

Of Those Text of Scripture Which Seem to Favour Universal Redemption.

by John Gill

The Bible teaches that Christ died for some, not every individual person, and that salvation is by faith in Christ, not by universal redemption.

Scripture: Luke 2:10

Topics: "Atonement", "Universal Redemption"

Description

John Gill addresses the interpretation of various scripture passages that appear to support the concept of universal redemption. He categorizes these texts into three groups: those using 'all' and 'every', those mentioning 'world', and those suggesting Christ died for some who may perish. Gill emphasizes that while these verses may seem to imply a universal application, they actually refer to specific groups, particularly the elect, and highlight the limitations of Christ's atonement. He concludes that redemption is particular and effective for those chosen by God, rather than universally applicable to all humanity.

Transcript

A Body of Doctrinal Divinity

Book 6--Chapter 4

OF THOSE TEXTS OF SCRIPTURE WHICH SEEM TO FAVOUR UNIVERSAL REDEMPTION

There are several passages of scripture, which, at first sight, may seem to countenance the universal scheme; and which are usually brought in support of it; and which it will be necessary to take under consideration: and these may be divided into "three" classes, Such in which the words "all", and "every" one, are used, when the death of Christ, and the benefits of it are spoken of. Those in which the words "world", and the "whole world", occur, where the same subjects are treated of.

And, Those that seem to intimate, as if Christ died for some that may be destroyed and perish. 1. Such in which the words "all", and "every" one, are used; when the death of Christ, and the benefits of it, particularly redemption and salvation by him, are spoken of. As, 1a. The declaration of the angel, in Luke 2:10, 11. "Behold, I bring good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people; for unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord".

Let it be observed, that Christ is not here said to be the Saviour of all men; but to be born for the sake of some, that he might be the Saviour of them; "Unto You is born a Saviour"; to you the shepherds, who appear to be good men, waiting for the salvation of God, and the coming of their Saviour, and therefore praised and glorified God for what they heard and saw; the words fully agree with the prophetic language, in which the birth of Christ is signified, in Isaiah 9:6. "To us a Child is born": indeed, it is said, that the news of the birth of a Saviour, would be great joy "to all people", or "to all the people"; not to all the people of the world, many of whom never heard of it; nor to all the people of the Jews, who did hear of it; not to Herod the king, and to the Scribes and Pharisees, and to many, at least, of the inhabitants of Jerusalem; for when he and they heard the report the wise men from the East made, of the birth of the king of the Jews, "Herod was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him" (Matthew 2:3), but to all the people of God and Christ; to the people Christ came to save, and does save; on whose account his name was called "Jesus, for he shall save HIS people from their sins"; the people given him in covenant, and for whose transgressions he was stricken, and for whose sins he made reconciliation (Matthew 1:21; Isa. 53:8; Heb. 2:17), at most, the birth of Christ, as a Saviour, can only be matter of great joy to whom the tidings of it come; whereas, there are multitudes that come into the world, and go out of it, who never hear of the birth of Christ, and of salvation by him; and where the gospel, the good tidings of salvation by Christ, does come, it is only matter of great joy to them to whom it comes in power, and who are, by it, made sensible of their lost, perishing estate, of their want of a Saviour, and of the suitableness of salvation; such as the three thousand convinced and converted under Peter's sermon; and the jailer and his household, who cried out, sirs, what must I do to be saved?

To such, and to such only, the news of Christ as a Saviour, is matter of great joy. 1b. The account given of John's ministry, and the end of it; "That all men, through him, might believe" (John 1:7), from whence it is concluded, that all men are bound to believe that Christ came to save them, and that he died for them; and if he did not die for them, then they are bound to believe a lie; and if condemned for not believing, they are condemned for not believing an untruth. But John's ministry only reached to the Jews, among whom he came preaching; and the report he made of Christ they were bound to believe, was, not that he died for them; as yet he had not died; but that he was the Messiah: and their disbelief of this was their sin and condemnation: as it is the sin of the deists, and of all unbelievers, to whom the gospel revelation comes; and they give not credit to it; for such are bound to believe the report it makes, and give an assent to the truth of it; and which is no other than an historical faith, and which men may have and not be saved; and which the devils themselves have: so that men may be bound to believe, and yet not to the saving of their souls; or that Christ died for them.

As is the revelation that is made to men, so they are under obligation to believe; if no revelation is made, no faith is required; "How shall they believe in him, of whom they have not heard?" The Indians who have never heard of Christ, are not bound to believe in him; nor will they be condemned for their unbelief; but for their sins against the light of nature, they have been guilty of; (see Rom. 10:14; 2:12). Where a revelation is made, and that is only external, and lies in the outward ministry of the word, declaring in general such and such things, concerning the person and office of Christ, men are obliged to give credit to them, upon the evidence they bring with them, and for their unbelief will be condemned; not because they did not believe that Christ died for them, to which they were not obliged; but because they did not believe him to be God, the Son of God, the Messiah, and the Saviour of men.

Where the revelation is internal, "By the Spirit of wisdom, and revelation in the knowledge of Christ"; showing to men their lost estate, and need of a Saviour; acquainting them with Christ, as an able and

willing Saviour; setting before them the fulness and suitableness of his salvation; such are, by the Spirit and grace of God, influenced and engaged to venture their souls on Christ, and to believe in him, to the saving of them; but then the first act of faith, even in such, is not to believe that Christ died for them; for it is the plerophory, the full assurance of faith to say, "He hath loved me, and given himself for me!" (Gal. 2:20). 1c.

The words of Christ in John 12:32. "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth will draw all men to me"; are expressive of the death of Christ, and of the manner of it, crucifixion; which would be the occasion of drawing a great number of persons together, as is usual at executions; and more especially would be and was at Christ's, he being a remarkable and extraordinary person; some to deplore his case and bewail him, and others to mock at him and reproach him. Though rather this is to be understood of the great multitude of souls who should be gathered to Christ through the ministry of the word after his death, as the fruit and consequence of it; who should be "drawn" and influenced by the powerful and efficacious grace of God to come to Christ, and believe in him; in which sense the word "draw" is used by Christ in John 6:44 but this is not true of all and every individual person; for there were multitudes then, as now, who will have no will to come to Christ, and are never wrought upon by the grace of God, or drawn by it to come unto him and believe in him; and will be so far from being gathered to him, and into fellowship with him, that they will be bid to depart from him another day, with a "Go, ye cursed"; and in the words before the text, mention is made of the "judgment", or condemnation of the world, as being then come; as well as of the prince of it being cast out.

But by all men, are meant some of all sorts, Jews and Gentiles, more especially the latter, that should be gathered to Christ after his death, through the gospel preached unto them; as was foretold, that when Shiloh, the Messiah, came, who now was come, "to him should the gathering of the people be"; that is, the Gentiles: and it may be observed, that at this time, when Christ spoke these words, there were certain Greeks that were come to the feast to worship, who were desirous of seeing Jesus; with which he was made acquainted by his disciples, and occasioned the discourse of which these words are a part; and in which our Lord suggests, that at present these Greeks could not be admitted to him, but the time was at hand when he should be "lifted up from the earth", or die; by which, like a grain of wheat falling into the ground and dying, he should bring forth much fruit; and should be lifted up also as an ensign in the ministry of the word, when the Gentiles in great numbers should flock and seek unto him. 1d.

The passage of the apostle in Romans 5:18. "By the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life"; is undoubtedly meant of the righteousness of Christ, called the free gift, because it was freely wrought out by Christ, and is freely imputed without works; and faith, which receives it, is the gift of God; but then this does not come upon, or is imputed to, every individual son and daughter of Adam; for then they would be all justified by it, and entitled to eternal life through it; and would be glorified, for "whom he justified, them also he glorified": and being justified by the blood and righteousness of Christ, they would be secure from condemnation, and saved from wrath to come; but this is not true of everyone; there are some who are righteously "foreordained to condemnation"; yea, there is a "world" of ungodly men, a multitude of them, that will he "condemned" (Jude 1:4; 1 Cor. 11:32).

The design of the apostle in the text and context is to show, that as all men are sinners, and are originally so through the sin and offence of the first man Adam; so all that are righteous become righteous, or are justified, only through the righteousness of Christ imputed to them to their justification; and those who are justified by it, are described by the apostle in this epistle as the elect of God; "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? it is God that justifies"; as believers in Christ, on whom his righteousness comes, or

is imputed to their justification; that is, "unto all, and upon all them that believe"; and such who receive that, receive also "abundance of grace" (Rom. 8:33; 3:22; 5:17), all which cannot be said of every individual of mankind.

But what will set this matter in a clear light is, that Adam and Christ, throughout the whole context, are to be considered as two covenant heads, having their respective seed and offspring under them; the one as conveying sin and death to all his natural seed, and the other as conveying grace, righteousness, and life to all his spiritual seed; now as through the offence of the first Adam judgment came upon all to condemnation, who descended from him by natural generation, and upon none else; as not upon the human nature of Christ, which did not so descend from him; nor upon the angels that sinned, who were condemned and punished for their own offences, and not his, being none of his offspring; so the free gift of Christ's righteousness comes upon all to justification, and to none else, but those who are the spiritual seed of Christ; given to him as such in the covenant of grace in which he stands an head to them; and "in whom all the seed of Israel", the spiritual Israel of God, "are justified", and shall glory (Isa. 45:24, 25). 1e.

The parallel place in 1 Corinthians 15:22. "As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive"; which is similar to the preceding in some respect, though not in everything; it is similar to it in that Adam and Christ are to be considered as representative heads of their respective offspring. Though these words have no respect at all to justification of life, nor to men being quickened together with Christ, nor to the quickening of them by the Spirit and grace of God; but of the resurrection of the dead, when men that have been dead will be made alive, or quickened; (see 1 Cor 15:36), and the design of them is to show, as in the preceding verse, that "as by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead"; as death came by the first Adam, the resurrection of the dead comes by the second Adam; as the first Adam was a federal head and representative of all that naturally descended from him, and they were considered in him, and sinned in him, and death passed upon all in him, and actually reigns over all his posterity in all generations; so Christ is a federal head and representative of all his spiritual seed, given to him in covenant, and who, though they die a corporal death, shall be made alive, or raised from the dead, by virtue of union to him; for of those only is the apostle speaking in the context, even of such of whom Christ is the first fruits, and who belong to him (1 Cor. 15:23), for though all shall be made alive, or raised from the dead, by Christ, through his mighty power; yet only those that belong to him, as his seed and offspring, or the members of his body, shall be raised through union to him, and in the first place, and to everlasting life; others will be raised to shame and everlasting contempt, and to the resurrection of damnation. 1f.

The text in 2 Corinthians 5:14, 15 is sometimes brought as a proof of Christ's dying for all men in an unlimited sense; "if one died for all, then were all dead": now let it be observed, that in the supposition "if one died for all", the word "men" is not used; it is not "all men", but all, and may be supplied from other scriptures, "all" his "people", whom Christ came to save; and "all the sheep", he laid down his life for; all the members of the "church" for whom he gave himself; "all the sons" whom he brings to glory: and the conclusion, "then were all dead", is not to be understood of their being dead "in" sin, which is no consequence of the death of Christ; but of their being dead to sin in virtue of it; and could it be understood in the first sense, it would only prove that all for whom Christ died are dead in sin, which is true of the elect of God as of others (Eph. 2:1), but it would not prove that Christ died for all those that are dead in sin, which is the case of every man; but the latter sense is best, for to be dead to sin is the fruit and effect of Christ's death; Christ bore the sins of his people on the cross, that they being "dead to sin, should live unto righteousness"; through the death of Christ they become dead to the damning power of sin; and to the law, as a cursing law; that they might serve the Lord in newness of spirit: this puts them into a capacity of living

to him, and affords the strongest argument, drawn from his love in dying for them, to such purposes; to influence and engage them to live to his glory; (see Rom. 6:2, 6; 7:4, 6).

And let it be further observed; that the same persons Christ died for, for them he rose again; now as Christ was delivered for the offences of men unto death, he was raised again for their justification; and if he rose for the justification of all men, then all would be justified; whereas they are not, as before observed. 1g. The words in 1 Timothy 2:4. "Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth". It is certain that all that are saved, it is the will of God they should be saved, and that by Christ, and by him only; "I will save them by the Lord their God"; salvation of whomsoever, is not of the will of men, but flows from the sovereign will and pleasure of God; and if it was the will of God that every individual of mankind should be saved, they would be saved; for "who hath resisted his will?" he works all things after the counsel of it; he does according to it in heaven and in earth; but as it is certain in fact that all are not saved, it is as certain that it is not the will of God that every man and woman should be saved; since there are some who are "foreordained to condemnation"; and if there are any he appoints to condemnation, it cannot be his will that the selfsame individuals should be saved; besides, there are some of whom it is clearly signified that it is his will they should be damned; as the man of sin and the son of perdition, Antichrist and his followers; to whom "God sends strong delusions, that they should believe a lie, that they might be damned" (2 Thessalonians 2:11, 12).

Besides, those it is the will of God that they should be saved, it is his will that they should "come unto the knowledge of the truth"; both of Christ, who is the way, the truth, and the life, the true way to eternal life; through the faith of whom, as well as through sanctification of the Spirit, men are chosen unto salvation; and of the truth of the gospel; not a notional and superficial, but an experimental knowledge of it; now to all men it is not the will of God to give the means of knowledge, of Christ, and the truths of the gospel: for hundreds of years together God gave his word to Jacob, and his statutes unto Israel, a small people in one part of the world; and as for other nations, they knew them not; God winked at and overlooked the times of their ignorance, and sent not the gospel, the means of knowledge, unto them; and this is the case of many nations at this day; yea, where the gospel is sent and preached, it is the will of God to hide the truths of it from many, and even from those who have the most penetrating abilities; "even so, Father", says Christ, "for so it seemeth good in thy sight" (Matthew 11:25, 26), it was his will it should be so, and therefore it could not be his will they should be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth.

It is best therefore to understand by "all", some of all sorts, as the word "all" must be understood in many places, particularly in Genesis 7:14, and this sense agrees with the context, in which the apostle exhorts that prayers and thanksgivings be made for all men, for kings, and for all in authority; not only for men of low degree, but for men of high degree also; for all sorts of men; this being agreeable to God, and acceptable in his sight; whose will it is that men of all sorts should be saved, and know the truth.

Though it is best of all to understand this of the Gentiles, some of whom God would have saved as well as of the Jews; and therefore had chosen some of both unto salvation; and had appointed his Son to be his salvation to the ends of the earth; and therefore had sent his gospel among them, declaring that whoever believed in Christ should be saved, whether Jew or Gentile; and had made it the power of God unto salvation to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile; and therefore it was proper that prayers and thanksgivings should be made for Gentiles in every class of life. 1h.

Another passage in the same context, in which Christ is said to "give himself a ransom for all" (1 Tim. 2:6), or a ransom price, antilutron, in the room and stead of all; but this cannot be understood of all and every

individual man; for then all would be ransomed, or else the ransom price must be paid in vain; but of many, as it is expressed by Christ (Matthew 20:28), and particularly of the Gentiles, as before; the truth contained herein being what has been testified in the gospel, of which the apostle was ordained a preacher, a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity, when the Jews forbid him and other apostles to preach unto them; but as he opposed this prohibition of theirs, so another notion of theirs in the next verse, which confined public prayer to a certain place; all which show whom the apostle had in view throughout the whole context, and intended by the word "all". 1i.

Another passage in the same epistle is sometimes brought in favour of the general scheme (1 Tim. 4:10), where God is said to be "the Saviour of all men"; but the passage is not to be understood of Christ, and of spiritual and eternal salvation by him; which it is certain all men do not share in; but of God the Father, and of temporal salvation by him; and of his preservation of all his creatures; who is the "preserver of men", supports and upholds them in being, and supplies them with the necessaries of life; and in a providential way is "good to all"; but his providence is extended in a special manner towards those that trust and believe in him; he takes a particular care of them, and makes particular provisions for them; these being his people, his portion, and the lot of his inheritance, like Israel of old, he surrounds them by his power, leads them about by his wisdom, and keeps them as tenderly as the apple of his eye. 1j.

So the words of the apostle, in Titus 2:11, 12. "For the grace of God, that bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men": but it is not said, that this grace brings salvation to all men, but has appeared to all men; nor that it teaches all men to deny ungodliness, &c. but only us, to whom the gospel of the grace of God comes with power; for that is to be understood by it; not the grace and love of God, in his own heart, towards men; for this is not manifested to all men; but is a favour he bears to his own people: nor grace, as wrought in the heart by the Spirit of God for this is not vouchsafed unto all men; all men have not faith; and some are without hope and God in the world, and have no love to God and Christ, and to his people; but the gospel, which often goes by this name, because of the doctrines of grace contained in it; this had been like a candle lighted up in a small part of the world, in Judea; but now it was like the sun in its meridian glory, and appeared to Gentiles as well as Jews, being no longer confined to the latter; and where it came with power, as it did not to every individual, it produced the effects herein mentioned; from whence it appears, the apostle is speaking only of the external ministration of the gospel, and of the extent of that; and not of redemption and salvation by Christ; of which when he speaks, in a following verse, it is in a very different form; "Who gave himself for us", not for all, "that he might redeem us", not every man, "from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people", a special and distinct people, "zealous of good works". 1k.

Likewise what the author of the epistle to the Hebrews says (Heb. 2:9), "That he (Christ) by the grace of God, should taste death for every man"; but the word "man" is not in the text; it is only for "every one"; and is to be interpreted, and supplied, by the context, for everyone of the sons Christ brings to glory (Heb. 2:10), for everyone of the brethren whom he sanctifies, and is not ashamed to own in that relation (Heb. 2:11), and for every one of the members of the church, in the midst of which he sung praise, and for the whole of it (Heb. 2:12), for everyone of the children given him by his Father, and for whose sake he became incarnate (Heb. 2:13, 14).

Besides, the words may be rendered, "that he should taste of every death", of every kind of death, which it was proper he should, in bringing many sons to glory (Heb. 2:10), and as he did; of the death of afflictions, of which he had waters of a full cup wrung out to him; of corporal death, being put to death in the flesh; and of spiritual and eternal death, or what had a semblance thereof, and was tantamount thereunto, when

he was deprived of the divine presence, and had a sense of divine wrath; as both in the garden, when his soul was "exceeding sorrowful, even unto death"; and on the cross, when he said, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!" 11.

One passage more, is in 2 Peter 3:9. "God is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish; but that all should come to repentance". This cannot be understood of every individual of mankind; for certain it is, that God is willing that some should perish; "What if God willing", &c. (Rom. 9:22). Nor is it true, that it is the will of God that all men should have repentance unto life; for then he would give it to them; for it is solely in his own gift; at least, he could give them the means of it, which he does not: the key to this text lies in the phrase, "toward us", to whom God is longsuffering; these design a society to which the apostle belonged, and not all mankind; and who are distinguished, in the context, from scoffers and mockers, that would be in the last days (1 Pet. 3:3, 4), and are described by the character of beloved (1 Pet. 3:8), beloved of God and Christ, and of his people; for whose sake he waited, did not bring on the destruction of the world so soon as, according to his promise, it might be expected; but this was not owing to any dilatoriness in him; but to his longsuffering towards his beloved and chosen ones, being unwilling that any of them should perish; but that they should all come to, and partake of, repentance towards God, and faith in Christ; and when everyone of them are brought thereunto, he would delay the coming of Christ, and the destruction of the world, no longer; when the last man was called by grace, and converted, and become a true believer, and a real penitent; when the head, or last, stone was laid upon the top of the building, the church, and that edifice completed thereby, he would stay no longer, but come suddenly, as a thief in the night, and burn the world about the ears of the ungodly: this world is but like scaffolding to a building, which, when finished, the scaffolding is taken down and destroyed, and not before; the building is the church, for the sake of which this world was made; and when this edifice is finished, which will be when all the elect of God are called, and brought to repentance, then it will be destroyed; the earth, and all therein, will be burnt with fire; as in 1 Peter 3:10. 2.

A second class of scriptures, which may seem to favour, and are sometimes brought in support of the universal scheme, are such in which the words "world", and the "whole world", are used; when the death of Christ, and the benefits of it, are spoken of. As, 2a. The words of John the Baptist to his hearers, in John 1:29. "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!" which are to be understood, neither of original sin, which is common to the whole world; but is not taken away, with respect to all: nor of the actual transgressions of every person; which is not true in fact; and is only true of such whose sins are laid on Christ, and imputed to him; and which he bore, and the whole punishment of them; and so has taken them away, as to be seen no more; which cannot be said of the sins of all men (1 Tim. 5:24), they are the sins of "many", and not all, which have been made to meet on Christ, and he has bore them, and took them away (Isa. 53:6, 12). 2b.

The words of Christ himself, in John 3:16. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son", &c. But all the individuals in the world are not loved by God in such a manner; nor is Christ the special gift of God to them all; nor have all faith in him; nor can it be said of all, that they shall never perish, but have everlasting life; since many will go into everlasting punishment: but by the world, is meant the Gentiles; and Christ opposes a notion of the Jews, that they themselves only were the objects of God's love, and that the Gentiles had no share in it, and would not enjoy any benefit by the Messiah when he came; but, says Christ, I tell you, God has so loved the world of the Gentiles, as to give his Son, that whosoever believes in him, be he of what nation soever, shall be saved with an everlasting salvation. 2c.

The words of the Samaritans to the woman of Samaria, in John 4:42. "We know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world", of Gentiles as well as Jews; this they learnt from what Christ had made known of himself, and of his grace to them; for they were originally Gentiles, and were now reckoned by the Jews as heathens; (see also 1 John 4:14.) 2d. The words of our Lord in his discourse about himself, as the bread which "giveth life unto the world"; and which "is his flesh he gave for the life of the world": now no more can be designed by the "world", than those who are quickened by this bread applied unto them, and received by them, and for the obtaining of eternal life; for whom the flesh, or human nature of Christ, was given, as a sacrifice for sin, whereby that is secured unto them: but this is not true of all men; since even the gospel, which exhibits the heavenly manna, and holds forth Christ, the bread of life, is to some "the savour of death unto death", while to others it is, "the savour of life unto life" (2 Cor. 2:16). 2e.

The words of the apostle, in 2 Corinthians 5:19. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself": these are the same with the us, in the preceding verse, which were a special and distinct people; for it cannot be said of every man what follows, "not imputing their trespasses unto them"; which is a special blessing, that belongs to some; for though it comes upon both Jews and Gentiles, that believe, yet not upon all and every man (Rom. 4:6-8), for some men's sins will be charged upon them; and they will be punished for them, with an everlasting destruction; by various circumstances in the context it seems, that by the "world" the Gentiles are meant. 2f.

The famous, and well known text, in this controversy, is 1 John 2:2 where Christ is said to be, "the propitiation for the sins of the whole world". Now let it be observed, that these phrases, "all the world", and "the whole world", are often in scripture to be taken in a limited sense; as in Luke 2:1 "that all the world should be taxed"; it can mean no more than that part of the world the Roman empire, which was under the dominion of Caesar Augustus: and in Romans 1:8 it can only design the Christians throughout the world, not the heathens; and when the gospel is said to be "in all the world, and bring forth fruit" (Col. 1:6), it can only intend true believers in Christ, in all places, in whom only it brings forth fruit; and when it is said, "all the world wondered after the beast" (Rev. 13:3), at that same time, there were saints he made war with, because they would not worship him: and so in other places; and in this epistle of John, the phrase is used in a restrained sense (1 John 5:19), where those that belong to God, are distinguished from the whole world, described by lying in wickedness, which they do not.

And as John was a Jew, he spake in the language of the Jews, who frequently, in their writings, use the phrase "the whole world", in a limited sense: sometimes it only signifies a large number of people; sometimes a majority of their doctors; sometimes a congregation; or a whole synagogue; and sometimes very few: and so here in the text under consideration, it cannot be understood of all men; only of those for whom Christ is an advocate (1 John 5:1), whose advocacy is founded on his propitiatory sacrifice; now Christ is not an advocate, or does not make intercession for all men; for he himself says, "I pray not for the world": and Christ can be a propitiation for no more than he is an advocate; if he was a propitiation for all, he would surely be an advocate for all; and plead on their behalf his propitiatory sacrifice; but Christ was "set forth", or preordained, to be "a propitiation", not for all men; but for such only, who, "through faith in his blood", receive the benefit of it, and rejoice in it (Rom. 3:25; 5:11), moreover, in this epistle, the persons for whom Christ is a propitiation, are represented as a peculiar people, and the objects of God's special love (1 John 4:10), but what may be observed, and will lead more clearly into the sense of the passage before us, is, that the apostle John was a Jew, and wrote to Jews; and in the text speaks of them, and of the Gentiles, as to be distinguished; and therefore says of Christ, "he is" the propitiation "for our sins; and not for ours

only", for the sins of us Jews only; "but for the sins of the whole world"; of the Gentiles also, of all the elect of God throughout the Gentile world: in which a notion of the Jews is opposed, that the Gentiles would receive no benefit by the Messiah, as has been observed, on John 3:16 and here the apostle takes up the sentiment of his Lord and Master, in whose bosom he lay, and expresses it.

Nothing is more common in Jewish writings, than to call the Gentiles the world, the whole world, and the nations of the world; as they are by the apostle Paul, in distinction from the Jews (Rom. 11:12, 15). 3. Another class of scriptures, which may seem to favour the universal scheme, and are usually brought in support of it, are such which it is thought, intimate that Christ died for some that may be destroyed and perish. 3a. The first passage is in Romans 14:15. "Destroy not him with thy meat for whom Christ died": which can never design eternal destruction; for that cannot be thought to be neither in the will nor power of men; could it be supposed, that it was in the will of any, or that any were of such a malicious disposition, as to wish for, and seek the eternal damnation of another; which surely cannot be imagined among men professing religion; yet it could never be in their power; for none but God can destroy soul and body in hell (Matthew 10:28), nor can one instance be produced, of any that were eventually destroyed for whom Christ died; nor can such destruction be brought about by eating meat, of indifferent use, that might, or might not be eaten, of which the apostle is speaking, neither through themselves nor others eating it: for that can never affect the eternal state of men, which makes a man neither better nor worse (1 Cor. 8:8).

But the passage is to be understood of the destruction of a weak brother's peace and comfort, through the imprudent use of things indifferent, by a stronger brother; who thereby may be the occasion of offending and grieving his brother, and of his stumbling and falling, so as to wound and distress him, though not as to perish eternally; thus it is explained (Rom. 14:13, 21), and is to be taken in the same sense as the phrase in Romans 14:20 "for meat destroy not the work of God"; not saints, as the workmanship of God; for as that is not of man's making, it is not of man's marring; nor the work of grace, which being begun, will be perfected; nor the work of faith, which will be performed with power; but the work of peace in individual persons, and in the church of God. 3b.

A similar passage, and to be understood in much the same manner, is in 1 Corinthians 8:12. "And through thy knowledge shall thy weak brother perish, for whom Christ died?" which intends, not the perishing of his immortal soul; or of his perishing eternally in hell; which can never be the case of any for whom Christ died; for then the death of Christ would be so far in vain; and not be a security from condemnation; contrary to Romans 8:33 nor be a full satisfaction to justice; or God must be unjust, to punish twice for the same offence: but it intends, the perishing of his peace and comfort for a time; and is explained by "defiling" and "wounding" his conscience, and making him to "offend", through the imprudent use of Christian liberty, in those who had stronger faith and greater knowledge (1 Cor. 8:7, 12, 13), of which they should be careful, from this consideration; that a weak brother is as near and dear to Christ, since he died for him, as a stronger brother is. 3c.

Another passage urged for the same purpose, is in 2 Peter 2:1 which speaks of false teachers that should be among the saints, who would bring in "damnable heresies, denying the Lord that bought them; and bring upon themselves swift destruction": from whence it is concluded, that such as are bought by Christ, may be destroyed; but Christ is not here spoken of, but God the Father; and of him the word despothV is always used, when applied to a divine Person, and not of Christ; nor is there anything in this text that obliges us to understand it of him; nor is there here anything said of Christ's dying for any persons, in any sense whatever; nor of the redemption of any by his blood; and which is not intended by the word "bought": where Christ's redemption is spoken of, the price is usually mentioned; or some circumstance or

another, which plainly determines the sense; (see Acts 20:28; 1 Cor. 6:20; Eph. 1:7; 1 Pet. 1:18, 19; Rev. 5:9; 14:3, 4).

Besides, if such as Christ has bought with his blood, should be left so to deny him, as to bring upon themselves eternal destruction, Christ's purchase would be in vain, and the ransom price be paid for nought; which can never be true. The "buying", spoken of in the text, respects temporal deliverance, particularly the redemption of Israel out of Egypt; who are therefore called, a "purchased" people (Ex. 15:16), the phrase is borrowed from Deuteronomy 32:6 where, to aggravate the ingratitude of the people of Israel, it is said, "Is not he thy Father that hath bought thee?"

And this is not the only place Peter refers to in this chapter; (see 1 Pet. 2:12, 13 compared with Deut. 32:5). Now the persons the apostle writes unto were Jews, scattered about in divers places; a people that in all ages valued themselves upon, and boasted of their being the Lord's peculiar people, bought and purchased by him: wherefore the phrase is used here as by Moses, to aggravate the ingratitude and impiety of the false teachers among the Jews; that they should deny, in works at least, if not in words, that mighty Jehovah who had of old redeemed their fathers out of Egypt, and had distinguished them with peculiar favours.

Of these various passages of scripture, see more at large, in my "Cause of God and Truth", Part I and of the objections and answers to them, taken from reason, and the absurd consequences following the denial of universal redemption, as supposed; see the same Treatise, Part III. From what has been observed concerning redemption, the nature and properties of it may be learnt. As, 1. That it is agreeable to all the perfections of God: it springs from his love, grace, and mercy, and glorifies them: it is planned and conducted by his infinite wisdom, which is illustriously displayed in it; and it is wrought out to declare his justice and honour; that all the perfections of God meet in it, mercy and truth, peace and righteousness: the glory of all his attributes is great, in the redemption and salvation of his people. 2.

It is what a creature could never obtain; none but the Son of God: no man could have redeemed himself, or any other, nor given to God a ransom for either: a creature could never have redeemed himself, neither by power nor by price; not by power, he could not have loosed the fetters of sin, with which he was held; nor delivered himself out of the hands of Satan, the gaoler [jailer], stronger than he: nor by price; for the infinite justice of God being offended by sin, required an infinite satisfaction, an infinite price to be paid into its hands, for redemption and deliverance; and to which no price was adequate, but the precious blood of Christ. 3.

The redemption obtained by Christ resides in him, as the subject of it, who is the author of it; "In him we have redemption, through his blood" (Eph. 1:7), and the benefits of it are communicated from him by the Father, through his gracious imputation and application of it, and of them to his people (1 Cor. 1:30). 4. It is special and particular; they are many, and not all that are ransomed and redeemed; they that are redeemed, are redeemed out of every kindred, tongue, people, and nation; they are the elect of God, and sheep of Christ; a peculiar people (Rev. 5:9). 5.

It is a plenteous one, full and complete (Ps. 130:7), by it men are brought, not into a mere salvable state; but are actually, and to all intents and purposes, saved by it; God, through it, is not made merely reconcilable to them; but the redeemed are actually reconciled to God, through the death of his Son. Salvation is obtained for them, not conditionally, but absolutely; Christ came to seek and save what was lost; even the lost sheep of the house of Israel; and he has found them in redemption, and saved them.

Redemption includes the several blessings of grace; as justification, pardon of sin, adoption, and eternal life; and secures all to the redeemed ones. 6. It is eternal (Heb. 9:12), so called, in distinction from the typical and temporary expiation, by the blood of slain beasts, which could not take away sin; but there was an annual remembrance of them; but by the blood of Christ men are eternally redeemed from all iniquity: and in distinction from temporary redemption and salvation: as of the people of Israel out of Egypt and Babylon; which were types of this; and because it extends, as to ages past, and was a redemption of transgressions and of transgressors, that were under the first testament; so to ages to come; the benefits and blessings of which reach to the saints in all generations: the blessings of it are eternal; an everlasting righteousness for justification; pardon of sin is once and for ever; and once a child of God, always so, and the inheritance secured by it: redemption is eternal; and the redeemed ones shall be saved in the Lord, with an everlasting salvation; none of them shall ever perish, but have everlasting life.

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