

ANASTASIS – RESURRECTION

"For since through a man there is death, through a man also there is a resurrection (anastasis) of the dead; for as by ADAM all die, so by the ANOINTED also, will all be restored to life." 1 Cor. 15:21,22. Diaglott.

Recognizing death as a reality, we have long seen, and often pointed out, that a resurrection of dead ones, is God's remedy for the removal of this sin-curse. Not until very recently, however, did we recognize the full force and deep scope of the word resurrection.

We have been accustomed to regard it as meaning the giving to a dead person of a spark of life – the very faintest spark of life, such as the act of Elijah to the widow's son, (1 Kings 17:22) or the act of Paul to the young man who fell from a window, (Acts 20:9,10) or the act of Jesus to Jairus' daughter, to the son of the widow of Nain and to Lazarus. (Mark 5:41,42, Luke 7:14,15, John 11:43,44.) We had considered and called these, resurrections of the dead. But an examination proves that these restorations of a faint spark of life, are never called a resurrection in Scripture. An examination of the Greek word from which resurrection is translated (Anastasis) proves that its meaning is broader and fuller than we had supposed, and that we have been in the habit of misusing it, when applying it to such partial restorations of life as above mentioned.

Liddell and Scott's Greek Lexicon defines the word anastasis to mean – "a setting up again" – "REBUILDING" – "RESTORATION." Let us then look at the resurrection in the light of this standard definition, and also, in the light of our text.

Mankind is the subject of Paul's discourse. Mankind as a race, had forfeited all right to life by the disobedience of Adam. The existence forfeited, was the one given by God to our representative,

Adam. It was a perfect being or existence, and all the imperfections under which we as a race now labor, have come as a result of sin, and are a part of the death penalty. We are now, and have been for 6,000 years a dying race, growing weaker and weaker and dropping faster and faster into the tomb. Adam in his perfection did not lose the last spark of life for 930 years. We, less perfect, are born with but a spark, the average duration of which is 30 years. This condition in which we now are, is Scripturally called death, even before we enter the tomb. We are all walking in the valley of the shadow of death and are now far down below the mountain tops of life and perfection. (Psa. 23:4; Matt. 8:22; 2 Cor. 5:14.)

Now let us ask the question – Where was our race when it began to fall – when death began to oppress, degrade and conquer? The answer is: Man was perfect, on the mountain tops of life, and not at all in the valley of death; not only perfect in being but in full communion with his maker who considered his handiwork "very good." Then as death means a falling from all this perfection, resurrection means "a setting up again" – "rebuilding" – "restoring" of humanity from every vestige of death to the perfection of their nature as represented by their head, Adam.

Now notice our text closely, and see the second clause, explaining the first, defines resurrection (anastasis) to mean restored: "Through a man there is death" – "by Adam all die." Then it states the remedy provided: "Through a man also (Jesus) there is a resurrection of the dead" – "by the anointed will all be restored to life." To restore life means to give back, or offer a thing which was lost or taken away. The thing lost by our race was perfect being.

But while resurrection means to restore, there is nothing connected with this word which limits it in time. All of the race shall be resurrected, but not necessarily all in a moment; on the contrary Scripture teaches us, that there are "times (years) of restitution," and

another shows us that it will be the work of a thousand years. It will be seen then that the resurrection ("rebuilding – setting up again – restoring") of humanity will be in process, but will not be complete until the thousand years are ended. [This may furnish another explanation of the first clause of Rev. 20:5, to those who think there is a shadow of proof of that clause being genuine; and not as we believe an interpolation.]

But Paul proceeds in the consideration of the anastasis – restoring, upbuilding, perfecting; he explains that there are two conditions of perfected ones. In answer to the question – With what body do they come to life again? – he explains (vss. 36-38) that as with the development of grain, so with mankind, the body sown is not the identical thing which springs up, though the same nature will be found in that which springs up, and the same identical personality, able to recall its former degraded condition, (Psa. 22:27; Ezek. 16:61; Zech. 12:10.) and to glorify God for the blessed change. But we inquire; will there be any difference in the resurrection – will all be raised alike? Paul replies that there will be a difference: As in the sowing there are different kinds of seed, so in the resurrection there will be different kinds of bodies, just as we see it illustrated in nature; when we sow wheat we expect wheat to spring up and so will every seed develop its own kind. The large majority of the race are sown (die) human seed; a few – "a little flock" have changed their nature, been begotten of God. They are sown spiritual seed, and in the resurrection, God will give "to every seed its own body as it hath pleased him." (vs. 38.) The human seed will have a human body, but the spiritual seed will have a spiritual body; "as is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy; and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly." (vs. 48.)

According to the illustration given, the human being will rise in a body like that which went into decay and death, but not formed of

the very same atoms of matter that composed it. (vs. 37,) "Thou sowest not that body that shall be." But to those begotten of God – of the spiritual seed, Paul says, "as we have borne the image of the earthy, (human nature – but having given that up to become 'new creatures') we shall (when born in the resurrection) bear the image of the heavenly" – the spiritual body.

Again some inquire, what is a spiritual or heavenly body like? It doth not yet appear what we shall be (like), but we know that...we shall be like **[R361 : page 4]** him (Jesus; not as he was, but as he is) "for we shall see him as he is." (1 John 3:2.)

We can form a tolerably clear idea of what the race in general will be when perfected (resurrected), knowing by experience that were it not for the imperfection it would be "very good."

And though we cannot fully comprehend what the new creature shall be when perfected (resurrected), because "it doth not yet appear, what we shall be" in all particulars, yet our Father's word informs us of some of the qualities of those "new creatures" "of the Divine nature" when perfected. He says: "It is sown in corruption, it is raised in INCORRUPTION; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in GLORY; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in POWER; it is sown an animal body, it is raised a SPIRITUAL BODY." [vss. 42-44, Diaglott.] Thus we get a very meagre view of the excellent glory of the new creatures – like Christ Jesus, the express image of the Father's person; "whom no man hath seen nor can see." (1 Tim. 6:16.) No wonder Paul said it doth not yet appear; no wonder God has not given us a more full account of the future glory; with the little glimpse we have, it almost over-awes us. We ask ourselves how searching must be our trial, if we would be accounted worthy of such divine honors? "What manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and God-likeness" – "He that hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as he is pure."

This perfecting, Paul shows, is not what the world is to get, but is a special thing. In vs. 42 he says, before giving the foregoing description – "Thus is THE resurrection of THE dead" i.e. the CHIEF perfecting of the CHIEF class of the dead. This CHIEF resurrection (anastasis – perfecting) began with Jesus, the head of the church which is his body – the head of THE CHRIST. Having proved himself worthy of this great glory by obedience even unto death, he was made perfect – MADE PERFECT through (by or on account of the) suffering" of death. (Heb. 2:10.) Jesus' resurrection was the first, no one before him had ever been raised completely out of death's control into perfection either of human or divine nature. He was "a first-fruit of those having fallen asleep." (vs. 20.) This is called "His (Jesus') resurrection," because if members of his body we shall share the same with our head. It is Scripturally illustrated by natural birth; Our head was born – delivered over 1800 years ago; the body is not yet fully delivered. We, "the feet of him," are still in the condition in which we "groan within ourselves waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption" in full of the entire body of the Christ. (Rom. 8:23.) (Will God cause to come to birth and not deliver? Will he deliver the head and not complete the work? (See Isa. 66:9.) The "little flock" of overcomers of the world – the blessed who shall "have part in the first (chief) resurrection" (anastasis – lifting up to perfection) and who shall "reign with him a thousand years," (Rev. 20:6.) will have part in "His resurrection" and experience the same changes and perfecting which he underwent, when God highly exalted him above the angels next to himself in power and glory – "the right hand of power."

Such is our, and such was Paul's hope. For it we suffer the loss of all things and do count them but dross that we may win Christ and be found in Him (as members of the body of Christ)...that we may know him (fully) and the POWER of HIS RESURRECTION." This desirable sharing in the power of HIS anastasis – raising to perfection, we hope to attain by sharing "the fellowship of His sufferings, being

made conformable unto his death; if by any means, (by all these earthly sacrifices) we might attain unto the EX-anastasis (the out-resurrection) from the dead" – the chief perfecting. Phil. 3:8-11.

Let us consider next, the

ORDER OF RESURRECTIONS.

We have already seen that the best or chief perfecting – that of the Christ, comes first, and the bringing of mankind to human perfection follows during the Millennial age: But let us follow Paul's argument on this point and note that this is his argument exactly. After telling in the words of our text that "by Adam all die, so by the Anointed also will all be restored to life," he adds – "But each one in his OWN rank; Christ a first-fruit, afterwards those who are Christ's at his parousia (presence)." Here are two ranks, or orders of anastasis, Christ (the anointed head and body) first. Theirs, as we have seen, is the first and chief anastasis, the first to come to perfection and that the Divine perfection. Afterwards, during his presence, another class or order will be perfected. His presence will continue during the Millennial age, for he comes to reign and to put down all authority, all opposition to right and to bring all things into harmony with God and His laws. Then "he must reign" – must be present until all of this work is accomplished; and he shall reign a thousand years. (Rev. 20:6.) consequently that entire age is the time of His presence. During his presence he shall bless mankind with truth and knowledge and restore all things. Then all, who during that blessed reign, will, may come into harmony with him and "Hail Him Lord of all," thus becoming His. This class we understand to be referred to by Paul when he says – "afterwards those who are Christ's at (during) his presence." These shall be raised up to the perfection of their (human) nature.

The raising up, the perfecting, may be either an instantaneous, or gradual work so far as the meaning of the word anastasis is

concerned. We have seen that the perfecting, or the raising of the world in general to full perfect human being, will require a long period. During that period they will learn valuable and lasting lessons in overcoming evil under the superintendence of able helpers and teachers. But there are two general exceptions to this rule; these two have learned these lessons in the present life under the dominion of evil. They have been made perfect through discipline endured here, and being thus prepared, are counted worthy to attain their perfect condition in the instant of return to life.

The first of these classes and the chief, are the members of the body of Christ, who have fought a good fight and finished their course of training and work of sacrifice, by obedience even unto death, and there is prepared for such, a crown of righteousness – the reward. The anastasis (raising up to perfection) of this class, though not coming to all of them at the same instant, will be an instantaneous perfecting to each one. The dead in Christ shall rise, be perfected, first; then we which are alive and remain, shall share in the same anastasis, the same perfecting, without sleeping for a single moment in death.

We shall be changed or translated in a single moment, lifted in the twinkling of an eye, instantly, out of the earthly tabernacle or house (which will dissolve in death) into our house (body) from heaven – our glorious spiritual bodies, whose glory doth not yet appear. But both the raising of those who sleep in Jesus, and the [R361 : page 5] changing of the living members into new conditions, as well as the resurrection of Jesus, together constitute the first (chief) anastasis. "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the chief, first resurrection – perfecting; on such the second death hath no power, but THEY shall be priests of God and of Christ and shall reign a thousand years." (Rev. 20:6.)

The second class, though less notable are highly esteemed of God, and in their sphere were overcomers and fought the good fight

though a different one from ours of this Gospel age. We refer to the Prophets and Patriarchs of preceding ages. Though they never had our "heavenly" – "high calling" – though never invited to change their nature from human to Divine, yet they were faithful and laid hold of the earthly promises set before them. Moses verily was faithful as a servant over all his house (of servants) but Christ was faithful as a Son over his own house, whose house are we, if – (Heb. 3:6.)

All those ancient worthy faithful ones, died in faith without receiving a fulfillment of the promises made them, yet were confident to the end of life, trusting God to give them at some time the things promised them. [Abraham had been promised all the land of Canaan, but had never received so much as to set his foot on, yet he died trusting God for what he had promised. Acts 7:5.] Instead of at once giving to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all the Prophets the earthly kingdom and dominion promised them, God let them rest; they "fell on sleep," while he developed the Gospel Church through the "better promises," even the heavenly – that it should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures. (Jas. 1:18.) Hence Paul, referring to these ancient worthies, states that God having provided some better thing for us, (the Christ) they without us (our instrumentality) shall not be made perfect. (Heb. 11:39,40.)

The anastasis of the Christ must take precedence to that of all others, because it is through The Christ that all things are to be restored. We believe, however, that the anastasis or perfecting of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, the Prophets and overcomers of past ages, will be a rapid or instantaneous perfecting of the human nature. And we understand that it is as perfected men ruling over imperfect men, that these of the fleshly seed, will bless all the families of the earth as the agents of the spiritual SEED which is Christ – the express image of the invisible God. (Col. 1:15; Heb. 1:3.) Through the Christ primarily, the blessing of restoration comes.