

"THE RESURRECTION OF THE JUST AND OF THE UNJUST"

THE RESURRECTION of the just could not mean a resurrection of those who had been perfect, for there are none perfect, none just, "no, not one." "The resurrection of the just," then, must mean the resurrection of those who have been justified; and the justified are those referred to in the Scriptures of whom Abraham was an example. Abraham believed God, and was justified by faith. It was the faith that justified, and the works corroborated the faith.

So with the Church of this Age. The Apostle says, "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom, also, we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." (Rom. 5:1,2.) We are not only justified out of sin, but are also brought by operation of our faith into the glorious standing of members of Christ; and we may hope to participate with Christ in the glories of His Kingdom in the future. It is one thing to be freed from guilt, and another thing to be raised to the position of sons of God, heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ, our Lord.

The resurrection of the dead is similarly spoken of in John 5:28,29, where we read, "Marvel not at this, for the hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth." The Lord does not mean merely all the good, for He also includes in this all that are in their graves. We read in the context that they that have done good shall come forth "unto the resurrection of life"; those who have done evil shall come forth to "damnation." The word damnation, in the Greek, signifies a crisis, a turning-point, a decision.

THE RESURRECTION OF THE CHURCH

Those whose faith enables them to stand through evil report and through good report, and who thus fulfil the Divine requirement, are character-likenesses of Jesus. These now pass from under the condemnation condition to the life condition. As the Apostle says, "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." (I John 3:14.) This passing from death unto life is not in the full sense in the present time. By faith we are reckoned dead with Christ, counted members of His Body. That future life is reckoned to us. We are counted as having it; and this is our condition because we have the Divine approval.

Since there is none good, the only sense in which one could "do good" would be by coming into accord with God by obedience, as under the Covenant which prevailed with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, or under the still higher Covenant that prevails with the Church in this Gospel Age. We have this testimony, that we are pleasing to God, who indicates His pleasure by begetting us of the Holy Spirit. In contradistinction, the world are aliens, foreigners. (Eph. 2:19.) By this Holy Spirit, this "unction from the Holy One," therefore, we have the evidence of acceptance with the Father.

The outcome will be, that those having this approval of God, having passed the trials and testings which they have received – for He receiveth no son whom He does not scourge (Heb. 12:6) – and having proved faithful to the end, will be raised by the Lord to the very highest place – glory, honor and immortality. This is the crown, or very highest pinnacle of life that could be imagined. So, then, those who will have part in this First Resurrection will reign with Christ a thousand years. This is the first class mentioned by the Apostle. They are approved; they shall come forth to "life resurrection."

What is the significance of "life resurrection"? We answer that these shall come forth to perfect life instantly. As St. Paul says, "It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is

raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spirit body." Thus instantaneously these blessings come to them. They have their trial in the present time and, therefore, theirs will be the chief resurrection.

THE RESURRECTION OF THE WORLD

But all will have a resurrection. How will the resurrection of the world differ from that apportioned to the Church? The world has not had the Divine approval; the heathen have not had the Divine approval. The Apostle says, "How shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard?" (Rom. 10:14.) They are not fit for heaven. They are not fit to be with the angels or with the saints, no matter how they came to be in this condition. They came into this condition because of heredity, as children of Adam. But they could not have the same kind of resurrection that those will receive who have God's approval now, at the time of their death: "Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life."

So with the majority of those in Christian lands. They could not be thought to be fit for heaven or to have God's approval in any sense of the word. And they know it. They confess it themselves. Nobody could deny that nine hundred and ninety-nine out of every thousand are living "after the flesh." They are not saints, but have **[R4989 : page 92]** the Divine disapproval, some having heard more of the Word of God, and some having heard less.

THE GENERAL RESURRECTION TO BE GRADUAL

"Those who have done evil" will come forth to the resurrection of "damnation" (Greek, *krisis*), resurrection of trial, resurrection of testing. What kind will it be? The Scriptures show us that it will be a gradual resurrection. During the thousand years of Christ's reign the people will be awakening from the sleep in the tomb. This awakening will be a preparatory work, not the full resurrection, which will require the entire thousand years.

But the Divine provision is that the account will have been settled for the whole world, so that when they shall come forth from the tomb in the future they will be in the hands of the Redeemer, whose Kingdom will be worldwide. They will have the opportunity of being raised again to that which was lost. Human perfection was lost, which includes not only perfect physical health, but perfect mental power; for mental power depends upon the brain, is affected by the brain, as well as by the body, so that men are now in a dying condition, mentally, morally and physically.

None will be fully raised, from imperfection to perfection, until the end of the thousand years. All who will respond to the beneficent arrangements will secure that which Father Adam enjoyed at first – perfect manhood. Those who will not be obedient to the requirements of Christ's Kingdom will be cut off in the Second Death. They will be destroyed as brute beasts, having had the full measure of Divine favor. – 2 Pet. 2:12.

"And the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished." (Rev. 20:5.) When the sentence came upon Father Adam he was thrust out of Eden. All of his children have been born dying, and are still in a dying condition. Therefore, the raising of man out of sin and death will be the bringing of him to full perfection – perfect life. This will be a gradual process. They will be made more alive and more alive, and less dead and less dead, as the thousand years progress, and none will get the resurrection life until they are raised to the condition of perfection – perfect life in the image of God, which was lost by Adam.

BURNING OF THE WORLD SYMBOLICAL

The Scriptures declare that "the earth abideth forever" and that "God formed it not in vain; He made it to be inhabited." (See Eccl. 1:4; Isa. 45:18.) It has not yet reached the blessed condition when it will blossom as a rose, although it is in process of completion. At the end of the thousand years of Christ's reign, the whole earth shall have

been brought to perfection. In the [R4990 : page 92] prophecies, mountains are symbolical of kingdoms. In 2 Peter 3:12 the Apostle's words signify that there will be a great conflagration and that the heavens also will be on fire, but that, nevertheless, there will be a new order of things, to take the place of the old order; and under this new order of things there shall come a blessing to all in the earth. The word "fire," in this sense, signifies destruction of the present order of things, of the *kosmos* – not the *ge*, the earth, but the social system, society as at present organized.

We not infrequently hear people say, "Well, matters are getting pretty hot!" Yes, the battle between capital and labor is getting hotter, as is evidenced lately in the labor troubles, particularly in Great Britain and the United States. But the time of conflagration will be such a "time of trouble" that it will entirely consume the present order of things, a time of trouble, therefore, that will be Epoch-making, and the new Epoch will be introduced immediately thereafter.

MOUNTAINS SYMBOLIZE KINGDOMS

We remember riding over the mountains once with an Adventist. The Adventist brother said, "Do you not think it will be a glorious time when these mountains will be brought down to a level?" We said, "Dear brother, the mountains are very beautiful, very useful." He said, "You cannot raise corn on this mountain." "Well," said we, "go to the prairie if you want to raise corn." Then he said, "What do you think the Scriptures *mean* when they say that the mountains shall be brought low, and when they speak about the melting of the earth"? We said, "Dear brother, the 'mountains' there are kingdoms. We read that 'the Mountain of the Lord's house shall be exalted in the top of the mountains'; it will be the chief Mountain or Kingdom." – Isa. 2:2.

THE RESURRECTION WILL LEVEL ALL CLASSES

The Psalmist tells us that "the mountains shall be removed and carried into the midst of the sea," mountains being symbolical of the

kingdoms, of the governments of the earth, and society in general, the elements which support the governments. (Psa. 46.) St. Peter also speaks as though the whole world will be consumed by fire. These things are symbolical, implying that the people who are now in a low condition will be brought up, and that those who are high will be brought low. Thus there will be a leveling process.

We remember the statement of the Scripture in Zephaniah, "Wait ye upon Me, saith the Lord." Here Jehovah is speaking to the Church, telling us that we should not be dissatisfied, that we should not be anarchists and strife-breeders: I shall attend to this matter Myself. You can rest with the present order of things. "Wait ye upon Me, saith the Lord, until the day that I rise up to the prey; for My determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them Mine indignation, even all My fierce anger; for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of My jealousy." That this fire is not literal is shown in the next sentence: "Then will I turn unto the people a pure Message, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord to serve Him with one consent." – Zeph. 3:8,9.

WHEN "THE SPIRIT AND THE BRIDE SAY, 'COME'"

It will be the work of the thousand years of Messiah's reign to thus make known the pure Message of God, the pure Word of God. We all see, as we look back, that a pure Message of God has not been declared to mankind, but creed contradicting creed, making confusion worse confounded. The Lord, however, will pour out His Spirit upon all flesh, and the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the great deep. (Isa. 11:9; Hab. 2:14.) As the Revelator puts it, "the river of the water of life" will flow freely. – Rev. 21:6; 22:1,2.

We see that there is no Throne yet established and that there is no Bride now. We are waiting for the time to come when the Throne will be established and when "the water of life" will flow out. In the future it will be "a river of the water of life." This cannot take place until the

second coming of our Lord; consequently, it will be *after* that, in the glorious time of Messiah's Kingdom, when the Spirit and the Bride will say, "Come!" The election of the Church of God will then have been completed; and *every creature* will come to a knowledge of [R4990 : page 93] the Truth and will have the opportunity of attaining to the full perfection made possible by the redemptive work of Christ.

THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE CHURCH TO EARTHLY SOCIETY

The spirit condition is spoken of as a heavenly condition in the sense that the words *heaven* and *heavenly* in the Scriptures are used to signify *higher*. So the heaven to which the Church will be taken is this *higher condition*. But the mission of the Church in the next Age is in connection with humanity. We are, then, to understand that the Lord and the Church will be present, operating through human, earthly agents; supervising, overruling.

We have an example of this invisible power in Satan, who has been ruling here for over six thousand years, through his agents. His work is a *deceptive* work. He has ruled mankind through ignorance, superstition, etc. But the rule of Christ will be the scattering of error, superstition. The world shall know the Truth that the Truth may make them free. Those who will receive the Truth will receive the freedom and will eventually attain the liberty which belongs to the sons of God. Men will be quite visible to The Christ, but *they* will be *invisible* to men. It is in respect to these that the Lord said that the twelve Apostles shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel – that the Apostles shall be associates with Him in judging and ruling the world.

Then there is another class: "Ye shall see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the Prophets in the Kingdom of God"; but our Lord does not say a word about their seeing Himself or His Apostles. He and His Apostles will be in the invisible phase of the Kingdom. So it is written,

"Instead of Thy fathers shall be Thy children, whom Thou mayest make Princes in all the earth." (Psa. 45:16.) The patriarchs will be considered the children. A *father* is a *life-giver*. While in one sense of the word Abraham and Isaac, etc., might be considered fathers, yet by virtue of Christ's redemptive work He will give them *life* and they will be His children; for whoever *gives* life is the *father* and whoever *receives* life is the *child*. They will be Princes in all the earth, not on the heavenly plane, but on the earthly plane, having obtained the "better resurrection" because they were faithful. Each one of them will be a sample of perfect manhood; and each one of them will be a prince or ruler. Their wisdom will be a wisdom superintended by the Church in glory.

THE OBJECT OF THE INDIVIDUAL TRIAL OF MANKIND

Mankind will need to be put on trial to see whether or not they will accept God's Plan with the knowledge they will have received. If they accept they will be adjudged worthy of everlasting life. If they fail to come into harmony, they will be adjudged worthy of everlasting death. But this judgment will be passed by Christ and His Bride.

So, then, we see that there is a great judgment or trial coming to the world to give them the opportunity of deciding whether or not they will come into harmony with the arrangements of Christ's Kingdom. In the work of judging, the Church will be associated with Christ. We read that God "hath appointed a day, in which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom He hath ordained" (Acts 17:31), Christ, the Head, and the Church, His Body. Again, "Know ye not that the saints shall judge the world?" (I Cor. 6:2.) Therefore our own judgment or trial takes place in advance, that we may be prepared to try or judge the world; and by the experiences through which *we* have passed, we may be assistful to them, as they shall be on trial and under our control.

