

UNIVERSAL SALVATION.

"We trust in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of those that believe." – 1 Tim. 4:10.

It is very generally conceded among Christians that Universalists are the only class of people who have any claim upon, or use for, this text of Scripture; but although we are not Universalists, we also, with Paul, trust in the living God [Jehovah], who is the Savior of all men, especially of those that believe. Thus the Apostle declares that in one sense the salvation which God has promised is to be universal, while in another sense it is to be restricted to believers.

A little reflection upon the general teaching of the Scriptures makes the Apostle's meaning here very evident. Nowhere in the Scriptures is eternal life promised to any except on conditions of faith in Christ the Redeemer, and repentance, or change of heart from sin to righteousness – "For there is no other name under heaven which has been given among men, by which we can be saved;" and "Now God commandeth all men, every where, to repent, because he hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained, whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead." (Acts 4:12; 17:30,31.) And the numerous exhortations to faith and repentance, as the prerequisites on man's part to salvation, are too familiar to every Christian to need repetition here. We merely cite a few. See John 3:15,36; 6:47; Acts 13:39; Mark 6:12; Luke 13:3,5; Acts 3:19.

In harmony with this teaching of the Scriptures, we therefore understand the Apostle's statement to signify that God is the Savior of all men from the Adamic death, or the death into which all were precipitated by Adamic transgression, in that he hath

provided a redemption for all. In thus providing salvation and ultimately offering it to all men as a free gift of his grace, through Jesus Christ, who is "the propitiation for the sins of the whole world," God stands in the attitude of a savior toward all men. He is the Savior whether all men accept the proffered salvation or not.

But, while thus the Savior of all, there is a particular or special sense in which God is the Savior of those that believe and accept this reconciliation [R1437 : page 251] and the opportunity offered of making it *everlasting* salvation. This salvation is conditional: "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." (Acts 16:31.) This is an unequivocal promise of actual and permanent salvation to every individual who believes, *i.e.*, heartily accepts. To such an one, God not only stands in the attitude of a savior, ready and willing to save, but he will go farther and actually accomplish his salvation; and this is the special sense in which he is the Savior of them that believe. Between the general sense in which he is the Savior of all men, and this special sense in which he is the Savior of them that believe, there is, therefore, all the difference between a possible and an actual, a proffered and an accepted salvation.

The general difficulty with Christian people on this subject is, that they do not admit that God is the Savior of all men – that he stands ready and willing to deliver all from sin and death into life and liberty of righteousness. Some declare that he stands ready to be the Savior of all "*the elect*." Others, while claiming that God is willing and ready to save all, practically deny it by claiming that the necessary *believing* must be done in the *present life* – which practically excludes three-fourths of the race from any opportunity of sharing in it, since more than that proportion have died without any knowledge of the only name given under heaven or among men, whereby we must be saved. This view contradicts God's Word; because for even one member of the human race to be left unprovided for – to be left without the needful information and

opportunity – would render false the statement which God makes, that he stands as a Savior to *all* men. The entire matter is clear, however, when viewed from the standpoint of the Plan of the Ages – which shows that through the redemptive work of Christ God has provided *salvation for all from all that "was lost" in Adam*; and that the knowledge necessary to the acceptance of this provided gift, while it has reached only the few in the present life, is to be testified to all in due time – in the coming age, in which Christ and his Church shall reign over and bless, with his gracious offer, all the families of the earth.

God has appointed means of salvation, of which every one who is sick of sin and desirous of a return to his love and service will gladly avail himself. At great cost it was purchased – even at the sacrifice of the "only-begotten" and well-beloved Son, who freely gave himself for us all. (John 3:16.) Condemnation unto death passed upon us through our father Adam, while we were yet in his loins and were therefore represented in him; but the death of the Son of God, "the man Christ Jesus," as a ransom or substitute for Adam, taking his place in death, legally released, not only Adam, but also all his posterity, from death. Thus, legally, the salvation of the race was secured – made possible – possible for God to be "just and yet the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus" (Rom. 3:26) – when the sacrifice of Christ Jesus was finished on the cross: and this is what our Lord meant when, dying, he bowed his head and said, "It is finished." And of its actual accomplishment toward all them that believe, "God hath" as the Apostle states, "given full assurance in that he hath raised him from the dead;" not indeed again in the flesh [The body of his humiliation was taken by him merely for the suffering of death, because, as by *man* (Adam) came death, by *man* also (the *perfect* man and therefore the acceptable sacrifice, Christ Jesus) must come the resurrection or salvation from the dead.] – but to the divine nature, a spirit being, endued with all power in heaven and in earth. He is therefore abundantly able to accomplish

the great work of restitution of the dead – of whosoever wills to accept everlasting life on the terms and conditions of the New Covenant.

But before this provided salvation can become actual or special to any individual, such an one must believe the testimony of God with reference to the matter, as expressed in his Word. He must realize (1) that he is imperfect, a sinner, unworthy of everlasting life; (2) he must recognize the man Christ Jesus as his personal redeemer, as the one through whose *meritorious sacrifice* for human sins comes the privilege of reconciliation with God and the [R1438 : page 251] consequent return to perfection and lasting life. All who thus believe and who act accordingly, [R1438 : page 252] *i.e.*, who accept the proffered salvation as the free and unmerited "gift of God our Savior," secured for us by him through the Atonement for sins provided in the sacrifice at Calvary – and who, in accordance with this faith, reform their lives, submitting themselves thereafter to the will of God – these shall in due time fully realize the special or actual salvation promised in the above text.

In accepting Christ as the Redeemer, the believing one is reckoned as no longer a dying son of the dead Adam, but as a living son of the "last Adam" (1 Cor. 15:45), having a new life in Christ. "Therefore if any man be in Christ [*i.e.*, represented in Christ instead of in Adam, as formerly], he is a *new creature*" [newly "created in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2:10) – reckonedly; and in due time, if he "abide in him," he will be a new creature actually]. – 2 Cor. 5:17. Such have, in God's estimation and in their own, "passed from death unto life:" being justified by faith they are no longer under condemnation. – Rom. 8:1.

Thus (*by faith*) we are transferred from the dead head of the race, Adam, to the living head of the redeemed race, Christ Jesus. And if any man be thus in Christ he is a new creature (2 Cor. 5:17):

old things – the old love of sin, the old disposition to do evil, and the old worldly and selfish ambitions, strifes, etc. – no longer please and satisfy his new mind. Their power of control has passed away, and behold, all things have become new. He begins to realize a new spirit, a new disposition within him; and therefore he has new hopes, new joys, new ambitions, a new heart [will] for love and joy and peace, and a blessed sense of the divine approval; and he looks forward with joyful anticipation, realizing that his destiny is eternal life. But out of Christ there is no life, no hope; and those who have not come into him by faith still abide under the Adamic condemnation. However, as already shown, it is the purpose of God that in "*due time*" these truths shall be so clearly testified to every man that all will have the fullest opportunity to believe and thus to come into Christ and through him inherit eternal life. See 1 Tim. 2:4-6.

The time for fully realizing the special, actual salvation is the Millennial age: the sense in which any possess it now is by faith; for "we walk by faith and not by sight" until the appointed time – the Millennial age. Then the faithful Bride class will be perfected as spirit-beings like their Lord; and thenceforth the reconciliation of the world will be accompanied by gradual restitution to human perfection, which salvation, if they are worthy, at the close of the Millennium will become everlasting salvation.
