

[R1076 : page 8]

SHALL NEVER DIE.

"I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he die, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." – John 11:26.

These were our Lord's words of consolation to Martha. They briefly state the great hope of our race through the plan of redemption.

The first statement – "He that *believeth* in me, though he die, yet shall he live," teaches, that only believers shall be resurrected *i.e.*, made to LIVE. This may appear out of harmony with other statements of our Lord, to the effect that ALL in their graves shall come forth, until we recognize the full force of the words, *resurrection* and *life*. We have heretofore shown that the word resurrect, signifies to lift or raise up again to perfection; and that since man's fall was from perfection, as represented in Adam, his promised resurrection implies a bringing to perfection again. But, many scriptures indicate that, while the gospel Church will be lifted to the perfection of the new nature in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, the world of mankind will be gradually resurrected, or brought to perfection of human nature, from which all fell in Adam; – the entire Millennial age being "the times of restitution," resurrection, or restoration. [R1077 : page 8]

By recognizing this fullness of meaning in the word LIVE, in the scripture under consideration, we have the statement clear, and easily understood, in harmony with all other declarations of the Scriptures.

TO LIVE means a great deal, in its full import. Adam and Eve lived, *i.e.*, they had life in perfect measure, before sin entered. When sin entered the dying commenced, and it was a process of ceasing to live. So death, the opposite of life, passed upon all men. From the standpoint of God's sentence, all are now dead. (2 Cor. 5:14; Matt. 8:22.) So then, though it is true that all in their graves shall "come

forth," they will come forth with only a small measure of life, such as men now have; they will still be measurably in death as all now are, and will be gradually advanced to perfection, through knowledge and acceptance and obedience of the truth.

That believing in Christ [including hearty obedience], is in the Bible made the condition of perfect resurrection to life, is a fact; and its reasonableness is evident; for why should the Redeemer continue to lift upward toward perfection, those who, when they came to a full clear knowledge of his character and plan, wilfully fight against it? The mistake generally made is, in insisting that this belief and obedience is limited for all to the present life-time. On the contrary, it is as true of the Millennial age as of the Gospel age.

In the present age, only a few come to that fulness of knowledge which brings fullness of responsibility; and how shall the many *believe* on him of whom they have not heard? And since only *believers* are to be fully released from death, it is evident that all must come to a knowledge of the truth that they may be saved – "in due time." – 1 Tim. 2:4,6.

Though our Lord is the great Life-giver in whom is vested all the resurrection or life-giving powers, and though he has promised perfect LIFE, full release from death, to *believers*, yet we see that now believers die as well as unbelievers. And we at first wondered as Mary did why the one who has the power of life should let his believing friends die, when he tells us that his special mission is to "destroy death." (1 Cor. 15:26; Heb. 2:14.) The Lord's words show us that though his work as the Life-giver belongs to the next age, yet he will not neglect the believers who die before that age; and that though such are permitted to die, it should not be understood to imply lack of power or willingness to serve, on the part of the Life-giver. "He that believeth in me *though* he die, yet shall he live."

That "*whosoever believeth* in him shall not perish [in death] but have lasting [perfect] life," is as clearly stated in the Scriptures, as

that *all shall come to a [full] knowledge* of the truth, – when the knowledge of the Lord shall be caused to fill the whole earth as the waters cover the sea. And it is equally true that whosoever believeth not [when given full knowledge and ability] shall be condemned.

In perfect accord with this view, is that peculiar statement of John 5:25 – "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming* when the *dead* shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that *hear* shall LIVE." According to the general conception, this should read, They that *live* shall hear, but this would not have been strictly true: hence the peculiar and guarded expression used, which is only appreciable as we come to see more deeply into God's plans for that coming age. All are dead (under death's dominion) until entirely freed. The Redeemer has come, the ransom has been paid, and in due time all the dead race shall *hear* [be brought to a clear conception of these facts], and they that hear [*heed*] shall [in due time] LIVE, reach perfection.

*Sinaitic MS. omits "*and now is.*"

A few, who were of the dead class, in this age heard thus of the ransom price given for our release; and those who have heard [understood and heeded] it, could also afterward hear, of a prize or high calling offered during the Gospel age to believing sacrificers, and have "had access into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." But the due time in which the great mass of the dead shall *hear*, will be when this "little flock" of sacrificers and heirs of God, has attained the glory. As members of the great Prophet they shall teach and bless the people, bringing them out of their graves and opening sin-blinded eyes and prejudice-stopped ears, as it is written. – Isa. 35:5.

"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son *shall not see life*, but the wrath of God abideth on him." (John 3:36.) This is further testimony on the same line: that only believers in and accepters of Christ and his *redeeming* work (as their ransom) will ever attain to life, *i.e.*, get fully free from death. Only

the little flock, the church, thus gets life during the Gospel age; and they get it only by promise – in hope – in faith. Their life is *hid* now, in God's promises. See Col. 3:3.

The Millennial Day is the time for *life-giving* actually. The church will get hers first, in the early morning of that day. The Lord will give to his overcoming Bride the *crown* of life that fadeth not away. (1 Pet. 1:4; 5:4.) Hers will be like her Lord's – life on the divine plane of being. Then will come the life-giving to such of the world as will *believe* and *obey*; when they all shall then stand trial for life, being brought to a full knowledge of God's character, plan and righteous laws. The gradual resurrection to perfect LIFE, step by step, will be of *believers only*; for, as clearly stated, the disobedient shall perish without attaining to life – they will never see perfect life, but as willful sinners shall be destroyed. – Acts 3:23.

The wrath of God will *abide* on such thus: The whole world was condemned, sentenced to death, in and through Adam; "the curse" [See Sept. TOWER] was upon all; and God had provided only one way of escape from that curse of death – through the *Redeemer*, by the remission of sins through *faith in his blood*. Some (the church) get free from the curse now, through faith in Christ, and will be received of the Father (actually) at the close of the Gospel age. Others, the great majority, will believe and get free from the curse by faith during the Millennial age and be (actually) received of the Father at the close of that age. But such as reject the only "way" to God remain under the curse or condemnation of death (wilfully, for they must all be made fully aware of the conditions of life and reconciliation to God) and shall never see [experience] LIFE.

Let us now examine the second part of our Lord's statement: "Whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die."

In the light of the previous statement, this one becomes very clear and simple. It is the Lord's assurance, that all who reach the condition of life, in its fulness, may retain it forever by continuing to believe and

obey. It is the promise that the perfect life once attained may be held forever.

