

THE NEW CREATURE'S RESPONSIBILITY TO DIVINE LAW

PART 3 – RESURRECTION OF CHURCH DIFFERENT FROM THAT OF WORLD

WE SHALL NOW consider some texts which are not generally understood, but which will enable us to set forth clearly the sharp distinction between the resurrection of the Church and that of the world in general.

In I Thess. 4:14,16 the Apostle Paul mentions *two* classes – "those who *sleep in Jesus*" and "the *dead in Christ*." Our Lord's Ransom-sacrifice accomplished on Calvary has changed the future of the Adamic race, so that they may now be said to "sleep in Jesus." The world, therefore, is not to be considered as *extinct*, eternally *dead*, but as *asleep*, waiting for the time foreordained of the Father, when "all that are in the graves shall hear His voice [the voice of the Son of God] and shall come forth." – John 5:28,29.

"The dead *in Christ*," however, is an expression applicable only to the Elect Church. The call to be baptized into Christ (the Anointed) is an offer which is restricted to the "called and chosen and faithful" Church of the Gospel Age. The Apostle is here referring to those who have been begotten of the Holy Spirit, and later have fallen asleep in death.

But they are not to be considered dead in the same sense in which the world is dead *in Adam*. "The dead in Christ" are *the* dead, who are to have *the* Resurrection of the dead – the First Resurrection – the chief resurrection. The others will be of the subsequent resurrection. We are not to understand, however, that these "dead in Christ" were dead as *New Creatures*, but that as far as the flesh was concerned their death was fully accomplished.

The term "asleep" has been applied to *both classes*. Those of the world who go down into death are still in the unsatisfactory condition in which they died and will come forth in the same state, in order that they may rise from [R5108 : page 308] it. But those who now belong to Christ will experience an instantaneous resurrection, and will receive new bodies like unto the Lord's glorious body.

The Church really begin to rise from the time when they become New Creatures; and unless we begin this rising *now* we shall not have the change – "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye," at the end of our course. (I Cor. 15:51,52.) These shall not come forth under a *future* judgment, or trial, but in their change will pass fully from death unto life – into the glorious reward, the Divine nature.

"THE SPIRIT RETURNS TO GOD"

"Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was; and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it." – Eccl. 12:7.

This text has no special reference to the Church. It has a general application to all mankind as they die. There can be no question as to what is meant by the first part of the text, for human bodies have crumbled to dust for centuries. The latter part of the text is wholly misunderstood by many Christians. It has no reference to the breath or anything returning through the air to God.

The thought is this: When God created Adam, He gave him a life that would continue forever if he would be obedient. When Adam sinned God did not take away the spirit of life immediately. He allowed him to hold on to that spirit of life just as many years as he could, battling with the thorns and thistles until the "breaking of the silver cord."

Adam transmitted a portion of that spirit of life to his children, in some of whom that portion of life continued for centuries. But mankind have no *right* to that spirit of life; it is merely something

transmitted to them by their parents. God recognizes none as having a *right* to live except those who are in harmony with Him – those who are *perfect*. Since the fall all mankind have lived without a *right* to live. Therefore, from the Divine standpoint the whole world is spoken of as legally *dead*. Every right to life from the Divine standpoint is forfeited. No one can say to God, "I have a right to live." God could say, "You have no right to live; for your first parents sinned and thus lost that right."

Adam could not give to his descendants what he had *lost*. When Adam died he gave up the spirit of life; that is, he no longer held that portion of life which he had held for nine hundred and thirty years. Where did that spirit of life go? It went back to God from whom it had come originally. Everything goes back to God. Adam could not say to his children, "I bequeath my life-rights to you"; for he had none. No one but God can give a right to life.

"The spirit returns to God who gave it." When one who has possessed the right to life has forfeited it, he cannot say that he has a right to life or to anything. There is *no way* to get life other than *through Christ*.

"NOT OF THE DEAD, BUT OF THE LIVING"

"The God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob...is not a God of the dead, but of the living." – Luke 20:37,38.

When we note the context we see that our Lord was combatting the theory of the Sadducees, and proving that Abraham and Isaac and Jacob would have a resurrection. Jesus said, "Now that the dead are *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." (Luke 20:37.) If they were dead in the sense [R5108 : page 309] that the beast is dead, God would never have spoken of them in this manner. They had come into accord with God, and He spoke of them in harmony with the general Plan. St. Paul says, "There shall be a

resurrection of the dead, both of the just and of the unjust." (Acts 24:15.) The Ancient Worthies had this testimony, that they pleased God; and we know that they had the promise of a better resurrection than would have been theirs if they had not pleased God. – Heb. 11:35.

These Ancient Worthies lived in exactly the same sense that the begotten New Creatures live. Unless God raises us up from the dead there will be no resurrection. The same thing that applies to the New Creature in Christ applies to the world in general. They may think that those in the tomb are absolutely *dead*; but God intends that they shall have an awakening. So the Apostle speaks not only of those who are asleep in Christ, but also of those who are asleep in *Jesus*. Those who are asleep in Christ are those who had become New Creatures in Christ, heirs of God, partakers of the Divine nature and have passed into death. These are spoken of as "the dead in Christ" who shall rise first.

Jesus is not the Savior merely of the Church, but also the Savior of the world. (John 4:42; I John 4:14.) He is the propitiation not only for our sins, "but also for the sins of the whole world." (I John 2:2.) Therefore, those who believe this statement – that there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and of the unjust – speak of the whole world in exactly the same way that they speak of those who have slept in Christ.

But in the awakening, those of the world who are asleep in Jesus will have the earthly nature, and those who have slept in Christ will have the higher nature. Christ gave His life as a corresponding price for man's life. But we who have come into the Church have come under different conditions altogether from those of the world. As Jesus said, "Ye are not of the world." (John 15:19.) We are separate and distinct from the rest of the world. The Apostle tells us that *our* life comes from the *Father* – "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." – I Peter 1:3.

Does Jesus do nothing for the Church? Yes, indeed! As Advocate He imputes of His merit to the Church that we may be counted in as joint-sharers of His sacrifice, for "if we suffer [with Him], we shall also reign with Him." (2 Tim. 2:12.) This willingness to *suffer* is the Covenant of sacrifice that we make with our Lord. Without *Him* we can do *nothing*. We can never come up to the Divine standards as He did; but as our Advocate He makes good our deficiencies. We have the same begetting of the Holy Spirit by the same Father and we shall also share in the same Resurrection, being made conformable to His death. The Resurrection of Christ is to the Divine nature, in which we shall be "changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye." – I Cor. 15:51,52.

The world will receive earthly resurrection. The Life-Giver, Jesus, will give to them all that was lost – human nature and the Edenic condition. So then, the dead world is said to be *asleep*, but they are to be awakened. Theirs is exactly the same kind of sleep as with us; but the Church were asleep as *New Creatures* and the world are not.

"GOD GIVETH IT A BODY"

"Thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat or of some other grain; but God giveth it a body as it hath pleased Him."

Here is the thought: Mankind belong to the Adamic nature. The kind of nature that God has been pleased to give to the Adamic race is earthly nature. But if we belong to the spirit nature we shall come up accordingly. If you plant corn, you will reap corn; if you plant wheat, you will reap wheat; if you plant barley, you will reap barley. So in death. If an animal body is sown, the animal body will be raised. The Church is an exception to the rule. We New Creatures are sown as animal bodies, but we have these animal bodies merely loaned to us, in which to operate. We are New Creatures, not human beings. We are sown natural bodies, we are raised spirit bodies, in the First Resurrection.

THE TWO RESURRECTIONS

"The hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment." – John 5:28,29., R.V.

The Divine provision is that through the obedience of One, the sins of the whole world will be atoned for, and a blessing come to every member of the Adamic race. By a man came death, and by a man comes the resurrection of the dead. (I Cor. 15:21-23.) We have two classes here; they that have *done good* are those who, during the present time, have heard the Gospel, and who have and use an opportunity to do good, and those who have *done evil* are those who have not heard and who have not, therefore, had an opportunity of doing good.

Who can be said to have done good? "There is *none* righteous, no, *not one.*" (Rom. 3:10.) After having received this good Word of God we should make good use of it, enter into the School of Christ to be taught of Him, and pass through our trials and testings. These things will determine whether or not we are worthy of this high position, to attain which we have consecrated our lives.

But we shall not in this life be perfect as Jesus was – in body as well as in mind. We cannot be perfect in the *flesh*, as Jesus was; but Jesus had a perfect will, and we can also have a perfect will, although we may have drawbacks and hindrances in carrying out that will. But to cover our defects, we have our Advocate, in whom God has arranged that we may be accepted. The Church have had their trial in advance of the world; and if they have overcome, God has said that the verdict will be, "Well done...I will make thee ruler over many things." (Matt. 25:21.) These constitute the "good."

Who are they that have done evil? None have been perfect; not even in their minds have they come up to a standard that God can

approve. They are *unsatisfactory*, which means *unfit*. When God shall have established the glorious Messianic Kingdom, then He will put all mankind under trial to see whether, during the thousand years of His Reign, the rewards and punishments [R5109 : page 309] will bring them to a proper condition of heart. At the end of the thousand years, Jesus, as Mediator, will present them to the Father for a final testing. If they pass that test, God will give them everlasting life. But those who take a thousand years to *make good*, will not get as high a reward as those who, by self-sacrifice, now prove their love for the Truth and die for righteousness' sake.

"HIDE ME IN THE GRAVE"

"O that Thou wouldst hide me in the grave, that Thou wouldst keep me secret until Thy wrath be past, that Thou wouldst appoint me a set time, and remember me!" – Job 14:13.

This passage of Scripture refers, not to the New Creature, but to a human being. It refers to a man and not to a spirit-begotten son of God and member of Christ. Job was here speaking as one of mankind. He [R5109 : page 310] was willing to die, for life had become burdensome to him. He said, "Oh, that Thou wouldst hide me in Sheol until Thy wrath be past!" In the midst of his very severe afflictions he cried, Oh, that I might die! but do not leave me as the brute creation; only hide me in the grave until all this time of wrath and sin and curse is done away with and the New Era shall be ushered in. We can hardly believe that Job realized the meaning of what he was saying, but we should rather suppose that he was uttering words, the full import of which he did not realize.

There is no reason to suppose that when David said, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in Sheol" (hell), he knew that he was speaking prophetically of the Messiah. St. Peter pointed out that these words referred, not to David, but to Christ, that His soul was not left in hell, neither did His flesh see corruption. (Acts 2:27-31.) But Job was speaking for himself, and yet prophetically for mankind. He was a type

of the world. He had lost his flocks and herds, his friends, his home, his children, his wife and even his health.

But in due time, God gave Job back just as many sons and daughters and twice as many flocks and herds, etc. In this way he was a type of the human family. Adam and his family have been lost. He was the king of the earth, but he lost his authority, and with it everything that he had. Ultimately Adam and all of his children will come back to their own – child for child. And so far as the earthly riches were concerned, he will get very much more than he ever lost. Job is a type of this Restitution.

The world is asleep from the Divine standpoint. As Job could say, "Hide me in the grave," so once a Christian could have said, "I shall be hid in the grave until the resurrection." God has made provision for the resurrection of all. But did all die alike? We answer that the Adamic family are dead in the sense that their life-rights were forfeited at the time of the fall. But God looked forward and could speak prophetically either through Job or through any one else. Job could speak as if he were not dead, taking cognizance of the fact that there will be a resurrection. The point here seems to be, Was Job's life carried over in the same sense that St. Paul's life was carried over? By no means. Job was asleep in the *Adamic* death; St. Paul was asleep in *Christ*. The one was the life of the New Creature, and the other was the life of the old creature, not begotten of the Holy Spirit to the new nature.

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