

ENOCH, ELIJAH AND THE SENTENCE.

THE ANSWER to the following query may interest others than the inquirer: –

"Since 'death passed upon all men,' because of Adam's sin; and since all had to be *redeemed* before they could escape from that death sentence, how came it that Enoch and Elijah escaped from it before the redemption-price was paid?"

We answer, that they did not escape, but were still under the sentence of death until the ransom was paid. The *execution* of the sentence was deferred in their cases, and their lives prolonged; but they would eventually have died had they not been redeemed. After father Adam was sentenced he lived nearly a thousand years, but under his particular sentence he could not have lived more than a thousand years; because the sentence read, "In *the day* that thou eatest thereof, dying thou shalt die." And since "a day with the Lord is as a thousand years" (2 Pet. 3:8), his death was fixed to take place within that "day." But God left the way open to make types of Enoch and Elijah, and hence, so far as they and the remainder of [R2153 : page 149] the human family were concerned, no limit of time for the execution of the sentence was fixed. If, therefore, it pleased God to have it so, they might have continued to live for thousands of years, under the death sentence, without dying. In Elijah's case, altho he was translated, it is not said that he did not die afterward. His translation made a type, as we have seen (MILLENNIAL DAWN, VOL. II., Chapter viii.), and he may have died and been buried afterward, unknown to men, as was Moses. – Deut. 34:6.

But with Enoch the case was different, as we are expressly told that he did not die. In his case, therefore, it is evident that the execution of the sentence was deferred, but there is no evidence that it was annulled. He, therefore, remained under that sentence of death until he

was *ransomed* by our Lord's death. As a member of the fallen race, he was an imperfect man, and altho redeemed, and altho a restitution to human perfection is provided for him in the divine plan, we are not certain that he is *yet* a perfect man. For the Apostle seems to teach that none of those whose faithfulness was attested before the Gospel call was made will be *made perfect* until after Christ and his bride are made perfect. He says (Heb. 11:39,40), after enumerating many of the ancient worthies, Enoch included, verse 5, "These all, having obtained witness through faith, received not the promise [everlasting life, etc.], God having provided some better thing [priority of time as well as of honor and position] for us [the Gospel Church], that they [the ancient worthies] without us [apart from us] should not be MADE PERFECT." And since the Church, the body of Christ, has not yet been perfected in glory, it is but a reasonable inference that wherever Enoch is and however happy and comfortable he may be, he is not yet made a perfect man, and will not be until all the members of the body of Christ have first been made perfect in the divine nature.

As to *where* God took Enoch, we may not know, since God has not revealed that. Should we speculate as to whether God took him to some other world, and for what purpose, it would be but an idle speculation. We may not be wise above what is written. We may be certain, however, that Enoch did not go to heaven – the *spiritual* state or condition – for such is the record: "*No man* hath ascended up to heaven but he that came down from heaven – even the Son of Man." (John 3:13.) Elijah is said to have ascended to heaven; but, from our Lord's statement above quoted, that must be understood to refer to the *air* – as, when it is said that "the fowl fly in the midst of heaven:" it certainly cannot refer to the *heavenly condition*, which flesh and blood cannot enter nor even see without a change of nature, which change has been promised only to the Gospel Church.

Understanding, as above shown, that Enoch was preserved from actual dissolution in death – altho, already under that sentence, legally dead (Rom. 5:12; Matt. 8:22) until the ransom-price for all was paid by

our Lord's death – we can see that there will now be no necessity for his dissolution, but that when the due time shall have come he may be fully and completely *restored* from even the measure of human imperfection he had inherited to full, perfect manhood.

So, too, it will be with those of the world who will be living when the "times of restitution" are fully ushered in: it will not be necessary for them to go into the tomb. For altho they are already legally dead, in that condemnation (or sentence) to "death passed upon all men," yet their penalty has also been legally met by another, Christ. He now holds the *judgment* against all, but graciously offers to cancel it entirely for each one who will accept restitution to life and perfection on the conditions of the New Covenant.

As during this Gospel age the Church, altho once, under sentence, they were *dead* in trespasses and sins, are *reckoned* as freed from condemnation, as justified, and as having passed from death unto life when they accept Christ's merit under the New Covenant, so it will be in the Millennial age with those of the world who, upon learning it, accept God's offer of life. They also will be *reckoned* as having passed from death unto life – as tho they had been utterly dead and then been awakened. So complete is the *reckoning* that those who then sin *wilfully*, and forfeit their reckoned life, die the second death, altho they all may not actually have died before. And indeed so too it is now with the Gospel Church – if after we, through faith in Christ, are reckoned as no longer dead, but alive toward God through Jesus Christ, we were to sin wilfully, intentionally, we would thus bring upon ourselves *again* (a *second* time) the full penalty of sin, *death*, and this would be the second death.

But while there are such similarities between the Lord's methods now and in the next age for justification to life, or passing from death unto life *reckonedly*, there are very different arrangements for the two ages or the *actual* passing out of death into life, when the trial of each is finished. The Church of the Gospel age walks by faith entirely, and

not by sight. Her trial occurs before the actual *setting up* of the Kingdom, and hence each one, as he finishes his course, must *wait* for the crown of life. They "all die *like men*," and the world recognizes no difference. But while they actually die the same as other men, God keeps up the *reckoned* difference between those who have accepted his offer of life and become his children and others who have not done so. Hence in Scripture [R2153 : page 150] believers are not said to be dead, but to be sleeping until the "morning," when, according to God's prearranged plan, such shall have actually and in full measure the *life* now *reckoned* as theirs under God's covenant in Christ. Thus our Lord spoke of Lazarus and others as sleeping, and the Apostle's writings refer to "those who sleep in Jesus." And the Scriptures, [R2154 : page 150] throughout, preserve the same sentiment, saying, – "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning;" "I shall be satisfied when I awake in thy likeness," etc. The only exceptions to this "sleeping" are particularly mentioned by the Apostle, when he says, "We shall not all sleep, altho we must all be changed." Those living in the time when our Lord *begins* to take his great power and reign, altho they all must die, because consecrated *even unto death*, yet they will not "sleep," their "change" to spirit-being coming in the moment of dying. And in this blessed time (according to the evidences presented in MILLENNIAL DAWN, VOL. II. and III.) we believe we have been living since April, 1878 A.D. What a blessing this is we find stated by our Lord, – "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord *from henceforth* – yea, saith the spirit, they rest from their labors [from weariness, etc.], but their works [not discontinued in a sleep of death] follow with them." – Rev. 14:13.

But during the Millennial age it will be somewhat different. Those who accept the New Covenant will no more get the perfect life instantly than we do now. They will get it at the end of the Millennial age, as we get it at the end of the Gospel age. Yet not just the same; for the Gospel Church, as we have seen, has waited in the sleep of death for the close of the age and the reward of the perfect life, while the faithful of the Millennial age, instead of dying, will gradually improve in health –

mental, moral and physical – until perfection will be reached by all such, at the close of the Millennial age. Meantime, those who sin wilfully against full light and full ability will be accounted to have committed the sin unto death; and death to such, even if born in the Millennium, will be the *second* death.
