

A close-up photograph of two insects on a white, textured object. In the foreground, a monarch butterfly is perched, showing its vibrant orange wings with black veins and white spots along the edges. Behind it, a black and white spotted moth is also visible, its wings and body covered in white spots. The background is a soft, out-of-focus light green.

**VIVIFY
OR MAKE ALIVE?**

A.E. KNOCH

VIVIFY OR MAKE ALIVE

VIVIFY is a term much needed by students of the Scriptures to express a thought which is not clearly apparent in the phrase "make alive." Much meditation and investigation have convinced us that it does not merely signify the impartation of life to the dead, but the abolition of the *death process* altogether. The "living," that is, mortals who have death operating in them and so are slowly but surely dying, may also be vivified by the impartation of a spirit which will stop the dying process. This is so important that we will consider each passage in which it occurs, so as to see if we cannot confirm this conclusion.

In forming the vocabulary for the CONCORDANT VERSION the preference was always given to plain Anglo-Saxon terms. Latin derivatives were avoided when possible. But it is one of the special features of English that synonyms out of these two sources tend to differentiate, as, for instance *pork* and *pig*, so that we are obliged to use the Latin terms at times for correctness and accuracy. So with *make alive*. In the Scriptures it seems inadequate, while *vivify* will readily adapt itself to the fuller significance.

John 5:21 For even as the Father is rousing the dead and
vivifying, thus the Son also is *vivifying* whom He
will.

This passage, as above rendered, is a remarkable confirmation of the view we have suggested. It is not that God "quickeneth

them” (AV), that is, the dead indiscriminately, after or in connection with their resurrection, but only those whom the Son will, *whether dying* or dead, are vivified. In fact most of the dead, in view here, who will enter the judgment, are not vivified when they are roused. Their vivification comes much later, and is not within the scope of this passage. Hitherto the words *and maketh them alive* added nothing to the sense whatever. They were either emphatic or redundant. In this view they are full of further truth, indicating that vivification is not for the dead alone.

John 6:63 The spirit is that which is *vivifying*. The flesh is not benefiting anything.

Our Lord is here speaking of life through His declarations. There is no thought of actual death and resurrection, but of added life. If they should believe His word they would sustain their life through it, not by eating flesh, as they were doing. Flesh would keep them alive (not give them life) for a short period, and they would die. Faith would keep them alive (not give them life) for the eon which was impending.

Rom.4:17 [Abraham] believes it of the God Who is *vivifying* the dead....

Abraham was practically dead, so far as progeny was concerned. What he needed was vivification in some degree in order to have the necessary vitality for generating a seed so multitudinous as was promised to him. He was not dead, so did not need to be raised or roused. So God is not presented here as One Who raises the dead, but as the One Who can impart life such as nullifies the death process. Abraham was *invigorated* (Rom.4:20). His body was dead only in a figurative sense, and the “making alive” corresponded to this, being also figurative, or a special usage best expressed by vivify.

Rom.8:11 Now if the spirit of Him Who rouses Jesus from among the dead is making its home in you, He Who rouses Christ Jesus from among the dead will also *be vivifying* your mortal bodies because of His spirit making its home in you.

It is evident that our future resurrection will not be because of the spirit which dwells in us. The dead will not possess it then, and if it depends on this spirit now, we could have it at any time. But it is a fact that the spirit which homes in us is able to put the practices of the body to death so that we may be living (see verse 13). It is this “living” by the power of God’s spirit which is our present vivification. It is confined to our spirits, indeed, yet is a powerful foretaste of the future.

1 Cor.15:22 even as, in Adam, all are dying,
thus also, in Christ, shall all be *vivified*.

Not all will die in Adam. Those who are alive at the presence of the Lord will not actually die at all. Moreover, probably untold millions on the new earth, who will have access to the tree of life, will be kept alive by its fruit or its leaves (Rev.22:2). That these are necessary shows that they are dying. But they effectually prevent actual death, for death shall be no more (Rev.21:4). So that the probability is that not half of those in Adam will die. But all will have the death process working in them. And it is this all which is in view here. Consequently vivification will be imparted, in many cases, to those who have not breathed their last, but who inherit mortality from Adam. Here it is essential to limit the thought to the death and life *processes*, or contradiction and confusion will result.

As a marvelously concise, discriminating and comprehensive summary of rousing, resurrection, and vivification is given us by the apostle Paul in the context of this passage, it may be of

great help to us if we seek to get a clear grasp of it with our minds and allow it to get a firm hold of our hearts. This chapter is usually supposed to deal simply with “resurrection,” hence the companion truths of *rousing* and *vivification* are usually overlooked. As the Authorized Version seldom distinguishes rousing from resurrection, and renders *rouse* as *raise* in this very passage, thus obliterating one of the distinctions which are so helpful, we will quote the statements we wish to study from the CONCORDANT VERSION.

Christ has been roused from among the dead
 the Firstfruit of those who are reposing.
 Through a man came death,
 through a Man, also, comes the resurrection of the dead.
 Even as, in Adam, all are dying,
 thus also, in Christ, shall all be vivified.
 Yet each in his own class:
 the Firstfruit, Christ;
 thereupon those who are Christ’s in His presence;
 thereafter the consummation.

THE THREEFOLD SCOPE

The scope of these assertions varies as much as can be. It goes from *One* to *all*. A *single One*, Christ, was *roused*, but *all* will be *vivified*. In between we have the resurrection of the dead. This cannot include all, for all do not die. Those of us who survive until the Lord’s presence (1 Thess.4:15) cannot be included. We will be *changed*, not raised (1 Cor.15:52). This mortal will put on immortality. Only the dead, who have gone to corruption, will put on incorruption. Those in Israel who will be alive when He comes to them will not die. To them He is not only the

Resurrection, for the dead, but the Life, for the living (John 11:26). Everyone who is living and believing in Him should not die for the eon.

Besides this there is the vast multitude of saints who will be born during the thousand years and in the succeeding eon, in the new earth. The leaves of the trees along the banks of the stream that issues out of the millennial temple will keep them in health (Ezek.47:7,12), and in the new creation there will be the tree of life restored (Rev.22:2). These trees would be needless had these saints been vivified, and were they in possession of immortality. The millennial saints will live to its end and enter the new earth. Death will have no place in the new creation on the earth, so no one will die. None of these can be included in Paul's statement concerning the resurrection, because they do not die. He does not say that, as *all die*, so shall *all be resurrected*. That is not true of resurrection alone. The *omission* of the word *all* is inspired. Let us leave it out.

THREE DISTINCT RELATIONSHIPS

Christ is the *Firstfruit* of those who are reposing. Resurrection is *through* Him as the second Man. *In* Christ comes vivification.

He is the earliest Example of those who will be *roused* from repose. These are, as it were, God's harvest, which must surely follow. This seems to refer especially to the *saints*, for the term *repose* seems to be used uniquely of them (1 Thess.4:14,15, etc.). Paul has been speaking of those who are put to repose in Christ (1 Cor.15:18). He has gone before us, a part of the same crop. If He has been roused we may rest assured that we will follow in due time, unless we are vivified before. We are *associated* with Him so closely that our souls must share with His the awakening of that day.

But resurrection is different. There, as a *Man* (not as Christ), He is the *Channel*, the *Means*, by which the bodies of the dead will be resurrected. This is not confined to the saints, for it is not as Christ, but as a *Man*, and we know that *all* who are in the tombs shall hear His voice, and there shall be a resurrection of judging as well as a resurrection of life (John 5:28,29). Just as the first man is the *channel through* which death comes to his posterity, so the second Man, the Lord from heaven, is the *channel through* which comes resurrection of the dead. There will be two kinds of resurrections, one of *judging*, before the great white throne, and one of *life* at Christ's presence, limited to those who are His, who are *vivified* also, as the word *life* implies.

These are strange and striking figures, for all resurrection involves *life*. The fact that one is a resurrection of life, in contrast to another, shows that the resurrection of judging lacks life in some sense. The figure is corroborated and confirmed when we read that the *dead* stand before the great white throne (Rev.20:12). The life that they have is not to be compared to the immortality of the resurrection of life. It is not *in Christ*, but only *through* the second Man.

In Christ is the only relationship that brings *vivification*, incorruption, immortality, deathlessness. The resurrection of life is included in it, but it goes far further, for it is the portion of *all*, even those who do not die, and even those who take part in the resurrection of judging and enter the second death. All of these were *in Adam*, and therefore experienced the dying *process* which is common to all of his posterity, even if they do not actually enter the death state. The same *all*, we are told will be vivified, that is, experience the reverse of the process of dying. They receive immortality, *in Christ*.

At the present time *in Christ* is limited to those who are His by faith. But when death is abolished this marvelous position will be extended to include all who have been *in Adam*. To be *in Christ* now is a gracious privilege and depends on faith. But this is not essential at all times, as we can see from our place in Adam. We have that without faith or anything of ours. As the last Adam, Christ must have *all* humanity in Him. Being a life-giving or vivifying Spirit (1 Cor.15:45), all who are in Him must be vivified. Just as the living God is the Saviour of all mankind, *especially of believers* (1 Tim.4:10), so Christ is the Vivifier of all, especially of those who believe, for these will be made alive at His presence, at the great crisis between the evil and the good eons, while the unbeliever will need to go through the great white throne judging and the second death before he is vivified at the consummation.

The character in which our Lord is presented is worthy of our closest attention in the interpretation of any passage of Scripture. He fills many functions, which are conveyed to us by the name or title which He bears. In this passage it is of vital value that we distinguish between Him as the *Firstfruit*, the *Man* and the *Christ*. The relationship is further clarified when we see that we are *associated* with Him as the Firstfruit, that He is a *channel* as a Man, and that all will be *in Him* as the Anointed.

In connection with rousing and resurrection no classes are given, no time is set. It is clear from other scriptures that these apply to every case of resurrection until the rest of the dead are raised at the great white throne. But now a new element enters, because the vivification is *in Christ*. Those raised for the great white throne judgment are not in Christ. Christ Himself has been vivified. Those who are His will be vivified at His presence. The third class needs much explanation, which is given in the

passage that follows. The *consummation* is carefully fixed by many details, such as the abolition of all authority and power, the subjection of the Son when He gives over the kingdom to God, and *the abolition of death*. This does not follow the resurrection of all at the great white throne, for the second death follows. The last class, composed of all who are held by the last enemy during the last eon, will be given life in Christ at the consummation of the eons.

We cannot reason that, in parallels like these, the earlier statements must limit and define the later. We cannot say that vivification is the same as resurrection, and has the same scope, just because resurrection appears in the first members of a parallel. In fact it would be far *more* logical to reason that vivification must mean more than resurrection, for *this* is usually the case in such parallels. They do not merely restate a thought. The second member may be similar, but it uses the first as a stepping stone to some greater and higher revelation.

We commend this passage to students of the Scriptures who wish to get a clear understanding of these great distinctions. Few seem to realize how great are the differences between rousing, resurrection, and vivification in actual application, in God's dealing with His creatures. Hence there is a tendency to merge them all into one and call it resurrection. This is one reason why the great truth of universal vivification has been lost and is now denied and decried. Let us hold fast to the great fact that *all* will be vivified, though all will not be roused or raised. And let us insist that the final vivification will not take place until the consummation, when death shall be abolished, and God become *All in all*.

1 Cor.15:36 What you are sowing, is not being *vivified* if it should not be dying.

Here also the point is quite obscure unless we distinguish between what is dead and what is dying. A dead kernel of wheat would produce no grain. It is the *dying* kernel which is given life, and this is a process which corresponds to vivification rather than resurrection.

1 Cor.15:45 The first man, Adam, became a living soul;
the last Adam a *vivifying* Spirit.

Here we have life, or rather *living*, brought before us, as in the two Adams. In Adam the life was manifested in sensation. By it he perceived and reacted to the world about him. The last Adam had all this and far more, for He was able to impart this process to others. This is, of course, most clearly evidenced in His dealings with the dead. But the fact that He will bestow immortality on the mortal, as well as incorruptibility on those who have gone to corruption, shows that more is meant. The first Adam brought in the death process as well as the crisis, so the last Adam brings a life process even to the living, as well as to the dead.

2 Cor. 3: 6 the letter is killing, yet the spirit is *vivifying*.

Gal. 3:21 if a law were given, that is able to *vivify*,

The law was given in order to keep those alive who fulfilled it. But it could not reverse the death process. Rather it aided it. Yet the law *appeared* to be able—not to bring life to the dead, as *make alive* would imply—but to keep those alive who kept its precepts.

1 Tim.6:13 God, Who is *vivifying* all,

God has vivified only One so far, our Lord, Who alone has immortality. But His vivification is representative and an earnest of the time when death will be abolished, and this great boon is extended to all.

1 Peter 3:18 being put to death, indeed, in flesh, yet *vivified* in spirit,

The dying process was unknown to Christ until His crucifixion. Then He was put under the dominion of Death by means of His flesh. Corresponding to this His resurrection and present life are by spirit. He has flesh, but even His body is spiritual, so that it cannot be killed by means of His flesh.

“Make alive” denotes the act of bringing from the *state* of death to a *state* of life. Although the Greek word *zōopoieō*, LIVE-make, is a compound of these two terms, our study has shown us that the Greek really denotes a change from the dying *process* (as well as the death *state*) into a *process* of living. For this “make alive” is unsatisfactory in most cases and misleading in others. Hence it is wise, in these connections, to use a special term which already has a similar usage (for *vivify* is defined as *animate, inspire*), and allow this to take on the scriptural meaning from the contexts.

This distinction seems to have been known to our early translators, so that they also, in place of “make alive” usually used “quicken.” I once thought this an arbitrary and useless change from the simpler words, but now I see that it was justified. However, since “quicken” has become archaic and fails to convey the proper sense, we have no recourse except to use “vivify.”

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