

Letter from the [Universalist] Church in New Britain [Connecticut] to the Universalist Convention of 1805

7th January 2005

Richard Eddy reprinted the following letter in his important series of articles entitled "Universalist Conventions and Creeds" (Universalist Quarterly July 1875: 312-318) He called this letter "a fine specimen of the sturdy logic which characterized all the flowed from the pen of its author, Rev. David Evans. It is worthy of preservation, as among the last utterances of the Rellyan theology."

The Universalian Church meeting in New Britain, To the Ministers and Messengers of the several Churches of the same faith with us, meeting in Convention at Philadelphia, May 25th, 1805, Greeting.

Dear Brethren: – An Inspired Apostle defines the Gospel of Christ to be Glad tidings of good things, and what tidings can be more gladdening and better, to him that knows the fallen, helpless state of man, who knows that he is a sinner, and that sin doth involve the curse which he not able to endure or to extinguish, – than to hear that God, who is infinitely wise, powerful and good, is the first cause and last end of all things? That thereby limits are fixed to the degree and duration of all evil, that all the evil which hath entered into the moral and physical world, is the subject of annihilation, and shall through the strict execution of the unfrustratable decree, be made to subserve the promotion of final, universal, purity and happiness. That the mediation of our most adorable Lord Jesus, doth, and eternally did exist, and that the existance thereof doth eternally eternally interest mankind therein, although the far greater number in the present time know it not, and do not desire the knowledge thereof. That the mediation of Jesus Christ laid on him the iniquity of us all, and brought him under the obligation of delivering us from the Curse, by being made a Curse for us, and that through an illumination of our minds in the knowledge of this grace and truth, mankind are saved from the dominion of sin, and from the tormenting fear of the Curse of the law, and are sweetly reconciled to God and to each other in Evangelical love and purity. That God most absolute, according to His Sovereign Will, hath elected a particular number of mankind to be real Believers in this life, all whom he doth in the present life sweetly incline to seek to know the Lord; to all such, (with our any exception) God doth in the present life shew His Salvation, and that the manifestation thereof shall be their

All-sufficient and unceasing heaven. That all those who are not thus elected, God doth suffer them during the present life to rest easy in their sins; and in the embraces of irreconcilable contradictions, they have no desire to attain to the knowledge of the only True God and Jesus Christ whom He hath sent; – Therefore, their lot will be, to die ignorant of their salvation from the charge and demerit of sin being fully completed in Jesus Christ. That their ignorance will be their sufficient future hell, binding them as much under the tormenting fear of the charge of sin and its demerits, as if Jesus had not saved them therefrom; in which awful state they must remain until the dispensation of the fulness of time. But the evil being temporary, God's distinguishing mercy to the one, and His awful severity to the other, is to subserve the promotion of final and universal purity and happiness in all. Therefore, manifestly consistent with every attribute in God, and the existence of the most glorious mediation of Jesus Christ, this being a summary of the Gospel of Christ, every part thereof is Glad Tidings of Good Things.

Also it is plain from metaphysical deductions, that Whatever God doth hate He will finally annihilate. God doth implacably hate sin, Therefore, He will finally annihilate it.

Further, What God will not finally hate, He doth necessarily love, Therefore, if God will not finally annihilate all sin, He doth necessarily love it.

These arguments, in conjunction with the word and oath of God that He hath no pleasure in the death of the wicked, do demonstratively and superabundantly prove the limitarian doctrine to be false and anti-Christian. Although in the present day a few only are inclined of God to desire to attain the knowledge of the most precious truth, – the absoluteness, universality and immutability of God's love, – the universality and absoluteness of Salvation through the merits of Christ alone, – that God will finally gather all into the knowledge of Himself, – yet we are under the greatest obligations to rejoice in God, that the proof of the existence of this truth is so plain, demonstrative, and invincible, that the most accomplished limitarian will never be able argumentatively to answer and confute. The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are His. Therefore let us not be discouraged, but animated unitedly to defend the truth, illustrating it and the necessity of seeing, knowing and believing it, in order that we may partake of eternal life.

To meet with you we have appointed our Minister, David Evans, to be our Messenger. Praying for the promotion of the real Gospel, we subscribe, Your Brethren.

Subscribed by request of our meeting of worship, May 19th, 1805. THOMAS MORRIS, Clerk.