickly exhausted, and a second edition of fifteen hundred was published in this city. The work has been out of print for several years. On revising it, the reflection very naturally arose, that the author is, even at a maturer age, responsible for leaving it in its then present condition, or for improving it. The preferred alternative was that of being responsible for the work, in a more complete form. In the revision, several of the Lectures have scarcely been changed at all, except by some slight improvements in the phraseology. The fifth Lecture has been recast, and a new shape has been given to the discussion, in order to meet, if possible, a feeling which extensively prevails in regard to the *apparent* inconsistency of eternal punishment with the Divine justice. The sixth is entirely new, and is intended to accomplish the same end respecting the *apparent* inconsistency of eternal punishment with the Divine goodness.

If it be thought an objection to the book, as a system of Lectures on Universalism, that it has not entered

fully into the later view of Universalists, the reply is, our title may be ill advised, but the design with which the Lectures were written, has nevertheless been accomplished. It is believed, that men first become Universalists by means of the arguments and objections specified in this volume, and our object has been rather to deal with those minds, which, as yet, only exhibit the premonitory symptoms. There is less encouragement to attempt anything, after the fatal collapse has palpably ensued.

A friend of Dr. Edwards, once said to him, when speaking of his work against Chauncy, "you have not only answered Dr. Chauncy, but all the Universalists that ever did write, or ever shall write." And thus it will be found. The work of Dr. Edwards is the great Thesaurus of instruction on the subject of future punishment. We gladly acknowledge our indebtedness to it for whatever is of most value in our second Lecture. We are also indebted to the general scope of that remarkable book, for the suggestion that the true method of encountering Universalism with the greatest success, is by building up a systematic and firm structure of truth, which shall stand as a barrier against Universalism in any and every form. There are forms of

error mixed in with the writings of those who call themselves Universalists, which are properly considered in treatises on Deism, and the grosser shapes of bald infidelity. Such views have been purposely left out of this course of Lectures for two reasons. They have been treated abundantly by writers on infidelity, and properly belong to that branch of Christian polemics. Then, again, since 'evil communications corrupt good manners,' it becomes a question whether the popular mind, is not more injured by the bare statement of views so shocking, than it is benefited by the most triumphant refutation of them. The best reason that I am able to give for offering this enlarged edition to the Christian public, is found in the frequent testimony of individuals, that they were saved from the maelstrom of Universalism by the perusal of a former edition.

That similar effects may be multiplied, and that those disciples of Christ who may favor it with a perusal, may, by its means, find their faith confirmed in the great and solemn truths connected with a deliverance of the soul from eternal punishment, is the prayer of

THE AUTHOR.

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