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The Doctrine of Universal Salvation.

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T H E
D O C T R I N E
O F
Universal Salvation

EXAMINED and REFUTED.

CONTAINING,

**A concise and distinct Answer to the Writings of
Mr. RELLY, and Mr. WINEHESTER, upon that
Subject.**

By ISAAC BACKUS,

Preacher of the Gospel.

*Earnestly contend for the Faith which was once delivered unto the
Saints—*

Building up yourselves on your most holy Faith.

Apostle JUDG.

P R O V I D E N C E :

**Printed and sold by JOHN CARTER. Also sold by PHILIP
FREEMAN, in Union-Street, Boston.**



• • With this Discourse may be had, the Au-
thor's HISTORY of NEW-ENGLAND; and a Piece
entituled, TRUTH IS GREAT, AND WILL PREVAIL.



T H E

Doctrīne of Universal Salvation

Examined and Refuted.

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. Eathanan 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, is entituled, "UNION: Or, a Treatise of the Consanguinity and Affinity between Christ and his Church. By James " Relly."

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“ 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 *worse 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 customs*, which shall be their own interpreters, are very necessary in the administration of justice; and that a *discretionary power* ought not to be allowed to the best of judges, without great caution and circumspection. And if *a gift doth blind the eyes of the wise, and pervert the words of the righteous*, how can debtors and criminals be suitable judges in their own causes? 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 his *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

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“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 surprising 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 come 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 in others; which are sufficient reasons why they do not admit of sureties in such cases. But infinite wisdom has caused mercy and truth, righteousness and peace, 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 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, Kelly says, “similar with this, the church existed in Christ; according as he hath chosen us in him, before the foundation 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 our 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 himself, drew a *figure* of his covenant with Christ, as having the church existing in him, he as the head engaging for his members;

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“ 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 is the SACRED THREE, who are eternally one in nature, prior to any idea of choice, and ever freely act according to that 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 skill, 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 sweat, and faint, and acknowledge his own weakness; then let him turn his eye, look at those wondrous composures, 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

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“ 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 *one 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 commit *adultery*, yet Christ never will. No soul can ever be married to him, till it is delivered from pre-engagements. Naturally we are all *wedded to do and live*, as much as ever a wife was to an husband; but we must become dead to that, and that to us, in order to be married to Christ. The conceit of some life in us, at least to make an honest cry for mercy in distress, is never given up, till the holy Spirit demonstrates to the soul, that the *law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good*; and that in us there is *no good thing*: In this way *sin revives, and we die*. By the body of Christ, *that also becomes dead wherein we were held*. Viewing how he *bear our sins* in his own body on the tree, our imaginary life expires; and the process against us is also at an end; since Christ is *the end of the law for righteousness, to every one that believeth*. Thus we become dead to the law by the body of Christ, that we should be married to him who was raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God; we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held, that we should serve in *newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter*. Rom. vii. 1—12, and x. 4. The oldness of the letter gives no encouragement to come to God, without holiness and obedience in ourselves; the newness of the spirit teacheth souls to come through Jesus, for pardon, cleansing and strength to live to him. According to the oldness of the letter, every defect in us lays a bar in the way of coming; but by the newness of the spirit, every sin and every enemy are so many reasons to move us to *come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need*. Heb. iv. 16.

The powers of thinking and choosing are essential to the nature of all immortal spirits; without which no idea can be formed of their existence; therefore two spirits cannot possibly become one without choice; and 'tis but a *filthy dream* for any to entertain

|| *Had the creature a real existence from eternity!*

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entertain such a notion. Yet Relly says; "man being the vessel marred between the potter's hands, was not rejected, but here was made another and better vessel; where the nature, once spoiled by sin, was born into the world pure and spotless, and called the Son of God." P. 27. "As the head was never without the body, nor the body without the head, in the Lord, the body hath always been, by union with the head, entitled unto all the blessings, honors, and glories thereof. — If it is not true until our believing, and by means thereof, then doth believing make that a truth which was not a truth, and faith creates its own object, and then embraces it: This looks like the heathen idolatry, first making their gods, and then trusting in them." P. 35. This is a darling topic with him; but I am quite willing to meet him, and to try the matter out fairly upon his own ground; in order whereto we must remember the difference there is betwixt faith and hope. Hope is fixed upon promised blessings; but faith regards all revealed truth, be the same desirable or terrible to us. The creation, support, government, and final dissolution of this world, by the word of God, are all objects of faith; as also are everlasting punishments to the wicked, and eternal life to the righteous. But of this the *scissors* of these last days are *willingly ignorant*. Heb. i. 3, and xi. 1—6. 2 Pet. ii. 3—7. Because the word gospel signifies good news, they imagine that none preach it, but such as prophecy *smooth things*, and cry, *peace, peace*, to carnal men. Isai. xxx. 8—11. Jer. viii. 11. The latter part of the pamphlet before us turns entirely upon this point; the deceit whereof is easily discovered.

For to hear of the *harmless* serpent was very good news to the poisoned Israelites, and so was the city of refuge to the man-slayer; as pardon also was to criminals *justly condemned*, and free forgiveness to debtors who had *nothing to pay*. But, according to the above reasoning, they must have been told, that health was as really theirs before they looked as afterwards, or else looking made the object they looked to! John iii. 14, 15. Safety is as truly yours before you fly as afterwards, or else fleeing to the city, makes the city you fly to, which had no existence before! Heb. vi. 18. Pardon and forgiveness were as really yours before you received them as since, or else giving in to the equity of the indictment and the accounts, and receiving a discharge therefrom, created the whole affair, which had no existence before! Psalm li. 3—8. Luke vii. 41, 42. Yet, speaking of Adam and his posterity, Relly says, "his sin, its curse and fruit, was theirs, before they felt it, knew it, or ever
were

“ were conscious of existence. Thus, by one man’s disobedience, many were made sinners. In like manner, Christ’s righteousness is upon all his seed, by his *single act*, before they had any capacity of obeying, after the similitude of his obedience, or of assenting to what he did, or suffered: This manifests such an union to him, such an inclusion of the whole seed in him, as renders his condition theirs, in every state which he passes through—*For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.*” P. 14.

The words of the text contradict the position he would prove by it. For it speaks of our concern in Adam’s sin as a *past event*, but of life by Christ as what *shall be* hereafter. And in Rom. v. 12—20, while the sacred writer declares a likeness between our two public heads in some things, he repeatedly asserts an unlikeness in others. What they each did as public heads, belongs to all their seed; but as to what they did, and the way how it comes to their seed, there is an infinite disparity betwixt them. By *one offence* Adam brought us all into a state of revolt from God, so that as we come into the world we all love the creature more than the Creator, love self above him, till we are born again, and death comes upon us by *law* as a just *debt*; but *righteousness* and abundance of *grace* are *received* as a *free gift*. As soon as Adam fell, he ceased to be our covenant head, so that we are not answerable for any of his after sins, any more than for the sins of other men that we allow of; but Christ is the unchangeable surety of all his chosen, and is able to save them to the uttermost. From a state of union and communion with God, and lordship over the earth, Adam by *one act* rushed into rebellion and misery; but by freely assuming our nature, and taking our law-place, Jesus saves from the dreadful guilt and power of *many offences*. By one act a fire might be kindled, enough to lay a city in ruins, and a little infection might spread the plague through a kingdom; but how great must the work be to stop the conflagration or contagion, and to restore health and prosperity again? Therefore it is strictly true, that *where sin abounded, grace did much more abound*. The word *as*, in 1 Cor. xv. 22, plainly points to the two heads, and the influence that proceeds therefrom. *As* by Adam’s sin a corrupt nature is communicated to his posterity, which causes the dissolution of our bodies; *even so* is the gift of righteousness, a new nature, and the resurrection of the body, communicated by Christ to his seed. *For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead*. And let it never be forgotten, that death comes upon all as our *just wages*; but eternal life as

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a free gift. Rom. vi. 23. No two ideas are more distinct, nor more easily understood by common people. All the blessings of salvation were provided by covenant in Christ, before the world began; but the only way for any to enjoy them, is by receiving them freely by faith.

Upon this Rely says, "believe and thou shalt be saved, is certainly similar unto, *do this and live*; man, in himself, being as capable of doing the one as the other." P. 42. I am sensible that many would have it so; but they can never accomplish their desire, till they can make wages and a free gift to be the same thing; nor till partaking freely of a rich feast, can be the same as working hard to earn it. Neither can the plea of inability excuse those who *make light* of the gospel call, till their natural faculties of hearing, seeing and tasting, are gone, instead of being fixed upon objects opposite to what they should be. Mat. xiii. 15, and xxii. 1—12. Luke xiv. 16—24. Natural inability often excuses from blame; but moral inability is the very soul of iniquity. The cause why we cannot love God supremely, is because we love the creature above him, which is the essence of idolatry; and the reason why we cannot believe his truth, is because it reproves our evil deeds, the works of darkness, which we *love rather than light*. Hence moral impotency to love God, and to believe the record he has given of his Son, is *the condemnation* which all unbelievers are under; and his *wrath abideth on them*; from which nothing but a *receiving his testimony*, and *setting to their seal that he is true*, can deliver any soul. John iii. 18—21, 34—36. Our personal interest is not the direct object of faith, but the consequence and privilege which is received by believing, as looking is the way of enjoying the light, and looking to the object that Moses set up by divine direction, was the way whereby the poison of the fiery serpents was expelled. If any who were bitten refused to look to that object, the poison killed them, while the nature and efficacy of the remedy was as good to those who looked, as if none had refused it.

Material bodies are dark things, and are often made use of to shut out the light, by such as hate it, and love darkness rather than light. And is not this the labour of the writer I am answering? The head, says he, was never without the body in the Lord; as if the creature was co-existent with the Son of God! David says, *Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being IMPERFECT, and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance WERE fashioned, when as yet there was NONE OF THEM.* Psalm cxxxix. 16. The whole plan of all his works
and

