

[R1234 : page 7]

RATHER TOO SIMPLE

The following is the simple way of setting aside the general teaching of God's Word by a play upon English words in order to prove that all mankind shall be everlastingly saved:

"Does not the Bible say that to know God is life eternal? And does it not say also that *all* shall come to the knowledge of the truth? Well, then, do not these two statements *prove* the everlasting salvation of all men?"

We answer, – Such an argument would not pass for *proof* to any well balanced mind. Very shallow indeed must be the brain which accepts such sophistry as conclusive proof.

Let us examine these two texts closely, – let us not hastily draw an immature conclusion from a part of a statement, but let us take into consideration the contexts also. Turn to John 17:3. Read it several times. Read the preceding verse twice. Think a little. Now read the second and third verses together. By this time you will see that the word "know" has the thought of *appreciate* or *understand*. You will have noted, also, that the expression, "that *they* might know thee," refers not to every one, but only to a special class referred to in verse 2. And in verse 2 you will find this special class [R1235 : page 7] mentioned in contrast with "*all flesh*." Now with these discriminating thoughts assisting us in "rightly dividing the word of truth," let us read these two verses together, and note that they not only do not support the idea suggested above, but directly contradict it.

It is to those whom the Father gives him – to those whom God's truth and providence have the effect of drawing to Christ and to righteousness – to those whom the Father approves, under the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus – to such shall be granted

a *full* appreciation of God's character. Such will be heirs of *lasting* life under God's arrangement, and their knowledge, their intimate acquaintance with God, will be one of the evidences that they are the friends of God to whom he has promised *lasting* life, and that they are not his enemies, whom he declares shall be destroyed from among the people, and shall not stand in the congregation of the righteous. – Acts 3:23; Psa. 1:5,6.

Next look at the other text referred to, 1 Tim. 2:4. Look at the context – verses 1 to 3 and 5 to 7. Read these all over carefully together, until you get the Apostle's connected thought.

While the Apostle does not counsel prayer for the miraculous conversion of the world and its rulers, nor for their lives to be prolonged, nor for their success in war, nor for the increase of their despotic control of the liberties of the people, he does recommend that when occasion offers, supplications, prayers, intercessions and thanks be expressed on behalf of any one, including kings and all in power, as well as on behalf of the Church.

There is a two-fold reason for this: First, that the Church be not misunderstood (through exclusive attention to and prayer for her own people only) to be opposed to, or to be enemies of, those charged with the execution of law, but being rightly understood by those without, she may be permitted quiet and peace in her pursuit of godliness; and secondly, because *such* an interest in the affairs of our fellow-men is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior.

Such good desires for all men, and such an interest in the world and the affairs of the world, are in perfect accord with God's interest and plan for mankind in general. For it is agreeable to God's will that all men (and not merely the Church now being selected) be saved (recovered out of the ignorance, prejudice, superstition and condemnation, which directly and indirectly came upon all men through Adam's fall and sentence, and from which

all were redeemed by the one sacrifice of Christ), and that they should all come to a knowledge of the truth. Therefore, in sympathizing with the world and its affairs and in manifesting such a righteous interest and sympathy and in praying on their behalf, subject to the provisions of God's Word, you are in harmony with God's will and plan, though his time for working out all his gracious provisions for the world of mankind has not yet come, and will not come until he has first selected the Church, who are to be his "new creation," partakers of the divine nature and its glorious powers.

Do you ask a proof that such is God's plan – that it embraces all men, that he wills the recovery of all men, and that they all come to a clear comprehension of the truth? It is in the fact that "There is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself *a ransom for all* – TO BE TESTIFIED *in due time.*"

How very evident it is, when all the connections are examined, that God's will, that all should be recovered from their misconceptions and delusions, and that they be brought to a clear knowledge of the *truth*, is for the very purpose of testing the wills of all by the truth, in order that those who will choose and delight in the law of God – Love – may be clearly manifested and separated from those who choose ungodliness – selfishness, etc.; that the "sheep" may be separated from the "goats." – Matt. 25:33,34,41.

A distinction should be recognized, as above shown, between the bringing to a *full knowledge of the truth* and a bringing to a *full knowledge of God*. The full knowledge of the *truth* must in due time come to *all*, and signifies a clear appreciation of the facts of the case – of the fact of sin and its condemnation, and of God's love and its provision of redemption for all, and of restitution to as many as heartily accept the conditions of the new covenant.

The full knowledge of **God** is that deep and full appreciation of God's character and plan in all its minutiae, which comes only as a result of close, intimate acquaintance and communion and is possible only to those who, when brought to a knowledge of the truth, gladly and fully surrender themselves to God – to the consecrated, who as a result of full self-surrender receive the spirit, the disposition of God, which enables them to **know** him as others cannot know him.

Yes, power over **all flesh** is given to our Lord Jesus, and when he shall exercise this power, **all flesh** shall be brought to a full knowledge of the truth; and when so enlightened all flesh shall be judged or tested by that truth; as it is written of that "due time" when all shall be enlightened – "My words shall **judge** you in that day." And so many as receive the truth and rejoice in it will, by virtue of that hearty obedience, come to a fuller and fuller appreciation of the very spirit of the truth, and thus shall come more and more intimately to know, to appreciate fully God himself. And for these friends of God, friends of God's laws, friends of righteousness, peace and love, and for no others, God has prepared and promised lasting life.
