

**WITNESSES TO THE TRUTH: CONTAINING
PASSAGES FROM DISTINGUISHED
AUTHORS, DEVELOPING THE GREAT
TRUTH OF UNIVERSAL SALVATION: WITH
AN APPENDIX EXHIBITING THE ENORMITY
OF THE DOCTRINE OF ENDLESS MISSERY**

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Witnesses to the Truth: Containing Passages from Distinguished Authors, Developing the Great Truth of Universal Salvation: With an Appendix Exhibiting the Enormity of the Doctrine of Endless Misery by J. W. Hanson

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J. W. HANSON

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ENDLESS MISERY.

John Wesley
BY J. W. HANSON.

"OUT OF THE STRONG COMETH FORTH SWEETNESS."—JEREM. XLV. 4.

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WITNESSES
to
THE TRUTH.

THE glorious idea of the final salvation of Universal Man, has kindled the pages of literature since it was first fully developed by Him, who, in the purposes of Deity, is the destined agent of its accomplishment. From the year 120, down to the dawn of the Reformation, it was never wholly extinct, though, owing to the baleful influence of Heathenism, the shrines of Christianity were for centuries burning with the lurid fires of endless sin and wrath, almost exclusively. The proudest names in the earliest annals of Christianity, claimed now by both Catholics and Protestants, announced the doctrine, and received no condemnation therefor. The Basilidian, Carpocratian, and Valentinian sects, (120—130) Sybilline Oracles, (150) and CLEMENS ALEXANDRINUS, (190—217) who was the most eminent from the Apostles down to his own time, all were Universalists, nor is there a word

of opposition to their opinions found in any manuscript of their times. The first announcement of endless misery is not older than about A. D. 200, when TERTULLIAN declared the sentiment; but even he does not condemn the opposite truth.

The ripest scholar, the profoundest intellect, the ablest controversialist, and one of the holiest saints the Church has ever had in its shining ranks — ORIGEN ADAMANTIOS * — (185—253) was distinguished for his constant advocacy of this necessary result of the Divine Attributes. After him came the distinguished names of GREGORY THAUMATURGUS, (240) TITUS, of Bostra, (360) BASIL the Great, (370) GREGORY NYSSEN, (370) DIDYMUS the Blind, JEROME, DIODORUS of Tarsus, and others, from 370—390. It was not until A. D. 394, that the first word was written condemning the doctrine as heresy. Previously, it was held by a portion of the church, while its opposite was believed by others, and, at some periods of the first four centuries after Christ, it was the orthodox, or popular doctrine. Its written declaration dates back of the first annunciation of the cruel sentiment now so rife.

When Heathenism and Christianity had be-

*Ballou's History of Universalism—to which we are indebted for these facts.

gotten their hybrid daughter, Catholicism, Endless Evil became an essential to orthodoxy, and, accordingly, the Fifth General Council, in A. D. 553, pronounced the "faith once delivered to the saints" a damnable heresy. This condemnation was repeated by the Councils which assembled in 649, 680, 787, and 869, proving, that though not popular, it still was in existence. A few of those who denied the Popish error, were JOHN SCOTUS ERIGENA, the greatest scholar and genius of the Ninth Century, RAYNOLD, Abbot of St. Martin, (1190) SALOMON, Bishop of Bassorah, (1222) the German Stadlings, (1230—4) many of the Lollards (1315) people in Canterbury, (1368) Men of Understanding in Flanders, (1400—12) JOHN PICUS, Earl of Mirandola, (1480—94) and PETER D'ARANDA, (1490—8.)

Never has the sublime fact, that Sin, and all its ruinous consequences will finally be ended, been lost sight of, since it was announced by Jesus, and written by Paul, though it was nearly so during the gloomiest periods of the world's history. In the Dark Ages, when Truth and Learning were eclipsed, and Error and Ignorance reigned, its opposite bore almost exclusive sway, and the persecution, and barbarism, and frightful multitude of horrors which then swarmed throughout the world, were natural consequences. The condition of the church during those

perilous times, compared with its triumphal career, during the first four centuries, when Pagan and Jewish errors were scattered by the good news of the Gospel, gives us notable proof of the power of the truth, that "God is in Christ, reconciling a world unto Himself," to win souls from darkness unto light. With comparatively few exceptions, but those generally brilliant ones, the Church entered the gloom of the great night of the Dark Ages, led by the all-engrossing falsehood, that God would hate and curse forever those who would not serve Him on earth.

Could the Past open its inexorable doors, — could the sainted martyrs pass in array before us, how many thousands, who have entered Heaven through baptismal fires, from the cross and the scaffold, and by the dark doors of dungeons and gloomy cells, would be seen to have gone with the assurance of a Universal Heaven, — and how many of them should we hear say that they "labored, and suffered reproach," and perished at last, "because they trusted in the Living God as the Saviour of all men, especially of those that believe."

With the dawn of the Reformation, this central orb in the Gospel system began to shed its light into the hearts of men, and it has promoted intelligence and human progress, in the exact ratio of its reception. So true is this, that we