



Bible Student's Notebook™

The Herald of His Grace

Presenting every man perfect in Christ Jesus. Colossians 1:28

Volume VII
Issue 154

150 Reasons for Believing in the Final Salvation of All Mankind

Part III (#76–#110)

by – Erasmus Manford (1815-1884)

76. We are directed to give thanks for all men.

"I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men" (I Timothy 2:1).

Truly, then, all have something to be grateful for; but, if eternal woe is to be the doom of some of our countrymen, citizens, neighbors, relatives, and household, it would have been far better if our race had never existed, especially that portion thereof that may be the subjects of infinite wrath and vengeance forever. We are told that all the happiness those enjoy on earth, who may in the end be cast into hell, will infinitely increase their sufferings in that awful world, by contrasting their condition in perdition with what it once was; so that, even the few joys they once knew will be an endless curse to them. What reason, then, will they have to be thankful for life or any of its delusive shadows? If the doctrine of eternal woe be true, they are all dreadful curses in disguise. Thank God, then, that this life and all its joys are real blessings to all, that they will not end in our eternal condemnation; and while life, being and immortality endure, all will have reason to be thankful to God for bestowing them.

77. Christ "can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the

way" (Hebrews 5:2).

Who, then, dare say that He will not have compassion on those classes, enlighten their minds, and lead them in the right way? He surely will; for He is the Light of the world, and the Savior of lost men. Yet, according to Partialism, He will have no compassion for countless millions of our frail race, but will make it His business to drive them into hell, and there torment them eternally. Who can believe that our blessed Redeemer is, or ever will be, so cruel?

78. The law of God requires all mankind to love Him with all the heart, and soul, and strength, and their neighbor as themselves; and hence, it is said by Paul, that "love is the fulfilling of the law" (Romans 13:10).

Will all mankind ever love thus? Will the law ever be fulfilled? Jesus informs us that love divine will reign in all hearts – that the law will be fulfilled.

"Verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled" (Matthew 5:18).

This is a triumphant refutation of the doctrine of endless hatred and sinning. The law of God requires, for its fulfillment, all to love and serve God, and Christ teaches that the law shall be fulfilled.

79. The doctrines of Jesus are of such a character that, when He preached, the people “wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth” (Luke 4:22).

Is there any grace in the doctrine of eternal damnation? If there is not, He did not preach it; for “gracious words” were spoken by Him. Jesus taught that God is the Father of mankind, in truth as well as in name, that His name and nature are love, and that He will finally deliver His offspring from the sorrows and imperfections of earth and exalt them to heaven. The people were not accustomed to such “gracious words,” and well might they wonder.

80. Jesus tells us not to take anxious thought of the future (Matthew 6:25-34).

We should trust in God. He is able and willing to save us, and He has solemnly promised that He will. God, immediately after the flood, told Noah,

“While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night, shall not cease”
(Genesis 8:22).

Would it not be impious to doubt the fulfillment of this promise? To be anxious about the return of the seasons, and of day and night? It certainly would. Is it not equally impious to be fearful that God will not provide for our eternal well being? All that is required of us is to deal justly, love mercy and walk humbly before God. He will provide for us hereafter. Our destiny is in His keeping.

81. Jesus reproved the Pharisees for shutting up the kingdom of heaven against men.

“Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, ►

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This weekly publication (52 times a year) is dedicated to:

- the proclamation of the riches of God’s abundant, exceeding grace (Romans 5:20; 11:6; Ephesians 1:7)
- the affirmation of God’s purpose to save all mankind through the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (I Timothy 2:3, 4; 4:10; Titus 2:11)
- the “preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began” (Romans 16:25)
- true freedom and liberty apart from the law (Galatians 5:1)
- the organic nature of the church, the body of Christ (I Corinthians 12)
- the distinct ministry of Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles (Romans 11:13)
- the importance of receiving all whom Christ has received (Romans 14-15)
- the recovery of rich Biblical truth that has too long remained hidden under the veils of traditionalism, prejudice, misunderstanding, and fear (Mark 7:7, 13).
- the completeness of the believer in Christ (Colossians 2:10), with ...
 - total forgiveness of sins (Colossians 1:14)
 - identity in His death, burial, and resurrection (Romans 6)
 - adult sonship position (Galatians 4)

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hypocrites! For ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for ye neither go in yourselves, nor suffer ye them that are entering to go in" (Matthew 23:13).

They were never guilty of shutting up the kingdom of hell – they were perfectly willing that it should be kept open, and that many should go in thereat; but the door of the kingdom of heaven they endeavored to close against all who did not think and do as they did. How many there are at this day just like the Scribes and Pharisees of old! They open hell and shut heaven to most of mankind. If Jesus were on earth, He would say to them, *"Woe unto you!"* as He did unto their ancient brethren. Remember, elsewhere Christ said to His disciples, *"Beware of the doctrine of the Scribes and Pharisees."* Jesus labored, preached, suffered, died, rose from the dead, and ascended on high, that all might enter His kingdom; and we are informed that *"He shall see of the travail of His soul, and be satisfied."* All, then, will finally enter the kingdom of heaven.

82. Peter was instructed in a vision, that all mankind came from heaven; that they are, while on earth, protected by heavenly power; and that they "all will be drawn up again into heaven" (Acts 10:10-16).

83. The same truth is taught by Paul, when he says, "For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things" (Romans 11:36).

84. The same soul-cheering truth is also taught by the wise man – Solomon.

"Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was; but the spirit shall return unto God who gave it" (Ecclesiastes 12:7).

From these three passages we learn, that mankind are of divine origin; while on earth, are under divine protection; and when they leave this world, return to that great and good Being Who created and sustains them. Says Jesus, *"If I be lifted up from the earth, I will draw all men unto me" (John 12:32). Amen.*

85. It is also written, "Therefore, as by the offense of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." (Romans 5:18).

Observe, first, the judgment to condemnation came on all men. None are excepted – all were condemned. Second, the free gift, with justification of life, also came on all men. The free gift of eternal life is to be equal in extent to condemnation, and all are to enjoy eternal life. Can argument be more complete?

86. In the next verse it is written, "For, as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous" (Romans 5:19).

The same "many" that were made sinners shall be made righteous. Dr. Macknight, an orthodox commentator, thus comments on this verse:

For, as the "many," in the first part of this verse, does not mean some of mankind only, but all mankind, from first to last, who, without exception, are constituted sinners, so the "many" in the latter part of the verse, who are said to be constituted righteous, through the obedience of Christ, must mean all mankind, from the beginning to the end of the world, without exception.

Is not this argument also complete?

87. The same writer, in the next verse, adds, "But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound."

Grace, then, is to abound beyond sin. How can this be, unless all enjoy this grace? All mankind sin; and in order for grace to abound much more than sin, all men must partake of that grace.

88. Paul says that, "As sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus ►

Christ, our Lord" (Romans 5:21).

Sin has reigned unto death. All sin, and all receive its wages – moral death. Grace is to reign unto eternal life. All are to be recipients of this grace, and enjoy eternal life.

89. We are required to love our enemies, that we may be like our heavenly Father (Matthew 5:44).

It is, then, a glorious truth that God loves His enemies; for, if He does not, we, by loving ours, would not imitate Him. The fact that we are required to love our enemies – to be Godlike – is proof positive that God loves His. I know this is deemed by some a false and dangerous doctrine, and many go so far as to say that it came from hell and that the devil is the father of it! Yet it is of more respectable origin; it came from heaven, and the God of purity and truth is its author, and Jesus Christ was sent by the Father to inform the world of this truth. Is it not strange that some suppose that God will torment a part of those He loves, without relief and without end? The hawk loves the dove, the wolf loves the lamb – loves to torment them. Is everlasting burning the fruit of God's love? Mr. Shinn very truthfully remarks:

What greater cruelty can be conceived than for creatures to be filled as full of torments as their capacity can hold, and be confined in necessary sin and misery without end, by Almighty power?

Alas! This doctrine casts its shadow far behind, and eclipses all the sacred and soul-cheering truths of the Christian religion! In vain may we be told of the good Providence of God toward the Jews or the Gentiles; in vain may we behold the mild and beautiful character of the Savior, as "*the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person;*" in vain may we study the justice, the veracity, and the kindness of our Maker's conduct in the present world. The doctrine under review carries the universe forward to a gloomy consummation, and causes all those stars of encouraging

doctrine to set under an unfathomable of mystery and darkness, which seems plainly undistinguishable from an unprincipled and unfeeling despotism.

90. We are all required to "bless those that curse us," that we may be "merciful, as God is merciful" (Luke 6:28, 36).

How false, then, is the dogma which represents God as cursing forever those who are so unwise as to pollute their lips with profanity; which says, because men do wrong, God will do infinitely worse – will pour out volleys of curses upon their defenseless souls eternally! This doctrine degrades the Almighty below the most profane wretch on earth. Remember, we are required to bless them that curse us, that we may be Godlike.

91. It is said, we must do good to them that hate us, that we may be merciful, as God is merciful (Matthew 5:44, 48. Luke 6:27, 36).

The unavoidable inference from this injunction of our Divine Master is that God is so merciful and so kind that He even does good to them that hate Him, and as He is unchangeable, He always will do good to them. This goodness will finally subdue the hardest heart, and cause those who now hate Him to love Him with all their soul and strength. This passage fully refutes the idea that God hates and will forever hate a portion of our race.

92. We are all commanded to pray for those who spitefully use us and persecute us (Matthew 5:44; Luke 6:28).

Will He who requires His children to cherish such benevolent feelings toward the erring, forever be unreconciled to them, never forgive them, but delight to spitefully use them and persecute them? If so, He requires us to be infinitely better than He Himself.

93. Jesus said, "If ye love them [only] that love you, what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans the same?" (Matthew 5:46).

If God loves only those who love Him, wherein is He better than the publicans? If God loves only those who love Him, why should not we love only those who love us? Is it not right to follow God's example?

Yet I have proved that God loves all, blesses all, does good to all; and as He is unchangeable, He always will love all, do good to all, and bless all. Can these conclusions be avoided? The dogma, then, of endless hatred and endless cursing, is false – as false as perjury!

It is sometimes said that Jesus never condemned the doctrine of endless torments. In the whole five passages He condemns the principles upon which that dogma is based, Alexander Pope says, "Hell is built on spite," and he speaks the truth. Jesus condemns all spite, hatred and revenge, and informs us that those evil passions are not of heaven, but of earth, and are sensual and devilish.

Remember that we are required to love our enemies, do good to them that hate us, and pray for those who despitefully use us and persecute us, that we may be like God; perfect, as He is perfect; merciful, as He is merciful; and hence, it must be that God loves all, and hates none; blesses all, and curses none. This is Universalism in its purity; and it is entirely unlike the doctrine of eternal hatred, eternal vengeance and eternal cursing, which is so popular with many Christians. Oh, that all knew that God is love!

94. "If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink; for, by so doing, thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head" (Romans 12:20; Proverbs 25:21).

Would God require us to deal thus with our fellow men if He will soon, in another world, put it out of our power to do good? We must, according to His command, ever be striving to reform our fellow men by deeds of kindness; but, we are told that in the spirit-land, God will not permit us to obey this injunction, or regard it Himself; so that what

is right and holy here, is wrong and sinful there; what is obedience in this world is disobedience in the next; and therefore, it will be perfectly right for Him to pour coals of hell fire, in one eternal storm, upon the heads of part of His children, and the "*pure in heart*" to stand by and say, "Amen! A little more grape, if you please?"

95. "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good" (Romans 12:21).

Of course, this is the way God overcomes evil, or He would not require us to overcome it in that way. While we were yet sinners Christ died for us. Herein is love; not that we loved God, but that He loved us. He makes His sun to shine on the evil and the good, and sends His rain on the just and the unjust. In God we live, move, and have our being. All these blessings and favors are for sinful men. Truly, He overcomes evil by good, blesses those who curse Him, and loves those who hate Him. Yet, according to Partialism, He is trying to overcome evil with threatening an everlasting evil; and if the work is not done when death closes our eyes and freezes our hearts, He will instantly place our souls in such a condition that our sins cannot be overcome with either threatening or pleading, or evil or good! Can anything be farther from the truth? Instead of overcoming evil with good, He will, it is said, inflict an infinite series of unspeakable evils! For one evil, He will cause millions! For the evils of a few days, He will inflict an eternity of evils!

96. Peter tells us "not to render evil for evil, nor railing for railing; but, contrariwise, blessing" (I Peter 3:9).

If the apostle believed that the administration of the divine government was conducted on the very opposite principle – the tooth for tooth principle – and that, for the evils of a moment God will render an eternity of most excruciating agony, would he have penned that sentence?

97. The Bible principle is not to do unto others as they have done unto us.

Does this mean that God will do worse by us than we have done by Him, or better? If better, will He cast us off in His anger to the mercy of the devil and His angels, to suffer the pains of hell for ever?

98. Jesus teaches, “I say unto thee, forgive thy brother that sinneth against thee, not until seven times [merely], but until seventy times seven” (Matthew 18:21-22).

Will not our heavenly Father, then, forgive His children – all His children? Will eternity ever reveal the time when God will not forgive the penitent? He is, ever has been, and ever will be, a sin forgiving God. Away, then, with the creed which says, “In a little while the door shall be shut, and the day of grace passed forever.”

99. We are explicitly commanded to “Bless and curse not” (Romans 12:14).

Why, then, will men profess to be commissioned by heaven to deal damnation round the land on each whom they judge their foe? Let them take this for a text, and think about it, and pray about it, and preach about it, until their souls become imbued with its benevolent spirit.

100. The spirit of the New Testament is, “Recompense no man evil for evil” (Romans 12:17).

Yet we are told God will do precisely what the “Gospel” forbids! – that He will pour eternal torrents of lava from the sea of damnation on countless millions as a recompense for doing what harmed only themselves.

101. It was a moral precept of the apostles to “Avenge not yourselves” (Romans 12:19).

How, then, could they consistently preach eternal, unmitigating vengeance and retaliation on all the sons of folly and sin? Would not that be vengeance “with a vengeance?”

102. It is said: “If any man be overtaken in

a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meekness” (Galatians 6:1).

The spiritual-minded, according to these words, evince the fruits of the divine spirit they possess, by cherishing charity for the erring, and by delighting to restore them to virtue’s ways. This spiritual-mindedness is of heaven – of God – and if it prompts mortals, who possess but a small degree of it, to such benevolence and mercy, what influence may we expect it must have with Him Who is the infinite source from whence it flows into the human heart!

If a drop of this good spirit sanctifies mortals, and impels them to labor, “*in season and out of season*,” for erring men, may we not expect that the ocean of love which God possesses will induce Him not to cease His work till every soul is purified, till the last wanderer is restored? Yet if the great Father of the universe will forever abandon a large portion of His children to evil, misery and despair, the boundless ocean of goodness He possesses will do infinitely less for mankind than the drop we possess would, were it aided by His power!

103. The Holy Spirit dictated James to write, “If ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors” (James 2:9).

God, then, cannot be a respecter of persons, or, in other words, partial, in His dealings with mankind. The same Spirit that dictated these words, also says,

“The Lord is good unto all, and His tender mercies are over all His works” (Psalm 145:9).

As He is unchangeable, He always will be good to all, and His tender mercies will ever be over all His works. What a libel on God’s government is the doctrine which represents Him as being partial in the distribution of His blessings – raising some to heaven, to associate with angels and feast on immortal bounties, and sinking others down,

down into a pit dedicated to every abomination, there to dwell in darkness and terror for ever and ever! My God! What a faith!!! Infinite depravity could not invent a more monstrous falsehood!

104. “Let not mercy and truth forsake thee” (Proverbs 3:3).

As God tells us never to let mercy forsake us, the unavoidable inference is that that divine quality will never forsake Him; but, according to the creeds of men, it will forsake the Eternal, or rather, He never had much of it.

John Wesley, in confronting the false supposition of eternal predestination, says:

There is no help for you in God. Your God! No; He is not yours; He never was; He never will be. He that made you – He that called you into existence – has no pity upon you! He made you for this very end – to damn you – to cast you headlong into a lake of fire burning with brimstone! This was prepared for you, or ever the world began! And for this you are now reserved in chains of darkness, till the decree brings you forth – till, according to His unchangeable, irresistible will you groan, you howl, you writhe in waves of fire.

Oh God, how long shall this doctrine stand? (Wesley's Works, vol. X, p. 145.)

Again, in Wesley's letter to the Rev. Hervey, he says:

But what becomes of all other people? They must inevitably perish forever. The die was cast or ever they were in being. The doctrine to pass them by, has consigned heir unborn souls to hell, and damned them from their mothers' womb!

I could sooner be a Turk, a Deist, yea, an Atheist, than I could believe this. It is less absurd to deny the very being of a God, than to make him an Almighty Tyrant! (Wesley's Works, vol. X, p. 201.)

Remember, mercy will never forsake the throne of God; and, therefore, He who sits thereon will ever be merciful to all the creatures of His power.

105. All men are required to repent.

“But now commandeth all men everywhere to repent” (Acts 17:30).

There is no limitation with respect to number or place, but all men everywhere are commanded to repent. Why, then, is it said that in hell sinners are not permitted to repent? If hell is *ANYWHERE* in God's universe, (yes, IF) and *IF* there are sinful men there, are they not clearly commanded to repent? If they are commanded to repent of course they are permitted to; and if they are permitted, who on earth is authorized to say they will not?

I am happy to record that Mr. Shinn, in the book before quoted, is of the opinion that sinners, even in hell, are not beyond the reach of divine mercy. He says,

It is often said, with great assurance, that there is no repentance in hell; and it seems to be taken for granted that this unqualified maxim is sufficiently authoritative to silence all further inquiry. This is a favorite hypothesis, which, far from having any foundation to rest upon, presumptuously assumes that God will punish His creatures for being wicked, and at the same time be unwilling that they should repent! It is either true that those sinners ought to repent, or they ought not. If they ought to repent, then to say our Maker forbids or hinders it is to say He is unwilling that His creatures should discharge their duty; but if they ought not to repent, it follows that, somehow or other, their obligation to do it is cancelled, and it is consequently right for them eternally to continue in a state of impenitency.”

This is a great deal for a Methodist to admit. May all his brethren grow with him in grace.

106. Eternal life is given to all men.

“He that believeth not God, hath made Him a liar, because he believeth not the record that God gave of His Son. And this is the record, that God has given us eternal life; and this life is in His Son” (I John 5:10-11).

According to this, God has given us eternal life in Christ, and all who believe this truth have the witness in themselves of the fact; but those who do not credit this truth – do not believe that God has given them eternal life in Christ – make God a liar. The conclusion, then, is that all are to receive eternal life through Jesus our Lord, as a gift from God (Romans 6:22). Hence Christ is called the “Savior of the world” (John 4:42; I John 4:14), and it is said “that in Him doth all fullness dwell” (Colossians 1:19), and “that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself” (II Corinthians 5:19).

Reader, do you believe this record, or do you make God a liar?

107. All shall know the Lord.

“And they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying know the Lord: for all shall know Me from the least to the greatest” (Hebrews 8:11).

It is said in John 17:3 that to know the Lord “is eternal life;” and as all from the least to the greatest are to know the Lord, consequently all will finally enjoy eternal life.

108. “We which have believed do enter into rest” (Hebrews 4:3).

“Ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory” (I Peter 1:8).

If those ancient saints had believed in the endless damnation of a portion of mankind for whom Christ died, would they have enjoyed rest in that belief? Would it have caused joy unspeakable, and filled them with glory? All

who really believe in endless torments can testify that faith in it produces nought but doubt, despair and horror.

109. The whole creation is to be delivered.

“Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God” (Romans 8:21).

It is generally admitted that “creature” in this verse means “every human creature,” “all mankind.” Let us read the passage with such a rendering, as it undoubtedly gives it its true sense: “For every human creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him who hath subjected the same in hope; because every human creature shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the sons of God.” This is a strong passage in favor of the universal deliverance of our race from the imperfections of earth.

110. There will be no sin in the eternal world.

“For he that is dead is freed from sin” (Romans 6:7).

Professor Stuart, a celebrated orthodox writer, in commenting on this passage, says, “This verse may be regarded as a kind of general maxim or truth, in regard to all such as die physically or naturally.”

This passage forever refutes the doctrine that man will sin in the future state. Sin is the work of the flesh; and when the body dies, all sin must die with it.

(to be continued ...)

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