

WHAT IS UNIVERSAL REDEMPTION?

WE ARE asked whether or not we believe in Universal Redemption, and what we consider to be the full scope or meaning of the term. We reply:

To our understanding, many who use the expression, "Universal Redemption," fail to understand clearly its signification. They mean universal and eternal salvation, which is another matter entirely. We believe that the Bible teaches Universal Redemption in its statement that Jesus Christ, "by the grace of God, tasted death for every man," and that He "gave Himself a Ransom for all, to be testified in due time." (Hebrews 2:9; 1 Timothy 2:5,6.) Again, "He is the propitiation for our [the Church's] sins and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." (1 John 2:2.) All these texts speak of the redemption of mankind; and all clearly and positively declare that it will be universal – that is, that it will apply to every member of our race.

The universality of the Redemption, having been thus established, our next question would properly be, What is included in the word Redemption? The answer is that in the Greek, as well as in the English, the word has the significance of purchase – of the acquiring of something by the giving of something else in its stead. This thought is emphasized several times in the Bible. Not only are we told that we are bought with a price, even the precious blood of Jesus, but we have Jesus' word for it that He gave Himself a corresponding price, for sinners. (Matthew 20:28.) The word used in the Greek is *lutron-anti*, signifying a price in exact offset. St. Paul gives exactly the same thought when he says, "the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a Ransom-price [anti-lutron] for all." (1 Timothy 2:5,6.) St. Paul again emphasizes the same thought when he says, "As by a man came death, by a Man comes also the resurrection of

the dead; for as in Adam all die, even so all in Christ shall be made alive." – 1 Corinthians 15:21,22.

Thus we have the matter of Redemption and the Redemption-price for mankind emphasized and particularized. It surely is *universal*; it covers every member of our race. The sin came by one man, and he alone was sentenced by the great Heavenly Court to die. His wife and his children share with him in this penalty – not by direct sentence, but indirectly; for the measure of life which we have came from Father Adam, and it was only a spark, its right to exist having been forfeited before it came to us. It was thus, however, that our great Creator provided Universal Redemption. By this decree against *one* person He made it possible that *one* perfect man might redeem the condemned one. It was to this end that our Lord, the great Logos, left the Heavenly Courts, humbled Himself and was made flesh, the Man Christ Jesus, who tasted death for every man. His death is sufficient for the satisfaction of the claims of Justice against the first man; and all the results of that sentence in that man's race are provided for.

UNIVERSAL REDEMPTION DEFINED

In order to see what Adam and his race may expect as a result of this Universal Redemption, we must notice what Father Adam was before he sinned; for redemption implies the bringing of him and his race back into the condition **[R5925 : page 214]** in which he was before he sinned. Note, therefore:

- (1) Adam had fellowship with his Creator.
- (2) He lived under Divine blessing, which provided for his every need and maintained him in life as long as he was obedient.
- (3) His claims had not been decided as respects eternity. He was in the School of Experience, gaining knowledge, and was assured of

a continuance of his life as long as he remained obedient and used his knowledge in harmony with his Creator's will.

(4) He was, therefore, a probationer for eternal life. It is our understanding that had Adam continued obedient under certain tests he would have been recognized as a graduate in the school of experience and as no longer properly subjected to tests and trials. But he never reached this position. He failed in his trial time, and never attained his graduation therefrom.

Universal Redemption, therefore, means a bringing of Adam and his race back again to the probationary state in which Adam was when he sinned. That which was lost is that which was redeemed, and which is to be restored. God's provision, the Scriptures tell us, is for "Times of Restitution"; and those times, or years, of Restitution are for the bringing of Adam and his race back to all that they at first had. The Scriptures intimate very clearly that the experiences of mankind – first, under the reign of Sin and Death; and secondly, under the Restitution blessings of Messiah's Kingdom – will give such ample knowledge of God and of His Plan that at the conclusion of Messiah's Reign every member of the race will have had his probation in full – full knowledge, full opportunity.

The Scriptures show us that some, when granted all these blessings, will resist them and, sinning wilfully, will be accounted as unworthy of any further favor of the Almighty, and will be destroyed in the Second Death. They show us clearly that in the end of the Millennial Age, some, even of those who will attain full human perfection, will not be accounted worthy of eternal life, but on the contrary will be destroyed in the Second Death, because, having enjoyed their share in the Universal Redemption, they have not improved the opportunities for such character development as would meet the Divine requirements. Their destruction is shown in Rev. 20:7-10. It is also pictured in the destruction of the goat class in the parable of the Sheep and Goats. – Matt. 25:31-46.

UNIVERSAL SALVATION EXPLAINED

But some one will inquire, Will not the redemption which God has provided still pursue them and recover them from the Second Death? We answer, No! During the Millennium Christ will give to all every assistance necessary and proper. "The world will be judged in righteousness." (Acts 17:31.) Besides, to suppose anything further to be done for these after they have gone into the Second Death through their own wilful course, would imply another sacrifice for sins. The sin which brought death to Father Adam was wilful sin. This the death of Jesus will fully offset: but the sin which will bring the Second Death will be individual, wilful sin on the part of every one who will die the Second Death; and the cost of redeeming each one of those sinners would be the death of a sinless one as a sacrifice for each.

The case of Adam is altogether different from what it will be with the race then; for each one of those sinners would be equally as guilty as was Adam himself; and each one will be personally condemned to the Second Death. If each one were to be redeemed again, he would need a personal Savior. The Bible intimates a considerable number of goats at the end of the Millennial Age, who will come under the Second Death penalty; and it would require an equal number of perfect sacrifices for their redemption from that sentence. What good would that do if they had not profited by all the experiences of the present life and all the experiences of the Millennial Restitution time? We could not imagine their profiting by any experiences.

Evidently, therefore, the Divine Plan is the only wise one; and no redemption will be given for the recovery of such from the Second Death, nor is there any kind of hope for them. Who would die for them? Who would redeem them? Not Christ; for the Apostle distinctly points out, "Christ dieth no more." (Romans 6:9.) Would a company of the holy angels voluntarily die for them under all these

circumstances and conditions, seeing that they had sinned against such light, knowledge and loving provision? And would any of the Church, the Bride of Christ, die for them? We believe not. Would any wise or intelligent being give his life a corresponding price for one who was incorrigible under such favorable conditions? We think it unreasonable so to suppose.

A WORD OF WARNING

It surprises us that any who have once tasted of the good Word, and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit, should be liable in any degree to be entrapped by such sophistries of the Adversary. We are to remember, however, that the Adversary is very alert at the present time to find snares for the Lord's people. We are led to write these words by the inspired suggestion of St. James, "Brethren, if any of you err from the Truth, and one convert him, let him know that he that converteth such from the error of his way [course] will save a soul from death and hide a multitude of sins." (James 5:20.) This does not signify that God's people might not be more or less ensnared with errors; but it does signify that the course or tendency is to lead off more and more from the Truth, from the way of Life into the way of Death.

We are in the Day of the Lord mentioned by the Apostle; and instead of casting aside the armor or of trying to make some improvement upon the plain statements of the Word of God or of permitting ourselves to take our own or other men's philosophies instead of the Word of God, we must be buckling on the breastplate, fastening our helmet, girding up the loins of our minds, grasping the shield of faith and taking a firm grip upon the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, in order that we may be able to keep standing in this Evil Day; and not only so, but that we may help others to stand against the wiles of our great Adversary. – Ephesians 6:12-18.

