

TRUE CHRISTIAN LIBERALITY

LIBERALITY, generosity, is essentially a Christian grace. God is love, and all who partake of his spirit must be proportionately loving and generous. But as we are instructed not to be wise in our own conceits, nor to be wise above what is written in God's Word, so likewise it is well for all true children of God to beware of assuming to have a greater, wider or deeper love than that clearly set forth in God's Word as the only real and true standard. God's people are to set up a standard neither for God nor for themselves; but as obedient children they should not fashion their minds and faith after their own defective conceptions, but according as the Lord has revealed.

Some err on one side of this question and some on the other; but the remedy for both errors is the same – submit your heads and your hearts unto the direction of the Lord through his inspired Word.

That Word nowhere teaches that everlasting torment is the wages of sin, but that the wages of sin is death. Every plain (non-symbolic) statement of the Scriptures agrees that "the soul that sinneth, *it* shall *die*." Surely, then, no one is justified in maligning, yea, blaspheming God's character and plan by teaching directly or indirectly the contrary – that he will keep the sinner's soul alive to all eternity in order to torment it. There would be neither love nor justice in such a course.

On the other hand the Word nowhere teaches Universalism, – that the entire human [R1598 : page 364] family will be everlastingly saved to divine favor and blessing. And those who rush from the one extreme of faith in an almost universal torment, to the other extreme of belief in Universalism are carried from one human error to another human error. However, the finding of

the one error to have been the result of a too careless handling of God's Word and a leaning to perverted human reason and judgment should put all upon their guard thereafter: but frequently it does not, as we see; and, getting filled with the thought of God's love, they seem to forget that God has more than one attribute of character and that these must all be co-ordinated in any plan that is his – that his Wisdom and his Justice each join with his Love in his plan for man's salvation from sin and its penalty, death.

The Scriptures do, indeed, teach that the great *ransom-sacrifice* given by our Redeemer will sooner or later bring to every member of the human family fullest opportunity for the recovery of all that he lost in Adam. But they forget that although Adam had *life*, its everlasting continuance was not assured: for this he was on trial when he wilfully sinned and thus cut short his trial and brought upon himself, and upon us in his loins, the sentence of death.

It is *what* was lost, and all that was lost that our Lord came to save. The salvation made possible by his *ransom-sacrifice* is a new trial for life everlasting, the results of which are expressed in John 3:36; Rev. 21:7,8.

It is sufficient that God should grant a universal, impartial trial to all; that those who, under the favorable conditions of the New Covenant, will fully submit themselves to God may have life, and that others may be manifested and, as cumberers of the ground, may be destroyed in the Second Death. Love, Wisdom and Justice could never agree to let a wilful sinner live to mar the peace of the holy; nor could they consent that such should be deprived of their own wills in order to their everlasting existence, for their companionship is not sufficiently desirable; nor could they consent that they should be kept alive, and that their wills should be kept under divine restraints to all eternity. Such lives

and such companionship are undesirable: the remainder of God's universe would be blessed by their destruction in the Second Death. Let us not be more **[R1598 : page 365]** wise, more loving, or more just than the only living and true God who dwells in a light which no man can approach unto, and whose mind is communicated to us through his Word. – 1 Tim. 6:16; 1 John 5:9,10.

Let us practice the grace of liberality according to, and not outside of, the boundaries laid down in the Lord's Word.
