

"WHOSE WIFE SHALL SHE BE?"

"They which shall be accounted worthy to obtain [attain] that world [age] and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage, neither can [will] they die any more; for they are equal [like] unto the angels, and are children of God – being children of [by] the resurrection." – Luke 20:34-36.

This passage seems to open up anew of late, and furnishes a light upon the future not elsewhere provided. We at one time held the view that the resurrection here referred to was the First Resurrection, the resurrection of THE CHURCH to spiritual perfection. But if so, the Greek word translated resurrection should be emphatic, so as to show that a *special* or particular resurrection is meant. But on critical examination, we find that *anastasis* as here used is not specially emphasized. Besides, as we examine the context it is evident that not the resurrected condition of the Church is discussed, but the resurrected condition of the World, as represented by the woman who had been married successively to the seven husbands. Our Lord's reply as above is an answer to the query, "In the resurrection, whose wife shall she be?"

The Saducees with whom our Lord held this conversation were disbelievers in a resurrection. They held that death ended all existence forever, as much to mankind as to beasts; and they held up the case of this woman with seven husbands, as an argument to prove that if a resurrection should take place, it would produce an endless jangle by reason of mixed and confused social arrangements.

Our Lord's answer is that they erred from not appreciating the power of God to control and arrange all the minutia, as well as the grander and greater features of his plan, and from not *understanding* the Scriptures. The Scriptures now opening up in the dawn of the approaching Day, disclose to us the fact that the world's

resurrection (Greek *anastasis* – raising up) will be a gradual work covering a period of a thousand years, and not a momentary work as the Saducees and others, and ourselves until four years ago, supposed.*

*The resurrection (lifting to perfection) of the Gospel Church will be an instantaneous or momentary work, because it will consist only of "overcomers" who in the present life shall have been tried and found worthy. (1 Cor. 15:51,52 – "**We** shall all be changed in a moment.") But the world's trial or judgment belongs to the Millennium or Judgment age, and their resurrection, lifting up to perfection, will keep pace with their obedience under their trial, the one ending with the other in the close of that age – the willing or worthy being then fully lifted up, and all the unwilling or unworthy and "abominable" being cut off in the second death.

Our Lord's answer steps right over the Millennial Age or period of *attaining* perfection (resurrection), with the answer that they must learn to trust "the power of God." His explanation shows how it will be in that great everlasting future which stretches out beyond the Millennium, and to which the Millennial Age serves but as a gateway, to admit the willing and worthy, and to "cut off" the unwilling and disobedient.

Thus viewed, mark the import of our Lord's words: "They which *shall be accounted worthy* to obtain that world [age] and the resurrection, neither marry nor are given in marriage." It is evident from a close examination that our Lord refers to a period *after* the world has been tried. The words "*shall be* accounted worthy," show that those referred to were *not yet* accounted [R915 : page 7] worthy; and that some future trial must be undergone by them, which would demonstrate their worthiness to *attain* the resurrection, and their right to live under the new order of things, where sin and sinners are inexcusable and will not be permitted.

The Bible teaches that "in *death* there is *no remembrance* of God, and in the grave [Hebrew *sheol*, Greek *hades*,] none can give God thanks (Psa. 6:5); and that there is no knowledge, nor wisdom, nor device, in the grave [*sheol, hades*,] whither all go (Eccl. 9:10.) Hence

we know that no progress can be made by these in *attaining* or being "*counted worthy*," until the great Redeemer shall become their Deliverer to set them free from the curse or penalty of the first failure, under the first trial, in Eden, and to grant each for himself a second trial under himself as Judge and Teacher. Thus Jesus' words teach a future trial for mankind in general, in which the woman and seven husbands who were already dead, and who were not believers in Christ, may have a part. For if the woman and her husbands and such like were not to have a further trial for *attaining* that world, in which they might be "accounted worthy," it certainly would have been in order for our Lord to have then and there stated the fact plainly. We know that some theologians of our day would from their erroneous views have answered quite differently. Instead [R916 : page 7] of saying those who "*shall be* [future] *accounted worthy*" to attain to the resurrection, they, would probably have said nothing about a resurrection and an age to come and a future trial, but would have stated it thus – Those who lived perfect lives before they died [that would be *none*] and who believed in and fully accepted Christ before they died [*none of them*] *went* at death [past tense] to heaven, while the others all went to a place of everlasting torture, where they will have too much pain to think about their marriage relationship. But, thus modern theologians differ in their teachings from the Great Master whom they claim as the *author* of their faith and teachings. Surely they have gone far from the truth, and are teaching for doctrines the theories and traditions of men.

"LIKE UNTO THE ANGELS."

The word "*equal*" here is a poor translation; the sense is *like*, as rendered above. See *Diaglott* and *Young's Trans.*

Man in his perfection is "a little lower" than angels, a human, earthly being, while angels are spirit beings. The work of perfecting or *raising up* the fallen race to the perfection *from which* it fell, will not change man to a spirit-being such as angels are.

But while men and angels are of different natures, they will be *alike* in some respects. The Lord mentions the particular point of likeness here referred to, viz., that they will no longer marry, neither *will** they die thereafter.

*We here prefer *will*, or *may*, rather than *can* as the translation of *dunamai*, because it gives the thought of the text more clearly. Can, would make it appear that even though they should desire to die, they would be unable to do so; whereas the thought is that life is a blessing which none would willingly part with, but which now, because of sin and its penalty, men cannot hold on to.

The thought is this, the trial or judgment of the Millennial age will be so complete and the lessons of obedience so well impressed upon men that only the "*worthy*" will attain to that condition of perfection and on these the lesson of the bitterness of sin and the blessedness of obedience will be so deeply impressed that eternity will not efface it, and they will never again choose sin; and consequently "neither *will* they die thereafter." All who attain that age at all will be so, because all *not* "counted worthy," the great Judge will "cut off," or "destroy from among the people." – Acts 3:23.

Now let us notice the likeness of men to angels, which will abolish marriage after the Millennium. Marriage is proper in this age. It is of divine arrangement. It is the method by which it pleased God to create a race – by creating one pair with whom he lodged the powers of procreation, to "multiply and to fill the earth." – Gen. 1:28. And our Lord signified his approval of marriage by his presence at the Cana wedding, and by his endorsement of the Mosaic law which prohibited the separation of man and wife. Therefore "Marriage is lawful in all etc." (Heb. 13:4.) even though this and other lawful things be generally *inexpedient* to the saints (1 Cor. 6:12.). See article, The Time is Short, February TOWER.

Angels are probably without sex – neither male nor female as we use those terms, though like God generally referred to as masculine. Man as originally created in God's image was probably the same in that

regard, like unto the angels. Afterward "male and female created he them" for the very purpose of thus filling or populating the earth. And the reasonable deduction is that when the earth shall become as the "Garden of Eden" and shall be fully populated, then the "filling of the earth" by the multiplying of the race will cease, according to the proper outworking of the plan of him who formed the perfect man into a perfect pair, for the purpose of filling the earth. And we inquire why God chose to make the man perfect in himself at "first," and then to sex him into twain, if it were not for an intimation and illustration of what the race shall be, when God's plans concerning it are *full*-filled?

The fact that Adam was without companionship among the beasts, and that woman became his help-meet does not prove that he would not have been as happy among companions like himself as originally created. Angels are surely meet companions for each other, yet not male and female. But in the plan God had in view, of producing a race from *one*, who in trial would represent all, in order that by *one* also he might redeem all, prevented the creation of a companion like himself and made proper the division of the one into two, mutually adapted to the various necessities of the situation.

So then our Lord's words teach us, that when the restitution age and its restoring or resurrecting work are complete, all who being worthy shall be thus perfected, shall be as Adam was at first – in regard to sex, and freedom from death – "like unto the angels."

These worthy ones will be "children of God," – becoming such *by the resurrection*. To appreciate this we must remember God's manner of using the word "children". Only those who bear his *image* and are in harmony with Him, does he recognize as His children; others who are impure and disobedient and who bear the image of Satan, are called "children of wrath," "children of the devil," etc. In accordance with this, angels are called "sons of God," and Adam in his first estate (sinless) is called a "son of God," and we though not actually released from the imperfection are reckoned perfect, being justified by faith, our

acceptableness being in and through merits and perfections of our Lord Jesus imputed to us. Yet in the fullest sense God will not recognize us as sons until our Lord shall present us *actually* perfect before the Father in the end of the Gospel age. Then we shall in the fullest sense enter into the fullness of sonship. – Compare Jude 24,25; Col. 1:22,23,28; 2 Cor. 4:14; 5:1-6.

So too it will be with the world, in the Millennial age. Though God has planned the work in its every particular, and though he so loved the *world* while sinners as to give his Son for their redemption and restitution, yet he will not recognize them as *children*, until the "*worthy*" ones have been *perfected (raised up* to perfection) in the end of that age. Meantime the world can only recognize God as their Father by *faith*, aspiring to be counted worthy to come to that perfect condition in which alone they can be recognized as God's children, and dealt with as such. To be recognized as God's child is to be recognized as one entitled to the "liberty of the sons of God" – freedom from pain, death, etc., etc. Until that grand consummation is reached the world can deal with the Father only through the Royal Priesthood of which our Lord is the head or High Priest.

When this Royal Priest has completed the work of judging the world, and shall have destroyed *evil* in every form (including wilful sinners of whom Satan is chief) he will present to the Father perfect and complete, all those counted worthy to attain to that age and full perfection of being. He will present them then (even as the Gospel little flock now) blameless and unprovable before him. (Phil. 2:15; Col. 1:22). Their perfection will be that of manhood, while ours is that of the new nature to which we were begotten as joint-heirs with Christ. (2 Pet. 1:4). Thus the Royal Priest and King will deliver up the Kingdom of earth to God even the Father, that God may be "all in all." God will then be recognized fully by *all his creatures* as they could not recognize him while in imperfection and sin. And all will then realize that the plan of salvation from first to last was of the Father and by the

Father, however he may have used others as co-workers by whom to accomplish his glorious and successful plan.

The figure of husband and wife is used frequently to represent the closeness of union and interest existing between the Lord and the church; particularly as showing the period of interest before and at the time of their uniting: but in no case does the figure go farther, to represent anything akin to motherhood on the part of the church. On the contrary the figure, generally used in reference to the period beyond our union, represent the twain as one – Head and Body; the Prophet, Priest and King of the world, during its age of trial.

So then we, in the light of the dawning Day, seeing more clearly the teachings of the Scriptures and the power of God to be revealed during the age of restitution, can appreciate the Lord's answer to the Sadducees' question – Whose wife of the seven husbands shall she be? – in a way which it was not possible for them to understand. We see, that this woman and her husbands, and all other men and women who during the Millennial age of trial may be proved worthy to reach perfection and to enter upon the great Eternity *beyond*, will no longer be male and female, but reaching *perfection* – full restitution – each individual will be complete and perfect in himself, as Adam was before made twain.

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