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## UNIVERSAL SALVATION.

(NO. III.)

One writes us who has been for some time a TOWER reader, and who seems to have determined that *he wants* the Scriptures to teach the everlasting salvation of all men. We fear he has not been much helped by the articles on this subject in recent TOWERS. We will answer his questions publicly for the good of others; hoping also that the objector may see the weakness of his position, and come over again to the firm foundation of the explicit statements of God's Word. He says: –

(1) There is no Scripture which states that there will be no resurrection from the Second Death.

We answer, The Bible is God's revelation of what he has done and purposes to do for human salvation. If, therefore, it reveals no resurrection from the Second Death, no one has a right to believe or teach so – no, nor even so to hope. Those who do so are adding to God's Word. It is a bold, bad heart which, after receiving all the mercies revealed, would attempt to set aside those *just* features of the divine plan which an unsanctified will rebels against. [R1453 : page 297]

(2) His mercy endureth forever; and is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever.

Yes, those gracious expressions mean much of joy and comfort; but, in the original, the word of which our English word *forever* is a translation does not mean exactly the same as *forever* or *without an end*. It means, rather, continuously as long as proper or necessary, until a proper end has been reached. To illustrate: In Lev. 16:34 we read, "This shall be an *everlasting* (Hebrew, *olam*) statute unto you, to make an

atonement for the children of Israel for all their sins, once a year." And in verse 29 we read, "And this shall be a *statute* FOREVER unto you: That in the seventh month and tenth day of the month ye shall...do no work at all." (Compare Exod. 21:6.) How long did "*forever*" or "*everlasting*" mean in those cases? Are those statutes still in force? No. When did that "*forever*" and that "*everlasting*" cease? At the cross. These, with all the other features of the Mosaic Law, ceased [R1454 : page 297] when Christ made an end of the Law, nailing it to his cross.

Just so in the texts quoted by Objector. God's mercy toward human sinners will endure until Christ makes an end of it in the close of the Millennial age. Mercy by that time will have exhausted every legitimate means for showing to sinners the path of life. More than that could not be called mercy. When all will have been done that can be done for sinners (and God's promises concerning the great work of Christ for the world during the Millennium are nothing short of this), then, the true, proper end of the mercy having come, divine Love and Justice will step forward and declare that those who have rejected this fulness of mercy shall be "cut off [not from their sins, but] from among the people." – Acts 3:23.

(3) "Once for all" Christ died to release Adam (and all in him), whether it be from First Death, Second Death or any other death. His blood can never lose its power until all are saved, to sin no more; because the man Christ Jesus gave himself a *ransom* FOR ALL.

We are glad that this Brother holds fast to the ransom, and bases all his hopes upon that sure foundation. (For this reason we can call him *Brother*.) If he will hold fast to that foundation, and test every part of his theory by that, he will come out all right. But to do this he will need that humility which will say,

"Let God be true, though it show my theories to be nonsense." The words, "once *for all*," and "a ransom *for all*," while they do teach a salvation *for all* (and not a limited atonement and a limited offer of salvation, as most Christians believe), do not teach that the salvation secured can never have an end.

Let us keep in memory the Scriptural statements that the penalty under which all the race fell from divine favor and into death was for Adam's transgression (Rom. 5:12), and that the recovery from sin and death secured by our Lord Jesus' ransom-sacrifice affected THAT *death* and THOSE *sins* and *weaknesses* which we inherited from our father Adam, and none other. Is it not, therefore, logical as well as Scriptural to say that wilful sins (intentionally committed, under full light and ability to the contrary) are *not Adam's* sins in any sense of the word, and that the ransom from Adam's sin and penalty would therefore not at all affect a release from these sins and their penalty? So say the Scriptures concerning all whose share in the Adamic sin and penalty has been canceled ( – through faith in Christ's sin-sacrifice), and who are therefore reckoned as no longer *dead* in Adam, but as "alive in Christ" – "risen with him." After they have been once enlightened – been brought to a knowledge of the truth, tasted of the good Word of God and the powers of the world to come [the Millennial powers – resurrection, etc., tasted by faith], and been made partakers of the holy spirit – if *such* shall fall away, it is *impossible to renew them again* – because their course does despite to the favor God offers, and counts as common and valueless the blood of the New Covenant wherewith they *had been sanctified*. – Heb. 6:4-6; 10:26-31.

Since God's plan is to *save all men from* all that was lost in Adam – through the Second Adam, Christ – it follows that when every child of Adam has been brought to a full knowledge of God's plan, and a full opportunity for forgiveness and restitution

to divine favor, all have been **SAVED** *from that calamity*. Then, [R1454 : page 298] however, their individual trial begins; and the length or brevity of their salvation depends upon *their own* (not Adam's) course. If they after all that sin *wilfully*, the penalty they will get will be their own and not Adam's – for which Christ died. And there is no authority in Scripture for your statement that our Lord's death was for, or that it will have any effect upon, those who will suffer Second Death, the penalty of wilful sin against full light and opportunity.

(4) Did not Lazarus of Bethany die twice? (Although it is not mentioned in the Bible, we of course suppose that he died again sometime after his miraculous restoration by our Lord; for he is not now living.) Surely Lazarus will share in the future resurrection; and hence it is evident that dying a second or even a third or a fourth time is no bar to the power of God.

Ah! now we see, by this, that you do not grasp the subject of the Second Death. Lazarus did not die the Second Death. He had *not yet* gotten free from the Adamic or First Death when our Lord awakened him. The great *ransom-sacrifice* had not yet been finished, and when awakened he was, with the others of the human family, still under the original death-sentence incurred through Adam's disobedience. The only way to get Lazarus out of the Adamic death was, first, for our Lord to die as the substitute or corresponding price for condemned Adam and all his posterity; and afterward, for Lazarus to be justified from Adamic sin and its penalty – First Death – by faith in that sin-offering, based upon a clear knowledge of God's goodness and a full consecration to him.

Since these were not the conditions in Lazarus' case, his was merely a re-awakening to the measure of Adamic life (yet under sentence of Adamic death) which he had enjoyed before he became sick and fell asleep. Consequently, the awakening of

Lazarus and others by our Lord at his first advent is never spoken of as their *resurrection*; for "resurrection" signifies lifting up, *out of the Adamic death entirely*, to *full* life and perfection. Only those thus actually released from Adamic death by such an *actual* resurrection, or such as by knowledge and *faith* come to the *justified* state (a *reckoned* resurrection condition) are or will be in danger of the Second Death – the penalty of wilful, individual sin against clear light and knowledge. Sanctified believers of this Gospel age (reckonedly passed out of Adam into Christ – from Adamic death to life) when they die are not counted as dying in Adam; for reckonedly they are out of Adam. They are reckoned as dying with Christ their Redeemer. (See 2 Tim. 2:11; 1 Thes. 4:16; Rev. 14:13.) But if such *abide not in* Christ (after getting *into* him as members of his body, as branches of the Vine), it will be because of wilful sin and rejection of his sacrifice and favor. Their death will be Second Death – the penalty of second failure during second trial.

As for believers in the next or Restitution age, they will likewise be *justified* by knowledge and faith and obedience – reckoned as resurrected out of Adam and his death penalty into Christ and his life gift. But instead of suffering and dying with Christ, as do the faithful in this age, they will be gradually restored to the perfection and life reckoned to them from the moment of justification. Only the *disobedient* will die after the new dispensation opens. Their death will not be because of any weakness inherited from Adam (all of which will have been reckoned paid and canceled in Christ's sacrifice), but because of their own *wilful* opposition to the Lord's righteous requirements. Hence their death will not be the Adamic but the Second Death – the wages of their own deserving, for which no ransom was given and none is promised – an "everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power" – "cut off *from among the people*."

(5) Let us try to do a good work for Christ in spreading this good news. I hope that you will yet spread the glad tidings of a resurrection from the Second Death.

Our reply to this, in conclusion, is, If this were good tidings, we could not preach it; because we have no authority to declare, in God's name and as a part of his plan, what he has nowhere revealed. But we fail to see how it would be *good* tidings to any but the wicked. To all who love righteousness it would be very [R1454 : page 299] *bad* tidings; just as to-day it would be bad tidings to any good community to learn that the jails and penitentiaries and work-houses and pest-houses were all to be thrown open; for no other pest has proved so baneful as the leprosy of sin. The righteous might dread such a release from the Second Death of those evil-doers described in Rev. 22:15 – evil-doers for whose permanent reform there would be no hope; because, before sentencing them to the Second Death, their righteous Judge had given them every opportunity possible to repent and come into harmony with his righteous law, that they might live forever.

Furthermore, let us remember that the Second Death will receive the incorrigible at the *close* of the Millennium (Rev. 21:8); and that at *that time* Christ's Kingdom, the thousand-year day of judgment, comes to an end. Hence, if it were true that there is to be a release from the Second Death, it must come after the Millennium. This would involve the thought of a continuance of sin, and a continued trial or judging of sinners, whereas God's gracious promise is that the Millennial day of judgment will make a full end of sin and sinners, and that beyond it, in the everlasting ages, there shall be no more sin, sorrow, pain, dying or crying; for all those former things will have passed away. – Rev. 21:4.

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