

# THE GLORIOUS RESURRECTION.

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## A DIALOGUE.

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SHOWING THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE RESURRECTION OF  
LIFE, AND THE RESURRECTION OF CONDEMNATION.

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AND so, Caleb, your dear Amelia is gone to be with the Lord ?

Yes, Andrew, I hope so ; the funeral was yesterday, I felt it very much on coming away and leaving her in that dark, cold grave ; but I hope I shall meet her again in another and a better world ; she died speaking to us of resurrection.

How very happy this must have been, Caleb, both for yourself and her too, in your scene of sorrow and separation, to be able to look on with joy to that bright day of glory ! I know of nothing so comforting to the people of God, while passing through this vale of death, as the joyful assurance of resurrection ; because it tells us of an hour, a happy hour, when all who love the Lord Jesus Christ upon earth will rise to meet Him in the air. Those who are in their graves will come forth at the trumpet's sound, and we that are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord ; He will take us home, to His Father's house, to the place He is gone to prepare. (John xiv. 3 ; 1 Thess. iv. 16-18.)

This will be a happy time indeed, Andrew, for those

who are ready, but, on the other hand, it will be very sad and sorrowful for those who are not. But, as you know, I do not look at resurrection quite in the same way that you do, I think the righteous and the wicked will all rise together, and I do not think it possible to know how it will be with us until the time come ; but I hope I shall find myself at the Lord's right hand in that day.

This is not the way your dear Amelia spoke of resurrection, is it, Caleb ?

No, Andrew, it is not ; resurrection was to her such a real, tangible thing. Death did not seem death to her, on account of the calm, happy assurance she had of what she called "*the glorious resurrection*," and she thought the time so very near, that even in her last moments she did not know but that it might take place before she had breathed her last.

This is as it should always be, Caleb, with the people of God who are called to pass through this scene of death ; and in scripture death is not spoken of as death to those who are in Christ Jesus ; but it is called sleep, and sleeping always implies waking, simply because of the glorious prospect of resurrection (1 Cor. xv. 5), or the happy time when the Lord will come and *wake them up again*, and call them out of their graves to dwell with Him in everlasting glory ; not with bodies of sin and death which we now have, but with bodies of glory, changed and fashioned like unto His glorious body. (Phil. iii. 20, 21 ; 1 John iii. 2.)

But you do not think, Andrew, that we shall have glorified bodies until we are judged and everything is settled, do you ?

Yes, Caleb, that I do ! The word of God, speaking of the resurrection of those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, says, the body "is sown [or buried] in dishonour, it is raised in glory ; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body" (1 Cor. xv. 42-44) ; therefore you see the body will be glorified at its

rising. There will be no interval ; it will take place in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye ; and we shall be with Him and like Him for ever.

And as to judgment : there will be no such thing to the believer in the way you speak of it ; because the Lord Jesus has been judged and condemned for us. He has died in our stead, and we have already passed from death unto life through believing in Him. (John v. 24.) He put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself (Heb. ix. 26), so that God has nothing against us, and therefore nothing to judge us for. We have already been judged in the Person of His Son. He became our substitute, and received at the hand of God that which was due to us (Isa. liii. 6-8), so that our standing is now in Christ, "holy and without blame before him in love, even as Christ is" (John xvii. 23 ; Eph. i. 4-6) ; and therefore we who believe are never spoken of as coming into judgment, to see whether we shall be received or rejected,\* neither shall we rise at the same time as the unbelievers (1 Thess. iv. 16) ; but on the contrary, the word of God tells us that we shall rise a very long time before the wicked dead (Rev. xx. 5), and our resurrection is called in scripture, "the resurrection of the just," in contrast to the resurrection of the unjust. (Luke xiv. 14.)

But, Andrew, how do you understand the latter part of the twenty-fifth chapter of the Gospel of Matthew ?

This, Caleb, is not a scene of resurrection at all. The dead are not referred to in it, but it is the judgment of the nations that will be alive upon the earth, when the Lord Jesus comes to set up His kingdom,

\* Believers will appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, where He will give to every one of us according to our works, and nothing that we now do for the Lord Jesus will go unrewarded in that day. But this is another thing altogether, it is a judgment as to present faithfulness in those who are saved, and the rewards will be distributed accordingly. (1 Cor. iii. 4, 15 ; Rev. ii. 23.)

and re'gn. It is as King that He is there seen, and as King He will judge. This will not be the case in the last great day. Then He will take His seat upon the great white throne, as the Lord God Almighty, from whose face the earth and the heaven will flee away, and there will be found no place for them; then the dead, small and great, shall stand before God, and the books will be opened. But this in Matthew is another scene altogether. It is the Lord Jesus as King of Israel taking the throne of His father David, and judging the living nations, when He sets up His kingdom upon earth. (Luke i. 32, 33.)

At your leisure read the last chapter of the book of Zechariah, and you will find the time of the kingdom spoken of; indeed it is continually referred to throughout the whole of the scriptures. It is a time of great blessing which God has appointed to come upon the earth, when the Lord Jesus will reign over this world in righteousness, and putting down iniquity; when God will have His ancient people Israel back again in their own land, and make Mount Zion the joy of the whole earth. (Ps. xlviii. 1, 2.)

And those nations which had been kind to them in the time of their tribulation and poverty, He will bring into millennial blessing, they shall "inherit the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world." And the Lord Jesus will acknowledge to them that what they did for the good of His brethren, the Jews, during His absence, was done to Himself, although they were not aware of it while they were doing it. Therefore as they had treated them with kindness and love when they were in a strange land, in persecution and distress, so now that the latter are brought home, they will be made to share in their exaltation and glory. And those who had not been kind to His brethren, will the Lord Jesus send away from off the earth to their own place.

The nations had shewn their love or hatred to Him

by their dealings towards His people ; and now that He is about to set up His kingdom upon the earth, those who had shewn their hatred are sent into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal.

This I cannot understand, Andrew, though I know it is the way my dear wife looked at it ; but I never could enter into it in the way she did.

Yes, Caleb, but you will if you prayerfully and patiently look into it. You know that God's ancient people Israel, the Jews, are now scattered all over the earth—a proverb and a by-word among the nations, as God said they should be, for their sin in not obeying His voice. (Deut. xxviii. 37.) But God has also said that He will gather them again, and bring them into their own land, and bless them abundantly. (Isa. liv. ix. ; Jer. xxxi. 10–13.) Then the Lord Jesus will, as *Son of man*, take the throne of His father David, and reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of His kingdom there shall be no end (Luke i. 32, 23), but it shall continue as long as the moon endureth. (Ps. lxxii. 7.) And not only will He reign over the house of Jacob, but He will be King over all the earth in that day (Zech. xiv. 9–17), and will deal with the nations in the way we have been seeing, but the wicked dead will remain in their graves during this time of blessedness and have their resurrection at the end of all things, which you will see if you read the twentieth chapter of the book of the Revelation.

You will also see this time of the kingdom referred to in the thirteenth chapter of Matthew. But in this case it is angels who are employed to “gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire : there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.” This is another picture of the scene described in the twenty-fifth chapter, and is the happy time when “the kingdoms of this world shall

become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ (Rev. xi. 15.) The wicked will be purged out of it, and the saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom and possess it for ever. (Dan. vi. 18-22.)

When the Lord Jesus was here upon the earth in humiliation and sorrow, He presented Himself to the Jews as their King, but they would not have Him, but crucified Him. (John xii. 13-16.) Therefore the kingdom was put off for a time, and in the interval God has brought in a new order of things altogether, even that which He is now doing, that as men would not have His beloved Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, down here, but put Him to death ; therefore God is uniting poor sinners with Him up there in heavenly glory (Eph. ii. 1-6), and before the kingdom is set up on earth, His saints will be raised and glorified, so that when Christ comes to reign they also will come with Him. (Zech. xiv. 5 ; Col. iii. 4.)

This is not the way that I have been taught to look at resurrection, Andrew.

I know it is not, Caleb ; but this is the way the word of God teaches us to look at this soul-comforting truth, and nowhere does it give the least idea of what people call the general resurrection, that is, a time when the righteous and the wicked will all rise together.

But Andrew, it is spoken of as taking place in an hour in the fifth chapter of the Gospel by John.

Yes, Caleb, there are two hours spoken of in this chapter. The first is the hour in which God is giving life eternal to poor dead sinners (John v. 25 ; Eph. ii. 1-4), and it has lasted now more than eighteen hundred years. Then there is another hour mentioned in the 28th verse, in which the resurrection of condemnation will take place. But between these two resurrections there will be at least a thousand years, in which Christ will reign over the earth in righteousness. The resurrection of life will take place at the commencement of this hour, and the resurrection of

condemnation will be at its close, as we see in the twentieth chapter of the book of Revelation, and it is referred to continually throughout the word of God.

Well, Andrew, you say that this subject of resurrection is very plain and easy to be understood, but I think it very difficult.

This, Caleb, is owing to the teaching you have received, and because you have not looked into the word of God about this important question yourself. Your real difficulty now is to unlearn what you have learned, and it requires a great deal more patience to unlearn anything, than to learn it. But when you have once done this, you will easily understand what it told us in scripture about resurrection, and you will have no difficulty in seeing that *the resurrection of the saints of God* is a very different thing, and has no connection whatever with the resurrection of the wicked dead, but they are as separate one from the other as light is from darkness. Indeed we are a separate people even now as much as we possibly can be ; though we are in this world together, having to do with each other. But it will be fully manifested when that happy morning comes, the morning of the *glorious resurrection*.

The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven for His beloved people with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God ; and one will be caught away here, another there—one out of this household, and another out of that, and the others will be left. Many a grave will lose its victory, for its inmate will be gone to meet the Lord in the air, while the graves of the wicked dead will hold their prey, till the great and solemn day, when the dead, small and great, shall stand before God in judgment. (Rev. xx. 12, 13.)

But, Andrew, if the resurrection of the people of God take place as you say, how will this affect the world ? Will that go on as usual ? Do you not think they will see it, and turn to Him, and be saved ?

No, Caleb, I do not; God's word tells us it will not be so, but it will have very little effect upon the world, it will take place in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. Many will be missed and many a grave will be emptied. Many a husband will lose his wife, and many a wife will lose her husband; children will lose their parents, and parents their children; servants their masters, and masters their servants, and so on. That day will bring an eternal separation between those who love Christ, and those who do not. And, like many other events, it will cause a little excitement for a time, and many will cry, "Lord, Lord, open unto us," but that will soon wear off, and men will go on building and planting as usual; marrying and giving in marriage, until the Lord Jesus come in glory and clear this earth greatly from the wickedness that is on it, and put things in their proper places. Then He will take the government of this world in His own hands (Isa. ix. 6, 7), and reign in righteousness, and all the earth will know the blessedness of it. (Isa. xi. 9, 10.) Satan will be driven off the scene, and cast into the bottomless pit, and will not be allowed to deceive the nations any more for a thousand years, then men will rejoice in the happy reign of the Prince of Peace. (Isa. ix. 6, 7; Rev. xx. 1-3.)

My dear wife used to talk with great delight about what she called *the resurrection from the dead*. I suppose, Andrew, it was the same time she referred to. Poor thing, I very seldom had patience to listen to her, though she laboured very hard that I might see these things in the same light with herself; and used to say how happy she should be if I had the same joyful hope of resurrection which she had. But my thought has always been that every one will rise from the dead.

And so they will, Caleb; every one will come forth either "to meet the Lord in the air," or in the resurrection at the last day; but in a scriptural sense it is only believers who will rise *from the dead*. Those who



have rejected Christ will never escape death, and when they shall rise out of their graves, it will be to partake of the second death, that is, shut out from God's presence for ever, where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. (Rev. xx. 6 ; xxi. 8.) In the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, we see what the resurrection from the dead (or, as in the original, from among the dead) is. Because He rose as the firstfruits of them that slept. He rose *from the dead*, and left them where they were. He left death behind Him. So also will it be with those who are Christ's, they will rise and *leave death behind them*, and the unbelievers also in their graves, and there they will remain until the last great day, when heaven and earth shall pass away, and the great white throne set up. (Rev. xx. 11.) It was the apostles preaching this *resurrection from the dead* that made the priests and the captains of the temple so angry. (Acts iv. 2.) They knew that He whom they crucified was buried, and that He had risen again ; and the apostles told the people that those who believed in Him as the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, would be brought into blessing, and rise *from the dead*, in the same way that He had risen.

Had the apostles preached the resurrection at the last great day, there would have been nothing in it to displease them, because they believed in ~~that~~ themselves ; but when they heard them preach through Jesus the resurrection *from the dead*, or out *from among the dead*, leaving the rest in their graves, as the Lord Jesus did, this was another thing altogether. They knew what it meant, and it cut them to the quick, so that they could not endure it ; and therefore united themselves with those wicked Sadducees, in order that they might put the apostles down ; and I am sorry to say, that in these days there are many who are doubtless God's dear children who become very angry when this soul-cheering doctrine is preached, and they will not hear it.

In the twentieth chapter of the Gospel by Luke we have a very delightful reference to this happy time, the *resurrection from the dead*, and also those who shall be counted worthy to obtain it. They are called *the children of the resurrection*. This shews us very plainly who it is that will rise to meet the Lord on that *bright resurrection morn*. It is the children of God ; that is, all who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, who have seen the end of their own, poor, helpless, worthless selves, and all that they can do, and are resting in what the Son of God has done for them. These are the children of God (Gal. iii. 26), and the children of the resurrection (1 Thess. iv. 14), and will have their part in that glorious day. While those who are standing on the ground of what they themselves are, and what they have done, will be left behind till the day of judgment, to appear before Him in whose sight no man living can be justified. (Ps. cxliii. 2.)

I begin to see what you mean, Andrew ; but still I cannot understand how this can give such light and joy to the soul as you speak of, because resurrection is resurrection, and it does not much matter when it will take place, or in what manner, provided it finds us ready for it when it does come.

O Caleb ! do not talk in this way. You have not tasted the sweetness of this blessed hope, or I am sure you would not do so. Only look at the joy of those who know their glorious portion in Christ, and are waiting for that happy event, assured that whether they remain awake till He come, or whether they shall sleep a little while in the grave, they shall live together with Him ; and are therefore only waiting for the *moment* to arrive, when the Lord Jesus will come and take them home to His Father's house, where He is gone to prepare a place for them, according to His parting promise, that where He is, there they may be also. And then, on the other hand, see those who are looking onward in anxious suspense to that dark and gloomy time, the

last great day ; when they think they will have to stand before their Judge as criminals at the bar, and do not know whether they will be acquitted or condemned till the time come. How can they be truly happy ?

I know what it is to have worn this heavy chain for a long time, and am feeling its smart to this very day ; but I am happy to say, that for many years I have, through mercy, known the sweetness of the position into which believers are brought by the precious blood of Christ ; and I know what it is to have been groping in the darkness of the one, and also what it is to be walking in the light of the other. The one is dark and gloomy indeed, too dark even to look at ; but the other is full of light and joy, and peace—giving true liberty of soul before God, knowing that He is a loving Father, and not an angry Judge. Therefore death, should it come, has, in a certain sense, lost its terror, and ceaseth to be death ; it is sleeping. (1 Thess. iv. 13.)

And not only so, but this blessed hope gives us power to walk for God in the world, which they who do not enjoy it have no idea of ; for instead of the heart lingering after the things which the poor world is delighting in, the affections are going out after Him whom we are expecting and longing to see ; all dread is removed because we know we shall not have to meet Christ as a Judge, but as One whom we have known and enjoyed upon earth, and are sure of a home and a hearty welcome when we see His face. This being the case, we cannot delight in that which caused Him so much sorrow, and the shedding of His precious blood.

Well, Andrew, I know it was so with my dear Amelia ; but I never could enter into it in the way she did, although I have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ for many years, and do hope I shall be with Him by-and-by ; but the thought of the dark and gloomy grave and the day of judgment often makes me tremble.

I do not wonder at it, Caleb ; it cannot be otherwise with those who really have their eyes open, as you have.

I only wonder it does not make you tremble more than it does. If I were looking at resurrection and the day of judgment in the way you are, I am sure it would make me tremble to this very day. Indeed I know what it is not to have been able to sleep in my bed on account of it. But I am thankful to say that for more than twenty years death and the grave have lost their terrors for me, because I know the Lord Jesus has been there in my stead; therefore they do not properly belong to me, they have lost their claim; and I may never have to go there, nor taste the pangs of death at all (John xi. 26; 1 Cor. xv. 51): and if I should have to pass through both, I know it will only be for a very short time, and while there I shall have that same blessed Lord Jesus watching over my dust, who is now preserving my steps as I pass through this world.

I am sure, Andrew, it is very happy, as you say, and very beautiful, to be able to pass through this scene and look at the future with such calm assurance and delight.

It is, Caleb, and I wish you knew the joy and blessedness of it. It is your privilege to do so, as a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, and it is certain you do not honour God by remaining ignorant of His purposes concerning you, and of this bright and cheering prospect of *the glorious resurrection*, when you will see His face and be with Him. We honour God when we are careful to know His purposes concerning us, and His love as revealed to us in His word; and true humility takes what He gives with thankfulness, because it does not look at the unworthiness of the receiver, but at the grace and goodness of the Giver. I, in my simple way, often look at death and the grave in connection with the people of God as a kind of convenience, something that is needful to take place for a short time, in order that the church might be gathered, and not the believer's proper portion; and, in my mind, I use a very simple figure, for my own comfort respecting it. It is this: when I order a suit of clothes of the tailor

he does not make the coat and bring it home, and then the waistcoat and bring that home ; but having made one garment, he carefully lays it aside in some safe place where it can get no harm until the whole suit is ready, and then he has the delight of bringing it all home together. So also is there a similar arrangement going on with us.

God is now forming a Bride for His beloved Son, Jesus Christ, and this Bride will consist of a company of poor sinners who have been washed from their sins in His own blood ; and the Lord Jesus is not coming for each one as they are converted to God ; therefore in order that this blessed work may go on, as it has been for eighteen hundred years and more, it is needful that some of our bodies should be carefully laid aside till the whole company be ready. This God is now doing. He is putting to sleep the bodies of His saints, one after another, for a short time, till the Bride be complete ; and when the last one is gathered in by His Spirit, the Lord Jesus will come and take us home to His Father's house altogether, and there we shall enjoy His presence in unfading glory, having left death and the grave, and all that is connected with them behind us for ever. Therefore those who are gathered will not have to be laid aside at all, but will be translated, as Enoch and Elijah were, and never see death. (1 Thess. iv. 17 ; Heb. xi. 5.)

I do not wonder, Andrew, at your being so happy. I have often been astonished to see how calm and cheerful you were when others were looking so gloomy. I think I can now see the secret of it. But I suppose you do not think it will be this very body which will be raised again and glorified, do you ?

Yes, Caleb, to be sure I do ! and what a comfort it is to know, that it will be this very same poor body which is now enduring the labour, and toil, and pain of this scene through which we are passing which will in that happy day bear the glory also. It will not be

flesh and blood as it is now, of course (1 Cor. xv. 50) ; yet it will be this very same body changed and glorified. The Lord Jesus will fashion it like unto His glorious body (Phil. iii. 20, 21), so making us meet for His presence.

But you see, Andrew, that many of God's people die on board ship, and they have to be thrown into the sea, and are eaten up by the sharks ; how can this very same body be changed again ?

Ah ! Caleb, mind what you are about ; for you are doing what some of the saints in the church at Corinth did (1 Cor. xv. 35) ; and what thousands are doing in these days, who are looking at resurrection in the light of their own understanding, instead of looking at it in the light of God's word. And therefore they can only come to the same conclusion which Nicodemus came to in like circumstances, when he said, "How can these things be?" Man by wisdom can never understand either God or His ways, therefore our happiness is to believe what He tells us, and not to look at what we think to be impossibilities, because this is the fruit of unbelief, which always shuts out God from our hearts and thoughts, and therefore is that evil thing which above all things God will judge.

In the beginning God spake, and this world sprang into existence, He commanded and it stood fast, and will do so until the end of time, and is He not as well able to command the sea to give up every dust of His saints again, although they are scattered all over the length and breadth of it ? This He will surely do, for He has said it, and "heaven and earth will pass away, but His word will not pass away." (Mark xiii. 31.)

I can see very plainly, Andrew, that I must give up a great many thoughts which I rather prided myself in.

I am very glad you can see it, Caleb, and the sooner you do it the better ; for it is very sad indeed to put our thoughts in the place of the word of God—setting up our judgment when God has spoken so plainly. See

how you dishonour Him by doing so, and see what a loser you are in remaining ignorant of what your dear wife used to call the *glorious resurrection*, or “the *resurrection of the dead*.”

This I begin to see, Andrew; and I am sorry I have not seen it before. And, now you are here, I should like to know what you think is the state of the soul while the body is in the grave.

What I think, Caleb, is of little worth, but the word of God tells us very plainly about this comforting truth, as it does about all truth which is for our good to know. The Lord Jesus said to the believing thief on the cross, “To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise.” And Paul said he had a desire “to depart and be with Christ, which is far better.” And, writing to the saints at Corinth, he reminded them that while they were “at home in the body, they were absent from the Lord.”

These passages shew us very plainly that the souls of believers go to be with Christ as soon as they leave the body; therefore they are in the presence of God, where “there is fulness of joy, and at His right hand where there are pleasures for evermore!” but still they are in a waiting condition up there, the same as we are down here—looking on to that happy *moment when their bodies will be raised again*, and they re-united in everlasting glory. They have done with mortality—they have done with everything connected with sin, but still they will not be fully satisfied, until they wake up in Christ’s likeness. (Ps. xvii. 15; 2 Cor. v. 4.)

I think I see this very clearly, Andrew; and I must ask you one more question before you go. Is there any scripture to shew that we shall know each other again in the glory? It would give me great pleasure if I really knew I should know my dear Amelia there.

Yes, Caleb, we shall know even as also we are known. (1 Cor. xiii. 12.) Not as it is down here, for if we now come into the presence of those we have not seen before, we do not know them, and are not at home wit’ t’em

until we do. This will not be the case in the glory, we shall know those we have never seen upon earth, and surely we shall know those we have seen, and remember all our heavenly Father's goodness and loving care over us, while we were here in the wilderness in weakness and trial.

See how it was on the mount of transfiguration, which was a little view of the glory. Peter had not been told who Moses and Elias were, yet he knew them and was at home with them at once; and so happy in their company that he did not want to be separated from them any more, therefore he proposed that they should build three tabernacles, that they might dwell together. (Luke ix. 28-36.) How much more will this be the case, when we have our glorified bodies! We shall know others, and others will know us; we shall know those who have been dear to us, both in the flesh and in the Lord, and enjoy their company for ever, where separation will be unknown. Heaven would lose one of its sweetest attractions to our souls if it were not so.

But, Andrew, how about those we have loved on earth, but whom we shall miss in that day?

Well, Caleb, everything of nature will be done away and we shall fully see that everything has been right and proper, and our hearts will give a loud Amen to all that the Lord has done. Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?

Thank you, Andrew, very much! I am sure that, with God's blessing, I shall profit by what I have heard. I hope for the future that I shall read the word of God more prayerfully than I have hitherto done.

Do so, Caleb; your soul will then get much blessing. You will grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, to whom be glory and dominion, both now and for ever. Amen.

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