

THE REST OF THE DEAD

But the rest of the dead lived not again, until the thousand years were finished.

The reader is reminded that these words, though given as part of Rev. 20:5 in our common version Bibles, are not found in the oldest and most reliable Greek manuscripts; – in none written prior to the fifth century, nor even in Vatican MS. 1160, of the eleventh century; neither does the Syriac MS. contain these words: but many MSS., not so old nor so exact generally, do contain the words. Whether they were originally a memorandum by some copyist, who thus commented for his own subsequent remembrance and jotted down his thought of the meaning of the text, afterward copied by others as part of the text, or whether the words really belong to the text and *were accidentally* omitted from the best, oldest and most reliable manuscripts, we will *know*, when we know all things. To us, these facts are of sufficient weight to warrant the conclusion that they are spurious.

However, for the sake of those not so fully convinced, let us here consider the words as though they were part of John's inspired revelation. And it will be seen that even if they are not spurious, but properly of the text, yet they are in perfect harmony with the plan of the ages. The difficulty in the minds of those troubled by this expression, arises mainly from their failure to fully appreciate the terms "lived" and "resurrection."

The passage when rightly understood is not at all in conflict with the Bible teaching, that all that are in their graves shall come forth, and that all shall be brought to a knowledge of the truth, and to a full opportunity for accepting or rejecting it, during the period of Christ's Millennial reign, and that with its close comes the end of human probation, when the willingly obedient shall all enjoy everlasting life,

and the willingly disobedient will all be cut off in the second death; and that Adamic death shall cease, being destroyed by the Redeemer and Life-giver; and when, consequently, pain, sorrow and weeping, incidents of that Adamic penalty shall be forever at an end.

The word *life*, really signifies that perfect state of existence from which death and dying, sickness and pain, and all the elements of death and condemnation, are excluded. Adam and Eve (before they sinned, and passed under condemnation of death and began to decay), and our Lord Jesus who was sinless, alone, of all human beings, ever had *life*; they alone ever "*lived*" in the full proper sense of the word; all others, born under Adamic condemnation (Rom. 5:12,17-19), are properly speaking *dying*, not *living* now. The death sentence having passed upon all, from the true standpoint of life all are in death – dying. All inherit the weaknesses, the imperfection and sin, and likewise the penalty, dying and death. Thus our Lord also, at times, spoke of the race as a whole – "Let the *dead* bury their dead."

We all know what it is to be *dying until totally dead*; let us all learn that it means to reverse this order, when we speak of *living until perfectly alive*. As the present and the past six thousand years, have been a dying time, – a time in which DEATH HAS REIGNED and triumphed and conquered the race – so the coming thousand years, the Millennium of Christ's reign, is to be a re-living time, a time in which LIFE WILL REIGN, the result of Christ's obedient sacrifice. – Rom. 5:17-19.

When life shall reign, the reign of Adamic death (from whose dominion all were purchased by the precious blood of the new King, the Life-giver,) must cease.

Many make the mistake of supposing that death was conquered when our Lord Jesus arose from the dead. True, there death was forced to surrender Him who *is to be* the destroyer of death, the life-giver to as many as will receive everlasting life as a gift of God upon his conditions, but Adamic death was not conquered then, nor its

power even restrained. The long six thousand years reign of death has not yet been interrupted, except by the resurrection of our Lord. Death reigned before the Law – from Adam to Moses, – and during the Law or Mosaic dispensation, which gave release to none; and it has also reigned during the Gospel age over all except Christ. And since, we walk by faith and not yet by sight; trusting our Lord's promises of final victory through a resurrection out of death's domain and power.

The apostle after relating (1 Cor. 15:42-54) the particulars of the first resurrection, that of the Gospel church, to the likeness, glory and power of her Lord, which he shows to be due at the appearing of her Lord, in the beginning of the **[R1106 : page 5]** Millennial age (1 Pet. 1:7; Titus 2:13; 2 Tim. 4:8), exultantly exclaims: "***Then*** shall be brought to pass [to fulfilment] the saying which is written, 'Death is swallowed up in victory!'" But it is a further mistake to suppose the apostle to mean that the victory over death is gained when the church is completed, in the first resurrection. Not so; on the contrary he shows, that ***then*** shall be brought to pass, or ***from then on shall be accomplished, the victory over death.***

The resurrection of the Church, with the change of the living members of the same, marks the period of the inauguration of Christ's Kingdom, and from ***then on*** the reign of sin and death must give place to the reign of righteousness and life. The victory of the Life-giver, assured eighteen centuries ago by his resurrection from the dead by the power of the Father, will ***begin*** with the deliverance of his joint-heirs, the first resurrection, but thank God it does not end there.

"Dear dying Lamb, thy precious blood
Shall never lose its power,
"Till ***all the ransomed*** hosts of earth
Are saved from Satan's power."

This brings us to the point of time referred to by the passage quoted at the head of this article, when the ***first*** resurrection is complete. What ***then*** about the rest of the dead? – We answer:

Then the **general** resurrection, of the dead and dying world, will begin. But it will not be at all like what is generally surmised. It will be the work of the entire Millennial age, a gradual lifting up to perfect life of those of mankind who shall then be found worthy of it. And though this work of resurrecting will be gradually progressing throughout the Millennial age, yet the rest of the dead (aside from those who share in the first resurrection, and live and reign with Christ) will not **live again** in the full sense of living – in the sense of regaining the perfection of life lost in Adam, – until the thousand years are finished.

"The wicked shall never see **life**," in this full sense (Psa. 49:19,20; John 3:36), though all the families of the earth shall be awakened and brought to **full** clear knowledge of the **truth**, before being sentenced as "wicked." – 1 Tim. 2:3,4; Heb. 10:26.
