

I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE.

As the time draws near for the commemoration of the closing scenes of our Redeemer's human existence, our minds are drawn to the consideration of the blessings secured for the human race through that great sacrifice. And as the long foretold signs of his second glorious presence and reign become more and more manifest, we lift up our heads and rejoice, knowing that our redemption draweth nigh.

The death of Christ secures for all mankind the blessed boon of resurrection, – a restitution. That ransom price laid down at Calvary secured for all mankind the right to live again. And the resurrection of Christ – not to the human nature (for that was the sacrifice laid down forever in our room and stead), but to the divine nature, with all power in heaven and in earth given to him – is proof and manifestation of the power which shall accomplish the great work of resurrection for those whom he purchased with his precious blood.

The time of his second presence is stated to be the time for the restitution of all things, – the time for the raising of the dead. Every indication, therefore, which we see giving evidence of his presence, is but the introduction to other and greater signs to follow shortly. The first accompanying signs of his presence are those of trouble; – "Behold he cometh with clouds." We have watched the clouds gathering for several years past, knowing that, according to the sure word of prophecy, they must soon overspread the whole heavens. And now the darkness increases, and we rejoice, knowing that these things must be, and that they are the disguised harbingers of a lasting peace and better state, and will not last forever. A few more years will find these events, their rise, progress, and culmination, numbered among the things of the past; and then what? Then the whole world will have come to recognize the presence and power of Christ; the kingdom of God will be actually "set up" in power and control of the world; the "old heavens," the present ruling powers, will have passed away, and

the "new heavens," the kingdom of God, will have come. Then the work of restitution will begin – the restoring of the dead to life, and of the living to health and perfection, the restoring of truth and righteousness, and the establishment of justice.

Until the present heavens shall have passed away, the dead, except the Christ – the Church, head and body – shall not be awakened; but when the new heavens are established, they shall be remembered and brought forth. "As the waters fail from the sea, and the flood decayeth and drieth up, so man lieth down, and riseth not *till the heavens be no more*; they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep." (Job 14:11,12.) This is a blessed provision; they shall not be awakened until surrounding circumstances, etc., shall be more favorable than at present, for their trial. The great conflict of this evil day, which shall terminate in the passing away of the old heavens and the complete binding of Satan, must first be at an end. For this Job prophetically prayed, saying, "O that thou wouldest hide me in the grave, that thou wouldest keep me secret until thy wrath be past, that thou wouldest appoint me a set time and remember me." He adds: "All the days of my appointed time will I wait till my change come. Thou shalt call, and I will answer thee; thou wilt have a desire to the work of thine hands." – Job 14:13-15.

Job also shows that the hiding in the grave means destruction, and that the coming forth is a re-creation, when he says, "Now shall I sleep in the dust; and thou shalt seek me IN THE MORNING, but I shall NOT BE." (7:21.) If he is not in existence, yet comes forth when called (14:15), the calling forth is a re-creation.

For six thousand years God has been turning man to destruction, and when the present storm shall have passed he will begin to say, "Return, ye children of men." (Psa. 90:3.) What tidings of great joy for all people are these! But only those who have implicit faith in the promises of God can now rejoice in the glorious prospect. All the hope of the world is in the resurrection, yet even Christians now have little

or no faith in it. Regarding death, not as destruction (Psa. 90:3), but as the gateway to heaven or to eternal punishment, they see no place or necessity for a resurrection; and to them this doctrine has lost its power.

It was not so with Paul. He taught that if there were no resurrection, then those who had fallen asleep had PERISHED, and that hopes for a future life were vain. (1 Cor. 15:15-18.) And while thus defining death to be destruction, he asks, "Why should it be thought a thing incredible that God should raise the dead?" (Acts 26:8.) If God has power to create and to destroy, has he not power to restore or re-create that which he destroyed? Surely this is not beyond the scope of divine power. And though it is as impossible to understand the philosophy of the resurrection as of the first creation, we accept both on the authority of God's word.

Jesus said to Martha, "I am the resurrection and the life," and then he gave an illustration of his power in awakening Lazarus to life. As we hear these words repeated at the graves of friends, and realize that they fall upon the ears of many as empty sounds, when they were designed to comfort and cheer bereaved hearts, we long to have them see and feel their blessed import. When awakened from death and brought to a knowledge of the truth, those who believe in Jesus as their Redeemer, who purchased their redemption with his own precious blood, and who walk in obedience to his commandments, may have life, everlastingly.

As we read God's word and recognize the foretold signs which show that these things must shortly come to pass, we hail with joy every indication. Truly we have cause to rejoice always, and in everything give thanks.

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