

## UNIVERSAL RECONCILIATION

### **[How all mankind were reconciled to God through Christ]**

*IN HIS IMAGE MINISTRIES~ADAM MILLS*

1. Adam was the divinely appointed representative of the human race during his probationary term in the garden of Eden.[1] The outcome of this probationary term would determine the nature of beings Adam and his wife would reproduce based on the law of heredity ~ sinless, holy beings, or sinful, unholy beings. Thus, Adam's behavior in the garden would directly affect his entire posterity. Adam's universal representational role is made evident in Romans 5:12~19, and 1 Corinthians 15:21,22.

2. When Adam sinned, the human race was now unworthy of any further existence. Through his representation, the race now merited extinction. But for the provisions of Christ, as mankind's Substitute and Surety, Adam and Eve would have been visited with immediate death [2], and neither ourselves, nor any other human beings would ever have been born. Paul makes this point in Romans 5:18:

“ Therefore as by the offence of one [judgment came] upon all men to condemnation;...”.

It is important to note how Paul clearly states that the action of this one man brought condemnation upon all of his POTENTIAL posterity. This UNIVERSAL sentence was passed AT THE POINT OF THE FIRST SIN before any other human beings had come into existence. The only way to properly understand the justice of this ruling, is in the light of Adam's representational status .

3. In order to respect the choice made by both Adam and Eve, in keeping with the justice of the divine law, while also affording the race another opportunity to prove their loyalty to Jehovah, Christ immediately intervened, assuming Personal responsibility for the sins of the WORLD (Revelation 13:8), which would certainly ensue. It was now a foregone conclusion that the nature of human beings would be sinful, and unholy. (See Romans 8:7,8; Job 15:14~16; Jeremiah 17:9) [3]. And, because of this deliberate act of distrust and disobedience, mankind must experience guilt, pain, sorrow, and death as the natural fruit of sin. (Romans 5:12). Yet, through the intervention of Christ, all of Adam's descendants would also be favored with the gracious GIFTS of a free will, a conscience, and a measure of judgment, intelligence, spiritual power, understanding of truth, and desire for holiness. (See John 1:4,9,16). [4].

4. The intervention of Christ involved His willingness to take upon Himself the full measure of guilt, condemnation, punishment and death for all human beings that should live upon earth till the end of time. (See Isaiah 53:6; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 2:9). He had volunteered to give the race a probationary extension of life at His own expense, and this continued existence would come directly and solely from Himself, now that we had chosen to separate ourselves from the Father through sin. (See John 14:6; Colossians 3:4; Hebrews 2:11) [5].

5. In order to fully satisfy the demands of the law which had been violated, AND restore all who were willing to their original state of love and holiness, not only must Christ die on our behalf, but He must also AS MAN, assume Adam's position as the head, father, and Representative of the race. In this capacity, He must be put on trial and live in perfect obedience to God's law of love ON MAN'S BEHALF, IN SPITE OF the added liability of a fallen, sinful nature which He must partake of. (See Romans 8:3; Galatians 4:4,5; Hebrews 2:14~17) [6]. In so doing, He would earn the right to re-establish the human race as worthy of eternal life, through reliance upon His merits and power, and

worthy of fulfilling the divine purpose in their creation ~ to occupy the positions of trust and honor vacated by the fallen angels of heaven. (See Matthew 22:30; Zechariah 3:7; Revelation 19:10) [7].

6. Christ has successfully accomplished both #4 and #5 above, which, by pledge, VICARIOUSLY granted Adam and Eve justification for an extended probationary existence, IN SPITE OF THEIR SIN AND SINFULNESS. This divine suretyship of Christ's would also grant them the opportunity to reproduce and fill the earth with human beings IN SPITE OF THEIR NATURALLY SINFUL CONDITION, who would be afforded the opportunity to make an individual determination as to their eternal destiny. It granted a temporary "stay of execution" of the sentence of ETERNAL death which must ultimately be visited upon all confirmed transgressors of God's law, and provided an 'Escape Route' from that sentence for all who could be induced to avail themselves of it. Through repentance and faith in Christ's atoning accomplishments all could escape the penalty, power and presence of sin if they were willing. (See John 3:16~19) [8].

The sin of Adam had now transformed his entire nature from one which was in harmony with God's law of love, to one which was now in harmony with Satan's principle of selfishness. Therefore, he would inevitably transmit this corrupted nature to his entire posterity along with the promised result ~ DEATH. (See Romans 5:12; 1 Corinthians 15:22) [9]. Mankind was no longer permitted access to the tree of life which imparts immortality. Mankind was no longer to be privileged with open communion with God. Mankind would now become acquainted with all sorts of evil being manifested in themselves and others during their lifetime. All of this, because of the choice which was made to partake of the tree of the KNOWLEDGE of good and EVIL.

Nevertheless, Christ's accomplishments on behalf of the race provided all with an equal opportunity to renounce evil and receive a share in Christ's own righteousness which would make them worthy to partake of the tree of life and live forever.

Therefore, this JUSTIFICATION to ETERNAL LIFE, through Christ's substitutionary role, passed upon us all VICARIOUSLY ALONGSIDE the CONDEMNATION to ETERNAL DEATH that had passed upon us all VICARIOUSLY through Adam. As related to, and represented by Adam, all humanity is worthy of eternal death in that we share a common NATURE with him which is fundamentally EVIL, and falls short of the divine glory, and harmony with the righteousness of the law possessed by man at creation. (See Romans 3:23; 7:18~8:4; 1 Corinthians 15:50). As related to, and represented by Christ, all humanity is worthy of eternal life because He has volunteered to share with us His own DIVINE, HOLY NATURE in the wondrous act of the incarnation. (See Romans 5:18,19; 1 John 2:1,2; 1 Timothy 4:10) [10].

Consequently, inasmuch as all humanity was represented by both Adam and Christ ("the LAST Adam": 1 Cor. 15:45), and, inasmuch as we are all related to them both, we are all directly affected by their behavior on our behalf. All men are granted probationary life due to Christ's representation and relationship to them. All men experience death at the conclusion of their probationary lifetime due to Adam's representation and relationship to them. All men have been subjected to the dominion of sin in some degree due to Adam's transgression and hereditary bequest. (See Romans 5:12,19; Psalm 51:5; Romans 3:9~12; Galatians 3:22; 1 Peter 1:18) [11]. All men have been endowed in some degree with desires, knowledge, and powers, with which they may be liberated from their subjection to sin due to Christ's ongoing redemptive enterprise as the new Head of humanity.

This temporal existence is granted to each of us to determine whether we will value the righteousness and eternal life that has been earned for us by Christ, in renouncing our sins and sinfulness through reliance upon Him, or, on the other hand, justify, excuse and cherish our inherited Adamic and ancestrally~transmitted faults, weaknesses and sins, as well as those we have cultivated, resigning ourselves to eternal death thereby.

The question naturally arises, 'Did Christ's intervention constitute all mankind as justified, and forgiven of all their sins?' Yes, but ONLY on a REPRESENTATIONAL level. As humanity's Representative and Substitute, all men have been represented as having been born in perfect sinlessness, as having lived an entirely sinless lifetime, and, as having paid in full the sentence of divine wrath and death due for all their actual sins. This substitutionary role of Christ in the work of salvation is the ONLY basis upon which ANY human being can be considered worthy of eternal life, in that the divine law demands nothing less than perfect, everlasting righteousness. (See Galatians 3:10~12). No mortal human being can present such a life record. The substitution of Christ for the human race is valid and satisfies this high demand of the law due to the fact that Christ is our Creator, and our only Life SOURCE. His Life is equal to the perfect righteousness demanded by the law. When born again, we begin to undergo the mysterious, transforming process (sanctification) of becoming ONE with Christ through the reception of His own SPIRIT, the Third Person of the Godhead. (See 1 Corinthians 6:17; Hebrews 2:11; John 14:16~19). In this way, we receive His characteristics, and share His NATURE. [12] Christ, through His Spirit lives His life in, and through the believer. (See 2 Peter 1:4; Galatians 2:20; Colossians 1:26,27).

However, as in any representational relationship, the one being represented can renounce or reject the representation as MISREPRESENTATION. Nevertheless, although this is the option most of mankind choose through unbelief, and the love of sin, it will forever remain an undeniable fact that the entire race of sinful humanity were indeed included in all that Christ came to accomplish on their behalf without regard to the personal choice of the individual sinner which has furnished them with the free gift of this probationary existence. The eternally lost will come to understand that they have all received the grace of God, through Christ Jesus, "in vain", having frustrated His merciful purposes for them by a stubborn and perverse will. (2 Corinthians 6:1; Galatians 2:21).

It is important to note that, because LOVE (which is righteousness: Psalm 119:172; Romans 13:10) can only be rendered by CHOICE ("IF you love me, keep my commandments" John 14:15), ACTUAL, personal justification, or righteousness could never be IMPUTED or IMPARTED to anyone against their WILL. God will never utilize force in His quest to win the hearts of sinful man simply because it is impossible to love by coercion. Therefore, the only justification possible for man is that which he himself desires and receives from and through Christ. Paul affirms this in Romans 3:24,25:

"Being JUSTIFIED freely BY his GRACE *through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus*: Whom God hath set forth [to be] a propitiation THROUGH FAITH IN HIS BLOOD," (See also Acts 26:18; 1 John 1:9).[13]

It is also important to note that forgiveness does not change anything in the ATTITUDE of God toward the sinner, as though God ceases to be angry with him/her from that point in time. God takes the initiative to reconcile the sinner to Himself WHILE he is yet UNRECONCILED. This point is accentuated by the fact that this great plan of redemption was in place before the creation of the world. Therefore forgiveness is, in essence, reconciliation of the SINNER to God, who is ALREADY reconciled to the sinner via the sacrificial atonement of His Son. Forgiveness changes the attitude of the SINNER toward God, from hostility or fear to love and gratitude for what God has done for Him in laying the burden of His guilt and sin upon his own beloved Son. Forgiveness also changes the attitude of the sinner toward his sins from love and justification of it to an enmity and disgust for sin when comprehending something of the incalculable Price which was demanded to atone for it.

7. John introduces Christ as "the Lamb of God which **taketh away** the sin of the world." John 1:29. The grammatical form of the words "taketh away" used by John is the *present participle*, which denotes action currently taking place. That is, literally, "the lamb of God who [is] **taking** away the sin

of the world". The Greek word he used, *airo*, literally means to bear away what has been raised, to carry off, or remove. Therefore, John is stating that He was presently carrying off the sins of the world to be expiated by His death. John's announcement marked the particular time in Christ's life that His voluntary lot was to begin bearing the weight of the sins of the world, in assuming His role as Messiah, and mankind's Sin-bearer. [14] Because Christ is the 'Life~support' of the entire race, and especially as He has now joined Himself to this race BY NATURE, He is Personally affected by the sin of the world to this day, as though He Himself is Personally involved in all that takes place in man's existence. (See Isaiah 53:4; 63:9; Hebrews 4:14,15). [15] In this capacity, He carries out His role as High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary, presenting before the Father His all~sufficient sacrifice for the sins of the world, which affords all mankind grace, mercy, and longsuffering, with which He seeks to lead them to repentance. (See Hebrews 7:24~27; 1 Timothy 2:5,6) [16].

### CONCLUSION

How is it, then, that all men have been reconciled to God? It is by Christ's life, death, and intercession on their behalf. GOD IS LOVE, and the greatest and fullest manner in which God could make known the vastness of His love, was to create beings He foreknew would utilize their freedom of choice to revolt against His authority, and then use the opportunity to demonstrate His love for His ENEMIES. "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." Romans 5:10. The justice of God and His law demands that He "BY NO MEANS CLEAR THE GUILTY" (Exodus 34:7). How could He, then, in justice, sustain life to a race of beings who are out of harmony with His character and law of love? How could He, in justice, tolerate the countless violations of His law to continue to this day by human beings all over the world, as yet unpunished? How is it consistent with His justice to "pass over the transgression" (Micah 7:18) of so many? How can sin and sinners exist AT ALL, without involving God Himself in culpability? The answer is found in the following texts:

"All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." Isaiah 53:6

"...Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." John 1:29

"To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them;..." 2 Corinthians 5:19

By counting the sins of all, from Adam to the very last human being that will live in this present world, to Christ, and requiring of Him the payment of the full penalty for them all, (accomplished at Calvary), God has presented to the universe His RIGHT to temporarily suspend full punishment for the sins of the rebel planet, and extend LOVE, MERCY, and GRACE to them IN SPITE OF their hostility toward Him and His law. The Father has consented to give this race the everlasting Gift of His own Son as the PROOF OF HIS LOVE for sinful mankind, and the PROOF that HE desires the salvation of all. The Son of God did not make this sacrifice in order to reconcile the Father to us. Rather, the Father AND Son have given THEMSELVES jointly to this painstaking work in order to reconcile US to THEMSELVES. The very fact that we could be reconciled to the Father, through the JOINT operations of Father and Son (2 Corinthians 5:19), while yet retaining our hostility of nature against Him (Romans 5:10), proves this to be so. The death of Christ for all sinners did not change anything in the Father's

attitude toward the race, but was the DEMONSTRATION of His own attitude, inasmuch as Christ's mission was to REVEAL the unseen Father to mankind. (See John 14:7~10). [17]

Through this infinitely magnificent plan, God has satisfied the demands of His perfect justice, which is an innate quality of His character, while also exercising His infinite mercy, which is also an innate quality of His character and manifestation of His perfect LOVE. Through the cross of Christ, God has declared “his righteousness (there is no abandonment of the strictest principles of His JUSTICE) for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, [I say], at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.” Romans 3:25,26. That is, in permitting man to exercise his freedom of choice to sin without bringing immediate punishment upon him, in order to exercise His love, mercy and grace upon the sinner for the purpose of bringing about repentance, forgiveness, and restoration from those sins, God has made full provision for this undertaking through the Substitutionary life, death, and intercession of Christ so that He has not violated the demands of His law, truth, and justice in doing so. The love of God, as clearly seen in Christ at Calvary constitutes the POWERFUL FORCE which transforms enemies of God into friends of God ~ sinners into saints. The commendation of His love toward us “when we were ENEMIES”, is the FORCE which OVERPOWERS the seemingly irresistible power of SIN in the nature of man. (See Romans 5:20). Divine LOVE is the most powerful force in the universe! It, alone, has the power to arrest the attention and win the devotion of the sinner, directing him away from his downward sojourn to self-destruction, in vice and selfishness.

### ENDNOTES

1. “The Sabbath was committed to Adam, the father and representative of the whole human family.” *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 48
  2. “Adam and Eve were given a probation in which to return to their allegiance; and in this plan of benevolence all their posterity were embraced. After the fall, Christ became Adam's instructor. He acted in God's stead toward humanity, saving the race from immediate death. He took upon Him the work of mediator between God and man.” *The Signs of the Times*, May 29, 1901
  3. “We are sinful by nature, and so are commanded to be zealous and repent. If we regard iniquity in our hearts, the Lord will not hear us; but the prayer of the penitent, contrite soul is always accepted.” *The Signs of the Times*, August 21, 1884
- “The result of the eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil is manifest in every man's experience. There is in his nature a bent to evil, a force which, unaided, he cannot resist.” *Education*, p. 29
4. “Christ is the “Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.” John 1:9. As through Christ every human being has life, so also through Him every soul receives some ray of divine light. Not only intellectual but spiritual power, a perception of right, a desire for goodness, exists in every heart.” *Education*, p. 29
  5. “By His obedience to all the commandments of God, Christ wrought out a redemption for men. This was not done by going out of Himself to another, but by taking humanity into Himself. Thus Christ

gave to humanity an existence out of Himself. To bring humanity into Christ, to bring the fallen race into oneness with divinity, is the work of redemption.” *Selected Messages, Volume 1, pp. 250,251*

6. “Christ did in reality unite the offending nature of man with his own sinless nature, because by this act of condescension he would be enabled to pour out his blessings in behalf of the fallen race. Thus he has made it possible for us to partake of his nature.” *The Review and Herald, July 17, 1900*

“He took upon his sinless nature our sinful nature, that He might know how to succor those that are tempted.” *Medical Ministry, p. 181*

7. “God created man for His own glory. It was His purpose to re-populate heaven with the human race, if after test and trial they proved to be loyal to Him.” *The Signs of the Times, May 29, 1901*

8. “God forbears, for a time, the full execution of the sentence of death pronounced upon man.” *Confrontation, p. 20*

“For the sake of his dear Son the Father forbears a while the execution of death, and to Christ he commits the fallen race.” *Spiritual Gifts, Volume 3, p. 46*

9. “To a large degree Satan has succeeded in the execution of his plans. Through the medium of influence, taking advantage of the action of mind on mind, he prevailed on Adam to sin. Thus at its very source human nature was corrupted. And ever since then sin has continued its hateful work, reaching from mind to mind. Every sin committed awakens the echoes of the original sin.” *The Review and Herald, April 16, 1901*

“Immortality, promised to man on condition of obedience, had been forfeited by transgression. Adam could not transmit to his posterity that which he did not possess; and there could have been no hope for the fallen race had not God, by the sacrifice of His Son, brought immortality within their reach.” *The Great Controversy, p. 533*

10. “The inheritance of children is that of sin. Sin has separated them from God. Jesus gave His life that He might unite the broken links to God. As related to the first Adam, men receive from him nothing but guilt and the sentence of death. But Christ steps in and passes over the ground where Adam fell, enduring every test in man's behalf. He redeems Adam's disgraceful failure and fall by coming forth from the trial untarnished. This places man on vantage ground with God. It places him where through accepting Christ as His Saviour, he becomes a partaker of the divine nature.” *Manuscript Releases, Volume 9, p. 236*

“In assuming humanity Christ took the part of every human being. He was the Head of humanity. A Being divine and human, with His long human arm He could encircle humanity, while with His divine arm He could lay hold of the throne of the Infinite.” *Selected Messages, Volume 1, p. 252*

“And the word that was spoken to Jesus at the Jordan, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," embraces humanity. God spoke to Jesus as our representative. With all our sins and weaknesses, we are not cast aside as worthless. "He hath made us accepted in the Beloved." Ephesians 1:6.” *The Desire of Ages, p. 113*

11. "Adam's fall in the Garden of Eden caused all to sin; but in the Garden of Gethsemane Christ drank the bitter cup of suffering and death, that whosoever believes in Him may not perish, but have everlasting life." *The Signs of the Time, June 13, 1900*

"As a result of Adam's disobedience, every human being is a transgressor of the law, sold under sin. Unless he repents and is converted, he is under bondage to the law, serving Satan, falling into the deceptions of the enemy, and bearing witness against the precepts of Jehovah." *The Signs of the Time, July 23, 1902*

12. "It is the privilege of every believer in Christ to possess Christ's nature, a nature far above that which Adam forfeited by transgression. He who sees the Son by faith and believes in Him, is obedient to the commandments of God, and in this obedience he finds everlasting life." *The Upward Look, p. 18*

13. "The grace of Christ is freely to justify the sinner without merit or claim on his part. Justification is a full, complete pardon of sin. The moment a sinner accepts Christ by faith, that moment he is pardoned. The righteousness of Christ is imputed to him, and he is no more to doubt God's forgiving grace.

There is nothing in faith that makes it our saviour. Faith can not remove our guilt. Christ is the power of God unto salvation to all them that believe. The justification comes through the merits of Jesus Christ. He has paid the price for the sinner's redemption. Yet it is only through faith in His blood that Jesus can justify the believer." *The Signs of the Times, May 19, 1898*

"But while God can be just, and yet justify the sinner through the merits of Christ, no man can cover his soul with the garments of Christ's righteousness while practicing known sins, or neglecting known duties. God requires the entire surrender of the heart, before justification can take place; and in order for man to retain justification, there must be continual obedience, through active, living faith that works by love and purifies the soul." *The Review and Herald, November 4, 1890*

"God's forgiveness is not merely a judicial act by which He sets us free from condemnation. It is not only forgiveness for sin, but reclaiming from sin. It is the outflow of redeeming love that transforms the heart." *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing, p. 114*

"Can we receive the forgiveness of sin before we feel that we are sinners, and before we realize the sinfulness of sin? I think not. When we sincerely repent before God of our sins, we shall feel that without the pardoning blood of Christ we must perish. When we cast ourselves in our wretchedness wholly upon the mercy of Christ, and feel that unless He saves us we perish; when we yield our own will, our own way, and plead for Jesus to control our will and actions, then we come into a position where we can receive and appreciate pardon and the forgiveness of sin." *Manuscript Releases, Volume 13 pp. 34,35*

"God is approached through Jesus Christ, the Mediator, the only way through which He forgives sins. God cannot forgive sins at the expense of His justice, His holiness, and His truth. But He does forgive sins and that fully. There are no sins He will not forgive in and through the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the sinner's only hope, and if he rests here in sincere faith, he is sure of pardon and that full and free. There is only one channel and that is accessible to all, and through that channel a rich and abundant forgiveness awaits the penitent, contrite soul and the darkest sins are forgiven." *The Faith I Live By, p. 102*

“None but the contrite are forgiven; but it is the grace of the Lord that makes the heart penitent.” *The Review and Herald, June 24, 1884*

14. “With the sins of the world laid upon Him, He would go over the ground where Adam stumbled. He would bear a test infinitely more severe than that which Adam failed to endure. He would overcome on man's account, and conquer the tempter, that, through His obedience, His purity of character and steadfast integrity, His righteousness might be imputed to man, that, through His name, man might overcome the foe on his own account.” *Confrontation p. 17*

“ The weight of the sins of the world was pressing His soul, and His countenance expressed unutterable sorrow, a depth of anguish that fallen man had never realized. He felt the overwhelming tide of woe that deluged the world. He realized the strength of indulged appetite and unholy passion which controlled the world and had brought upon man inexpressible suffering.” *Confrontation p. 36*

15. “The cup of suffering was placed in His hand, as if He were the guilty one, and he drained it to the dregs. He bore the sin of the world to the bitter end. And yet men continue to sin, and Christ continues to feel the consequences of their sin as if he Himself were the guilty one.” *Manuscript Releases, Volume 13, pp. 369,370*

16. “By pledging his own life, Christ has made himself responsible for every man and woman on the earth. He stands in the presence of God, saying, Father, I take upon myself the guilt of that soul. It means death to him if he is left to bear it. If he repents, he shall be forgiven. My blood shall cleanse him from all sin. I gave my life for the sins of the world.” *The Review and Herald, February 27, 1900*

“Jesus, the world's Redeemer, stands between Satan and every soul. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." And those who lay their sins upon Christ through faith in his righteousness, will come off victorious. As our Mediator, Jesus was fully able to accomplish this work of redemption; but O, at what a price! The sinless Son of God was condemned for the sin in which he had no part, in order that the sinner, through repentance and faith, might be justified by the righteousness of Christ, in which he had no personal merit. The sins of every one who has lived upon the earth were laid upon Christ, testifying to the fact that no one need be a loser in the conflict with Satan. Provision has been made that all may lay hold of the strength of him who will save to the uttermost all who come unto God by him.” *The Review and Herald, May 23, 1899*

17. “The atonement of Christ was not made in order to induce God to love those whom he otherwise hated; it was not made to produce a love that was not in existence; but it was made as a manifestation of the love that was already in God's heart, an exponent of the divine favor in the sight of heavenly intelligences, in the sight of worlds unfallen, and in the sight of a fallen race. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." We are not to entertain the idea that God loves us because Christ has died for us, but that he so loved us that he gave his only-begotten Son to die for us.” *The Signs of the Times, May 30, 1895*