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In What Ways Did Adam Typify Christ in Romans Chapter 5?

How was Adam a “type” or pattern (Greek: *typos*) of the One who was going to come later? In other words, how was Adam’s action parallel to Christ’s work? Paul gave a clear-cut answer to these questions in Romans 5:14-19. What Adam did affected **all humanity**, bringing sin and death **into** (*eis*) every last individual (Romans 5:12). Adam was a pattern of the One who was coming because Christ’s action likewise encompassed **all men**—bringing justification **into** (*eis*) each person—Romans 5:18. If we believe that all people became sinful through Adam, then Paul told us we should also believe that every last person will someday receive life’s justification in Christ—see Romans 5:18. This is exactly what the Spirit of God told us through Paul. Incidentally, in Romans 5 and other passages, Paul frequently referred to **all** other people except Christ as “the many”.

Although the works of Adam and of Christ are similar in that each influenced all people, there were other major differences between Adam’s sin and Christ’s death on the cross. One of these distinguishing features, of course, was the nature or **quality** of the work. Adam’s deed dealt **sin and death**, while Christ’s act of righteousness brought **justification of life**—Romans 5:18.

In addition to this contrast in quality, Paul informed us that there was also a significant variation between the two performances in **quantity** or **magnitude**. In Romans 5:15, God’s free gift was **not** like Adam’s act, which Paul called an “offense,” because in Adam “**the many**” simply “died.” By way of contrast, Paul stated that the grace of God and the grace gift of Jesus Christ “**super-abounded**” to that very same “**many**” who received sin and death (Romans 5:15).

The word for “super-abounded” is *eperisseusen* or *perisseusen*, depending on which Greek text one uses. The Greek dictionary for the NIV by Goodrich and Kollenberger (GK) supplied the following meanings for the root verb *perisseuōs*: “**to have in abundance, to have more than enough, to overflow, to have an excessive amount of something (ranging from excess to a very great degree of excess).**” In various other passages outside of Romans 5, the NIV has translated this verb as follows: “**to have left over, to overflow, to excel, to abound, to have an abundance of.**” Strong’s Greek dictionary of the King James Version gave to the verb *perisseuō* these other meanings as well: “**to super-abound in quantity or quality (or both), to be in excess, to be superfluous, to cause to excel, to be better, to be enough and to spare, to exceed, to redound, to be over and above.**”

There is also an adjectival form of this Greek word and it is *perissos*, which GK defined as: “**exceeding, going beyond, more than, to the full.**” Strong gave that adjective these meanings: “**more super-abundant, exceeding abundantly above, and beyond measure.**” All of these terms apply to Christ’s “grace gift” when it is compared to Adam’s original sin!

Paul flatly stated that Christ's work was every bit as widespread in its effect as Adam's—it was **universal**. But Paul left us with one pleasantly puzzling question. When it says that Christ's grace gift “super-abounded” (*perissuesen*) to ALL in comparison to Adam's sin, what does that mean?! Think on these things, and rejoice!

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After Believing in the Reconciliation of All, What Should One Then Do?

What should believers in the ultimate reconciliation of all (TURA) do once they have trusted this Bible truth? They should realize that it was God who gave them the faith to accept it as a divine gift, a blessing, and a privilege. God gave it to us not because we were necessarily smarter or more spiritual than the majority of other Christians. With humility remember that the glory goes to **God**, the Savior of all—I Timothy 4:9-11.

Use this knowledge to help build and unite **the church**, not to break it down or fragment it further. Understanding that God loves and saves all people, let us love all people too, especially believers.

Be ready to explain Bible passages to people who show interest but **do not push** reconciliation teachings on ones who hesitate or reject. God's acceptance of people does not depend on their correct understanding of His eschatological plans. God does not give every justified believer the immediate understanding that He gave the Samaritans who said to the woman, right after receiving Christ, "Now we believe, not because of your words but we have heard Him ourselves and know that this is indeed the Anointed One, **the Savior of the World**" John 4:42.

Christians should be viewed in a **favorable light**, whether they agree or disagree and every "lost" person should be seen as a candidate for salvation right now and/or at least as one with whom we will be united when God becomes "all in all" as described in I Corinthians 15:28. We will show more love, patience, and respect for all people, in keeping with Galatians 6:10.

TURA believers may feel free to **present reconciliation** along with all the other themes of their gospel outreach **when witnessing**. A tract including TURA has been prepared and can be sent upon request. Whole sheets of scripture references are also available, showing many of the good things that will happen ultimately for people who die outside the faith of Christ.

Remember that **are not the only ones** who have been enlightened on this important subject. The apostles understood total reconciliation and brought it up in their books—especially Paul, Peter, John, James, and the author of Hebrews. Early Christians knew this truth learning it from Christ and the apostles. It was widely accepted in the churches at Alexandria, Antioch, and Caesarea. Much later it became an article of faith for the Anabaptists, the German Baptists, and other assemblies. It is part of an early church tradition that we can call "Gregorian" after Gregory Nazianzus and St. Gregory of Nyssa—both highly respected Nicene Fathers.

Christians who believe in TURA ought to **avoid doctrinal pitfalls**. The ultimate reconciliation of all has been coupled by certain people with the rejection of such faithful ideas as the deity of Christ, the substitutionary atonement, or the inspiration of scripture.

Over the years, one group holding to TURA (the Unitarian-Universalist Church) has gone astray, rejecting most articles of Christian faith. Knowing this, some Christians wrongly believe that TURA ideology will invariably cause people to depart from the Christian faith. We must be ready to **absorb wrongful chastening** like this from those who see reconciliation as some form of “heresy” which neglects God’s judgment altogether. Possibly Paul faced opposition like this when he wrote “...therefore we both labor and suffer reproach; for we believe in the living God, Who is the Savior of all humans...” I Timothy 4:9-11. He did not let opposition cause him to stop presenting reconciliation, however, and he told Timothy: “These things command and teach” I Timothy 4:11. We may assume that “these things” include the ultimate reconciliation of all—the topic Paul just finished mentioning!

Some converts to reconciliation are able to share with others, but for one reason or another, others are not in a position to discuss the issue with many people. Those who must accept and enjoy the understanding of TURA in relative silence can identify with Mary, who for years simply “...pondered many things in her heart” Luke 2:19. It was not until years later that the New Testament writers reported the virgin birth of Christ and many other things Mary had treasured silently for years.

Realize that many who reject TURA may otherwise fare quite favorably at the bema judgment seat for having served God faithfully. Likewise, some who balk at TURA now **may adopt and promote the view** later in their lives.

J. S. Johnson in his book “Christ Victorious over All” (1920) wrote about a great Bible teacher and Christian college administrator who had originally accepted TURA, in his younger years as a believer. But later, that individual switched to the “eternal torment” theology and strongly opposed ultimate reconciliation of dead lost people. But nonetheless, he still admitted, that it would be the happiest day of his life if he could once again accept and believe the view that **all people** will ultimately find peace with God. Knowing from Colossians 1:20 that this Professor’s earlier views WERE correct, let us go forth to be the happiest (most blessed) people on the earth, rejoicing in God’s total salvation! “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassions and the God of all comfort...” II Corinthians 1:3 (TURA (The Ultimate Reconciliation of All), 24635 Apple Street, Newhall, CA 91321.

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Always” or “Consistently” (aei)?

“*Aei*” is a Greek word of interest to Bible students who wonder how long sinful people will remain unrepentant after they die. Concerning unbelievers who were preparing to stone Stephen, for example, the NIV of Acts 7:51 reads, “You always [aei] resist the Holy Spirit.” In fact, the NIV likewise translates *aei* as “always” on every other occasion. But when rendering *aei*, the translators of the Concordant Version (CV) avoided the word “always”, translating *aei* as “ever”.

The Concordant Lexicon and The Concordant Greek Text present *aei* as meaning *a-ei* or “un-if” (the literal counterpart of *a-ei*), which means unconditionally or “on each and every occasion.” Colloquially this would mean something like “no ifs, ands, or buts about it!” or in other words “consistently.” *Aei* does not refer to continuity throughout extended or infinite time. Hence the words used for translating *aei* (always, always, continually, continuously, and ever) wrongly convey the idea of absolute permanency.

While this may seem to be a small and insignificant issue, it affects our understanding of seven Bible passages in which *aei* occurs. One example is Acts 7:51 directed toward Stephen’s persecutors. Another is Hebrews 3:10 where one must either believe that the Israelites who rebelled against God will “always” be resisting Him (in the future) or that they “**consistently**” did so in the past. The latter is correct because *aei* says nothing against God’s changing their outlook posthumously, in response to Christ’s victorious and all-inclusive work on the cross.

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ARGUMENTS ABOUT TURA (THE ULTIMATE RECONCILIATION OF ALL)

Argument raised against TURA: If *olam*, *aion*, *aionios*, and combinations of these words refer normally only to the ages of the earth, then passages in which these words are used in reference to God do not refer to God's eternity. This would leave God with no reference in the Bible to His everlasting nature.

ANSWER: **a.** If any of the above words are used of God Himself, it is possible the inspired Bible writer **WAS** using them to mean eternal, because God's "age" is eternal. **b.** On the other hand, use of these words concerning God may be referring to the fact that God **IS** the **God of all these earth ages**. Perhaps none of these passages is speaking about His eternal character; they may be speaking instead about the fact that God endures through all these ages and that the ages are part of His great plan. Thus the foregoing is not a strong argument against reconciliation of all (TURA).

Another argument against TURA: If *olam*, and other Bible words ordinarily translated "eternal" refer only to ages (even when they speak of God), then the nature of God in the Bible would be entirely non-eternal. This would be true because there are no references (outside of those that use *olam*, *aion*, etc.) pointing to the fact that God has an everlasting existence—past, present, and future. If *olam* and *aion* mean nothing more than "age" or "age-lasting", there would be no references that would indicate God has existed and always will exist. In the Bible God would end up no longer being God!

ANSWER: There are at least three other words (and word patterns) used in the Bible to show that **God is** eternal—words other than *olam*, *aion*, *aionios*, or their combinations. (1) Hebrews 7:3 states that the Melchizedek priesthood goes on to a completion. Melchizedek's seeming **lack of beginning of days or end of life is like to the Son of God**. Here the Bible clearly states that the Son of God is without beginning of days or end of life, without using *aiōnios*. (2) In Habakuk 1:12 that God is "from everlasting." The word is *qedem*, and Strong says *qedem can* mean eternal and everlasting, something it surely does in this context. (3) Isaiah 9:6 is a well-known passage in which God (the Father and the Son) are spoken of as the "everlasting Father." The word for "everlasting" here is *ad*, which **can** mean forever, everlasting, and eternal. Undoubtedly that is its meaning here where *olam* and such eonian words are not used. Perhaps there are others too. These three Bible verses, however, show that God's eternity **IS** clearly established in the Bible without making *olam* and the other age-related words to refer to anything other than "ages."

Arguments against the "eternal torment" belief: Once again, it is agreed that a word may have some change in its normal meaning on occasion, but only **if and when** the context demands such modification. There is the illustration where Christ said that the love on money is the root of all evil. It is agreed that the love of money is not the root of every last evil, in the sense of absolutely ALL. Sexual sins, for example, are usually not

motivated by the love of money. But the normal meaning of all is, nonetheless, ALL. Eternal Torment believers think that **every** passage that implies the salvation of all must be reinterpreted such that “all” cannot not mean ALL This is not a worthy approach to God’s Word.

I Corinthians 15:21 uses the “double all” in reference to death in Adam versus future life in Christ: “For as in Adam **all** are dying, even so in Christ shall **all** be made alive.” This passage can mean nothing but the universal reconciliation of all people to life in Christ. Attempts to make it “say” anything else would undermine the doctrine of original sin through Adam as well as undermining the inspiration of all scripture..

Romans 5:18, is another passage where the Greek word all (pantas) is used twice, with only ten Greek words in between the two “alls”. In this Romans 5:18 parallel construction, “all” must be translated the same (ABSOLUTELY ALL) in both cases. “Therefore through one offence, **adverse judgment** [came] **into ALL**, and so through one righteous act, **life’s justification** [came] **into all**.” There can be no doubt that **all** human beings, other than Jesus who is **God**, are condemned to adverse judgment because of Adam’s “nosedive” into sin. There is no textual basis for distinguishing “the ‘all’ who face adverse judgment from the ‘all’ who will come into life’s justification—they are the same, **all people**.”

Paul also penned several verses in which such a double-contrast is made by using the term “the many,” which certainly means **all others** except “the one” (Christ), as in Romans 5:15: “But not as the offence thus also the grace-gift, for if **the many** died by the offence of **the one**, [then] much rather the grace of God and the grace-gift of **the one man**, Jesus Christ, superabound unto **the many**.” While “all” may deviate from its usual meaning when context dictates, there are many reconciliation passages in which “all” must mean “ALL.” TURA (The Ultimate Reconciliation of All) 24635 Apple Street, Newhall, CA 91321-2614.

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Jesus Saves All People

(words that fit with a published celtic tune)

These words fit specifically with an arrangement of Ungar's "**Ashokan Farewell**" in "Legends", edited by James Calaway and Phil Coulter, Hal Leonard Corporation, 7777 W. Bluemound Rd., P. O. Box 13819, Milwaukee, WI 53213. This melody was the theme song for the Civil War films shown a few years ago on Public Television. It is a very touching celtic tune.

Jesus came here from above
To show forth the Father's love
And to die for the sins of all people.
God will reconcile each one
Through the precious blood of Jesus,
For God sent His Son as a ransom for all.

Christ said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life;
No one comes to the Father but by me."
But He also has said He draws all men to Him
And none He draws to Him will be turned away.

Jesus Savior of the world,
Is God's bread come down from Heaven.
All nations will worship before Him.
Every person in the sea, on the earth, and underneath it;
And those in the Heavens will sing praise to God.

All the enemies then
Will be His disciples,
And part of Christ's footstool, with God All in All

The Bible Teaches the Ultimate Reconciliation of All

Many Bible passages clearly show that God will eventually save all people through the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son. Each of these scriptures speaks for itself and requires no supporting texts. Taken together they forge a sturdy framework for belief that all lost people will finally be reconciled to God. All people who die in their sins will swear allegiance to Christ after their righteous judgment, corrective pruning, and second death in the Lake of Fire have taken place. It is the Bible alone, apart from human logic, blind emotion, or evangelical Christian tradition that must dictate human destiny. **All** scripture is God-breathed (II Timothy 3:16).

English Bibles have some sections, however, that are said to teach eternal torment or at least everlasting separation from God for those who die in unbelief. Each of these apparent conflicts with total reconciliation is caused by the insertion of modern English words like 1. "forever", 2. "eternal", 3. "hell", or 4. "damnation" for Greek or Hebrew words having the following very different meanings respectively: 1. "for an age", 2. "age-enduring", 3. *hades or sheol or geenna*, or 4. "adverse judgment." An adequate, scholarly, supporting base has been produced to correct these unfortunate translation defects. But in most of the popular English revisions many of the errors were unchanged.

A list of certain "free-standing" Bible excerpts shows the ultimate salvation of all people. These are not the only reconciliation verses but they are illustrative of many other texts as well. They can be analyzed in translations of your choice, provided that care is taken to change the mistranslated words mentioned above. Also, where these translations say "all things", realize that the word "things" is absent in the original, having been added by translators. Their attempt to produce more readable English phraseology has unfortunately made it sound as if "the reconciliation of all [things]" is referring to clouds, elm trees, granite boulders, and lions instead of "all people", which is the central meaning. The easy solution is to delete the word "things" and read simply "all" as it is in the original.

Luke 2:10 and 19:10, John 1:6-9, John 1:29 [the word *cosmos* here refers to the entire world—past, present, and future], John 3:17, John 12:32 [note from context this refers to Christ's death, not to "lifting Christ up" in gospel preaching], Acts 3:20-21, Romans 5: 10-12 and 15-19, Romans 11:32 and 36, I Corinthians 15:20-28 and 53-57, II Corinthians 5:14-21, Ephesians 1:10, Philippians 2:10-11 [as well as Romans 4:11 and Isaiah 45:22-23], Colossians 1:20, I Timothy 2:3-6 and 4:9-11, II Timothy 1:10-11, Titus 2:11, II Peter 3:9, I John 2:2 and 3:8, Revelation 5:13 as well as 20:14 and 21:5. Old Testament sections supporting ultimate reconciliation also exist and a few of them are Lamentations 3:31-33, Psalms 77:7-9 and Isaiah 26:9b and 19. TURA (The Ultimate Reconciliation of All, 24635 Apple Street, Newhall, CA 91321-2614.

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An Answer to Christmas Cards.

Now comes my little “commercial”—please forgive me if you happen to hold the alternative position. The joy I feel in discovering this facet of scripture overwhelms my sense of “good manners”, if in fact I have ever had any such sense!

It was in the ____ the year of my life, after I had been a Christian believer for about ____ years that I finally began to understand God’s great plan involving Adam, Christ, and every last person (I am a slow learner)! It came as huge joy to discover in many Greek and Hebrew Bible passages the message that God’s ultimate salvation is not limited to those who receive Christ’s faith before they die! It was monumental and marvelous to realize at last, from both Old and New Testaments: that Christ’s infinite work on Calvary finally will undo everything Adam and Satan did to every one of us mortals. God finally reaches even those who die “outside of Christ.” Certainly salvation comes only through Jesus, and that’s just fine, because Christ **will** eventually draw all people (past, present, and future) unto Himself. Known to share at the drop of a hat, I have lists of scriptures communicating this message and many excellent books by evangelical Christian scholars, past and present. Also, two major Bible-study web sites now carry several essays on this wonderful subject—www.greenwood.net/~cdevans/srindex.htm at which click on “Systematic Reconciliation” and go to “TURA” by George Howe. Or you can also get other teachings at: www.restoreallthings.org/gpage.html6.html and songs at www.reconciliationbiblesongs.org. georgefhowe@sbcglobal.net. Thanks again for writing to me at Christmas.

Good News for All—Past, Present, and Future

From the very start right down to today, many Christians have believed that the good news about Christ is **universal** in its scope and that the Bible states Christ's work will ultimately lead to the salvation of everybody.

The Bible Teaches that the Gospel Reaches Every Last Individual. The Greek word *euaggelion* (pronounced *evangelion*) means “gospel” or “good news” and the word is frequently used about Jesus. The shepherds were given the message by an angel: “And the angel said to them [the shepherds], ‘Do not be afraid for behold, I announce to you great joy which shall be to all the people (*panti tō laō*) because today was born to you in the city of David a Savior Who is Christ, the Lord” Luke 2:10-11. The “gospel” involves Jesus becoming the savior of all people—universal good news, indeed.

John the Baptist Understood Universality. John the Baptist told His followers one day when they saw Jesus: “Behold the Lamb of God, Who takes away the sin of the world (*kosmou*)” John 1:29b. Jesus came to die for everybody's sin. The writer of Hebrews said: “But now He [Christ] has appeared. . . once for all for the annulment of sin through the sacrifice of Himself” (Hebrews 9:26b). John the Apostle wrote “For this purpose the Son of God was manifested: that He might undo the works of the devil” (I John 3:8). Sin, death, and the devil's work are temporary, while God's love lasts forever and abolishes all three.

Paul Included the Ultimate Reconciliation of All People as Part of the Gospel.

That great Christian/Jew, the Apostle Paul, had this to say in I Corinthians 15:1-6, outlining the gospel: “Now I make known to you, Brothers, the **good tidings** which I preached to you, which you also have received. . . that Christ **died** on behalf of our sins, according to the scriptures [meaning the Old Testament, which tells about Christ's coming in Isaiah chapter 53 and other places], and that He was **buried**, and the He was **raised** [from the dead] on the third day, according to the scriptures, and that **He was seen** of Cephas [the Apostle Peter], then by the 12 [disciples]. Afterwards He was seen [alive] by more than 500 brothers at one time, the majority of whom remain until now.” Part of the complete gospel is that Christ will return—Acts 3:20-21. The gospel can also be studied in Paul's sermon in Acts 13:16-41 and that He will justify all people: “by one righteous act, justification into all humans” Romans 5:18-19.

In that same good news chapter (I Corinthians 15) Paul wrote in verse 28 that, in the end (*to telos*), **God will become “...all in all,”** meaning that God will finally reconcile to Himself every person who has ever lived, no exceptions. The Bible teaches that God will restore Israel, of course, and that “**all Israel will be saved**” Romans 11:26. The gospel message and its universal implications can be studied in many other Bible passages too.

Jesus Taught the Salvation of All, Accomplished through His Sacrificial Death. Shortly before he laid down His own life on a cross, Jesus told His disciples: “ ‘And I, if I be lifted up from the earth [lifted up above the earth on a wooden cross], **will draw all** [“*pantos*” means “all” and by extension, “all people”] **unto myself.**’ This He said signifying what kind of death he was about to die” **John 12:32-33.** I believe there is **no other Savior** than Jesus the Messiah AND I realize that there **doesn’t need to be any other savior**, because Jesus will draw all people to Himself and make them one with God (I Corinthians 15:28), even if they have died in unbelief!

What’s Ahead for Believers and Nonbelievers? Like the thousands who heard Peter’s Pentecost sermon (Acts 2:14-26), you are encouraged to repent of sin to God and confess Jesus as Lord and God’s Messiah (Acts 2:36-39). Confession of Christ brings new life of faith, whereby Christ’s own faith is expressed inside of the individual—see Romans 6:1-11. “Life in Christ” is not the result of the believers’ good works, church attendance, or even of their “own” faith. Saving faith is a gift of God’s grace, as Paul wrote: “By grace are ye saved, through faith—and that [that faith] not of yourselves. It [the saving faith] is a the gift of God, not of works, lest any individual should boast” Ephesians 2:8-9.

Believers will meet the Lord in the air and will then coexist with Him permanently—I Thessalonians 4:14-18. After believers are raised to be with the Lord, their works will be seriously evaluated (I Corinthians 3:10-15 and other passages), but they themselves will not be condemned or sternly disciplined: “Whosoever heareth my words and believeth on Him that sent me has age-abiding life and shall not come into adverse judgment [condemnation] but is passed from death unto life” John 5:24—see also First Thessalonians 5:9-10 and Romans 8:1. The believers’ “age-abiding” life means life now, life during the 1000 year Millennial Age (Rev. 20), life in the New Jerusalem age (Revelation chapter 21), and life forever after too. The Bible teaches that Israel will be totally restored and that Jesus will return to rule the earth during the coming ages.

Unbelievers are raised from the dead, after the 1000 year Millennium, and they will each be judged fairly (Genesis 18:25) from “the books,” according to their works—Revelation 20:11-15. Those whose names are not in the “book of life” will be consigned temporarily to God’s cleansing lake of fire, which is the “second death”—Revelation 20:14. It behooves everyone to stop sinning. God’s judgments are strict, but they are shown to wise, corrective, and temporary (Lamentations 3:31-33 and Isaiah 26:19b). God’s judgments will bring non-believers to trust Christ, even after they die. **God is love and all death will be rendered powerless** (I Corinthians 15:20-28 and I John 4:8).

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A Pitch for Total Reconciliation to Use in Christmas Cards

I really “go ape” around Christmastime because it reminds us that God is going to save, reconcile, and resurrect **everybody** eventually, through the blood of His Son, Jesus—the Messiah. I am a Christian who believes that Christ’s sacrifice was **infinite** and totally comprehensive! And the real “kicker” is that we **need not wait** but can have a personal relationship with Christ **now** by **believing in Him as our Lord and Savior**. That’s called the “**gospel**” which means “**good news**” in Greek and it sure is totally good news. If you have not yet expressed faith in Jesus Christ, please consider this right now and start to live with HIM. It gives life much more meaning. If you are already a believer, great—let me encourage you to continue spending time with God in prayer and studying His Great Book—the Bible. Some really keen passages include Romans 5:18-19, I Corinthians 15:20-26, and I Timothy 4:9-11 in each of which the great Apostle Paul makes God’s great plan very clear.

The REALLY Good News of Christmas

There is a type of Christianity that goes back to the churches at Alexandria, Antioch, and Caesarea. These churches held to a future free of the erroneous concept of an “eternal hell” for lost people. The everlasting hell idea gained ascendancy later as a result of Churchmen like Augustine, Tertullian, and Justinian who were ill informed on the Greek language. Living at the same time as Augustine were other Nicene Fathers such as Gregory of Nyssa and Gregory Nazianzus who held to the ultimate reconciliation of all people. This idea that God’s punishment comes to an end is still an important minority position, very much alive even in Evangelical Christianity. It is well supported in the Bible—please keep reading. Christmas commemorates the birth of Jesus who was the Son of God and Mary. God had always planned to come to earth this way in order to save everyone. All people need to be saved because even the best of them have evil in their thoughts, desires, and actions. Jesus was God coming here as a human to save us by His one great “act of righteousness” which constituted the shedding of His own blood and the giving up of His life on the cross as a sacrifice for all sin. After three days and three nights, He returned from the dead and promised to come back to earth again. Giving gifts at Christmas can become one way to celebrate this **great gift** of God’s infinite love, which takes away the sin of the whole world.

One cannot receive salvation except by believing in Jesus Christ as Savior. Ultimately everyone does get saved, however, because God finally reconciles all people through His Son. Some people get saved in this present life because God gives them the faith to trust Jesus as their savior before they die. Such “believers” experience great joy because they begin to know and love God through His Holy Spirit, Who takes up residence in them as soon as they believe. They continue to grow as they read God’s one and only book (the Bible), learn to pray (hold conversation with God), associate with other believers, and live for God—serving Him instead of continually serving themselves. They learn to love and obey God’s rules instead of living in sin and disobedience.

In the hereafter, God will also reconcile people who die without having received Christ’s faith. But that is another subject involving God’s wise, loving, and corrective **judgment** of unsaved people, after He raises them from the dead. God **is** love, so even His **stern** judgment of “lost” people will be **temporary**, leading them to complete reconciliation and final union with Him. In the end, God becomes all in all. God has a plan involving every last person. Perhaps you already know where you fit in that big picture. If not, I hope you will search and learn this year. The little essay above is all taken from Bible passages, some of which can be consulted and studied carefully at: www.greenwood.net/~cdevans/srindex.htm at which click on “Systematic Reconciliation,” going to “TURA” by George Howe. Or you can also get help at www.restoreallthings.org/gpage.html6.html whereupon enter the section entitled “Writings of George F. Howe.” Please also learn key TURA Bible verses by singing the songs you will find on www.reconciliationbiblesongs.org. George Howe, 24635 Apple Street, Newhall, 91321. georgehowe@sbcglobal.org. 661-259-3124.

What the Bible Does not Say about Christmas

Thanks for the Christmas greeting and annual report telling of God's activity in your lives. I have had fun each Christmas sending a greeting that exposes the reader to the Spirit-inspired truth of Biblical Universalism. Without any more discussion, here goes with that "thought for the season".

In Christmas card replies over the last few years, I have gotten into the habit of sharing Bible verses that have meant much to me that year—**verses** pointing to the concept that God is going to redeem every last human being—past, present, and future—by the blood of Jesus Christ as noted in Colossians 1:20, for example. "Through Him [Christ] to reconcile **all** into Him [into the Father], making peace through the blood of His [Jesus'] cross—whether on the earth or in the heavens [everybody, in other words]..." It took me **46 years** as a believer to understand and believe passages like **Romans 5:18-19** and **I Corinthians 15:20-28**.

This year instead of talking with you about what the Bible says, however, God has blessed me with what the Bible **does not say** and how happy we can be that it **does not!** The commonly heard phrase "**eternal death**" occurs **nowhere** in the Bible. If it did, there would be **internal** Biblical contact with all the verses like I Corinthians 15:54, in which Paul quoted Isaiah 25:8 to show us that "**death was swallowed up in victory.**" The "eternal death" idea is not found in the Bible. Also please give thanks with me that the Bible **never** talks about "**everlasting torment**" for people who die outside of Christ. In Matthew 25:46 Christ **did** say that the "goat" **nations** would receive a "pruning" [*kolasin*] that would occur in **an age** [likely the millennium] but He did not say not "forever". Nor does this *kolasin aiōnion* involve all lost people. Our Lord was merely pronouncing a corrective "sentence" against those **nations** that had mistreated Christ's people [Israel]. The idea that all lost people suffer forever in "a Devil's hell" conflicts with verses teaching that Satan's entire "life's work" will be loosed, abolished, and destroyed when Satan will be rendered powerless—also consult **I John 3:8** and **Hebrews 2:14-15**. We know that there is no salvation in any other name than in the name of Jesus—there doesn't need to be salvation in any other name because ultimately God saves everyone through Christ's infinite work! Thanks for reading.

I Corinthians 15:20-22 Are Astounding Verses for Christians Who Believe in Eternal Torment for Lost People

“Yet now Christ has been raised out of [the] dead, firstfruit of the ones having been asleep. Since in fact through [one] human, death; also through [one] human, resurrection of the dead. For even as in Adam all are dying; thus and in Christ all will be made alive.” The key message here is, “in Adam all are dying; thus in Christ all will be made alive.” Through one human came death **into** all and through another human comes life **into** all.

Paul’s Greek does not say “all those who are in Christ will be made alive”. Instead, there are two very clear statements about all people—(1) death for all, then (2) life for all. Explanations of timing follow in verses 23 to 27. Christ is first in resurrection. Those who are His are second and will be brought back to life at His appearing. But then comes the “end” (consummation) that leads to a glorious event in which God will become “all in all” (verse 28). “All in all” can mean nothing less than the resurrection, complete reconciliation, and total union with God of all mankind. Fundamentalist Christians and others who believe that God will forever punish or forever banish, all lost people should read and believe this passage which was inspired by the Holy Spirit. A belief in eternal hell or eternal death for all those who die in a lost condition is a flat-out denial of these Bible verses.

For more information about God’s plan to ultimately save all people, write: TURA (The Ultimate Reconciliation of All), 24635 Apple Street, Newhall, CA 91321.
georgefhowe@sbcglobal.net. www.restoreallthings.org/gpage.html6.html
www.greenwood.net/~cdevans/srindex.htm.

Will God Do to Lost People Exactly What He Condemned Lost Edomites for Doing?

Amos 1:11 tells why God condemned Edom: "...for three sins of Edom, even for four, I will not turn back my wrath—because he pursued his brother with a sword, [1] **stifling all compassion**; because [2] his **anger continually raged**, and [3] **his fury flamed unchecked**, I will send fire upon Teman that will consume the fortress of Bozrah." God planned to judge Edom because they had mistreated the children of Israel. God was concerned with the hostile manner in which Edom had dealt with Israel. **Edom had stifled all compassion**—something that was not approved by God who is called "the God of compassion". David wrote "But you O Lord are a compassionate and gracious God—slow to anger and abounding in Mercy and reliability" Psalm 86:15. If God were to separate Himself forever from all "lost" people He would Himself be stifling compassion and would be falsifying Lamentations 3:22 where it states that God's **compassions fail not**. It would be strange indeed for God to condemn Edom for stifling compassion if God intended to stifle all His compassion for lost people "eternally."

The **Edomite's anger raged continually**. If the Bible taught that God intends to exercise His wrath forever against lost people, would He not be doing exactly what He condemned Edom for doing—raging in anger continually? Fortunately there is no place in Bible Greek or Hebrew where it is said that God's anger against anyone lasts "forever!" Instead, the Bible teaches that God's indignation is slow to start (Psalm 86:15) and that it definitely has an end (Isaiah 10:24-25, Psalm 30:5, Psalm 103:9, and Isaiah 57: 16, for examples.)

The next indictment God brought against Edom was that **her fury flamed unchecked**. God will not practice unbridled, endless fury. His judgments will accomplish only "what He desires" Isaiah 57:16. One of the reasons He terminates his fury is that otherwise "...the spirit and breath of those standing before Me (those I have created) would grow faint"—Isaiah 57:16. God did not want people to vanish under the impact of His fury and so God's attitude differs from the way Edom treated Israel. It also differs from "unending torment," "unending separation," or "absolute annihilation," which are often attributed to Him by certain believers today. It would be peculiar and conflicting for God to condemn these three actions of Edom if He intended later to practice all three in dealing with lost individuals. The Old Testament scriptures prove that God's wrath and judgment will end and the New Testament makes it clear that God will ultimately reconcile all people. Let us abandon a view that makes God fulfill the same three behavioral errors for which He condemned the Edomites. TURA (The Ultimate Reconciliation of All), 24635 Apple Street, Newhall, CA 91321-2614.

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Evangelical Christians Have Been “Foolish and Slow to Believe”

Some Christians label any Bible teaching “suspect” unless it has been acknowledged as a major part of church doctrine since the days of Augustine or at least since the time of the reformers. While such an attitude may help protect from schismatic heresies, it also carries an inherent danger of its own. Some Bible truths that were widely accepted in the first three centuries were lost in major segments of Christendom as a result of the teachings of Augustine and others. One of these missing but valid tenets is the ultimate reconciliation of all people, which is still stoutly rejected by major segments of the body of Christ. Unbelief prevailed in Old Testament times too. A very long list of examples could be tabulated, involving Abraham and Sarah, the Israelites repeatedly, and most of Job’s friends—people who discounted promises of blessing, ignored warnings of judgment, or completely misunderstood God’s work.

The disciples in New Testament times likewise had faulty views of Christ. Some of His disciples on the Emmaus road did not acknowledge that He had come to earth to die—Luke 24:25-26 “O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary for the Anointed One to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?” After years of direct contact with Christ, the disciples did not even believe that Messiah would die and rise again—events foretold by prophets and taught repeatedly by Christ Himself. John was evidently speaking of himself, Peter, and others also when he said they were not as yet aware of the scripture that He must rise from the dead—John 20:9.

These failures should be studied to show how some serious misunderstandings of God’s truth have afflicted God’s elect through the entire Bible and even up to today. There are many bloopers in Church history concerning believers’ failures to acknowledge eternal security of the believer, the Trinity or Godhead, and other Biblical verities.

Even the God-blessed “evangelical” denominations of today fail to promote the reconciliation of all. Peter told us that the anointed One was to be received into Heaven “until the times of restoration [reconciliation] of all, which God spoke through the mouth of His holy prophets from the age” Acts 3:20-21. Substantial numbers of Bible verses foretell a future universal outpouring of God’s mercy, leading to the restoration and reconciliation of all people. Why not believe, as Paul did, and stop “kicking against the goads?” Let God help you assist fellow Christians to admit that Christ is the “Savior of all mankind...” (I Timothy 4:9-11). TURA (The Ultimate Reconciliation of All), 24635 Apple Street, Newhall, CA 91321-2614. www.restoreallthings.org/gpage.html6.html and www.greenwood.net/~cdevans/srindex.htm Also www.reconciliationbiblesongs.org. georgefhowe@sbcglobal.net.

Some Things That Will Last Forever and Some That Won't

Throughout the Greek New Testament there are several words which have been rendered into English this way: “always”, “continually”, “everlasting”, “immortal”, “imperishable”, lasting “forever”, lasting “forever and ever”, or having “no end.” What sorts of phenomena do these Bible words designate as “permanent”? Is the punishment of the unsaved dead people in that list? The same questions could be asked of the Old Testament Hebrew texts as well, but we will confine ourselves to New Testament references at present.

Aidios appears only twice in the entire New Testament. In Jude verse 6 the NIV translates it “everlasting” –“everlasting chains of judgment”. In Romans 1:20 NIV translators rendered it “eternal”—“his eternal power...” In the Concordant Version of the Bible (CV), however, *aidios* appears as “imperceptible.” Thus Romans 1:20 has *aidios* describing God’s power, which would be imperceptible to us, were it not for “nature” wherein God’s power is made visible or perceptible to our senses. It is obvious that God’s power does last forever and is, in that sense, “eternal.” But possibly that is not what is being said in Romans 1:20. Furthermore, “imperceptible” in Jude 6 would set aside the idea that the chains will bind fallen angels forever, as the English Bible versions otherwise imply.

The word *aiōn*, in conjunction with a few other Greek words, is translated “for the eons [aeons]” or “of the eons” in the CV as opposed to the “forever and ever” of many other Bible translations. Revelation 20:10 reads “...tormented day and night for ever and ever” (NIV). According to the Greek, however, this punishment or chastening is for the aeons of the aeons, a phrase probably referring to the last two “ages” in God’s great scheme—the Millennial aeon and the New Heaven/New Earth age. By itself, the Greek word *aiōn* simply refers to an age or finite period of time—long or short. In Revelation 20:10 “The Emphasized Bible” (Rotherham—Kregel Press) correctly says “...unto the ages of the ages,” and “Young’s Literal Translation of the Bible” (Robert Young—Greater Truth Publishers) likewise translates this “...to the ages of the ages.” Neither *aiōn* alone nor in any of its combinations with other words carries the meaning of “lasting forever.”

Its companion adjective, *aiōnios*, does not correspond to our English word “eternal”, which is often wrongly used to translate it. It means instead “**pertaining to an age**”, “**age-abiding**”, or “**age related**.” Since *aiōnios* is an adjective relating to the aeons, the perfectly good English word “aeonian” can be used to translate it also, although that word is seldom used in modern English. It is necessary to look elsewhere in scripture to find words that really mean “forever” or “eternal.” **None of the items called “eternal” in the English translations are really “eternal” in the sense of being everlasting.**

Asperantos, is found only in I Timothy 1:4 where it refers to “endless genealogies.” The apostle was using it to designate very long genealogies, but not ones that are actually “endless”, as our English puts it. Thus *asperantos* has no bearing on our study here.

The Greek word *aphthartos* (noun) and its companion adjective *aphtharsia* are each used in seven New Testament passages. In I Corinthians 9:25 a crown for faithful believers is described as a crown that will “last forever” (NIV) or as a wreath that is “incorruptible” (CV). These two words truly refer to items that are going to continue on and on into the future. They have been variously rendered, in the NIV, as follows: immortal (immortality), imperishable (can never perish), undying, and unfading. As we have seen in I Corinthians 9:25, one of these unfading items is the award-wreath that a faithful child of God receives.

The two Greek words *dia* (through) and *pas* (all) literally mean “through all”. In the six occasions where these two words are used together, the NIV translators rendered them as: “always” (three times), “continually” (two times), and “forever”(once). The CV translators, however, used one word on all six occasions—“continually”—and so did Rotherham. In doing this they showed that *dia pas* does not confer eternal or everlasting status on whatever is being modified. The angels of the “little ones” (Matthew 18:10) “continually” see the face of the Father in Heaven. Peter noted that David “continually” saw God before him (Acts 2:25). Paul (Acts 24:11) “continually” strove to keep his own conscience clear. It is said in Luke 24:53 that the disciples “continually” stayed at the temple praising God after Christ’s ascension. The lips of believers are to be “continually” praising God (Hebrews 13:15) and in Romans 11:10 the backs of people who opposed God were to be bent “continually” (but not “forever”, in any of these.)

Of all these *dia pas* passages, only the one in Romans 11:10 could be interpreted by some to indicate everlasting judgment—“...may their backs be bent forever” (NIV.) The CV translators made it clear here, and in Psalm 69:22-23, which Paul was quoting, that the people who were hardened against God received effective judgment causing their backs to be bent continually, rather than forever. This should not be placed on the list of phenomena that are permanent. It obviously has reference to God’s wise punishment right here on earth—a chastening indeed, but not an everlasting one.

In four occasions, the Greek word *dienekes* (in conjunction with two other Greek words, *eis*—to and *ho*—the, is used in the New Testament. The NIV translators rendered this trilogy of words as “forever” (two times), “endlessly” (once), and “for all time” (once). In the Young’s Translation this is given as “continually in Hebrews 10:1. In the CV it is translated “to a finality,” which apparently means “to a completion”. In one sacrifice, Christ has perfected people “to a completion”. Another example occurs in Hebrews 10:1 where it is written that the same sacrifices in the Jewish tradition cannot perfect “to a finality”(CV) those who are approaching. Here again the NIV and most English translations have attached the concept of “forever” to words that do not say “forever” in Greek. None of these four instances of *dienekes* should be tabulated among the Biblically everlasting phenomena.

Pantote in the CV dictionary is said to mean literally “every-which-besides” or “every-when.” While this is not meaningful for English readers, the CV translators rendered *pantote* as “always” and so did the NIV—see Luke 18:1. Upon reading the verses (41 of them) wherein this word is present in the Greek, the “always” involved seems to be in an earth-related or age-related sense and not in the vein of “forever and ever”. In Matthew 26:11 Christ reminded His hearers

that the poor are “always” with us (both NIV and CV)—and here one can observe the temporal sense in which “always” is used to translate *pantote*. Some other occasions in which the word is used are noted here, not one of them deals with the “after life”: Christ was not always to be on earth with His disciples; in the parable, the elder son always lived with his father; the disciples were always to pray; on earth Christ always did what pleased His Father who always heard the Son’s prayers; Christ always taught in the synagogue; Paul always thanked God for the Corinthian believers who were to always commit themselves fully to the work of the gospel; right down here on earth and despite our trials—Christ always leads us in triumphal procession; for earth-bound mortals Christ is always alive to plead for those who come to Him; Paul always mentioned Philemon in his prayers; godless interlopers in the Church are always learning but never coming to a knowledge of the truth; Paul wrote that Cretans were always liars; Paul always thanked God for believers of whom he always had pleasant memories; Paul told us to always be joyful and to always let our conversation be full of grace; and there are several more. Even though some of these virtues will obviously persist into the distant future, such was not usually the intent of this word *pantote*.

In summary, there are some phenomena, which will persist unchanged throughout the two ages yet ahead in earth history. One is the award-wreath of I Corinthians 9:25. Other unfading items that will last forever are: the dead (as they are finally raised), the “seed” (by which believers are born again), immortality (brought to light by the Gospel of Christ), God Himself, the age-abiding King, and the beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit which is unfading. “Torment”, “flames”, and “separation from God” are conspicuously absent from the items that are going to persist forever—praise the Lord.

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Free Will Salvation?

When people show true saving faith; their conversion is God's gift. We should joyfully acknowledge their faith, while giving all glory, congratulation, and commendation for that faith to God alone. People being evangelized should be encouraged to acknowledge the faith of Christ, which has been given to them.

Those who do not manifest the faith of Christ are slated for corrective judgment and for the cleansing lake of divine fire, which is also known as the "second death (Revelation 20:14.) In the original Greek and Hebrew, however, the Bible does not state that unjust people who die go to "eternal hell", "eternal death", or "everlasting torment"; none of these terms are biblical. The Greek words *aiōn* and *aōnios* and their Hebrew counterparts refer to an "age" or in the adjective form "pertaining to an age", so that the modern English concepts of "everlasting" or "eternal" are simply not present. The loaded word "hell" likewise has no equivalent in Greek or Hebrew. In Old English it had a different meaning for "hell" than the ghastly one it has taken on over the centuries. But "hell" has been incorrectly used in modern English translations for such words as *sheol*, *hades*, and *geenna*, which have meanings, each very different from the modern meaning of "hell". It is a wise move for Bible believers to abandon the word "hell" altogether and use the three transliterated original words.

The repentant thief on the cross is an example of salvation by God's faith, not ours. This man was no more righteous than the other convict who was being executed. The faith of God stirred in his heart, however, and he expressed it. This was not the thief's own "good decision" or wise choice—it was his expression of the faith given to him supernaturally. His faith and ours is not the result of our talented free will. If it were, then salvation would be the result of a human good work and not of God's intervention. Attributing salvation to human free will is non-Biblical. TURA (The Ultimate Reconciliation of All), 24635 Apple Street, Newhall, CA 91321-2614.
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WHAT IS THE TRUE GOSPEL OR GOOD NEWS?

The “gospel” in Greek means good news and it is the good news about Jesus Christ. The shepherds were given this important gospel message by an angel: “And the angel said to them [to the shepherds], ‘Do not be afraid for behold, I announce to you great joy which shall be to all the people because today was born to you in the city of David a Savior Who is Christ, the Lord And this will be a sign unto you—you will find a baby, wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.’” Luke 2:10-11. This means Jesus was God’s Son who came to earth as a baby, which is totally good news for everyone on earth!.

John the Baptist understood the good news. Here is what John said to his followers one day when they saw Jesus walking toward them: “Behold the Lamb of God, Who takes away the sin of the World” John 1:29. Jesus came with the purpose of giving His life as a sacrifice for the sin of the world, meaning that he will reconcile **all people** to God.

The good message about Christ was presented clearly by the Apostle Paul in I Corinthians 15:1-6: “Now I make known to you, Brothers, the good tidings which I preached to you, which you also have **received**, in which also you **stand**, through which also **you are saved**...For I delivered to you what was among the first things that I received—that Christ **died** on behalf of our sins, according to the scriptures [meaning the Old Testament], and that He was **buried**, and that He was **raised** [from the dead] on the third day, according to the scriptures, and that He was seen by Cephas [the apostle Peter], then by the twelve [disciples] . Afterwards He was seen [alive] by more than 500 brothers at one time, the majority of whom remain until now, though some fell asleep.”

Yes, the good news for you and for the **whole world** is that God the Son [Jesus the Christ] was born to the virgin Mary, lived a life without any sin, died on the cross to remove the sins of the world, came back from the dead to be with His believers for many days right on earth, went back to heaven as they watched, and that He will come to earth again. This entire message can be studied more fully in Acts chapter 13, verses 16 and onward to about verse 41.

Are you believing and accepting this gospel now? Would you like to pray telling God that you believe this whole plan of salvation and that you want to be one with Him? Believing this gospel gives you “age-lasting life” during two important earth ages, which lie ahead—the Millenium (Revelation chapter 20) and the New Heaven/New Earth aeon (Revelation chapters 21-22:1-6). Believing this gospel means that you will escape the corrective judgment God has ahead for those who are rejecting the important message. All others get reconciled after the judgment and will ultimately become one with God too—I Corinthians 15:28.

Thanks for listening, and God bless. georgefhowe@sbcglobal.net.
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Is it “Everlasting Hell” or “Age-During Discipline” that Faces God’s Lost People?

The Bible is clear that those who die without a God-given faith in Christ will face adverse judgment, chastening, wrath, pruning, and punishment. But nowhere does the Greek or Hebrew Bible state that such punishment will be “everlasting.” The Bible teaches in over 20 different passages (with 60 or more supporting texts) that all who die in their sins will some day worship God and be fully reconciled to Him.

The Greek word *aiōn* means a period of time or age, like its English counterpart “aeon.” The scripture describes punishment as being *aiōnios*, which is the adjectival form of *aiōn*. *Aiōnios* has no single, common English word exactly corresponding to it. A whole series of words is used to convey its meaning such as: “pertaining to an age (or pertaining to a period of time)”, “relating to an age (or relating to an aeon)”, and “age-enduring.” The English words “aeonian” or “aeonial” are the exact equivalents of the Greek *aiōnios* but they are uncommon and are seldom used. The English words “eternal” and “everlasting” do not correspond to the Greek *aōnios* but have nonetheless been widely used by most translators. They convey a very different concept, unwarranted by the Greek text. It is biblical to say that God’s judgment and punishment of lost souls will involve one or more “ages” ahead, but it is not biblical to say that they will be “eternal” or “everlasting.”

The English word “hell” has been used to translate the Greek words *geenna* and *hades*, neither of which signifies a place of unending torment or eternal separation from God, which “hell” is commonly assumed to be. *Geenna* was a place outside Jerusalem where the corpses of criminals were destroyed by fire and maggots. *Hades* is the unseen location of dead people. Christ used the term *hades* as a teaching tool in the Lazarus parable, not as a device to establish a doctrine of unending, conscious torment. The rich man in *hades* may well have represented the dismal future on earth of Christ-rejecters (including some Jews and some gentiles) in years ahead. But even in the parable, some repentance and change were already evident in the suffering rich man! The lake of divine fire described in Revelation is the “second death”(Revelation 20:14), which comes after the Great White throne judgment. All death, including the second death, will be swallowed up in victory (I Corinthians 15:53). Thus it is a fact that God will deal seriously with unrepentant sinners in death and judgment. But the word “hell” has undergone so many distortions and has been given unscriptural, overtones to the point that it will be best to use the transliterated Greek or Hebrew words rather than “hell”—*geenna* or *hades* in the Greek or *sheol* of the Hebrew.

People should be told that God is going to judge wisely and correctively chasten all those who have not received the gift of grace through faith. But people should also learn that ultimately God is going to reconcile all individuals through the blood of Jesus Christ, Who is completely victorious over sin and death. TURA (The Ultimate Reconciliation of All), 24635 Apple Street, Newhall, CA 91321-2614.

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The Great High Priest Practices Gentleness with the Strays

Every high priest was supposed to be “...able to deal gently with those who are ignorant and are going astray...” Hebrews 5:2. This describes every true high priest and especially the ultimate and Great High Priest, Christ Himself. He is highly qualified to express gentleness because He became a partaker of human blood and flesh (Hebrews 2:14). We would expect Christ to be gentle in dealing with ignorant and deceived people, even after they die. Surely He would not change His gentle pattern after people die to a mission of tormenting lost people forever. It states in Hebrews 13:8 that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and for the ages, which implies that the death of human beings does not eradicate Christ’s compassion for them.

In Hebrews 2:17 Christ is said to be a merciful high priest, Who has made reconciliation (atonement, NIV) for the sins of “**the people**”—these are very comprehensive terms, indeed. Christ described Himself and God the Father as being “kind to the ungrateful and to the wicked”—Luke 6:35-36. Putting lost people into everlasting torment would seem to an ultimate act of “**unkindness**”, not befitting God.

Except for committing any personal sins, Christ identified with humans in every way. One reason He did this was that He is a very merciful high priest. Paul wrote in Romans 5:15 that although death extended to “the many” (which undoubtedly means “all people”), grace and the free gift of God go even further because both of them “super-abound (*eperisseuō*) to the many”—quite an extensive and overwhelming phrase! The very same “many” who inherited death from Adam receive grace and the grace gift from God! In James 5:11 were are told that as well as being merciful, the Lord is “super-compassionate” (*polysplagchnos*)!

Who are “**the people**” for whose sins Christ made atonement? John has told us that Jesus is the propitiation for **our** sins (I John 4:10) and not for ours only but for the **sins of the whole cosmos** (*kosmou*) (I John 2:2). Thus God is going to reconcile all people into Himself through Christ, Who made peace by the blood of His cross—Colossians 1:20. Atonement, propitiation, and reconciliation will finally encompass everyone so that God can and will become “all in all” (I Corinthians 15:28) at the end [consummation.] TURA (The Ultimate Reconciliation of All), 24635 Apple Street, Newhall, CA 91321-2614. www.restoreallthings.org/gpage.html6.html or www.reconciliationbible.com or www.greenwood.net/~cdevans/srindex.htm. georgefhowe@sbcglobal.net

Howe's TURA History

From 1939 to 1985 I cannot recall anyone explaining the many Bible verses that teach the ultimate reconciliation of all (TURA). During that 46-year period I listened to at least 5000 sermons in church meetings and in Christian college chapel sessions. This 5000 does not include numerous Sunday school classes, college Bible classes, youth group meetings, and more. Perhaps this is simply a tribute to my poor memory, but I cannot recall one person making it plain that God has a great plan in which He finally will become “all in all”—I Corinthians 15:28. In the light of so many clear-cut references to universal salvation, I should have discovered this truth in my own Bible study. During those years I read the entire Bible at least 13 times in English, once in Spanish, and once in German. My only defense is that I adopted and defended wrong English word choices in key Bible verses, which were supposed to prove **unending** torment in **hell** for lost souls. I had believed that Adam's sin was the result of his own free choice and that God had no responsibility for that decision. I was also admonished that we are really very fortunate that God opted to save ANY people because He “owes” nothing to anyone except an eternity in hell. Christians are often advised to be quite joyful that God decided to redeem any individuals at all. A person was never supposed to ask why a good God, Who is altogether merciful, would condemn most of His created people to an endless separation from Him! I never heard that question asked in fundamentalist assemblies.

I cannot remember hearing one sermon on Romans 11:32 showing that **God** has “locked up” all into stubbornness (unconvincedness), so that He might then have mercy upon all. No preacher noted that God is going to gather together all into one, in Christ, as Paul so clearly wrote in Ephesians 1:10. Pastors and teachers did not indicate that the key Greek words translated “ever”, “forever”, “everlasting”, etc. actually mean “age” and “age-lasting” and are so translated in several literal versions based directly on the Greek. Perhaps none had light on this subject either, and were working in honest ignorance. The Bible contains many deep subjects and some valid concepts in it have eluded scholars for centuries, even though those same teachings were clearly understood by the apostles and believers in various early assemblies. These same deep and overlooked subjects, however, have been understood and adopted by smaller groups of believers all down through the history of Christianity. One minister of very Calvinistic persuasion informed us in the early 1980's that Christ had died for the sins of only the elect. While his mistake was obvious, I owe him thanks because his false remarks on this topic induced a turning point in my own thinking. I knew several Bible references where it plainly states that Christ died for the sins of the **world**. God was at work in the very details of my ignorance and I was prepared for the next step by concentrating on the fact that Christ died for the sins of the world. Shortly after that time, in 1985, a friend gave my older son and me several important, Bible-based books on the ultimate reconciliation of all. For a short time, I still stoutly resisted studying these treatises, even refusing to browse through them, because of an unfounded, “knee-jerk” fear that I would be committing “heresy.” At first, I did not even study the Bible verses involved. My son Paul Howe, however, examined the books carefully and strongly recommended that I study them. Periodically and from time to time I then delved into the treatises and Bible verses, between 1985 and 1999. I tried to determine if the passages should be taken

as they are inscribed in Greek or if each one should be “conformed” to make it fit somehow with the cherished orthodox doctrine that all lost people go to hell forever. It became very clear that I needed to accept God’s Word, even when it runs counter to one of the most basic tenets of evangelicalism and even when it runs against the firm beliefs of all my friends.

Everlasting hell is a concept popularized 1500 years ago, a Roman belief based on the mistaken ideologies of Augustine, Tertullian, and Justinian. Prior to Augustine, of course, many believers in assemblies at Alexandria, Antioch, and Caesarea embraced the universalist scriptures, which are statements of Christ, Paul, John, Peter, James, and others. Even at the time of Augustine, other “Nicene Fathers” like Gregory of Nyssa and Gregory Nazianzus held to the ultimate reconciliation of all people.

For about 15 years (1985-2000) I pondered and even privately treasured these texts in my heart, like Mary (Luke 2:19), sharing my beliefs only with a few very close friends. In the year 2000, I felt compelled to go public with these verses for God’s Glory. God is the One Who inspired **all** scripture, even the words that get systematically ignored or ceremoniously reinterpreted. These passages have “refused” to bend or to be revised for almost 1500 years of their ecclesiastical manipulation.

It became clear that a few of books on reconciliation have been written by individuals who believe that Jesus Christ was “created” by God the Father, before the creation itself. Some are otherwise well-meaning Bible students who are fowled up on their Christology, largely because they have followed the mistaken ideas of their founding teacher, whose words they treat with quasi-cultic reverence. Unfortunately their work, which is helpful in understanding the ultimate reconciliation for all people, leads some critics of TURA to assert that TURA will invariably lead people away from belief in the co-eternal Trinity.

In that stack of books my friend gave us, however, were volumes on reconciliation authored by people of Baptist, Pentecostal, Seventh-Day Baptist, Anglican, and other persuasions— individuals who adhered to the deity of Christ and His eternal preexistence. Since those earlier years, I have discovered other authors recognizing total reconciliation—books by writers from the Methodist, Dutch Reformed, Covenant, Presbyterian, Anabaptist, and other Trinitarian denominations. This clearly dispels the myth that belief in Biblical universalism relentlessly leads people away from believing that Christ is the co-eternal, second Person of the Trinity. After one accepts the ultimate reconciliation of all, there are many deep questions that arise but each one has a poignant answer in God’s Word. For more information write TURA, 24635 Apple Street, Newhall, CA 91321-2614. www.restoreallthings.org/gpage.html6.html
www.greenwood.net/~cdevans/srindex.htm. www.reconciliationbiblesongs.org.
georgefhowe@sbcglobal.net

Take a Close Look at Hymns

Charles Wesley (brother of John Wesley) wrote some hymns containing broadly worded statements about Christ's work on behalf of all humanity. Verse two of the hymn "Christ the Lord is Risen Today", for example, says, "Dying once, He **all** doeth save. Where thy victory, O grave?" [Did you mean that, Charles? Good deal!] In "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing" these phrases are found: "God and **sinner**s reconciled...Joyful **all** ye **nations** rise...Light and life to **all** He brings...Born to raise the sons **of earth**, and Born to give **them** second birth" [Did you believe He succeeded in all this, Charles? Merry Christmas to ALL indeed!] In another song, "Arise, my Soul, Arise" the great Charles wrote: "His blood atoned for **all our race**" and pretty much the same phrase is found in "And Can it Be?" [Christ] "...bled for Adam's **sinful race**." [What did you mean by writing that Christ bled for the whole **race**, C. W.? Will He save all?]

The great hymn writer Isaac Watts was a Biblical universalist! Johnston gave us a fine Watts quotation in the monumental work ("Christ Victorious over All", 1920, Chicago, IL—long out of print; I now possess a rare copy of this work, thank you Dean Hough!) Watts once said, "There is not one place in Scripture which occurs to me, where the word death necessarily signifies a certain miserable immortality of the soul" p. 210. Since Christmas is near, listen to this phrase from Watts' "Joy to the World": "He comes to make His blessings flow, Far as the curse is found" [That's really broad, Isaac—thank you.]

And let's not forget Fredrick Faber who probably was a universalist, as well. Listen to a portion of verse three from Faber's "There is a Wideness in God's Mercy": "But we make His love too narrow, By false limits of our own; And we magnify His strictness with a zeal He will not own." You can look this hymn up in almost every hymn book and study the last verse too; it involves TURA.

Fanny Crosby may at least have had a "hope", as shown in words from "I Am Thine O Lord": "There are **depths of love** that I cannot know till I cross the narrow sea."

Consult www.reconciliationbiblesongs.org. georgefhowe@sbcglobal.net.

Infinite Sin or Infinite Sacrifice?

It has been asserted by some that rejecting Christ's sacrifice is the "infinite sin" and requires the "infinite punishment" of being separated from God **forever**. The English word "infinite" occurs three times in the King James Version of the Bible (KJV). In the newer translations like the NIV and the NKJV, other words have been used instead of "infinite" on these three occasions—words like "boundless", "endless", or having "no limit." Since the 17th century when the KJV was translated, the word "infinite" has taken on a vast and unapproachable meaning in fields like mathematics, astronomy, and physical science. The two Hebrew words that were translated "infinite" in the KJV are *qes* and *mispar*. Where *qes* was used in Nahum 3:9, it cannot mean "infinite" in the modern sense because Cush and Egypt certainly never had "infinite strength"—their power was simply very great or "boundless" as translated in the NIV. In Job 22:5 Eliphaz was wrongly attempting to make Job feel guilty by asking him: "are not your iniquities infinite [*qes*]?" (KJV). Apparently neither Eliphaz nor Job took *qes* in the modern scientific sense of "infinite" but simply and figuratively as "endless" (as in the NIV).

Whether they got it from Job 22:5 or elsewhere, some believers have adopted the notion that **human sin** is "infinite" and that an infinite sacrifice was therefore necessary to reconcile mankind to God. Some folk go further and insist that a soul who dies rejecting Christ, has committed an "**infinite sin**" against God's sacrifice (infinite in itself). They hold that Christ-rejecters will therefore receive punishment for an **infinite length of time** into the future—forever! But certainly nothing human is "infinite", not even all the sin of all mankind or the one individual wretched sin of rejecting Christ. There is nothing Biblical or logical about the concept that rejecting Christ deserves an infinitely long sentence in hell.

The Hebrew word *mispar* (Psalm 147:5) is translated "infinite" in the KJV and as having "no limit" in the NIV in reference to God. The 17th century KJV is still accurate in this passage because even in the modern scientific sense, God's wisdom and other divine attributes are totally **infinite**—especially His love! When we acknowledge God's attributes as Omniscient, Omnipotent, and Omnipresent, let us remember that first and foremost God **is** "Omniloving" because He **is** love! His mercy is so great that it is **age enduring**—see almost every verse in Psalm 136. God is known as the "Father of mercies and the God of all comfort"—II Corinthians 1:3. So, Christ's sacrifice on the cross was "infinite" in that God (the Creator) died for the sin of man, the creature. This surely was an unparalleled act and a gigantic undertaking! One would expect that the results would be totally comprehensive too—and they are. The sacrifice of Christ for the sins of the people was "**once for all**" (Hebrews 7:27—NIV); it will save **all** people (I Timothy 4:9-11). It caused the grace of God and the grace gift of Jesus Christ to superabound (epērissēuō) to all the people who had fallen into sin (Romans 5:15.) For more information about TURA (the ultimate reconciliation of all) write: TURA, 24635 Apple Street, Newhall, CA 91321-2614. www.restoreallthings.org/gpage.html6.html or www.greenwood.net/~cdevans/srindex.htm georgefhowe@sbcglobal.net. Also, of course, www.reconciliationbiblesongs.org.

A Letter Used to Introduce Old Friends to the Reconciliation of All

I have used the following letter as a means by which to inform my friends of an eschatological and soteriological change of view—a paradigm shift which started for me in 1985 when a Christian friend gave to me and my son Paul copies of several important, Bible-based books which called attention to many neglected Bible passages.

For a short time after this 1985 introduction, I stoutly resisted these ideas, even refusing to browse through them, because of the unfounded fear that I might be committing “heresy.” At first, I did not even study the Bible verses involved. But my son Paul Howe told me that I ought at least to examine and evaluate the Bible verses. So, I delved into those treatises and scriptures periodically between 1985 and 1999 to see if the passages should be taken as inscribed in Greek or if each should be conformed to make it fit the doctrinal statements generally embraced in fundamentalist churches. It became very clear from the start that I needed to accept God’s Word, even when it runs counter to one of the fondly accepted erroneous tenets of evangelicalism. I pondered and treasured these texts in my heart (like Mary—Luke 2:19) and for 15 years shared my changing concepts only with a few close friends. In the year 2000, I felt compelled by the Lord to go public with these verses, to the Glory of God, Who inspired **all** scripture. The Lord took my son Paul (aged 42) home that year and showed me that I must openly promote the concepts that he and I had embraced together. These passages have “refused” to bend or to be reinterpreted successfully for almost 1500 years of ecclesiastical error. When Luther reintroduced “salvation through faith alone”, he did not correct this mistake. My friends need to know about this true Bible teaching and my whole-hearted acceptance.

Lest you fall into the same trap originally facing me, would you consider an **exercise in exegesis**? Without receiving any more details, would you please read the following Bible sections carefully, while attempting to **guess** what change they might have wrought in my own outlook? Please read them directly from your Greek versions, without consulting the commentaries and without the “benefit” (?) of English translations—ancient or modern. I myself am not educated in Greek but the Lord has enabled me to acquire skills in “concordance surfing”, which allow me to tell whether or not translators have followed the texts. Interlinear Greek/English versions, and the extremely literal translations by such scholars as Drs. Young, Rotherham, and others have likewise been of help. If you do not have the time to use an interlinear Bible, any English translation of your choice can be used, if you remember that the verse may have been “tweaked” somewhat by translators. Remember that each is a “free-standing” passage and does not need to be set aside or challenged by “other passages” that supposedly teach some “other doctrine”. Those “other passages”, seeming to conflict with the texts given here, contain historic mistranslations of key Greek terms. One should not “bend” clear Bible texts to make them fit with mistranslations of other Bible sections, as you well know. Here are the verses themselves: John 1:29; John 1:6-9; John 12:32; Acts 3:20-21; Romans 5:15, 16, 18, and 19; Romans 8:19-23; Romans 11:32 and 36; Romans 14:11; I Corinthians 15:20-28

coupled with I Corinthians 12:3; II Corinthians 5:14-21; Ephesians 1:10; Ephesians 4:5-10; Philippians 2:10-11, Colossians 1:20; I Timothy 2:3-6; I Timothy 4:9-11; II Timothy 1:10-11; Titus 2:11; I Peter 4:6; II Peter 3:9; Hebrews 2:8-9; Hebrews 2:14-15; I John 2:2; and many others. There are numerous additional passages devoted to this same issue, but these are quite possibly the most complete, forthright, and direct. There are also numerous Old Testament references lending support. The Bible verses used to “down pedal”, refute, “revise”, or “put into context” the above sections are quite correct in the Greek but have been mistranslated in almost all English versions. What do they **seem** to teach? If they **seem to teach** it, in the light of **II Timothy 3:16 should we not accept it**, even if it goes slap-counter to our orthodox traditions?

You may write, if you wish, telling me what change you think Howe has made public since 2000, a change that was made by many more famous believers historically—G. Campbell Morgan, William Barclay, Hannah Withall Smith, and Hannah Hurnard, for example. After you write back, I will reply, letting you know if you discerned this unusual path I have followed. There is no need to state your position on this theme, unless you so desire. I am interested always in hearing the arguments of those who oppose or support this view. Please let me know if you would like to receive (1) some diskettes of 68 short Howe essays authored from 2000 February onward, and/or (2) a copy for your personal library and/or for the seminary—free of charge—of an evangelical Christian book covering the subject more extensively. There are several recently published books by believers who favor this subject. If you request either or both of the above items, I will not assume that this indicates you are siding with me.

If I do not hear back from you in some weeks, I will “spill the beans” by writing you another memo—not to harass but simply to let you know the answer to the above question which is: “what did Howe find in the Bible that most good evangelical/fundamentalist preachers systematically ignore or reject?” Feel free to inform anyone of my change, by the way—I want old friends and others to appreciate my “mutation”, its **Biblical** underpinnings, and the great **joy** it has brought to me. If you are too busy or if you are **deeply uninterested** at present, no need to reply. I will respect your desire to remain **incommunicado** and will send the follow-up letter for your files. Keep these verses handy, however, because there may come a time in your life when you adopt them personally.

I love and respect all believers, no matter what stand they take on this question. I have changed in no other way (still a creationist, etc. etc.) but am, of course, somewhat **older!** Because this matter is so intensely controversial, I enjoy discussing it **in print**, allowing people to evaluate it slowly, under no pressure. The wonderful God loves us through Christ whether we are right or wrong on each particular Bible theme. Sincerely and gratefully, George F. Howe, 24635 Apple St., Newhall, CA 91321-2614.

The Follow up Letter to People Who Didn't Answer the Original Letter

This is a letter that was sent several weeks after old friends of mine had received an “Exposure Letter.” These were all Christians who did not realize I had converted from the eternal torment view to the ultimate reconciliation concept. If they did not answer, then I sent this letter as a follow up. The “game” I asked them to play was to attempt to guess what new idea George Howe had adopted because of many Bible passages—verses that I listed for their study in the first letter. Very few individuals answered this follow-up letter but nonetheless the mission of letting my friends know about the Bible basis for believing in the ultimate reconciliation of all was accomplished. **Here is that second letter, the follow up:**

Some weeks ago, I mailed you a list of 16 Bible passages, which have prompted a paradigm shift on my part. I promised that I would write another memo letting you know the impact of these passages. This modification in belief came only from the Bible—it did not arise on the basis of wistful thinking, philosophy, or personal motives. It began in 1985, but did not congeal and culminate until 2000. It is a change from Augustine's concepts to the views of Gregory of Nyssa and Gregory Nazianzus a faithful and valiant early believer who were, like Augustine, “Nicene Fathers.”

All 16 scripture sections you received could be explored profitably because each carries this neglected message. But since time is limited, it will suffice to summarize just one Bible portion: Romans 5:15-19. Here Paul wrote that “**the many**” (which means “**all people**”) died by one offence (Adam's transgression). Then Paul also stated that the grace of God and the grace gift of Jesus Christ “superabound” **unto the “many” (all humans, once again)**—Paul's logic and flow of thought here are absolutely clear in verse 15, making it obvious that every last person will finally receive the gift of grace; it will superabound to each one!

Verse 18 says that through **one offence** adverse judgment came into all mankind—a truth that we recognize. But verse 18 also relates that through **one righteous act**, life's justification enters **all people**—a corresponding truth that needs to be embraced by evangelicals. This is Pauline, Biblical Universalism.

In verse 19 “the many” (all humans except Christ) became sinners through the disobedience of “the one man” (obviously Adam). But then right in verse 19 Paul further asserted that “the many” (every last person) is to be constituted just through the obedience of “**the one**” (Jesus Christ). These sacred portions and many others show that current teaching in both protestant and catholic churches about an “everlasting hell” (or at least an everlasting **separation** of dead lost people from God) is incorrect. If **all** Scripture is God-breathed, then God's punishment of those who die in a lost condition does **not** last “forever”.

There are some statements in English Bibles, however, that appear to support never-ending punishment for those who die outside of Christ's faith. But the same verses in Greek speak of an "age-enduring" chastening (check Young's Literal Bible or Rotherham's Emphasized Bible). These verses have been mistranslated and so has every mention of the English word "hell" in the whole Bible. There is no one Greek word or group of words corresponding to the awful concept of the word "hell" as it has evolved in the English language. I invite further correspondence on Romans 5:15-19, should you so desire. Whole books on this specific topic exist. May the Lord continue to bless you as you patiently serve Him. I love and respect all believers, even those who remain at odds with me on this subject and I remain your friend,

George F. Howe.

A Letter of Sympathy to Someone who Has Lost an Unsaved Friend or Loved One

The objective in such a letter as this is to show how the Bible verses demonstrating the Ultimate Reconciliation of a

Il people (TURA) can be of great help. The teaching of Biblical universalism can be made plain without getting into any polemics—a letter like this is not a didactic treatise on the subject nor is it an invitation to debate. We want to inform grieving relatives that God has a beautiful plan for all people whom He created and that this plan will work eternal good, even for those who die outside of Christ. It has to be brief because they have already waded through many cards attempting to console them. It has to get their attention quickly as an item of real help.

Feel free to use the following letter, revise it, or prepare your own letter of condolence. Many evangelical believers are unable to give real comfort to people whose unbelieving loved ones die because the typical evangelical imagines that the individual who passed away has gone straight to hell and will remain there forever. This is unfortunate because nowhere in the Greek or Hebrew of the Bible is there any word that carries the erroneous baggage associated with our English word “hell”. There is no Bible verse that condemns those who die outside of Christ to undergo judgment or chastisement forever.

Some people attempt to comfort grieving relatives by saying “Maybe he/she put faith in Christ during the last seconds they were alive” or “God is a God of love and mercy—we don’t understand all that He does, so we will commit this one to Him”. Committing all to God is a good idea, incidentally, but it is too vague and does not give much consolation to the grieving individual who imagines that lost dead people are immediately engulfed in everlasting hell fire or, at least, are being forever banished from God. People need to know the great promises of God in the Bible concerning the time when God will become “all in all” (I Corinthians 15:28). They need to realize the fact that all those who have fallen into sin will be ultimately made just—Romans 5:18. So, here is an attempt to give a positive approach to reconciliation, while at the same time comforting them in their loss:

I am saddened to learn that ... passed away! I went through a similar experience some time ago. It is comforting to know at times like these, that our God has a joyful plan for **all** people after they die; that’s right—it **is** joyful and it is for **all people!** We all know that God has great plans ahead for those who have expressed faith in Christ. But I have discovered over the years that most believers in Christ do not understand the words of Jesus, Paul, Peter, John, James, and others in the Bible telling us that God is the “Savior of the **world**”. Let me explain this briefly and perhaps sometime you can help others too.

God has a joyous and **ultimate** plan to embrace **all people** by way of Christ’s great work on the cross! The Bible passages covering this are just as much to be trusted as those showing that people who believe in Christ are saved right now! Remember “**all** scripture is inspired of God...” (II Timothy 3:16.)

God has told us that He is going to give resurrection life eventually to **everyone**—to each group in God’s own timing. “The man Christ Jesus . . .gave Himself as a ransom for all men [**all human beings**], to be testified **in due time**” (I Timothy 2:6). This verse shows that all people will finally experience Christ’s redemption: different ones being redeemed at different times. Paul also revealed in I Corinthians 15: 22-28 that while **all** people are dying, in Adam, “. . .so in Christ shall **ALL** be made alive—yet each in his own class”. Christ was the “firstfruits” of resurrection, then those that are believing are raised at his coming (His “presence”). Then in the end (consummation), all others embrace loving subjection to Christ, so that when time is finished, God will become all in all (verse 28 of I Corinthians chapter 15). The only valid Biblical conclusion is that God through Christ will somehow bring every dead human being into this same resurrection life.

Christ Himself is the firstfruits (verses 20 and 23 of I Corinthians 15). The people in the second group to be raised are “Christ’s own” or as Paul puts it: “they who belong to Him.” They are a group of people who will be raised “when He comes. . .” in the “rapture.” Then in verses 24-28 of I Corinthians Paul discusses a third group, which includes all those others who were not in group one or group two. Paul implied that this last group would be made alive, after the last enemy (death) is destroyed—verse 26.

All death (including the “second death”) is going to be destroyed or “rendered powerless”. Death is not eternal. This may be what Paul had in mind when he told us that “God. . .is the savior of ALL PEOPLE, especially of those who believe” in I Timothy 4:10. Since God is the “**Savior** of all people”, then surely He is going to **save** everyone! “He purposed within Himself, when the times have reached fulfillment, to head up all in Christ—both in the heavens and on the earth in Him” Ephesians 1:10. Christ Himself said that “If I am lifted up from the earth [in reference to His death on the cross], I will be drawing **all** people unto myself” John 12:32. When Christ said that He will be drawing all people to Himself, He meant that His death would ultimately ransom and restore everyone (see I John 2:2).

Philippians 2:10-11 tells us in addition, that someday every knee will bow (in humble worship) to God and someday every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. From other Bible verses it is clear that this “bowing of the knee” is a future act of humble, Spirit-filled worship. All these people who will ultimately be confessing that Jesus is Lord possess God’s Spirit because, “. . .no man can say that Jesus is Lord but by the Holy Spirit” I Corinthians 12:3. Philippians 2:10-11 and other passages describe a joyful worship, which will involve the entire heavens, all earth, and all people who were “under the earth”. This is the same moment to which Paul had reference in I Corinthians 15:28 when he wrote that eventually, “God [will] become ALL IN ALL” when the “end” or “consummation” of the ages comes. Please also study Romans 5:15-19—verses which show that justification by Christ is going to be every bit as “universal”

as was the death brought to all mankind by Adam's sin. In fact, wherever death came, the Grace of God and the Grace gift of our Lord Jesus Christ will "**superabound**" (verse 15). These are not just my words of encouragement—they are God's Word and they cover all people.

There is much more to be said about many issues including God's wise, balanced, and corrective judgment at the Great White Throne and His cleansing lake of divine fire, which is also called "the second death". His judgments will all occur, as the Bible says. But the "second death" (Revelation 21:14) is simply that, a death—and all death is to be swallowed up in Christ's great victory on the cross (I Corinthians 15:54-57)—a VICTORY that is total and complete!

I have been praying for you ever since I heard about your loss. I trust these comments about Christ's great work and God comprehensive plan will be of **encouragement** and comfort to you. If you disagree with these interpretations, no problem—I live at **peace** with all believers in Jesus, no matter what views they hold on God's future plans for people. Please keep in touch with me and stop by for a visit. I have cherished your friendship over the years and want it to continue.

May the Good, Merciful, Loving Lord bless you and "yours" at this time.

What do you think of sending a letter like this? If you want more information about TURA along with this, please write:

TURA, 24635 Apple Street, Newhall, CA 91321-2614.

www.restoreallthings.org/gpage.html6.html

www.greenwood.net/~cdevans/srindex.htm or www.reconciliationbiblesongs.org.

Luke 9:25 Not “Eternal” Loss

In Luke 9:25 and elsewhere in that chapter, Christ was not referring to “eternal” loss. The word we often translate “eternal”, for better or for worse (aiōnion), is not even present. In verse 25 where Christ said that the selfish person will “...lose or forfeit his own self” (NIV) the word “or” (ē) is used between apolesas (lose) and zēmoiōeis (forfeit), showing that Christ used these two words synonymously in this passage. Thus Christ was not telling Judas, for example, that his selfishness was going to cost him loss of eternal life while concurrently telling Peter that he would face a less severe fate (zēmoiōeis). Instead, Christ used both words in conjunction to tell all who were listening (elect and non-elect) that whatever time is spent selfishly in this life will be lost—time for which we might have received reward. It is clear from II John verse 8 that even apollumi (lose) sometimes involves a mild loss, like simply a loss of reward (“...that you do not LOSE what you have worked for” (NIV). georgefhowe@sbcglobal.net
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Will Judgment “Bring in” Victory or Will Judgment “Be Cast out for” Victory? Matthew 12:20

The King James Version makes the last portion of this fascinating verse read: “...till He **send forth** judgment into victory.” The New American Standard Bible has “...until he **leads** justice to victory,” which is the same as the NIV rendering. Most English translations are thus at variance with the Concordant Version, which has “...till He should be ever **casting out** judging for victory.” Who did the most trustworthy job of translating the Greek word *ekballō* here: all the English translations which convey the idea that Christ leads or brings justice into victory or the Concordant Translation which makes it sound as if Christ actually “casts out” judging to introduce a complete victory?

The word *ekballō* in the NIV has been translated various ways which are listed here with the number of times it was translated that way following each word: “drive out” (20), “drove out” (5), “take out” (3), “threw out” (3), “thrown (3), “get rid of” (2), “remove from” (2), “send out” (2), “threw out” (2), and “driven” (2). *Ekballō* was rendered just one time with each for these words: “brings out,” “brought out,” “dragged,” “drive,” “drives out,” “expelled,” “exclude,” “leads out,” “pluck out,” “put out,” “puts out,” “put outside,” “reject,” “sent,” “sent away,” “take out of,” “throw,” “throw outside,” “throwing,” and “took out.” Note that in every other case except Matthew 12:20 the word the translators chose for *ekballō* carried the idea of **absolutely getting rid of** or **throwing away**—only in Matthew 12:20 did they use “leads.” It was translated “leads” only once in 81 passages in the NIV. We do not know why translators chose one English term or another in Bible translation to render a particular word. It is **very curious**, however, that **only here** they rejected the usual “driving out” concept for *ekballō* and substituted a word with an entirely different meaning.

There are about nine other Greek words that actually mean “leading” or “causing to remove to an intended goal,” but Christ used none of these. Instead Matthew 12:20 fits with the view that “judgment” will have completed its work and will be forever **cast out** so that Christ will have a totally **complete** victory! *An* is a little Greek word that is not easily translated. The CV translators rendered it “forever,” which cannot be verified in the NIV Concordance.

Nevertheless, Matthew 12:20 conforms to the “consummation” described in I Corinthians 15:28 wherein God will become “all in all” and it also fits with I Corinthians 15:54 where Paul repeated the Old Testament comment: “Death has been swallowed up in **victory**.” TURA (The Ultimate Reconciliation of All), 24635 Apple Street, Newhall, CA 91321-2614.

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“Many” and “the Many” Often Mean “All” in Scripture

In Matthew 20:28 Christ said that He came to give His life as a “ransom (*lutron*) for many”. His words can be understood in the context of I Timothy 2:6 where the very similar Greek word *antilutron* (ransom) is used in saying that Christ gave Himself as a ransom for **all**. The “all” who are ransomed in I Timothy 2:6 must be the same as the “many” of Matthew 20:28.

In Romans 5:19 Paul wrote that through the obedience of the “one” (meaning Christ) the **many** will be made just. The “many” who are justified by The One (Jesus Christ) are the same as the “many” who became sinners by the previous disobedience of the alternate “one”, who is obviously Adam. Any hesitancy over this interpretation of “many” in verse 19 is removed in verse 18 where the “all” who come into life’s justification through one righteous act are the same as the “all” who had already come under adverse judgment [condemnation] through the one offence. All face condemnation through Adam’s offence [disobedience] and all are ultimately going to be justified by the righteous act [obedience] of the other “one”, Jesus Christ. It would have been difficult for Paul to have expressed ultimate universal salvation in any plainer terms!

“By His knowledge my righteous Servant shall justify **many**” (Isaiah 53:11) is an Old Testament passage that also means Christ will justify all people. People who are now receiving faith in Jesus Christ are the “firstfruit” of James 1:18. Believers should be admonished that “many” and “all” refer not only to the Church and to Old Testament believers but to all humanity. In Acts 11:17b when Peter had learned that God’s plan included Gentiles too, Peter said: “Who was I to think that I could oppose God?” When we learn that God intends ultimately to save all people, may we respond the same way!

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One-Liners or TURA Swifties (Biblical Ones!)

A humorous joke that consists of only one sentence is called a “Tom Swifty.” Here are a few Tom Swifty one-liners about total reconciliation:

It is God’s **will, not just his desire**, that all people repent (II Peter 3:9).

Jesus came into the world to “**save**” sinners—**not just to offer salvation to them** (I Timothy 1:15).

Be kind to fellow Christians who hold to eternal punishment for lost souls: many of us once held that harsh theory too.

John did **not** say “Behold the Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of only those who believe in Him before they die. John 1:19?”

Jesus promised “...I will draw **all people** unto Myself” [not “just **the elect**”] (John 12:32).

Is it O.K. by you that God is omniloving (I John chapter 4, Psalm 145:8-9, and Matthew 20:14-15) and that He has compassion on all He has made?

What in the **world** did Paul mean by writing that “...the living God is the Savior of **all** human beings...” (I Timothy 4:10-11)?

Did God ever say, “I no longer redeem people after they die?” (I Peter 4:6 and I Peter 3:19).

Find the word “hell” in any Greek or Hebrew dictionary.

Did the Son of Man say that He came to seek and to save **some** of the lost in Luke 19:10?

Find one Bible passage condemning all who die outside Christ to everlasting banishment from God.

There is **no** salvation outside of Christ but there will be complete reconciliation for **all** in Christ—Colossians 1:20.

When speaking about condemnation, the Lord said, “**judgment**” is mine” (Romans 12:19), He did not say “eternal torment” is mine!

Write some Biblical Universal Tom Swifties of your own!

Peter and the Jewish Christians Responded Cheerfully to Necessary Changes

God performed a great work in getting Peter to meet with Cornelius the Centurion at Caesarea, where Peter witnessed to Cornelius—Acts 10:1-11:15. Later Peter had to defend his meeting with this gentile before critical Jewish believers at Jerusalem. He told them how the Holy Spirit had fallen on all those gentiles who heard his testimony, much to Peter's own amazement. Peter responded to this shocking development that God was saving Gentiles by saying: **"...who was I to think that I could hinder God?"**

The believers, who were at first critical of Peter for eating and fellowshiping with uncircumcised people, finally praised God and said: **"...then God also gave to the nations repentance unto life!"** Acts 11:18. With this peaceful acknowledgment the believers had undergone a monumental shift in theology without rancor or rebellion. The Bible describes the reverent attitude of these Jewish Christians to Peter's report in these words: **"when they heard this, they kept silent..." (11:18).**

Believers in the gospel of Christ ought to manifest a similar reverent and submissive attitude to Paul's words in Romans 5:18 and many other verses dealing with God's universal plan: **"Therefore as through one offense, adverse judgment into all humans; so also through one righteous act—life's justification into all humans."** Modern disciples should change their theology of "eternal torment for lost people" by recognizing that God plans to reconcile all people (Colossians 1:20) and someday those dead lost people will become **"...all in all" with God** I Corinthians 15:28. Show respect for God's Word by **"keeping silent and glorifying God..."** (Acts 11:18), like the Jewish believers did upon facing revolutionary theological news in their own day. TURA (The Ultimate Reconciliation of All), 24635 Apple Street, Newhall, CA 91321-2614. www.restoreallthings.org/gpage.html6.html or www.greenwood.net/~cdevans/srindex.htm. georgefhowe@sbcglobal.net. www.reconciliationbiblesongs.org.

What Gives God Pleasure Now and Later?

Ezekiel wrote that God takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked (Ezekiel 11:33) but that He does experience pleasure when such people turn from their evil ways and live. Will God change in the age to come, so that He will finally find pleasure having wicked dead people separated from Him and tormented forever? It says in Hebrews 13:8 that Jesus Christ, God's Son, is the same yesterday, today, and for the ages. This means that God's attitude and outlook never changes.

If God gets no satisfaction from the death of wicked people now and if He will get none later either, will He punish them forever anyway, and thereby remain permanently unsatisfied? Isaiah said that after Christ undergoes "the suffering of His soul, He will see the light of life and **be satisfied**" Isaiah 53:11. We know that God takes no pleasure even in the **death** of the wicked. We also know that God never changes. He would not find pleasure in seeing billions of people **tormented endlessly** after they die. His satisfaction will instead involve their all being changed and becoming one with Him, as other Bible verses promise, including Colossians 1:20 and I Corinthians 15:28.

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Some Prophecies of Reconciliation Came from Strange Sources

Some Biblical hints of universal reconciliation came from unlikely sources. Caiaphas, for example, was a Jewish high priest who uttered a startling forecast about the significance of Jesus' death while he was speaking to the entire Sanhedrin in Jerusalem. Various members of this ruling group were hesitating about how to deal with Jesus and Caiaphas blurted out, "You know nothing at all! You do not realize that it is better for one man to die for the people than for the whole nation to perish!" The Bible explains that Caiaphas did not say this by his own knowledge but "as high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the Jewish nation, and not for that nation only, but for the scattered children of God, to bring them together and make them one" (John 11:49-52)—an amazingly inclusive statement, likely referring to all people! Caiaphas evidently meant something very different than what the prophecy actually announced.

Besides this Jewish high priest, there are other serendipitous sources for Biblical prophecies concerning total reconciliation. The newly converted men of Samaria expressed a complete understanding of global salvation when they pronounced that Christ was "...the Savior of the world (*kosmou*)" John 4:42. This rather deep Bible truth was communicated clearly to these men who, a few moments earlier, had no knowledge of Christ's gospel whatsoever and came to hear Him at the prompting of the woman at the well.

Joab sent a woman of Tekoa to David to plead with him for the restoration of the king's wayward son, Absalom. Encouraging David to relent and accept Absalom back, the lady said to David: "Yet doeth God devise means that His banished be not expelled from Him" II Samuel 14:14. One is reminded of Luke 10:21 where Jesus commented that God had "...hid these things from the wise and prudent and revealed them unto babes..." TURA (The Ultimate Reconciliation of All), 24635 Apple Street, Newhall, CA 91321-2614.
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Does Christ Give or Receive Gifts in Ephesians 4:8 and in Psalm 68:18?

Paul quoted David saying that Christ "...**gave** gifts unto men" (Ephesians 4:8) when He ascended on High. All translations agree that Christ was giving the gifts—none of them indicate that He was receiving gifts. Psalm 68:18 is the passage Paul was quoting in Ephesians 4:8, and all of the common English versions, except the King James and the Concordant, say in Psalms 68:18 that He "...**received** gifts from men". Translators gave the meaning of "received" to the Hebrew word *laqah* which means "to take" or "receive" "...only in the widest variety of applications" (Strong's Hebrew and Chaldee Dictionary). Instead, *laqah* can mean "brought", which would have made Psalm 68:18 read "...He brought gifts for men." This is similar to the manner in which *laqah* was handled in Genesis 15:10 where it is said that Abraham "brought" (*laqah*) sacrificial animals to the Lord (NIV). *Laqah* is in fact translated to mean either "bring" or "brought" on 40 different occasions in the NIV and might have been so translated in Psalm 68:18. If so, a needless NIV conflict between the account of David and that of Paul would have been avoided.

David reported that the Lord **brought** the gifts even to rebellious people, so that He might then dwell among them. For the Lord to "receive" gifts from rebellious people would make no sense. Furthermore, God's giving of gifts to rebellious people is a solid testimony to ultimate reconciliation of such folks!

In a cryptic fashion, Psalm 68:18 and many other Old Testament passages point to the reconciliation of all. Throughout the New Testament the gifts conferred by the glorified Christ upon all people are shown to include reconciliation, redemption, propitiation, ransom, and ultimate salvation. Ephesians 4:7 shows that Christ gives gifts to believers now: "But to each of us is given grace, according to the measure of the gift of Christ." TURA (The Ultimate Reconciliation of All), 24635 Apple Street, Newhall, CA 91321-2614.

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Are All People Slated to Be Ransomed, Released, Redeemed, and Delivered?

Many words in New Testament Greek designate aspects of the work that God will accomplish for people through the death and resurrection of Christ, His Son—the Second Person of the Trinity. Some of these are translated “ransom,” “release,” “redemption,” and “deliverance.” In certain passages they apply to people who have believed in Christ before their death—God’s elect or “first fruits.” In a few cases, the words refer to God’s chosen people, Israel. There are other sections, however, where these special words appear to have a broader application involving all people.

Their meanings can be studied in concordances like the NIV Concordance authored by Goodrich and Kohlenberger (GK). The key English terms chosen by the concordance will be given for each word. In transliterated Greek words, the Greek letter omega is represented by ω while the letter o stands for omicron.

Antilutron is a noun defined by GK as the **purchase price** required for the redemption or ransom of someone. *Antilutron* is found only one place in scripture (I Timothy 2:6) where the one Mediator is said to have given Himself a **ransom for all**, “...to be testified in due time.” The **price** for salvation has already been paid for all people but the **process** occurs in different stages and is thus testified “in due time”, as Paul said here.

Anti in Greek generally means “in exchange for” or “in place of” (GK). *Lutron* is a noun referring to a loosener or one who loosens. *Lutron* and all the other Greek words in this essay relate back to *luō*, a word which means to loosen, release, or untie. So Christ was the one who substituted Himself in exchange for all others whom He loosened and set free. Christ was the one who sacrificed himself as a loosener in exchange for all (I Timothy 2:6), something which will be complete in due time. Will people who die without faith in Christ have a ransom? Yes—Christ stood “in their place” and loosened them too. All scripture is “God-breathed” so I Timothy 2:6 must be believed as it has been written, and not rejected, revised, or reinterpreted to make it fit with alternative orthodox ideology.

Lutron is a noun, occurring twice in scripture where it was translated “ransom” by NIV scholars. It was used by Christ referring to his having come to serve, and to “give His life a ransom for many” Matthew 20:28 and Mark 10:45. In saying that He gave His life as the ransom (*lutron*) for “many,” Christ was simply saying “for all” in a slightly different way. In Romans 5:18 Paul made it very clear that Christ’s “act of righteousness” brings life’s justification “into **all** people.” And then in Romans 5:19 Paul said that Christ’s “obedience” causes “**the many**” to become just, Paul showed us that “the many” means “all”. Christ is “the **One**” and **all other people** are “the many.”

Isaiah used a similar statement in Isaiah 53:6 saying that God laid the iniquity of **all** upon the suffering Servant [Jesus]. And then in Isaiah 53:11 Isaiah added that God “will justify **many** and will bear **their iniquities**.” Again “many” is shown to denote all. Christ is the “ransom” or “purchase price” [*lutron*] for them all.

Lutrōsis is a word similar to *lutron* and it means “redemption,” “ransoming,” “loosening” or “releasing” (GK). It is found three times in the Bible. In Luke 1:68 Zacharias said that Christ, the Lord, “has come and redeemed His people”, referring to faithful Israelites. In Anna’s sermon, *lutrōsis* refers to Jerusalem where she “spoke about the child [Christ] to all who were looking forward to the redemption [*lutrōsis* or setting free] of Jerusalem.” In Hebrews 9:12 *lutrōsis* designates the “age-abiding” redemption that Christ has achieved for Christian believers.

Apolutrōsis is a companion word of *lutrōsis*, showing up 10 times in scripture. The NIV has it translated 8 times as “redemption,” once as “ransom,” and once as “released.” “Deliverance” is the manner in which the Concordant Version (CV) scholars have consistently rendered it, which makes good sense. *Lytrōsis* is redemption and *apo* means “from”. “Redemption **from**” something is obviously a “**deliverance**.”

In certain passages *apolutrōsis* deals with redemption from the bondage of corruption, which our physical bodies face. Christ will accomplish the bodily “deliverance” [*apolutrōsis*]—Romans 8:23—by means of the same power that makes it possible for Him to bring “the all” under His control (Philippians 3:20-21.) In some other verses, this word *apolutrōsis* signifies spiritual deliverance for those who believe in Christ in this life. Of particular interest, however, is the use of *apolutrōsis* in Romans 3:24. Concerning the same “**all**” who **sinned** and came short of the glory of God in Romans 3:23, Paul wrote that **they** are “being justified freely through the redemption [*apolutrōsis*] that is in Christ Jesus.” Thus all who **sinned** [all humanity] will be redeemed or **delivered from spiritual bondage!**

Lutroo is a verb used three times in the Bible. It was translated “redeem” or “redeemed” in the NIV. Once *lutroō* spoke of Israel—a people who “had hoped that He [Christ] was the one to redeem [*lutroō*] Israel (Luke 24:21.) Once it referred to believers—Christ “gave Himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness...” (Titus 2:14.) I Peter 1:19 shows that this act of redeeming comes **only by way of the precious blood of Jesus**, as of a lamb—without blemish or spot.

Contrary to the beliefs of some non-biblical universalists, this redeeming is quite necessary and is accomplished **only by the blood** of Christ. Redeeming is properly referred to as the “**vicarious atonement**.” There is no other god except the God of the Bible and no one comes to God except through the Lord Jesus Christ, His Eternal Son. Through death itself, wise judgment after death, and corrective discipline, all people ultimately turn to faith in the shed blood of Christ—John 11:52 and 12:32. There is really **no “need”** for any alternative means of salvation after death because Christ ultimately becomes the savior of all mankind, **in His own way and in His own time**.

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Christ Loves, Rebukes, and Disciplines Lost People Too

Christ stated that: “Those whom I love I rebuke [*elegcho*] and discipline [*paideuo*]” Revelation 3:19, NIV. This “rebuking” [*elegcho*] appears to apply to non-believers as well as to Christians, for several reasons. The last part of Revelation 3:19 directs those who are thus exposed and disciplined to “repent.” True believers have already repented when they were drawn to Christ. But repentance is an ongoing practice so the repenting here may refer to both Christians and to non-Christians. The following verse (Revelation 3:20) contains the classic invitation for lost individuals to let the Lord Jesus into the door. Surely true believers have already opened that door and this too suggests that verses 19 and 20 are directed to lost people.

God has revealed that He does love individuals who are outside of Christ—“for God so loved the world...” John 3:16. In John 3:20 Christ said that those whose works are evil reject the “light” because they fear having their deeds “exposed.” If an unbeliever comes into a Christian meeting and hears gospel preaching in his own language (I Corinthians 14:24), he will be “exposed” (same word). The exposing and rebuking are marks of God’s love and they apply to lost people as well as believers. By way of His unchanging and disciplinary love, God draws all people unto Himself. TURA (The Ultimate Reconciliation of All), 24635 Apple Street, Newhall, CA 91321-2614.

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What Did God Mean in Revelation 3:9 by Twice Saying: “I Will Make the People of Satan’s Synagogue Worship at the Feet of Believers”?

Most English Bible versions say in Revelation 3:9 that God will “make” or “be making” certain people worship at the feet of the Philadelphian Church. This common rendering makes it sound as if God is sternly forcing unrepentant and rebellious individuals to admit grudgingly that the believers were right: “I will **make** those who are of the synagogue of Satan...I will **make** them come and fall down at your feet and acknowledge that I have loved you” Revelation 3:9 NIV. This would also fit with the interpretation some folk give to Philippians 2:10-11, where they assume that God is going to force hardened sinners to bow their knees and confess unwillingly that “Jesus Christ is Lord...”

The true meanings of *didomi* (I will make), and *poieo* (the second “I will make”) from Revelation 3:9 must be examined. *Didomi* often is translated “give,” “grant,” or “arrange”, all of which carry a different concept than “forcing.”

Poieo is a multi-faceted Greek word, as the work of the translators shows. In the NIV it was rendered “make” or “made” 61 times. Should this carry the idea of forcing, as “he made me do it”? Or does *poieo* show that God will “make” in the sense of “produce” a worshipful result?

In Matthew 4:19 this word was used by Christ in telling His disciples, “I will **make** you fishers of men.” Here *poieo* was no indicator of forced action but showed that Christ was going to **change** them so they could accomplish a new line of work. If *poieo* likewise means change in Revelation 3:9 then the verse says that Christ is simply going to **convert** these lost sinners so they will worship Christ at the feet of the Church. The words most regularly used in the NIV to translate *poieo*, and its various verb forms, are “do” and “doing”, neither of which carries any idea of “forcing.” Some of the other renderings of this word include positive or neutral, terms like “performed,” “produced,” “appointed,” and “put into practice.”

Another positive and non-forced use of *poieo* occurs just three verses away in Revelation 3:12 —“Him who overcomes I will **make** a pillar in the temple of my God” NIV. Thus *poieo* in Revelation 3:9 also describes a very positive act, brought about by the One who changes and remakes human hearts. It is not a grumbling worship extracted from unrepentant sinners. Thus sinful liars who had plagued the Philadelphian Church will be transformed into saints who bow down willingly before God at the feet of the Church. They will openly acknowledge that the ones they previously hated are the elect of God and they will all worship God together. Paul’s reconciliation hymn in Philippians 2:10-11 also describes sincere, heart-felt worship by every last person who ever lived: “that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, **to the glory of God the Father.**” TURA (The Ultimate Reconciliation of All), 24635 Apple Street, Newhall, CA 91321-2614. www.restoreallthings.org/gpage.html6.html or www.greenwood.net/~cdevans/srindex.htm.

**Do People “Get Saved” because they are “Calling on the Name of the Lord” or Do They
“Call on the Name of the Lord” because They are Getting Saved?**

Romans 10:13 and Joel 2:32a.

Is it “free will” or “election” that prompts our turning to God? An answer can be found in the Old Testament verse Paul quoted as Romans 10:13—Joel 2:23a. Joel was describing a general, worldwide turning to God in which “...whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall *be delivered*” KJV. “Be delivered” is “be saved” in the NIV of Joel 32a. In the futurist view of eschatology, these words refer to people who are to be saved from tribulation during the Day of the Lord. When the apostle Paul quoted this phrase in Romans 10:13, he applied it to the personal salvation of Jews and Gentiles—see Romans 10:9-13. He affirmed that such general salvation involves a simple calling on God through Jesus Christ. But in both passages the key question remains: are people saved because they called on God’s name or do they call on Him because He is in the process of saving them?

Joel mentioned the people who called on the name of the Lord and he identified them as having been “...the survivors **whom the Lord calls**” Joel 2:32b—NIV and NASB. The answer is simple: the ones who called on God’s name are the very same individuals whom the Lord called to salvation!

In Ephesians 2:8 Paul told believers that neither the grace supplied to them nor the faith expressed by them were of themselves “...and that *not of yourselves*: it is the gift of God” (KJV). By whose faith did Paul live his newfound life—his own faith or the faith of Christ? Answer this question by looking at Galatians 2:20 “...and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by **the faith of the Son of God...**” (KJV).

According to both Joel and Paul, salvation did not involve a leap of faith on our own part but came by an irresistible call of God to us. Faith came not from “inside out” but was transplanted into us from “outside in.”

There will be an ultimate reconciliation so that “...God may be all in all”—I Corinthians 15:28—KJV. Evidently this same reconciliation event is being discussed in Philippians 2:10-11 where Alfred Marshall has changed “**at**” to “**in**” “...that **in** the name of Jesus every knee should bow...” Do all these knees joyfully bow and does every tongue acclaim that Jesus Christ is Lord because each will exercise some innate free will? The Bible implies otherwise—that they will do this by the Holy Spirit because “...no one can say ‘Jesus is Lord,’ except by the Holy Spirit” I Corinthians 12:3b—NIV. No one gets saved by a choice based on their personal “free will.”

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A “Special Salvation” and the “Salvation of All” in I Timothy 4:9-11

I Timothy 4:9-11. *Faithful is the word and worthy of all acceptance—for therefore we both toil and suffer reproach, because we rely on the living God, who is the Savior of **all** human beings, especially of believers. These [truths] be **commanding and teaching**. At the very **start**, Paul said the words about to be written were **trustworthy** and **deserving of widespread acceptance**. These words were not written to be opposed, doubted, revised, whispered, or obscured. Like all scripture, they are “God breathed”(II Timothy 3:16). These words do not mean something different than what they really say!*

Paul told Timothy that teaching these very words (I Timothy 4:10-11) had required great personal effort on his part and had led to his suffering defamation: “...therefore we both **labor** and **suffer reproach**”. It is possible that those who now teach these words will be defamed as being in error or even as “heretics”. Paul had worked hard and had endured major reproach for telling people what he is just about to say—that God is the Savior of **everybody**. If God is the “Savior of all humans”, then all people of all time will ultimately be saved. Some believers are not ready to **command** and **teach** this salvation of all, as Paul told Timothy to do, but each believer can **accept** I Timothy 4:9-11 and personally **live** in the great joy it supplies. Some must simply ponder this truth in their hearts, as Mary once did until New Testament writers conveyed some of the truths she had known for a long time. In this Timothy passage Paul makes it clear that there is a special feature of salvation, uniquely applicable only to believers. But Paul did not suggest that “special salvation” of the believers in any way negates or supplants the ultimate salvation of all other people. God will gather **all** together **in one**, in Christ, “*in the dispensation of the fullness of times*” (Ephesians 1:10). Christ’s becoming a **ransom for all** will be “... **testified in due time**” (I Timothy 2:6). The reconciliation of people who die outside of Christ’s gospel will come after God has wrought wondrous changes in them by His wise judgment, chastening, and pruning—bringing them at last into Christ so that God will finally become “**all in all**” (I Corinthians 15:28). God would not be “all in all” in one single person were forever consigned to “hell”!

At the **end** of these clear statements about God saving all, Paul told Timothy to be commanding (charging) and teaching others about the ultimate reconciliation of all. This means that Timothy was supposed to relate this faithful word about God’s universal salvation to other people and to teach them God’s plan without apology and without reluctance. Timothy doubtlessly obeyed and became a teacher of the good news that God will ultimately accomplish total salvation. Let us command and teach this same good news today, as we are able, despite the major opposition to it in many assemblies of believers. Write to TURA (which stands for the ultimate reconciliation of all), 24635 Apple Street, Newhall, CA, 91321-2614.

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DID YOU KNOW GOD IS GOING TO SAVE YOU?

Did you realize that God saves some folks right now and reconciles all others later, after judgment? The Bible says that “the living God is the Savior of all human beings” I Timothy 4:9-11. God wills **all** people “to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth” I Timothy 2:3-6. Remember that whatever God **wills** is going to happen, because He “works **all** according to the purpose [design] of His **will**” Ephesians 1:11. **But** the Bible also tells us that **all** people have sinned and that the effect of sin is **death**—Romans 6:23. God’s program does not stop with death because the rest of the verse (Romans 6:23) says “but the gift of God is age-enduring life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Romans 3:23 tells us that **all** have sinned and come short of the glory of God, and then Romans 6:24 states that all these same people are “being justified freely by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus” (Romans 3:24)! **All** those who are chosen by God (Ephesians 1:11) are receiving new life now through Jesus Christ (who is the Son of God.) They are called **elect** individuals, and they will not be subject to God’s corrective indignation and chastening (Romans 8:1 and I Thessalonians 5:9-10). Also God’s elect people will not be judged at His great white throne nor will they experience the “second death”, which is God’s cleansing lake of fire—Revelation chapter 20:14. All other people are ultimately saved, so that God finally will become “**all in all**,” after He abolishes death—I Corinthians 15:28. This new life is **altogether** the work of God through Christ and cannot come through any other savior. It cannot be earned by performing good deeds. The good works you do, commendable as they are, cannot bring you into proper relationship with God. Your new life is the result of God’s grace gift, which is the faith of Jesus Christ, expressed inside of you! God freely gives this faith to the elect (see Ephesians 2:8-9), who are then in the position of believing that Jesus is God’s anointed one—the Messiah, Who died and came back from the dead for their sake. **Elect** individuals also receive God’s Holy Spirit Who enables them to begin leading a godly life. Christ never sinned and God made Jesus become sin for us, so that we might be made the righteousness of God in Christ—I Corinthians 5:21. Even if you do not possess faith in Jesus now, keep open to the prospect—you may be one of His Elect, to whom He will give faith on some other occasion before you die. If you are presently not a believer, you should try to **live righteously** anyway because the Bible says that unsaved people will be judged according to their works. The books will be opened; see Revelation 20:11-15. Remember that God’s chastening for unbelievers after death is **stern**. Obey God’s universal laws even if you do not have faith in Christ now. You can discover those laws by studying the Bible. Someday what happens to believers now will happen to all people; they will be made righteous [just] through Christ’s one “righteous act”, which was His death on the cross on behalf of all people—Romans 5:18. If you are a believer in this GOOD NEWS, take time to express your God-given faith in Jesus Christ as your personal Savior. Begin fellowshiping (spending time) with other Bible-believing Christians. Begin letting God change your behavior. Jesus is going to draw all people to Himself either now or later: “And I, if I am lifted up from the earth [put to death on the cross] will be drawing **all** people unto myself” John 12:32—**why not now**? For more information on these topics, write: TURA (The Ultimate Reconciliation of All), 24635 Apple St., Newhall, CA 91321-2614. georgefhowe@sbcglobal.net.

Do Certain Bible Passages Teach that God Stops Saving Once People Die? (II Corinthians 6:2-3, Psalm 69:13, Psalm 32:6, Psalm 49:8, and Isaiah 55:6)

Since the Bible has so much to say about the enduring character of God's great love and His endless mercy, the common idea that He will no longer save people after they die would require absolute scriptural support before it should be believed. But the key Bible passages offered in defense of the idea that God stops saving dead people deal with other issues instead.

In II Corinthians 6:2-3, for example, the phrase "now is **the** acceptable time, now is **the** day of salvation" does not teach that God's willingness to save comes to an end. Most English translations of the Greek wrongly introduce the word "the" at the two points in the passage, as seen above. In his interlinear literal translation of the Greek, Alfred Marshall (1958) put the verse correctly by using the indefinite articles "an" and "a" in these locations: "now is **an** acceptable time, now is **a** day of salvation". Certainly people can be saved "right now", but this verse does not preclude the salvation of other people after they die.

The whole of II Corinthians chapter 6 is speaking about something very different than the possibility of salvation shutting off at death. It is telling us that God's grace was not given "in vain" verse 1, so that when we needed God to listen to us, He listened; when salvation was required, He saved us (verse 2). The emphasis of the word "now" in verse 2 is directed to believers, telling them that they ought to start **now** letting God work out His salvation within them, as they are also told in Romans 5:10 and Philippians 2:12: "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God Who works in you..."

Believers are actually in the process of **becoming** saved, and it is Christ who works in them to minimize offences which would otherwise bring disrepute on Christ's own name and ministry, as carefully explained in verse 3 of II Corinthians 6. If we are actively being saved "now" (verse 2), we will be ready to face adversities such as afflictions, hardships, distress, beatings, imprisonments, tumults, labors, sleeplessness, and hunger (verse 5). And if we are experiencing God's salvation "now", we will begin allowing Christ to build virtues in us such as purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, love, words of truth, the power of God, and the weapons of righteousness (see verses 6-7 and onward). Far from being a text that shows a deadly cut-off time for human salvation, II Corinthians 6:2 is part of an extended discussion of how to live the Christian life!

There are several other Bible passages sometimes employed to demonstrate that people cannot be saved after they die. David wrote concerning God in Psalm 32:6: "...let everyone who is godly pray to you while you may be found." God's deliverance is seen here in the context of imminent judgment. But Psalm 32:6 the phrase translated "...while you may be found" in the NIV evidently does not have the word "you" in Hebrew.

Rotherham's Literal Bible has it "...in a time to obtain" and it is "...as the time to find" in Young's Literal Translation of the Bible. In either of these literal renderings, the Hebrew has said nothing about there being a time after which God cannot again be found.

Psalms 69:13 recommends that we pray to God for salvation in a time of His favor—"I will pray to you, O Jehovah, in a time of your favor." The KJV has "in an acceptable time," as Paul quoted in II Corinthians 6:3. No deadline is pronounced, however, after which eternal condemnation comes. An outstanding feature of the **Old Testament** books is that **none** of them develops the common concept of unending torment in **hell** for those who reject God.

Psalms 49:8 is another verse sometimes promoted as a basis for the view that there is a time beyond which all opportunity to be saved will cease—"For the redemption of their soul is precious, and it ceaseth forever" KJV. This rendering makes it sound as if the chance of being redeemed comes to an end, does it not? But the NIV puts the whole verse into entirely different English: "the ransom for a life is costly, no payment is ever enough." With this newer translation all support for cessation of salvation evaporates and the whole message of that scripture is seen to be different—study it carefully in the NIV. Note that Psalm 49:5-11 in no way deals with the timing of human salvation. It speaks instead about the futility of human wealth in redeeming human life, and it covers the fact that no person can redeem the life of another!

Isaiah 55:6 is sometimes listed as sufficient reason to believe that grace forever ceases after death—"seek the Lord while he may be found; call on Him while He is near" NIV. But the verse that follows immediately states that the same evil people who were previously consigned to chastening will seek the Lord in the future. It is an invitation for the reconciliation of sinners without any mention of a cut-off time: "Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts. Let him turn to the Lord and He will have **mercy** on him, and to our God, for He will freely pardon" Isaiah 55:7. The reason they will turn to God is that He does make future salvation possible, as is so clearly taught in the New Testament. None of the standard proof-texts show the permanency of death in preventing salvation but they demonstrate instead that God is always merciful and in fact draws all people unto Himself, as Christ stated in John 12:32. TURA (The Ultimate Reconciliation of All), 24635 Apple Street, Newhall, CA 91321-2614.
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Was David in *Sheol* [a Word Sometimes Translated “hell” in Older English Bible Versions]?

In the midst of Psalm 18, while praising God for delivering him from his enemies, David affirmed that he had been in *sheol*: “The cords of the grave (footnote—*sheol*) coiled around me, the snares of death confronted me” 18:5 (NIV). In earlier English versions, like the King James Bible, *sheol* was often translated “hell”, whenever the translators felt so inclined, it seems. But Psalm 18:5 is one of those many passages which show that *sheol* should never have been rendered “hell” in English and that the NIV translators were quite correct in removing “hell” from the entire Old Testament. David is also said to have been in *sheol* in Psalm 30:3.

As the Concordant translators have correctly pointed out, *sheol* consistently refers to the status or condition of dead people before their resurrection—be that conscious or unconscious. While NIV translators stopped turning *sheol* into “hell” (a step in the right direction), they still erred in frequently translating it as “death” or “grave” [as here in Psalm 18:5]. But there are other Hebrew words which deal specifically with “death” and with the “grave.” Perhaps the best solution to this problem is simply to transliterate the word into English as *sheol*—something that the NIV translators wisely did in certain other Old Testament passages where the KJV translators had used “hell.”

Notice in Psalm 18:6 that when David cried to God from *sheol*, God heard David: “From his temple he heard my voice; my cry came before him, into his ears” NIV. This shows that *sheol* is not of place of perpetual banishment of lost souls from God. It is instead a location from which God hears people.

God then produced an amazing geological, astronomical, and meteorological display—Psalm 18:7-15! Finally God reached down, took hold of David in *sheol* and drew him up into a spacious place—vv. 16-19.

In summary, Psalm 18 shows that *sheol* is obviously not the “hell” of “eternal separation” from God, as King James Translators often rendered the word in passages where *sheol* seemed to fit with the prevailing error of everlasting torment for lost sinners. *Sheol* is instead a location from which direct communication can come from people and enter God’s temple. It is a location from which God can deliver individuals, as He wills.

Consult www.restoreallthings.org/gpage.html6.html and www.greenwood.net~cdevans/srindex.htm.

The Shepherd of the Israel, of the Ekklesia, and of All

God is the shepherd of Israel in Ezekiel 34:12-24, where it is said that He keeps track of every individual, rescuing them, and bringing them back. He judges fairly and righteously among the sheep, settling all previous injustices and mistreatment (verses 20-22.) Isaiah also wrote of this marvelous time when as a result of God's judgment, "the people of the world learn righteousness" (Isaiah 26:9b.) Ezekiel went so far as to say that "David" would become the shepherd [of Israel]—an obvious reference to Christ's literal 1000-year reign on earth.

"All Israel will be saved" Paul wrote (Romans 11:26.) Does this God who plans to save every last Israelite intend to abandon all other dead lost people? James wrote that people believing in Christ now are "a kind of first fruits" (James 1:18), clearly implying that all other people will be brought to Christ posthumously, in a main harvest.

In John 10:1-18 you have Christ expanding on the Old Testament shepherd comments by saying that this shepherd "brings forth His own" (NIV, verse 14.) We know from other Bible passage that "Christ's own" includes nothing short of every last person—Hebrews 1:2, Matthew 11:27, John 3:35, 5:33 and 37, and 13:3).

Christ's Commitment to His Sheep. Christ said, "I lay down my life for the sheep"(John 10:15.) If it could be determined what group of people He laid down His life for, we would know who these "sheep" are. Christ laid down His life for the whole world which means that every last human being ever created is one of His sheep—John 1:29.)

What about Outsider Sheep? Some of Jesus' sheep are "not of this fold" John 10:16. He said that He was intent on bringing them into the fold and that they too would hear His voice. Christ is going to bring all people together in one, said Paul (Ephesians 1:10.) Quite likely some of these other sheep are dead lost people who will be changed and saved later on. Christ brings people into the fold by giving them "the faith of Christ"—Ephesians 2:8-9 and Galatians 2:20. He causes all other people to acknowledge Him by using wise judgment, chastening, indignation, and even the lake of divine fire. Jesus is going to gather into one all of the Children of God (created people) who are now scattered abroad. This verse is not referring only to those who are now His children but speaks of all His created children as in I Corinthians 8:6—"yet for us there is but one God, the Father, in Whom all is and one Lord Jesus Christ through Whom all exists." This helps explain what Paul meant in I Timothy 4:9-11 when he wrote that God is the Savior of all humans—especially those who believe. The special salvation extends to those whom He elects to save in this life and all others also come to Christ later. For further information write to TURA (The Ultimate Redemption of All), 24635 Apple Street, Newhall, CA 91321-2614. Consult the "writings of George Howe at www.restoreallthings.org/gpage.html6.html and "systematic reconciliation" at www.greenwood.net/~cdevans/syrindex.htm.

**If All Are Not Ultimately Reconciled, Then Believers Face a Greater Load of Grief
than those Outside of Christ—I Thessalonians 4:13**

In First Thessalonians 4:13 Paul told Christians not to grieve like **the others** (meaning like unbelievers) about dead people. Some of "the others", of course, think dead people don't come back. Others in Paul's day believed people went through terrible torment, as any study of Grecian and Roman mythology shows. But those Christians who receive the concept of the ultimate reconciliation of all people realize that all will be raised from the dead, and after wise judgment, they will ultimately be **one** with God (I Corinthians 5:28). In this way, God helps us avoid the grief of "the others."

However, if there were everlasting torment for people who die outside of Christ, then a **greater load of grief** would fall on believers than on god-less individuals. Paul would have been wrong to tell us that we do not grieve like others. He might well have told us instead that we believers grieve far more, because we would know that all the unsaved people who have ever lived are going to be in a state of unending torment including most of our ancestors, many of our friends and even some members of our immediate families. But the Spirit of God is correct, as always, having Paul tell us NOT to grieve about the dead, like lost people do. He could say this **because we know that Christ will draw all people to Himself as in John 12:32.**

If the deep shadow of Augustinian eternal-torment-eschatology were correct, then Paul would have been wrong in I Thessalonians 4:13 and we would face far greater grief than any unbeliever ever does. And we would also have no encouragement to offer someone who just watched a dear unsaved brother or sister die of cancer. Having said these things, let us be reminded that Augustinians are saved if they believe the gospel, despite their low view of many Bible passages. Many of them will receive great reward from God for having let His Spirit work through them. Although this is beside the point, it will help us hold a high view of all believers, no matter which marginal doctrinal errors they champion. And it will help us extend pity toward those believers who imagine most of humanity already in a non-biblical hell of severe torment.
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Do II Thessalonians 1:6 and 1:9 Teach Everlasting Banishment for Lost People?

There are several Bible passages, which are interpreted by some Bible teachers to say that people who died without expressing faith in Christ will be either chastened forever or separated from God eternally. One of these texts is II Thessalonians 1:6 and 9: “It is just with God to repay affliction to those afflicting you...who will pay this penalty of age-during destruction from the face of God...” Paul reminded these early believers that their persecutors would be penalized when Jesus returns to rule the earth—they will experience destruction that is said to be “aeonian.” The Greek word for “destruction” (*olethros*) does not entail annihilation nor is it said to involve an everlasting conscious punishment in hell. It is not said to last forever but to be aeonian, an English word derived from the Greek *aiōnion* meaning “related to the ages.”

II Thessalonians 1:9 indicates that the evil afflictors of Christians will be destroyed and shut out from the face of the Lord and the glory of God’s strength. Many believers hold that that this destruction of evil people will take place at the end of the tribulation, when Christ will defeat the Godless nations. The millennium is the beginning of the next age (aeon) in which enemies of Christ-centered Israel will be destroyed, meaning that they will be kept away from the presence of Christ and His Kingdom rule for that whole “age” called the millennium. This banishment is “age-lasting” and temporary—not “everlasting.”

These believers also suggest that the evil people who afflicted Israel and the church will be raised at the end of the millennial aeon to appear at the Great White Throne judgment, after which they will experience the lake of divine fire—which is the “second death” Revelation 20:14. All of this is covered in Revelation chapter 20. Although they will be committed to judgment and to the second death, those previously evil people will obviously be included in the ultimate consummation when God becomes “all in all”—I Corinthians 15:28. The II Thessalonians 1:9 phrase does not teach that evil people are slated to be banished from God forever—a concept that would conflict with many passages throughout the entire Bible showing the temporary character of God’s wrath or indignation. TURA (The Ultimate Reconciliation of All), 24634 Apple Street, Newhall, CA 91321-2614. georgefhowe@sbcglobal.net
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A Defense of the Fact that All People Will Be Reconciled Ultimately to God: An TURA Overall Discussion of TURA

Introduction.

The Bible teaches that all people will finally be brought to life, justified, restored, and united with God. They will be made part of God Himself as described in I Corinthians 15:28, because God will become “all in all.” Paul dealt directly with the ultimate reconciliation of all people in Romans 5:18 where he referred to it as the “justification of life” which, he wrote, is “into all men” (*eis pantas anthrōpous*). “Men” can be given the more generalized connotation of “people” as in “into all people.” In I Corinthians 15:22 Paul noted that: “...in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.” Each phase of this total resurrection described in I Corinthians 15:22-23 occurs in its own time: (1) Christ is the first fruit, (2) then “the ones of Christ” are vivified at Christ’s “presence” or His coming, and (3) finally the remainder of the “all” [all others] experience resurrection at the “end”—*telōs* (I Corinthians 15:24ff.) The Bible says in I Timothy 2:6 that each step in the vivification of all will occur “in its own times” and Ephesians 1:10 states that it occurs in “the fullness of the times.”

Right now God is the Savior “especially of believers” (I Timothy 4:10, Alfred Marshall’s Interlinear Translation—AMIT). These are people who express God-given faith in the gospel of Christ. This present salvation is limited to believers and is distinguished from God’s future work when He will become the “savior of all men.” In I Timothy 4:11 Paul exhorted Timothy to present both types of salvation by saying: “charge [command] and teach these [things].”

Special salvation is a gift received by grace through faith, such that even the “faith” involved is not of ourselves—Ephesians 2:8-9 and Galatians 2:20. People who are graced with this special salvation through the faith of Christ escape adverse judgment and the wrath of God—John 5:24 and I Thessalonians 5:9.

Learn Some Greek and Escape Some Widespread Errors.

The Greek word *aiōnion* is an adjective related to the Greek noun *aiōn*, which means an “age” or “aeon” of time. *Aiōnion* as an adjective must therefore mean “related to an age,” “lasting for an aeon,” or simply “aeonian.” These meanings derive from the root word *aiōn*, which is “age” or “aeon” in English. Nonetheless, in many passages within most English Bibles, *aiōnion* has been wrongly rendered “eternal,” “everlasting,” or “forever”—all of which convey a very different concept than what the Greek actually designates. Whereas *aiōnion* speaks of a period of time, which, no matter how long it lasts, definitely has an end, the word “eternal” refers to unending time which is almost the exact opposite.

II Thessalonians 1:9 demonstrates the way in which the proper handling of the adjective

aiōnion eliminates translation errors. The Greek here designates a penalty of *olethron aiōnion* for people who disobey the gospel of God. That pair of words has been wrongly brought into English bibles as “everlasting punishment.” But at least two translators saw the error and rendered the words as “age-abiding destruction” Rotherham’s Emphasized Bible (REB) and “destruction age-during” Young’s Literal Translation of the Bible (YLTB).

In Matthew 25:41 the nations who have been unkind to Christ’s “brethren” will be sent into *pyr aiōnion*—Greek words that most English translations have represented as “everlasting fire.” Rotherham, however, correctly translated them as “age-abiding” fire and Young as “age-during” fire.

In Matthew 25:46 most English Versions say that these same offensive nations will face “eternal punishment” but Rotherham rendered these words (*aiōnian kolasin*) correctly as “age-abiding correction.” Dr. Young also translated this as “age-during” punishment. Some expositors hold that these “brethren” of Christ are the Israelites. The punishment of nations described in Matthew 25 is perhaps describing the earthly trials that in the millennium (Revelation chapter 20) will face anti-semitic nations who have mistreated Christ’s earthly “brethren” during the last 2000 years. Such stern but balanced treatment of nations by the Lord certainly fits with Psalm 96:10 where it states that: “He will judge the nations with equity...” It is both interesting and comforting to learn from the Greek text that the fire, destruction, and correction being discussed in Matthew 25:46 and other Bible passages are “age-related” rather than “everlasting.”

What about the “Everlasting Life” of Believers?

The life that believers receive upon their resurrection obviously goes on forever after, even though it is not regularly called “everlasting life” in the Greek scriptures. This “special salvation” is actually said to provide *zōēn aiōnion* or “age-during” life, even in John 3:16 (YLTB).

It is a life related to “ages” because elect individuals are raised from the dead before the Tribulation (I Thessalonians 4:12-17) and so they will live with God during the last two **ages** of earth’s history. These, if I am correct, include **1. the Millennium aeon** described in Revelation chapter 20 and **2. the New Heaven/New Earth/New Jerusalem epoch** when Christ will dwell on the new earth, right among men (see Revelation chapter 21 and 22:1-6).

What Lies Ahead for those who Have Died in a “Lost” Condition?

God’s lake of fire awaits the unsaved after their wise and equitable judgment at the Great White Throne—Revelation chapter 20. This divine lake is really nothing more or less than a “death” (the “second death”) as noted in Revelation 20:14. The Bible teaches no conscious torment and no everlasting separation from God for those who experience the “second death.” It should not be called “eternal death” because that phrase is not found in the Bible.

The Bible states that those who will worshipfully receive the mark of the beast (Revelation 14:9-11) will then be subjected to a torment of divine burnings in the presence of the Lamb for “ages of ages” REB. The word for “**brimstone**” here is a word referring perhaps to a **divine** fire and not to “brimstone” which is burning sulfur. In Revelation 19:20 it is also acknowledged that the beast and the false prophet are to be thrown live into the lake of divine fire. Both of these passages (Revelation 14:9-11 and 19:20), however, deal only with 1.the beast, 2. the false prophet, and 3. beast-worshippers. All of these three will evidently receive temporary conscious torment for the last two earth “ages” which were described earlier. These passages do not cover the eternal condition of all who died outside of Christ, as is often incorrectly assumed.

While not discussing the nature or purpose of the second death, Paul avowed that it does end because “death” itself (unqualified) is the last enemy that Christ will destroy before voluntarily turning the kingdom over to the Father (I Corinthians 15:20-28, II Timothy 1:10-11, and Hebrews 2:14-15).

The posthumous reconciliation of lost souls is not a “second chance” but a heartfelt final acquiescence after an educative judgment—something much like what Paul experienced upon direct confrontation with God while traveling to Damascus. The will of the Lord will replace the stubborn and ignorant human will. God is not “willing” (or not “choosing”) that any should perish but that all should come into repentance. God wills all people to be saved (I Timothy 2:4). Those who are vivified and then justified in the consummation described in I Corinthians 15:28 will become part of Christ’s “footstool” as seen in Hebrews 10:13, Psalm 110:1, and Matthew 22:44.

What about “Eternal Hell” Described in English Bibles?

Across the centuries the English word “hell” has undergone great linguistic contortions such that it should no longer be used in English Bible translations. “Hell” should be replaced by *hades* (Hebrew *sheol*) or *geenna*, in keeping with whatever Greek or Hebrew word is in the original at that point. *Hades* or *sheol* in the Old Testament is simply the imperceptible domain or condition of people after death. *Geenna* was once a location where dead bodies underwent consumption by fire and maggots in a ravine near the old city of Jerusalem. The lake of fire in the book of Revelation, as we have seen, is the second death. None of these localities is said to be a place of everlasting conscious torment for lost humans. At the end of the consummation, the “age-abiding” life of believers will presumably continue right on as an unending life shared with all other humans who will then have been reconciled to God. The Bible fits with Calvin’s ideas of election and predestination but it flatly contradicts Calvin’s concept of “limited atonement” or the contemporary Calvinists’ view of “double predestination.” The ultimate impact of the atonement will have no limits but will cover “the all” [*ta panta*]. God’s reconciliation of all honors the monumental and infinite work of Christ on the cross and it broadens the effect of His sacrifice to mind-boggling, biblical proportions. With excitement Paul discussed the overwhelming nature of God’s love, grace, and

ultimate purposes—see Romans 8:38-39. Every statement in the Bible about God’s judgment and chastisement will be accomplished but our historic concept of an “eternal hell” will evaporate in the light of God’s wonderful plan for all humanity! In order to cling to the doctrine of eternal hell, believers are forced to ignore or reinterpret such words as “all” *panta*, “world” *kosmos*, and “age-lasting” *aiōnios*.

Who Were the Rich Man and Lazarus in Christ’s Famous Parable?

One passage in the gospels (Luke 16:20-31) is often wrongly taken as a narrative. It is the story of the rich man and Lazarus, which is a parable since it is part of one long parable extend throughout all of Luke chapters 15-16. All features of this lengthy parable should be interpreted together for symbolic meanings communicated and not as a source of basic doctrine concerning the after-life.

Possibly these two figures, Lazarus and the rich man, portray the difference which would come to exist between the earthly futures of humble people (Jews and Gentiles) who receive the gospel (Lazarus) as opposed to earthly punishment from God which would be in store for anti-Christian religious organizations. Certainly there have been tremendous worldly trials during the last two centuries for those Jews (and Gentiles) rejecting Christ.

But even if this passage were intended to describe the afterlife, it does not deal with “hell” but with “*hades*”—two very different places. It is of interest to note that Luke 16:23 is the only passage (out of 10) where the NIV translators rendered *hades* as “hell.” In all other nine verses they translated *hades* simply as “hades” or as “depths.” The classical “hell” never ends but Revelation 20:14 indicates the end of *hades* will occur when it is cast into the lake of fire. As ordinarily perceived in English, the place called “hell” has no change of heart whereas this passage shows some modifications that were already taking place in the attitude of the rich man—e.g, concern for his brothers. Changes like these result from corrective chastening, not from everlasting vengeance. Such pleasant details are quite foreign to the usual depiction of “a Devil’s hell” where unmodified sin endlessly reigns.

A Little Bit of Reconciliation History and its Current Status

Perhaps in the future evangelical Christians will begin to view Biblical ultimate universal reconciliation as an acceptable variant teaching and cease treating it as a major heresy. This is what has happened with various conflicts regarding baptism, the second coming of Christ, and other issues and has led to friendly coexistence between such denominations as Lutherans, Baptists, Pentecostals, Church of Christ believers, Seventh Day Adventists, etc.—all of whom realize that people in other groups are also part of the Body of Christ if they believe the gospel.

Total reconciliation was taught by Christ Himself and by the apostles in the early church. Many years later it became a widely accepted teaching in the Alexandrian church. The writings of Origen, a key Alexandrian Church Father, were not declared heretical until many years after his death. Even then, the charges of heresy were not based on Origen's teachings about the reconciliation of all but on other doctrines attributed to him. The Alexandrian, Antioch, and Caesarean churches also embraced reconciliation of all people. The promotion of Biblical reconciliation was later repressed in the Roman Catholic religion based on the eternal torment teachings by Augustine, Tertullian, Jerome, and others. But there were individuals and small groups who kept the meaning of the reconciliation scriptures alive during the Catholic centuries—e.g. Anabaptists, etc. In the 18th and 19th centuries, an important universalist movement arose within the Church of England and in the United States. Unfortunately, many of those universalists embraced Unitarianism. Today many of the Universalist/Unitarian church bodies, as well as some of the liberal protestant congregations, have maintained a belief in the reconciliation of all people but have simultaneously rejected other aspects of Biblical truth such as the virgin birth of Christ, the blood atonement, the deity and bodily resurrection of Christ, the judgment, and the inerrancy of scripture. Care must be exercised now so that Biblical reconciliation not become once again a platform from which people abandon belief in other Bible teachings. Currently there are many excellent books by evangelical believers who have adopted Biblical universalism. A representative list will be sent upon request. Other books have been written in defense of the usual eternal torment teaching and certain examples of these can be supplied as well.

How Should We Now Relate to Others in the Body of Christ?

Hopefully believers who persist in eternal torment theology will begin to see that their brothers who have adopted the reconciliation view deserve the respect afforded to any fellow believers who disagree on a given Bible subject. May they cease dealing with reconciliation theology as if it were a damnable heresy. Minds should not be closed to reconciliation just because large numbers of evangelical teachers have continued to reject it. We must recall that a major segment of Christendom has repeated been in error on numerous other Bible teachings in past centuries, teachings that are now widely accepted!

May we who promote the ultimate reconciliation of all and share its biblical basis do so with a kindly attitude. Let us defend it on the basis of scripture and not solely with human logic or emotion—either of which can fall into error. Let us remember that there are thousands of other teachings in the Bible and that some of the individuals holding to eternal separation may be choice servants of Christ in other areas of belief and practice. Let all believers treat each other with respect and seek God's glory as their top priority, in keeping with Galatians 6:10 and Philippians 4:5. Let us all allow Him to use us to proclaim the gospel of Christ's special salvation for those who believe. May we, like Paul, try to reach God's elect among those who are unsaved. For further information, write Ultimate Reconciliation, 24635 Apple Street, Newhall, CA 91321-2614. Go to www.restoreallthings.org/gpage.html6.html or to www.greenwood.net/~cdevans/srindex.htm. georgefhowe@sbcglobal.net.

**DID YOU REALIZE THAT GOD IS ULTIMATELY GOING TO
RECONCILE ALL PEOPLE?**

Paul the **Apostle** put it this way: “For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living **God**, who is the **Savior of all men**, specially of those that believe. These things command and teach” I Timothy 4:10-11, King James Version (KJV). **Paul** also wrote: “Therefore as by the offense of one [person—meaning Adam] judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one [Jesus] **the free gift** came upon **all men** unto **justification of life**” Romans 5:18, KJV. **DID YOU KNOW GOD RECONCILES SOME PEOPLE RIGHT NOW?** **Jesus** said, “For God so loved the **world**, that he gave his only begotten Son that **whosoever believeth** in him should not perish but have everlasting [age-lasting] life” John 3:16 KJV.

Learn more about these and other Bible topics at www.restoreallthings.org/gpage.html6.html and www.greenwood.bnet/~cdevans/srindex.htm. georgefhowe@sbcglobal.net

A Future View of Unsaved People

We can observe unbelievers with an emphasis on their future condition. More concern, prayer, and love will be evoked for lost souls if they are seen in the light of what God is going to accomplish in them. There is much in the Bible concerning the spiritual status that lost folk will ultimately possess, once they have experienced God's stern but wise corrective pruning in judgment—once they have come into Christ. Every unsaved person will eventually:

Be made ALIVE...John 5:26, 6:51, I Corinthians 15:22

Be free from God's ANGER...Isaiah 12:1

BELIEVE through the light...John 1:9

Be BLESSED in Christ...Acts 3:25, Genesis 18:18

Be giving BLESSING, honor, glory, and power to the Lamb...Revelation 5:13

Be at peace with God through the BLOOD of Christ's cross...Colossians 1:20

Have BOWED their knees reverently to worship God...Psalms 22:29, Isaiah 45:23,
Romans 14:11, Philippians 2:10

Not be CAST OUT...John 6:37 as tied to John 3:35

Have COME to Christ...Psalms 65:2-3, John 6:37

Be COMFORTED by God...Isaiah 12:1

Experience God's COMPASSION...Lamentations 3:32, James 5:11b

CONFESS with their tongues that Jesus Christ is Lord...Isaiah 45:23, Romans 14:11,
Philippians 2:11

Be a new CREATION because at that time, they will be in Christ...II Corinthians 5:17

Will have received Christ's taste of DEATH for them...Hebrews 2:9, II Corinthians 5:14

Be themselves free from DEATH...Isaiah 25:8a, I Corinthians 15:26, Hebrews 2:14-15

Be DELIVERED up to God...I Corinthians 15:24

Escape the DEVIL'S work and presence...Hebrews 2:14-15, I John 3:8

Be DRAWN to Christ...John 12:32

Be FILLED with Christ...Ephesians 4:10

Be a partaker of Christ's FLESH...John 6:51

Be part of Christ's FOOTSTOOL...Psalms 110:1, Matthew 22:44, Mark 12:35, Luke
23:42-43, Acts 2:34-35, Hebrews 1:13, Hebrews 10:13

Be set FREE...Psalms 102:19-20

Be giving GLORY to God the Father...Philippians 2:11

Be in Christ's HANDS...John 3:35, John 13:3

Be IN Christ...Ephesians 1:10

Be part of Christ's INHERITANCE...Hebrews 1:1

Have JOY...Isaiah 12:3, Luke 2:10

Be into the JUSTIFICATION of LIFE...Romans 5:18

Be LIGHTED by the TRUE LIGHT...John 1:9

Possess God's MERCY...Psalms 30:5, Psalms 136—every verse King James Version,
Romans 11:32, James 5:11

Be made NEW...Revelation 21:5
Be ONE with God...Romans 11:36, I Corinthians 15:28
Not PERISH but REPENT...II Peter 3:9
Give PRAISE to God and receive PRAISE from God...Psalms 66:4, I Corinthians 4:5
Be under the PROPITIATION or ATONING SACRIFICE of Christ...I John 2:2
Be RAISED UP by God...Psalms 145:14
Be RECONCILED to God...II Corinthians 5:18-19, Colossians 1:20
Be RESTORED...Acts 3:21
Be RIGHTEOUS...Romans 5:19, II Corinthians 5:21
Be SAVED...Luke 19:10, John 3:17, John 12:47, Isaiah 44:22, Titus 2:11, I Timothy 2:3
Have Christ as SAVIOR...John 4:42, I Timothy 4:9-11, I John 4:14
SEE the SALVATION of GOD...Luke 3:6
Be WITHOUT SIN...John 1:29, Hebrews 9:26
Be in SUBJECTION to Christ...I Corinthians 5:28, Philippians 3:21, Hebrews 2:8
Be without TEARS...Isaiah 25:8
Be TO God...Romans 11:36
Be THROUGH God...Romans 11:36
Be free of TRESSPASS IMPUTATION...II Corinthians 5:19
Express TRUST in Christ's Name...Matthew 12:21
Possess knowledge of the TRUTH...I Timothy 2:3-6
TURNED to God...Isaiah 45:22
Be free of the VAIL separating them from God...Isaiah 25:7
WORSHIP God...Revelation 5:13.

Consult www.restoreallthings.org/gpage.html6.html and
www.greenwood.net/~cdevans/srindex.htm.

God Binds up the Wounds of Judgment—Ezekiel, Hosea, and Job

God disciplines people but then He restores them, moving from judgment to reconciliation just as if reconciliation had been His plan from the start. By this means the Old Testament hangs a suitable backdrop against which Paul's clear discussions of salvation for every last human can be understood, as seen in I Corinthians 15:20-28, Romans 5:15-19, and I Timothy 4:9-11, for example.

God told Ezekiel that Israel would be scattered among the nations and would suffer scorn (Ezekiel 36:1-21). In the verses following, however (Ezekiel 36:22-38), God said that He would bring the Israelites back from those nations and restore them for His name's sake.

The vision of dried bones that came together and the whole bodies rising to life (Ezekiel 37:1-14) portrayed God's plan to resurrect and restore Israel. After captivity, downfall, and discipline, Israel was to be restored to their own land where it is foretold that "David" (a prophetic figure of Christ) would become their shepherd king (37:24). Peace was to prevail and God would live with them "for an age" (*olam*) (37:24-28).

Early in his book, Hosea likewise sternly reported that God's love would be withdrawn from the house of Israel (1:6) but just four verses later he acknowledged that the Israelites "...will again be like the sand on the seashore" (Hosea 1:10). First he told of judgment for idolatry (chapter 2), but then he discussed future reconciliation, as if it had always been God's ultimate goal—2:14-23. It was predicted that God would "tear" people in severe judgment until they earnestly seek His face (Hosea 5:15 and 6:1. An end of judgment was set—a time when they would seek Him. "Come—let us return to the Lord. He has torn us to pieces but He will heal us. He has injured us but He will bind up our wounds" (6:1). The One who tore, injured, and wounded was predicted later to heal and to bandage their wounds. Even a possible reference to Christ's crucifixion comes in 6:2 where Hosea writes that: "...on the third day, He will restore us that we may live in His presence."

Turning now to the book of Job, some of Eliphaz' statements are valid truths, even if they were not the advice Job needed at that time. Eliphaz stated that the Almighty "...wounds, but He also binds up. He injures, but His hands also heal" (Job 5:18).

The Old Testament concept that judgment is followed by healing fits well with the New Testament teaching that Christ will ultimately be "casting out" (*ek ballo*) judgment for victory—Matthew 12:20-21. These many Old Testament comments prove the remark Peter made in a sermon (Acts 3:21) that God's reconciliation of all had been previously discussed "...by the mouth of all the holy prophets, from the age." TURA (The Ultimate Reconciliation of All), 24635 Apple Street, Newhall, CA 91321-2614. www.restoreallthings.org/gpage.html6.html. www.greenwood.net/~cdevans/srindex.htm. Click on "Systematic Reconciliation" at www.ais-gwd.com/~cdevans.

Xtra Info on My Change to TURA after 46 Years Believing in Eternal Torment

It was about 1985 when a studio cartoonist friend of ours (Ross) came over to the house and left copies of books by Loudy, Allin, Jukes, and others for me and my older son Paul to read. Ross had already made his own transition into Biblical universalism and is now even more firmly entrenched in it than he was back then. Based on my involvement with evangelical fundamentalism from age nine onward, I cast aspersions on the books, saying that they were “heretical.” But Paul, who had been reading them carefully in the meantime, told me I better get off my duff and read them too, realizing that the books were correct on the final reconciliation of all into God!

I was amazed at the careful Biblical scholarship of the TURA (The Ultimate Reconciliation of All) advocates. It bothered me, however, that many were non-trinitarians—believing that somehow in eternity past God the Father **created** God the Son, a view that is incorrect biblically and has unfortunately been linked to universalism because of the Unitarian universalists who correctly believe in universal reconciliation but reject most other important Biblical teachings. I realize, however, that these folks are otherwise fine practicing disciples of Christ who are in error because of their self-imposed adherence to incorrect philosophies of their original leader. They hold that Christ was the Son of God, nonetheless, and was likewise the Creator. They have been generous and helpful in helping me secure major TURA books. I enjoy using their Greek interlinear New Testament and Bible study volume. They correctly hold that dead souls “sleep” until the resurrection and they have an excellent analysis of eschatology in Loudy’s book. There is, of course, no support for their pre-Adamite aeon nor is there any way to settle permanently on five aeons, as they dogmatically do. Their dispensationalism is valuable, even though it is sometimes “over played.” They also hold to a creation view called the “gap theory” or reconstruction hypotheses, which is an outmoded creation theory without clear-cut Biblical support. But every one of us who writes about Biblical universalism has a few of our own theological/exegetical errors, I suspect!

Slowly I became convinced that total reconciliation is Biblical; that it is not the sole property of Arian believers, like the Concordites. I found that there were Anglicans, Baptists, and other Trinitarians in the TURA camp. TURA goes directly against “eternal torment” or “everlasting separation from God”, concepts that I had thought were cardinal doctrines of Bible-believing Christianity! But I was exceedingly busy from 1985-2000, pursuing scientific research projects, helping to produce a peer-reviewed creation-science publication called “The Creation Research Society Quarterly” (now in its 46th year of publication, begun in 1964), and teaching a full load at little Los Angeles Baptist College. In 1985 that school changed its name to “The Master’s College” upon the hiring of an energetic new president.

So, I moved very slowly over a period of about 15 years, working sporadically on reconciliation as time and interest permitted. I had many unsolved problems with the view, and was hoping to find a substantial body of literature on Biblical universalism

written by present-day, “card-carrying” evangelicals. I learned to discuss the doctrine only with certain close friends—people who would delve into the matter without rancor or immediate rejection. The switch from ET to TURA enhanced my personal Bible study and Bible memory work about 10-fold! I became like Mary, pondering many things and keeping them all in my heart. Even now, if I approach someone about TURA, I do so largely by way of literature. I tell them to examine all those Bible passages themselves. I usually avoid explaining the view orally because ET individuals can become very defensive in straight-forward discussions about their theory. While going through this slow “conversion”, I also realized that coming completely “out of the closet” on this subject could threaten my job at the college and my membership at our local Baptists congregation. I still attend that assembly because they have valid positions on many other critical issues and are immersed in missionary outreach.

In the year 2000, I felt compelled by the Lord to “go public” with these many reconciliation Bible verses, to the Glory of God, Who inspired **all** scripture—even the words that get routinely ignored. The Lord took my son Paul in death on January 14 in that year and showed me that I must now openly promote these concepts that Paul Howe and I had embraced together. My verse on this commission is Jeremiah 1:7—“You must go to everyone I send you and say whatever I command you—do not say you are a child, for God told you to go.” What a verse!

Although retired in 1997, I was still teaching about half-time in the year 2000 and became fully retired in 2001, so that any hesitancy to promote TURA based on association with Master’s College was thereby removed. I began to produce essays on various aspects of TURA and I developed a mailing list so that I was sending new essays to people about four times a year. Although I stopped this mailing list activity, many of the essays have been improved and several have been put on-line at some excellent web sites: www.restoreallthings.org/gpage.html#6.html and www.greenwood.net/~cdevans/srindex.htm. The others are posted here on this web site.

Knowing that I was “out of step” with an 11-word statement about everlasting torment (ET) in our church doctrinal creed, I informed the local elders of my eschatological and soteriological “departure” from Augustinianism. I also told them they could feel welcome to remove my name from the membership list if they deemed my views to be a significant problem. In early 2003 they took me up on that “offer”. They also accepted my suggestion that I still be allowed to attend services while voluntarily I promised not to use that local assembly as a basis for recruiting for TURA. They took no issue with my continuing my web site witness and other activities outside the church sphere.

This was actually a blessing because I was previously too busy at the local church lecturing on creation science, instructing Sunday school classes, and helping various ways in the AWANA youth program. Thus the Lord has given me much more time to work on TURA, carry out research on Yuccas, lichens, and other plants for the Creation Research Society, and to fellowship with my grand children and great grandchildren!

It was a privilege to realize that every church member present in that one business session learned about my reconciliation beliefs. I suspect there are some who either privately believe in TURA or at least give the whole matter serious thought. I try to remember that God loves everyone—even those millions of true believers who wrongly defend ET theology. Some of them have been gifted in amazing ways to carry out missions, evangelism, and other roles in the Body. Furthermore, it is certainly true that **if** God wanted all believers to give up this false teaching now, it would happen **today**, not tomorrow. Therefore He must have an important set of reasons for letting people like you and me enjoy TURA and try to relate it to our born-again ET brethren as well as those who do not yet revere Christ.

I am able to witness about TURA to our church people whenever they move from this city and change churches. I have sent TURA literature of various sorts to previous ministers who now are at other local churches. I also write to former church members whose children have run amok or even died in sin, assuring them from the Bible that those dear kids are in God's plan too and will someday be joyfully reunited with God and His family. One fine gentleman, however, did answer by telling me four years after I send him a TURA message upon his wife's death, that my card was the only one of all the condolence cards that he kept! Since 1967 when we had both attended the same church, this friend had become a believer in TURA too, while sitting under the ministry of Rev. Klassen—a covenant church pastor who is also an author of a very successful TURA book. Klassen is likewise a gifted Christian artist. Prints of some of his pictures are selling well in Christian bookstores—especially one of a little child knocking at a very large wooden door with a lantern in hand.

With old friends, former students, and colleagues at Master's College I have systematically shared this change in view—a great opportunity to give each one of them a first-hand witness about God's ultimate salvation of all. I have been able to share TURA with many of my associates in the Creation Research Society Board of Directors too. One of them said, "George, I think you are 'out to lunch' on this one—but somehow, I hope you **are** right!" Where I did not feel at liberty yet to share this concept with certain people, I arranged for excellent current reconciliation books to be sent to them **anonymously** and free of charge directly from the publisher! I have racked my brains and my old address books trying to remember people who ought to hear about this from me. Then, of course, I write to each one. Incidentally, in 1967 or thereabouts, Thomas Talbott and I were both on the Westmont College faculty. At that time Tom was still a grad student working on a philosophy degree at nearby U. C. Santa Barbara. We didn't see much of each other. Now, Tom is one of the key evangelical spokesmen for Biblical universalism, being coauthor of a book by Partridge and Perry, published by Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, MI..

Reconciliationists are the only ones who can share God's great joy with individuals who have watched loved ones or close friends die "outside of Christ." We can supply unique assistance in circumstances where even great evangelists and Bible teachers like Billy Sunday, Billy Graham, and C. H. Spurgeon could bring no help.