

"LIKE UNTO THE ANGELS."

AMONGST the Jews were three particular parties. The largest and in every way most important of these were known as Pharisees, who believed in a future life, to be attained by a resurrection at some future time, for which they waited. Second to these in importance, yet very much smaller, were the Sadducees, who boasted of their intellectual acumen, claiming that a man when he died had no preeminence above a brute, except in the honors done to his corpse – disbelieving in a resurrection or future life of any kind, disbelieving also that there are angelic beings of a spirit order, holding extremely materialistic views, believing nothing that they could not appreciate with their natural senses. The third party, Essenes, accepted the heathen teachings of Plato, disbelieving in a resurrection, and claiming that when a man died he was more alive than before. This sect or party, although mentioned by Josephus a little later than our Lord's time, was so small in the days of our Lord and the apostles that they are not so much as mentioned once in the New Testament.

The Pharisees, the numerous party, the orthodox at that time, were our Lord's chief opponents in argument and otherwise; yet, as the records show, they uniformly failed to entrap him, though their ables men were put to the fore with this end in view – that they might show our Lord's teachings to be illogical or unreasonable to some degree, and thus to break his influence with the common people; or, failing to do this, that they might catch him in his words and have opportunity for a charge against him before the Roman governor, and thus bring political pressure to bear to stop his ministry. It was on such an occasion, after the discomfiture of the Pharisees, that the Sadducees stepped to the front with a question which they had every confidence would confuse our Lord in the presence of the people, and not only show his position to be illogical, but gain a feather for

their own [R3461 : page 345] caps as philosophers and teachers superior, not only to Jesus, but also to the Pharisees.

WHOSE WIFE SHALL SHE BE?

The Jewish Law provided certain inheritances for each son, and it was the ambition of each to perpetuate his own family. This the Law inculcated, by providing that upon the death of any man childless, his brother, if he had one, should perpetuate his inheritance for him by taking the widow to wife. The skilfully arranged question of the Sadducees supposed seven brothers, the first one of whom married and died childless, the wife being taken by his brother, and so likewise until the entire seven had been husbands to the one wife. Lastly the wife died. Which of these seven could claim the wife in the resurrection? The question seemed to show an absurdity in the doctrine of a future life, implying that there would be such a muddle that all eternity would not straighten it out.

Our Lord's answer was, "Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, neither the power of God." That is to say, the difficulty of the Sadducees arose from the fact that they had not understood the Scriptures relating to the future life beyond the resurrection, neither did they give proper weight to the power of God, which is quite able to surmount every difficulty that could be imagined. Our Lord might have stopped there, giving the not unreasonable inference that his hearers lacked the proper knowledge of the subject to permit them to clearly comprehend anything he might say about it. But rather than appear to avoid the question, and, indeed, with a view to giving light upon the subject to us who would come afterward, our Lord explained the matter, saying, "The children [people] of this world [age] marry and are given in marriage; but they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world [age] and the resurrection from the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage."

True the glorified Church will not marry, but there is no reference here to the Church class, the Bride class. The question did

not refer to saints, but to any ordinary Jews under the Law, to whom the illustration might be in any degree applicable.

Nothing in the illustration implied that either the woman or any of her husbands were followers of the Lord or in any sense of the word "saints." Our Lord's answer should be understood from this standpoint, therefore. He did not say, My disciples will neither marry nor be given in marriage, nor that those who are faithful in following me will have such experiences, but he made his answer as broad as the Sadducees had made their question: he made the answer applicable to all Jews. True, also, the Greek article occurs before the word resurrection in the question and also in the answer, but this would be no positive proof that a special or chief resurrection was meant except two resurrections were referred to in contrast. Indeed the distinction between the resurrection of the Church and that of the world was not yet taught by our Lord – was not set forth until after Pentecost. Hence the Sadducees could not know to refer to it. They did probably know that our Lord had awakened some dead ones, as had the prophets of old, and so probably referred to the anastasis of the future as in contrast and distinction from any temporary awakening of the present time.

DID THE RANSOM SECURE FULL RESURRECTION?

We ask then, what did our Lord mean by limiting his answer to "they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that age and the resurrection"? Will not the whole world be accounted worthy to obtain full resurrection? Did not our Lord's death purchase full resurrection for all the race? We answer, No. Our Lord's death was the propitiation, the satisfaction, whereby the sins of the whole world shall be cancelled, and whereby, therefore, the whole world may be awakened from the sleep of death and brought out of the great prison-house, the tomb. But such awakening and coming forth is with a view to their enlightenment, that they may all come to the knowledge of the Truth to the intent that by such knowledge and by obedience to it

they might be saved, recovered, delivered completely out of all weaknesses and imperfections – brought gradually step by step, up, up, up, out of sin and death-conditions to full perfection and life-conditions; and this condition of absolute perfection or life from the dead is resurrection "out from among the dead" who will refuse to use those opportunities.

The raising up will proceed during the thousand years from the time of the awakening of the individual until he shall have attained to the full perfection of manhood – all that was lost in Adam. Then he will be resurrected – that will constitute his resurrection. Thus he will attain unto "that world," that perfect dispensation which God has designed shall be the ultimate and everlasting condition of all who love and obey him. But some will be awakened from the tomb who will not be accounted worthy to attain such a lifting up to perfection, mental, moral and physical, because of their failure to respond to the blessed privileges and influences of that time.

Now, as respects those who, at the close of the Millennial age, will have demonstrated their obedience to the Lord, and who shall be accounted worthy of that perfect state, and to be made perfect themselves, lifted clear out of death – such will neither marry nor be given in marriage. The Lord does not say what will be the **[R3461 : page 346]** intermediate conditions during the Millennial age, and this leaves us to infer that mankind and womankind, being awakened from the tomb in precisely the same conditions in which they went into it, will possess the same sex distinctions as at the present time. What will be the regulations of that time we are not told, but we have confidence in the Lord that he will be abundantly able to direct the course of mankind wisely for their benefit, instruction and uplift.

The end of the uplifting process, the end of the Millennial age, will mark a change in the human constitution by gradual development, a change so great that by that time those who will be ready to pass beyond the Millennial age into the everlasting

conditions will not only be perfect in the sense and degree that Adam was perfect before he sinned, but also before mother Eve was taken from him and made a separate being. That is to say, sex conditions will gradually pass away, and be no more in mankind, even as it is not found in angels, and as it was not in man before the separation into sexes was effected in Eden for the purpose of propagating the race and filling the earth.

SEXUAL DISTINCTIONS TEMPORARY.

It will be remembered that during the first thousand years after the fall, not only was life much longer than at present, but births were much less frequent than now; and so we presume that during the Millennial age the propagation of the species will gradually diminish until toward its close it will finally stop, mankind gradually losing the sex functions. Sex will no longer be necessary; for man will no longer be alone, as he was at first, to need a companion, for the whole earth will then be filled with perfect beings, and all the wicked, the incorrigible, will be destroyed. It is to this we understand that our Lord referred, saying, "Neither can they die any more, for they are equal unto the angels, and are the children of God, being children of the resurrection." As the angels do not die, neither will the perfected human beings die.

Eternal life is the gift of God through Christ for all of Adam's race who would receive it upon conditions of absolute obedience, and the test which will take place in the close of the Millennial age (Rev. 20:7-9) will guarantee that none remain to pass beyond into the perfect dispensation except those who, like the angels, having been tested, will be in no danger of falling, and will therefore die no more. Those who pass that inspection at the close of the Millennial age will be accepted of the Father as his children, and the intermediary or mediatorial Kingdom of Christ over them will terminate. They will become God's children by the resurrection – by the raising up processes **[R3462 : page 346]** of the Millennial age, administered

through the glorified Christ – the same that elsewhere is called "the resurrection by judgments," because the rewards and penalties of obedience or disobedience will follow promptly, having the effect of constraining to righteousness and uplifting from sin-and-death conditions.

In applying this Scripture thus to the world of mankind, and its raising out of death conditions during the Millennium and its attainment to life everlasting and to the condition where there will be no further marrying, we have no desire to imply that there will be marrying in the glorified Church. On the contrary the Church is married to the Lord. As old creatures they are dead; as New Creatures they never will be married to any but the Lord; and when in the resurrection they come forth to glory, honor and immortality it will be to conditions like to their Lord, "far above angels, principalities and powers and every name that is named."

WHAT MOSES SHOWED AT THE BUSH.

Continuing to level his argument against the Sadducees – continuing to prove the general resurrection of mankind, and not merely the resurrection of the Church – our Lord adds, "Now that the dead are [to be] raised even Moses showed at the bush, when he calleth the Lord the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob, for he is not a God of the dead but of the living; for all live unto him." Had there been no provision in God's plan for the raising of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, he never would have spoken of himself as being their God, but rather would have treated them as non-existent, having no being, no God, and never to have any. Likewise the fact that God speaks of the coming blessing through Abraham upon all the families of the earth proves that from the divine standpoint, although the billions of earth are dead, they all live unto God – in his purpose, in his plan, in his arrangement, to be accomplished and fulfilled through Jesus during the Millennial age.

SHALL WE KNOW EACH OTHER THERE?

The questions are frequently asked us, What knowledge of one another will there be in the next life? and Will there be communication between the heavenly and the earthly classes?

We reply that the acquaintance of the present time will be prolonged into the next life, and revive and increase. As for those who will attain the spirit plane of being, viz., the Bride, the overcoming class, and "the virgins, her companions, which follow her," otherwise in Scripture known as the "great company," all being upon the spirit plane will be able to see and know each other, because in those respects they will be alike, spirit beings. True, the Bride class, with her Lord Jesus and the Father, will all be on the divine plane, while the Great Company, like the angels, will be **[R3462 : page 347]** on a lower plane of spirit being. But all spirit beings may see and know and have intercourse with each other – those on the divine plane being superior not only in rank and position but also in that they will possess inherent life, immortality, while the others will possess a life that will be eternal because of its continuous supply.

The world of mankind will know each other as they do now – some by previous acquaintance and some by introduction. Thus, none of the ancient worthies who will be present as perfect men will be known by any of the world today, and they would need, therefore, some kind of introduction, either by divine miracles attesting them and their authority or by some other means. It may be easily enough imagined how the world will gain introduction one to the other, just as such introductions are now accomplished amongst men. Similar introductions will doubtless be necessary to the glorified saints beyond the vail, since the majority of them have never seen the Lord, the Apostles, nor each other.

COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN SPIRITS AND HUMANS.

Coming now to the last feature, we answer that undoubtedly there will be communication between the heavenly and the earthly beings, not only throughout the Millennial age but subsequently. To our understanding the Father and the heavenly angels will have nothing to do with mankind during the Millennium, until the delivery up of the Kingdom of God's dear Son. But there will be communication between the Kingdom class, the Church, with Jesus at its head, and the world of mankind under their supervision and uplifting influences. Looking back into the past, we see that God communicated with Abraham, and numerous of his natural descendants, through spirit beings, who assumed human form for the purpose. But we are not to expect such manifestations in the future, because we find in the divine arrangement a different preparation.

We find that the ancient worthies as a class have been prepared of God in advance to serve this very purpose; that they, rewarded with human perfection, might serve as the intermediaries between the spirit Kingdom and the world of mankind. As it is written, "The Law shall go forth from Mount Zion and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." The instruction will go from the spiritual Kingdom to the earthly princes, its representatives, and be communicated from these princes to all the families of the earth, with full power and authority in the name of the Kingdom to enforce every regulation, to reward the well-doers and to punish all who fail of obedience.

With the end of the Millennial age, wilful evildoers having been cut off in the Second Death, the world of mankind will be, like the angels, possessed of lasting life, and without sex. They will all be perfect men, like to and equal to the condition of the ancient worthies during the Millennium. When the Kingdom of Christ shall be delivered to the Father we believe that a similar communication will be established between the perfect men and the heavenly courts that

was in vogue before the first disobedience and its penalty came upon men. True, we do not know very particularly about the character of the communion which prevailed in Edenic times, but it was sufficient for every purpose, we may be sure, and such will be the communion of the future between the perfect God and his earthly image, the perfect man – similar communion to that which during the Millennial age will take place between the glorified Church and its earthly representatives, the ancient worthies.

