

forth religious and moral healing on a still larger scale, not in rills but in a river; not like the hill-side spring, whose waters trickle faintly through the moss, betrayed only by its livelier green, but rather like some big lake far up among the mountains, which collects the streams from many a spring, then over-runs in a broad lapsing sheet of water to pour its blessings on the plains below, a river from its birth?

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## THE FUTURE PUNISHMENT OF SIN.

### II. THE UNIVERSAL PURPOSE OF SALVATION.

IN a former paper I have discussed the term most frequently used by St. Paul to describe the future punishment of sin, viz. *destruction*; and have endeavoured to show that this word denotes utter and hopeless ruin. In one passage this destruction is spoken of as *eternal*. And we saw that this last word denotes either a period contemporaneous with life, and thus involving finality, or a long period of time stretching backwards or forwards beyond the speaker's mental horizon. We found also a passage in which the Apostle speaks casually, but very solemnly, of destruction as being *the end* of some about whom he writes in tears.

This vein of teaching must now be supplemented and guarded by other passages which speak very clearly of God's purpose of salvation as universal. These will be found in the second, third, and fourth groups of the Pauline epistles.

In the great chapter on the resurrection (1 Cor. xv. 22) we read that "as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall

all be made alive." This categorical assertion demands now our careful study. The latter part of it Meyer understands to refer to the general resurrection, when "all that are in the graves will hear His voice, and will go forth; they who have done the good things, to resurrection of life; but they who have practised the bad things, to a resurrection of judgment."<sup>1</sup> For this interpretation he finds support in the word *each*, which at the beginning of the next verse seems to divide into two classes those who "in Christ will be made alive; but each in his own order." These classes Meyer supposes to be the good and the bad. This exposition is accepted in the main by Ellicott, and by Evans in the *Speaker's Commentary*.

It lies open, however, to what seems to me a fatal objection. The word *life* is never once used in the New Testament to describe the future state of the lost. When referring to existence beyond the grave, it is always, as in the passage just quoted from the Fourth Gospel, a specific term distinguishing the state of the saved from those who in the great day will be condemned. Ellicott reminds us that this word is frequently used to describe natural life on earth without thought of happiness or misery. He quotes 1 Corinthians xv. 36, where a seed cast into the ground is said not to be *made-alive* except it die; and Romans iv. 17, where God is said to "*make-alive* the dead." Meyer quotes also 2 Kings v. 7 (LXX.) where the king of Syria asks, "Am I God, to kill and to *make-alive*?" And Nehemiah ix. 6, "Thou *givest-life* to all things." But the passage we are discussing takes us beyond the limits of bodily existence on earth. And in that loftier sphere, the life and incorruption brought to light by the Gospel give to the word *life* a new and loftier significance. This nobler use of this common word is a conspicuous feature of the phraseology of the New Testament. And it must rule

<sup>1</sup> John v. 28, 29.

the significance of the passage before us. The lost will rise, not to life, but to a second death.

The word *each* at the beginning of verse 23 is explained by the latter part of the same verse. Two orders are mentioned, and these are arranged in a sequence of time: "Christ the firstfruit, then they that are Christ's." But we have no hint in the entire context of any other "order," nor any reference to the resurrection of the lost. In verse 24 we read of "all principality and all authority;" not, however, as being made alive, but as brought to naught. Moreover, although Christ will raise all men, it is utterly opposed to the thought and phrase of St. Paul to speak of men "without Christ" as being "made alive *in Christ*." These sacred words describe ever an inward relation to Christ shared only by those who are inwardly united to Him and find in Him their spiritual home.

All this is recognised by Edwards, who understands the first *all* to include all men and limits the second *all* to the saved. But he does little or nothing to remove the difficulty involved in giving a different compass to the same word in the parallel clauses of the same verse. Godet recognises the difficulties of both sides; and prefers apparently, with hesitation, the exposition of Meyer.

Some other commentators and writers, unable to give to the word *made-alive* any but a good meaning, and to the word *all* a wider and narrower meaning in the same verse, have accepted this passage as a categorical assertion that all men will ultimately be saved. But inasmuch as this chapter refers specially, and as it seems to me exclusively, to the resurrection on the day of Christ's return, this exposition would imply, or at least suggest, that on that day all men will enter into the full enjoyment of life eternal; in absolute contradiction to 1 Thessalonians v. 3, 2 Thessalonians i. 9, John v. 29, and much other express teaching in the New Testament.

From these various interpretations let us now turn to St. Paul's own words. He has asserted in verse 18 that if there be no uprising of dead men, they who have been laid to sleep in Christ have perished. They have lost all that is worth having. And men who, like the Apostle, have sacrificed everything for a hope in Christ are of all men most to be pitied. These suggestions he rejects with a triumphant assertion that Christ has risen, a firstfruit of the sleeping ones. He refers evidently only to those mentioned in verse 18 who sleep in Christ. Now the word *firstfruit* suggests a harvest to follow. This suggestion St. Paul supports by saying that, just as through man comes death, also through man comes resurrection of dead men. This he confirms by a more definite assertion: "As in Adam all die, so also in Christ will all be made alive." Throughout the whole chapter he thinks only of the dead in Christ and of resurrection only as a gateway to eternal life. Indeed in this same chapter he makes emphatic and reiterated assertions which indisputably are true only of the servants of Christ. Without any further limitation, still writing about "the resurrection of the dead," he says in verse 43: "It is raised in incorruption . . . in glory . . . in power." Whatever be the ultimate destiny of the lost, none who accept the teaching of the New Testament can suppose that these words describe the lot awaiting them at the coming of Christ.

Now in all human discourse universal terms are limited by the speaker's mental horizon. Beyond that horizon they have no validity to assert or to deny. And in this chapter the unsaved lie altogether outside the writer's thought. Writing as a believer in Christ to fellow-believers, he thinks only of those who abide in Christ and will share His glory. He remembers that, through the sin of Adam, his readers, like himself, will pass through the dark portal of death; and remembers also that they who believe in

Christ will live, though they die; that they owe this immortal life to the resurrection of Christ, and that it will be consummated in their own resurrection from the dead.

Notice carefully that in this passage St. Paul writes, not πάντες ἄνθρωποι, as in Romans v. 12, 18, 1 Timothy ii. 1, 4, where he refers expressly to the whole race, but the less definite term πάντες, which leaves the precise reference to be supplied from the context. This confirms strongly the limited exposition given above. Similarly, in 2 Corinthians v. 15, he writes that "one died on behalf of all:" an assertion true of the whole race. But the words which follow prove that the Apostle refers only to those who have shared the blessed result of the death of Christ, and in this sense are dead with Him: "One died for all, therefore all died." In each case, St. Paul's words, read in the light of their context, have not the full compass they might have if they stood alone as an absolute assertion.

From the above it is now evident that the passage we have been discussing sheds no light on the future punishment of sin. It does not even assert a universal purpose of salvation. I have discussed it merely to guard against prevalent misinterpretations.

Much more to the point is Romans v. 18, where we have the definite phrase πάντας ἀνθρώπους in reference first to the sin of Adam, and then to the salvation brought by Christ. The same words are found also in verse 12, where we have a definite and emphatic assertion, "to all men death passed through." This historical statement is expounded in verse 14: "Death reigned from Adam to Moses." Without doubt it covers the entire human race. Even over Enoch and Elijah, during their life on earth, death reigned, until by the hand of God they were rescued from its dominion. Here then we have a passage in which manifestly the writer's horizon embraces the whole family of man.

We notice at once that verse 18, although consisting of two clauses by no means short, contains no verb. Consequently, the word which usually conveys the main assertion of the sentence must be supplied from the context. This defect sheds obscurity over the whole verse, and renders needful most careful grammatical study of the words used.

The most conspicuous feature of this verse, occurring twice in each clause, is the common preposition *εἰς*. Upon our interpretation of this small word depends our exposition of the whole verse.

This preposition denotes, in its simplest meaning, motion towards the inside of something. It is thus more definite than *πρός* with an accusative, which denotes simply motion towards an object, it may be only towards its circumference. From this local sense is easily derived that of mental movement or direction. It is the ordinary Greek word to describe an intelligent purpose. And this is its most common derived sense. Less frequently it is used to describe a tendency, sometimes an unconscious outworking, of blind force. At other times it notes an actual result, intentional or unintentional. These three senses are closely allied, and flow naturally from the radical local sense of the word. The first and third are found together in closest relation in Romans vii. 10: "The command which was for life, this was found by me to be for death." The purpose of the law was life; its actual result to St. Paul was death. The context, and especially the contrast of life and death, make quite clear the different senses conveyed in this one short verse by the same common preposition.

When the word *εἰς* denotes a purpose, it may almost always be suitably rendered *for*, as in the above rendering of Romans vii. 10. The Revisers' usual rendering, *unto*, is obscure, and therefore unsatisfactory.

In the light of this various use of this common preposition, we turn again to Romans v. 18. The absence of a

verb compels us to fill up its defective grammatical structure from the preceding verses ; and this is the more easy because verse 18 is expressly given as a summing up of the foregoing argument : “ *Therefore* as through,” etc.

The earlier clause recalls at once verse 12, where we have the same words, *εἰς πάντας ἀνθρώπους*, evidently marking out the extent of the result of Adam’s sin : “ To all men death passed through.” So verse 14 : “ Death reigned from Adam to Moses.”

But in the foregoing verses we have no assertion that through Christ benefit has actually reached *all men*. Indeed the universal phrase, *εἰς πάντας ἀνθρώπους*, is conspicuous by its absence from verses 15–17. The free gift has abounded, not to *all men*, but *εἰς τοὺς πολλούς*. These last words occur again still more conspicuously in verse 19, where we read that “ *the many* will be constituted righteous.” This repeated change of expression cannot have been chosen merely in order to call attention to the great number of the saved ; for this would be done more effectively by the universal phrase, *all men*. Another explanation of it must be sought. Moreover, in these two passages, the definite article, *οἱ πολλοί*, by no means implies or suggests universality, but marks out the many as a definite object of thought. The article suggests universality only when this is involved in the definiteness of the object referred to. Similarly, in verse 17, we read, not that all men “ will reign in life,” but that this will be the lot of those who receive the gift of righteousness. In other words, where we have a plain statement of actual or expected result, the universal phrase, *all men*, is conspicuous by its absence. Only once do we find it in the second part of the comparison, and then in a passage (verse 18) in which we have no categorical statement.

The explanation is not far to seek. In defect of clear statement, we must fall back upon the most common use of

the preposition *eis*, when not used in a strictly local sense. St. Paul wishes to say in verse 18, that the life eternal, which, as he has taught in verse 17, will be actually enjoyed by some men, was designed *for all men*.

To this exposition no one can object that it gives to the same preposition two uses in the same verse. For, as we have seen, this is the case in Romans vii. 10. Moreover, in a verse which is professedly a summing up of a foregoing argument, the meaning of the words used must be determined by that argument.

Nor can it be said that this exposition breaks down the comparison of Adam and Christ, that a contingent and partial benefit is no match for actual and universal injury. But this failure of the comparison is only apparent. For although death is inevitable and universal, continuance under its dominion depends upon ourselves. In Christ, God offers to every man an entrance into eternal life. Consequently, each man's fate is in his own hands. Indeed we gain in Christ more than we lost through Adam. For they who accept the offered life will be saved not merely from the result of their father's first sin, but from the due punishment of their own "many offences."<sup>1</sup>

We may therefore accept Romans v. 18 as an assertion that the salvation brought into the world by Christ is as wide in its design as was the sin of Adam in its actual result; that God's purpose of salvation embraces the entire race.

In Romans xiv. 11, St. Paul quotes from Isaiah xlv. 23: "As I live, saith the Lord, to Me shall bow every knee, and every tongue shall confess to God." The prophet refers apparently to willing homage paid by true servants of God. His words are most easily understood as referring to universal worship in that new earth and heaven which he saw from afar. But it would be unfair to interpret

<sup>1</sup> Rom. v. 16.



them as meaning that that glory will ultimately be shared by all the wicked men of Isaiah's own day. Indeed, the last words of his glowing prophecy speak of the corpses of those who have sinned, of the worm which shall not die and the fire which shall not be quenched. These terrible words reveal how far from the thought of Isaiah was a universal restoration.

This prophecy St. Paul quotes to support his assertion that "we shall all stand before the judgment seat of God;" and he rightly draws from it the inference, "therefore each of us will give account of himself to God." For the universal homage described by Isaiah must be a fulfilment of a Divine purpose; and this purpose implies that God claims the obedience of all men, and will therefore require an account from all.

We must therefore place Romans xiv. 11 beside chapter v. 18, as announcing or implying that God's original purpose of salvation embraced every child of Adam. But, inasmuch as it is quoted by St. Paul, not in reference to the ultimate salvation of all men, but simply to prove that all men will give account to God for actions done on earth, we cannot accept it as an assertion of the ultimate salvation of all.

From Romans xiv. 11 we turn naturally to Philippians ii. 9, 10, where, in language borrowed from the same prophecy of Isaiah, we have a plain statement of God's purpose in raising the Crucified One above and beyond all others and giving to Him the Name beyond every name. As before, the graphic delineation "every knee bow and every tongue confess" must describe the willing homage of the servants of God. But here the worshippers are further described as belonging to three classes. "Those in heaven" are its angelic inhabitants: same word in Ephesians i. 3, 20, ii. 6, iii. 10, vi. 12; 1 Corinthians xv. 40, 48, 49. "Those on earth" are living men: same word in Philippians iii. 19, 1 Corinthians xv. 40; 2 Corinthians v. 1. "Those

under the earth" are the dead in contrast to the living. So Homer (*Iliad*, bk. ix. 457) speaks of Pluto as "Zeus under the earth." It is unsafe to infer from these last words that St. Paul thinks of universal worship earlier than the resurrection. His threefold division includes angels and men as they were at the moment of writing. And he divides men into those now living and those already dead. For both these classes will join in that eternal song. Without thought of time, looking only at the persons belonging to these three all-inclusive classes, St. Paul says that God exalted Christ in order that every one of them may bow to Him.

It is not safe to infer from the graphic terms "every knee and every tongue" that angels and departed spirits have bodily form. For these words were naturally prompted by the Apostle's thoughts about living men; and with these he easily associated angels and the dead.

The phraseology of the verse before us is appropriately taken from Isaiah xlv. 23, already referred to, which follows and confirms an announcement of God's purpose of salvation for the Gentiles: "Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth." And inasmuch as that ancient purpose will be fulfilled in homage paid to Christ, and only thus, the submission to God foretold by Isaiah is legitimately stated here in the form of submission to Christ. Notice also that the "glory of God the Father," *i.e.* the manifestation of His greatness evoking His creatures' admiration, is here represented as the ultimate purpose for which God exalted Christ. As ever, St. Paul rises from the Son to the Father. A close coincidence is found in 1 Corinthians xv. 28.

From the mention in Philipians ii. 10 of "those under the earth" as objects of God's purpose of salvation, we cannot infer a probation in Hades, even for those who on earth did not hear the Gospel. For it is quite possible that

of this large class the fate of each will be determined by his acceptance or rejection of such light as he had on earth; and, if so, the eternal song of the heathen who loved the truth will be a designed result of Christ's victory over death. The whole passage is so easily explained by St. Paul's teaching elsewhere that we cannot fairly infer from it any further teaching about the position or prospects of the dead.

With the passage just studied may be classed Colossians i. 19, 20: "He was pleased that in Him should all the fulness dwell; and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, . . . whether the things upon the earth or the things in the heavens." And Ephesians i. 9, 10: "According to His good pleasure which He purposed in Him, . . . to sum up all things in Christ, the things in the heavens and the things upon the earth." Thus in each of the longer epistles of the third group, written by St. Paul apparently from his prison at Rome, and embodying his loftiest and widest thought, we have a plain assertion that God's purpose of salvation embraced every individual man; but we have no assertion or hint that in every man that purpose will be accomplished.

Similar teaching is found in the latest group of the Pauline epistles. In 1 Timothy ii. 1-5 we have an exhortation that prayer be made for *all men*, among whom are specified kings and men in authority; and we are told that God "desires *all men* to be saved, and to come to knowledge of the truth." In chapter iv. 10 we read that God "is Saviour of *all men*, specially of believers." In Titus ii. 11 the Revisers read "the grace of God, bringing salvation to all men." But the words so rendered mean only salvation for *all men*: σωτήριος πᾶσι ἀνθρώποις. The Greek dative merely specifies those for whose benefit the saving grace appeared. In each of these passages we have the universal phrase noted above, *all men*. But the first and

third of them state only a Divine purpose, not necessarily an actual result. And if God's purpose of salvation embraced all, He may justly be called "Saviour of all men;" and, inasmuch as only believers will actually be saved, He is in this special sense their Saviour.

One more passage demands attention here. In Romans xi. 26 we have a categorical assertion that "all Israel will be saved." This reveals a universal blessing awaiting the ancient people of God. But it did nothing to lessen the gloom which in chapter ix. 3 almost forced from the patriot's heart a wish to be himself, on behalf of his brethren, separated from Christ by a curse which was, in the language of the Old Testament, an irrevocable doom. And it does nothing whatever to prove that St. Paul expected ultimate salvation for those individual Jews who had gone down into the grave "enemies of the cross of Christ."

Besides the above passages, I know not of any which assert or imply, or seem to imply, that all men will eventually be saved.

To sum up. St. Paul states clearly, and in several places, that God's purpose of salvation embraced every son of Adam; but he never says that in every one that purpose will be actually accomplished. And manifestly the kindness of God is resisted by many whose "impenitent heart" refuses to be led to repentance.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, even in the epistle which depicts in most glowing language God's universal purpose of salvation, St. Paul speaks in words already expounded of some "whose end is destruction;" and we find nothing in his writings to modify this terrible assertion. We are therefore compelled to believe that in his mind the universal purpose of salvation was consistent with the final exclusion from its glories of some of those originally included in its scope.

Whether, beyond the wide horizon of the Apostle's

<sup>1</sup> Rom. ii. 4, 5.

knowledge, and thought, and hope, the universality of God's purpose of salvation itself suggests or implies an ultimate salvation for those who die rejecting the salvation offered to them in the Gospel, we shall consider when the entire teaching of the New Testament is before us.

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1 PETER III. 17.

ST. PETER wrote his first epistle to encourage some Christian converts in Asia Minor, who were in much affliction by reason of their heathen surroundings. In spite of all the trials which beset them, he exhorts them to hold fast and persevere in their Christian profession. Among other arguments which he employs is this (iii. 17), "It is better, if the will of God should so will, that ye suffer for well-doing than for evil-doing." And he proceeds to support this assertion by examples.

First, as of greatest weight, he sets before them the earthly life of Jesus. It is better, he argues, to suffer as I have told you, for Christ did so. "Christ also hath suffered for sins once, the righteous for the unrighteous, that He might bring us to God." Here St. Peter shows both the nature and the motive of Christ's endurance. He who had no sin, who merited no suffering, bore even death itself from the hands of His persecutors, that thus He might finish the work which the Father had given Him to do, and bring salvation near to the unrighteous. It is with such a motive the apostle desires to inspire these Asian Christians: therewith would come to them a share of that strength by which the Lord Himself was supported; their hard trials would be abated of their keenness: their lives would be ennobled, raised above their pains; filled with Christlike compassion and love for them that were ignorant