

VIEWS FROM THE WATCH TOWER.

WHY REV. LYMAN ABBOTT IS NOT A UNIVERSALIST.

AT A GENERAL CONVENTION of Universalists one session was set apart as "Interdenominational Evening," and amongst other speakers was Dr. Lyman Abbott, a representative Congregationalist, who gave his reasons for not believing in universal salvation. Speaking as a liberal Congregationalist he declared that modern Congregationalism *does not accept the doctrine of eternal punishment as preached by the celebrated Jonathan Edwards* of the last century.

We make quotations from Dr. Abbott's discourse as follows: –

"I do not believe that any one of God's creatures will be kept by God in eternal existence simply that he may go on in sin and misery forever. The proposition has long since become spiritually unthinkable to me. I might perhaps believe that a soul could suffer eternally; but I can not believe that any being that God ever made will be kept in existence by God that he may go on in sin eternally.

"What was the old doctrine of eternal punishment? The Savoy Confession, up to about the middle of this century, was the recognized expression of orthodox Congregationalism. Not that it was binding on orthodox Congregationalists; but it was the only historic creed they possessed. Except in the matter of polity, and one or two minor matters, it was identical with the Westminster Confession of Faith; and this was the substance of its statement: It declared that our first parents fell by eating the forbidden fruit; that, they being the root of all mankind, their guilt was imputed and their sinful and corrupted nature was conveyed to all their posterity; that as a result we are 'utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good;' that from the race thus lost and ruined in the Fall, 'by the decree of God, for the manifestation of His glory, some men and angels are predestined unto everlasting life, and others

are foreordained to everlasting death;' that those not effectually called, God was pleased, 'for the glory of his sovereign power over His creatures, to pass by, and to ordain them to dishonor and wrath for their sin, to the praise of his glorious justice;' and that those 'not elected, altho they may be called by the ministry of the Word, and may have some common operations of the Spirit, yet they never truly come to Christ, and therefore can not be saved.'

"Specifically, and clause by clause, I disown that statement....This doctrine is inconsistent with the character of a righteous God. I might fear such a God; I might tremble before such a God; I might, because I was a coward, obey such a God; but I could not reverence such a God. It is inconsistent with the faith that Jesus Christ is God manifest in the flesh, for it was not His nature to pass any by or to ordain any to dishonor and wrath. It is inconsistent with the Scripture; inconsistent with the parable of the prodigal son, which is Christ's epitome of the Gospel; inconsistent with the declaration of Paul that 'every knee should bow and every tongue confess Jesus Christ to be the Lord, to the glory of God the Father'; inconsistent with the very chapters of Romans on which it is supposed to be founded, for they close with the declaration that '*God hath concluded all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all;*' inconsistent with the splendid picture John paints, of the time when every creature that is in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, shall give praise and glory to the God of their salvation."

These noble words and logical arguments surely appeal to all God-loving and God-honoring hearts and heads; and we are glad so to think: it is a sign of heart enlargement which should be admired, even tho the speaker (like other great men of our times) has swerved far from the Bible under the influence of Evolution and Higher Criticism, and is no longer trusting in the great sacrifice for sins "finished" at Calvary for salvation. But Dr. Abbott said some more good things in that discourse. In telling his Universalist [R2639 : page 164] audience why he does not believe in universal salvation, he displayed excellent logic. In reasoning

that "the ultimate fact in human life is the freedom of the human will," he said: –

"I know that I can choose the good, and therefore I can choose the evil. What I find true in myself I believe to be true in every other man; he can choose the good, and therefore he can choose the evil. And while I wistfully desire – yea, and sometimes devoutly hope – that when the great drama of life here and hereafter is ended, all God's creatures will have chosen the good – I do not know. If I were a Calvinist, I should be a Universalist. If I believed that God could make all men righteous, I should be sure that he would make all men righteous; otherwise he would not be a righteous God. But I start from the other pole. I begin with my own absolute freedom. I recognize as a fact, in my life, in my philosophy and in my preaching, that, in the last analysis, the destiny of every man is in his own hands. Father may persuade, mother may entice, influences may environ, God himself may surround with all possible persuasions, but in the last analysis the destiny of every man is in his own hands. And what he will do with it I do not know.

"Why, if God be good, has he made a world in which there is sin? Why has he not made a world sinless? Could he not? Certainly; he not only could, he has. The birds are sinless. But he could not make a world in which are free moral agents able to choose the good without giving them at the same time power to choose the evil. Power to choose the one is power to choose the other; and a world in which there are some men who choose shame, dishonor, sin and death, is a better world, I dare to say, than a world made of machines that could choose neither the good nor the evil."

We fully concur with the foregoing, reminding our readers nevertheless of the necessity for remembering the two opposite views of *free agency* which may properly be taken from different standpoints, as shown in our issue of Dec. 1, 1899, page 264.

But two queries naturally arise:

(1) How does Dr. Abbott harmonize his two propositions, (*a*) that the *decision* respecting his harmony or disharmony with God lies with *man* himself, individually; (*b*) that God has made no provision for the eternal torture of any? The logical mind will surely inquire, What then will become of the wicked who are *unwilling* to be saved on divine terms and hence *unfit* for the rewards of eternal bliss, if the time is to come when "every creature that is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea shall give praise and glory to the God of their salvation"?

Is it possible that so fine a logician as Dr. Abbott has overlooked the logic of his own expressions? Oh no! We answer, the connecting link in the Doctor's logic is clear to his own mind, but he does not care to make it very public because it is not very popular yet – the same is true of many others of the ablest ministers in all denominations. The connecting link of his logic will be seen at once when it is stated, – he believes in the *utter destruction* of the incorrigibly wicked, as we do, and as we teach publicly.

But public teachers who keep silence on this subject and put their light under a bushel, do so at a great *cost* – the cost of further guidance of the Lord into the "all truth" promised. Oh, how many ministers in seeking to avoid the senseless charge, "Annihilationist," have suffered God's character to be blasphemed and his people to be deluded by the doctrine of an *eternal torment* of the unsaintly; – preferring numbers and popularity and honor among men and the financial emoluments of these rather than the truth! Alas! they seek to be wise and prudent according to this world's standards, entirely overlooking the fact that the Lord declares he will not reveal his secrets to such. Our Lord pointed this out, saying, "I thank thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast *hidden these things from the wise and prudent* and hast revealed them unto babes" – who will utter the truth regardless of consequences. – Matt. 11:25.

(2) Some one will say then, If Dr. Abbott believes thus in the final reign of righteousness and the destruction of the incorrigibly wicked, is he not very close to the truth and a very hopeful subject?

We answer, No. At one time, so far as we might judge of any man's heart by his writings, Dr. Abbott was very close to the truth – a believer not only as above but also in the Atonement and in the second coming of him who made the atonement with his own precious blood. But the Doctor seems to have permitted himself to become one of the "wise and prudent" who prefer honor one of another rather than that which cometh from God only. (John 5:44.) At any rate, instead of coming out more and more boldly for the truth on these unpopular subjects, he seems to have put the light he had under a bushel until it has gone out. For according to Dr. Abbott's present teachings he undoubtedly is now an Evolutionist with all that implies of rejection of the Bible doctrine of a fall by our first parents (and we in them) from perfection and harmony with God – into sin and its mental, moral and physical degeneration and death. And the rejection of this implies a rejection of the Atonement; for if man did not fall he needed no redemption from the fall – no Redeemer. And if the "ransom for all" (1 Tim. 2:6) is denied, then logically "times of *restitution*" to a former estate (Acts 3:19-21; Ezek. 16:55,61) must be denied also. And accordingly there would be no object in establishing the Millennial Kingdom – for Evolutionists argue the world is progressing [R2640 : page 165] splendidly under Evolution and needs Christ's Kingdom no more than it needed a sin-offering when it had committed no sin and was under no condemnation.

Thus nearly all the great and wise and prudent according to the course of this world, *professing* themselves to be wise, have by leaving the truth of God's revelation, the teachings of the Bible, become foolish; and their foolish hearts have become darkened. Indeed we believe this to be the secret of the greater blindness and more rapid falling away of ministers than other Christians from the very hub of revealed truth, the ransom, and hence from all truth. With greater advantages for learning the truth than others they have not *loved* truth so as to search for it,

especially when they perceived that their search would not only cost time and energy; but the truth being now as ever unpopular would cost them *popularity* with all classes wedded to errors.

In consequence many ministers have so trifled with truth and with their own consciences that they not only have lost love and relish for truth as truth, but have even lost much of that keen perception for truth which always accompanies a tender and trained conscience. This is well attested by the frequent confessions of prominent ministers appearing lately in the public press. They confess to systematic deception practiced for years respecting their beliefs versus their confessions. And the fact that this is done without even an apology or any manifestation of shame for so ignoble a course demonstrates that these gentlemen either never had much conscience to hurt, or, as we prefer to think, that they have so long and so persistently trodden it in the mire of self-interest and "prudence" that it has lost its life, its power. It is for this reason that the ministers of all denominations are much less amenable to the truth than the consecrated "sheep" of their flocks; – just as it was in the end of the Jewish age. Not only so, but they are the greatest enemies of the truth – and now as eighteen centuries ago many of them do not hesitate to say all manner of evil falsely, openly and by insinuation, to stir up the evil passions of their deluded followers to reject and to *crucify the Truth!* Woe is surely coming upon all such hypocritical scribes and Pharisees, who will neither enter the Kingdom themselves nor permit those who would be so inclined to enter. – Compare Matt. 23:13.

LOWER ANIMALS SUFFER LESS THAN MAN.

Infidelity's hyper-criticism has charged the Bible and the Bible's God with unsympathetic brutality in commanding Israel to sacrifice sheep, oxen, goats and doves by the tens of thousands – causing these innocent creatures intense pain merely to *typify* something future. Moreover, it is claimed that the method commanded by Moses' law for the killing of animals for food – namely by bleeding to death – is

barbarous, causing needless prolongation of the animal's sufferings: and the Hindus of India are pointed to as examples for Christians, because they will not taste animal food even if starving: whereas the founder of Christianity, while giving his followers the law of Love, not only neglected to mention the lower animals but ate thereof himself.

Our answer has been that it is a mere supposition, quite unproven, that the lower animals suffer pain in anything like the degree known to man: – especially such as under the Jewish Law were prescribed as food for man. In our opinion the cutting of the throat, while it does not exhaust life instantly, does render those animals unconscious so that they suffer no pain whatever. The horse and the dog, not permitted the Jews as food, give many instances of greater nerve-sensitiveness than do the ox, sheep, etc., and more than any other animals, tho very much less than man. Doubtless the sensitiveness of these two is designed to make them more tractable to man's control and therefore more useful and companionable to him.

We clip from the *Pittsburg Press* an article corroborative of the above that may be both interesting and profitable reading, as follows: –

ANIMALS WHICH HAVE NO PAIN. RECENT EXPERIMENTS SHOW THAT LOWER ORDERS ARE NOT SENSITIVE.

"The old writers, according to science, assumed that an insect has sensations and feelings resembling our own – that it sees what we see and suffers as we would suffer if treated in the same way. Recently the pendulum has swung in the other direction, and high authorities practically deny that the lowest organisms feel anything that can properly be called pain.

"Thus the late Prof. W. W. Norman, of the University of Texas, maintained as the result of experiments on the flounder and lower species, that the reactions of these creatures against injury do not indicate pain sensations at all.

"Certain motions are said to express pain, because they always accompany injury. Since they do accompany injury they are said to indicate that the injury causes the animal to suffer. This, the professor says, is a mere argument in a circle. He regards movements as the immediate consequence of physical stimulation. To prove his position he made a considerable number of experiments.

"The most striking and classic of these experiments were made on the common earth worm. If such a low animal be divided at its middle transversely, only the posterior half shows those squirming and jerking movements which, anthropomorphically viewed, seem [R2640 : page 166] to indicate pain; the anterior half (containing the brain) crawls, as ordinarily, away. Now, if each of these halves be halved again, the posterior segment of each squirms while the anterior halves crawl away. This same process may be continued with precisely like result until the pieces are no longer large enough to crawl independently.

"This striking phenomenon is explained in part by the two sets of muscular fibers in the worm, one longitudinal, causing the squirming and jerking, and the other circular, which produce the crawling. Why in the posterior segments the former set should be initially stimulated and in the anterior the latter set, Professor Norman says he does not know.

"The abdomen of a hermit crab may be cut in two without any 'but a very slight response' from any remaining movable organ. 'Limulus' stops a few seconds when four or five abdominal segments are cut away, then proceeds quickly breathing as before.

"'Geophilus' cut in two in the middle continues its crawling, the front half going forward and the rear half backward. Millipedes divided while walking do not hasten nor stop nor jerk. Dragon flies lose part of their abdomens without any appreciable change in position. Eels continue to eat when their abdomens are cut away during the process.

"Lastly, sharks and flounders, provided a current of water circulates through their gills, will allow the most tedious and deep-going

operations on their heads without the slightest appreciable movement indicative of pain."

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Many friends of the Truth have queried whether or not God's plan reveals any provision for the lower animals. They query whether or not there will be deaths among the lower animals during the Millennium and if so if that would not cause pain to their human friends, etc.

Scripture promises are addressed only to man and refer to the lower animals only as they stand related to man's welfare. For instance, the promise that the lion shall eat straw like the ox and lie down peaceably with the lamb, is for man's comfort and assurance, and by no means implies everlasting life to the lamb. Altho all animals have suffered by the fall of man, it is indirectly, in that their ruler, their king, lost his balance, his full sanity, and hence has been unable to regulate and govern properly his subjects. Restitution times therefore will bring its blessings chiefly to man, who because of his much higher and finer organism has suffered by his degradation and death sentence immeasurably more than the brutes.

We may expect death among the lower animals during the Millennium as they shall live out their periods of usefulness. And by reason of the contrast the everlasting life provided for man (made in God's image) will be the more appreciated. Since summer and winter are to continue (Gen. 8:22) we may know that the flowers and all vegetation will likewise die and revive perennially, reminding restored and perfected man of the blessed change that came to him by divine grace through Jesus, his Redeemer and Lord.

These conditions prevailing in the animal and vegetable worlds will bring no pain, neither sorrow nor crying (Rev. 21:4) because *all* of the former things will have passed away. Amongst these will be present *misconceptions* by which we are inclined to attribute to the lower animals human feelings and sentiments – some even carrying

these mistaken notions to flowers – loving and talking to their flowers as others do to a pet dog – imagining reciprocal feelings and sentiments.

Restitution will not only bring to men greater knowledge but also sounder minds, in harmony with the divine mind, – so that their loves and hopes, like the divine promises, will measurably pass by the lower creatures and think and plan for and be absorbed in uplifting man – "the groaning creation." And already those who receive a knowledge of the divine plan and with it the spirit of the Lord, find themselves no longer [R2641 : page 166] disposed to *waste* valuable time and affection upon dogs, flowers, etc., while the Lord's "brethren" *need* sympathy and aid and counsel in the narrow way, and while mankind in general are in so deplorable a condition as at present – mental, moral and physical. And such a change of sentiment is an evidence of their attaining more of "the spirit of a sound mind." – See 2 Tim. 1:7.

THE WAR SPIRIT GROWING.

For years Germany, France, Italy, Austria and Russia have had military fever, as is well known; and now the same has spread in virulent form to Great Britain and her colonies and to the United States. Just what bearing this may have on the great time of trouble impending is somewhat difficult to prognosticate, but it forcefully reminds us of the Prophet's pronouncement respecting our day: "Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles: Prepare war, make up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near; let them come up [to battle]: beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruning hooks into spears: let the weak say, I am strong." The context following clearly describes the great day of trouble in which the symbolic sun and moon shall be darkened and the voice of the Lord shall be heard in rebuke of evil and the present symbolic heavens and earth shall be shaken. – Joel 3:9-16; Heb. 23:26-29.

In the light of the Boer war and the resistance shown to be possible for a weak nation when well armed with modern weapons, we need not wonder if some of the small, weak nations now feel themselves [R2641

: page 167] comparatively strong, and if they will be proportionately independent – even to arrogance. Belgium for instance and Switzerland are amongst the weak nations now feeling themselves strong: and it is said that the latter is now spending on its military forces and armaments (pro rata to its population) more than any other nation of Europe.

Of course this war spirit may quiet down; but while it lasts – while every boy's heart is throbbing with military enthusiasm and every school-yard is a drill-ground – when even the Sunday School scholars are organized into "Boys' Brigades" – when professed Christians are so infected with the fever as to be blinded to justice and love and pity, – things are not favorable to peace. It looks very much as tho the International Peace Congress cried Peace! Peace! when there is no peace – because the spirit of avarice controls the world and not the spirit of the Lord, the spirit of love and benevolence. However, we who look from the Watch Tower can note these things with equanimity. In the world but not of it, we can sympathize with all the contestants, realizing that each nation is more or less blinded and misled by the spirit of pride which forgets or has never learned that only "righteousness exalteth a nation; but sin is a reproach to any people." – Prov. 14:34.

Every evil course amongst men seems to be the result of the misdirection or perversion of a *good* quality; and so it is in this war spirit: it is the misdirection of *combativeness* and *destructiveness*, – two qualities absolutely indispensable to progress. But very few even of Christians have learned of the Lord's Word and spirit how to use these faculties properly – in fighting the good fight, in overcoming and destroying the forces of *sin in themselves* and in opposing error with truth, the darkness with the light – "Speaking the truth in love."

We pray that as the spirit of warfare rises in others it may be fully awakened also in the Lord's consecrated soldiers of the cross, that they may become valiant for righteousness, courageous for the truth as "good soldiers of the Lord Jesus Christ," and be zealous to the extent of enduring hardness, – shame, contempt, evil speaking and general

opposition from the world, the flesh, the devil and the nominal Church which, blinded by false doctrines, Satan is so grievously misleading.

This thought respecting the Lord's soldiers, and the true nobility of character, and deadness to the world, and alive-ness to God necessary to victory over self and the world, much impressed us recently on the occasion of our visit to the Washington City Church. We found that, out of a total of twenty-seven professing full consecration to the Lord, three-fourths were "Volunteers," and the other fourth desirous of being such and only hindered by circumstances they could not so far control. The Editor had the pleasure of joining these soldiers of the Lord in their campaign against error and for the liberation of "brethren" still bound in Babylon; – a campaign, a warfare for a purpose, a noble purpose, a loving purpose; a warfare *for* God and truth and liberty, which injures none and can offend none except the great Adversary or those whom he has blinded. The Editor has longed to join in this service in Allegheny, but thus far has been restrained by the fear that harm rather than good might result because of his being known to be closely identified with the publication. It would be credited to a desire to "blow his own horn" rather than as the blowing of the Jubilee Trumpet, proclaiming the times of restitution of all things spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets. – Lev. 25:9,10; Acts 3:10-21.

We are thankful that we can record that *this* war fever is spreading as well as the evil life-destroying one. The soldiers of the cross are becoming more and more courageous and coming more and more to realize that, if "we ought also to *lay down our lives* for the brethren," this would imply our willingness to lay down any and every lesser thing – time, influence, etc. The Boston Church (numbering about seventy) we understand has enlisted in this "Volunteer" work almost without an exception. We have sent them 13,800 of the "Volunteer" TOWERS which they are hastening to distribute before the warm weather thins the congregations they would serve.

What a privilege is here for such as have prayed God for opportunity to serve him and his cause! Counting that each of these double TOWERS represents four sermons, and that each should reach and be read by at least three persons, can any one point out any other method for reaching this same desirable class of "brethren" at the same low cost? If we know of no other method of reaching this class *at any price*, and if we know of *no other* way by which we could preach to them the true gospel, why should not all of the Lord's consecrated people who enjoy the light of present truth avail themselves of the privilege? The fact that it is a *new* method of preaching is nothing. It is surely a successful method, not only as respects the "brethren" we would aid, but also as respects those who have covenanted themselves as living sacrifices to the Lord and his cause. All who engage in this service as something done for and unto the Lord are sure to be correspondingly blessed. Let all who *can* secure a share in this blessing. See the item in our issue of April 15th, discussing the work, method, etc., hearken to the joyful sound of the Jubilee Trumpet and become enthused with the spirit of this holy warfare. [R2646 : page 168]

"I THAT SPEAK AM HE."

– JOHN 4:26; 9:37. –

She came, the thirsty one, to fill her pitcher,
And found a stranger sitting on the brink;
And while she poured for him the well's refreshment,
He gave the precious cup of life to drink.
And when she wondered at her life's revealing,
And if Messiah deeper depths could see,
He graciously her rising faith encouraged, –
"I that speak to thee am He!"

And so when we, blest Master, come, all empty,
To fountains, we but drink, and drink in vain;
Be thou with satisfying waters waiting,
That we may drink, and never thirst again.

Our wayward hearts' true inwardness disclosing,
Constrain our timid faith to hope in thee,
And let us hear again the gracious message –
"I that speak to thee am He!"

They turned him from the synagogue accursed,
Whose gift of sight the Savior had bestowed;
And, burning under grief and indignation,
He sought again the well-remembered road.
And while he mused upon his kindly patron,
And if he could indeed Messiah be,
Lo, One with beaming countenance addressed him,
"I that speak to thee am He!"

And so, dear Lord, when our dim eyes are opened,
And one-time friends thy healing power despise,
Be thou anear with words of cheer and comfort,
To grant our saddest hour a glad surprise.
And when life's subtle mysteries perplex us,
Unlock to us with faith's unfailing key,
That we may hear from out the open portals,
"I that speak to thee am He!"

The proud and haughty still a sign requiring,
In vain the zenith and horizon scan,
While walks among them One with vesture girded,
To wield the purging and discerning fan.
But he who humbly treads the path of duty,
With eyes unsealed shall his Deliv'rer see;
His trial hour shall brighten with this token –
"I that speak to thee am He!"

R. B. HENNINGES.
