

## RESURRECTIONS AND CONDITIONS CONTRASTED

Let us contrast briefly the trial of those who shall share the first resurrection, with that of those who shall share the general resurrection; and the Lord's method of giving the reward to the worthy of this trial and to the worthy in that; and the reasons for the differences; in order that we may comprehend the situation more clearly.

The first resurrection at the beginning of the Millennial age and the completion of the general resurrection at its close, reminds us of the fact that our Lord was raised from the power of death, perfect, in the beginning of the Gospel age, but the church *lives not until the end* of the Gospel age. But while there is this general resemblance between the two ages, in the fact that trial and testing come throughout, and the reward of life at the close, there is a wide difference between them in other respects. For instance: –

First, the *kind* of "life everlasting" to be bestowed in the end of the Gospel age to the Gospel church, will differ from that to be given the faithful of the Millennial age – or rather, to express it correctly, the Gospel church will obtain similarly *everlasting* life, but will have bestowed upon them a higher nature or finer organism. Both classes when perfected, will have perfect everlasting life, but the one will be a perfection of human nature, – "very good," grand indeed, an image and likeness in the flesh, of the divine while the other will be superlatively grand, of a nature, organism, etc., not only higher than human, but "far above angels" – the *express* image of the Heavenly Father's substance – "partakers of the divine nature."

Second, the kind and degree of trial will be very different. In the Millennial age all who would have the perfection of human life, then

to be freely bestowed [R1106 : page 6] upon all worthy of it, will be required to prove their worthiness by willing conformity, not only to the righteous laws which will then prevail, but also to *principles* of righteousness. They must come to *love* righteousness and hate iniquity, not merely from fear of penalties, but on principle. But then knowledge will be clear and all things favorable to righteousness. In the Gospel age much more exacting and crucial is the test. All who shall share Christ's nature and throne are obliged to prove their worthiness by enduring much opposition from the wicked and blinded in the present age, as well as from their own physical and mental weaknesses and imperfections. They must prove themselves "overcomers" by patiently and perseveringly doing the Lord's will as *best they can* understand and do it.

Third, the methods of giving the reward of life will differ. The Gospel church must walk by faith all the way, being treated as other men, subject to many of the vicissitudes of disease and death much as others; and they must *trust, believe* and *hope* for the life promised at the close of the age without experiencing any evidence of it on the way, except by faith. They, like others, have pain, sickness, sorrows and difficulties; they are men of sorrows and acquainted with grief, and are finally sown in death. Though trusting in Christ as their Savior and Life-giver, and publicly declaring it, yet they must in dishonor and weakness fall under the blow of the now reigning prince of darkness – death – hoping, praying, trusting for the resurrection-life *promised*, but not in any measure actually accomplished in them. "I have said, Ye are gods, all of you sons of the Most High; but ye shall *all die like men* and fall like one of the chiefs." (Psa. 82:7.) [We do not fall in death as sinners, like Adam, but as sacrifices for the truth in opposition to error, like the other chief – Christ Jesus – with whom we are reckoned joint-sacrificers.] These, having passed all their trial satisfactorily, without rewards, will be given the great reward all at once, without further trial. Their resurrection or perfecting as new creatures, spiritual beings, will be an instantaneous one – in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.

But with the world, during the Millennial age, it will be very different. They will not be promised life and restitution, yet be deprived of it entirely until the close of their age, and be obliged to sicken and die. No; on the contrary, Death shall *reign* no longer. At the very beginning of the Millennial age, Life will begin to reign, and will begin to pay *his wages* unto all obedient unto the spirit of the law of life. Each act of obedience shall be rewarded; each effort to honor and obey and uphold the right and the truth, will bring its compensation; not only of pleasure and a sense of heavenly approval, but also of *health* and *strength* – a gradual release from death, and a gradual bestowal of life. The work of *restitution*, as it relates to mind and morals and physical development is the *resurrection work*; – *lifting the race up*, out of the death state and all the degradation into which the penalty of Adam's sin plunged it. This is the true meaning of the word resurrection.

It is a serious and blinding mistake, made by very many, to suppose that the raising of a corpse out of a tomb, or even the re-animation of a dead person, such as Lazarus, the widow's son, Jairus' daughter, etc., to be *resurrections*. Not at all; the term resurrection is never applied to such cases in the Scriptures. Of Lazarus our Lord said, I go to awake him out of sleep. He was re-animated or awakened to a former degree of life; or rather, we might more properly say, to the former *degree of death*. Of little value would the promise of resurrection be, to any, if it merely signify awakening and re-animation to our present, poor, dying state. Thank God it means in the fullest sense "*to raise up again*" not partially, but up, up, up to perfection. To the majority, as already shown, this will mean a lifting up, or back, to the perfection of human nature lost by father Adam – gradually, during the Millennium, and in co-operation with their own efforts and longings for righteousness and perfection, mental, moral and physical. To the "little flock," who, under the favor of the Gospel call, have exchanged human nature (by its sacrifice) for divine nature, it means, the *lifting up* (at one bound – in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye) to the full perfection of the new nature – the divine nature;

not gradually, but instantly, from mortality to immortality, from weakness to power, from dishonor to glory, from a natural body to a spiritual body; because their trial is fully past before death. And all who shall be accounted worthy of the first [chief] resurrection will have been already proved "overcomers," "faithful until death," and "worthy," or they would not have part at all in that chief resurrection.

Blessed and holy, proved and accepted, are all they that have part in the first resurrection. And while all others shall share in the general resurrection, none but holy ones shall ever reach its grand climax – perfect life; – for everlasting life is the gift of God (through Jesus Christ our Lord); and he gives it to none of the wilfully wicked or rebellious, but only to such as will serve, honor and obey him, when their knowledge and opportunities are perfect. All shall be awakened and brought to full knowledge before being sentenced as "wicked." But the *wicked* shall never see *life*. – Psa. 145:20; Heb. 10:26,27; John 3:36.

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