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THE DISPUTED CLAUSE

We are requested to re-examine the first clause of Rev. 20:5, by some who feel that a great weight rests upon that passage; that if that clause be a part of the inspired record it would flatly contradict all hopes of a probation during the Millennial age for those who have died.

This is a great mistake. If the doctrine of a trial of all the world of mankind during the Millennial age were *dependent* for proof upon any clause in the symbolic Book of Revelations we would decline to preach it. And those who oppose us should likewise determine that if this one verse of a symbolic book is the only objection they can find, they have practically no opposition to offer, and should confess it. But let us *review* the subject.

(1.) Our original statement relative to the clause – "*The rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished*" – stands uncontradicted, undisputed. Some, in attempting to resist the [R1210 : page 7] statement and its force, have indeed succeeded in raising a dust that has confused and blinded some of their followers for a time, and *led them to suppose* that our statements were untrue, but it was only a deceptive use of language; for when their words are sifted it will be seen that they do not deny our position – which indeed cannot be gainsaid.

Our statement therefore stands undisputed, and it *was* and still *is* – That the above quoted words are not only *not found in the very ancient Syriac and Coptic MSS., but neither are they found in any Greek MS. written earlier than the fifth century*. And we may add, they are lacking in many Greek MSS. of later date; and among these are some of the admittedly most exact and careful

MSS., such as *Codex Cantabrigiense* of the seventh century and Vatican MS. No. 1160 of the eleventh century.

The above are plain, unvarnished facts, they are indisputable, and they can be verified in the library of any scholar.

But an opponent, recently, after a rambling article upon the old MSS. in which, instead of stating facts clearly, as we have done above, he confused his readers, so that they should not understand the facts, then proceeded to make the statement that the passage in dispute had been *quoted* by one of the so-called "Fathers" in the first century. But he took care not to cite the reader to volume and page where this statement might be verified or disproved. And while we very much dislike to question any man's veracity, we shall feel justified in discrediting this unsupported statement regarding the quotation of this passage by one of the Fathers until *some evidence* is offered – especially so in view of the equivocal handling of the subject as it relates to the Old MSS. in the same article.

But here let us make the suggestion, that the "writings of the Fathers" have been more liable to interpolations, etc., than the Scriptures; for it would appear that the expression of Rev. 22:18,19 has always more or less deterred men from falsifying the canonical books. We believe that very few interpolations into the text of the Bible have been made intentionally (that of 1 John 5:7 being a bold and notable exception). Other interpolations were, we believe generally the result of accident – usually the copying of a *marginal comment* into the text, at a time when all copying was done by pen.

But having repeated our statement of the facts regarding the first clause of Rev. 20:5 let us see that even if it were proved, either by the finding of another and yet older Greek MS. or in any other way, to be a genuine part of what John the Revelator wrote, it would *in no way conflict* with the plan of the ages, which provides

that after the Jewish age had selected and proved an earthly class of rulers and this Gospel age has selected and tried the heavenly class of joint-heirs, God's Kingdom under Christ as King shall be established; which will rule and bless the world and put down all insubordination and sin in every form, lifting out of evil and degradation to perfection and life all the willing and obedient ones and destroying as part of evil all who love sin and who refuse to abandon it when every opportunity to do so is offered; – a work which, we are specifically informed, will be accomplished in a thousand years. Let us see this in the articles on the third page and the one following: – ***THE REST OF THE DEAD LIVED NOT UNTIL THE THOUSAND YEARS WERE FINISHED.***

Give the words *lived* and *died* their full meaning. We speak correctly of our father Adam, who was made a perfect man and possessed of life in full, perfect sense, when we say that from the moment he was cast out of divine favor and out of Eden he began to be a *dying* man, and this dying process continued for 930 years until it was finished – Adam *died*. And if we would think and speak correctly of the world of mankind during the Millennial age, "the times of restitution," we would think and speak of their gradually living, – getting more and more perfect and more and more alive in all their qualities and powers, mental, physical and moral, until perfection of life and of being should be attained at the close of the Millennium. There all mankind desirous of LIFE – under the terms of the New Covenant – *perfect life* such as Adam possessed, and lost for himself and all his race – shall have attained to all that was lost, and all that was redeemed through the precious blood; while others will by that time have been cut off from life entirely in the destruction of the second death.

It is then very easy to see, regardless of this passage, that though the little flock – the body of Christ, whose trial ends with this age – will be raised out of death fully and completely, to the perfection of life (but as spirit beings), by a *sudden resurrection*

change, "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye" at the beginning of the Millennium, the contrary will be true of the world in general. They are to stand trial for life during that thousand-year-judgment-day, and who in God's plan are to get LIFE step by step as a reward for obedience. And in the end of that, their trial-day, the fully obedient shall in the fullest sense of the word ***live*** again. Such will then be like unto Adam, perfect, and the earth will then be like unto Eden – a paradise of God.
