**Dealing with the errors of the doctrine of universal reconciliation**

**By MA Piet Guijt**

**Introduction**

In the article ‘Doctrine of universal reconciliation: a very cunning deception’ as published in the Promise Magazine of October 2016 (18), it is indicated why people, including some Christians, would gullibly embrace the thought of universal reconciliation and what the arguments of the defenders of the doctrine of universal reconciliation are and why these arguments have appeared to be totally unsustainable. In this Promise document we shall go into more details on each of the 45 questions that were asked and which are to be found on the internet site (19), written by Goedbericht, the Foundation that is engaged with the proclamation of the doctrine of universal reconciliation.

The spokesman of this foundation (which is engaged with the proclamation of the doctrine of universal reconciliation) André Piet, is trying to refute a number of objections against this doctrine of universal reconciliation. He does so by the means of responding to the 45 questions regarding the thought of universal reconciliation. Those are questions of people who clearly have doubts about the doctrine of universal reconciliation and by answering these questions, André Piet (hereafter in short mentioned as A.P.) is trying to take away the doubts by bringing his view forward. In this document we shall get into more details on the questions asked.

 Of course it is good that one clarifies and defends his view. It can make people think and also take away misconceptions. However, by reading through the answers of A.P. one cannot but be astonished about the sometimes crooked way of reasoning that he applies. It is regrettable to see how even preachers are sometimes dealing with God’s Word erroneously and without discernment. André Piet has clearly become entangled by his own studies, and in my view he has become a victim himself by the deceiving spirits, for people do not want to accept that he is misguiding people consciously, do they?

 Several believers have been confused by the subtle distortions of God’s Word by the supporters of the doctrine of universal reconciliation. That’s why we would like to respond with critical comments regarding the arguments of A.P. to the 45 questions. In that way we want to make clear that the criticisms that were submitted against universal reconciliation, have  absolutely not been refuted by him. And that it is absolutely necessary to have major doubts about the doctrine of universal reconciliation. Moreover: the doctrine of universal reconciliation should be resolutely rejected as a cunning deception.

**Refuting the arguments of André Piet, advocate of the doctrine of universal reconciliation**

We shall deal with several questions below, display the answer of A.P. and then briefly render our refutation of his view.

**Question 1.** *Where has the term universal reconciliation been derived from?*

According to A.P. it is derived from Colossians 1:20.

We will return to this at questions 19 and 20.

**Question 2.** *On which other biblical arguments does the faith in universal reconciliation rely?*

André Piet summarizes some arguments that would support the faith in universal reconciliation. It is a summary of some separate texts without their implication. In addition, some texts are not displayed clearly. For example, in Phil. 2:11 it does not read that all tongues will *wholeheartedly*confess. It is added by A.P. because it benefits his view. However, he forgets that there are *many* other Bible texts that clearly contradict the universal reconciliation. Therefore, we refer to ‘Enclosure 1. Bible texts that contradict the doctrine of universal reconciliation’ attached to the mentioned article in the Promise magazine of October 2016. Furthermore, we have dealt with several texts in that article, which were also mentioned by A.P. and which will be discussed below in relation to those questions.

**Question 3.** *Does the universal reconciliation imply a denial of the future judgment?*

André Piet answers that there will indeed be a judgment, which will however, not be eternal.

 That this thought is absolutely wrong, we will explain below at the questions concerned.

**Question 4.** *What happens with the ungodly after death?*

Unfortunately, from the answer of André Piet to this question, there seems to be a confusion in the mind of the supporters of the doctrine of universal reconciliation. Rightly, A.P. starts to answer that the ungodly will be judged according to his works (Rev. 20:12) and if his name is not written in the Book of Life, he will be thrown in the lake of fire, which is the second death (Rev. 20:14,15).

But now comes the error, for he incorrectly links 1 Cor.15:22-28 to Phil.2:10 and 11.

From the Statenvertaling (Old Dutch Translation) where it is said in 1 Cor.15:26 that death will be abolished as the last enemy, A.P. derives that death will be no more.

However, the Greek word ‘katargeitai’ can better be translated to ‘made ineffective’, made inactive, disabled, or as according to the NBG translation: dethroned.

But that only applies to the believers in Jesus Christ and those who keep His Word! They have been redeemed from death and will never see it (Jn. 8: 51). (Spiritual) death remains for those who are not in Christ.

 A.P. wrongfully thinks that once death will be no more in the lake of fire and that therefore all people who were in the lake of fire, will still be redeemed. But he forgets that death will always be in the lake of fire (Rev. 20:14).

**Question 5.** *That God desires all men to be saved, does not mean that this will really happen, does it?*

André Piet refers to some texts from which it would seem that every man will be saved, e.g. “God does whatever He pleases (Psa. 115:3), God not only desires all men to be saved (1 Tim. 2:4), but also to be the Redeemer (Savior) of all men (1 Tim. 4:10). God hardens and opens the hearts of whomever He wants (Rom. 9:18; Acts 16:14) and nobody can thwart His intentions and plans (Rom. 9:20; Job 42:2). Regarding the will of man, A.P. says: even the heart of the king is directed by God (Pro. 21:1).

 André Piet seems to have a wrong idea about the relationship between God’s sovereignty and the free will of man (7). We will elaborate a little bit longer on this issue. Even though A.P. acknowledges that God does not force man, he however does not see that with that will, man can make a choice, independently of God’s will. For that’s precisely the essence of the free will that God Himself has given to man. A.P. does point to the fact that God as the heavenly Potter, has shaped us as men, and according to the texts such as He hardens who He desires and has mercy on whom He desires (but which text, Rom. 9:18 is related to the election with a certain purpose, which is not about the final destination of man).

Though, A.P. seems not (to be willing?) to understand the essence of the free will, namely: the *moral* option given to man by God whether or not to choose for God.If God would *determine* the will of man, then man has no free will anymore.

 The Bible shows us clearly that man has received a free will, and that man can choose whether he accepts or rejects God’s will. Surely, simply from the fact that there has been a fall because Adam and Eve did not obey God, it already appears that man has a free will.

Of course God desires out of His love for men and for our own sake, that we obey Him, but He does not force. Man *himself*is allowed to choose or not to choose for accepting God’s offer of salvation by the suffering and death of Jesus on the cross of Golgotha. God only is a Savior of men who accept the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

 God Himself does what He pleases, but He gives each person a choice. *God determines the two options out of which man can choose*, but man has to choose himself *which* of those two options he chooses: for or against God. In other words: choosing to obey God, which is for one’s own sake, or choosing to disobey God and rejecting God’s grace offering in Jesus, which is against one’s own sake. Think e.g. of Deu. 11 about blessing or curse.

 When we study the Bible, we can discover the twofold will of God, namely His ‘absolute or sovereign will’ (God’s counsel, God’s judgment), that no man can resist. And also His ‘desiring will or resistive will’. The latter is the will that He presents to men, though which man, with his responsibility given to him by God Himself, can resist against Gods will or not. An example of God’s desiring will is to be found in Mat. 23:37 and Lk 13:34: . *Jerusalem…..How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling”*. And “*Today if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts*” (Heb.3:15). So, though man has been given the free will by God Himself(!), the desire (the desiring will) of God does not always happen.

“David Pawson, the English Baptist writes in his book *The way to hell*: Through the entire Bible it is made clear that man is responsible for himself and has to give account to God. If that was not so, then a judgment day would be one big farce”(12).

 From the following, it appears how crooked the supporters of the doctrine of universal reconciliation sometimes reason and distort the Bible. They say e.g. that the sacrifice of Jesus would not be sufficient for God, if man HIMSELF is responsible for his/her own salvation: namely by the right faith or by accepting a position. This is a dumb remark.

Again, man is permitted to *choose* whether to accept or not to accept God’s offer of salvation by the suffering and death of Jesus on the cross of Golgotha. A simple comparison: if a boy proposes to a girl, the girl has to choose herself whether to say yes or no.

**Question 6.** *What should we do with the texts that deal with ‘eternal judgment’ and suchlike?*

André Piet responds to this as follows: “Isaiah 32:14 and 15 speaks about a judgment over Jerusalem ‘forever’ (NASB). And in the same verse it is said: *“Until the Spirit is poured out upon us from on high”*. According to Jude 7, Sodom and Gomorra are examples of a punishment under eternal fire. Nevertheless, in the future these cities will be restored in their former glory (Ezekiel 16:55). An example of eternal punishment! The important point is: ‘eternity’ = age. Both words are exactly the same in the original text of the Bible. ‘Age during’ refers to ‘age’ (in Greek it is aiōn). In 2 Timothy 1:9 we read the term ‘from all eternity’, from which it appears that an ‘eternity’ has no beginning nor an end. Also note that ‘eternal’ is not set in the opposite of ‘time’ (see question 35). The eternal judgment is the judgment which is related to one or more ages (= time periods). At the return of the Lord Jesus Christ, not an endless eternity will begin but ‘the ‘coming ages’. So far, according to A.P..

 It is certainly not true that the word aiōn *is always* in relation to an age. It can actually also relate to eternity, which is the case in the most texts of the New Testament. Only in three texts (Rom. 16:25; 2 Tim. 1:9 and Tit. 1:2), among which texts are mentioned by A.P., there is mention of a certain time, namely chronois aiōniois or chronōn aiōniōn (literally: '[the] times of the ages’. What the supporters are doing now, is using (not to say: misusing) exactly these texts, which are *exceptions,* to ‘demonstrate’ that aiōn ‘thus’ means age, denying *all other* texts such as Lk.1:33; Rom.1:25; 9:5; 11:36; 2 Cor.11:31; Heb.13:8. Finally it is to be noted that it is not an argument for the doctrine of universal reconciliation if eternal would stand against time. Because eternity also regards time, albeit an endless time.

 Then we also have the question of Sodom and Gomorra. The texts begins with the word ‘like’, which makes clear that it is connected to the previously mentioned. The context makes clear that God’s judgment comes over everything that leaves the place which He has determined for His creatures in His creation. Regarding Sodom and Gomorra, it is about men who have exchanged the natural function for what is unnatural and committing indecent acts in a homosexual relationship with one another (see Gen. 19; Rom. 1:27). The sense is therefore that Sodom and Gomorra and the surrounding cities, have sinned in the similar way like the angels (Jude 6). They have committed the sin of the same apostate nature. Therefore they are an example of God’s judgment which he had determined for them in creation (8).

 André Piet interprets Jude 7 differently from what is meant. The fire that destroyed Sodom and Gomorra, is an *image* of the eternal fire of hell. Thus the text does not mean that the cities would never be allowed to be built as such anymore. From what Jesus says in Mat. 11:23,24 about the comparison of Sodom and Gomorra with Capernaum, is about the fact that there will be a *difference in judgment*. From Lk 12:47,48, it appears that God is also perfectly righteous in the eternal judgment and in which eternal judgment He considers the extent of knowledge and responsibility that one has.

**Question 7.** *What do the reference books say about the meaning of the word ‘eternity’ in the Bible?*

In response to this question, A.P. mentions two encyclopedias that would show that aiōn often is meant temporary.Of course nobody denies, as we have seen, that the word aiōn *sometimes* can refer to a temporary condition (this is the straw at which A.P. always clutches), but it is often related to an everlasting condition, which becomes very clear in the context. There are also several other encyclopedias that give the information which would not please A.P. See also 8, enclosures I,II and III.

 Normally the adjective ‘aiōnios’ has the meaning of a continual uninterrupted way of life (2,4).

Certainly, when it is said that something will not stop, for example “..their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched” (Mk 9:48)(13). This is strongly displayed in a certain metaphor to express eternity, e.g. eis pantas tous aiōnas, which literally means: ‘to all the age(s)’ (Jude 25) and eis ton aiōna tou aiōnos, which literally means ‘to the ages of the ages)’ (Heb. 1:8), which is translated with ‘forever and ever’. See also Rom.16:27; Gal. 1:5; Phil. 4:20; 1Tim.1:17; 2 Tim. 4:18; Heb. 13:21; 1 Pet. 4:11; 5:11; Rev. 1:6,18; 4:9v.; 5:13; 7:12; 10:6; 11:15; 14:11; 15:7; 19:3; 20:10; 22:5. The words ‘forever and ever’ is a typical Semitic expression, which has been copied from the Hebrew ‘le-olmei olamim’. The *separate* word ‘olam’ is in itself not always unambiguous, for ‘olam’ can mean among others: a ‘time period, a men’s age or eternity’, but if one intends to achieve unambiguity in Hebrew, then he just says in Hebrew ‘le-olmei olamim’, which means mandatory ‘forever and ever’ (8, enclosure II).

 Furthermore, we can point to what Brinkman (6) brings forward. In the New Testament the word aiōn appears 128 times. The translation of this word has caused a lot of problems, because especially from the angle of the concordant translators (almost all of them are supporting the doctrine of universal reconciliation) the attention is drawn to only one translation possibility, namely a (finite) time period. This is, however, wrong, for the etymology (origin) of the word aiōn is aienon, which means: always existing, endlessness. This is confirmed by many other sources (see among others 8, enclosures I,II and III).

 The Old Testament has been written in Hebrew and Aramaic. If we read texts in the New Testament, which are quotes of texts from the Old Testament, we see something very significant! For example 2 Cor. 9:9 (“as it is written: *He scattered abroad, He gave to the poor, His righteousness  endures forever.* ") is a quote from Psalm 112:9. This Psalm reads: “*He has given freely to the poor, His righteousness endures forever; His horn will be exalted in honor*”. It is therefore dumb to say that the word aiōn would refer to a limited period and thus not infinite, for that would contradict Psalm 112:9. The word ‘forever’ has been translated continuously in the Old Testament with always, eternal, forever. God’s righteousness is forever and inseparably related with God Himself which is eternal and therefore not: temporary.

 Other examples are the combination of Psa. 45:6 (*Your throne, O God, is forever and ever*[olam]*; :A scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom*) and Heb.1:8 (*Your throne, O God, is forever and ever*[aionos]*; A scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom*); it is therefore unjustified that the supporters of the doctrine of universal reconciliation claim that aiōn is always related to a finite time period. That is totally unsustainable. Compare also Heb. 5:6 with Psalm 110:4 and 1 Pet.1:25 with Isa 40:8. The word aiōn is a word full of possibilities, which we should not ‘limit’. It renders one of the unique aspects of God Himself, His ever existing being. The word aiōn stands for one of the personifications of the divine features of the Eternal Entity (6).

**Question 8.** *Does Matthew 25:46 prove that neither the eternal punishment nor eternal life will come to an end?*According to André Piet, Matthew 25:46 does not prove that the eternal punishment is ever lasting.

 How can he say that? For if we look at the full text, we read: “*And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous will go into eternal life.*” We see the same word aiōnion in the Greek original text. It would be very strange and inconsistent to consider the punishment to be a temporary condition and eternal life not, would it not?

 André Piet says further: “Eternal life is the life of the coming age, which we read in Luke 18:30. Thus the eternal punishment is the punishment of the coming age”. According to him, ‘eternal’ does not indicate the duration of time here, but the time of life and the time of punishment, which means that it belongs to the coming aiōn. Therefore, eternal life is the life of the coming age and the eternal punishment is the punishment of the coming age, according to A.P..

 But this is a misconception. In this context it is therefore very important to point to the expression ‘neither in this *aiōn/olam* nor in the *aiōn/olam* to come’ (e.g. Mat. 12:32), because it is misinterpreted by the advocates of the doctrine of universal reconciliation, namely as two *limited* periods. It is an expression which is frequently used in the Jewish apocalyptic and rabbinic literature and it indicates a contrast between the temporary (only this *aiōn*, in which this world still exists) and the permanent one (when this world will be abolished)”(4). “The logical conclusion of this distinction in *aiōns* is a sharp contrast between the current life and the coming life, in which God is not visible yet, and the life in the Kingdom of God that has become visible. The Bible doesn’t speak about more than two aiōns: there is the current aiōns and there is the aiōn to come, which will *not* cease. There is no mention about a third time period. That possibility is not offered, and in that way the escape route of a possible universal reconciliation, which people are searching for after ‘all *aiōns’*, has been radically cut off! (4).

 It is therefore incorrect what the supporters of the doctrine of universal reconciliation say, namely that the Bible would not teach that an endless age will come, but by this it mean the ‘ages to come’ in which God will bring His ‘eternal plan’ to completion. This interpretation has simply been fabricated in order to sustain their own view. After all, in order to be able to ‘sell’ this misconception, they need these ‘ages to come’ as a period that would pass (after which something else will follow). Now, in order to make it reasonable that the concept ‘eternal life’ is also finite, they consider eternal life to be a gate to the infinite and incorruptible life, which has no end. But this imagination of a gate is a wrong interpretation, for if we look at Rev. 4:10, we cannot assume that the worship of the elders will cease, do we? And we cannot derive from Rev. 11:15 that the government of God and Jesus will cease, can we? (1). As the above mentioned has already indicated, the expression ‘to all eternity’ is a strong expression of endlessness.

 Finally A.P. says: “The word that is translated in Mat. 25:46 into ‘punishment’, is literally: chastisement. It aims at an improvement for the one who is being chastised. It is another word for ‘punishment’ than in e.g. Acts 22:5 where it has been rightly rendered with punishment. An endless chastisement is a psychopathic idea, as every righteous parent knows”.

 First of all it should be noted that there are several Greek words for punishment, in order to indicate the distinction between punishment and chastisement. After all, the word ‘kolasin’ which is translated in Mat. 25:46 to ‘punishment’ would literally be: chastisement, according to A.P., but that meaning does not appear in the Greek vocabulary. Additionally, the concept of (pedagogical) punishment or chastisement depicts a wrong impression of the eternal damnation. The hell is not a re-education institute, but a place of revenge.

 “The doctrine of universal reconciliation wants to picture us a God who forces His enemies to change their minds the same way, in other words: by the means of torture (chastisement). People who proclaim this, call the endless torture a “psychopathic” idea. The idea of a God who forces his enemies as a tyrant by tormenting them to change their minds is however, much more ‘psychopathic’. Then the devil will ‘freely’ bend his knee before God? Are they serious?! How freely is it here? A free choice can never be realized by force and torment.

It is remarkable that a free choice is suddenly possible in this case, while the doctrine of universal reconciliation is among others based on the fact that man and therefore also the devil would [actually] have no free will” (1).

**Question 9**. *Will eternal life end?*

 From the answer to this question, the confusion seems to be caused by André Piet himself. He answers: “Beware: the age (to come) will end (cf. Lk 18:30 and Eph.2:7). However, life will not! On the contrary, death will ultimately be destroyed”.

 First of all, A.P. mistakenly assumes that the age to come will cease. The texts that he mentions do not demonstrate that. Additionally, it is true that death has been defeated by Jesus and that those who believe in Him, are allowed to share in the victory, but for those who do *not* believe in Jesus, death has *not* been defeated. Death, however, still has the power over those unbelievers and they are in the realm of the dead. And this death and  realm of the dead will forever be in the lake of fire (NBV) (Rev. 20:14), where also the beast and the false prophet (Rev. 19:20), the devil (Rev.20:9 and 10) and those who are not written in the book of life (Rev. 20:15) will be.

 **Question 10**. *Would the thought that everything will ultimately end well not lead people to live indifferently?*

 André Piet answers: “For some people it will. Already in the days of Paul there were people who scorned him and even put words in his mouth: let us do evil so that the good will come out of it. The judgement over these people is well deserved, according to the apostle (Rom.3:8)”.

 His answer is right in itself, but even if one would be indifferent or become indifferent, then it is still no argument for the alleged correctness of the doctrine of the universal reconciliation.

**Question 11**. *Why would we tell the gospel to others if they will still be saved?*

André Piet answers that it still has to be told, precisely because it is a good message. Furthermore, he however, points to the fact that the non-believers will not be saved from the coming wrath. “Those who believe will be saved from the coming wrath. The rest will not (1Thes.1:10). And because we know how much the Lord is to be feared, we try to convince people, which is according to the apostle in 2 Cor. 5:11”, according to A.P..

 It is strange that no consequence is drawn from this. After all, the fact that you are to convince people, implies that there is a possibility that they cannot be convinced and that they can reject the gospel. But also that possibility is denied by the supporters of the doctrine of universal reconciliation, for they conclude *mistakenly* from Lk 15: 1-7 that all lost people will ultimately be found by God. After all, the intention of the parable appears from verse 7. See also question 16.

**Question 12**. *Is the wish not the father to the thought for most people who believe in the universal reconciliation?*

André Piet answers: “If people want it, they will find themselves in very good company anyway! God Himself desires all men to be saved (1Tim. 2:4). And because God wants it, it will surely happen (1Tim. 4:10)”.

 God indeed wants every man to be saved, but God respects the choice of each individual, even though a choice against God ultimately means everlasting misery (= exile, which means being outside the Kingdom of God).

 Furthermore, A.P. says that when a person doesn’t want God to be the Savior of all men (e.g. because of tradition!), such a person will therefore be blinded for the royal Scriptural testimony about it (Jn. 7:17).

 First of all, it should be noticed that someone who rejects the doctrine of universal reconciliation, is not to be blamed for wishing people to be perished. Every sensible man would want all men to be saved, but unfortunately not all men will be willing to submit themselves to God. Furthermore A.P. mistakenly point to Jn. 7:17, because in the text it is about the fact that the Pharisees refuse to accept and acknowledge the doctrine of Jesus.

It should be kept in mind that it was Jesus Who more than anyone else also spoke about hell and warned about it!

**Question 13**. *Is the church history not against the doctrine of universal reconciliation?*

 André Piet answers as follows: “Great figures from the first centuries of the church history such as Origen, Clemens of Alexandria, Eusebius and Gregory of Nazianz still believed the Scripture, concerning this point. A major turning point happened since Augustine and later on when the dark Middle Ages began. ‘The ages to come’ of which the Scripture speaks, were replaced by an endless eternity. The valley of Hinnom became a mythological hell.

And God’s salvation plan for the whole creation was limited to a triumphant church above …”.

 What a misinterpretation of matters! First of all, it can be noticed that Origen was a gnostic who wanted to mix his gnostic ideas (which Paul strongly warned us about) with elements from the gospel. He taught among others that the stars have a soul and that demons will be saved (a quote from “*If The Foundations Be Destroyed*”, written by Charles Salliby) (1).

How strange is it that A.P. actually does not understand that the valley of Hinnom is a metaphor of hell. And he thinks mistakenly that many Christians think that God’s salvation plan for the whole world was limited to a triumphant church above. A lot of Christians know and believe that God’s salvation plan is intended for the whole creation. But the application to man is that he has been given an option. In his answer to question 13, A.P. says: “After all, Paul already warned us at the end of his life that after his death the people will not accept the sound teaching anymore (2 Timothy 4:3). With which it is to say that the church history is an extremely unreliable measure to judge a doctrine. Whether a doctrine is sound, is not to be decided by the church history, but only by the Scripture”.

 It is manifestly wrong for A.P. to assume that the doctrine of universal reconciliation is the sound doctrine. All objections in this argument are precisely intended to unmask the doctrine of universal reconciliation as a false gospel. Additionally, A.P. contradicts himself, for he also tries to hide himself behind people from the church history.

**Question 14***. Is it not very complicated for a simple Bible reader to discover the universal reconciliation?*

 André Piet says: “No and yes. A simple reader of the Bible is confronted in each page with a God who is looking for the lost and finds him, Whose love has no boundaries and Who makes all things well”.

 Yes, indeed and of course God desires every man to come to the acknowledgment of the truth, for God loves man, but A.P. does not understand the essence of the free will that God Himself (!) has given to man. After all, love leaves man free in their moral choice. See also our comment to the questions 5 and 16.

 A.P. continues to say: “At the same time a simple Bible reader reads about an ‘eternal punishment’, about torment ‘to all eternity’, etc.. That such terminology is contrasting what is written in the original text, is not naturally known by most people. And that causes the confusion. That’s what makes it complicated sometimes to clearly find the universal reconciliation in the Scripture”.

 André Piet may draw his support from the original text, but (also) those who are able to read the original text, [hopefully] do not allow themselves to be confused by the errors of the doctrine of universal reconciliation. In my view he does not understand thoroughly what the referred terminology implies. He even dares to claim that it is man who is covering and unjustly holding down the truth of the doctrine of universal reconciliation and in that way tries to manipulate Rom. 1:18 for his ramshackle doctrine of universal reconciliation.

**Question 15**. *Must the universal reconciliation also be preached?*

 André Piet says among others: “… not the universal reconciliation should be preached, but the Universal Reconciler. Not the salvation of all men but the Savior of all men. *It is a trustworthy statement deserving full acceptance* and of which the apostle says: *Prescribe and teach these things* (1Tim. 4:9-11)”.

 His answer sounds godly, but it is in fact a smoke curtain. Indeed God has  made it *possible* that *each* individual *can* be saved by the faith in the accomplished work of Jesus Christ, but A.P. still does not want to consider that man has a free will and can even choose for not submitting himself to God. But that finally means a choice for hell. “There are ultimately just two kind of people: those (the believers) who say to God: “Thy will be done”, and those (the unbelievers) to whom God will say: “your will be done” (The Great Divorce, C.S. Lewis)(12).

**Question 16**. *Is the second death not a definite destruction?*

 From the answer of A.P., the confusion in his doctrine appears to be very obvious. He says: “If that would be the definite end, then death would ultimately still have the last word. In addition, God would then become an endless Loser …. Creatures, work of His own hands would have become inaccessible for His limitless love”.

 No, death does not have the last word. After all, death itself will be thrown in the lake of fire, like it has already been indicated earlier in question 9 (Rev. 20:14) and also those who are in death, are the losers and therefore not God. God is the great Conqueror. Because God has given a free will to man (otherwise we would be puppets), the Almighty God has consciously chosen for running the risk of being rejected by some people. God is looking for people, but does not force. André Piet tries to demonstrate with Lk 15:4 (God is looking for the lost one until He finds him) that ultimately every man will be saved. But A.P. neglects to point to verse 7 which reads: “*I can guarantee that there will be more happiness in heaven over one person who turns to God and changes the way he thinks and acts than over 99 people who already have turned to God and have his approval*”*.* That text indicates the true meaning of the parable which Jesus spoke out! In addition, the fact that God finds us, does not necessarily mean that people are willing to go with Him like the lost sheep in the parable. After all, not every person is willing to be a ‘sheep’, for unfortunately some want to be a ‘goat’ (Mat. 25: 32 and 33).

**Question 17**. *Don’t we deprive the coming judgment from its seriousness when it still comes to an end?*

 André Piet answers that also a temporal judgment and suffering is heavy and serious. Indeed, temporal suffering is also terrible, but it is still not an evidence for the correctness of the doctrine of universal reconciliation. Nor is Psa. 30:5 or 6, which text is mentioned by A.P.

**Question 18**. *Do the final chapters of the Bible show an universal reconciliation?*

As it is to be expected, André Piet claims that these chapters do not contradict the universal reconciliation, for God will still make everything new, won’t He? (Revelation 21:5).

 But he has to continue to read a little bit further (verse 8), for it reads: “*But cowardly, unfaithful, and detestable people, murderers, sexual sinners, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars will find themselves in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death*”. Those people will not take part in the renewed creation, for only those who are in Christ, the Lamb of God, will take part in it (Rev. 21: 9 - Rev. 22: 5).

 A.P. claims that Paul looks further than John. For John speaks about the throne of the Lamb and about ruling unto the aions of aions (Rev. 22:5). Paul, however, shows according to him, that Christ’ government speaks about an ‘until’ (1 Cor. 15:25). In Revelation 21 and 22 there is still mention of (the second) death (21:8). Paul however says that also death will be defeated as the final enemy (1 Cor. 15:26), according to André Piet. This shows that A.P. does not have a good picture of several concepts. After all, the fact that death will be defeated as an enemy does not mean that there is no death anymore, but that death has no power anymore over those who believe in Jesus. That is what Paul is talking about and it will precisely *precede* the end about which John speaks in Rev. 19, 20 and 21 where it is indicated who will be thrown in the lake of fire (Rev. 19:20; 20:10,14,15 and 21:8). André Piet just reverts the case.

**Question 19**. *What does ‘reconcile’ in Col.1:20 mean?*

“The word ‘apokatallasso’ which is used here, indicates reconciliation, the removal of hostility between God and men and in the relationship between men, which is another word than ‘hilasmos’ in e.g. 1 Jn. 2:2 which is about the covering of sins. God reconciles the world to Himself ‘by the blood of His [Jesus] cross’ (NASB). Through the cross, God teaches Love to the world, against all hostility”, according to André Piet.

 But the erroneous assumption that he makes, is that he thinks that all people will accept the love offer of God. Unfortunately, this will not be the case. In 2 Cor. 5:20 we read the appeal: “Be reconciled to God (but not in the meaning of an event [to be expected], but in the sense of an appeal!).  Unfortunately, practice shows that not every individual is willing to be reconciled to God. Moreover, it must be pointed out that ‘the sins are covered’ (hilasmos) does not automatically mean that ‘the relation has been restored’ (katallagè). The fact that people are redeemed or become redeemed, happens only by one’s faith in the Lord Jesus.

**Question 20**. *Do we make a limitation in Col. 1:20 by not mentioning that which is under the earth? (For this does occur in Phil. 2:10).*

 To my astonishment A.P. says: ‘that ‘únder’ the earth’ are the dead, who certainly have ever been ón the earth”. He takes the concept ‘under the earth’ very literally, namely as the dead being buried. This is an unspiritual interpretation.

 It is remarkable that he still indicates in his answer that *hostility* is the condition for a reconciliation. This is a nonsense remark (of course you can only save a drowning man when he is in the water. That is quite obvious, an empty obviousness), and an indication of how one’s mind is deformed when he by any means persists to defend a certain unbiblical view. After all, the hostility is the *problem* for which a solution, namely the reconciliation was necessary, and *not* a condition to share in the reconciliation. After all, the condition is the *(willingness) to accept* the reconciliation.

 The Study Bible of ‘In de Ruimte’ is right to say the following about Col. 1:20: “Some people have read a proclamation of the universal reconciliation in this text, whereby also the unbelievers and the devil together with his angels will find peace with God. However, we should rather think of a situation whereby everything that has rebelled against God, will be submitted to and will have to acknowledge the government of Christ (Phil. 2:10)”.

**Question 21**. *Does Philippians 2:11 not simply mean that once all tongues will be forced to confess that Jesus is Lord?*

In Phil. 2:10 and 11 it is said that every tongue will confess that Jesus is the Lord. According to André Piet all, including those who are under the earth, will praise God wholeheartedly, for it says ‘tongue’ and not ‘lip’. For tongue indicates the inward man according to A.P., while worshiping with the lips is only the outward and appearance. This has been nicely fabricated, but not true because ‘glossa’ refers to language and the speech sense. And sometimes the word lip is also used when it regards sincere confessions (Heb. 13:15/16). Additionally, the word ‘ex-omologeo’ can refer to both a sincere confession and a lip service. Finally, it can be noticed that also those who are perished, have to acknowledge that Jesus is Lord. That is also to the honor of God the Father (9).

**Question 22**. *Does ‘all’ in all kinds of ‘universal reconciliation texts’ not refer to just all the believers?*

 Supporters of the doctrine of universal reconciliation conclude from the texts such as Rom. 5: 18, 1 Cor. 15:22 and Col. 1:20 that ‘therefore’ all people will be saved, but they forget that the salvation which is offered by God to man who is separated by sin has to be *accepted*. The sacrifice of Jesus has been *intended* for all men, but not everyone accepts it.

Unfortunately. God gives man, as we already saw, the choice to accept or not to accept His offer of mercy in Christ. The choice of man also becomes apparent when we read Jn 3:17 (also Jn 12: 46) carefully, for in the text there is mention of ‘so that’. This on the one hand indicates the desire of God, but on the other hand also the possibility that people can reject the offer of God. Also Rom. 3:23/24 is not a proof of the correctness of the doctrine of universal reconciliation. After all, in the respective pericope, the *condition* of righteousness and salvation has been spoken about several times, namely the faith in Jesus Christ. In other words: the context makes it clear that ‘all’ are only justified in so far as they have believed. “The same argument can also be applied to Rom. 11:32 and Rom. 5:17 - 19 [see below]” (2). Additionally, it can be noticed that only those who believe in Jesus, have received the gift of righteousness (verse 17).

We shall discuss some texts below. First of all Rom. 5: 17-19, particularly: “*So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness  there resulted justification of life to all men*” (Rom.5:18). Jildert de Boer writes: “The words ‘all men’ and ‘all’ are read as all men without exception, thus in absolute sense” (5). “But thereby the context is not taken into account. In the context of Romans 5 it is *from the first verse already about faith* and then about the difference between being in Adam and being in Christ. All *who believe in Christ*are justified and enter into life” (5).  André Piet also ignores the verses 12–19. Especially in these verses is spoken about *the faith* in Jesus Christ. That is the criterion for salvation. (We now pass the remarks of the supporters at verses 12–18; we shall deal with them later at the questions 36 and 44).

With the text 1 Cor. 15:22 (that ‘in Christ all will be made alive) mentioned by the supporters, the doctrine of universal reconciliation cannot be defended. Besides, “The important thing here, is that it is also written ‘in Christ’. There is only one possibility to get in Christ, which is through the way of faith. Also verse 23 points out to that, for this verse indicates whom it is about: ‘*after that those who are Christ’s at His coming’*” (2). There is a sharp contrast between those who will and those who will not experience the resurrection (verse 19, 31, 32 and 58). In the texts (verses 18, 19, 20 and 23) is said that those who are Christ’s, will be resurrected.

**Question 23**. *Does John 3:36 prove that there is no end to the wrath of God?*

 André Piet says: “No, it does not prove it. As long as one is disobedient to the Son of God, the wrath of God abides on him. The Greek word which is translated here with ‘abide’ is translated in Jn 1:40 with ‘stay’ … and lasted there only one day”.

 It is quite staggering how A.P. tries to get his right with meaningless arguments. The verb ‘abide’ or ‘stay’ can after all refer to both a short and a long period or even to eternity.

**Question 24**. *Does 1 Cor. 15:22 (“For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.”) mean that all men will resurrect?*

 All men will resurrect. In Jn 5:28 and 29 we read: “*Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs will hear His voice, and will come forth; those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment*”. Now A.P. says beautifully: “The whole human race will know (when death will be defeated) the life which the last Adam had ever revealed on Easter morning as the First born” [1 Cor. 15:22], but he overlooks that death will ultimately be thrown into the lake of fire, where also those who are condemned will be. Not all who will die in Adam, but only those, who die *in Christ,* are related with Him, and will rise to a resurrection of life. See our comment at the questions 30 and 45.

**Question 25**. *Has God also reconciled to the unbelievers?*

 André Piet: “No, for God has never been an enemy and therefore cannot reconcile. Not He, but the world is hostile. What God did at the cross, was proving His LOVE. Men killed His Son, but He did not count it against the world (2 Cor. 5:19). For Christ died for all (2 Cor. 5:15) in order to give Life to all. No hostility will be able to resist against so much Love”.

 The initiative for the reconciliation indeed came from God. Even though God loves man and Jesus died for each individual, it still has to be noticed that’ no hostility will be able to resist against so much love’ is unfortunately a wrong assumption, because A.P. forgets about the rebellious heart of many people. We still want to point out that 2 Cor. 5: 17 indicates that only those who are in Christ, thus have accepted Him and have become children of God (Jn 1:12) have become a new creation.

 **Question 26**. *What is hell actually?*

 André Piet points out that for the word ‘hell’ the original text ‘gehenna’ is written. And that Greek word, according to him, refers to the valley of Hinnom, which is south of Jerusalem and which was a place of the waste incinerator of the city.

 Indeed that was true, but the mistake which is made, is that people do not perceive that this valley of Hinnom is used as a *metaphor* for hell. Of course hell is not an underground place for immortal souls where everlasting torments are taking place.

 (The) hell is actually a *spiritual* condition, for it has not so much to do with a place and location in the spiritual world, but with condition and situation. The Bible uses symbolic language to express this condition of eternal destruction “far from the presence of the Lord” (2 Thes.1:9).  It is a condition of God forsakenness, of a concentration of powers of darkness, ‘helping’ each other in destruction (compare the image of shadow in 2 Chron. 20:23), an eternal separation from God, destruction, remorse, inactivity, powerlessness, desolation and desperation. “*Where their worm will not die and their fire will not be quenched*”, says the Bible (Isa. 66:24 and Mark. 9:38), which indicates timelessness of the remnant that has been left and the remorse that is gnawing at their conscience. In hell evil punishes itself, for people are left to themselves, thus to selfishness and to the powers of darkness to which they were attached (5). (The) hell is a spiritual place/condition of 1. Physical discomfort; 2. Moral depression; 3. Moral depravity; 4. Special desperation; 5. Spiritual death (12).

 It is remarkable that A.P. still points to Jer. 31:40 where the prophet prophesies that this valley of corpses will someday be holy to the LORD. He tries to show that hell will once cease. But now A.P. confuses two matters with one another. Besides, Jer. 31:40 is about the spiritual restoration of Jerusalem, of those who serve the LORD, and it is not about the disappearance of hell.

**Question 27**. *Did the Lord Jesus proclaim an ultimate universal reconciliation?*

 If there is one Person who absolutely did not preach the doctrine of universal reconciliation, it would be Jesus Himself. After all, nobody spoke about hell like He did (see e.g. Mat. 5:22,29; 7:23; 18:8,9; 25:41,46 and the other three gospels). Who are we that we would know better than He?

**Question 28.** *What will happen with the devil?*

 André Piet writes: “The last thing that we specifically read about the devil, is that he will be thrown in the lake of fire where he will be tortured (literally) ‘untill aions of aions’ (Rev. 20:10), which means till the most extreme ages. Is this endless? Of Christ we read in Rev. 11:15 that He will rule ‘until the aions of aions’. We know from 1 Cor. 15:24-28 however, that Christ will rule until. Then God will be all in all. In other words ‘until the aions of aions’ is not the same as endless”.

 This answer is wrong because of several reasons. First of all, it is not right to see ‘until the ages of ages’ as ‘until the most extreme ages’. A.P. lands at this wrong interpretation due to a confusion with e.g. an expression such as the king of kings, i.e. the most excellent king. The expression ‘until the ages of ages’, however, is a Semitic expression that refers to endlessness. See question 7. Furthermore he interprets the word ‘to’ erroneously as until, but forgets that also the word ‘in’ is mentioned. He also says this when he mistakenly tries to argue that Rev.14:11 does not teach an endless torment (see our comment at question 33). It is also very questionable to present Rev. 11:15 as a contradiction to 1 Cor. 15: 24-28. Although the Son submits Himself to God the Father, still it will forever remain true that Jesus is and will remain to be the King of kings (see e.g. Dan. 7:13,14; Rev. 20:13).

 Additionally A.P. says: “In Col. 1:20 we read that God will reconcile mutually (?), not only on the earth but also in heaven. So also the hostile citizens of heaven (Eph. 6:12) will transform into creatures that relate harmoniously with their Creator. Then satan (= the adversary) will be no more satan and the devil no more devil!”

 Here we see again a distorted interpretation of a text. A.P. actually forgets that fallen angels, thus also the devil, will never ever receive mercy (Heb. 2:16). In this context we can point out to the fact that the lake of fire has been precisely prepared for the devil and his demons (Mat. 25:41). In addition, satan and his angels have made an irrevocable, irreversible choice in their original rebellion against God, which is for an eternal, irreconcilable hostility against the Almighty God. The devil is not able to repent and therefore there is no possibility for reconciliation for him and his demons (13). Consider also that Jesus did not come to save the devil, but to destroy him.

**Question 29**. *What is the lake of fire?*

 André Piet’s answer is quite bizarre. Speaking about the lake of fire, he says that from the context and other texts (he does not indicate which ones) it is seemingly referring to a battle, not far away from the Dead Sea. This is complete nonsense.

 A.P. writes further: “With regard to the judgment before the Great White throne, we read that those whose names are not written in the Book of Life, will be thrown in the lake of fire.  On two occasions it is also said that this is the second death (20:14; 21:8). Note that for satan and his two henchmen the lake of fire will not be a second death. In any case, they will not be dead, but they will actually be tortured there. And additionally it is not a second death, because they haven’t even been dead for a first time. Conclusion: for all but three exceptions, ‘the lake of fire’ will be for everyone a situation of death and not of continuation of life”. This is according to A.P.

 This shows that A.P. does not understand well what the *second* death is, which is a *spiritual* condition of *men* who are forever separated from God. The second death regards only people, for they know about a first death (which is being separated from God in this life by sin), and the second death is being permanently separated from God. But also the devil and his demons are spiritually dead, separated from God. Also death itself will continue to exist as a spiritual reality, namely in the lake of fire. Rev. 20:14 reads: “*Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire*”.

**Question 30**. *Will death be defeated when it is thrown into the lake of fire? (Rev. 20:14)*

 André Piet replies: “Death will be defeated when all men are made alive! Death will be swallowed up in victory (1Cor. 15:22-26, 54)”. This is not an answer to the question but only the quoting of texts in which the same words appear, but which are to be used and explained in a very different context. What is meant in 1 Cor. 15, is that death has no more power over those who believe in Jesus. The second death will have no power over them (1 Cor. 20:6a) and they will not suffer loss or harm as a result of the second death (Rev. 2:11). But death as such will remain [ultimately in the lake of fire] and has power over those who do *not* believe in Jesus (Rev. 21:8). See our comment to question 4. Everybody will ultimately undergo the judgment. Only a personal faith in the gospel leads to eternal salvation.

**Question 31**. *What does ‘soul and body will perish in hell’ (Mat. 10:28) mean?*

 André Piet remarks that the ungodly will be judged in the millennial kingdom of peace. “They will die in the horrible valley of Hinnom (see question 26) and in that way the blessing of the millennial kingdom of peace will be taken away from them. They will rise to a resurrection of judgment after a thousand years”.But that is no (universal) reconciliation, is it ? Besides, we can refer to  Fijnvandraat (17). He deals with several Greek words for ‘destruction’ and ‘perish’ and concludes that in the New Testament those words in no way have the meaning of destruction, thus cease to exist.

**Question 32**. *Will some people never be able to repent (Heb. 6:4-8 and 10:26)?*

 It is really staggering to read how persistently André Piet is trying in all kinds of ways to hold on to his false teaching. One may wonder whether A.P. himself believes what he claims.

For he writes: “This is about Messianic Hebrews, who returned to Judaism (“crucifying the Son of God again”). The destruction and burning of Jerusalem and the temple would not last any longer (“which results in burning”, “fierceness of fire”). The Lord would begin to judge His people (10:31; 8:13). Who could ever bring these apostate Jews, who consciously rejected the gospel, to repentance again? These Jews literally had no sacrifice left any more: they did not know (acknowledge) the true Sacrifice anymore and the offering service in Jerusalem would soon come to end. The statements from these portions can only be understood within the context of their historical background. The final destination does not play a role here”. This is according to A.P.Although the epistle had been written to the Hebrews, what is written in Heb. 6: 4-8 can regard every believer (Jew or non-Jew, for as believers, we both belong to the church of Jesus Christ) who has received the Holy Spirit, though afterwards yet forsake the faith.

The mentioned texts absolutely do not deal with the destruction and burning of Jerusalem and the temple, thus the link which A.P. assumes between the burning, the fierceness of fire and the destruction of the temple, is not right at all. And whether the temple would have been destroyed or not, the offering service in Jerusalem nevertheless had no value anymore, which means that the argument of A.P. about the offering service is not acceptable. And what he is trying to deny, particularly that it would not concern the final destination, is totally unfounded, considering the context of the epistle. Additionally, the burning is a known symbol for God’s eternal punishment (cf. Mat. 3:12, 13:30, 18:8 and 9, 2 Thes. 1:8, Rev. 20:14 and 15).

**Question 33**. *Does Revelation 14:11 teach a ceaseless torment?*

 The answer of André Piet is his favorite theme. According to him ‘forever and ever’ is a deceptive translation because it is stated: ‘to the aions of aions’, which is: to the most extreme aions. He thinks that it is to be derived from the analogy of e.g. the Holy of Holies, the heaven of heavens, etc. As it has already been said at question 7 and 28, the term ‘forever and ever’ is a Semitic expression which indicates endlessness.  Then A.P. says: “Consider also that here it is not said that the torment will continue ‘in the aions of aions’, but ‘the smoke of their torment will rise to the aions of aions’, the SMOKE which causes their torment will rise to the aions of aions”. What does A.P. actually mean by this? Actually nothing. It is again only a smoke curtain of deceptive remarks. Additionally A.P. states that the *smoke* is causing their torment. This is not correct, for there is mention of the smoke of their torment. The smoke is not the *cause*, but the *result* of the *fire* which causes the torment. There is no smoke without fire.

**Question 34**. *Does Luke 1:33 prove that Christ rules endlessly?*

 In order to continuously trying to show that eternity does not necessarily mean forever, A.P. makes efforts to weaken (not to say: deprive (this text) of all effectiveness) this text in which it is said that Jesus will rule ‘forever and ever’ as king over the house of Jacob and that His kingdom will have no end, by putting this against 1 Cor. 15:22-28, particularly verse 25:

“*For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet*” and verse 28 which reads that the Son will submit Himself to God. A.P. says: “.. the ruling of Christ has an ‘until’ after which the Kingdom will then permanently get into the hands of the Father”.

 In that way he actually tries to demonstrate that the kingdom of Jesus will still come to an end and that Lk 1:33 would (must) be a mistake. But even if God is all in all, Jesus will still remain to be the King (of kings) forever. We can refer to Isa. 9:5,6 and Dan. 2:44 and also to Dan. 7:13,14 and Micha 4:7 from which it appears that both Jesus and God are mentioned as eternally ruling Kings.

 **Question 35**. *How can ‘eternal’ in Rom.16:26 and 2 Cor. 4:18 meant to be temporal?*

 First of all, it should be noticed that the question is quite strange, for in the texts mentioned it is not said that eternal can be temporal. This question undoubtedly comes from someone who has heard A.P. claiming that eternal would not mean everlasting, but only temporal. Regarding Rom. 16:26,  A.P. says: “The fact that God is ‘the eternal God’, means that He is the God of ages, the King of aions (1 Tim. 1:17). Just like the ‘long ages’ (Rom.16:25) are ‘the ages of ages’, so is ‘the eternal God’ the God of ages”.

 However, it cannot be derived from this that God is just a temporal God, can it? After all, God is an eternal God, Who ‘is beyond time’. Additionally, A.P. contradicts himself by quoting 1 Tim. 1:17, for precisely in this verse a direct link is made between the God of ages (which according to André Piet is not eternal) and the everlasting God!

 Regarding 2 Cor. 4:18 (“*while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal*”), André Piet finds it problematic that the Greek word ‘proskaira’ in the NBG translation, is not translated with ‘for the occasion’ or ‘a special moment’ (or ‘temporary’ as in Mat. 13:21), but with ‘transient’.  The Greek vocabulary however, gives more possibilities for the translation of the word ‘proskaira’, and depending on the context, there is an option to choose what is the most appropriate. And Fijnvandraat (17) writes: “Nowhere has the typically new testamentical meaning of aiōnios been expressed clearer than in 2 Cor. 4:18, where the ‘eternal’ is put in clear contrast to the ‘transient’”.

 Finally A.P. points to 2 Tim. 1:9, in which ‘chronôn aiôniôn’ appears, again trying to make acceptable that time is not the opposite of the term eternal times. No, of course not, but the difference is that the transient has an end, and that eternity regards a time that has no end. This text is one of the only three texts (Rom. 16:25; 2 Tim. 1:9 and Tit. 1:2), in which there is mention of a certain time, namely chronois aiōniois or chronōn aiōniōn (literally: ‘[the] times of the ages’. See also our comment at question 6.

 Besides, it is remarkable that A.P. tries to emphasize again and again that time is not the opposite of the term eternal times, for there is no one who claims that aiōn *always* refers to eternity, but sometimes also to a *certain period*or*a time period.*The word ‘aiōn’ can have more meanings, but A.P. wants to relate it mistakenly in *all cases* to the temporal (for that is more appropriate for the doctrine of universal reconciliation).

**Question 36**. *Could it be that ‘all men’ from Rom. 5:18 is not literally ‘all’ but ‘many’ (verse 19)?*

 Regarding this, André Piet says as follows: “When all men’ in the first part of Rom.5: 18 is indeed all men, then ‘all men’ in the second part should also be. Otherwise the comparison is not pure. And when ‘the many’ in the first part of Rom. 5:19 include all men, we have no reason to accept that the second ‘the many’ in the same verse, would suddenly mean ‘not all men’”. At question 22 we already dealt with that extensively. However, in the pericope of Rom.5, there is a reason why ‘the many’ is not all men. After all, in the verses 1-11 the apostle Paul stresses the importance of accepting Jesus Christ as the Redeemer, the Reconciler.

 In verse 18 Paul stresses the parallel line of the comparison, namely, so as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to death to all men *who sin*, even so through one act of righteousness, there resulted justification of life to all men *who accept it*.While Adam is the head of the unredeemed humanity, Christ is the head of the redeemed humanity, which are those who have accepted Jesus as their Redeemer.

 By supporters of the doctrine of universal reconciliation it has been argued on a level of detail of texts (sometimes even totally illogical), but the main errors of that doctrine are deeper, e.g.: the denial of the free will (regarding the moral choice) of man and the gravity of the evil, namely wanting to be god himself.

**Question 37**. *What does the torment of the rich man in Luke 16:19-31 mean?*

 According to A.P., this story is not to reveal anything about possible experiences or considerations in the realm of the dead. The story of the rich man and the poor Lazarus has nothing to do with the dying of man and his fate in the hereafter. No, according to him it is a satire (!) addressed to the Pharisees who were greedy for money (16:14). And he refers to Luke 13:27-30 where we read that there will be prominent Jews (>the rich man!) who at the coming of the Kingdom of God will see Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (>Abraham’s lap) but they themselves will be thrown outside (insurmountable chasm). So far A.P..

 But that is not an answer to the question. One comment is: “When you examine the explanation as it is given by the ‘universal reconcilers’, the first thing you notice, is that they cannot claim an erroneous translation. As a matter of fact, they cannot claim anything and therefore they hide behind Luke 13:26-30 where it is described what Jesus (the Master of the house) replies to the request for entrance: “*Then you will begin to say, ‘We ate and drank in Your presence, and You taught in our streets’: and He will say, ‘I tell you, I do not know where you are from; depart from Me, all you evildoers.’ In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, but yourselves being thrown out. And they will come from east and west and from north and south, and will recline at the table in the kingdom of God. And behold, some are last who will be first and some are first who will be last.’*What is said here by Jesus, only regards the final judgment, given the fact of the weeping and gnashing of teeth. See also Mat. 25:30: “*Throw out the worthless slave into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth*”. Therefore, we better set aside the explanation of the ‘universal reconcilers’ on the parable of the rich Lazarus and the poor man (this is again not a typing error)” (1).

**Question 38**. *There will never be forgiveness for one certain sin, or will there be? (Mark 3:29)?*

 From the answer of André Piet it becomes clear once again how simplistic his argumentation is. He says: “It is a striking example of how randomly the Greek word aiōn is usually translated. Here this word is translated with ‘never’. In the parallel portion of Matthew 12:32, we however, read: “*it shall not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come*”. Here the same aiōn is presented as century. Otherwise it had to be translated as follows: ‘neither in this eternity, nor in the eternity to come’..! That the translation word ‘eternity’ just simply is not acceptable, appears from a simple comparison of texts. Not ‘eternity’ but ‘age’ (‘era’) is the meaning of the word aiōn”. So far A.P..

 A.P. comes again with his favorite theme. As it has already been noticed, the word aiōn can imply *both* era (century) and eternity. Therefore people cannot translate the word *consistently* with era (century) or eternity. The context in which the word is used, determines it. What A.P. now also does again, is misusing this fact and interpreting the text in such a way that it benefits his argument and in which way he, undoubtedly unintentional, deceives people, including himself. Besides, the so called simple comparison of texts mentioned by him, is totally not applicable, for ‘toutoi toi aini oute and toi mellonti’ in Mat. 12:32 should *not* be translated into ‘neither in this eternity, nor in the eternity to come’, but into ‘neither in *this* era (which is this time period in which we now live), nor in the era *to come*’ (which is the expression for eternity, as it appears from other texts).

 André Piet also says: “The Scripture teaches that soon an endless eternity will come but speaks about ‘the coming ages’. In those time periods God will accomplish His ‘eternal purpose’. Until He will be all in all”.

 This sounds very nice, but it is not true, however. First of all, there is no mention of the coming centuries, but of the so called coming era (singular), the idea that it *is* the same as the endless eternity, which A.P. wants to deny continuously, in order to maintain his doctrine of universal reconciliation. It must be admitted that it can be confusing when a certain word has several meanings and that therefore differences and sometimes also insecurities may occur in translations. In this grey zone there can therefore be mention of a difference in the interpretation of the text. That’s what the advocates of the doctrine of universal reconciliation are making use (read misuse) of and they ignore the many, many (!) texts, which precisely are absolute clear.

**Question 39**. *Does the Bible teach about a ‘second chance’?*

 André Piet takes advantage of the word chance, in order to reply that salvation is not a lottery. “God is a Savior of all men (1 Tim. 4:10). That is not a chance but a guarantee!”

 Of course the gospel of salvation is not a lottery. The gospel indicates that man can receive eternal life by choosing to believe in Jesus Christ (Jn 3:16). When someone does that, God guarantees him that He will take care of His children and that they will be saved forever. But there is no guarantee that one will choose for Jesus. That depends on a personal choice. Therefore the problem is not God’s, but man’s. See more at question 40.

**Question 40**. *Does 1 Tim. 4:10 not only teach that God is a Savior for all men?*

 Although we assume from the translation that God is a Savior *of* all men, especially the believers, God grants eternal salvation to the unbelievers, but the most to the believers? How are we supposed to imagine that? “The most obvious is the explanation that God in principle is the Savior of all men (which means all men can in principle be saved), but actually only of those who believe” (2). A better translation is therefore: but more precisely, namely the believers. “Only he who comes to the Savior, will be saved. Compare Joseph who in Gen.41:45 is called ‘Savior of the world’. But *only those who came to him*, got saved” (15). See also our comment at the questions 5 and 12 in which also the text 1 Tim. 4:10 was taken into consideration.

**Question 41**. *Does John 3:16 not read ‘whosoever believes’? Is that not a limitation?*

 What André Piet (partially) answers to this question is staggering. He says: ‘God loves the world, according to John 3:16. That is a fact. The unbelief of man does not change that at all (Rom.3:3). It is strange that John 3:16 is so familiar, but that just a few people know what is written in the following verse 17: “*For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him*”. The result of it is, that if God is not really going to save the world, He would then have sent His Son to the world for nothing. Then He will be the great target-misser or (in the language of the Scripture) the greatest sinner of all times”.

 How can A.P. say that? (and at question 16 he called God already the great loser if the doctrine of universal reconciliation would not be true). A person takes part in the salvation, only when he accepts it in faith! Actually, in many places in the Bible a call is addressed to men for repentance. Man have to choose himself. But if man chooses for the evil, he ultimately has caused himself misery. Still God is the winner. But the loser is the condemned who is in great trouble and full of remorse. Not God is the target-misser, but the ungodly man, who wanted to be independent of God.  Another part of the answer of A.P. regards juggling *again* with the concept of aiōn. Referring to Luke 18: 30, he claims mistakenly that ‘the age to come’ would not be the final one and that therefore in John 3: 16 nothing is said about the definite destination of the unbeliever. He therefore points out to the texts in the gospel of Matthew (e.g. 13:39,40,49; 24:3; 28:20) where the end of the ages (plural) would be spoken about, but in those texts is written: the end of the age (singular) (‘suntelaia tou aionos’), which can also mean the end of the *world,* thus of this sinful world. So, the argumentation of André Piet is not logical.

**Question 42**. *Aiōn indeed may mean ‘age’, but the adjective ‘aionios’ does still mean: forever, endlessly, doesn’t it?*

 It is shocking what A.P. says about it: “No, the meaning of an adjective results from the noun. It refers to it. ‘Yearly’ refers to ‘year’. ‘Monthly’ refers to ‘month’. Etc. and therefore: ‘aionios’ refers to ‘aiōn’. Would we not have the word ‘eternity’ in our language, then ‘all ages’ would simply refer to ‘age’. Someone who turns one year, celebrates one year on his birthday, but someone who turns one century (= age) is ageless”. So far André Piet.

  This is ‘nicely’ fabricated, but is incorrect. Besides, in Greek vocabularies and in the literature of language experts, ‘*aionios*’ has usually the meaning of endless *continually*. That is also confirmed by *many* texts in the New Testament! Just as it has already been displayed at the question 6 and 35, there are only three texts, namely Rom. 16:25, 2 Tim. 1:9 and Titus 1:2, where the word aionion or aionios is related with the meaning aiōn, 'age' (= a limited time period) and where we continually find the term ‘[the] times of the ages’. In *all* other (dozens of!) places there is no indication that the word should be considered in this limited meaning.

On the contrary: in the New Testament, the word has been intended for us to indicate the imperishable, uncorrupted and the  exalted beyond time, which has been made accessible for us through the work of Christ.

 From the mentioned texts, namely 2 Timothy 1:9; Romans 16:25; Titus 1:2 in which there is mention of the term ‘all eternity’ (which are an exception, regarding the use of  aiōnios) A.P wants to conclude that the word ‘eternal’ means neither beginningless nor endless and that ‘eternal’ is related to time. Of course eternity does surely have to do with time, but time can be both a limited time and a very long time or even an endless time. What A.P. is constantly trying to do, is to undermine the texts that are indisputably dealing with eternity.

 He fails to acknowledge (he does it continually and systematically) all other texts from which it clearly shows that it is about an endless time, a time without ceasing. Just think about the expression eternal life. Whosoever has this life, will ‘never’ perish (Joh. 10:28; 11:25 ff.).

Therefore, the believer who knows to be destined for heaven, also has an ‘eternal salvation’ (Heb.5:9), an ‘eternal redemption’ (9:12) and an ‘eternal inheritance’ (9:15), expects an ‘eternal home’ (2 Cor. 5:1 cf. 1 Cor. 15:53), eternal glory' (2 Tim. 2:10; cf. 1 Pet. 5:10: the glory of God Himself!) and a bountiful entrance into the 'eternal kingdom' (2 Pet. 1:11; cf. Lk 1:33) (9). Fortunately this is not just temporary.

**Question 43**. *Is the phrase ‘if indeed’ in the epistle to the Colossians (1:23) not a denial of the universal reconciliation?*

 André Piet answers: “No. In the first place, the rendition ‘if indeed’ is not correct. It should be: ‘because’. It implies that Paul in this verse does not warn, but gratefully memorizes the steadfastness of the Colossians!”

 What André Piet is saying, is just not right, for the Greek word ‘ei(ge)’ indicates a *condition*, namely being anchored in the faith of the redemption work of Jesus Christ by *an own choice*.  A.P. continues to say: “In the second place, the hope of the gospel is precisely the hope of the universal reconciliation! A couple of verses before (Col.1:20), Paul wrote about God, Who through the blood of the cross, reconciles all things (ta panta) to Himself. Paul refers to that in verse 23, when he writes about the hope of the gospel”. Those who deny the universal reconciliation, have allowed themselves to stray from the hope of the Gospel”. It is unimaginable how one can (dares) to write this. What a deception or blindness! The hope of the gospel is the *possibility* for reconciliation, which a person has to/is allowed to accept. The gospel still remains to be the good news, even though not everybody will be willing to accept it.

**Question 44**. *Does Rom. 5:18 refer us back to Rom. 5:17, so that “all men” are only those who receive “the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness?*

 Based on the word ‘all’ in Rom.5:18, A.P. tries to show that *all* men will be justified.

 In this texts it is indeed written ‘all’, but if we look at Rom. 5:1 and 9, it seems that it only regards those who by the faith in Jesus’ blood are justified. And therefore, verse 17 can only refer to the believers. Thus André Piet denies the entire previous part of Rom.5:1-11, which precisely speaks about the justification by faith! See also our comment on the questions 22 and 36.

**Question 45**. *Are the second “all” in 1 Cor.15:22 not just all who are in Christ? Thus believers?*

 Of course André Piet denies this and says “that it is not written: For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive. No, it is written: For in Adam all die, so also all will be made alive in Christ”. Now we again see the known problem: A.P. just denies the verses 12-19 (see also our comment on question 22). And precisely in these verses, *the faith*in Jesus Christ is spoken about. In Christ alone, thus by faith in Christ one can be saved. Thus only the believers in Christ! After all, dying in Adam is also a result of the choice of each person to sin.Being made alive in Christ is a result of the choice to acknowledge and accept Jesus Christ as Redeemer.

**Conclusion**

 We have shown that the ‘arguments’ of André Piet *do not* form *any*foundation for the doctrine of universal reconciliation. Several texts, which are written in different contexts, are connected together by him, just to demonstrate his right, without asking himself the question whether those contexts are related to each other. He is clutching at any straw in trying make the false doctrine acceptable. “Their incomplete and therefore so often vague explanation falters and fails continuously and can apparently only ‘sustain’ when many scriptures, e.g. about the necessity of repentance and faith, are being denied” (15).

 Although it is true that A.P. sometimes rightly indicates an incorrect translation of some texts, it is still necessary to be said that his exegesis of several texts, which he tries to use to support his view, is sometimes staggering and pathetic. The deception lies in the fact that by a mixture of good and wrong exegesis, the impression is given that the doctrine of universal reconciliation would be right, but the main fallacy lies in among others the denial of the role and importance of the free will and of the gravity of the evil.

 nGod has created man with a free will, because God intended to live eternally with men who would serve Him wholeheartedly and that they would give everything for that, even their life. That means that there would be a great and eternal separation with men who do not want to serve God. The thought of the doctrine of universal reconciliation is in contrast to it. Wouldn’t it be strange if God still gives a free will when ultimately everyone will serve Him? Then He could just as well have made puppets.

 Furthermore it is striking that A.P. denies a lot of texts which indicate the contrary of what he is trying to claim. He furthermore misuses the fact that the word ‘aiōn’ relates to a temporal condition in just three exceptional cases, while in most of the texts it is spoken about everlasting.

 The way in which A.P. deals with God’s Word, actually shows that the doctrine of universal reconciliation cannot be true and is also not true. The several ‘arguments’ are often totally unfounded and seem to be forced in such a way, that doubts certainly must arise in the critical and sober listener. From the utterances of several people who have had direct contact with A.P., it seems that he obviously does not want to listen, in spite of the meaningful arguments of those who refute the doctrine of universal reconciliation. It is to be hoped that A.P.’s eyes will be opened for the deception of which he himself has become a victim.

 Besides, it is imaginable that the supporters of the doctrine of universal reconciliation want to mention [with putting on their (universal reconciliation) glasses] certain texts as a support of their view and therefore deny other texts. That is very human, but not fair. And sometimes certain explanations of a text are not to be refuted (well). Then, one cannot convince another person well. One should then do it from the understanding of the whole Bible and he should leave the possible ‘contradictions’ to be difficulties instead of pressing them into the mold of a certain vision.

 If one allows himself to be immersed in the biblical view under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, he cannot possibly maintain the thought of the universal reconciliation.

Besides, there are too much texts that contradict the doctrine of universal reconciliation (see ‘Enclosure 1, Bible texts that contradict the doctrine of universal reconciliation’, attached to the article ‘Doctrine of universal reconciliation: a very cunning deception’ (19, internet version). By trying to predict a happy end for everyone, an attempt is made to take the sting out of the ultimate gravity. In addition, people impair in this way the only gospel of salvation, but when it is rejected, nothing more is left than being eternally separated from God.

This is extremely serious and goes to the heart of the Christian faith.

 Finally. It is even stranger when people intend to proclaim that even the devil and his demons will reconcile with God. Therefore we want to render some serious statements from Derek Prince (13): “God makes two things very clear in His Word. In the first place, that He is fully righteous and undivided. Secondly, that He has condemned the devil and his demons to an everlasting punishment in the lake of fire. Therefore, a person who doubts about the second claim, also doubts about the first one. He who denies the latter, rejects in that way the truth and righteousness of God. One cannot be an advocate of satan and at the same time a friend of God. Unfortunately, as a result of the subtle deception of the universal reconciliation, satan has deceived people to choose for his side against God. When people persist in this attitude, God’s righteousness demands that the same thing will happen to them as the devil” (13). Therefore, it is of great importance to be sincere, receptive to the truth and to read and understand the Bible under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

***MA Piet Guijt, 28 August 2016***

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