

THE RELATIONSHIP OF OUR LORD'S DEATH AND RESURRECTION TO GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION.

"Jesus, our Lord, was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification." – Rom. 4:25.

The term justification implies either one of two thoughts – either the declaring or proving right of a person or thing which is right, or else the making right of a person or thing which is wrong. The term is commonly used in both senses. A man tries to justify himself when falsely accused: that is, tries to make manifest his righteousness and the falsity of the accusation. Again we say we justify an uneven balance when we add sufficient weight to the lighter side to make it an even balance. So the Scriptures speak of justifying God (Luke 7:29; Rom. 3:4; 1 Tim. 3:16), *i.e.*, of making manifest his justice, or righteousness; and again they speak of justifying sinful men by making them righteous. Thus we see that the term justification, as applied to man in his relationship to God, is equivalent to full salvation or restitution to actual perfection. When a man is actually justified (made right) and is so pronounced and accepted of God, he will have reached actual perfection in every sense of the word – mental, moral and physical; he will be fully restored to the lost estate once enjoyed by Adam.

There is a sense, however, in which some are justified now. By faith they accept *the promise* of God, of full restitution to the divine favor and likeness through Christ their Redeemer and Lord, and thenceforth they are reckoned of God as justified, and owned and treated as sons. All such believers are *legally* justified now, their deficiency being made up to them by the imputed righteousness of Christ. There are some very great and special

advantages to be gained by being thus justified by faith now. But these we must leave for consideration at another time.

This great work of *actual* justification, salvation, or restitution, is the work which [R1247 : page 3] God purposed to do for the world; and to this end both the death and the resurrection of Christ are all-important.

The Word of God continually points to the death of Christ as the only *foundation* for the hope of the world's justification or salvation, saying that "When we were yet sinners we were reconciled to God *by the death* of his Son;" that though "All we like sheep had gone astray, the Lord hath laid upon him the iniquity of us all;" that "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed;" that we are "bought with a price," "redeemed, not with corruptible things, as silver and gold...but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." (Rom. 5:10; Isa. 53:6,5; 1 Cor. 6:20; 1 Pet. 1:18,19.) Our justification, without his death as our ransom-price, would have been legally impossible, since in no other way could God be just, and yet the justifier of fallen and condemned men.

Both the death and the resurrection of Christ were indispensable to God's plan for human salvation or justification; and as we reflect upon the relationship of these marked events we get a glimpse of the philosophy of the wondrous plan which must lead every reverent soul to glorify the wisdom which devised it, and to realize to some extent how God loved the world, even while all were yet sinners.

Let us notice, first, how our Lord Jesus was delivered for our offences; and secondly, what his resurrection has to do with our justification.

John speaks of him as being, previous to his human existence, in the bosom of the Father – the Father's only begotten Son (John 1:18). The Revelator says he was the beginning of the creation of God. (Rev. 3:14.) Yes, says John, he was in the beginning (the beginning of creation) with God. (John 1:2.) And Paul adds (Col. 1:15-17), "He is the first born of every creature: he is before all things, and by him all things consist: by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him and for him; and by him all things consist." To this John also adds his testimony (John 1:3), saying, "All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made."

Thus we see that, previous to his human existence, our blessed Lord was the honored agent of Jehovah in all his mighty works; that he was his only begotten and well beloved Son, his bosom friend and confidential companion, ever in fullest harmony, sympathy and co-operation with him. And whether we contemplate the vastness and grandeur of the physical universe, or the innumerable hosts of intelligent creatures, angelic and human, which, by the power delegated to him, he brought into existence, or the grandeur of the heavenly court and the presence of the divine Father, the great Emperor of the Universe, we are overwhelmed with a sense of the glory that he had with the Father before he humbled himself to the comparatively low estate of manhood. Yet he, that was so rich, for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich. – 2 Cor. 8:9.

Glance now at his poverty: Transformed from a nature and station so exalted to our human nature, which is of the earth, earthly, and the scope of whose powers is limited to its precincts, we see that even as a *perfect* man, which he was, his humiliation was very great. And though the earth was his, and the fulness thereof, he claimed not a foot of it. And though all the silver and

gold were his, and the cattle upon a thousand hills, he claimed nothing. The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head. He was born of humble, human parentage – born in a manger, cradled with the beasts of the stall in the little town of Bethlehem and reared in the despised city of Nazareth. And when at thirty years of age he emerged from obscurity and began to declare his mission in the world, he was despised and rejected of men. He came unto his own people (the Jewish nation), but his own received him not. And finally they put him to an ignominious death as a criminal; and none mourned him save a few humble people who had in meekness and simplicity of heart received his teaching, and who hitherto hoped that this was indeed he that should have redeemed Israel. (Luke 24:21.) O! how deep the humiliation of the Son of God, and how keenly he felt it when the bitter dregs of ignominy were added to the cup of death, and in anguish of soul he cried, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup [of ignominy and shame] pass from me. Nevertheless, not my will but thine be done."

Christ's deliverance for our offences was his deliverance to death, and all his previous humiliation from the spiritual to the human nature was only *preparatory* to the offering of the great sacrifice which was to accomplish our redemption. This our Lord declared when he said, "A body hast thou prepared me for the suffering of death," and "Lo, I come [being thus prepared] to do thy will, O God;" "In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin [the typical sacrifices under the Mosaic law] thou hast no pleasure." They were not sufficient, but were only typical of the great sacrifice which he was about to make; for, says the Apostle, "It is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins." – Heb. 10:4-9.

We thus see that it was impossible for any creature, either higher or lower than the human nature, to release man from the condemnation to death. The blood of bulls and goats could not do

it; and even the Son of God could not do it until first changed to the human nature. And since all men were under condemnation, no man (of Adamic posterity) could redeem his brother, or give to God a ransom for him. (Psa. 49:7.) A man had sinned and was under the just condemnation to death, having forfeited his right to life; and since the word of Jehovah had gone forth, "Dying thou shalt die," there was no power in heaven or in earth that could release him from that condemnation unless another man could be found, who, himself free from sin and condemnation, would willingly offer his own life as a substitute for the condemned one, thus giving an equivalent or corresponding price for the condemned, and redeeming him from the curse of death.

Such a man could never come into the world as the seed of Adam, since all of Adam's posterity inherited his condemnation; but such a one was promised as the seed of the woman. (Gen. 3:15.) And the Son of God was that one. Begotten of God and born of a woman, he thus partook of the human nature without its condemnation. This was indicated in the angel's message to Mary – "That *holy thing* which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." (Luke 1:35.) Since by man (Adam) came death, by man also (the man Christ Jesus) must come the redemption and consequent resurrection from the dead. – 1 Cor. 15:21.

What was it, then, that Jesus gave for our redemption? It was his *life*, as he said – "I lay down my *life* for the sheep." (John 10:15.) When any being gives his life, he is giving all that he has. No being can have more than one life at a time; when he has given his life he has passed out of existence, and can never exist again unless some higher power restores his life. But when did Jesus give his life? When he was a spiritual being, or when he was a human being? The Scriptures declare that it was after he became a man, and that for this purpose he became a man. His life as a man, his life in the flesh, his humanity, therefore, was what he gave for the life of the world, as the world's sin-offering. This he

very clearly stated when he said, "My *flesh* I will give for the life of the world." (John 6:51.) And this price of our redemption he never took back; for when he was raised from the dead he was no longer human, but of the divine nature, being thus highly exalted, even above his former spiritual glory. He was put to death in the flesh, but quickened [made alive] in the spirit nature, and is henceforth the divine Christ. – 1 Pet. 3:18.

Since all men inherited imperfection and consequent condemnation from Adam, when the life of Adam was thus redeemed by the death of the man Christ Jesus, they also share in the redemption, just as they had shared in the condemnation; as it is written (Rom. 4:19), "As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." Thus the Son of God was delivered for our offences. And this expression "delivered for our offences" is a weighty suggestion of the love of God, who thus freely gave him up for us all. When Christians think of the sacrifice of Christ in giving his life for us, too often they seem to forget our heavenly Father's sacrifice in thus delivering up the precious Son of his love to such abject humiliation, suffering and death for our redemption. Surely herein is manifested the love of God to man, in that he gave his only begotten Son to die for us. You who have realized some measure of parental love may be able thus to gain some idea of the costly sacrifice on the part of our heavenly Father as well as of our Lord Jesus.

We now come to the second proposition of our text – to the consideration of what our Lord's resurrection has to do with our justification.

It is manifest that though we were redeemed from death by the precious blood of Christ, the purpose of God was not to perpetuate the life of the race in sin, but on the contrary to deliver them both from sin and from its legitimate penalty, death. And

while the legal right to do this was under God's arrangement secured through Christ's death, the process of its accomplishment [R1248 : page 3] will require considerable time. It is written that for this purpose "God hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained (Jesus Christ), whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead" (Acts 17:31); and that "He hath committed all judgment unto the Son." – John 5:22.

This day appointed for the world's judgment under Christ, the great Prophet, Priest and King, is to be the Millennium, or thousand years' reign of Christ. It will be the world's great judgment day. In the sense of sentencing merely, a judgment would be utterly useless and certainly in no sense a blessing. But in the full sense of the term judgment, which includes the thought of trial, we see a great work to be accomplished during the thousand years of Christ's reign – a work of first awakening from death, and then of teaching, reforming and disciplining the race until they are actually justified, made right, acceptable to God and worthy of everlasting life. This great work of Christ, during the thousand years of his reign, will be accomplished in all who willingly submit to his righteous authority, and all others shall be cut off in the second death. "Then cometh the end, when he shall [R1248 : page 4] have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule, and all authority and power; for he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet." – 1 Cor. 15:24,25.

Many of the special features of this great work of restitution or justification are clearly pointed out by the sacred writers. Our Lord speaks of the awakening of all from death in that day, saying, "The hour cometh in which all that are in their graves shall come forth." (John 5:28.) "There shall be a resurrection of the just and of the unjust." (Acts 24:15.) They tell us that the knowledge of the

Lord shall be made to fill the whole earth as the waters cover the sea (Hab. 2:14), showing that great enlightening and educational influences will be set to work; that the world will be ruled with a rod of iron (Rev. 2:27), with unbending justice, from the power of which none can escape; that a grand highway of holiness (a public thoroughfare) shall be cast up, and that the redeemed of the Lord shall walk thereon (Isa. 35:8,9; 40:3), showing a grand reversal of public sentiment in favor of righteousness, a glorious revival of religion that shall sweep over the whole world. They tell us further how all the stumbling-stones of temptation to evil shall be gathered out (Isa. 62:10), showing that none of the licensed evils of the present day will find a place under that glorious reign of righteousness. And thus the way of life shall be made so plain that the wayfaring man, though unlearned, shall not stumble therein. (Isa. 35:8.) How difficult it is to find the way of life now! "Straight is the gate and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, and *few* there be that find it," now; but then all shall find it. There will not be a thousand contradictory religious creeds to confuse the mind, but the books of divine revelation shall be opened, made plain, so that all can understand.

Such an opening of the books is even now begun; not, however, before the blind eyes of the world, but before the anointed eyes of the household of faith; for already we perceive that we are in the gray dawn of that glorious day which God hath appointed. And much more we are told, of how the physical earth shall be made glorious, how the wilderness shall bloom and streams shall break forth in the deserts, and how the earth shall yield her increase instead of the brier and the thorn (Isa. 35:1,2,6; Psa. 67:6; 85:11-13; Ezek. 34:25-27; Zech. 8:12), and how wholesome restraints and wise rulings and righteous discipline of rewards and punishments, as the individual cases may require, shall finally bring forth the peaceable fruits of righteousness in all the earth, until the whole earth shall smile as the garden of Eden and break forth into singing.

In the resurrection of Christ, as the Apostle states, we have the assurance that this great work shall be accomplished. If his sacrifice had not been acceptable, had he in any way incurred condemnation to death by failure to meet the requirements of the law, he never could have had a resurrection and our hope would have perished. But *his* resurrection accomplished is the assurance and pledge that the great work of the world's resurrection and restitution shall also in due time be accomplished. The preparations for it are made; the legal barrier to it was removed by the death of Christ for our redemption; the resurrection of Christ and his endowment with all power in heaven and in earth for its accomplishment is also an established fact; and, thank God! the appointed time is not far distant when the long-promised blessings shall be poured forth.

For this great work of justification, salvation or restitution, how necessary the resurrection of Christ; for man's receiving of the thing purchased awaits his glorious appearing as the great Prophet, Priest and King whom Jehovah promised to raise up. (Deut. 18:15.) This is the theme of the whole gospel – of its types and prophecies and all its glowing inspirations. It was the hope of the early church, and it is our hope. This is the blessing implied in the promise to Abraham – "In thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed," "Which seed," says Paul, "is Christ." (Gal. 3:16.) It is the blessing, too, prefigured in that eloquent type of the Day of Atonement, when the high priest, after making the typical atonement for the sins of Israel, came out to the door of the Tabernacle, arrayed in robes typical of glory and beauty, prefiguring the dignity and glory of the office and work of the risen Christ, the world's High Priest, and lifting up his hands blessed the people who lay prostrate in the dust, in symbol of the world's prostration in death. It is the blessing referred to by the Psalmist when he calls upon the heavens and the earth to rejoice greatly, saying, "Let the heavens rejoice and let the earth be glad; let the sea roar and the fulness thereof. Let the field be joyful, and

all that is therein: then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice before the Lord; for he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth: he shall judge the world with righteousness and the people with his truth."
– Psa. 96:11-13.

It is the blessing referred to by Isaiah (14:7), when he says, "The whole earth is at rest, and is quiet; they break forth into singing." It is that for which the church has long prayed, saying, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven." Yes, those years of blessing under Christ's reign are the "*times of refreshing* from the presence of the Lord," "the *times of restitution of all things* which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began." – Acts 3:19-21.

But we seem to hear some inquire, How can these things be? Does not death end all? and is not the doom of each one sealed at death? Do not the righteous then go to heaven and the unrighteous to everlasting woe and merciless torture? It is not our purpose now to dwell at length on that question, but you will readily see that those ideas are out of harmony with the teachings of the scriptures to which attention has just been called. Why would God appoint a thousand years to judge the race if their trial is already past and their doom eternally sealed? There is a class whose trial ends with this life, whose judgment day is now, and who, therefore, will "not come into judgment with the world" during the Millennium, but now we are considering God's provision for the world in general. Whatever may be thought of the condition of man in death, all Christians agree that the full reward or penalty of each is reserved to the second coming of the Lord and the resurrection then due to take place. (Those who desire to inquire further are respectfully referred to Old Theology Tract, No. 1.)

We see, then, the importance both of the death and of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, to the accomplishment of the divine

plan of salvation. And Christ's resurrection, Paul shows us, is the pledge of our resurrection, saying, "Now is Christ risen from the dead and become the *firstfruits* of them that slept." (See 1 Cor. 15:12-20.) If Christ died and rose again for the purpose of giving life to the world; if he removed the great legal barrier by his costly sacrifice; if his sacrifice was acceptable, in that God raised him from the dead, and gave him all power in heaven and in earth, and appointed a day for the great work, then as surely as that day shall dawn upon the world, so surely shall the prison-house of death yield up its captives (Isa. 61:1) and the justification of the world shall be accomplished. Praise the Lord! "Blessing and honor and glory and power be unto him that sitteth upon the throne [of universal dominion] and unto the Lamb forever and ever."
