

WHAT THE NEW THEOLOGY LEADS TO –

UNIVERSALISM

– THE DESPERATE REACH FOR HEAVEN

How can I be saved?

That is the great question of the ages. But, interestingly enough, it depends on how much you want to be saved. It also depends on what you want to be saved from!

Most people do not want to be saved from sin. What they really want is to remain in their sins, be able to excuse them as acceptable, and go to heaven at some time after death.

So “How I can be saved?” hinges on “What do I want to do with my sins?” Many people do not like their past sins, but most want to be able to keep indulging them in the future.

For most people, “How can I be saved?” really means “How can I get to heaven, pretty much as I am?”

But there are those who genuinely want to be saved from sin. They want deliverance. They want to separate from the hateful thing. They want purity of heart. They want godliness. They want to be like God—sweet, kindly, clean.

For those people, there is an entrance to heaven!

It is simply a matter of coming to Jesus in repentance for the past, giving Him the habits, attitudes, and life—and dedicating to Him one’s life. It is arising from one’s knees and determining, in the strength of Christ, to press onward in the consecrated way.

For such people, a whole new life begins; a life not free from troubles and trials, but a happy life nonetheless.

This walk along the narrow way leads along a path which erelong ends at the city of God.

Such people honor the sacrifice Christ made on Calvary. They respect His ministry in the Sanctuary above. Instead of playing with theological word games (and hoping God will be fooled by them), the sincere want to be Christ-like.

Unfortunately, there are those who do not wish to separate from their sins. They love them too much! Appetite, passions, temper, lusts. It is all too important to lose. The thought of such a sacrifice seems too much for them.

What are such folk to do? They inquire, “What must I do to be saved?” What they are really asking is, “How can I get to heaven in my sins?” Such folk are desperate, and they are willing to accept any theology of desperation which seems to answer their need.

One such theology of desperation comes under several different names: humanism, agnosticism, evolutionism. But it is all the same: It is **atheism**, a pretense that there is no God.

If somehow such folk can prove to themselves, despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary, that there is no God, then they imagine they will never be judged for their sins, and can more peacefully enjoy them in this life.

This is a difficult religion to maintain (and it is a religious belief; make no mistake), since it requires denying such a powerful display of evidence throughout all of nature. “The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God.” Well, some are willing to be fools, if they can enjoy their sins for a time.

Then there is the theology of **“God does not kill the wicked.”** We find this among the ancient Egyptians, in Hinduism, and many pagan religions. It is well to appease the gods, but they will not bother you much after death—regardless of what you do in this present life. There will be no punishment for sins.

Then there is the theology of **works**. Placate the gods with gifts, make long pilgrimages, climb stairs on one’s knees. We find this religion throughout the native superstitions of the world—from Africa to India, from China to South America. Among the churches of so-called Christendom, Roman and Greek Catholicism are excellent examples.

Interestingly enough, in works religions there may be devotion for objects and statues, but there is little closeness to one’s Saviour. Whether it be Hinduism, Catholicism, or Anglicanism, we have here religious forms and ceremonies, and little else.

Then there is the theology of **acceptance-alone**. All you need do is accept God, and you will be saved.

Well, in some respects, this is the easiest of all. No efforts to evade God's existence, no struggles to please Him. Just accept that He exists and intends to save you somehow. Some kind of magic will take place, just before eternal life begins for you—and all your sinful loves will vanish. All you need do is accept Jesus as your Saviour; after that you can do just as you please. It really doesn't matter, for you will be saved anyway.

A close brother to "saved by acceptance" is "already saved." According to this theme, you were saved at the cross. The theologians call it a "finished atonement."

Although some say that acceptance may be necessary, the underlying theme is that all the world was saved at the cross, and everyone will be saved except those who try too hard to avoid it. "It is easy to be saved, hard to be lost," such folk declare. Obviously, if your salvation was finished at the cross, then you do not need to even accept it. Sequiera calls it "corporate salvation."

Can you see at this point where we are headed?

The final step is *Universalism*. Worldlings and near-atheists love this one. In fact, it has appeal to most everyone, for it touches the deepest chords of the unsanctified heart: Everyone, yes everyone, will finally be saved!

You need neither the Bible, nor Calvary, nor the atonement. You do not need to resist sin; in fact, you can enjoy it to the full. You can even go around murdering people. For everyone will be saved! This is the new theology, expressed a little more openly.

It is clear that this view is almost identical to many of the theologies, mentioned earlier.

It is also clear that this view is totally pagan. There is not a bit of Bible or Christianity in it. It is a religion that Adolf Hitler could love. Hindus, Buddhists, animists, Taoists, Confucianists, Unitarians, and many Christians embrace it.

In the January-April issue of Mike Clute's periodical, *God's Last Call*, he quotes a letter from one of his supporters, and then comments on it. The letter and Mike's approval reveals that Mike has turned his back on God's Word and has gone over to *Universalism*!

But this is understandable. For years, Mike taught that God will never kill the incorrigibly wicked (we all agree He never hurts or slays the innocent or righteous). Mike's view is not supported by Scripture. (See our 42-page in-depth tractbook, *The Terrible Storm*, which thoroughly refutes this error in detail, and gives dozens of Bible and Spirit of Prophecy quotations.)

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But when a person leaves the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy, he is ready for anything. Any new idea can come along and, if he feels it is nice, he is likely to accept it.

In this particular issue of Mike's paper, these are the points brought out: (1) Satan produces the final (hell) fire. (2) It is a "symbolic fire," and not real. (3) It will purify all the sinners, for they will burn in this imaginary fire until they are purified of sin.

(4) Then they will be clean, pure in heart, with no traces of sin—and will be welcomed into the city of God, there to live through eternal ages! (5) All the wicked will be saved, and that includes all the evil angels as well as Satan himself! (The devil accomplished a lot by getting that fire started!)

(6) When Satan, the last one to have his sins burned out, is welcomed through the gates, he will be reinstated as the leading angel and will again lead the choirs of heaven as the honored, respected leader of the angels. All the redeemed will respect Satan more than any other angel, for he is once again the leading angel.

That is the hellish teaching which Mike Clute now accepts. He freely admits that the name of this terrible error is "Universalism."

How can imaginary fire get rid of sin? How can Satan produce flames which will get rid of his sins, or anyone else's? How can anything good come out of a being so utterly bad? Yet, according to this heathen idea, the devil is more worthy of worship than the Father or the Son; for he will have saved more sinners than the Godhead! The efforts of the Holy Spirit, working through good angels and the loyal on earth, accomplished far less than Satan did with his imaginary fire!

This is truly a theology of final desperation.

Beware of those who urge upon you "new light" which is not in the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy! Erelong, they will lead you all the way out! I guarantee it: The only way you can avoid being captured eventually by error—is to rigorously stay with the plain words of the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy.

Let us, for a moment, compare these views:

***The Bible, Spirit of Prophecy, and historic Adventism* teaches that you will be saved by Christ's merits, which will enable you to have a living faith which works.**

***Modern Protestantism* teaches that you will be saved because of your faith, regardless of your actions.**

Universalism teaches that you will be saved regardless of your belief or actions. It is, thus, only a step beyond modern Christian (new theology) theory.

Obviously, modern Protestantism (which, in our church, is called the “new theology”) has almost the same teaching that Universalism has.

Why is there such a desperate search for some type of foolish notion which will promise heaven to those clinging to sin? The answer is the great concern to somehow obtain “assurance.”

Genuine Christians need not concern themselves with worries about assurance,—for they are walking hand-in-hand with Christ throughout the day. They love Him with all the heart, and gladly serve Him and obey the commands given in His Word. They have a full Christian experience and are at peace with God. Ask a genuine Christian if he has “assurance,” and his eyes will twinkle. He has Jesus, and that is better than a feeling.

But those who want the saved-in-sin theories to give them assurance—will always lack assurance. They are convicted, by the Holy Spirit, that they are still in their sins and are therefore out of Christ.

Kicking against the pricks of conscience, as Saul did, they cry out for the peace of heart they hope to find in a theology of hoped-for assurance.

Here is the truth about “assurance”:

Historic Adventism: You have assurance in (not about but in) Jesus. You have assurance because you are in Jesus, as the branch is to the parent stock of the vine; closely connected with Him, moment by moment. A living experience is yours, which transcends nominal assurance.

Modern Protestantism: You have assurance because you think you can be saved while remaining in your sins. But the nagging doubt persists: “Could the theory be wrong, since that is my only basis of assurance?”

Universalism: You have assurance because you think you can be saved while remaining in your sins. But once again, as much as you may try to believe it—the theory can bring you little real assurance.

However we analyze it, we find that modern Protestantism (the new theology) is similar in so many ways to Universalism!

Here is what the Spirit of Prophecy says about Universalism:

“At the funeral of an irreligious young man, who had been killed instantly by an accident, a Universalist minister . . . [taught that] the salvation of heaven depends upon nothing which we can do in this life; neither upon a present change of heart, nor upon present belief, or a present profession of religion.”—

Great Controversy, 537, 538.

Modern Protestantism (the new theology) and Universalism is about the same in that both teach the same outcome: “salvation . . . depends upon nothing which we can do in this life.”

In reality, these false religions do not have “assurance,” but “carnal security.” That is the way it is with all the false religions in the world,—including the works religions! Just stay in your sins, and just believe that it will all turn out all right.

Hinduism: After this life, you will return to live in sin all over again.

Catholicism: After this life, you will inevitably burn for a time in purgatory, and that fire will burn out your sins and make you clean. (Sounds like Clute.)

Protestantism: After this life, all your sins will be magically taken away and you will be taken to heaven.

So just go ahead and stay in your sins; all is well. You are locked into them (the Catholic teaching of Original Sin, accepted by modern Protestantism) and cannot escape till the moment of death or translation.

So there we have it: variations on the theme of providing the sinner with carnal security. Commenting on Universalism and kindred ideas, we are told:

“It is thus [by such teachings] that doubters, unbelievers, and skeptics turn the truth into a lie. And multitudes have been deceived by their sophistry and rocked to sleep in the cradle of carnal security.”—*Great Controversy, 539.*

But the truth is far different.

“God has given in His Word decisive evidence that He will punish the transgressors of His law. Those who flatter themselves that He is too merciful to execute justice upon the sinner, have only to look to the cross of Calvary. The death of the spotless Son of God testifies that ‘the wages of sin is death,’ that every violation of God’s law must receive its just retribution.”—*Great Controversy, 539-540.*

It is because of such clear statements of truth, as in the above paragraph, that there is a studied war on the Spirit of Prophecy by so many in our denomination. If God’s Word is right, then we need to flee to God and cooperate with Him in getting rid of sin from our lives! But many do not want to do that. They prefer a theology of desperation instead. War on the reprover, instead of on the sin.

That which carnal-minded men and women want is to be able to forget that God has justice. They extol His mercy and grace, but they push the justice back into the shade. They do not want

it to be considered.

“Another extreme which Satan has led the people to adopt is entirely to overlook the justice of God, and the threatenings in His Word, and to represent Him as being all mercy, so that no one will perish, but that all, both saint and sinner, will at last be saved in His kingdom.”—*Early Writings*, 219.

The only place you will find the truth is in God’s Word. The teaching, that God will punish and blot out the hopelessly impenitent, is to be found all through the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy.

Here is a summary overview, in a few paragraphs:

“Let us consider what the Bible teaches further concerning the ungodly and unrepentant, whom the Universalist places in heaven as holy, happy angels . . . We must resist and overcome sin . . . ‘No fornicator, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolator, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.’ (Ephesians 5:5, ARV) . . .

“God has given to men a declaration of His character and of His method of dealing with sin . . . ‘All the wicked will He destroy.’ ‘The transgressors shall be destroyed together: the end of wicked shall be cut off.’ (Psalms 145:20; 37:38). The power and authority of the divine government will be employed to put down rebellion; yet all the manifestations of retributive justice will be perfectly consistent with the character of God as a merciful, long-suffering, benevolent being.

“God does not force the will or judgment of any. He takes no pleasure in a slavish obedience . . . The principles of the divine government are in perfect harmony with the Saviour’s precept, ‘Love your enemies.’ God executes justice upon the wicked, for the good of the universe, and even for the good of those upon whom His judgments are visited. He would make them happy if He could do so in accordance with the laws of His government and the justice of His character. He surrounds them with the tokens of His love, He grants them a knowledge of His law, and follows them with the offers of His mercy; but they despise His love, make void His law, and reject His mercy. While constantly receiving His gifts, they dishonor the Giver; they hate God because they know that He abhors their sins. The Lord bears long with their perversity; but the decisive hour will come at last, when their destiny is to be decided. Will He then chain these rebels to His side? Will He force them to do His will?

“Those who have chosen Satan as their leader and have been controlled by his power are not prepared to enter the presence of God. Pride, deception, licentiousness, cruelty, have become fixed in their characters. Can they enter heaven to dwell forever with those whom they despised and hated on earth?

Truth will never be agreeable to a liar; meekness will not satisfy self-esteem and pride; purity is not acceptable to the corrupt; disinterested love does not appear attractive to the selfish. What source of enjoyment could heaven offer to those who are wholly absorbed in earthly and selfish interests?

“Could those whose lives have been spent in rebellion against God be suddenly transported to heaven and witness the high, the holy state of perfection that ever exists there,—every soul filled with love, every countenance beaming with joy, enrapturing music in melodious strains rising in honor of God and the Lamb, and ceaseless streams of light flowing upon the redeemed from the face of Him who sitteth upon the throne,—could those whose hearts are filled with hatred of God, of truth and holiness, mingle with the heavenly throng and join their songs of praise? Could they endure the glory of God and the Lamb! No, no; years of probation were granted them, that they might form characters for heaven; but they have never trained the mind to love purity; they have never learned the language of heaven, and now it is too late. A life of rebellion against God has unfitted them for heaven. Its purity, holiness, and peace would be torture to them; the glory of God would be a consuming fire. They would long to flee from that holy place. They would welcome destruction, that they might be hidden from the face of Him who died to redeem them. The destiny of the wicked is fixed by their own choice. Their exclusion from heaven is voluntary with themselves, and just and merciful on the part of God.

“Like the waters of the Flood, the fires of the great day declare God’s verdict that the wicked are incurable. They have no disposition to submit to divine authority. Their will has been exercised in revolt; and when life is ended, it is too late to turn the current of their thoughts in the opposite direction, too late to turn from transgression to obedience, from hatred to love.”—*Great Controversy*, 540-543.

In the above passage, did you catch two key words? One was “choice” and the other was “probation.”

It is now, not later, that we make our choice. There is no second chance later on. There is none at the Second Coming, and none in the fire beyond.

It is now that we are in our probationary time. You will notice that the theorists have little to say about the “close of probation.” Most world religions never mention it; Protestant theologians tell us it occurred at Calvary, and we will never face it.

Universalism; that is what it is. Eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we go to heaven.

— Vance Ferrell

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