

## The "All's" of Scripture.

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**C**HILDREN of God, graciously made willing for all His revealed will, can indeed marvel at His love, and, owning themselves deserving of eternal punishment, yet beholding the infinite grace that has made them members of Christ for ever, may well rejoice to tell the glorious gospel of Christ. They see something of the awfulness of sin, and humbly, reverently, and solemnly, speak of that which God will do in judgment. A brusque manner, a mechanical accuracy, a cold indifference, a seeming lightness when dealing with eternal punishment,—how unholy are such characteristics, and how our hearts long to have fuller likeness to Christ in the handling of His truth.

Undoubtedly there will be saved a **great** number whom no man can number. Election is **not** a plan to save two or three. But universalism is not found in Scripture, and to declare it is to misrepresent God, and to delude men. We dare not speak or act or pray against the words of God: nor can we find in the new life, and its desires, a rebellion against Him, but only a holy confidence in His perfect purpose. It is the flesh that rises up against God's judgment. The flesh may be disguised as universal love, but it is a self-assertiveness, that underestimates sin, and undervalues the precious work of the Son of God. As soon as our "feelings" take the place of God's own revelation, we have need to examine our ways very earnestly.

Many who, by grace, accept Scripture readily and loyally, find their need for more prayerful study of the Holy Spirit's words "all" and "every." And the following thoughts may help them. When we read in the beginning

of Scripture, "I have given you **every** herb bearing seed"—the same word as "all"—we realize that God refers to **every kind** of herb. When we come to the words near the opening of the later Scriptures, "He was troubled and all Jerusalem with him," and again, "There went out to him . . . all Judea," we realize at once that there was not an untroubled part of Jerusalem, and that all districts of Judea were represented. And thus one could go through the concordance. We reject the thought that expressions are mere hyperbole. The Holy Spirit uses the word rightly. The theory that "all" necessarily means "without exception" is a fiction: it signifies the completeness of that of which the **context** speaks. To explain a word without its context is to deny the full inspiration of Scripture. Who would object to the verse "God is a Spirit," because we read Christ cast out the spirits with His word," or oppose the expression "God is light," because it is written "I form the light," and "Thou hast prepared the light"? Indeed, God Himself has warned us against a universalizing of the word "All"—"When He saith, all things are put under Him, it is manifest that **He is excepted**, Which did put all things under Him" (1 Cor. 15. 27). This is the more remarkable, because the context there has been **misused** to spread universalism, and further, because **we** should have naturally said "**Superfluous**, when the word 'things' is added," ignoring the **Greek** idiom of verse 28 ("All things in all"). In like manner, when we find references to "all" as sinners, we never include the Lord Jesus. Universalism is based on a fictitious theory that a signification of a word in one context must be the same in every other. This is more evidently erroneous when a term is adjectival or pronominal, as the word "all."

And it may help believers to realize a related thought. If I say "I see you," I do not mean "your life"—I see your face. If it be said, "The English rule that country," not every Englishman is involved; or again, "The nation was steeped in iniquity" would not imply that there were no believers. Almost all words are used to describe the whole or a part or all sections of the whole, according to the context. "All nations" are blessed in Abraham's seed, i.e., representatives of all nations, as it is written, "**out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation**" (Rev. 5. 9). We must compare Scripture passage with Scripture passage, and find, after prayerful meditation, the Holy Spirit's dictionary and commentary, if I may so express it, in the Scriptures themselves. It is easy to hurry, and to have no time for humble thought, in the presence of God. Hence the spread of many saddening misinterpretations, often fascinating to the flesh. The meek are those whom God guides in judgment, and if we have not time to wait, and ponder His precious words, it is manifestly our own sinfulness that leads to misunderstanding. God is still graciously ready and willing to teach. Are we ready to be teachable?

Our beloved Lord went about the **whole** of Galilee, healing **all manner of** sickness (the usual word for "all") and they brought unto Him **all** sick people, i.e., all manner of sick people, and no disease baffled Him. The teaching is clear and we are praiseful (Matt. 4. 23, 24). So in 8. 16, the "all" that were brought to Him were healed, and He gave His disciples power over "all manner of sickness" (10. 1) Chapter 10. 22 does not signify that every individual would hate God's people: but **all manner** of men have showed their enmity (cf. 24, 9, all nations, and John 15. 19, the world). Matthew

17. 11 indicates "**all manner of things.**" Thus we have no doubt as to the Holy Spirit's usage of the word **elsewhere**. Why should we alter it in this connexion?

Many of the most "universal" expressions are employed of Israel—"all Israel shall be saved." It is therefore the more striking that the Holy Spirit emphasizes "The **remnant** shall return, even the remnant of Jacob, unto the mighty God" (Isa. 10. 21), and again, "I will pardon them whom I reserve" (Jer. 50. 20, Amos 9. 10). It is of this nation, too, that the Lord marks out one very definitely for eternal judgment (Matt. 26. 24, John 17. 12), and probably Antichrist is of Israel (Ps. 50. 16-21, Dan. 11. 37).

The "all" of Roman 3. 23 is definitely and grammatically linked with "being justified freely," and though others have sinned, only those believing into Christ are **mentioned** in this passage. Nor is it otherwise in 1 Corinthians 15 .22, only the death in Adam of those who become children of God is **there** before us. "As in Adam all die" is universally true, but 1 Corinthians 15 does not deal with the ungodly in this connexion. "The dead" of verse 42 are not the unsaved dead, no limiting **word** is needed, the **context** gives the limitation. There is not a syllable about the resurrection of judgment (John 5. 29).

To read Acts 3. 21 without the descriptive words "**which God hath spoken** by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began," is to alter what He has written. And so is it throughout. Prayerfully read the context, and the answer will be graciously given again and again. We observe the words of Psalm 91. 11 "in all thy ways," and notice that they are missing in the record of Satan's quotation (Luke 4. 10). Thus we not only see the marvellous unveiling of the difference between faith and presumption, but also the Holy Spirit's witness

against omitting certain words from a verse, and then misusing it. As to no other subject is this gracious warning more needed than with respect to the error of universalism. And let an earnest exhortation be added against putting natural inclinations and feelings in the place of *God's words*. His arrangements in past history and present providence are a holy test for simple faith. The heart that says, "I would not do thus" as to the future will soon say, unless restrained by mercy, "I would not have done this in the past," or act thus in the present. But God is wiser than we are, infinitely wiser, and self's standard is altogether lower than His (Isa. 55. 8, 9). The contrast with infidelity is full faith, and there is no logical resting place in between.

We waited for any difficulties, and proposed an article dealing with verses sent by any earnest enquiring children of God, ere reprinting this. The fact that such were not sent, nor opposition raised by those who set aside God's truth, may indicate that He has graciously helped some of His own, and remind us that the objections of the natural man will not stand the test of the Scriptures. But we would reiterate glad willingness to render assistance to His beloved people, as He graciously enables us. How fully are we all dependent on Himself.

Some may feel one hesitation still. If the word "all" is thus explained, what about "all" in such verses as Colossians 1. 16, and Hebrews 1. 3, or again in Philippians 4. 19? The heart may again find its resting place in the words of the Holy Spirit. **There is no limiting context.** So in 1 Corinthians 15. 51, the "we" gives the only restriction. The word is in the singular in John 6. 37, and there is nothing to explain EXCEPT "**that the Father giveth.**" So in Romans 10. 12, "That call upon Him" is the Holy Spirit's limitation: there is none else. Our hearts may well rejoice and be glad. Thus we can cast "**all** our care" (1 Pet; 5. 7) upon the Lord, for He is "the God of **all** grace" (verse 10), and He has given us **all** things that pertain to life and godliness (2 Pet.

1. 3), nor will He fail. The important point for each believer is this:—Dictionaries do not decide the meaning of a word but register it: the Holy Spirit's own use of words must be found by comparing Scripture with Scripture (1 Cor. 2. 13), prayerfully, humbly, quietly. Then will Divine light and blessing be granted, and those who have said, "Who shall roll us away the stone?" will look and see the stone has been rolled away—to the praise of the glory of God's grace.

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