



The Heathen

THEIR PRESENT STATE
AND
FUTURE DESTINY

BY
GEO. GOODMAN

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The Heathen in Relation to the Death of Christ.

GEORGE GOODMAN.

I. SEVEN WORLD-WIDE FACTS.

THERE are many Scriptures that teach us that the salvation of God is of world-wide application. That it affects not only those to whom the knowledge of it has come, but the whole of, mankind irrespective of the fact that the message of it has not yet reached them.

The following are seven world-wide facts:

1. The Love of God.

It is written, "For God so loved the *world*" (John 3. 16), and that it was this love that was the moving cause of His sending His Son into the world. In this He acted according to His being, for "God is love."

2. The Will (or Desire) for Man's Salvation.

"God," we read, "will have *all men* to be saved" (1 Tim. 2. 4), and further that all such come to the knowledge of the truth, since "there is one Mediator between God and men . . . Who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time" (1 Tim. 2. 5, 6).

3. The Work of Reconciliation.

As the last quoted text reveals, "Christ gave Himself a ransom for all," for we read that "God was in Christ reconciling the *world* unto Himself" (2 Cor. 5. 19). This He has done (verse 18), and upon this finished work is based the ministry of reconciliation committed to His ambassadors.

For "the Lamb of God beareth away the sin of the *world*" (John 1. 29), and "He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the *whole world*" (1 John 2. 2).

"Christ died for *all*" (2 Cor. 5. 14, 15), and is therefore spoken of as

4. The Saviour of the World

(John 4. 42 and 1 John 4. 14). The Living God is stated to be "the Saviour of *all men*, specially of those that believe" (1 Tim. 4. 10). The Lord Jesus proclaimed Himself the Light of *the world*, and John the Baptist bore witness that He was the True Light which lighteth *every man* that cometh unto *the world*; or, "Who, coming into the world, lighteth *every man*" (John 1. 9).

5. The Resurrection.

"For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (1 Cor. 15. 22). Irrespective of the result of that resurrection (whether to life or to condemnation), because of the Resurrection of Christ, *all alike will rise*—for "by Him came resurrection," a thing till then unknown (Acts 26. 23).

6. The Rewarder of the Seeker.

As to God Who extends a gracious Providence over all men, seeing "He left not Himself without witness (among all nations, v. 16) in that He did good and gave us rain from Heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness" (Acts 14. 17), He announces that *He rewards every true seeker*. "In every nation he that feareth Him and worketh righteousness is accepted with Him" (R.v., acceptable to) (Acts 10. 35).

The principle of His judgment being that He will "render to every man according to his *deeds*; to them who by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory and honour, and immortality, eternal life . . . glory, honour and peace to every man that worketh good." There being no respect of persons with God (Rom. 2. 6-11).

The Lord declared that every one that seeketh findeth, and in Hebrews 11. 6 we are bidden to believe that God is "the Rewarder of them that diligently seek Him."

Cornelius is perhaps the outstanding illustration of this fact. He was a devout Roman soldier, who prayed, fasting, gave alms, and feared God. Those things, while

unable to save him (they are things common to all religions) "came up for a memorial before God" (Acts 10. 4), and were "had in remembrance in the sight of God" (v. 31), and so grace was extended to him.

Peter was warned not to call common and unclean that which God had cleansed (v. 15) (*ekatharisen*, same word as "purged" and "purified" in Hebrews 9. 22, 23).

7. Judgment in Righteousness.

For as surely as God loved the world, so surely as Judge of all the earth He will do right.

These things, then, are world-wide, and are true, whether the knowledge of them has reached the ears of those affected by them or not.

How, then, do the heathen, that vast mass of humanity still in darkness, stand in relation to them?

In general terms we may state this that but for the death of Christ there would have been nothing to prevent the judgment due to a guilty world being executed. So that the very *continued existence of the human race* is due to the Cross of Calvary. So also is *the proclamation of a day of grace* (2 Cor. 5. 19), in which God is not imputing men's trespasses to them, but is restraining judgment that mercy may be extended and preached to all (Rom. 11. 32).

In this sense, then, Christ is the Saviour of the world, and the Living God has shown Himself to be the Saviour of all men who would but for Calvary have perished in their sins.

But the great question for our consideration is:

Are the Heathen in their Uncounted Millions without Hope, Lost?

Or is grace extended to any on the ground of the work of Christ, even though they are without the knowledge of salvation, and so unable to believe in Him of Whom they have not heard? (Rom. 10. 14). Three questions shall occupy us:

1. What exactly is the condemnation that passed on all men by sin?

2. Are the heathen in complete darkness?

3. Is there among them that which corresponds to the attitude which we believers take toward God (*i.e.*, repentance and faith), which becomes the medium through which the grace of God reaches them?

Did we allow our hearts to answer, there is not one of us but would welcome the thought that the grace of God reaches a great multitude of them from every nation, but we must not consent to be carried away by a natural desire, though we may reverently inquire how far the Scriptures allow such a thought.

II. THE WAGES OF SIN.

The first question then to occupy our attention is:

What exactly is the condemnation that passed upon all men by sin?

If we turn to Genesis 2. 17 we read: "For in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."

Now, as to the scope of this sanction, let me quote the words of an old Divine (Dr. DAVID RUSSELL, on "Infant Salvation," 3rd, Ed., 1844, p. 19):

"Now whatever may be included in . . . the curse, it did not include punishment in the body in the resurrection state. Corporeal death as thus denounced must include all the pains, diseases, and troubles which produce or accelerate that event, but in no language can *death* be made to signify a *resurrection* from the grave.

"Death and a resurrection are so directly opposed to each other that the threatening of the former cannot comprehend the latter. Now the original threatening makes mention of death only. . . . It was not said, 'Thou shalt surely die and then rise to new sorrow,' but simply, 'Thou shalt surely die.'

"The resurrection of the body was introduced not upon the footing of the constitution established with Adam, but on the footing of that dispensation which has been established through Christ. The Scriptures uniformly speak of it as resulting not from the fall of Adam, but from the Mediatorial economy introduced in consequence of the plan of redemption."

This I judge to be true, since we are told that Resurrection came by Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 15. 20-22).

The Result of the Curse,

then, had there been no Redemption and Resurrection,

would have been that the whole human family would have passed into the realm of death and have continued there in a state of physical and spiritual death, that is, separated from the body and separated from God.

And this is so, irrespective of personal transgression (Rom. 5. 14), for it is "*in Adam*" all die. The one offence of the one man brought death upon his posterity.

Resurrection, then, is as universal as sin. All the human race rise from the dead, and this because by One Man (the Second Man, the last Adam) came also resurrection from the dead.

But after resurrection the primeval curse is exhausted. Our association with the first Adam no longer avails to condemn us.

In Resurrection all Stand Upon their Own Responsibility

to be dealt with, not for the sin of their Federal Head, but according to their own works, as many passages tell us will be the case (Rom. 2. 6; 2 Thess. 1. 8). There is, of course, no question of any second chance in this. It is this life that determines all. The question is, on what ground does the judgment proceed? Surely the result must be:

1. That **all irresponsible persons** (infants and others) will have no charge against them and can therefore be the objects of that free grace that comes through the reconciliation made at Calvary. The gift of salvation and eternal life may justly be extended to them, since where there is no law there is no transgression (Rom. 4. 15 and 5. 13).

2. That **the Second Death**, that is, the casting of both body and soul into Hell, of which Jesus spoke in such solemn terms, of which we read in Rev. 20. 15: "Who-soever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the Lake of Fire," is not for Adam's transgressions, but because of the personal sin of rejection of the proffered salvation in Christ.

The Christ rejecter is the one upon whom the Second Death has power. "This is the condemnation, that light

is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil" (John 3. 19). It is these lovers of the dark who are cast into the Outer Darkness.

In this, all judgment will be according to truth and according to the works, for while salvation is of grace, judgment must in its nature be of works.

3. The bearing upon the question of the heathen is important. Their fate depends in resurrection, not upon their association with the first Adam, but upon their measure of personal responsibility. An Omniscient Judge alone can determine:

(a) The measure of responsibility and pronounce the sentence of the second death.

(b) Whether had the light been granted them their hearts would have received and welcomed it, and

(c) Whether their attitude to the light they have reveals the fact that they would have obeyed the Gospel had they known it.

III. LIGHT IN DARKNESS.

The second question suggested on page 6 was:

Are the Heathen in Complete Darkness?

The Scriptural answer is "No," for Romans 2. 14, 15 expressly says they "show the work of the law written in their hearts," and "do by nature the things contained in the Law."

How did the law come to be written there? And what law is it?

The godly WM. ROMAINE, in a sermon entitled, "No Justification by the Law of Moses," preached in St. Paul's Cathedral before the Lord Mayor and Aldermen on 2nd September, 1741, sets himself to show that the law there referred to was the Law of Moses, since it is said to be in measure the same as that which the Jews had received by revelation and had in writing. And that "by nature" (*phusei*) cannot mean by natural intuition, for no one by intuition would have discovered the efficacy

of sacrifice to put away sin, nor purification by blood, which is the main truth of the Law of Moses so far as salvation is concerned.

Rather "by nature" means by their customs and traditions (received by tradition from their fathers, 1 Peter 1. 18), that which was natural to them as being that which had been *written* in their hearts (not conceived by them), from their earliest day, for conscience does not initiate, but "compares the conformity or obliquity of our actions with some right rule" (p. 123), that is, "excusing or accusing."

In this Romaine is, I am aware, departing from the view taken by many great commentators. For example, Dr. Handley Moule says:

"The law in this passage means not the ceremonial law of Israel, but the revealed moral law given to Israel, above all in the Decalogue. This appears from the language of verse 15, which would be meaningless if the reference were to special ordinances of worship. The Gentiles could not show the work of that kind of law written in their hearts; what they showed was a 'work' related to the revealed claims of God and man on the will and life. 'Made in the image of God, man (Gentile and Jew) has the mysterious sense which sees, feels, handles moral obligations.'"

Dr. C. Hodge goes so far as to say that the *phusis* of anything is that which belongs to its original constitution, and is opposed to what is taught, acquired, or made.

But the question is not of "special ordinances of worship," as Dr. Moule suggests, but of the great principle of sacrifice and the value of atoning blood. However it be, this truth as to sacrifice and purification by blood was known to men apart from the Law of Moses. This is evident, for Abel learned it, and was justified by it. Noah, Job, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—indeed, all the old patriarchs—sacrificed, as did Jethro, the priest of Midian (Exod. 18. 12), and Balaam and Balak, king of Moab, on the altars of Baal. The Egyptians sacrificed, as did the Babylonians. The practice was and is almost universal, Greeks, Romans, Africans, and Indians of Mexico even offering human sacrifices.

Whence came this knowledge that sin could only be expiated by blood? How comes it to be written on the hearts of those who had not the law, and by what agency.

Surely *it has survived from the original revelation to man in Eden*, and been handed down as part of the common knowledge by tradition. If that is so, then the Gentiles who have not the law codified and written as the Jews had, nevertheless retained some of the great principles and original commandments of God.

Thus, as Bishop BUTLER reasons: "Every one may find within himself the rule of right, and obligations to follow it."

That the heathen nations have retained and by study attained to a very considerable knowledge of the truth is evident to all who read the classics.

The Greek and Roman Philosophers

write page upon page that read almost like Christian Doctrine. Indeed it may fairly be said that their philosophy served the same purpose to them, as the law did to the Jew, for we find their best writers lamenting the fact of their universal sinfulness. SENECA writes: "We are all wicked; what we blame in another each will find in his own bosom."

HORACE says: "I see and approve the better course—I follow the worse."

MARCUS AURELIUS acknowledges: "If I will, it is in my power to keep out of this my soul all wickedness, all lust, etc. Remember then this thy power that Nature hath given thee."

Were salvation by law-keeping the Gentiles evidence that they have sufficient law to do what is right, but it is not, because both Jew and Gentile acknowledges themselves to be servants to sin, nevertheless it is sufficient to show them their need of salvation, and the truth they have retained is sufficient to teach them that God alone can save, and that salvation is through expiation by blood. These things they find written upon their hearts.

To Sum Up.

It may be fairly and safely stated that

1. **The heathen have sufficient light remaining** to reveal to them their guilt and their sinful condition. This is evident, since many of them feel it, and go to great lengths (pilgrimages, fasts, self-inflicted lacerations and torments and such like) to seek to relieve themselves of the burden of guilt.

2. They know that **to do good and seek right** is well-pleasing to God, and though in many cases the idea of God is debased by polytheism and hideous conceptions (Rom. 1. 23), they yet believe that He should be called upon by supplication.

3. They retain the thought that **the expiation of sin is by sacrifice**, and often go to much real self-denial to provide what they believe to be acceptable sacrifices, even offering their own children in their blindness (Micah 6. 7).

4. They believe that their **future happiness or sorrow** is the reward of their conduct here, and that the judgment and determination of their destiny rest with God and not with themselves. And many other such things they know.

These things are not stated as suggesting that the heathen have sufficient light to save them or bring them the knowledge of salvation, but as showing that God has not left Himself without witness among them, which will lead up to the last question.

IV. AN "ELECTION OF GRACE" FROM AMONG THE HEATHEN.

We have come thus far:

1. Reconciliation in the Death of Christ and Resurrection are **world-wide**, including every creature.

2. That in Resurrection **the original curse on sin is exhausted** so that all men stand upon their own responsibility when raised from the death to which the curse assigned them.

3. That God has not left Himself without **witness to all men**, who retain written on their hearts much of the original knowledge and law of God. This brings us to our third question:

Is there among the heathen that which corres-

ponds to the attitude we believers take towards God (*i.e.*, repentance and faith) which becomes the occasion through which the grace of God reaches them.

Let us remember as regards ourselves that faith is *never a meritorious thing*. Indeed, we are told that our salvation is "through faith that it might be of grace" (Rom. 4. 16). That is to say, all merit is expressly excluded that the salvation may be purely a free gift.

No attitude of ours towards God merits salvation.

Let us remember, too, that there is no salvation apart from Christ or otherwise than by the precious Blood. Does salvation reach us, it is on the ground of what He did and on that alone, and it must be so with all men. Grace could not reach the heathen except through Calvary.

And in our case it is through faith alone, and this would seem to

Block the Way to any Heathen being Saved,

for it is written: "How can they believe on Him of whom they have not heard?" (Rom. 10. 14). But the Apostle goes on to add: "*But I say, Have they not heard?* Yea, verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world" (Rom. 10. 18).

I suppose the intention is not to allege that all men have heard the Gospel, which would be contrary to fact, but,

(a) That the door of faith has been thrown wide open to all men (Acts 14. 27, and 11. 18).

(b) That the Gentiles were found to have faith to receive the Gospel when it, the true object of faith, was presented to them (Rom. 9. 30).

For have they not exercised faith in the light they have? Not that that has saved them, because the knowledge of the true and only way of salvation has not reached them; nor have they fully walked in the light they have, for, like ourselves, they approve the things that are excellent but find no power in themselves to fulfil them. In other words, like ourselves they are sinners, unable to save themselves or to be justified by law-keeping or by their own works, or on the ground of merit.

Together we stand before God alike in this (we with the fuller light and they in comparative darkness), guilty, sin-bound, and lost, unable to save or justify ourselves, because without strength and sold under sin.

Our Only Hope is GRACE,

and that can only be righteously extended to us on the ground of the BLOOD shed. The only hope for them is the same, and God is the God of all Grace, and the Blood of substitution and reconciliation has been shed. In this we are without distinction. *Only grace can meet our need.* Grace that remits sin on the ground of the Blood and regenerates by the gift of the Holy Spirit and Eternal Life.

Is this grace ever extended to the heathen apart from the knowledge of the truth? Is knowledge an essential, and if so, what degree of it? "If any man think that he knoweth anything he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know" (1 Cor. 8. 2). Then

Does Ignorance Disqualify for Grace?

If so, where in Scripture have we the exact amount of knowledge required set out?

The four persons to whom Christ said, "Thy faith hath saved thee," probably had a very small amount of knowledge; probably none of them could read or write—a woman who was a sinner, the woman with the issue of blood, a leper, and a blind beggar—yet grace reached them (Luke 7. 50; 8. 48; 17. 19; and 18. 42).

Obviously we must not insist too much on knowledge being needed before grace can act.

For **Assurance** and the Enjoyment of Deliverance no doubt knowledge is needed, but for grace it is not so much knowledge as a right attitude toward God that matters.

And when we were saved, that is, were graced (Eph. 1. 6, R.V.),

What Attitude Did we Take?

1. We took the place of sinners, guilty, sin-bound, lost.
2. We found no help or salvation in ourselves.
3. We recognised that expiation for guilt was by sacrificial blood.

4. We cried for mercy, and called on the Name of the Lord.

AND WHAT THEN? Our eyes by sovereign grace were enlightened to receive the Gospel and we saw the all-sufficiency of Christ, who died and rose again, and our faith found its rest in Him, and as knowledge increased assurance followed. But *this effect* was the work of grace. Our attitude neither merited nor effected it. It was *given*. It was the *free gift* of God, we know not how (John 3. 8). Now as we have seen

TWO GREAT FACTS

stand out with regard to the heathen.

1. The Efficient Cause is Present.

God is the God of all grace, and the reconciliation (the righteous ground upon which it is bestowed) has been made.

2. The Same Attitude that we have Taken may Possibly be Taken by Them.

Look again at the four points:

(a) Do not many who are in darkness and ignorance of the Gospel take the place of sinners guilty, sin-bound, and lost?

(b) Have they not found themselves consciously helpless and hopeless.

(c) As we have seen, in all nations the knowledge that expiation is by blood-sacrifice survives. Not, of course, that those sacrifices they offer can put away sin, any more than the blood of bulls and goats on Jewish altars slain, but they show that their knowledge of the need of sacrifice remains.

(d) They, too, cry for mercy, and call upon the Name of the Lord. Who can deny these things? *That it is universally so it is not suggested*. Alas, how many in our so-called "Christian" land take a true attitude toward God, but that there are those who do cannot surely be denied.

What then? Shall not grace flow out to them and the gift of grace, even though knowledge and assurance and

the personal enjoyment of deliverance await the arrival of the evangelist?

Is there not among them, too, **an election of grace**?

Is it not written, "Whosoever shall call on the Name of the Lord shall be saved" (Rom. 10. 13). And "Every one that seeketh findeth" (Matt. 7. 8). And "In every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted (or acceptable to) Him" (Acts 10. 35). And that to those who "seek" and "work good" God "renders" His free gift of "eternal life" (Rom. 2. 6-11).

What if an Omniscient God, seeing that they take a true attitude toward the light they have, is able to see and know that had the Greater Light, the True Light, been given them, they would have rejoiced in the light. Does the fact that the light never reached them prevent the out-flow of His grace to them? There seems no reason for thinking so. This principle is recognised in Matthew 11. 21-24. Would this fact, if it be a fact,

Hinder the Missionary

from taking the knowledge of salvation to them? Surely it would be a greater incentive. If we knew that God in grace had extended mercy to the heathen seeker who called upon the Name of the Lord, and that he still sat in darkness not enjoying the deliverance (*i.e.*, Salvation as distinct from mercy) he longed for, would we not hasten to take to such the glorious Gospel, assuring them of that mercy and unfolding to them the riches of the grace that bestowed the gift and the infinite value of the atoning work of the Son of God by which that grace can righteously be extended to the sinner; that their joy might be full and that they might have fellowship with us (1 John 1. 3, 4), the recipients of the same grace, and rejoice with us in the assurance of salvation and deliverance from the power of sin.

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