

1 Timothy 2:3-4 (John Thomas Mawson) 174964

Answers to Correspondents, Will All Be Saved? (2:3-4)

W.W., Manchester. — You must not allow the caviling of the universalist to hinder you in the proclamation of the glad tidings; indeed, the very passages quoted by him should give you a great incentive to go on with your work.

1 Timothy 2:3-4

Take the first: "God our Savior, who will have all men to be saved" (1 Tim. 2:3, 4). The gospel is for all, and is sent to every sinner on earth: this you can freely make known. Moreover a righteous basis for the blessing of all is found in that "Christ Jesus... gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time" (verse 6). This must be made known world-wide.

But salvation which God is willing to bestow upon all, is linked with coming "to the knowledge of the truth," and here the will of man comes in and he refuses it; and in this is his condemnation, for men love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil (John 3:19). But God is dealing with men in grace, it is the day of salvation, and He is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3:9). If; however, in self-will a man refuses repentance and the gospel, his doom is clearly foretold in the Word of God:

"The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels.

"In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: "Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power" (2 Thess. 1:7-9).

And all such will be without excuse.

The word "will" in verse 4 is not the will of purpose, it is the will of desire, embracing all men both in the thought of His heart and in the bearing of the one all-availing ransom. But the will of purpose is not thus general: it is definitive of some "chosen" in the inscrutable sovereignty of grace (see Eph. 1:4, 5).

1 Corinthians 15:22

The passage in 1 Corinthians 15:22: "For as in Adam all die so in Christ shall all be made alive," certainly does not prove that all men will be saved. It is a simple statement of the fact that on the one hand all that are in Adam die, and that on the other hand all who are in Christ shall be made alive. But all men are not "in Christ." Hence all will not be made alive, that is, not made alive in the sense in which this verse speaks of being made alive or quickened.

It is interesting to note that the word quickening applied in verse 45 to Christ, "the last Adam a quickening Spirit," is cognate to the verb used in this verse. Hence there is contrast between the two Adams. Each is head of a race. Death prevails in one line, life in the other. In Adam all die, in Christ, the last Adam, all are made alive.

Though verse 22 does not pass beyond those in Christ, yet we may remark that more is involved (though not developed) in verse 24 where the destruction of the last enemy, death, is spoken of. Death is here viewed as an enemy which has invaded God's creation: that enemy must be destroyed and this involves the resurrection even of the wicked — not their being "made alive" in the sense of verse 22, but the bringing together of the component parts of man — body, soul and spirit by the destruction of that which had separated them. Thus is God vindicated in respect of that which had brought disintegration into His creation: and of this the resurrection of Christ is the pledge. But the resurrection of the lost is in view not of life, but of judgment, hence it is spoken of in John 5:29 as the resurrection of damnation (or judgment) and is contrasted there with the resurrection of life, and in Revelation 20:4-6 with the first resurrection, from which it is separated by an interval of a thousand years.

Romans 5:18

As to Romans 5:18. This runs thus:

"As by the offense of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation: even so by the righteousness of one (or by one righteousness' margin) the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life."

The words "judgment came" and also the words "the free gift came" are in italics in the A.V., as indicating that they are not in the original. Omitting these words the simple meaning of the Scripture is evident: as the offense of one had its bearing towards all men to condemnation so the bearing of the one righteousness is towards (literal translation) all men unto justification of life. That does not mean that all men receive the blessing which flows from that one accomplished righteousness, but it does mean that it is towards all alike in view of justification of life. We have a somewhat similar statement in the third chapter, where we read (verse 22) of "the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all": that is to say it is towards all men, but, mark, it does not say "upon all men" but goes on, "and upon all them that believe."

1 Timothy 4:10

You ask again as to 1St Tim. 4, 10:

“For therefore we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, specially of those that believe.”

Here the word “Savior” should be translated “Preserver.” God is the Preserver of all men. His rain descends upon the just and upon the unjust. He sustains all in life. But His beneficent care in this way is specially marked towards those that believe, and hence the apostle’s confidence in the midst of suffering and reproach.

One passage from the Old Testament and one from the New will serve in few words to prove the falsity of the universalist’s reasoning. “And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting, life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt” (Dan. 12:2). “Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth: they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation” (John 5:28, 29).

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