



**THE
RESSURECTION
OF
THE DEAD**

Elder R. Lester Dodson

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Tom Adams

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FOREWORD

“FORASMUCH as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us,” on the subject of the “resurrection of the dead,” it seems fitting and proper that we, likewise, should leave on record, for those who shall come after us, a declaration of what we understand the Scriptures to teach concerning this all-important subject.

This matter is most profoundly wrapt in mystery, and. it is utterly impossible for any human being to fully explore its height, its depth, its breadth and its length. In attempting to set forth our views, we shall undertake to approach the subject from different angles: (1) by writing in a general way, and (2) by dealing with various individual texts of Scripture treating upon it. We shall then present the writings of other men who, in our opinion, more or less lend support to our conclusions. The names of the authors of a number of the articles to be found in Part I of this book are very familiar to many of our readers. They traveled extensively throughout the United States and Canada and the esteem in which they were held by sound and peace-loving brethren was such that no one should dare question their integrity, or their gifts as able expounders of God's blessed word. In Part 2 we will present the writings of those whose views are not in accord with our own, but notwithstanding the fact that we do not agree with what they say, we shall defend to the death their right to say it.

According to Hassell's Church History the oldest Old School Baptist Church in the United States, which was organized in the United States is the church at Hopewell, N. J. (The Welsh Tract Church near Newark, Del., is the oldest Old School Baptist Church in the United States, but it was constituted in 1701 in South Wales, and so far as we know is the only church in the United States that was organized in Europe.) We wish to quote here from page 555 regarding the Hopewell, N. J. church, as follows: “The church, composed of twelve members, five of whom were Stouts, was organized at the residence of Joseph Stout, April 23, 1715, upon these eight fundamental principles: 1st. The Three-Oneness of God; 2d. His Self-Existence and Sovereignty; 3d. The Total Depravity of the Natural Man; 4th. The Eternal, Personal, Unconditional Election of all the Members of the Body of Christ; 5th. The Specialty and Definiteness of the Atonement; 6th. The Necessity of a Spiritual Birth in order to Worship God in Spirit and in Truth; 7th. The Sovereign and Efficacious Operation of Divine Grace upon all the Vessels of Mercy; 8th. The Baptism of Believers by Immersion.” We see from this that the subject of the RESURRECTION was not among the eight fundamental points of the Hopewell Church.

Elder Hassell, speaking of the “Old School, or Primitive, or Predestinarian, or Covenanted Baptists of the United States and Canada” (pages 620-621) has this to say: “I believe that, both in doctrine and practice, they come much nearer than any other professing Christians to the models of the apostolic and primitive churches, as described in the New Testament and in Gibbon's 'Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire' and in the most reliable Church Histories. At the same time, like the apostolic and primitive churches, they neither are nor claim to be perfect, only in Christ. Like those churches, they are not yet perfectly united in all points of doctrine and practice; there being still some diversity among them in the *understanding* of the mysterious doctrinal truths of the Trinity, Predestination, the nature of Regeneration, the condition of the soul between death and the end of the present dispensation, the Resurrection of the body, and the Judgment after Death – and in the practice of Feet-Washing, the Laying on of Hands on all baptized Believers, the Proper Attitude in Prayer, the Manner of Opening Church Conferences, and the Method and Amount of. Contributions to the Temporal Assistance of the

Ministry. *But in the great central doctrine of Salvation by Grace alone, through the Electing Love of God the Father, the Redeeming Love of God the Son, and the Renewing Love of God the Spirit, and in the heartfelt obligation of adorning this holy doctrine with godly lives and conversations – they are perfectly agreed.* In reference to other matters, not so essential now to be understood, and upon which they cannot now reach perfect harmony, it becomes them not to fall out by the way and unchristianize one another, and indulge a fleshly spirit in the use of harsh and bitter language, but to await the sunshine of new and clearer revelations in that Perfect World of Light and Peace and Love to which the saints are hastening. *Then, in answer to the prayer of our great High Priest, all the redeemed family of God – all the members of his Mystical Body – shall be perfectly one, even as the Father and the Son are one. John 17:20-23.*“ We have quoted the foregoing from Hassell’s Church History to show that the subject of the RESURRECTION is one upon which the brethren have not been agreed, while the doctrine of Salvation by Grace is one, as we have contended through the columns of the *Signs of the Times* for years, upon which all genuine Old School Baptists do agree.

Because there are two schools of thought prevailing among us on this subject, we shall endeavor, to the very best of our ability, to cling to the Scriptures of eternal truth in expressing our thoughts, believing as we do that they (the Scriptures) are the only infallible guide and rule in things pertaining to the kingdom of our God. We would, therefore, earnestly request our readers to most carefully examine what we shall have to say, as well as that said by others, and put it all to the acid test of the Scriptures. Whatever does not measure up to their standard or is found to be wanting by such a test, regardless of who the writer is, should be discarded and cast aside as being unworthy of the serious consideration of those who profess to love our Lord in sincerity and in truth. This should apply to all men and all groups of men, regardless of the age of the world in which they lived and wrote.

Since we once believed as many who disagree with us now, we shall strive to show ourself most charitably disposed towards them, and we earnestly hope that they, in turn, will be charitable toward us, as the main reason for our publishing a book in which both sides of this question is presented is to instruct, enlighten and edify the body of Christ, insofar as it is possible for us to do. It will be seen from the articles of others which we shall present that able brethren in the past, though differing on this point of doctrine, did not cease to walk together in love and fellowship. This was as it should have been, and we will do well to emulate their example in this day and time.

We were young in years when we were brought out from the New School Baptist order and became identified with the Old School or Primitive Baptist Church. At first, we accepted, almost without reservation, whatever was preached by Old School Baptist ministers, regardless of who they were or where they came from. For awhile after we began to speak in public we even followed the custom witnessed in our youth by closing our own public utterances with such requests as that “the Lord would on the morning of the general resurrection day, raise these vile bodies from the dust of the earth, unite them with the spirit and receive them up into glory.” At the time we were not aware that the Bible contained no such expressions. As time passed and we became more heavily burdened with the preaching of the Word, the seriousness of this matter made us go often to the throne of grace to seek earnestly God’s guidance in all things, and when we were called to the pastorate of churches we were made to diligently inquire of the Lord concerning these matters and to desire that he would make of us a workman approved unto Him, that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. The more we searched the Scriptures, the more we became convinced that such prayers as we and others were making were not according to Bible teaching and we honestly believe that God has opened our eyes and that he has given us an understanding of this phase of His glorious truth, the same as he has

other points of doctrine, such as Salvation by Grace, Predestination, Election, etc. We are fully persuaded that the understanding which we have was not received of man, or from man, and that neither were we taught it but by the Holy Ghost. We firmly believe that God has so taught and instructed us that we can say of a truth with a great Apostle that whatever knowledge we may have of spiritual things came from God, and not from man. This being the case, we shall not presume to force our views upon our readers, but leave the matter in God's hand to teach them, if it be his will so to do. Some seem to feel it is perfectly all right for us to retain the same view of this matter that we held when in our unregenerate state, but we feel to know, so far as we are concerned, that a change has been wrought in us and that we no longer see and understand the matter as we once did, and we have only God to thank and praise for it. We are definitely convinced that many of God's ministers even are still under the influence of their early or present surroundings, environments, customs and traditions, and that God alone can set them free.

In this connection, we wish to relate one of our early experiences which left a lasting impression upon us. There was an able and highly esteemed Old School Baptist minister – one whom we shall never doubt was truly called of the Lord to proclaim his everlasting gospel – who was one of the most scholarly men in the country. He was also an Editor and Publisher of an Old School Baptist paper. He used to express his views on certain points and in substance emphasize that if one did not believe as he stated the matter, that one was not a genuine Old School Baptist. There were a few points which we did not and could not bring ourself to see as he presented them, which caused us great distress of mind. During our concern and trouble of mind, lasting over a period of two or three years, we tried to reason that with all of his knowledge and understanding of languages, particularly of Latin, Greek and Hebrew, to say nothing of English, he must be right in his conclusions, but at the same time we could not become reconciled to accepting his views. Finally, a feeling came over us that this minister with all of his knowledge of languages was just as dependent upon the Almighty for a true and correct interpretation of the Scriptures as the most ignorant man who ever lived, and with that feeling our mind was relieved and we could and did rest in peace. This experience and others have been the means, we hope, of rooting and grounding us in the belief that the religion of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ can only be understood by God revealing it to his people.

We have stated that we know there are those who differ with us on this subject, and we can as truthfully say that we are well aware of the fact that there are at the same time, many who see eye to eye with us and rejoice in our understanding of the matter.

In December, 1926, we published in book form a collection of articles on the subject of Predestination. This book was most favorably received by Old School Baptists throughout the country, and we are sending forth this second book in the hope that it, too, will be kindly received by those who are lovers and seekers after truth, and that God will use it for his own glory and for the comfort and edification of his saints.

Humbly submitted by one who sincerely hopes he is a true servant of the Lord Jesus Christ.

R. LESTER DODSON

PART I

SECTION A

THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD

In presenting our views on this subject, as in all other of our writings, we desire to adhere strictly to what is taught in the Scriptures. The Apostle Paul realized that a great mystery enshrouded the Resurrection of the Dead; therefore, we hear him saying, “Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended,” Phil. 3:13. Evidently he meant by this that he did not fully understand all that there was to know about it, and we would do well in this day and time to follow his example, as well as to give earnest heed to his admonition concerning this matter. In the second verse of this same chapter, he says, “Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision.” The great apostle is here warning against those who fight, who would stir up strife among the brethren on this issue, or cut off those whose views do not coincide with their own. Paul urged his brethren to “mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample (For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.)” Phil. 3:17-19. He then says, “For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ; who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.” Phil. 3:20-21. If our vile body has to be *changed* in order to be fashioned like unto his glorious body, it is quite evident that in the resurrection it will not be as it is now. There is abundant scriptural evidence to show that there will be a change. Consider for instance 1st Cor. 15:44, 46 and 49: (1) “It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.” (2) “Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual.” (3) “And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.”

While we affirm most emphatically that Christ arose from the dead and that the identical body which went into the tomb was the same body which came out of the tomb, we do not understand that that body is anywhere in the Scriptures declared to be “his glorious body”. On the contrary, the record is that that body was especially prepared for him here in this world: witnesseth, “wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: in burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God.” From the record, again, we read: “Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of his people.” Heb. 2:14-17. It was absolutely necessary for the Savior to come to where his people were – in the flesh – in their lost and ruined condition, in order that he might deliver them. It is written, “For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not

after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” Rom. 8:3-4. John says, “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.” John 1:14. Paul said, “It is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins,” so Jesus came, as it was written of him, to do the will of God, “By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.” Heb. 10:10. It was, therefore, of the utmost importance that he should demonstrate beyond the shadow of a doubt that he not only had power to lay down his life, but *most of all* that he had power to take it up again. He had said to the Jews, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up,” and in order to verify his word, which could not possibly fail, whereby he was to put to open shame Herod, Pontius Pilate, the Roman soldiers, and all others who took part in crucifying him with wicked hands, it was absolutely necessary that the identical temple, or body, in which he had appeared before them here in this world should be the one to come forth from the tomb victorious on the third day, otherwise there might have been some semblance of truth in the false reports which they circulated by saying, “His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept.” Mat. 28:13. There were many infallible, or unmistakable proofs, which could not be gainsaid, of the fact that Jesus actually arose from the dead. He was seen by many of his disciples, by Cephas, then the twelve; after that he was seen of above five hundred at one time. These things we verily believe with all of our heart and soul. The Scripture must needs have been fulfilled which had declared, “Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.” This is the very essence of our faith, or the foundation upon which it rests, and without it all would be vain and we would yet be in our sins. And, “If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.”

There are some, however, who claim that Jesus now sits at the right hand of the Majesty on high in a body of flesh, blood and bones, and that in the resurrection the bodies of the saints will be the same as we see them now; therefore, it is claimed, we will recognize each other in heaven. We have not yet found any scriptural authority to support such an idea, and until we do we shall refuse to accept it. If not dreadfully mistaken, we have beheld him, by faith, the same as the prophet Isaiah did. He asked, “Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? *this that is glorious in his apparel, traveling in the greatness of his strength?*” The one answer is, “I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save.” We understand that “Edom” means earthy, or fleshly, and so Paul comes along and says, “Though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more.” He then goes on to say, “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” 2nd Cor. 5:16-17. When Jesus had finished the work assigned to him by his Father here in this world, he himself prayed, saying, “*And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.*” John 17:5. The glory which he had with the Father before the world was did not consist of a body of flesh, blood and bone, for that was not assumed until he came into the world. John declares that “God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.” John 4:24. In the very outset of John's record he says, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God, the same was in the beginning with God.” If God is a Spirit and the Word in the beginning was God, then the Word was Spirit, and if God heard his prayer, and he said, “The Father heareth me always,” he must have glorified him with the same glory which he had with the Father before the world was. We must conclude, therefore, that he is now with the Father and that they both are spiritual. Paul could very properly write to his Corinthian brethren then, as follows: “Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.” 1st Cor. 15:50. We have no less an authority than our Lord himself for saying, in substance, that earthly relationships

cease in the resurrection. When the Sadducees came to him with the case of the woman who had had seven husbands, and asked whose wife she would be in the resurrection, he reproved them by saying, “Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, *but are as the angels of God in heaven*. But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.” Mat. 22:29-32. Shall we question the fact of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob *being alive with God in heaven today*, and can anyone even attempt to describe the kind of body possessed by the angels of God? John could not describe the bodies to be possessed by the saints in glory, and we feel it would be wise for ordinary men not to undertake that which John could not do. He said, “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.” 1st John 3:2. By way of emphasizing these words, let us repeat them: *It doth not yet appear what we shall be*: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him: for we shall see him as he IS – not as he was when he was here in the flesh. If Jesus is now as he was when he was here in the world, and we are to be like him, it would appear what we shall be, but this is contrary to what John says about the matter. It would seem to us that it should be sufficient for every saint to be assured of being like Jesus. The Psalmist said, “As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.” Psalm 17:15. But Paul said, “Some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?” He answers his own question by saying, “Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die: And that which thou sowest, *thou sowest not that body that shall be*, but bare (or natural) grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain: but God giveth it a body as it has pleased him.” 1st Cor. 15:35-38. In this connection, the same apostle wrote, “Behold, I show you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ; Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know your labor is not in vain in the Lord.” 1st Cor. 15:51-58.

So far as we are concerned, no better illustration of this glorious mystery (and it is a mystery, regardless of what any man may say about it) can be found anywhere in the Bible than that given by Jesus, who said, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.” John 12:24. Do we not see typified here the very change which the apostle has been setting forth as that which is wrought in the grain of corn when it is put into the ground and comes forth anew? The grain of corn is composed of two parts, representing the two bodies – the natural and the spiritual; one sees corruption and returns to the earth from whence it came, but that which cannot be holden of death appears in a more glorified state. It does not by any means, however, lose its identity. It is corn when it is planted and it is still corn when it comes up even though it has a different body given to it. We verily believe that the creature who is known here in this life by his brethren and friends as LESTER DODSON, if indeed he be a subject of divine grace, will beyond all peradventure of a doubt be the one to sing praises eternally to God in that world which is beyond this vale of tears, but he will then be bearing the image of the heavenly, and not the image of

the earthy. Peter said, “Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance; *knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me.*” Paul said, “For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labor: yet what I shall choose I wot not, For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better; Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you.” Phil. 1:21-24. After relating at some length to the church at Rome the corruptness of the flesh, he says, “O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” He evidently expected to be delivered from it, and by giving thanks to God through Jesus Christ our Lord he tells us how this deliverance is to be brought about. Then, in writing to the Corinthians, he said: “For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were' dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: If so be that being clothed, we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit. Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: (For we walk by faith, not by sight;) *We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.*” 2nd Cor. 5:1-8.

The Scriptures all harmonize with each other, and there is not a single solitary Scripture in all of the Bible, when it is properly understood, that is not in full accord with the foregoing quotations. To literalize and physicalize the resurrection, in our humble opinion not only does not harmonize with the Scriptures, but belittles and detracts from the resurrection itself. It was a great condescension for our Lord to forsake the glory which he had with the Father before the world was and assume a life of humiliation, which subjected him to ignomy and shame, but it will be the GLORIFICATION of his people for them to appear in his likeness and be with him in glory.

Let us earnestly urge those who prefer to take the word of God as the man of their counsel, rather than accept the traditions of uninspired men, to diligently read their Bibles. Surely a matter as important as this one is to the Church was not overlooked or neglected by the Great Head of the Church and his immediate disciples, who both laid the foundation and builded thereupon. Both Jesus and his disciples frequently used the expression “the resurrection of the dead,” but neither he nor they made use, at any time or place, of such expressions as “the resurrection of the dead bodies of the saints,” “the resurrection of bodies of flesh and bone,” or even “the resurrection of the body.” Nor do we find any such expressions by any of them as his raising up dust bodies on the General Resurrection Day and reuniting them with the Spirit. On the contrary, they said something entirely different, according to our way of thinking. Jesus said, in the resurrection they shall be “as the angels of God in heaven.” Paul says (Heb. 2: 16) “Verily he (Jesus) took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham.” We see here that the nature of the angels of God in heaven is not the same as the seed of Abraham here on earth, and since Jesus says in the resurrection they shall be as the angels of God in heaven, it is definitely certain that they will not be as the seed of Abraham, which possesses an earthly nature, consisting of flesh, blood and bone. This should settle the matter for all time to those who prefer to accept what Jesus and Paul says rather than what any mere man may say. He gave another illustration which is more common and more readily understood by earthly creatures by citing what takes place when a corn of wheat is put into the earth. Very little is said by some who like to quote from 1st Cor. 15th chapter, about that portion of Paul's testimony where he said, “*thou sowest not that body that shall be.*” He follows that up by saying, “But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him.” Later on

he says, "It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body." It should be noted that the apostle says "*there is a spiritual body*," and not that there will be a spiritual body. Elsewhere we are quoting the words of Jesus to show that a spirit hath not flesh and bones. If the natural and the spiritual are the same of what need would there be for the apostle to distinguish between them? They are separate and distinct, suited for separate worlds entirely, and Paul makes a very definite statement in 2nd Cor. 5:16 where he says, "though we have known Christ after the flesh (here in this world), yet now henceforth know we him no more." John says, "*Beloved, now are we the sons of God*, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." 1st John 3:2. This should suffice us, without quibbling over the matter. We are reminded here of what Joshua said to Israel: "If it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood (before regeneration), or the gods of the Amorites in whose land ye dwell; but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." If the unregenerate religious world is correct in their version of the resurrection, important as this matter is, may they not also be right about the rest? Years ago, we recall talking with the late Elder John McConnell, former pastor of the Ebenezer Church in New York City about having listened to some Minister speak what we felt certain was the truth, and we were somewhat puzzled to understand how he could preach what he did and remain where he was. Elder McConnell said while he may have spoken the truth to us he doubted that it was the truth to him. It was like God commanding the raven to feed the prophet. He did not feed the prophet with raven's food, but with bread and fish, which was what God had for his servant, and neither did the raven feed upon the prophet's food. Jesus said to the Jews which believed on him, "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." Anyone can quote the Scriptures of eternal truth, but they are TRUTH only to those who are given to receive and understand them. We should be very careful about accepting a doctrine believed by worldly men, rather than clutch it to our bosom as gospel truth. We like to believe that the vast majority of those who have been called to follow in the footsteps of our Lord, sincerely desire to conform to the pattern laid down by Jesus and the Apostles. The Good Book is a model and it should not be emasculated, and neither should expressions be attributed to it which it does not contain. The prophet Isaiah said, "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them."

One was asked how he arrived at a certain interpretation of a particular Scripture. He replied, "according to the rule of Greek Grammar." Another says in substance, "There is no mystery about the resurrection; it can all be explained by the use of the Dictionary." Still another says in effect, he will make certain of explaining the mystery by going to the root of the various English words which are to be found in Latin, Greek, Hebrew, etc. If the Lord's people are going to be dependent upon any such methods as these for a proper interpretation of the Scriptures, they are in a most pitiable condition. We are persuaded that such is not the case, but instead God will *reveal* to them whatever is necessary for them to know.

Before concluding this part of our treatise, we wish to revert to Phil. 3:13. After Paul said, "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended," he went on to say, "but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." If we correctly understand him, he meant to tell us that he had turned his back upon the things which he formerly believed in and practiced. Having part with Christ who was the first fruits of them who were to arise from the death and condemnation of the law, he saw the legal dispensation at an end; he was in a new world and was contemplating to some

extent, at least, the things which pertain to the kingdom of our God. If we have been delivered from the powers of darkness and brought into the marvelous light of the gospel of his blessed Son we, too, should forget the things which are behind, which we clung to in our unregenerate state, and press toward the mark for the prize of our high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

ROMANS 8:11

“But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.”

We do not understand this Scripture as applying to the raising of our dust bodies on what is termed the “General Resurrection Day”, but rather that its application is to the militant church here in this time state. We shall, therefore, undertake to present the evidence, as we see it, which supports this point of view. In the very first verse of this chapter the apostle says: “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” We will all doubtless agree that so far as that life which is beyond this vale of tears is concerned, there is now no condemnation to those who were chosen in Christ Jesus, but according to the language as we interpret it, there still is condemnation here in this life to God’s people who walk after the flesh. Both our experience and the Scriptures bear testimony to this truth. Paul says, “For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.” Heb. 10:26-27. Following on in the chapter containing our text, the apostle shows how the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, which is attributed to the fact that the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made us free from the law of sin and death. He points to what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, and this necessitated God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to condemn sin in the flesh. He clearly shows that “they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.” Continuing with this line of reasoning he says, “For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.” Then he makes a positive statement to the effect that “the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.” His definite and final conclusion, therefore, is “*they that are in the flesh cannot please God.*” Here, again, we believe, all will agree that the natural man, as such, cannot please God. There must needs be first the work of regeneration wrought in him and faith given before he can walk acceptably before God. Paul, therefore, tells his Roman brethren that “ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you.” Then he goes on to say, “And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.” We might well inquire, how are we to be made aware of these glorious truths? Here is where our text comes in and explains it by saying, “But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.” It was God who raised up Jesus from the dead, and we are persuaded that his Spirit must quicken our mortal bodies before we can have any part in glorifying God in our bodies and in our spirits which are his. Saul of Tarsus realized full well the necessity of this quickening in his own case, and after experiencing it Paul (for he was even given a new name) was qualified to speak with authority to similar characters among the Ephesians, saying, “And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.” Eph. 2:1-3. This is all applicable to the experience of the children of grace here in this world.

The verse immediately following our text reads as follows: “Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh.” The conjunction, “therefore”, shows conclusively to our mind that that which follows is inseparably linked to and becomes a part of that which went before, and this meant that those quickened characters whom Paul was addressing as *brethren*, “are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh,” and he warns them of the result by saying, “For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.” If these Scriptures do not substantiate our claim that the text deals with the life of God's people here in the flesh, we would not know what form of speech could be employed that would. The purpose of language, when properly used, is to convey what is meant, and in order to get the proper meaning we must not lose sight of that which surrounds the subject. Neither should we lift bodily a Scripture out of its setting and place it where it does not belong. It should be allowed to remain in its own native environment if it is to produce the results and serve the purpose for which it was originally intended.

There is such an abundance of evidence which follows on in this chapter to support our conclusion, and the importance of the subject is such that we feel compelled to present more of it here: (1) “For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba Father; (2) The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together; (3) For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us; (4) For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope; (5) Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body; (6) For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it; (7) Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.” We repeat, if language means anything at all, it would certainly seem to us that these Scriptures deal with the children of God while they live here in this world.

Some years ago we recall reading an article written on the twenty-eighth verse of this chapter, which reads as follows: “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.” In that article the writer maintained that what the apostle actually meant to set forth was that ALL GOOD THINGS work together for good, etc. We later wrote on the same subject through the Signs and said in substance that, since the apostle did not write these things of himself, but wrote as he was wrought upon and moved by the Holy Ghost, there could not possibly be any mistake as to what he said or what he meant, for his mind was even filled with the words supplied by the Holy Ghost to express the thought intended. The most learned of mankind often fail to choose the right words to correctly express their meaning, but the Holy Ghost, never. We feel the same way regarding our text. Had the text meant to refer to the quickening of dead bodies, at some far distant future time, unquestionably the Holy Ghost would have directed the apostle to so declare, but since it specifically says *mortal bodies*, which means bodies that are subject to death, we must accept it at its face value, unless we are willing to have the Scriptures changed, and this we cannot consent to or permit.

We said in the outset of this article that we understood the text to refer to the quickening which God's people experience here in this time state, but we would not for the world leave our readers in doubt or even have them suspect that our hope, which we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, does not enter into that which is within the veil, whither the fore-runner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest forever after the order of Melchisedec. This eighth chapter of Romans is one of the most wonderful in all of the Bible to us. Not only does the Apostle Paul set forth herein the things both of the flesh and the spirit, but he shows clearly to our mind how we are to be partakers of spiritual things, which is by the very same quickening power of God which wrought in Christ in raising him from the dead. He then assures those of us who are thus quickened that *all things* shall work together for our good, and finally and best of all he declares in no uncertain terms that nothing, not even DEATH itself, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. While we firmly believe that our text deals with God's children in this life, we equally and just as firmly believe that the latter portion of this chapter deals with the hereafter, or that which is beyond this vale of tears. In this connection, we would like to invite the attention of our readers particularly to the expression of the apostle 'in the thirty-fifth verse where he asks, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" We have purposely italicized the plural pronoun US. Please note the apostle does not ask who shall separate our spirit from the love of Christ, or the Spirit of Christ, and neither does he speak of either the soul or the body. There must be a reason why he did not differentiate between and mention them separately. If these bodies of flesh and bones in which we live here, which were formed of the dust of the ground, and concerning which the Lord said to Adam, "for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return," (Gen. 3:19) were a part of the us referred to by Paul, death would at least separate this part of us from the love of God until we are raised, but the language of the apostle will not permit of any such conclusion. Incidentally, God is unchangeable and eternally the same, yesterday, today and forever, and we have never yet discovered between the lids of the Bible where he has revoked or altered in any degree whatsoever his decree or declaration to Adam that "dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." To better understand what the apostle had under consideration, since the Scriptures are their own best interpreters, let us bring forth some other Scriptures which bear upon this point. Job is a pretty good witness, so we will first call upon him. He says, "Thou hast clothed me with skin and flesh, and hast fenced me with bones and sinews." Job 10:11. The personal pronoun "me" here refers to the real Job who was clothed with skin and flesh, and was fenced with bones and sinews. Peter also is a good witness, so he shall be heard: His testimony is, "Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance: knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as the Lord Jesus hath shewed me." Peter was dwelling in a tabernacle which his Lord had shewed him had to be put off. Another outstanding witness is one that is familiar to all and is an unquestioned authority on these matters. We refer to Paul, who says: "I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart (from the flesh or body), and to be with Christ; which is far better: Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you," who were still in the flesh. Let us have some further testimony from Paul on this point. Continuing, he says, "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." Here he speaks of two houses, or buildings, and they are not one and the same, for one is an house for us to live in while here in this world, which will be dissolved, but the other is a building of God for our eternal abode in the heavens which are beyond. Dr. John Gill, famous biblical commentator of England, quotes one, Philo, as having said: "I am very little concerned for this mortal body, which is about me and cleaves to me like the shell of a fish, though it is hurt by everyone." Sometimes we hear brethren say, "If it is not my flesh, my blood and my bones that will be resurrected, it will not be me, and if it is only something in me that is to be resurrected, I am not interested." If they

did but know it, it is just the reverse of what they seem to think. Instead of something being in them, the truth of the matter is , as we have undeniably shown by the three witnesses whose testimony has just been presented. Our real self does not consist of so many pounds of flesh, blood and bones, which varies but little with most of us here in this life. The greatest men of history were very similar in fleshly appearance to the great masses, but something besides flesh made them stand as peers among their fellowmen. Ordinarily the features by which men are identified and distinguished from one another are found in the face or head, and the recognition of the Lord's people is to be found in their head, the Lord Jesus Christ. We do not need pictures of Christ hanging on the wall, which are so popular with the religious world, to give us an idea as to what our Lord looks like. Having never looked upon his earthly features, we would not recognize Jesus if he appeared in our midst, but even if we had seen him in the flesh it would be no guarantee that we would recognize him if he appeared in the flesh again. Even his own earthly mother, Mary, did not recognize him a few hours after his death and resurrection, for it is said she mistook him for the gardener until he spoke to her. His personality or identity as the blessed Son of God is what interests us most vitally. What he was, what he did and the principles for which he lived and died is what gives him the preeminence over all others who went before or shall follow after him. It was Jesus who said to Martha, "Whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." He did not say, the spirit of whosoever believeth in me shall never die. He was speaking of the new creature who has part with him, and since Jesus destroyed him that had the power of death, not even death can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Is it any wonder that so many of God's called and qualified servants turn so often to this eighth chapter of Romans for solid comfort and assurance to the poor and needy. Not only are they told that tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril and sword shall not be able to separate them here in this life from the love of Christ, but they are assured "that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature," shall be able to separate them from the love of Christ throughout all eternity. The reason why nothing shall be able to separate them from his love is that he has conquered all foes and will destroy for them the last enemy, DEATH.

JOHN 11:25-26

“I am the resurrection, and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?”

These words were spoken by the Lord Jesus Christ to Martha, and they undoubtedly have a great significance. It shall be our purpose, God being our helper, to present at least a portion of their meaning. We wish our readers would turn to and read the eleventh chapter of John. The account given here concerns Jesus, Lazarus, Martha and Mary. It is quite evident to us that they were much more than good friends, for when Jesus asked, “Where have ye laid him (Lazarus)? They said unto him, Lord, come and see. Jesus wept.” John 11:34-35. Is it any wonder that the Jews should have said, “Behold how he loved him!” We have heard of brethren presenting the idea that the death of Lazarus and his being raised from the dead typified the resurrection of the Lord's people on the “General Resurrection Day.” We would like to suggest here, in our humble opinion at least, that Lazarus was a type of the Gospel Ministry; Martha was a type of the Church under the law, and Mary was a type of the Gospel Church under the dispensation of Grace. When word first came to Jesus that Lazarus was sick, he said, “This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.” He later said, “Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep.” Apparently, they did not understand Jesus, and he finally said unto them plainly, “Lazarus is dead.” When Jesus had raised Lazarus from the dead, we are told that he “came forth, bound hand and foot with grave-clothes, and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.” The true gospel minister must be as dead to the law and the things of the legal dispensation, as one who had been dead four days and laid in the grave, if he is to preach the gospel in its purity, and we believe that all ministers who are called and qualified by God can testify to this death. When they are brought forth, however, by the mighty power of God, and the gift to preach is made known unto the Church, she is to acknowledge that gift by loosing him, or ordaining him to the full work of the gospel ministry, in order that he may be free to go wheresoever God in his providence may open a door and direct him. Otherwise he is not free to perform, properly, the ordinances of God's house.

Martha, as we have said, was a type of the church under the law. She could not understand fully the ordinances of God's house under Grace. We are told by Luke (10:40) that “Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, (Jesus) and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister (Mary) hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me.” But Jesus answered and said unto her, “Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.” Martha, therefore, had to be instructed more perfectly in the things pertaining to the gospel church, and this was what Jesus was doing in the words of our text. She had just been saying, “Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee.” Jesus then said unto her, “Thy brother shall rise again.” Martha replied, “I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.” She, apparently, had a very similar idea to that held by many today, and they need to be taught as she was taught and by the same Teacher, the way of God more perfectly. Jesus, therefore, said unto her, “*I am the resurrection, and the Life*: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.” And then Jesus added, “Believest thou this?” We would to God that all of his people might believe this in deed and in

truth, and, perhaps, then there would be no confusion, for they would then be seeing eye to eye and would no doubt speak the same things. But we are persuaded that it is not God's purpose that we should all be seeing alike on this point, any more than it is His purpose that we should agree on everything else. We honestly believe that as long as we live here in the flesh there will be things to bring forth the graces of his blessed Spirit, such as longsuffering one toward another, forgiveness, meekness, humility, charity, etc., that patience might have her perfect work. It is in this way, we believe, that we are to see God manifested in the flesh, through the kindness and tender mercy of the brethren toward each other. There are those Marys, however, who have ceased from their labors and have entered into the house, or gospel church, and are sitting at the feet of their Lord and Master, enjoying and delighting in the work of redemption which he has finished in every sense of the word. They really believe with all their hearts and souls that Jesus is their resurrection and their life, and they are fully persuaded that whosoever liveth and believeth in him shall never die. Having part with Him, who is the first resurrection, they are convinced beyond the peradventure of a doubt that all of their adversaries and even the second death can have no power over them. We do not understand that Jesus was the first to be raised from the dead in a literal sense, for there were others and he himself raised Lazarus from the dead, but Jesus was the first to keep the law in every jot and title and to rise from its condemnation and death, for having satisfied the demands of the law he could not be holden of death, which was its penalty, and since he did all of this for his people they stand complete in him. With faith to believe this, they need fear no evil, for no lasting harm can befall them. Even the last monster, DEATH, which some so much dread, shall but prove the opening of the portals through which they shall pass out of this world of sin and sorrow into the fullness of that which no eye hath seen, nor ear heard, and neither hath it entered into the heart of man, but is prepared for those that love him. They shall bid adieu to this vain world and find entrance into their eternal home, where undivided praise shall be rendered, world without end, to Father, Son and Holy Ghost. The Poet must have had a glimpse of this when he wrote the words which comprise Hymn No. 1256, in the Beebe Collection:

“It is not death to die -
To leave this weary road,
And, 'midst the brotherhood on high,
To be at home with God.

It is not death to close
The eye long dimmed by tears,
And wake in glorious repose,
To spend eternal years.

It is not death to bear
The wretch that sets us free
From dungeon chain, to breathe the air
Of boundless liberty.

It is not death to fling
Aside the sinful dust,

And rise, on strong, exulting wing,
To live among the just.

Jesus, thou Prince of Life!
Thy chosen cannot die;
Like thee, they conquer in the strife
To reign with thee on high.”

1 THESSALONIANS 5:23

“And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Judging from the interpretation given to the above Scripture by some of the brethren, it is quite evident to us that they either do not read the connections or having done so utterly disregard them. Where this practice is followed the Scriptures can be made to mean whatever the one using them may choose. A reportedly very popular and famous New York City Air Minister almost invariably quotes from Revelation 3:20 in his “Call to worship,” as follows: “Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in.” He apparently interprets this to mean that God is knocking at the door of every human heart, and if they will but hear and open the door, he will enter and save them. This places Salvation, as we see it, upon the acts of the creature. We are confident our brethren will not accept any such conclusion. Nevertheless, the quotation, what there is of it, is correct. It is only when we see that it is addressed to the Laodicean Church that it is correctly understood. Old School Baptists of all people should be careful not to lift the Scriptures out of their proper setting, or take them separate and apart from their connections, or half or misquote them, and thereby give a meaning entirely foreign to what the context warrants.

The question which Jesus asked his disciples in his memorable sermon on the Mount is, we believe, apropos and applicable here. Jesus asked, “Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?” Mat. 7:16. From this we would learn that if we would gather figs we should go to the fig tree, and if we would gather grapes we should go to the vine. We know in our practical every day life that we do not go to the peach tree to get apples, or vice versa, and, therefore, if we are to correctly understand the apostle's meaning when he said, “And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ,” (1st Thes. 5:23) we should consider the nature of the things which surround it; what the apostle had been talking about prior to and immediately after this petition on behalf of his brethren. He does not dwell upon a certain matter and all of a sudden inject something else entirely foreign or extraneous to what is under consideration, without a proper pause or break to separate and distinguish between them.

In this fifth chapter particularly of 1 Thessalonians, after reminding them that “the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night,” the apostle says, “Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness”. “For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation. For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ.” He then proceeds to instruct them how they should look after their ministering gifts by saying, “And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labor among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. And be at peace among yourselves”. He then exhorts those who minister by saying, “Brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feeble minded, support the weak, be patient toward all men. See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men.” Then he takes the trouble to enumerate seven definite and distinct things which they should do: namely, (1) “*Rejoice evermore.*” A large volume, indeed, could be written on the reasons why the children of light should rejoice for-evermore; (2) “*Pray without*

ceasing.” It is written “That men ought always to pray,” and we are persuaded that every true subject of divine grace who is really acutely alive to his own condition and need feels to pray constantly; (3) “*In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.*” Give thanks for all things, both spiritual and temporal, for “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.” Jas. 1:17. We should give thanks for the day of adversity as well as the day of prosperity, for both alike cometh according to the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning us, and they will most certainly work together for our ultimate good. To do this one of necessity must needs have faith, which is the gift of God. With this faith one can even glory in tribulations, for faith penetrates through and beyond the things which are seen, which are contrary, and believes as did the apostle when he said, “Therefore 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. And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.” Rom. 5:1-5. (4) “*Quench not the Spirit.*” In other words, cease not to speak of the goodness of God and his mercy, which endureth for ever; and continue to manifest the fruits and graces of the Spirit of Christ, such as love, compassion, tenderness, sympathy and forgiveness towards the poor and needy, against which there is no law; (5) “*Despise not prophesyings.*” Be not prejudiced against any who are called and qualified by God to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord and to preach the unsearchable riches of God, through Christ Jesus our Lord, and be not as some who have their favorite preachers and will not even go to hear others; (6) “*Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.*” Accept nothing from any man, even your own pastor or favorite preacher, simply because he says it, but test it by the word of God, and when he speaks not according to that word, receive it not, and neither bid him godspeed; neither follow him in anything beyond what he follows Christ. And once it has been proven and found to be good, hold fast to it, regardless of who the man may be who would dissuade you or dare to oppose it, always, of course, in the Spirit of the Lord; (7) “*Abstain from all appearance of evil.*” Surely, there is no one who will deny that these things pertain to this life, and immediately following this is to be found the text. Having dwelt upon the fact that his brethren were children of light, and having admonished them as to how they should live and conduct themselves in order to adorn the profession of their faith in God here in this world, the apostle does not in the very same breath, or line, jump to something entirely foreign to it, but being well acquainted with their weaknesses and their inability to perform that which is good, he calls upon the God of peace to sanctify them wholly, or set them apart completely unto these things. Like Jude, in writing to his beloved brethren, who were to earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints, in opposition to ungodly men, after saying, “Keep yourselves in the love of God,” and at the same time knowing it was an utter impossibility, in and of themselves, for them to do so, he turns away from them and says, “Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, To the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.” Paul, therefore, followed up his admonition to “Abstain from all appearance of evil,” with the language of our text: “And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” He would have them remain faithful unto death. Nothing is said here as to how or when Jesus would come, except in the first part of the chapter, where it says, “The day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night,” but the apostle prays that “your whole spirit and soul and body be *preserved* blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Preserve means, “To keep in safety; protect from harm,” and this is what the apostle is praying

for on their account and in their behalf, and this means here in this world, or time state. We are persuaded that when our earthly race is run and we are ready to quit the walks of men that Jesus, our Glorious Head of grace, will come for each and every one of his people and will pilot them across that Great Divide, and that not an hoof shall be left behind. The record says, "The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall 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." The apostle concludes this thought by saying, "Wherefore comfort one another with these words." Like the thief on the cross who had been dead in Christ, or dead to all knowledge of Christ as the Saviour of sinners (nevertheless chosen in him from before the foundation of the world) until practically his very last moment on earth, when Christ was revealed in him the hope of glory, he cries, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom," and in answer thereto receives that most joyful of all news, "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise." Whatever Jesus may or may not have meant, according to Luke, he most certainly did not say, "Today thy soul or thy spirit shall be with my soul or my spirit in some far off intermediary place, until the General Resurrection Day, when thy body will be raised and thy spirit come from paradise, be reunited and then go on to heaven." What Jesus did say was, "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise." We have long since believed that many are called, but few are chosen; that is to say that only a few, comparatively speaking, of the Lord's people are regenerated and brought out to testify here in time as witnesses before men to give glory to God, but even those who so far as we can know here are dead to all knowledge of the truth, we have comfort in the assurance which God's word gives that the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his. Those who are *dead in Christ* must first be quickened, regenerated and made alive before they are to be caught up together with those who are alive and remain to meet the Lord in the air, and then shall we all be forever with the Lord. Jesus said to Martha, "he that believeth in me, *though he were dead*, yet shall he live. And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." This transition or change can take place in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. Let us emphasize the words of Jesus to the thief on the cross by repeating them. He said, "To-day (not to-morrow or a million years hence, but to-day) shalt thou be with me in paradise." We believe that herein is to be found untold comfort and consolation for God's people, not only in these most distressing times but in all others, whether in the past or the future, for they can be assured that their loved ones and friends, as well as untold millions of the redeemed of the Lord, of whom they know nothing, shall never stray beyond the pale of their heavenly Father's care, neither will God ever be too late or too far off to save his own. And although they may have never given any inkling of having known the Lord in the pardon or forgiveness of their sins, yet they are safe in the arms of their Beloved. This change can take place with a loving companion upon the death bed, and we may never know of it; it can take place with a darling son as he comes down out of the air to the earth for the last time upon the field of battle; it can take place with a precious daughter as she sails on a mission of mercy across an ocean infested with submarines that torpedo, set afire and sink the vessel upon which she travels; it can take place with the unborn babe, as it did with John the Baptist, and the centenarian is none too old, for our God is not confined to conditions, time or place. He is not only Omnipotent and Omniscient, but Omnipresent as well, and it should be enough for us to know that all we are and have is in the hands of him with whom we have to do. This is the comfort wherewith we, ourself, are comforted of God and we can wholeheartedly join the apostle in saying, "Wherefore comfort one another with these words." It is here in this life that we need to be comforted and need to comfort one another with the same comfort wherewith we, ourselves, are comforted of God. There will be no need of comfort in that world which is beyond this vale of tears, for nothing can enter there to molest our undisturbed repose.

CHRIST'S SECOND COMING

We are definitely convinced that a misconception of the Second Coming of Christ has influenced many people to think incorrectly of “the resurrection of the dead.” They have tied up the idea of Jesus coming the second time into the world in a bodily form with a General Resurrection Day, General Judgment Day, etc., with the end of time. Our only explanation for writing on this subject here is because of its bearing on the subject under discussion.

From what we have been able to discover there are those in almost every religious creed on earth who, from time to time, emphasize that the time is fast approaching when Jesus shall literally come down through the clouds in the natural form of a man, and some even go so far as to claim that he will set up an earthly kingdom and reign as king here over his people. John Bunyan, some three hundred or more years ago gave it as his opinion that Jesus was liable to come any day. Other individuals and groups have in our own day and time gone so far as to fix the year and month, and as evidence of their good faith in such a belief they have either sold or given away most of their property. They have met with sad disappointment, simply because they did not rightly understand what the Scriptures teach. The Scriptures have themselves declared that no man knoweth when the coming of the Son of man shall be, but this does not prevent men from speculating and prophesying about it.

As one of the most frequently quoted texts to support the idea of Jesus coming on earth again in a bodily form is that found in Hebrews 9:28, we shall use this as a foundation for our comment at this time. We think, the very fact that Paul chose the Jews to write this epistle to is highly significant. Perhaps it will not be amiss in us to review some of the things referred to in this epistle. Having worshipped under the law of Moses for centuries, with all of its sacrifices and offerings, it was not an easy matter for them to quickly turn to something else. Paul, therefore, in the very outset told them the same God who at sundry times and divers manners had spoken unto the fathers by the prophets hath in these last days spoken by his Son. In the third chapter he shows Christ as more worthy than Moses, and says: “Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus; who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses was faithful in all his house. For this man was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who hath builded the house hath more honor than the house.” Heb. 3:1-3. In the fifth chapter he discusses the priesthood and shows the difference between that which is of men and that which is of God. While we would like to quote considerable of the actual Scripture itself, we must give some consideration to our space. However, we will quote here from the eleventh to the seventeenth verses, inclusive, of the seventh chapter, as follows: “If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law), what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron? For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law. For he of whom these things are spoken pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar. For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood. And it is yet far more evident; for that after the similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth another priest, who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life. For he testifieth, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.” In the eighth chapter he shows that by the establishment of the eternal priesthood of Christ the Levitical priesthood of Aaron is abolished, and then goes on to speak of the two covenants. The Jews were well familiar with the first, which covenant they were unable to keep, but Paul told them that in this New Covenant which God had made with Israel, he would put his laws into their minds, and write them in their hearts; and that he would be unto them a God, “and they shall

be to me a people. And they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. In that he saith, a new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.” Hebrews 8:10-13.

The climax is reached in the ninth chapter, wherein is shown that the rites and sacrifices made under the law were far inferior to the perfection of the blood and sacrifice of Christ. Here, again, we would like to quote extensively, but lack of space forbids. We hope our reader will turn to it and make a careful study of it, that he may see for himself what God's word says. We feel compelled to quote portions of what is found in this chapter. In the thirteenth and fourteenth verses we read: “For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh; how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?” Coming over now to the twenty-second verse and through the twenty-sixth, we read: “And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission. It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us; Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world; but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.” All along he had been dwelling upon Moses versus Christ, the Old Covenant versus the New Covenant, and in the next chapter he speaks of the law having *a shadow of good things to come* versus “*a new and living way*, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say his flesh,” by the shedding of whose blood their sins and iniquities were remitted and put away forever or remembered no more. How wonderfully descriptive these things are of the fulfillment of the work which Jesus came to do, by and through his sufferings, death and resurrection. This was accomplished by his coming (the first time) under the law and meeting all of its requirements, paying the debt in full and setting the sinner free. It was in the end of that legal world or dispensation that Jesus came and put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. He was not talking about the end of this literal world, but the end of that world which the Jews had been living in for so many years. This is shown clearly by the language which he used. He says “he hath appeared,” which is in the past tense. If it had had reference to the end of this natural world in which we are living today he would have to use a future tense. Let us not add to or take from the sacred words of truth.

Paul then goes on to say, “And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.” When Jesus *first appeared* it was in the form of a man, in the likeness of sinful flesh, made under the law to redeem them that were under the law, and he had now suffered and died, and being dead his testament had been put into effect and, therefore, the judgment, or the time to make distribution of the benefits to his rightful heirs. What have “the many” for whom Jesus died a right to expect from his finished work of redemption? Surely, they must expect something better than the likeness of poor sinful man again. Yea, those who by faith look for him to appear the *second time*, expect him to appear in power and *great glory*, and it is without sin unto salvation when he thus appears. Wherefore says Paul, in writing to his Corinthian brethren, henceforth we are to know no man after the flesh. “Yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we

him no more.” II Cor. 5:16. If this was the only scripture in the Bible to oppose the idea of Jesus coming a second time in the flesh, it should be sufficient to dissuade us against it, but there are many others. Even Isaiah, prophesying of what would take place in the Gospel Day, hundreds of years before Christ came in the flesh, by faith saw him coming up from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah, and he was *glorious in his apparel*, travelling in the greatness of his strength. How can it be possible to preach the gospel of the blessed Son of God, without holding Jesus up to believers as the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace? His might and power and glory need to be extolled to poor, weak and helpless sinners.

Yes, we are well aware of what was said to those who witnessed his ascension up into the clouds by the two men who stood by, clothed in white: “Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.” We would like to emphasize here the necessity of some definite outward manifestation of his ascension. He had said to Mary, his earthly mother, who after his death had taken him to be the gardner until he spoke to her, “Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father; but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.” John 20:17. As it was necessary that there should be some unmistakable evidence of his resurrection from the dead, so must there of necessity be absolute proof of his ascension into heaven, otherwise even his own disciples might have been left to believe that the Roman soldiers had taken him away. His followers must not be left in doubt, and in order that there should be eye witnesses to the fact that he actually ascended, “While they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.” We wish to speak here particularly of the manner in which he ascended, since it is said he would “come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.” Before the death and resurrection of Jesus, he was asked by his disciples to teach them how to pray, and he said, “After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil; for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.” Mat. 6:9-13. Let it be noted that this was said under the Jewish economy or legal dispensation, when they were looking for his kingdom to come, but even then we do not find an exact literal repetition of these identical words. Luke quotes a variation. Many religious denominations have incorporated the exact language in what they call “The Lord's Prayer” in their religious services, and if that is the proper manner in which God's people should pray unto him Old School Baptists have been wrong lo these many years. Since the death and resurrection of our Lord, and the establishment of his kingdom in earth with him as King of kings and Lord of lords, we do not pray, “Thy kingdom come,” but we do pray, “Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven* * * For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.” We are persuaded that every true prayer is after this manner, “Thy will be done,” in the Spirit. The life is not in the letter, for the letter killeth, but the Spirit maketh alive.

The manner in which Jesus went up was in the cloud, for “a cloud received him out of their sight,” and it was declared that he shall “come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.” It was not said that he would “come in like body” but in like manner – in a cloud. He is seen by faith, and so far as we are aware none but his disciples have ever seen him since he arose from the dead. Jesus himself said that “immediately after the tribulation” of the destruction of Legal Jerusalem, as recorded in the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew, would “appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.” Mat. 24:30. He himself also said, “Verily I say unto you, this generation shall

not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.” Mat. 24:34. Mark confirms this testimony (13:24-27). Luke says the same (21:27). These things were actually fulfilled before that generation passed, as Jesus said they would be. When the Gospel Day was fully ushered in, about the year A.D. 70, John witnessed their fulfillment and testified to it. Having lived to see them his authority cannot be questioned. Here is what he says: “Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so. Amen.” Rev. 1:7. In the twelfth chapter of Revelation, John presents a type of the Gospel Church in the figure of a woman. He says, “And there appeared a great wonder in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: and she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered.” He then goes on to speak of the great victory won by Michael (Jesus) in his battle with the great red dragon, “that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan,” and declares that he “heard a loud voice saying in heaven, NOW IS COME SALVATION, AND STRENGTH, AND THE KINGDOM OF OUR GOD, AND THE POWER OF HIS CHRIST: FOR THE ACCUSER OF OUR BRETHREN IS CAST DOWN, WHICH ACCUSED THEM BEFORE OUR GOD DAY AND NIGHT.” There is no question whatever in our mind but that John was beholding King Jesus, by faith, as being the same one that was dead, but then being alive forevermore, having the keys of hell and of death, with all power, both in heaven and in earth, in his hands. And in our humble opinion wherever the Gospel Church is assembled in a heavenly place in Christ, and the Spirit is poured out upon her, she hears the substance of what John proclaimed. At the risk of repeating some things already said, in this Gospel Day God is performing his work of regenerating and quickening his people who are dead in trespasses and in sins; Jesus is appearing the second time without sin unto salvation to them; the quick and the dead are being judged; the sheep are being separated from the goats and he is assigning to each their portion: those on his right hand enter into life everlasting, and those on his left hand enter into eternal judgment.

While here in the flesh, Jesus often turned to natural things for illustrations of his points, and we will do likewise. At Christmas time, for the benefit of young children, a great mythological narrative is woven about a physical man, dressed in red coat, white whiskers, etc., with a sled drawn by reindeer prancing on the roof of the house, is told them. For awhile they are enraptured with intense glee and joy, but by and by as they develop and become more mature they have an awakening. Some are ready to say they discover that it was all a myth and they learn that there was nothing to it. But what are the real facts? When they grow up into manhood and womanhood they realize that the physical creature which their little eyes looked upon was but the embodiment of a spirit, the wonder of which fills the earth to a far greater extent than their little minds ever dreamed of or were capable of comprehending. Paul said, “When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things.” 1 Cor. 13:11. There is such a thing as a growth in grace and in the knowledge of the things of God, but it would appear that there are still those who believe and cling to what they believed while in their unregenerate state. We wish that it might be the will of our God to awaken them, that they might be enabled to behold the glory of God as it appears in the face or person of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, as a once crucified but now risen Savior, with power over all worlds, principalities and powers, be they visible or invisible.

THE NEW BIRTH

“Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” John 3:3.

Here, again, our main reason for writing on the New Birth at this time is because we feel it has an important bearing upon the subject of the “resurrection of the dead.” There are two words in this quotation which we desire to emphasize and enlarge upon. These words are MAN and BORN. Since it is man that must be born again, we will do well to inquire (1) Who or what is man? And where better than the Scriptures of eternal truth shall we seek enlightenment? We could go to the Dictionary and get the definition there that he is “an adult male of the human species,” but that would not be altogether satisfying to us, as our text undoubtedly embraces the female of the specie as well as the male. The first Scriptural reference to man is found in Genesis 1:26, where it is recorded that God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.” God was not a being composed of flesh, blood and bone and, therefore, it was not in that sense that man was made in the image of God. Neither was Adam spirit, so it could not have been in that sense that man was made in the image or likeness of God. Paul distinctly declares “the first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven.” I Cor. 15:47. Paul says nothing that would indicate that the *entire* man is anything but of the earth, earthy. The breath which God breathed into Adam's nostrils was declared to be the “breath of life,” and there is nothing said about its being spirit. Adam became a living soul, or a human creature with the breath of life in him, and he was nothing but a natural man as he was created in the Garden of Eden. Paul tells us in Ephesians (1:4) that the children of God were chosen in Christ Jesus before the foundation of the world, and we understand from this every member of the mystical body of Christ had his life or standing, spiritually, in Christ, who was declared to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body. The Psalmist wrote on behalf of Christ (Psalm 139:15-16) as follows: “My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them.” It was well said in that connection, “I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvelous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well.” Since the bride of Christ was created in him before the world was, and every member of his mystical body had their standing in him, God held his only begotten Son accountable for the acts of his bride, or the sins of his people, and all power, both in heaven and in earth, was given into his hands, so that he was absolutely able and qualified in every respect to pay her debt and redeem her from under the curse which she fell in Adam. When God was ready to make man he made him according to the same pattern. His bride, Eve, was created in him, and all of his posterity, which embraces every member of the human race, had their life or standing in Adam. He was held accountable for Eve's actions and God gave him power over all the earth and every creeping thing that creepeth upon it. While no figure can present the perfect type, we get from this a glimpse of the sense in which man was made in the image of God. It was according to the eternal purpose of Almighty God that his children should partake of the Adamic nature and be brought under the condemnation and death of the law. It was the body of Christ, his church, which was to be “sown in corruption” and “raised in incorruption:” “sown in dishonor” and “raised in glory:” “sown in weakness” and “raised in power,” and it all was for the glorifying of God

and the lifting of the name of Jesus on high. Therefore, says Paul, "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same." Heb. 2:14. There was an entity, individuality, personality or being of some kind or form which was identified as a member of the body of Christ before Adam was created, otherwise how could the children be said to partake of flesh and blood. Job said (10:11) "Thou hast clothed me with skin and flesh, and hast fenced me with bones and sinews." He was a man before he was born, or manifested in the flesh. Paul speaks of abiding in the flesh which he likened to an "earthly house of this tabernacle," which he said was to be dissolved. Peter spoke of living in a tabernacle, which would have to be put off. They were both men and children of God who had partaken of flesh. The method of coming into this world is to be BORN into it, and that which is natural is first, and then that which is spiritual. The same man that is born into or manifested in this world must be born again, or of the Spirit, if he is ever to see the kingdom of God. There has to be a child before it can be born. The birth simply makes manifest that which already existed. We have to be born of the flesh and enter into this natural world before we can have any perception of the things of this world. Likewise, if we are to have any understanding or comprehension of spiritual things, we must be born of the Spirit. Jesus said distinctly, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit:" They are fitted for two entirely different worlds: one for this natural world, which is the flesh, and that must ever remain flesh; the other is for the kingdom of God and, the "natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." We know by observation that the actual flesh, blood and bone is not born again. They develop, grow old and fade away with the passing of time. We also know too well that the lusts and passions of the flesh are not changed when a man is born again. Peter tells us that baptism does not put away the filth of the flesh. In 1st John, Chapter 3:9-10 we read: "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother." Only the *new creature* availeth anything; there must of necessity be the two births. Not until we are born again can we say with Paul, "I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members." "So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin."

It takes more than flesh, blood and bone to constitute a man. It is the personality, or character, or being, that inhabits this earthly tabernacle that can be said of a truth to be the real man. He stands for something; he has principles and a purpose in life. When a man of outstanding character and principles goes wrong, we say of him, he is not the man we have known for many years; or when we see a man who has had a mean reputation all his life turn his back upon evil and seek after righteousness, he is spoken of as being a new man, a changed man, or different from what he once was. They that are born of the flesh will love the things of the flesh, while those who are born of the Spirit will love and seek after the things of God. We are persuaded that each and every one who is born of the Spirit will be perfect in Christ. In heaven there will be no old men and young boys, no grandmothers and little girls, no giants and midgets, no feeble-minded, idiots, cripples or deformities of any kind whatsoever.

In concluding this article we wish to make some quotations from Elder Gilbert Beebe's article on this same subject, which was republished in the October, 1942, *Signs of the Times*. On the first page of that issue he said: "Adam, both before and after his transgression, was a natural man." In column one, page 219, we quote: "For we are expressly informed that the first Adam was not spiritual, but natural; but the second Adam is spiritual." Beginning with the second column on the same page we read: "That man

who was chosen in Christ Jesus before the foundation of the world, and consequently before he was manifestly the subject of any birth, before he was born either of the flesh or of the Spirit. We think it will not be disputed by any intelligent christian that all the children of God were personally elected or chosen of God in Christ Jesus before the foundation of the world, according to Ephesians i. 4. If this be admitted, it must follow that they all had a personal identity and existence as members of the mystical body of Christ before Adam's dust was fashioned to a man, and therefore prior to their first or second birth. The developments of time have demonstrated to us that it was the purpose of God that every one of his elect should, in the fullness of the dispensation of time, be born first of the flesh, and then be born again of the Spirit. Both of these births were ordained and provided for by the wisdom and decree of God, not to give them being or identity, for these they had in Christ before the world began. By the first birth they were to be developed in their earthly and fleshly nature in common with the whole natural posterity of the earthly Adam. This first birth was necessary, that they might see and know the things of nature, for except they were born of the flesh they could never have known the things of the flesh. 'What man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him?' In the stupendous mystery of the hidden counsel and purpose of God this fleshly birth and identification of God's elect with the family of mankind was indispensable to the development of the great eternal purpose which God had purposed in himself before the world began, that in the first Adam they should all die, and in Christ they should all be made alive. If we admit that God has saved us and called us according to his purpose and grace which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, then we cannot consistently deny that the purpose and grace provided for our being born of the flesh, and identified with all the rest of Adam's posterity, and with them sink into death by the transgression of Adam, and be quickened from the dead, and raised up from condemnation and wrath, be washed, cleansed and purified, and freely justified through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. Whether brethren can agree with us, that the absolute purpose and immutable decree of God embraced our fallen state and condition, as well as our salvation from sin, death and hell, through his dear Son, or whether they regard our fallen condition as an afterthought, occasioned by some unavoidable failure of his purpose, if it be admitted that our redemption from sin and death was predestinated, we must also and unavoidably (we think) admit the indispensable necessity for the fleshly birth of all the children of God which were from everlasting identified and personally chosen unto salvation in our Lord Jesus Christ. By our natural birth then we enter into and become a part of this world, are capacitated to see it and to sojourn in it until like an hireling we shall have fulfilled our allotted number of days; but our first, or fleshly birth, while it capacitates us for a knowledge of the things of nature, can supply us with no capacity for anything beyond bounds of this world, and hence the necessity that we should be born again in order that we may see the kingdom of God and know the things of the Spirit of God. In being born again, then, this man, who was chosen of God in Christ before the foundation of the world, and born of the flesh since the foundation of the world, must, at some period still later than his fleshly birth, be born again, or he cannot see the kingdom of God; must be born of water and of the Spirit, or he cannot inherit the kingdom of God. As our first or natural birth belongs to and results from natural generation, so our being born again belongs to and results from regeneration. The seminal life of all the posterity of Adam was created in him, in the day when they were created. So the spiritual eternal life of the generation of our Lord Jesus Christ was given and secured to all the children of God in Christ when he was given to be the head over all things to his church. The words of our Lord which we have placed at the head of this article (John 3:7) were addressed to one who was already born of the flesh, and they are applicable to such only as are born of the flesh. A birth can only develop, or bring forth into manifestation, the same nature of which it is generated and born. 'That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.' The first birth brings forth that life, flesh and nature

in which we were created in the earthly Adam, but the second birth brings forth into manifestation that life, spirit and immortality which was given to us in Christ Jesus, as the second Adam, and the Lord from heaven.”

CONCLUSION

There are a number of Scriptures which we would have liked to present our views upon in detail, but the lack of space forbids more of our own writings appearing here. We will, however, take the liberty of making a few observations and commenting briefly upon certain points not yet touched upon.

So far as we have been able to discover the word *resurrection* does not appear at all in the Old Testament. There are, nevertheless, portions of Scripture to be found there which some of the brethren interpret to mean that when this natural world comes to an end, the dust bodies of all the saints will be raised and reunited with their spirits and then go on to heaven, forever to be with the Lord. One of these Scriptures will be found in Job 19:25-27, which reads as follows: “For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth; and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God; whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me.” Job has always been and will ever continue to be a great comfort to the Church of the true and living God, and he was here exhibiting a superb quality of that faith which is much needed by those who follow after righteousness here in this unfriendly world. As Abraham, by faith, received Isaac in a figure from the dead, so Job, by faith, declared his unshakable belief in the fact that he would see the hand of God in the land of the living, despite all that had occurred or might take place with him in the loss of all that he once possessed, or the terrible affliction which had been visited upon him and the turning of his wife and friends against him. He believed in the absolute sovereignty of God and that nothing, or all things combined in this world, could prevent the purposes of God concerning him from coming to pass. Those who will read the last chapter of Job will see that his faith was amply rewarded and that his latter days were far more wonderful with the blessings of God than his beginning. There have been times in our own life, when seemingly at least, the very powers of hell were arrayed against us, but faith was given to triumph over all our foes and then we were made to realize that all things were in the hands of our God and that he could make whatever obstacle confronted us melt away as the snowflake does in the midday sun. We could then say with Job that we knew that our Redeemer lived, and that nothing was impossible with or too hard for him.

In the thirty-seventh chapter of Ezekiel there is found recorded the vision of dry bones which God gave to his prophet concerning the *whole house of Israel*. Some brethren claim that this is a type of the resurrection on what they call the last day, but we prefer to understand it as portraying the church of God, including both Jew and Gentile, as it stands in nature. The Old Testament scriptures were prophetic of what would come to pass in the day of the Lord, or when the Messiah came, or as someone has well said, what is concealed in the Old Testament is revealed in the New Testament. It would be difficult to more forcefully illustrate the utter destitution of spiritual life in the natural creature than is set forth in the type of the valley of dry bones. It requires the same God to create a new creature in Christ that it did to make those bones live.

In Daniel 12:2 is written: “And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.” It is claimed by many that this refers to what will take place on what they call the General Resurrection Day. By reading the preceding verse, we believe, it will be clearly seen that this was vitally connected with the coming of our Lord into the world to set up and establish his kingdom. This Gospel Day is the last day, and the Lord is carrying on his various kinds of work all about us, and will continue to do so till the end of time here below. Spiritually speaking, members of Adam's race sleep in the dust of their nature until they are awakened

by the voice of their God. The Jews slumbered and slept under the law until Jesus came, and then those whom he was pleased to make alive were awakened to the fact that God was manifesting himself in the flesh. Jesus said unto his disciples, “For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.” Mat. 13:17. But even his disciples who walked and talked with him while he was here in the flesh only understood him in part. Philip could not preach JESUS from the text: “He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth,” etc., until after Jesus arose from the dead and the spirit of understanding was poured out upon him. None but Jesus can open the book sealed with seven seals and give his people understanding today. It is his life that is the light of men, and unless he is pleased to reveal himself unto us we must forever remain in total darkness.

In John 5:25 Jesus said, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, *and now is*, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live.” Those who were dead were evidently in their graves; nevertheless, Jesus said they would hear the voice of the Son of God, and would live, or come forth as we understand out of their graves, and he said that that time was then present – “and now is.” The word “grave” undoubtedly can mean something besides “an excavation in the earth for the burial of a dead body.” We once heard one of our able ministers devote considerable time to explaining the different meanings of the word “world,” and he well pointed out that it did not always mean the earth upon which we live. Therefore when Jesus said, “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; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation,” he did not necessarily imply that dust bodies would come up out of excavations in the ground on a single twenty-four day. Jesus nowhere mentions a General Resurrection Day. We seriously fear that some are still in the grave of tradition. The Apostle Paul said to the Ephesians, “And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins,” etc. If they were dead they were unquestionably in a grave of some kind. We believe they were buried in the grave of sin, but when they were quickened together with Christ they were brought forth in a new life, and when they possessed that new life, which is the life of Christ, there is a sense in which they never died. Jesus said to Martha, “I am the resurrection, and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: *And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.*” John 11:25-26. He did not mean that the natural body would not die, but he meant that the creature who inhabits this body, or tabernacle which Peter says must be put off, or this house which Paul says must be dissolved, shall never die. He illustrated this point elsewhere in presenting the parable of the corn of wheat which is put into the earth. The literal grain of wheat which is put into the ground rots and returns to the earth, as every experienced farmer well knows, but he also well knows that life arises, so to speak out of death, for it cannot be holden of death, and the form in which that life appears is not the form in which it was put into the earth; therefore that which comes forth is that which cannot or does not die. Some say if the identical body which goes into the grave does not come up out of the grave, there is no resurrection. Jesus did not say so, but on the contrary, through the parable of the corn of wheat, refutes that theory and confirms what Paul said in the fifteenth chapter of first Corinthians: (1) “That which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be,” “but God giveth it a body as it has pleased him;” and (2) “It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body.” When one says it is raised a body of flesh and bone, as we see it, he is saying just the opposite to what Jesus and Paul said, and we prefer to stand with them.

As will be seen by referring to the forty-second verse of the fifteenth chapter of First Corinthians, Paul was talking about the “resurrection of the dead.” Had it been proper for him to have used the

expression “the resurrection of the body”, he could just as well have done so, and the Holy Spirit would no doubt have moved him so to do, but he very definitely says, “So also is the resurrection of the dead,” and he then goes on to say, “It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption; It is sown in dishonour; 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 spiritual body.” When Jesus appeared unto his apostles to convince them beyond the question of a doubt that it was he, and not another, who was risen from the dead, he also said to them, “A spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have.” This was before he had ascended unto his Father. How then can any say that a spiritual body has flesh and bones! The Lord Jesus Christ and the Apostle Paul are the highest possible authorities on this matter and their testimony must stand as the final word, from which there can be no appeal.

It is also in this chapter that Paul says, “For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the first-fruits: afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.” Sometimes brethren quote this as a text, but strange as it may seem to us they not only avoid explaining the words, *every man in his own order*, but in the face of them they go on and emphasize that ALL are to be raised at the same time and on the same day. We are convinced that the Gospel Day in which we are now living is the last day and that during this day the Lord is carrying on all phases of his work: Sinners are being regenerated, quickened, made alive, suffering, dying and are resurrected, *but every man in his own order*. In addition to knowing, as we hope, something of the appearing of the Lord Jesus to his people here in the flesh, we are confidently expecting that when the time comes for us to quit the walks of men and go down in the valley of the shadow of death, we will not be left alone, for Jesus, the shepherd and bishop of our soul, will come to pilot us safely through death into that home which will be our eternal abode. Closely following the verses which we have just quoted it is said, “The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.” How can death be the last enemy that shall be destroyed if after death an important part of us is to be entombed as a prisoner in the grave until some far-distant and unknown time, which no one knows anything about. Under such conditions, it would seem that the grave and not death would be the last enemy to be destroyed. We prefer to accept the Scriptures at their face value, rather than avoid or omit any part of them, for we are persuaded that when they are employed as they were intended to be, consistency and harmony will be found to prevail throughout. It is only when we either misconstrue or misapply them that we run into difficulties, and there are so many passages which are contrary to the point of view held by some of the brethren that we can but feel they are mistaken so far as this point of doctrine is concerned.

Because we do not believe in the resurrection of a literal body of flesh and bones, we are sometimes accused of being a “non-resurrectionist” or a Sadducee. The Sadducees did not believe in a resurrection of any kind or thing, or to quote the Apostle Paul, “The Sadducees say there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit: But the Pharisees confess both.” Acts 23:8. In the sixth verse of this chapter Paul said, “I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee: of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question.” If the resurrection of the literal body is as important as some of the brethren make it out to be, why did not Paul include it here in acknowledging that he agreed with the Pharisees in confessing their belief in the resurrection of “angel” and “spirit,” and why did not Jesus, the head over all things to the church, or some one or more of his immediate disciples say something about it in some of their writings?

As we pen these lines there are beautiful dahlias and other flowers about us, and we recall that only a few months ago the dahlia bulbs were put into the ground. We are not now beholding the bulb, for that has decayed and returned to the earth, but we are beholding a new and different body, the grandeur of

which it would be difficult to describe. It would be, indeed, mortifying and humiliating to the majestic oak to reduce it again to its original embryonic state, when it was in the small acorn. The wonder and grandeur of yonder world is utterly beyond the comprehension of mortal man as he is here in this state. Of a truth, eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, and neither hath it entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for them that love him, but God reveals some knowledge of them here by his spirit. It is so wonderful that we are not capacitated here in this body to receive it; therefore Paul desired to be delivered from the body of this death.

We truly hope that our treatment of this subject, as well as other articles which we are publishing, will prove interesting, instructive and helpful to our readers. We have been forced to work by piece-meal, with many interruptions and often under trying conditions. As a result there will be mistakes and repetition, but a certain amount of repetition is sometimes needful in order to have matters of great importance indelibly impressed upon our minds. We have spent a great deal of time searching for articles in order to present both sides of this question in as fair a manner as possible, and we hope we have succeeded in large measure, at least. We honestly believe that the publication of this book is of Divine appointment and that it is according to the will of our God that it be sent forth to the brethren, or the household of faith, and we are very definitely persuaded that it will accomplish whatever purpose he has for it. If it be of man, we pray God that it will come to naught, but if it be of God we know that no power in earth, nor all earthly powers combined, will be able to overthrow it.

In conclusion, we would most earnestly commend to our readers and especially those who speak and write in a public way, the following admonition given to us by Elder H. H. Lefferts, which appeared in the March, 1943, issue of the *Signs of the Times*: “May you bear in mind that you are his (the Lord's) steward to whom you must render some day an account of that which he has committed unto you. Endeavor to preach and to write that which the Word of God teaches, that you may acquit your conscience in his sight. His approbation is all that his servants need. We must not seek to please men, not even to please our own brethren, but to “preach the word,” to give the word its full significance, not merely to square ourselves with our own or other's preconceived notions. Until you and others of us do this, we shall not have reached our mature stature as servants of the “true and living God.”

R. LESTER DODSON

PART I

SECTION B

The Late ELDER WM. L. BEEBE

(He was the second Editor of the Signs of the Times)

REVELATION XX. 14, 15

“And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.”

In the Signs for February 1, brother W. B. McAdams requests my views on the above text particularly, and includes the whole chapter in the request. Desiring at all times to be subject to the brethren, I will endeavor to comply with the wish of brother McAdams, as the Lord may give me ability, hoping it will be distinctly understood that in this, as in every case in which I write or speak, no more importance is claimed for what is presented than what is due to the views of a fallible worm of the dust. Should the Lord lead me to present his truth, the glory belongs to him alone: should he leave me to my own blinded imaginations, the shame of my ignorance will appear to my own discredit.

In considering any portion of revealed truth, it is important to remember that the subject is too great, and the record too solemn, to be approached with the vain and polluted reasoning of the carnal mind; much less may the curious eye of natural intelligence hope to pierce the impenetrable veil which the Father has been pleased to interpose between the finite mind of mortals and the glory of his own revelation. Even the simple record of the evangelists is no more than history to the wisdom of this world; and in the powerful and irresistible logic of the inspired apostles, the worldly wise could see only evidence of madness. But to those who have been taught of the Lord, the word of the Lord is in deed and truth *glad tidings*; that is, *gospel*. While all the inspired record is thus by the sovereign pleasure of God hidden from the comprehension of the natural mind, there is no portion of the sacred record more deeply concealed, even in the letter of it, than the Revelation of Jesus Christ as signified to his servant John. The wisdom of scientific divines has stultified itself in the very title of his book by calling it “The Revelation of St. John the Divine,” whereas the inspired apostle begins by declaring it to be “The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him,” &c. This was not given unto John, but the Lord Jesus sent and SIGNIFIED by his angel unto his servant John the mysteries recorded in this book.

It must, then, be borne in mind that all the marvelous record given herein is written in signs, and can no more be deciphered by the application of natural rules than the lights of heaven, which are ordained for signs in the natural firmament, may be read by the knowledge of the alphabet. As the direct revelation of the Father is the only power whereby anyone can know our Lord as the Son of God, so all the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God must be taught in the same way and by the same power. When it is his gracious will to reveal the glorious mystery recorded in any part of his word, it is manifested in the saint to whom he gives it, independently of intellectual powers or natural education. He shows his

truth to an infant Samuel, or the unborn Jeremiah, or John, as easily as to the adult; and the educated Saul must feel his ignorance as deeply as the illiterate fishermen of Galilee. Nor can any of his people ever attain to strength to go alone, but all must ever feel dependent on his present grace.

The vision recorded in this chapter must be taken in its connection to express things signified therein, and not regarded as a literal record. The angel having the key of the bottomless pit, who bound the dragon, evidently signifies the Lord Jesus, who came down from heaven as the Angel or Messenger of the covenant, having the authority and power to do the will of God, by which he did through death destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil, and in his resurrection he triumphantly led captivity captive. As the chain was in his hand when he came down from heaven, it is manifest that the result of his mission was in no wise uncertain. He came not to *try* to do the work given him to do, but to finish it, as he did, not leaving a jot or tittle unfulfilled. Thus his own arm [or power] brought salvation unto him, and his fury [or zeal] it upheld him. This was in his union with his body, the church, including all the children given to him in the eternal covenant of the immutable will of God. In his character as the eternal God he never needed salvation, for he was never lost; but as the Life of his body, “he was numbered with the transgressors, and he bare the sins of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.” – See Isa. lxiii. and liii. 12. After the display of his victory over sin, death and hell, his exaltation and glory is signified, inverse four, by the thrones and the reigning power of their occupants, whose blessedness consists in their oneness with the Lord in his death, as in his life. This includes all his redeemed, as clearly stated by Paul in the inspired judgment delivered in 2 Cor. v. 14, “For the love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead.” And 2 Tim. ii. 11, “It is a faithful saying, For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him.” Then, unquestionably these are they who have part in the first resurrection, on whom the second death hath no power. This blessedness is not offered as an inducement to influence the dead to take part in the first resurrection, as it is represented by those who preach an offered salvation; but the blessing is definite, and the partakers therein are specifically identified as they who shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years. Notice the positive declaration; there is no condition in the word. Like all the promises of God in Christ, it is clear, certain and sure. The specified time of their living and reigning I do not understand to indicate the years as measured in our finite chronology; but as the term exceeds our experience of time, so it is used to signify that life which our Lord calls eternal life, which can never perish. The experience of it here in time is limited to the span allotted to each of them here; but it is in them a well of water springing up into everlasting life. In this life every saint does reign *with Christ*; but not even the most favored of the apostles ever for a moment reigned *without his presence*.

The loosing of Satan after the thousand years are expired, cannot signify that his power shall then be unlimited by the supreme control of our Lord; but as he is said to have the power of death, it is the will of our God that he shall exhibit that power to the extent which shall develop the final deliverance of the saints from the bondage of corruption and result in good to them; thus manifesting the perfection of the glory of God. In the individual experience of each of the redeemed, the victory is given in all its effulgent glory, when they smiling joyously fall asleep in Jesus, with Stephen, and beholding the glorified Redeemer, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the spirit of the Lord. Looking on things seen by the natural mind, the dying saint seems to confess the triumph of Satan; but the faith of the Son of God converts the terrors of death into the gate of unimaginable bliss; when they can sing,

“Clasped in my precious Savior's arms,
I would forget my breath,
And lose my life amidst the charms
Of so divine a death.”

In its application to the church in her organization, this loosing of Satan has been manifest from the primitive age to the present, as appears from the inspired record, and from the experience of the church since. But while wars and fighting among the saints attest the presence of this enemy among them, and the armies of their adversaries encompass them, the fire of the I word of God shall devour them all. And the devil that deceived them is consigned to the never ceasing condemnation signified by the lake of fire and brimstone, the abiding wrath of God, beyond the reach of hope.

The awfully sublime vision with which the chapter closes, of which the text is the conclusion, denotes the judgment of this world, which is rendered from the immaculate throne of the power of God, by the revelation of Jesus Christ. This judgment is not in the far distant future, but it is even now, as declared by the supreme Judge. – John xii. 31. He is now upon the throne of his power, and by his righteous word separating his sheep from the goats. The subjects of his grace are each of them made free from sin and death by the power of his own precious blood, justified freely by his grace, and shall not come into condemnation. Having passed the ordeal of the piercing scrutiny of divine justice and received the verdict of justification in their righteous Head, there is no more due to eternal justice from them; therefore they rest in the finished righteousness of their Redeemer, which is the only justification acceptable to God. This precious truth is made known to them by the Holy Spirit, who takes of the things of Jesus and shows unto them; and exactly as many as are led by the spirit of God are the sons of God, which includes all the children of Zion, as it is written in Isa. liv. 13. As God works in them to will and to do of his good pleasure, they can never be brought into bondage again, for they are no more under the law, but under grace. Hence the idea that they are to be again judged after time shall end, is inconsistent with itself and at variance with the plain testimony of the inspired record. The righteousness of God is theirs, and it is fully satisfactory for all his ransomed people. So that they are not merely saved from the penalty of their sins, but in their strong Redeemer they have righteousness in which they are perfect in him. These members of his body are all written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world; so that there can be no uncertainty as to who they are. They are kept by the power of God, therefore they cannot be lost. They are all known to the sovereign Judge, and there can be no need of a court of inquiry to identify them, after they have left this mortal state. Those dear children of God who have fallen asleep in Jesus and are enjoying the eternal rest of heaven, will not have to be arraigned again to ascertain their right to enjoy the light of God's favor. The dying thief did not have to wait till ages should drag their weary length away for his final judgment. He heard the precious word of assured peace even in his closing agony. TO-DAY, not after ages on ages have expired. “To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise.” The inspired record clearly teaches the doctrine of the resurrection, and while I do not dare to claim that I understand that mystery, to which Paul sought to attain, and which did not yet appear to John, I tremblingly hope to realize its infinite glory when the body of this death shall be dissolved. How are the dead raised up? or with what body do they come? I dare not ask. It is enough for me to know what God has revealed in the scriptures; and there I would wait; while I have no controversy with any who may know more than has been shown to me on this vitally important doctrine.

The latter two verses of the chapter as quoted at the beginning of this article, being the close of the vision of the judgment, I could not detach from the connection in which the Spirit has placed them. The righteous judgment of God has disposed all his works in righteousness. And so even “death and hell are cast into the lake of fire.” This is graciously explained to be the second death, which is just said, in verse six, to have no power on such as have part in the first resurrection. Unquestionably our Lord Jesus is the First Resurrection, and in him all his members have part. He is the Rock of our salvation. It is Christ in you which seals you as partakers in his resurrection life; and as that life is eternal, death has no power over it. While subject to vanity in this tabernacle, death works in our sinful nature, thus causing us to experience the tribulation assured us in the world. But all enemies are subjected to our victorious Lord, so that the certain destruction of this last enemy is expressly foretold. 1 Cor. xv. 26. Then only LIFE will survive when the last enemy shall have been destroyed.

Life is in the scriptures sometimes more than mere conscious existence. The natural man with all his carnal enmity against God, exists in natural life; yet in that condition he is said to be dead. And the apostle solemnly protests, saying, “I die daily.” The close of the earthly career of the saints, I believe, is not after the resurrection of our Lord anywhere in the New Testament called *dying*, but only *sleeping*. They sleep, but they have not lost their life, for it is hid with Christ in God. So death also means all that brings darkness and sorrow in the experience of the saints. By the text is signified the banishment of all such elements as cloud our pilgrimage here, and their being with all other enemies of the peace of the saints consigned to that lake of fire where all the principles of iniquity writhe in everlasting torment, under the interminable condemnation of the burning wrath of the holy God. This is the perdition of ungodly men to which all the workers of iniquity are already condemned. And while the long-suffering of God endures these vessels of wrath fitted to destruction, their final destiny is as irrevocably fixed as is that of their moving spirit, the prince of darkness, and that destiny is determined by the righteous judgment of God. While he has power to execute his sovereign will, his judgments cannot be changed.

Of what I have sought to express this is the sum: Sin has brought upon all the human family the just sentence of death. This condemnation can never be revoked or commuted while God is immutable. The everlasting covenant in which all the members of the body of Christ are written, is the book of life. Jesus is that life which alone could satisfy the demand of eternal justice for the sins of his members in their relation to their earthly father. Justice being satisfied in Jesus, their life, they are by his blood cleansed from all sin, so that they are in him holy as he is holy. In their earthly existence it is given to them to feel in measure the bitterness of sin working death in them, while their life is hid with Christ in God. After they have suffered all that infinite wisdom has in love given them to endure, they shall be called from this world of tribulation to the full enjoyment of eternal rest in Jesus, which is heaven. Those sinners whose names are not written in the book of life, are still under the condemnation of death, not for rejecting the offers of salvation, but for sinning against the holy law of God. On such the wrath of God abides. – John iii. 36. This hopeless condemnation is the state of death and hell, or darkness and tormenting confusion signified by the lake of fire.

If these thoughts are consistent with the revealed word and the experience of the saints, I may hope they will be acceptable to brother McAdams and those of the saints who read. I have no desire to escape correction, if in any point I have written erroneously. I have no exclusive right to any truth. All my errors are original, and my own. He who shows me their inconsistency is entitled to my gratitude. If left to myself I shall doubtless go into error, and contend for it, but if I am led by the spirit of Christ, I shall thankfully yield to correction and reproof.

In the love of Christ, I am still the servant of all.
WM. L. BEEBE

LONGWOOD, Ontario, Canada, Feb. 12, 1880.



The Late ELDER JOSEPH L. PURINGTON

Copy of a Letter written by Elder Joseph L. Purington, on the Resurrection of the dead, in reply to brother Weedon of Kansas.

ALEXANDRIA, Va., May 7, 1813

DEAR BROTHER WEEDON: – I was very much gratified to receive your letter of March 28, and to hear of your welfare, and also the welfare of your family. I am pleased to know that you have found brethren with whom you have fellowship, and with whom you can associate. All the subjects of grace in their experience agree that Christ is the life of his people, and that life is manifest in the calling of grace. It is one life embracing the head, body, and members of that body, which is the church, and individual believers. That life existed before its manifestation. All that is meant by eternal union is the life union of Christ and his people. This union existed before its manifestation. I am no stickler for the expression eternal union. It is an everlasting love-union none can dispute who are taught of God. The love of God to his people in our Lord Jesus Christ, is one. It is indivisible. Christ the life, spiritual life and immortality of the church is one, and it is indivisible. It is called eternal life. I could quote an abundance of the scriptures, but I think you understand these points. There is, really, no just cause for divisions, and sub-divisions, among the subjects of grace, and there would be none, but for the fact that certain bad men are determined to draw off disciples after them, and the flesh is always striving for the mastery. I make these remarks as you had occasion to speak of the expression, eternal union.

You wish for my views concerning the resurrection. There is a great deal of useless cavil on the subject. It is as much of a revealed mystery as any point of revealed truth – Paul's natural mind did not understand it. He wrote by revelation on the subject. Aside from this we are lost in a sea of speculation, theoretical disquisition, and metaphysical reasoning. Salvation by grace is not understood by the carnal or natural mind. No part of revealed truth is comprehended by the natural mind. The resurrection is a mystery. I find myself lost in the contemplation of the subject. When I say lost, I mean lost in every sense, only upon the principle of what God has revealed. I dare not speculate. One thing is certain: Adam, when in the garden of Eden, to be a subject of the world of immortal glory, though not at that time a sinner, must have been changed from a natural man to a spiritual man, to have been an inhabitant of the world of eternal glory. Christ Jesus being a spiritual man, the Lord from heaven, a quickening Spirit, quickens and changes our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body &c. Thirty years ago I entertained the idea that the soul and body would unite in the resurrection. This idea

came by tradition. Notwithstanding God's great purpose of eternal redemption is accomplished in time, yet time is but a moment, the twinkling of an eye, with Jehovah. The mode of operation by which the body is changed and made spiritual, can only be comprehended upon the principle of the change wrought in every subject of grace by the eternal Spirit. Every seed produces its kind. Christ Jesus our Lord in his Sonship, as the only begotten Son of God, is the incorruptible seed of God. Sinners born of this incorruptible seed, are manifest as the children of God. The spirit of adoption is in them, whereby they cry, Abba, Father. The adoption is the redemption of our body – as Paul says, speaking of the church in her collective body, meaning the natural body. It is changed from a natural to a spiritual body. As to whether the bones, flesh, and dust which compose the body, either before, or after decomposition, is to be raised or not, it is this vile body that is to be changed, or is changed. The change of the whole man, soul, body, and spirit, is distinctly manifest in the resurrection. The apostle spoke by the Holy Ghost, and his natural mind did not comprehend what he spoke, or wrote by the Holy Ghost. He says, “Behold I show you a mystery” &c. In the mystery of redemption, in the salvation of sinners in Jesus Christ, there is a great change in a deliverance from wrath and condemnation into the liberty of the sons of God. Paul calls it “glorious liberty.” The resurrection is a mystery. It does not yet appear what we shall be. Paul speaks of the resurrection in the future tense. It is in the future with the saints while on earth. Really it is not in the future with God. Time, from beginning to end, with God, is only a moment, to make the closest calculation we can make. All of our knowledge respecting the resurrection, is very much limited. Christ is the Resurrection and the Life. Paul in first Cor. Chap. xv., speaks of the resurrection in the future tense, and it will always be in the future while the church is on earth, I mean that portion of the church which is on earth, for those of the saints who have departed are already in heaven, and with them the resurrection is complete. We deposit the bodies of our kindred in Christ in the earth. That is, all our eyes can see, our minds comprehend. With them mortality is swallowed up of life. We see no resuscitation of the dust. We hear no blast of the trumpet, nor see any change before our eyes. We are in time, they are in eternity. No future with them, but with us there is a terrible future. We hear his voice in the work of salvation, and we will hear his voice in death; yes, in the resurrection, but those around do not hear. The incorruptible seed, or germ of immortality, which is Christ, the word of God, and which is in the saints, swallows up mortality, or in other words, mortality becomes spiritual, that which is corruptible becomes incorruptible. There is no tangible change to be seen by our mortal vision, or senses. Enoch and Elijah, who never saw death, were translated; they disappeared from mortal view. There was a change but it was mysterious. Moses died, yet on the mount of transfiguration he and Elias (Elijah) appeared and talked with Jesus. The penitent thief and our Lord expired on the cross, and after death they were in the hands of the Father. Christ's body of flesh was raised on the third eventful morning, and his appearance to his disciples, with connecting circumstances in his ascension, was to establish the personal identity of our Lord, that he was risen from the dead and had ascended to glory. When mortality closes up on us, the resurrection takes place; time has gone forever; eternity with its awful realities is upon us, or we are in it. Time is only a moment, the twinkling of an eye, in the vast immensity of boundless eternity, an insignificant speck or atom of terra firma in the shoreless ocean of a world without end. The incomprehensible mystery of the resurrection where it is said in John v. 28, 29, “In the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice and shall come forth,” &c., presents distinctly the awful truth of a terrible change at that distinct period. The entrance of the wicked at the death of the natural body is into a state of damnation. The resurrection with the wicked is a living death, the state of being alive, or existing when alive in the midst of death, in the presence of a holy God of immaculate purity, where there is no world, like this to hide them from God, as frail mortals here suppose they can be hid. The resurrection of life is the bringing into a state of perfect glorification in Christ Jesus all the elect of God. To resurrect is the

resumption of life, and of course something is raised up. The mortal body of the saints is changed, raised up immortal, but in no way can it be known by our mortal senses. Only by faith we know it to be a mystery, but when it takes place it is no longer a mystery. Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. By this we are to understand that we do not by our natural birth, or standing in Adam, come into possession of anything spiritual or heavenly, in any sense of the word. There must be a change of our vile body *absolutely* to a state of immortality. The change is experienced in the resurrection of every person, and a special happy change with the elect of God. The body of Christ deposited in Joseph's tomb was raised, or removed, but none knew it but the disciples, and the women on that occasion. The last trump shall sound. The length and breadth of the gospel dispensation, though with us it may be thousands of years, with Jehovah it is only a moment. The trump is now sounding, and will continue until the last vessel of mercy is brought home to glory. As I have already expressed, it is always in the future with the saints while on earth, as it was with Paul and the church in his day. That future is the end of time with the church, and every individual member thereof. Seed must be put in the ground and die before there can be a crop of the same quality. Christ Jesus our Lord was made flesh, and in the flesh he died, and in his death and resurrection all the family of the Most High are made to appear. How are the dead raised up, and with what body do they come? The earthy is made to bear the image of the heavenly. They are raised up by the power of God, and appear like the glorious body of Christ, a body which our natural eyes cannot behold, nor our natural minds comprehend. The voice of the Son of God is heard in our experience when called by grace, and the same voice is heard when all that are in the graves shall come forth, &c. This voice is heard by every individual, first with the saints in their experience, and secondly in the resurrection. All that are in the graves presents the condition of death of our mortal bodies. They are resurrected, not in the sense generally understood, but in the sense Paul speaks of it as a mystery. We naturally look for something we can comprehend. We shall not all sleep, &c. Whether asleep or awake, or in other words, whether dead or alive, in a natural sense, the change will take place. Every thing appertaining to eternal salvation is a mystery only as it is revealed. So is the resurrection. How foolish is speculation and theorising on the subject. The labored effort that is made by our natural minds to comprehend the subject of the resurrection, exposes the weakness and foolishness we possess. We can have no proper view of it only by faith, and its revelation to our faith. The victory over sin, death, hell and the grave is through our Lord Jesus Christ. And this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Christ dwells in his people by faith. They live by the faith of the Son of God. The common view of the resurrection is a myth. Sinners are saved, soul, body and spirit, in the work of redemption. The time of the resurrection *absolutely* is now, but in the future with us while on earth. The past, the present and the future embodies the resurrection of the dead. Eighteen centuries have passed since Paul and the inspired writers testified of the resurrection. It is in the future with us. These fleshly bodies will never be reanimated with natural life, for if it was so we could see and understand a corporeal resurrection. But there is a change, a mysterious change, but we don't understand it now. It will be known in the resurrection. When mortality puts on immortality, when this change takes place, then will be brought to pass the saying, "Death swallowed up in victory." The voice of the Archangel and the trump of God is heard, and the dead in Christ shall arise first. What does this mean? Why, that all the saints that have fallen asleep, and are falling asleep, are being resurrected before the period arrives when the mystery of redemption will be completed, experimentally and manifestly, and those who are alive and remain will be changed in a moment; in the twinkling of an eye. When Paul testified by the Holy Ghost of the resurrection, time receded from his view, knowing that a thousand years, or ten thousand years, was but a moment; space of time was obliterated, or blotted out; the whole family of God in heaven and earth was before him, and he spoke of the end of time, or the closing up of God's purpose of redemption, as

though he was identified in person with those who would be alive when the mystery of God is finished. "We which are alive," &c. Our limited minds only superficially can view the subject here, for it does not yet appear what we shall be. When we leave this world we enter into an unknown country, so far as our natural minds can understand and know; but by faith we see things which are unspeakable, and produce exceeding joy, unspeakable joy, and fullness of glory. Aside from this we are lost in a labyrinth of entire oblivion. Only a portion of God's glory can we see in the Lord Jesus Christ, compared with the fullness of the glory of the indivisible Godhead. The resurrection, what is it? It is changing the heirs of immortality, soul, body and spirit, into the perfect likeness of the immaculate Son of God. Every thing mortal, natural, corruptible, in our earthly existence, is made immortal, spiritual, incorruptible and heavenly, like Jesus our Lord. Sin and depravity, the temptations of Satan, and the shafts of the ungodly, will be done away forever. As we said before, we deposit in the grave the bodies of the saints, and of our fellow-creatures, and that is the last of mortality, the last we see of their flesh. Every thing beyond this is unknown to our natural minds. It is eternity with the departed, and so it will be with us. There still remains a mystery in the resurrection, but those who have entered the shoreless sea or ocean of eternity, who are the redeemed of the Lord, shine as stars of the first magnitude with the glorious morning Star of our redemption in the firmament of our ascended Lord. The morning stars sing together, and all the sons of God shout for joy. They are as the angels of God in heaven. Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him; but he hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. We know nothing of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ, the great mystery of the vital union of Christ and the church, and the mystery of the resurrection, only by revelation from God by the Eternal Spirit. These are the deep things of God.

I think I have comprehended in my remarks on the resurrection an answer to your inquiries. The views I have expressed are my understanding of what the Bible teaches concerning the resurrection. In the minds of some people, perhaps many, my views may be considered heretical, unsound and inconsistent. The awful magnitude of the subject, as I view it, arises as high above the common views of many people as the heavens are higher than the earth. I am lost in wonder, admiration and praise. If the dear saints would drop speculation on revealed truth, and receive the testimony of inspiration, through the teachings of the Holy Spirit alone, and let creeds and theories end forever, much more comfort, joy and peace would abound to the mutual edification of each other.

We are all in moderate health, and living comfortably. I continue to attend my appointments. I saw your father and other of your relatives last Thursday and Friday at Quantico. We had communion. Pleasant meeting. Write again soon. If my views on the resurrection do not meet your mind, give the reasons why they do not. My wife joins me in love to you and family.

Yours in gospel fellowship,
JOSEPH L. PURINGTON
(*Signs of the Times* September 1, 1873)



The Late ELDER SILAS H. DURAND

THE RESURRECTION

“But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body.” – 1 Cor. xv. 38.

This is a great mystery, and I hesitate to write concerning it, and yet I am drawn in my mind to do so.

On the subject of the resurrection of the body, it seems at first thought as though I could be contented to simply say, I take just what the Bible says on the subject, and believe that; but I do not understand it. In considering this subject I am apt to think more of what is not true concerning it than of what is, for the natural mind is constantly trying to enter into this mystery, as also into all the other mysteries of the gospel, and to understand and explain all the details of them. But this cannot be. The natural man cannot understand these things. The ways and judgments of God are unsearchable and past finding out. (Rom. xi. 33.)

What I do believe, and sometimes rejoice in, is that “There is a resurrection of the dead.” “The dead are raised up.” The Lord Jesus Christ “shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.” Phil. iii. 21. How this work shall be done I do not know, nor does any mortal, any more than any one knows how the world was made out of nothing. How the raised body will appear I do not know, nor does anybody else. It is by faith alone that we know that there is a celestial body. “We know not what we shall be,” said the Apostle John, but we know that we shall be like Jesus, and we know that we shall be satisfied with his likeness (1 John iii. 2; Psalm xvii. 15), and we know that when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, we shall also appear with him in glory. (Col. iii. 4.)

The poor, tried soul is very apt to disclaim such wonderful knowledge, and to say that he does not know these wonderful things for himself, though he knows they are true of all the people of God. It is seldom that one can realize in himself “the full assurance of faith” to say, “I know that I am a child of God,” and that “I shall behold his face in righteousness.” This knowledge is an experience; it is an experience of the power of divine life; it is a belief which rests not upon the evidence of things which we can see and understand, but upon faith, which “is the evidence of things not seen.” Sometimes the truth of our experience of this knowledge of faith is brought forth to our view under the ministration of the word, and by the teaching of the Spirit, so that we can say with holy assurance and with tremulous joy, “We know that we have passed from death unto life.”

Again and again we are halted in our efforts to search deeper into the mystery of the resurrection, and attain unto a more perfect knowledge of it. It is not to be known in any degree by searching; it evades the scrutiny of the keenest intellectual powers. It is understood as fully by a child as by the most learned man. It is known only by revelation. It is believed only upon the evidence of a God-given faith. It can never be understood except in the experience of it. We are to “hold fast the form of sound words,” concerning this, as well as all other spiritual subjects, “in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.” All that is written of it in the Bible is true, but is not for the comprehension of the natural mind, but for the comfort and instruction of the Lord’s people.

We can say certain things both negatively and affirmatively concerning this deep but lovely mystery, which will never be understood in time, and so by the teaching of the word we may be kept from

erroneous ideas on the subject, awaiting the times when the Lord may be graciously pleased to open “the form of sound words” more fully to the understanding of our faith.

1. The raising of the body of Jesus from the grave is not mentioned in the Scriptures as an *example*, showing how the bodies of his people are raised up. The bodies of the saints are not to be raised up as his body was raised up, for his body saw no corruption, while theirs shall all see corruption. His body came out of the grave just as it was put into the grave, no change having yet come upon it, in order that witnesses, chosen before, might see that it was still unchanged. They saw the print of the nails and the place of the spear, and saw him eat and drink. Thus he was manifest as “the Resurrection and the Life.” Afterward he was glorified.

2. From that day that he ascended out of the sight of his disciples he is never to be known any more after the flesh. Therefore there appears to be a direct contradiction in the Scriptures to the theory that Jesus now exists in a body of flesh and bones in heaven, and that his people after the resurrection shall so exist in a body like the one we have in this mortal state. The apostle says, “Wherefore, henceforth know we no man after the flesh; yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more. – 2 Cor. v. 16. Also, we read that “It doth not yet appear what we shall be.” – 1 John iii. 2. Also we are told that the body “is raised a spiritual body.” Jesus’ body could be seen after he came out of Joseph’s new tomb. That was the evidence that he had abolished death, and had become the destruction of the grave, and had brought life and immortality to light. From the time he ascended up on high and was glorified he has not been seen by the mortal eyes of his disciples. He is not seen in any way by anybody but his disciples.

Now we are to remember that it is the same body which is sown in corruption that is raised in incorruption. It is the same body which was sown a natural body that is raised a spiritual body. The sowing is undoubtedly the instant of death. We are to notice that the resurrection is not a preliminary act to the change. We do not read that it is raised and then changed to a spiritual body, but it is raised a spiritual body. At its last appearance to the mortal sight of the saints on earth it is a corrupt, natural body. At its next appearance to the faith of God’s people here, and to their spiritual sight in glory, it is a spiritual body that shall never know corruption. It is the same body which was a vile body here on earth that has been changed that it may be fashioned like unto the glorious body of Jesus.

3. This is all I can say. How this work is done I do not have the faintest knowledge; I only know that it is according to the working of Jesus, “whereby he is able to subdue even all things unto himself.” How we shall appear in that glorious body I do not know; I only know, and rejoice to know, that we shall be like Jesus, and that we shall appear with him in glory.

In replying to the question of the one whom he addresses as a fool, as to how the dead are raised up, and with what body they come, the apostle illustrates the subject by the dying and quickening of grain after it has been sown in the earth. It must die in order that it shall be quickened. The body given the grain in its resurrection is its own body. The apostle does not mean by this that the grain which fell in the earth is lifted out again. It is not in this sense that the seed is given its own body, but that to the seed of wheat is not given a body of rye or of some other grain, but of wheat, the same as the seed which was sown. Why does the apostle bring this peculiar figure for our contemplation just here? Because the one he calls a fool evidently regards the resurrection as the lifting of a body out of the grave, and wants to know how it is done. He evidently is combatting and hushing the thought of the natural mind that in the resurrection the body will be raised in the sight of men, and the desire to know beforehand how that body will appear.

But the apostle has been presenting Christ as the fullness of the resurrection. The resurrection of the dead depends upon the resurrection of Christ. There is a vital and necessary connection between the two. If Christ be not raised then the dead will not rise; “then they which have fallen asleep in Christ are perished.” For all the saints who, to human view, die, are fallen asleep in Christ. The apostle still, in the use of this figure of the sowing of grain, is directing our faith to the view of Christ, as the quickening Spirit, as the Resurrection and the Life, without whose resurrection there could be no resurrection of the the dead. In the sowing of grain the apostle reminds us that we do not sow that body that shall be. That literal grain or body of wheat that is sown is seen no more, but from it there comes forth a resurrection which shows much more than was sown, yet to the seed is given its own body. This figure of the seed of grain is fulfilled in Christ. The resurrection of his body was a literal resurrection; that is, it came out of the grave just as it was put in. Death and the grave had not been able to make that body see corruption. Thus the sting was taken from death, and the power from the grave, and Jesus became as the grain of wheat that was sown, and became the first fruits of them that slept. Thus the resurrection of the bodies of all the saints was so secured that they are not spoken of as dying, but as falling asleep. Their bodies see corruption, but Jesus is to them the resurrection. They have borne the image of the earthy Adam; now in the resurrection, on account of that seed that was sown, they come forth in the image of the second man, the heavenly. It is in his image that they are raised, not in their own image, not in the image of the body that is sown in corruption, but in the image of Jesus, and fashioned, not like unto his body as it was when nailed to the cross, and when it was raised from the tomb, but like unto his body when he was glorified, “like unto his glorious body.” This appears to me to be the apostle’s teaching by the figure of the sowing of grain.

The resurrection of the body of every saint is in the resurrection of Christ. This is the great object of the apostle’s regard in all this chapter. As regards the time, answering the question, “When are the dead raised?” I have to believe that the resurrection is not a matter of time; it is beyond time. In calling the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, Moses at the bush showed that the dead are raised up: “For God is not the God of the dead, but of the living; for all live unto him.” – Luke xx. 37. They who have fallen asleep in Jesus are dead unto us, but they are living unto God in the resurrection. *How else is the resurrection of the dead taught by Moses at the bush?* To us who are yet in time the resurrection is yet to be; those who have gone out from time have come into the enjoyment of the eternal and glorious presence of him who said, “I am the resurrection and the life.”

MAY 10, 1902.

FRAGMENTS

I have thought that we must regard the body of Jesus as differing in one respect from the body of any other man that ever lived upon the earth, in that it was sinless, and because of that, could see not corruption. “He was made in the *likeness* of men,” to be a servant, “and being found in fashion as a man,” he became obedient unto death. He was sent forth “in the *likeness* of sinful flesh,” but are we to understand from the record that his was sinful flesh? “He was made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law.” He must be under the law in order to redeem those who were under it.

The son is under the same law as his mother, though the father be not under it. If his had been a sinful body, could he have been a proper offering for the sins of his people? Could he have borne their sins if he had been capable of sin himself?

Though he was made of a woman, yet his father was not a man, but God. The angel said, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." That body was a holy thing. I do not think I can say that the body begotten by the Holy Ghost was a sinful body.

He was made flesh, "made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death." He took part of flesh and blood in order that "through death he might destroy him that had the power of death," and in order that he might be "touched with the feeling of our infirmities," and be "tempted in all points like as we are;" yet in all this he was "without sin." The tempter, the prince of this world, had nothing in him. (John xiv. 30.) "He knew no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth." "He was holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners." "He was made to be sin for us, who knew no sin."

It was said to Adam, "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return," but it was not so said to Jesus. Nor was this true of his body. It could not return to dust, for that would have been to see corruption, and it was written that God's holy One should not be suffered to see corruption. Had his body been sinful he could not have borne the sins of others, for he must have died on his own account, as one of the sinful race of Adam, even though he had not sinned himself, and his body must have seen corruption. But he was undefiled, pure, God's holy One, with no touch or taint or nature of sin in his body. Therefore he could bear the sins of his people, and only the sins of others could cause him to die.

But though the sins of his people could prevail to bring him down into the baptism of death, they could do no more. Their power over the body ceased when he died, for the law had no further claim. He could not see corruption. When the grave received the dead body of the Son of God, then its power was gone, and in the appointed time that same body must come forth in form and fashion as it went into the grave, to show openly that he had triumphed over both death and the grave. He had "abolished death" by giving it all it could demand under the holy law of God for the sins of his people, and then coming forth from it by the power and glory of the Father. Also by the same glorious resurrection he became the destruction of the grave; so that his people, who in a legal and mystical sense died with him and rose together with him, are forever delivered from death and the grave. "Death hath no more dominion over him" or them.

In the resurrection of Jesus he is said to be born from the dead, and thus to be "the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead," as it was written, "Thou art my son; this day have I begotten thee." The sonship of his people is in his Sonship, and they are therefore secure in him. They shall not "die any more; for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection."

August, 1902.

(Taken from his book FRAGMENTS)



ELDER H. C. KER

Delmar, Del.

(Correspondence with Elder L. H. Hardy, of North Carolina)

Reidsville, N. C., June 22, 1909

DEAR BROTHER KER: — I especially request your views, in a private letter to me, on John v. 28, 29. I hope you may be blessed of the Lord to write soon, for I shall be anxiously awaiting to hear. I hope that you and family are well. We are as well as usual

Yours in a blessed hope,

L. H. HARDY

MIDDLETOWN, N. Y., June 29, 1909

ELDER L. H. HARDY – DEAR BROTHER IN CHRIST: – Your letter asking my views on John v. 28, 29, was duly received. I appreciate your confidence in me as being able to elucidate this portion of holy writ, yet frankly confess you are mistaken in the man. I have often acknowledged through the *Signs*, as well as from the pulpit, that there is much in the Bible I do not understand, and this text you suggest is one of the many I have no satisfactory light on, hence am sure it would be a waste of time to try to explain that which has not been revealed to me. Should any one say, The text means just what it says, I would be compelled to reply, If that be true, then the fact stands without argument that there is at least one portion of inspired testimony which the Holy Ghost has no need to shew unto us. This I could not reconcile with Paul's statement: "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: *** neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." If the Scripture you mention is in any sense a part of the things of the Spirit of God, and Paul was correct in his statement, it cannot be comprehended by the carnal mind, hence its import must be spiritual and understood by divine revelation. Further, if it means just what it says literally, no man can enlarge upon it, and it stands open to the comprehension of the infidel as well as to the quickened sinner. The older I grow, and the longer I am in the ministry, the more I realize my lack of understanding in divine things, and the more careful I become with regard to the Scriptures. I used texts in my early ministry that I would not dare touch now without clearer light than I have ever had. Indeed, I often question my knowledge of the most simple text, if there be such a thing as a simple text. Some brethren in different sections of the country seem to be disturbed regarding the doctrine of the resurrection, and all manner of evil things are being said of those who do not use their language when speaking of the subject. But I must confess, dear brother, there is one thing that concerns me and troubles me more, viz., "Am I His, or am I not?" If I am, then all will be well at last. I have never made the subject of the resurrection a hobby, and hope to be kept from ever making any subject a hobby, and especially one that the apostles did not understand nor try to explain. Paul considered the resurrection "a mystery," and John was satisfied with the assurance that "now are we the the sons of God;" he was willing to leave the rest until Christ, who is our life, shall appear. Then "we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." I have never taken the resurrection of the bodies of the saints as a direct subject to write upon, and only a few times have I ever tried to speak of the deep and hidden mystery: resurrection; the omission has been due to lack of

understanding. My faith, however, as “the evidence of things not seen,” embraces the truth of the resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust; the one to life eternal, the other to “everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.” But to describe the glory, joy and peace of the first is as far beyond me as it is to describe the eternal woe of the second. We have descriptive powers, and often use them to advantage regarding things we have seen, but I do not understand how a man can describe that which “doth not yet appear. The attempt to do this, both of the glory and the punishment, has caused all the trouble on the subject that now exists. Do you not think, dear brother, it wise to adhere strictly to Bible language when preaching, writing or conversing upon this deep yet sublime subject? Would it not be better to say, “It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body,” than to say, These Adamic, sinful, vile, mortal bodies shall be raised? Would it not be better to say, “That which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be,” than to say, This very identical body will be raised? Instead of saying, In the resurrection we shall appear just as we do now, except our bodies which are natural shall be spiritual, would it not be better to say, “As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly”? Instead of saying, In the resurrection there will be fathers, mothers, husbands, wives and children, would it not be better to say, “In the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven”? This mortal must put on immortality; this corruptible must put on incorruption. “When” this is done, “then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.” Is it not better to say “when” this is done, than to say where and how it is done? On the other hand, would it not be better to say of the wicked, “These shall go away into everlasting punishment,” than to say, The wicked shall go away into everlasting literal fire, and there suffer forever and ever? Is it not better to say they “shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power,” than to say, The nonelect shall be punished with everlasting conscious punishment through the endless ages of eternity? Would it not also be well to get the actual understanding and views of a brother and know exactly how and where he stands before publishing him abroad as a heretic? A man lays himself liable, in every sense of the word, when he so accuses a brother, and also disregards every principle of love, brotherly kindness and forbearance.

I have not asked the above questions to call out a reply from you, but merely as suggestions for your consideration, and that you might know my position on the subject of the resurrection. I believe firmly and absolutely in the resurrection as the Bible speaks about it, for without it there can be no such thing as salvation and final glory, but I do not accept the additional phraseology of uninspired men, notwithstanding the qualifications and attainments of some of them, and the age of others. One man may say, This is absolutely true, because the text implies it. Paul knew fully as well what his language implied as we do, yet to him the resurrection was “a mystery.” Therefore what this or that may seem to imply does not warrant me, at least, to conclude that this or that must be so, or this or that way, and preach it and call it “the doctrine of God our Savior.” I am particularly desirous while in this “tabernacle” of clay to know the power of the resurrection and “of the world to come,” to be a partaker of the heavenly gift, and to realize in my own soul the holy calling. I have not yet attained unto the resurrection, therefore it must be in the future, and my hope is in it through Christ the Lord.

Now, dear brother, I have written you quite a letter in length, with all the sincerity of my being, but before I close I want to assure you, as I have other brethren, that I shall not be brought into any controversy whatsoever on this subject. I have given in this my belief and faith in the resurrection, and hope what I have said may be satisfactory to you; if not, the matter ends here. This letter is your property to do with as you deem best.

I am, I hope, your brother in hope and faith, H. C. KER



REIDSVILLE, N. C., August 21, 1909

DEAR BROTHER KER: – Your letter written June 29th and postmarked July 14th, reached here July 15th, but by some means or other it was mislaid here at home, and I have just got to read it. I am glad to read that letter. Now I have heard from all to whom I wrote, to wit: Elders Ker, McConnell, Lefferts and Vail, and I feel just as I expected I would: to have sweet fellowship for them; I have always had this, and believe I shall while we live. I do not see anything in your letter that I do not receive. There were a few things in Elder Lefferts' letter that were not just according to my mind on the same subject, but I know I am not perfect, but that I am a very poor sinner, and needing the mercies of God (it appears to me) more than any man, therefore I have just the same fellowship for Elder Lefferts as though we fully agreed.

On each point on which you ask a question I would have to answer in harmony with you, therefore there would be no room for controversy, unless it be like some are by their dressing, just want something a little bit different from "the other fellow." You have seen my version of the text, and I feel sure that you will not declare nonefellowship for me because I hold those views. I do hope the grace of God will keep all controversy out of Zion, but there has to be a broom and a winnowing to cleanse the house.

The Lord bless you and yours. Remember me in love to them.

Yours in hope,

L. H. HARDY

[The above correspondence is published for the benefit of those who, like brother Hardy, have heard all sorts of reports, and therefore wonder how some brethren stand on the subject of the resurrection of the dead. We have no desire to hide or cover any thought we have ever had concerning this mysterious subject. On the other hand, we believe it honorable to confess our ignorance of such a great deep. For argument's sake one might say, Paul does not say the resurrection is a mystery, but the "change." He says, "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed." This change embraces ALL, both asleep and alive, and in the change and after the change he puts no difference between them, consequently the "change" embraces the resurrection of the dead, which is beyond all question a part of the "mystery." To believe in the resurrection is a matter of faith, but to declare how the dead are raised up, and with what body they come except it be a spiritual body, is another thing altogether. The letters received by brother Hardy from those mentioned in his letter to us have settled his mind that we all believe in the resurrection of the dead, even though we may express our views a little different from him, and he expresses "sweet fellowship" for us all. How good it is to have an understanding one with another, as well as to confess our faults one to another. The man who has reached the place where all who do not agree with him are "heretics," is on a dangerous "pinnacle," and is more likely to destroy himself than any one else. The publication of the above is by the mutual consent of all concerned. – K.]

ELDER H. C. KER

Delmar, Del.

RESURRECTION

It seems necessary at this time that the editors of the *Signs of the Times* reaffirm their faith and hope in the resurrection of the dead, as we see and hear from some quarters false statements and accusations of us regarding this subject. But of two things we assure our readers: we absolutely refuse to be drawn into unpleasant controversy on the subject, and to adopt the phraseology used by some in expressing themselves. Our objection to controversy is because the resurrection is a mystery known only to God, hence it is foolish for men to fight and try to kill each other about it. The prophets, when testifying concerning the coming of Jesus, did not understand how such things as they declared could be, nor did they know when those things should take place. (1 Peter i. 10-12.) That glory, or knowledge, was reserved for those who lived and now live in the gospel dispensation. So also the resurrection being glory beyond this life, all men must wait until it is experienced by them before they can understand how it shall be.

Our reason for refusing to use the language adopted by some of our brethren is because such language is unwarranted by the Scriptures. We cannot therefore consistently nor conscientiously use it in expressing our views of the resurrection. It does not seem enough to some for the editors of the *Signs* to constantly affirm their belief in the resurrection of the dead, but our false accusers want us to declare that we believe in the resurrection of a “natural” or “mortal body.” This we now, once for all, refuse to do, let the result be what it may. Whatever the resurrection is, or shall be, it is entirely spiritual, nothing natural or mortal about it, if the Scriptures be true, and we believe they are, and shall stand unmovable by them, regardless of what any man since the apostles’ day has said, does say or shall ever say. The “body is sown a natural body: it is raised a spiritual body.” “It is sown in corruption: it is raised in incorruption.” “It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory.” These statements are by Paul, the servant of Jesus Christ by the will of God the Father. He makes the distinction very positive between the natural body and the spiritual, saying, “There is a natural body and there is a spiritual body.” There is no connection, or relation, between the natural body and the spiritual body. There is no relationship between corruption and incorruption, nor is there likeness between dishonor and glory. While the editors of the *Signs* object to being told over and over again that the dead are raised natural, both in body and form, (which assertion cannot be sustained by the Scriptures) they make no fuss about it, never make the slightest reference to it, except when driven to do so by persecution and false accusations. We do not like to fight, but when there is no way out of it we can and shall, and our enemies may depend upon it. We do not propose to sit idle always and allow ourselves to be misrepresented and slandered to the sacrifice of ourselves and our subscribers, who love us and the *Signs* for the truth’s sake. We are glad to say to our readers that most of the hard and hateful things said of us are said by those who are either very friendly toward or editors of some other paper published in defence of the Old Baptist cause, so said. These are enemies of the *Signs of the Times*, and would gladly sacrifice it and its editors in building up the publications with which they are associated. This is the underlying principle that is prompting much of the persecution of the *Signs* and its editors, and not that they care so much as to what the editors believe, preach or write. The *Signs of the Times* has lived longer than any medium of correspondence of its kind in this country. Many others, like gourds, have sprung up, as it were, in a night, and been cut down in about the same length of time. The chief reason we have for believing the Lord is with the *Signs* is that it stands and has ever stood all the assaults of its

enemies. There are some at the present time who are connected with other Baptist papers, either as editors or often contributors, in different parts of the country, who have never stood for the declarations of the Black Rock Convention in 1832, nor have they stood with the “*Signs* Baptists,” but are known as “Clark Baptists,” who would now champion the doctrine advocated by Elder Gilbert Beebe on the resurrection of the dead, but they are quite silent on the doctrine of “absolute predestination of all things,” “eternal vital unity of Christ and the church,” “the new birth,” &c., as Elder Gilbert Beebe believed, wrote and preached. Their leader, Elder John Clark, of Virginia, long since dead, and Elder Gilbert Beebe declared nonfellowship for each other because of differences of opinion on such points of doctrine long before some of these, now wise men, were born. Bars of nonfellowship were raised by these people many years ago against the Beebe or *Signs* Baptists. Because of the wide differences on doctrine not one of these men would be received, nor put up to preach, in what are called by them Beebe Baptist churches, anywhere from Virginia to Maine. How strange that they should persecute the editors of the *Signs* when they have no use for them nor for the principles of doctrine they advocate! One of these men, now located in California, wrote us last spring, asking if we subscribed to a certain editorial written by Elder Gilbert Beebe on the resurrection of the dead. We, in reply, asked him if he subscribed to the views of Elder Gilbert Beebe on “absolute predestination of all things,” “eternal vital unity of Christ and the church,” “the new birth,” and so on, and remarked that when he answered us we would answer him. When he acknowledged our letter he said if we did not care to answer his question we need not do it, and that he was not alone in the desire to know, but he failed to make mention of our questions, much less to answer them by saying one thing or the other. He never has stood with the “*Signs* Baptists,” though now, strange to say, is preaching for some of them. We wonder how long they will stand “Clark Baptist doctrine.” We have no pleasure in writing such things, and have tried our best for several years to avoid it, but when pressed, repressed and trampled upon we have to defend ourselves, and shall endeavor to do so in such a way that there will be no mistake as to where we stand and what we believe.

Regarding the resurrection of the dead, all men should remember that it is but one point of doctrine, and if all who do not use Elder Gilbert Beebe’s words in presenting their view are heretics, let it be remembered that all who deny other fundamental principles of the doctrine advocated by him, and sustained by the word of God, are heretics also, hence why should one heretic denounce another? “Consistency, thou art a jewel.” Why should men declare nonfellowship for each other because they cannot see and understand the unfathomable mystery? Another thing that should be remembered is that because a man preaches the resurrection of “the natural bodies of the saints,” it is no reason that he should be regarded as being an overly sound Old School Baptist, because the rankest Arminians in the world believe it and preach it. If the resurrection is a literal thing, in other words, if a natural body is raised, then the Arminians are not dead in sins and to the doctrine of God, for they have sight to behold what Paul and John did not see, therefore must be regarded as the children of God with special revelation.

We, the editors of the *Signs*, object to the expressions, “this identical body” and “this mortal body” in speaking of the resurrection of the dead, and absolutely refuse to use them in expressing ourselves on this subject, for the reason that the Bible nowhere uses them when speaking of the body that shall be raised. The word “identical” means “the same, not different;” hence the resurrected body is not the identical body that is sown, because it is changed and raised spiritual. The word “mortal” means “subject to death, destined to die; as, man is mortal.” Therefore the body after death is not mortal, for the reason the life that made it mortal, subject to death, has taken its flight. The definitions of the above words are not a fancy of the mind of a heretic, but that of authority on the English language. When Paul

in Romans viii. 11, speaks of the Spirit of him that raised up Christ from the dead quickening the mortal bodies of the saints, if so be that God dwells in them, he had in mind an experience in time, as it seems to us, more than the resurrection of the dead at some future time. None of us should forget his statement in chapter seven, verses eighteen to twenty-five inclusive. Here he speaks of the two men, inward and outward man; that he, according to the flesh, and with the flesh, served the law of sin, but with the mind (of Christ) he served the law of God. He longed to be delivered from the body of death, or, in other words, “the dead body because of sin.” The body of Paul and the bodies of the Romans were then dead because of the sentence of death upon them, and the bodies of the saints now are no less dead for the same reason. When a man is condemned and sentenced to die by the law, in the eyes of the law he is already dead; so also the sentence of God’s law being upon sinners, their bodies are dead (yet mortal) as Paul said, because of sin, condemnation and judgment of the law. But he said the Spirit is life because of righteousness, and by the Spirit those dead bodies should be quickened that they should serve God and rejoice, as Paul did from time to time, in the hope of the glory of God. David in his day realized the deadness and nothingness of the flesh, and asked the Lord to quicken him that he might be quickened and run after God.

It is because the editors of the *Signs* do not use the expressions, “identical body” and “this mortal body,” as being raised, that we are accused of not believing in the resurrection of the dead. We do, however, believe most firmly and assuredly in the resurrection of the dead, for without it there can be no salvation; but we much prefer the use of Bible language in expressing ourselves. Such language will stand all the assaults of our enemies. If some of them dared they would accuse Paul and John of being nonresurrectionists, inasmuch as they use the “identical” language we adopt. The resurrection was a mystery to Paul, and it is the editors of the *Signs*. John saw and handled the resurrected body of Jesus, yet he said, It doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is; not as when he saw and handled him. It has not appeared as yet to the editors of the *Signs* as to what we shall be, hence we must leave it to those to whom it has been revealed to tell the people how the dead are raised. Paul, however, stamped the man who would ask such a question as a “fool.”

It has been, and still is, our desire to give our readers a clean sheet of unadulterated gospel, not one of strife, contention and bloodshed. The *Signs* is about the only paper of its kind in the United States today that is free from controversy, backbiting and murder. We desire to continue along the same lines of love, peace and unity. Truth always condemns error, and to contend for the faith once delivered unto the saints, means to continue in the doctrine, to be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, preach the truth, write the truth and stand pat on Bible language and proper definitions of language; and inasmuch as our Bible is written in the “English language,” let us at all times give to the people what the language means, regardless of men’s notions and ideas, let them be what they may.

K.

(*Editorial in the Signs of the Times, August 1, 1920*)



ELDER H. H. LEFFERTS

RESURRECTION

Desiring to follow brother Ker on the subject of the resurrection, that our readers may see and know that we stand together, have decided to republish the following article, which was first published October 1st, 1915. The views therein set forth are what we believed then, and what we believe now, and we doubt if we could make ourself clearer should we attempt to write an article now on the subject. Brother Ker and our-self have long been persecuted and ridiculed by some who differ with us, in expression at least, if nothing more, but we have borne it in silence. Now, however, we feel that we must defend ourselves, and the many subscribers of the *Signs of the Times* who agree with us, that the Bible declares plainly and positively that “the body sown natural” “is raised spiritual,” that “mortality is swallowed up of life,” and that “he who hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God.” We have so affirmed always, and shall continue to affirm exactly what the Bible says about the resurrection, and leave it to our brethren generally to decide whether the Bible is right, or the views of a few men of this day who seem to have set themselves up as judges in Israel. We are willing to, and verily shall, take the word of God as the man of our counsel, let others do and say what they may. L.

The faith of God’s elect viewing the resurrection, as described by the apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians xv., your views in connection therewith, on a better resurrection, as in Hebrews xi. 35, and the first resurrection as in Revelation xx. 5, 8, are solicited through the “*Signs of the Times*.”

A brother who lives in Texas sends the above request to us. This is not the first request of this nature we have had, but have deferred complying with any of them until we felt more at liberty to write upon this subject of the resurrection. The brethren, we feel, have a right to such views as we have upon any subject, and such views as we have we hope we are willing to share with the brethren. If any one has sent us a request for views upon any subject with which we have not complied, it is because we have no views to give them. It is not worth while for us to try to write about something that we know nothing about. As to the resurrection, it is a most glorious subject, and one that we love to think and to talk about, always to edification, never for the sake of argument or controversy. As to our having any cast-iron, unbending opinions or views to lay down upon this subject for the consideration of our readers, we have none. It is comforting to walk round about this glorious truth of the resurrection and to survey it in its various aspects, but to plunge into the depths of it and to fathom its mysteries, no mortal ever has done it, nor ever will this side of eternity. So much of the resurrection as we have already experienced, we are thereof a witness and are free to talk about; so much of it as is yet beyond our present experience we know nothing, except as it is set forth in the Bible. Right here we want to say that we positively do believe all that the Bible says upon the subject of the resurrection, but we do not claim to understand it all, nor to be able to explain it all. In speaking or writing of this matter we have wanted to adhere closely to the Scriptures and the scriptural manner of expression. One of the things about Old School Baptists that first drew us to them in our early experience, was that we saw they were the people that adhered strictly to the Scriptures in all matters of doctrine, faith and practice. Thus it has always been our desire to reject anything in the way of doctrine that did not have a “thus saith the Lord” for it. When we endeavor to clothe scriptural truths in phraseology of our own, we very often change the import of a text by using our own modes of expression instead of quoting the exact Scripture language. This often leads to confusion in the minds of the hearers as to just what this or that

preacher means upon any given subject. We would like our readers to know just how we feel about this matter of the resurrection, and shall try to be clear in our expression, but if any one reads this expecting to have the “mystery” solved for them, they will be disappointed before they read very far. We deem it is a mistake to think that nothing is known of the resurrection until after we pass out of this life, that it begins simply with the ending of mortality. If we know nothing of heaven while here in the flesh, what assurance or hope have we that we shall ever hereafter know anything about it? Upon what is our hope based if not upon the earnest of the Spirit, that earnest which the Spirit brings to the subjects of grace of that inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, reserved for the elect of God? It is a heaven below the Redeemer to know, and when the knowledge of Christ and his salvation is revealed to our faith it is a foretaste of glory. It is then that heaven comes down our souls to greet. These revelations which God brings by the Spirit unto his people, afford the basis of their hope. Therefore it seems to us that the hope of heaven is based upon heaven itself, the hope of the resurrection is based upon the resurrection itself. Jesus says, I am the resurrection and the life. This being so, then every manifestation of Jesus in the lives of his people is a manifestation of “the power of the resurrection,” and just as we can never know all about Jesus until we see him face to face, without a veil between, just so we shall never know the fullness of the resurrection until then. The life that we now live in the flesh, we live by the faith of the Son of God. This life of the christian being the manifestation of the life of Jesus in his mortal body, then it must follow that God’s people, even while in this world, live the life of the resurrection. “You hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins.” With what did he quicken them? He quickened them by the Spirit and with the life of Christ. This quickening of the Spirit is the entrance of eternal life. Is not this eternal life the very life of Christ, and is not Christ the resurrection? Then that which quickens those who were dead in sin is the power of the resurrection. If we may be permitted to speak of such things having a beginning, we would say that the resurrection life begins with each individual subject of grace the very moment he is quickened by the Spirit, and from that moment it continues on and on and on through all the travel of the believer, until it is consummated, or shall be consummated, in the full revelation of the infinite glory of God beyond the bounds of mortality. Belief itself is a manifestation of the power of the resurrection. Does not Paul say we believe according to the working of the mighty power which raised Christ from the dead? (See Ephesians i. 19, 20.) Thus, it takes the same power to make one a believer that it took to raise Christ from the dead. Is not, then, belief an effect of the resurrection power? What did God do with those whom he quickened from the death in sin? He raised them up together and made them sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. Are not these heavenly places all the privileges and the blessings of the gospel covenant? It seems so to us. Then to enjoy the gospel in any sense whatever, and to whatever extent, there must be a raising of the subject up from death in sin and from under the curse and dominion of the law of sin, and what is this raising up but a further manifestation of “the first resurrection?” The more we think about this matter the more we feel the impossibility of setting bounds to the resurrection, and saying it begins here and ends there, it includes this or does not include that. The whole life of the believer as a believer and as a manifest child of God is based upon the fact that Christ is risen from the dead, and not only risen himself but came forth bringing his sheaves with him; that is, all that the Father gave unto him before the foundation of the world. The head did not rise without the body, but both the head and the body, so Christ rose from the dead with all his church. “Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. “Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ.” Had Christ not risen from the dead there never could have been the gospel, the church, faith, hope, love, prayer or praise. All these things have their roots in “the first resurrection,” and the very resurrection life maintains them. Peter never could, at the day of Pentecost, or any other time, have interpreted Joel’s prophecy and the Psalms of David had he not been partaker of the life of the resurrection. Read the

eleventh chapter of Hebrews, and the list there given of all the trials of the people of God. These things they never could have endured except they had that victory that overcometh death. This victory Jesus is, so by faith in him they counted not their lives dear unto themselves. It seems that here must have been a sense, at least, in which mortality was swallowed up of life, since they lost their interest in their mortal lives through the measure of the Christlife given unto them. We have derived great comfort in cloudy days from being able to think that even now Christ is with and within his people, and that having Christ in them they are already the “children of the resurrection.” But we must not lose sight of the fact that there is a future aspect of the resurrection. As regards this futurity of the resurrection we must let the Scriptures bear witness. God has left on record by the pen of inspiration such information concerning what is yet ahead of us as he deemed necessary for us to know, and what God has not disclosed in his written word regarding this matter it is not worth while theorizing or speculating about. We can now know no more about it than the Scriptures declare. “But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come? Thou fool! that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die: and that which thou sowest, 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, and to every seed his own body. All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds. There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: 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 spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.” Note how all through this language the Spirit is all the time distinguishing between the earthly and the heavenly, the natural and the spiritual. Never are the two confused or mingled, but always kept separate and distinct. The same “it” that is sown a natural body is raised a spiritual body. Then in the forty-fifth verse we are told what these two bodies are: “The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.” “The first man is of the earth, earthy [the natural body]: the second man is the Lord from heaven [the spiritual body].” “And as we have borne the image of the earthy [the first man Adam], we shall also bear the image of the heavenly [the Lord Jesus Christ].” The same “we” that bear the first earthy image shall bear the second heavenly image, but there are two distinct images. “Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.” No need to cavil over these words, for nothing could be more distinct than the separation made by the Spirit in this fifteenth chapter of first Corinthians between flesh and Spirit. Now comes the mystery which no man on earth can ever explain: “Behold, I shew you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed,” &c. All of this language we do most certainly believe with all our heart, but as Paul did not go on and explain it, neither can we. John says, “It doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.” What more can we wish to know than this: that we shall be satisfied, when we awake, with His likeness? Whatever it takes to make up that complete and in-finite satisfaction we are assured God will give us. But as to what that spiritual body is, how it looks, how it is made, who knows? We do not, and we do not care for any one to try to tell us. Why try to pry into that which God has not seen fit to disclose? The time is coming when we shall know as we are known and see as we are seen, when that which is in part shall be done away and we shall see face to face. Until then, let us wait. “For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like

unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.” Very often brethren in quoting this, say “vile bodies,” instead of “vile body.” We do not know why they persist in doing this, for the Spirit doubtless used the right word in saying “body” instead of “bodies.” “Our vile body,” signifying many members, but all one body. Something like it occurs in Ephesians iv. 13: “Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.” Notice that the “all,” meaning many, are to be conformed to the one end: the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, the perfect man. Nothing is said about their ever becoming perfect men or perfect women, but coming unto the “perfect man.” This agrees with Romans viii. 29: “For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son.” Here, again, the all or many are to be brought forth in the one image. Again, in Romans viii. 23, we have: “Even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.” Here it is also “our body,” not “our bodies,” as is so often quoted. It sets forth the many in one, the many members of the one body. As to the “better resurrection” in Hebrews xi. 35, the connection is, “And others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection.” To be delivered from torture meant that they would have to die again at some later time, and they preferred to have it all over with at once in hope of that “better” or real resurrection in all its fullness which can never be broken. Lazarus was raised from the dead, but he was simply brought back to natural life, and had to die again at some later day, therefore his resurrection was not unto eternity, and was not spiritual. The “better” resurrection is the resurrection of the spiritual body which Paul talks about in Corinthians, which is unto eternal glory, and which death can never end. Thus these martyrs for the faith described in Hebrews xi. 35, who were delivered over to be put to death for the truth’s sake, did not wish to be delivered from that torture at the hands of men, and thus receive a temporary resurrection, but preferred to depart and be with Christ, which is far “better.” As to the “first resurrection” in Rev. xx. 6, this reads, “Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power.” Christ was the firstborn from the dead, the first to rise from the dead to die no more. The resurrection of Christ is, therefore, the first resurrection. Those who have part in this resurrection are those who were chosen in him before the foundation of the world, and for whom he died and rose from the dead. These are risen with Christ and cannot die any more, because he has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. Those for whom Christ died cannot die, they have everlasting life. The second death, the death of the mortal body, has no power over them, for while their mortal bodies do die and return to dust, the spirit, or life, cannot die. He that liveth and believeth in me shall never die, but hath everlasting life. When the earthly house of this tabernacle is dissolved, they shall be clothed upon with that building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. Two different houses, but the same child of God that now lives in this earthly house shall also dwell in that other house not made with hands, the building of God. “But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living: for all live unto him.” – Matt. xxii. 31, 32. Thus we see that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, while dead to us as men, are living unto God, and are not really dead at all. All God’s people are just this way: none of them die. Christ having risen from the dead, and they being partakers of this “first resurrection,” the second, or corporeal death, can have no power over them. L.

Leesburg, Virginia

(Editorial in the Signs of the Times, Aug. 15, 1920)



The Late ELDER D. M. VAIL

(Letter written to Elder F. A. Chick)

Waverly, New York, 2/20/09.

Eld. F. A. Chick,

Dear Bro, in Christ: I am now seated to try and answer your question and questions.

Your first statement is as follows: You say, “if I have understood your views upon the resurrection, they are that it takes place immediately that the breath leaves the body”.

Dear Bro.: – I have been declaring with my lips and pen twenty-eight or twenty-nine years that there is no waiting in eternity, and am still declaring it. I would ask, do you think it would be holding fast the form of sound words to say that the saint has died and gone to glory enjoying perfect felicity in the presence of Jesus, and at the same time is waiting for the resurrection morn? To me the resurrection morn of the church was when Jesus arose from the dead, and that is truth revealed in the experience of each and every saint, as they are raised experimentally in and with him. Are the saints that have breathed out their lives in eternity, or are they still creatures of time? If in eternity how could they be waiting; if they are still creatures of time would it be correct to say they are in glory and perfectly happy with Jesus, to go no more out forever?

I suppose you have noticed the contradictory statements in many obituaries, how that they hold the dead both in time and eternity, giving their language its logical interpretation. Is it true, are any of the saints waiting but those on earth? The Scriptures are given to the living on earth and apply to them alone in their experience of God’s grace. While here below, they and they only, are waiting for the adoption, to wit; the redemption of the body.

It could not be said of those in glory that they are waiting, – no indeed. To prove that one is sound on the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, is it necessary to speak of literal graves, with literal bodies to be carried through space, to literal clouds, there to be reunited body, soul and spirit; and as the theory generally follows, the spirits of millions of the saints called back from heaven and the others from hell – what for? There is but one redeeming feature to my mind in this teaching, – that is, it would take faith to believe that God could do this, but no faith is, needed to believe and understand all the rest of the affair as theory; it is altogether too literal for me.

Bro. Chick, is not the resurrection of the dead preached every time the resurrection of Christ is preached? Is not the resurrection of the body preached when the resurrection of the head is preached? Is not the resurrection of the dead denied when the resurrection of Christ is denied; can the resurrection of the dead be denied without denying the resurrection of Christ? I do believe that God by his spirit and almighty power will change our vile body and fashion it like unto his glorious body.

I also believe that the resurrection of those living on the earth is in the future to them, and will be as long as there is one remaining on the earth, and that will be the end of the gospel dispensation or day. In that day (gospel day) the judgments of God will be made manifest to his people. As the gospel day is the last day there can be no final judgment day following it. Can there? In God's eternal mind everything natural and spiritual was unalterably fixed before time began, therefore God, or Christ are not waiting to pass judgment upon the elect or non-elect at the end of time. Would it be holding fast the form of sound words to teach such a doctrine? Certainly not.

You speak of the sepulcher of David remaining until a certain day as proof that he was waiting. This does not prove that he was there waiting for the resurrection, to be raised; no evidence to me in that.

Then you refer to Christ as being in the grave three days. Bro. Chick you know that the body of Christ did not see corruption; so could not represent the bodies of sinners that do see corruption. You then mention Lazarus and six others that were raised after being buried for some time. You know that they were brought back to natural life, and I am surprised that you should refer to them as representing God's people that are raised to eternal happiness, or in other words, the resurrection of the dead to eternal glory and perfect happiness. It does not present God's power in bringing his people from a grave of sin, condemnation and death, to a life of joy and peace, eternal perfection, or a good hope through grace.

You then mention those bodies that rose after Christ's resurrection. I think the same truth is set forth as in the other six. Faith never looks to flesh, bone, dust, or a literal grave, which expression is generally figurative in the Scriptures; but to Jesus Christ, the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end; the I AM, not will be; therefore, whatever our natural eyes may look upon of our friends that are dead is not proof that they are not in glory with Jesus and eternally happy. While holding tangible or natural bodies in our minds we do not present the resurrection of the dead to the comfort of God's people, and our teaching will confuse and starve the spiritually minded seeker after truth. You speak of Jesus being known and seen with natural eyes after his resurrection as before. Bro. Chick, why was it that Martha did not know him until after he had called her by name? Why was it that his disciples did not recognize him until in the breaking of bread, when he immediately vanished out of their sight? Have no evidence that Thomas knew him until he (Jesus) spoke to him. Have we any scripture proof that he was seen with natural eyes as he was seen before his crucifixion? Was it not that his word was spirit and life that they recognized him as the Saviour, the Son of God? Is he not revealed to the faith of God's people now in various ways or experiences? Most assuredly. Sometimes in a vision, dream, promise, affliction, joy, peace, poverty, hunger, thirst, crucifixion, dying daily, mourning, feeling forsaken and alone and in many other ways and conditions in which Jesus is manifest to his saints.

I feel sure that whatever we can fathom or comprehend with our natural mind or minds eye, is not spiritual; hence, what we would teach while led or exercised in that way would not comfort a spiritually minded christian. Bro. Chick bear with me a little longer. I wish to speak a little concerning Jesus expecting or waiting at God's right hand. Is Jesus waiting and expecting separate from his church or people? If not, is it not by his Spirit that they are waiting for whatever God has promised? It is not possible that any are waiting in eternity, at least in the sense that we are waiting for tomorrow, next week or next year. I cannot understand how that God, or Jesus as the Son of God, can be spoken of in the attitude of waiting, but Jesus as the Son of man, the Mediator Days man, or perhaps the God man Mediator, in this connection with his people in the flesh can be spoken of in that way as waiting.

Now Bro. Chick I have felt free and willing to write you as I have. What I have written has been given me to believe by some power. I know I have not copied from anyone although I do know of many ministers and brethren that endorse fully what I advocate on these subjects; but Bro. Chick, though we do not see alike on some things my love and fellowship for you is firm and complete without wavering and I do hope you will not cast me off from you if you can possibly bear with me.

Love to all.

D. M. VAIL

Binghamton, N. Y.



The Late ELDER P. D. GOLD

(Owner, Editor and Publisher of Zion's Landmark, Wilson, North Carolina, for about forty years)

DECAY – IMMORTALITY

Exhaustion is evidence of finiteness and failure, and is the result of the wearing away of the agencies of nature. Vegetation springs forth in luxuriousness and with promise of long life in its early growth. But towards autumn it bears marks of decay, and fades and perishes before winter.

The soil in its virginity puts forth crops that show its fertility, but soon exhaustion follows unless aids are added to stimulate productiveness. However it may be recuperated by feeding the soil with suitable fertilizers.

Man the noblest creature on earth in his formation and rank is equally as subject to succumb to the wear and tear of labor, and the taxing of his forces to compete with nature's demands. So that emaciation and death follow. His limbs weaken, his nervous system loses its vitalizing sensitiveness, his taste fails to enjoy the youthful zest of food, his energies relax and weaken, and man soon wastes away and ceases to have pleasure in things of earth. Even that mysterious character known as a christian who, at times rises above the dull powers of mortality, and finds pasture in the Carmel heights of heavenly manna at times becomes so benumbed by the corrosions of earth, and the wasting of disease, and the gnawing of worldly care as to faint by the way.

All such things of sorrow, decay and disappointment arrest our expectations of satisfaction in this transitory world of vanities, and furnish a ground of hope and expectation of another and enduring state of perfection – not created out of decay of this perishing state, but a resurrection where former things are done away, and all things become new – not old things made new but out of the old there springs up a new creation in which the desire of immortality dimly felt in the imperfect state as one is renewed in the spirit of his mind, as a vitalizing sense of love and divine joy warms in the soul, and kindles a flame of sacred love for things that never perish, and there appear the foundation and pillars,

the frame and substance of a glorious building not made with hands, but eternal in the heavens, and its glories so entrance the soul as to persuade it of a better resurrection wherein mortality is swallowed up of life, and hope is perfected in fruition of eternal youth. (The italics are our's. R. L. D.) P.D.G.



The Late ELDER P. G. LESTER

THE RESURRECTION

(The following is the last article Elder Lester ever wrote and most appropriate since a short while thereafter he answered the call to enter eternal rest.)

I have been requested to write on the subject of the resurrection of the dead. I say of the dead, none but the dead are comprehended in this subject. Some of our able brethren north of us treat upon the subject entirely as to how it is with those who are dead, and not as to how It is with the living, for the living have never entered into the state of death but they are subjects of time and are vitally affected by the things of time and not of eternity, while the entity of the dead has passed from time into eternity, therefore the real existence or entity is in eternity while the dead in their natural condition are yet in time buried here in the earth, and as such know not anything, and we do not understand in their entity they are aware of the passing events in time. Therefore in this separated condition we do not seem to know anything in the sense that we are dead; hence Paul says “behold I show you a mystery, we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.” How long is this? It is so short it is immeasurable. That is how long we do not sleep yet we do sleep, in some sense. “Them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him” and they shall not be prevented by those of us who are alive and remain; and we shall be changed, resurrected and caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Our hope comprehends this blessed estate, not the grave but with the Lord in the air, in the spirit. “This mortal must put on immortality” and “this corruptible must put on incorruption” so when this shall have taken place “then shall have been brought to pass the saying that is written, “Death is swallowed up in victory. “When does this take place? Things are brought to or come to pass in time when we shall find that we are more than conquerors over death and the grave and mortality is swallowed up of life; and we are with the Lord and so shall we ever be.

One says “all my appointed time will I wait till my change come.” Till the resurrection comes. That is what it means, a change. It is sown a natural body, and it is raised a spiritual body.

It is a common thought with our people that when one dies his spirit goes to God and we bury the body, but in the resurrection the spirit comes back and reunites with the body and both go on to heaven together, but I do not find such scripture in the book. (The italics are our's. R.L.D.) Our existence is a mystery and can not be explained. I am not attempting to explain it in these thoughts but rather show

that I do not know anything about it really, but as we preach the wisdom of God in a mystery so I write. I hope that the hearts of some of our readers might be comforted to some degree at least.

There is a difference from the way we look at the resurrection and the way it really is. There is a difference from the way that Christ was raised up and the way His people are. He lay in the grave and saw no corruption while they are corruption itself, and His resurrection proves that the dead are raised up. When Christ died the bodies of many of the saints arose from the dead and came out of their graves after His resurrection. They arose when he died and came forth after he arose; His death was their life and His ascension was their resurrection. He was not a pattern for their resurrection but He was it. "In am the resurrection and the life. If I be lifted up I will draw all men unto me." The substance or virtue of His entity, His divinity draws His people from the grave, they hear His voice and they come forth, at the present time and in time to come. We know that we, like a corn of wheat must fall into the ground and die else we abide alone. God has ordained it that we die and has made the act of death the swallowing up of life. In this figure we find we die as we live or as the powers of death are being enforced in us at the same time the virtues and powers of life are being wrought in us. God has set seed time and harvest time and we know these are and that they must come in their own order. The good farmer prepares the soil as fallow ground and at the proper time and manner he breaks up this fallow ground and works it down so as to create and hold the season for germination of the seed and he sows the wheat into the ground and the season, the moisture, heat and other qualities take hold upon and destroy it in a sense but he looks for a great transformation, first the blade then the stalk and finally the full ear on the stalk. Paul knowing that some fool would want to know how the dead are raised up and with what body do they appear and he refers him to sowing the wheat a thing that he knows.

God is a great husbandman; He farms creation, we see or read how He prepared everything for His work. He made all manner of life to bring forth after its kind and He made man, and while He made him of the earth in common with everything else yet he was of a different substance, and He commanded him to multiply and replenish the earth. And He made a helpmeet for him whereby he should multiply. He planted him in the garden of Eden but He did not fence the garden; He did not clothe the man and his helpmeet but left them in the innocence of their nature and nakedness and the devil was in the garden, and they being susceptible of his influence he approached them in such a form and manner as to corrupt their morals, and lust which is of the devil had its conception, and he destroyed their innocence and multiplication set up and came into the family. This was God's way of multiplying without regard to His divine purpose in the election of grace. We are not to understand that the wisdom and eternal purpose of God so ran ahead as to provide the election of grace and in order to its utility so arranged to bring man into a state of sin and death as to need the election and salvation of grace. The affairs in the garden of Eden were to accomplish for which man was made to multiply and replenish the earth. The first man Adam was of the earth earthy, the second man Adam was the Lord from heaven. The things of the first man are incidental to the things of the second man, but they do not lead up to them, but those of the second man go back to those of the first man. It seems that while Christ was in the grave He went and preached to the spirits that were in prison. Salvation flowed out from the cross or from the grave of Christ, back to the former sea and forth to the hinder sea. The former subjects of grace are not made perfect without the latter. "Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation;" not yesterday, not tomorrow, but now. I am He that was dead and am alive and behold I live forever.

We note that as the corn of wheat was dying it was living, the virtues that brought about its death brought about its life. It roots downward and springs upward and brings forth fruit. Its association is

consequent upon its dying rather than upon its living and yet we live because He lives. We do not live to die but we die to live. "If we be dead with Him we shall also live with Him." Therefore as we die we begin to live. If man dies shall he live again? We die to the grave but we live unto God. Though our flesh be devoured yet in it we shall see God. Our friends come and spread flowers upon our grave but if we have died in hope we do not need those flowers we know nothing of. We are not there, our entity is with God. It must be in the grave or with God. If with Him we are resurrected from the grave. We come into our living entity. But in our mortal state or condition we have answered the sentence, "Dust thou art and unto dust shall thou return;" and none but the poet has said that this dust shall be bidden to rise.

It is a common belief among us that we shall rise from the grave. That is the best we can do with such a mystery. You ask me where we buried my mother and I can show you the stones that mark her tomb, but you ask me where she is and my faith says she is in the Paradise of God, that her conscious existence is there and in the final ending with her there will be nothing of her in the grave, for the grave shall give up its dead, death shall give up its dead. They that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God and shall come forth. That must be in the sense that the dead are in the grave at the time that is and is to come, which implies a mystery.

We must again refer to the corn of wheat that falls into the ground and dies. And we note that as it dies it lives and tho' it comes up yet it leaves its impress in the ground but it is not there. We look for it in the harvest. "Them which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him" and there they are ever with the Lord in the air and so shall they ever be with the Lord.

March 15, 1929.

P. G. LESTER

Roanoke, Virginia

(Was Editor of Zion's Landmark)



ELDER G. B. BIRD

RESURRECTION

There is no subject that I hesitate to write upon more than the subject of the resurrection; first, because there has been so much written and spoken about the subject in an argumental manner, and in an ambitious way, and hence so much agitation over the subject, and second, I feel to know so little about it. Much of what I have heard and read on this subject, during the nigh fifty years I hope I have been interested in these things, has been purely imagination and comprised of the things which the carnal mind can and does endorse; indeed the views of many of the Baptists are substantially the same as those entertained by the unregenerated, and carnally minded. Most certainly if the truths of God are hid from the wise and prudent of this world, then these wise fellows cannot have the right conception of these things, and if our views are in strict harmony with them, then we must know of a certainty that we are wrong. I have never felt to know anything of the great beyond, and if I should undertake to paint a word picture of how we shall look in the eternal world, I would know, and so would you, dear reader,

know, that all the basis for such a picture was my imagination. One great test as to whether a man is right in his heart or is not, does he become ambitious over the subject, does he want to quarrel or fight over it. If he does you can be assured that he is in the flesh, and is carnal minded, and to be carnally minded is death, (now) death to the knowledge of the hidden spiritual truths of God. No person can believe in the resurrection more than I. It is all my hope, the capstone of the salvation of the family of God, and there is no subject that gives me more joy to muse upon than the resurrection of the dead for I am the man that *dies daily*, and am so often in need of that spiritual raising from the dead, I cannot even have a good thought until I am raised from this lifeless state or condition. I think I have learned by oft repeated experiences, that I cannot preach until and unless I am raised from the dead; and this power to deliver is wholly in Christ. I truly believe in and love a living resurrection, one that is all sufficient now and always; all we can know about this deep and sublime subject is what we have experienced. Christ has affirmed, "I am the resurrection and the life," and these two principles are in-separably united together. One cannot exist without the other; to have Christ is to have life, and to have life is to be raised from the dead.

When the gospel is preached, life is preached, for the gospel is life, and we are not, neither indeed can be, a witness of life, or any of the fruitions of life, until we are raised unto life, and none can know so well as the poor preacher, that "If Christ be not risen, (now) then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain." We know of a truth that we cannot "Prophesy upon these bones" until the command comes from God saying: "Son of man prophesy," and in that prophecy there was life. Listen, "I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live." "So I prophesied as *he commanded* me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood upon their feet, an exceeding great army." This is no strange thing to the children of God now. How well do we remember in our own experience, when we have come to the stand in a state of death, we saw the bones so very dry, no evidence of life, truly a valley of dry bones, and behold this is the whole house of Israel. "O my people, I will open up your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel." This grave was not a hole in the ground, or a literal grave, for they were not literally dead, but only dead in feelings, just in the same manner as is so often the case with us now. And this bringing them into the *land of Israel* is that gracious entering into the unspeakable joys of the land that flows with milk and honey, a new heaven and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness; this is that walking about Zion, the coming or rather ye are come (now) "to the spirits of just men made perfect," the sitting together in heavenly places in Christ. Some will say then, is the resurrection past? No, by no means, no more than Christ is past. Ours is an eternal, living, and everlasting resurrection, the same yesterday, today and forever. The scripture found in Matthew 27:52 was having reference to the same things, and was not speaking of something that would occur at the end of this material world, but rather of the things of which we are living witnesses. The grave here is the same grave spoken of in Ezekiel 37:12. This grave is the carnal mind, the earthy, the flesh, and we are witnesses also of the power of this grave to imprison us, to shut us up in the earth (not the soil literally) so that we cannot come forth. It is the spiritual children of God here in this life that are looking for him, and it is unto them that he (Christ) shall appear the second time without sin unto salvation. I long to see that happy season in my pilgrimage here on earth, as I go burdened down with sin and guilt to the places appointed for the gatherings of the people of God. Oh, to see the Son of Man appear in the clouds of glory, (his called servants) and the gospel of peace is preached. Then *there is deliverance*, not just a promise of deliverance in the future; then there is the resurrection of the dead, and Almighty God is worshipped in spirit and truth by his living children who are raised from the dead. All of these blessed foretastes of Heaven, which we are made partakers of here in time by the sure mercies of God, and the all sufficient grace in Christ Jesus the Lord, makes me

to believe that there is a blessed home after death for the redeemed of the Lord, and they will all be there in a right form, and at the right time.

G.B. Bird
Canada, Ky.



The Late WILLIAM GATHERCOLE

“London, March 4th, 1817.

“Dear Sister in Christ Jesus, – Grace, mercy, and peace be with you, from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. I have of late had many cares and anxieties upon my mind, otherwise I would have answered yours before this; but at last, feeling a little more composure of mind, and having a little time upon my hands, I am constrained to write to you; and you may use on this occasion the old proverb, ‘Better late than never.’ I have very minutely read and inspected your letter, and am glad from my heart that the Almighty has appeared for you, and removed the darkness, bondage, and distress from your mind, that you so long laboured under, and has raised you up to such a degree of confidence. This is the Lord’s doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes. You may say with Paul, that ‘the grace of our Lord was abundant with faith and love, as it is in Christ Jesus.’ I was glad to hear of the humility it wrought in your heart, and the soul loathing which you felt on account of your own vileness, and the need he gave you to feel of the Saviour’s supporting power. These things, my sister, are ‘things that accompany salvation,’ which no formal professor or hypocrite in Zion ever had.

“You say that when you were lost to all hope, he has brought you forth as the morning; that is, that hope may appear clearer than the noon-day. I should be glad if my sister, in her next, would inform me how this wonderful change in her feelings took place; whether it was effected by an open manifestation, or any sweet word dropped into her heart, together with the sensation of soul she felt at the moment this change in her experience took place. If my sister will favour me with a few lines upon this part of the subject, I shall the more exceedingly rejoice.

“And now I could wish to give thee advice for thy future welfare. Make not too free with what the Almighty has bestowed upon thee. Do not be too lavish with it, by telling it to every formal professor; but set a watch over thy mouth, and keep the doors of thy lips shut to them. Be diligent in private prayer, reading the word, meditation, and self-examination. Be careful, as much as in you lies, to maintain a conscience void of offence, by a steady attendance on the means of grace, and by a walk and conversation becoming the gospel; and be careful to avoid the company and conversation of all who walk contrary thereto. Thou art now in the most dangerous stage of life. Watch over thy own spirit, and over every member of the old man of sin, and yield not to his entreaties, though he offer thee many gifts: ‘Flee youthful lusts, which war against the soul,’ and follow after peace and holiness. ‘Give all diligence to make thy calling and election sure; for if thou doest these things thou shalt never fail.’

“You complain that you have still some fear of death. This is no uncommon case with the people of God. We read of some who ‘all their lifetime were subject to bondage’ to this king of terrors; but Christ

came to deliver such poor souls as these; and when perfect love cometh into the heart, attended with an application of the blood of atonement, it speaks pardon, peace, reconciliation, and eternal friendship. When this blood is applied, and this love felt and enjoyed, we are not only delivered from the fear of death, but are assured we shall have boldness at the day of judgment.

“But you also wish me to give you a few of my thoughts respecting death. Death, as we call it, is the dissolution of the body, or the departure of the spirit from the clay tabernacle which it inhabits; and Paul tells us to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. We read of one and another of the Old Testament saints ‘gathering up their feet into the bed, and yielding up the ghost;’ and in the New Testament, of those who committed their spirits into the hands of him who gave them. Some are said to ‘fall asleep in Jesus,’ and such God hath said he will bring with him. And the Holy Ghost hath promised a blessing upon all that die in the Lord. Now, to die in the Lord, I understand, is to die interested in the covenant of grace, and to be vitally united to Christ by a living faith, while in this world, as our covenant Head, and to be brought to enjoy a living union with him, and out of his fulness to be continually receiving grace to enable us to persevere. If we are brought out of ourselves to live by faith upon him, he will enable us to live to him; and then we are assured we shall die in him. Hence it is said, ‘These all died in faith;’ and all that are brought to live a life of faith upon Christ, and die in the faith of him, have The promise of being raised in his blessed image in the first resurrection, and that over them the second death shall have no power. Christ hath disarmed death of its sting, for the sting of death is sin; and he hath put away sin by the sacrifice of himself, made an end of it, and brought in an everlasting righteousness; yea, ‘he was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him;’ and when he offered up himself a victim to divine justice and magnified the law, God the Father was well pleased, and we for ever delivered from death, hell, and destruction; for Christ, when he said, ‘It is finished,’ not only destroyed death, but him that had the power of death, that is the devil, and rose triumphant, as a mighty conqueror, over all his foes and our enemies, and declares, ‘I am he that livel~h and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore,’ and, ‘Because I live, ye shall live also.’ As, therefore, Christ has destroyed death for his people, I conclude that it is to them only a phantom, or rather a messenger sent to dismiss them from the body; and as soon as the believer in Christ is arrested by this messenger, it is that he may enter immediately into the presence of the Lord, in whose presence is fulness of joy, and at his right hand pleasures for evermore.

“A believing view of our interest in the work of redemption, an application of the precious blood of the atonement to our conscience, proclaiming pardon and peace to us, attended with a feeling sense of the love of God to us, as reconciled in his dear Son, will enable us to rejoice even in the article of death, and say, ‘O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?’ Thanks be to God, who giveth me the victory though our Lord Jesus Christ.

“May the Lord, if it is his blessed will, favour my young friend with an unctuous experience and a happy enjoyment of these things, and, like one of old, she will desire to depart, that she may be with Christ, which is far better.

“Beloved, adieu. Grace and peace be with you, while I am “Thine to serve, with such as God has given me,

“To Mary Bailey (Since her marriage, Mrs, Thomas How.)”

“WILLIAM GATHERCOLE”

London, England

PART II

The Late ELDER GILBERT BEEBE

THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD

NEW VERNON, N. Y., Nov. 1, 1846.

“BROTHER BEEBE: There are three or four designing men in Middle Tennessee, who have created considerable excitement on the subject of a non-resurrection. They have charged the Richland Association with denying the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead.

“I have been a member of this association for the last eighteen years, and I know that it believes the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, and of a general judgment. It denies the resurrection of flesh and blood, and contends for the resurrection of Jesus Christ and all his saints, spiritual, in his likeness, as John says. – 1 John iii. 2. I send you a copy of faith in all the leading principles of the gospel, as they present an abstract of our principles.

GEORGE R. HOGE”

It has been and still is our desire, so far as possible, to avoid unprofitable agitation of subjects which in our judgment have a stronger tendency to excite discussion than to edify, comfort and instruct the people of God. And although we consider the resurrection of the dead inferior in importance to no part of the gospel of God our Savior, we have feared that the manner in which some brethren have seemed disposed to discuss it, is calculated to gender strife and discord, rather than to result in the peace of Zion and the glory of God.

The letter of Elder Hoge which will be found above, states that the Richland Association of Tennessee has been misrepresented on the subject, and asks the privilege of explaining the real sentiments of that association. He has also sent us a copy of the minutes of the association, containing an “abstract” of their doctrinal sentiments, in which they say, item 10: “We believe in the resurrection of the dead, and general judgment.” This expression undefined, we presume would be satisfactory; but as brother Hoge adds, “She denies the resurrection of flesh and blood,” we conclude that the most of our readers will consider such denial as equivalent to a denial of the resurrection altogether, and a justification of those who have so charged that association. We will not attempt to define what is intended by their profession of faith in the resurrection, nor of their repudiation of its application to flesh and blood; or what our brethren of Richland believe will be raised up at the last day; whether soul, body or spirit. If they only intend to say that all the relationship between the saints and Adam, or human nature, ceases with the death of these mortal bodies, and that the resurrection shall bring them forth as a production of the quickening Spirit of God, in the same manner that the body of our Lord Jesus Christ was raised from the dead, we see no cause for controversy; for such we presume to be the general view held by Old School Baptists on the subject. But if such be their intention, we think they have not been sufficiently clear in defining their position.

By the reference made to 1 John iii. 2, we are inclined to believe our brethren hold with us that the resurrection of the crucified body of our Lord Jesus Christ is an exemplification of the manner and nature of the final resurrection of the bodies of the saints. In his resurrection he became the first fruits of them that slept, consequently the certain pledge that all his people shall in like manner be raised up in that hour in which all that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and come forth; they that have done good to the resurrection of life eternal, and they that have done evil to the resurrection of damnation.

Many idle and vain speculations have been resorted to by multitudes at sundry times, in attempting a philosophical solution of the resurrection of the dead, but all philosophy must forever fail when applied to the things of the Spirit of God; as we Old School Baptists hold the things of the Spirit to be known only by revelation, not by science; rules therefore which will apply to natural things cannot apply to spiritual things. To us it seems quite inexpedient to say that flesh and blood will not arise, as many would be led from that expression to suppose that the identity of the bodies of the saints in the resurrection was denied; which must be equivalent to a denial of the resurrection altogether. For if the bodies of the saints are raised from the dead at all, there must necessarily be a preservation of identity; and if the bodies of the saints are not to be raised up, what is to be raised? Not the soul, or spiritual man, for that cannot die, cannot be committed to the grave; and in the resurrection, all that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and shall come forth to' the resurrection of life eternal, or of damnation. There can be no two ways of understanding Romans viii. 11. But if the spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. The term mortal cannot apply to our spiritual life, as that is in no sense mortal, nor can it apply to any other part of us than that which came under the sentence, "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return."

Some have said that flesh and blood shall not arise, but flesh and bones shall arise; and this view they have attempted to sustain, first, because it is written that "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption." – 1 Corinthians xv. 50; and second, because that Jesus had shed all his blood when he was crucified, and it is supposed that his risen body contained no blood. These two, we presume, are the strongest arguments used by the advocates of the theory. But let us examine them. Does Paul say that flesh and blood shall not be raised up? or that they shall not after the resurrection inherit the kingdom of God? By no means. Let it be remembered Paul speaks in the present tense, cannot; and for the same reason that corruption cannot inherit corruption. The kingdom of God is a spiritual kingdom, and our flesh and blood in their present state, and relation to Adam, and to the law, are corrupt, depraved, diseased, mortal and natural. But in the text our brother has referred to, (1 John iii. 2,) we are assured that when Christ shall appear, we shall be like him, &c.; and Paul in the text quoted, (Rom. viii. 11,) has told us how: "He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken our mortal bodies." If then we can know how Christ's body, in which he suffered death, was raised up, we shall also know how our mortal bodies shall arise. And of his resurrection we can trace a few very important particulars. And first, we observe, though he was put to death in the flesh, he was quickened in the spirit. When put to death in the flesh, we understand that his relation to the law, which he assumed by being made of a woman, was finished. He died as the Son of man; as the Son of David; as the issue of Judah; being put to death in the flesh; but he was quickened by the Spirit, or begotten from the dead, so that in his resurrection his body arose from the dead as the immediate production of the Spirit, and was thus declared to be the Son of God with power. "Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee," is applied to the resurrection of his body from the dead, and not to his birth of the Virgin Mary. So to be like him, the same quickening Spirit that now dwells in the saints, by which they

were regenerated, and which raised from the dead the crucified body of Jesus, shall also, that is, in like manner, quicken our mortal bodies. In which quickening the saints shall arise, so far as relates to the bodies, in a new relationship. As in the resurrection of Christ his risen body stood no longer related to the fleshly stock of Abraham, Judah or David, so in the resurrection, the saints shall be released from all relationship to those who are now their kindred after the flesh; not to be known in the resurrection as Gentiles or Jews, as male or female, as married or as given in marriage, as parents or as children, but simply as the sons of God. The notion of some that parents are waiting now in heaven to embrace their children, husbands, wives, &c., is altogether unwarranted by the faith and testimony of the Gospel. The immediate relationship which we stand in to each other here belongs only to our time state; but all that relationship must be dissolved. We shall be begotten from the dead immediately by the Spirit, as independently of our present carnal relationship as though we had never sustained such relation to Adam. In the resurrection of Christ the identity of the body was preserved. "I am he that was dead, and am alive," &c. That Jesus whom John saw in his risen and glorified body was the same that had been dead. The identity must have been preserved to fulfill the scriptures. His flesh should not see corruption; and what he had given as a sign of his Messiahship. Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up; the sign also of the prophet Jonah must have failed if the same body which suffered on the cross had not arisen from the dead. His Godhead did not die, nor could his soul cease to exist. His Mediatorial Headship of his church could not expire. But it was that wherein he was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, &c., and that which died arose from the dead. So when the saints are called hence their spiritual life which they receive in regeneration does not die; their quickened souls do not die; but their bodies, even their mortal bodies, die; and those same bodies shall arise in like manner as the identical body of our Lord Jesus Christ which had been crucified did arise, bearing the prints of the nails and the place of the spear. A further definition of the identity to us seems superfluous. To talk of the particles of the flesh, the composition of the bones, to philosophize upon the subject, is as extravagant as to attempt to harmonize natural philosophy with any other part of divine revelation. We admit that all the blood was drained from the veins of the body of Jesus; but that is no evidence that his risen body contained no blood; for the fact is quite as apparent that all the life of Jesus was taken from his body, and who will argue that his risen body contained no life. Such vain speculations serve only to gender strife and contention, and to divert the mind from a spiritual to a carnal train of thinking.

While thus we contend that the identity of the bodies of the saints shall be preserved, even as we have proved that the identity of Christ's body was preserved, we also hold, and firmly believe, that the change which the apostle speaks of in 1 Cor. xv. shall also be gloriously realized by all the saints. The body in its present state is mortal, or subject to disease and death, but it shall be perfectly freed in the resurrection from mortality; this will be a glorious change, but this is not all; the body in its time state is weak, it is sown in weakness, but it shall be raised in power. Now it is corrupt, but it shall be raised in an incorruptible state, and death shall be swallowed up in victory. It is now in a state of dishonor, but it shall be robed in immortal honor; it is now a natural, earthly, Adamic body; but in the resurrection it shall be a spiritual, heavenly body, standing in the same relation to Christ as it now stands to the old Adam. That law which remands our bodies to the dust has dominion over our mortal bodies so long as they remain this side of the resurrection of the dead, but when they shall be raised up from their graves they shall be free from the power and dominion of that law. For the sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law; but thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

We have much more to say upon this interesting subject when opportunity shall serve. We have offered the above remarks, not to provoke controversy, but because there are, as we have strong reasons to fear,

many dear brethren whom we love in the Lord, who seem to indulge a sort of speculating spirit on the subject; we desire not to kill or wound them, but if possible to admonish them in the spirit of the gospel.

With regard to those passages on which brother Hoge has desired our views, we will, so far as ability is given us, attend to his request soon.

Gilbert Beebe

(Founder of the Signs of the Times, 1832)

(Article taken from Vol. I. of EDITORIALS)



The Late ELDER F. A. CHICK

CHRIST THE FIRST THAT SHOULD RISE FROM THE DEAD

(1 Cor. xv. 20; Col. i. 18; Rev. i. 5.)

From some cause our mind has been very pleasantly dwelling upon the truth presented in these portions of holy writ of late, and we feel like presenting some of our reflections for the consideration of our readers. Nothing can be more important to be considered by all who believe, than the truth of the resurrection of the dear Redeemer, because all our salvation both here and hereafter depends upon it. Take away the fact of the resurrection of the crucified body of the Savior from the gospel, and we should have no gospel left to proclaim. Paul abundantly testifies in all that he says in all his epistles that if Christ be not raised, all his preaching was vain, and our faith is vain, and we are yet in our sins; that is, we are not yet justified, and our hope is for this life only, and cannot embrace what is beyond. "If in this life only we have hope in Christ we are of all men most miserable."

There are three special things which are declared in the word to be involved in the fact of the resurrection of the body of Christ.. We say the body of Christ, because that was what was taken down from the cross, and which was laid in Joseph's new tomb, and which arose from that tomb, and appeared to many before the time came in which he ascended out of their sight. These three things we wish to briefly call attention to.

First, Paul in Romans i. 4, says that by his resurrection he was declared to be the Son of God with power; that is, his rising from the dead proved him to be all that he had claimed to be during his earthly ministry. He said that he was the Son of God. In his death, to his enemies it seemed that his claim was fully proven to be false, and could he have remained in the grave there could have been no assurance to his disciples that he was what he had claimed to be, but the rising again of Jesus from the dead was full proof that he was all that he had claimed to be. Now this is of the utmost importance to all who believe, because in this sonship of the dear Redeemer lies our sonship also. If he be not the risen Son of God, then we are not sons of God; we cry, Abba, Father, in vain, if Jesus be not risen from the dead. We do not purpose to dwell upon this, but have simply desired to remind those who read of this truth.

Second. Paul also testified in Romans iv. 25, that he was raised for our justification. Not only is our sonship then involved in his resurrection from the dead, but, also our state of justification before God. In all the Scriptures this truth of justification is presented, and presented as a thing essential in the sinner's salvation; this we do not need to argue, for surely none among all the people of God question or doubt this, yet it is good to contemplate this truth for our comfort and joy. Job asked the solemn question, How shall a man be just with God? And here in the doctrine of the resurrection of the blessed Lord, we have the answer. The resurrection of the body of Christ proved that his atonement for our sins was complete, for had this work remained unfinished in his death, then he could not have risen again from the dead; his resurrection proves that the divine law was fully satisfied, and that now there could be no more condemnation to them who were embraced in the covenant of redemption. In the death of Christ, and in his resurrection again from the dead, lies our only but yet all-sufficient hope of salvation. Christ did indeed die for our sins, according to the Scriptures; in this is our salvation, because in him is our atonement and justification, and our righteousness, and all that we need, but none of these things could ever have been ours had he not risen from the dead.

The third thing that is again and again said in the word to be connected with the resurrection of Christ, is our own resurrection from the dead. It is not only true that in his resurrection we come to be sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty, by a new and spiritual birth, and are justified freely through his redemption, but also the final and future resurrection of our bodies is involved in it, so that if Christ be not risen, there is no resurrection for us who believe, and if Christ be risen then nothing can hinder the resurrection of our bodies also. This need not be dwelt upon here surely, because all are familiar with the scriptural testimony which so abundantly bears upon this subject.

There have been some reflections in our mind in more special connection with the texts of Scripture referred to in the beginning of this editorial, to which we have felt like calling attention, and first among them is this, that in all these places Christ is declared to be the first to rise from the dead. There is no contradiction here of the statements of the Old and the New Testaments concerning the raising again of the two children by the prophets Elisha and Elijah, or concerning the raising up of the ruler's daughter, and the widow's son, and Lazarus, by the word of the Savior himself, for all these were but raised up to a resumption of this natural life, and were still subject to disease, decay and death, together with sin. Paul in Hebrews testifies that women received their dead raised to life again, while others were tortured, not accepting deliverance that they might obtain a better resurrection. Better than what? Why, better than that accorded to the children who were restored to their mothers, better than a resurrection back again to this natural life. None had before been raised up, as was the blessed Lord. In the true gospel sense he was the first to rise from the dead. None had thus risen before him. This is a plain statement, and by it we learn that none of the patriarchs, or prophets, or holy men of old, had yet been raised up from the dead. Two of the Old Testament saints had been translated, that they should not see death: "Enoch walked with God and was not, for God took him," and Paul singles him out as a solitary example of the escape of death. Had this been a common experience of believers, it would not have been said of Enoch more than of the rest. Enoch alone under the patriarchal dispensation, and Elijah alone under the prophetic dispensation, escaped death. God gave to them this faith. But of all the rest who died in faith, it is not said that they were translated that they should not see death. And of them all it is true that they have not risen from the dead, else Christ had not been the first to rise.

This is also evident from this additional fact. It is testified by the Holy Spirit by the Apostle Matthew, that among the wonderful signs which accompanied the Savior's death, such as the rending of the rocks, and the darkening of the sun, and the rending of the veil of the temple, that the graves were

opened, and many bodies of saints that slept arose and came out of their graves after his resurrection, and went about the holy city, and appeared unto many. Thus it is evident that these bodies at least were not yet risen, else they could not have been said to have been raised, and to have come out of their graves after his resurrection. Also we ought to notice that it is not said that all the bodies of all the saints that slept thus arose, but many. The word “many” just as surely means only a part, as the word few would mean it. Thus the resurrection of these many bodies proved beyond all contradiction that Jesus was truly the first to arise from the dead. In view of this it is no wonder that Paul in 2 Timothy ii. 17, 18, utters such condemnation of the heresy of Hymeneus and Philetus, who said that the resurrection was past already, thus overthrowing the faith of some. This was an express denial that Christ was the first to rise from the dead, and if this were denied, then the hope of justification, and of their sonship in Christ was vain; they who had hoped in his resurrection were yet in their sins, and all the experience that they had rejoiced in, was but a figment of the brain. No wonder that Paul uttered such severe condemnation of these men and their heresy.

Still further, if Christ was the first to rise from the dead, then it is manifest that in the sense in which this is spoken, his people did not rise when he arose. Had they have then arisen, it could not have been said that he was first. All who rose with him would have been first, as well as he. In one sense all his people did indeed rise with him, that is, from under the curse of the law, and into the new covenant relation with God. This is shown elsewhere in the Scriptures, and is not disputed, and we need not to dwell upon this here, but in the sense in which the apostle spoke, his people did not then arise. Their resurrection is also yet in the future. From the example of the Old Testament saints, and from the resurrection of the bodies of many that slept after his resurrection, we learn that the resurrection does not take place at the moment of death. And we learn from the statement that he was the first to arise, that his people did not rise at the moment of his resurrection. Therefore the resurrection, to all the people of God, save only those whose bodies arose when he arose, is in the future, and this the Scriptures in all places say. They always speak of it as being yet future.

Another thought suggests itself here, viz: Jesus himself was in paradise while his body lay in Joseph’s new tomb. He said to the penitent thief, “To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise.” We know from the narrative that their bodies were not in paradise, both were laid away in the earth. The body of Jesus arose on the third, the appointed day. Thus was fulfilled in the death of both Jesus and the penitent thief the decree, then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit to God who gave it. But we see the dust of Jesus rising again from the dead, and as he was the first, so shall this dying “thief,” and all who believe, also rise from the dead, and it appears to us that the testimony of the record shows that this resurrection will not take place with one until it takes place with all, at the last moment, when the last trump shall sound.

It is because of this hope of the resurrection of the body that saints are said to sleep in Jesus. Sleep has with it the hope of an awaking again. Because this is so the word is used to set forth the hope of a believer that when he dies he shall rise again from the dead. We would call attention to the fact that before the resurrection of Christ from the dead, the word sleep is used to describe death, and after his resurrection saints are not only said to be asleep, but also dead. In Job xiv. 12, the dead are said to be asleep. See also Jer. li. 57, Dan. xii. 2, Deut. xxxi. 16, and other places in the Old Testament. Jesus also said of Lazarus that he sleepeth, meaning as he said directly, he is dead. Thus death was spoken of as being a sleep, before the resurrection of Christ, and on the other hand afterwards saints are said to be dead, as well as asleep. They are so spoken of eight or nine times in 1 Cor. xv. See also 1 Thess. iv. 16, and other places beside. But whether we use the word sleep, or the word dead; whether we speak of

those who sleep in Christ, or of the dead in Christ, this sleep and this death still abides, and none are yet risen from it save those who arose when Jesus arose. For in all places their resurrection is said to be in the future. Faith in the people of God can say no more nor less than the written word says, and the word of God speaks of the resurrection as being in the future. If we therefore say that the resurrection is past with any, save those already spoken of, we come into the same condemnation as did Hymeneus and Philetus. And as it was the body of Christ that arose, so must it be our bodies also, that they may be fashioned like unto his glorious and glorified body. How his body of flesh and bones was glorified, and what that change in it means, we cannot know, and so also we cannot know what this change means in our vile body, but it was his real body of flesh and bones that was glorified, and so will it be our body of flesh and bones, now vile, that shall be glorified, being changed into his image. For this God's dear people have hoped in every age, and in this hope have they died, triumphing over death, and rejoicing. This glorious hope will not be disappointed.

Redemption will be finally completed. We have not yet attained, but we shall attain. Then shall we be satisfied, when we awake in his likeness. We shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. This our hope embraces and expects, and for this we wait. This is the adoption, the redemption of our body. The things which we experience here are but the earnest of the inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession. As man sinned in the flesh, so must he be redeemed in the flesh; as death passed upon him because of sin, and so the body goes down to the grave and into death, so redemption must embrace the body, else death is not fully conquered, and redemption is not fully complete, but Christ goes before in all; he is the first to rise from the dead, he was the first to enter the full glory. As the bodies of Enoch and Elijah are in that perfect state, changed into the image of the dear Redeemer, and as those who are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, so shall the bodies of the dead who believe be raised, experiencing the same change as do those who are alive then, and all together be with the Lord, and like him.

“This glorious hope revives our courage by the way,
While each in expectation lives and longs to see the day.”

The crowning thought with us as we write these things is, that in all things Jesus has the pre-eminence; in all things he is the leader of his Israel, and they can but rejoice to follow where he goes. Let us be steadfast in the faith, rejoicing in hope of the glory of God.

C.
Hopewell, N. J.
(*Editorial in Signs of the Times, July 15, 1902*)



The Late ELDER L. H. HARDY

REIDSVILLE, N. C., May 25, 1909.

DEAR BROTHER CHICK: – For some cause I feel strongly impressed to write some of the things which I understand the Scriptures to teach concerning the resurrection of the bodies of those who sleep, both of the just and of the unjust, and I pray the Lord to guide me in the attempt.

I have thought whether God's dealing with Enoch was not a figure of His dealings with all the other members of his mystical body. "He was not, for God took him." – Gen. v. 24. Where was that natural body in which he had lived and walked with God and begat sons and daughters? Was it not that body that "was translated that he should not see death"? – Heb. xi. 5. If so, are there two kinds of people in God's glory, one in the translated body and another in a different or exchanged body? We read of him that he was not found, for God had translated him. Doubtless it was the same body that lived here and in which he pleased God that was translated. If that is true, how can it be otherwise than that it is the same body that is to-day and suffers pain, commits sin, walks as God directs, &c., that shall rise from the dead? Not a natural, but a changed and spiritual body. The body of Enoch was not a natural body after the translation, but a transplanted, a spiritual body, as all the saints shall have.

Another case was that of Elijah. As he and Elisha walked and talked there came "a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven." – 2 Kings ii. 11. Where was his body in which he had prophesied and been persecuted? The sons of the prophets would send fifty strong men to look for it, even after Elisha had protested, and they searched in the mountains and in the valleys three days, but returned empty. They persuaded Elisha until in his shame he gave his consent for them to go, but when they returned the shame was theirs and the prophet had honor with the Lord. Where was the body of Elijah? It was taken to heaven, as was that of Enoch, and was a translated body, or a spiritual body.

It is said of our Lord, "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept." – 1 Cor. xv. 20. Why call him the firstfruits if there are none to come after him? In the days of Israel's sacrifices they were commanded to bring to the house of the Lord the first of the first-fruits of the harvest; did not that signify that there should be other fruits to follow the firstfruits? If not, I fail to see the sense of the language. Also in Paul's expression concerning Christ; if there are to be no other fruits from the dead I fail to see the sense of his argument. He was not speaking of the spiritual quickening that the Lord spoke of in John v. 25: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live;" but of that which our Lord said in verses 28, 29; "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; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life: and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." If this is not what Paul refers to, I fail altogether to catch his meaning. Christ, in his body, is the firstfruits of the resurrection of the saints in their bodies which shall come forth like unto his glorious body. When his body came forth from the dead it was the same body that ministered to the saints and that was crucified, for the prints of the nails and the spear were yet there, and they became a witness to Thomas. It appears to me that the whole of the time that he showed himself to his disciples after his resurrection was for a testimony to the saints for all time. They saw that it was he, the same Jesus who had showed forth to Israel for three years and a half. He had conquered every one who had risen up against him, and now he

had conquered death and the grave with the Roman seal upon it. He who had power over death while he was yet in death, and could take up his life again, can he not bring forth from the dead all who put their trust in him? Yes, verily, for this is just what he has done. In the resurrection of his body from the dead there is the assurance of the resurrection of all the members of his mystical body at his coming. That is the time of the harvest, when the full virtue of the firstfruits shall be known. Christ is “the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ’s, at his coming.” Now if the dead rise not, then is Christ not raised, and if Christ be not raised, then there is no gospel, and those who now live in hope must die in despair. Just as sure as the body of Christ has risen from the dead, just so sure shall the bodies of the saints rise at his coming; and just as sure as the saints now bear the image of the earthy, just so sure shall they then bear the image of the heavenly. Now they bear the image of Adam, the earthy, and are like unto the body of Christ while he was in the flesh, but in the resurrection that earthy image will be fully done away, for it will have been swallowed up of death. They shall be raised up like unto his glorious body. It is the same, however, that was sown a natural body that shall be raised a spiritual body. This fifteenth chapter of first Corinthians is devoted to the resurrection, first, of the actual body of our Lord, and secondly, of his mystical body, the church, and the one is just as sure as the other, for if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not raised, your faith is vain and our preaching is vain. Are not the troubles and deliverances through which we are now passing the earnest of these very things? And what is the sense of an earnest if it is not to inspire hope in that to which it points forward? Surely if the saints are not to rise, faith is vain, hope is vain, our preaching is vain and we are yet in our sins. Let us eat and drink and be merry, for to-morrow we die and will be no more. The anchor is lost, the compass is taken away, the cable is broken and the ship is cast on the rock and beaten to pieces and we will be no more. If this is not the teaching of Paul, I am so blind that I cannot see.

The teaching of our Lord in that before cited text, John v. 28, 29, is that both the righteous and the wicked shall hear His voice and shall come forth. He says, “The hour is coming.” therefore it is in the future. We do not know when it is, but if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. “For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first.” – 1 Thess. iv. 16. Evidently the apostle is not speaking of the resurrection of the actual body of Christ, which event occurred nearly two thousand years ago, but of the actual resurrection of the bodies of the saints, who are the members of his body in particular. They shall rise first. What can he mean? To be sure that there is some one to rise afterwards. Who is it? Our Lord said it is they who have done evil, and they shall come forth unto the resurrection of damnation, and of them he has said, “And these shall go away into everlasting punishment.” For he had said unto them, “Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.”

My dear brother, I hope you will be able to gather from what I have written what I understand the Scriptures to teach, and what I really believe to be the way of the Lord with us.

I am in very feeble health; hope you and yours are well. The Lord bless both you and us to live unto him and to declare his word.

Your brother in the hope of the resurrection of this body from the dead.

L. H. HARDY

North Carolina

(Article taken from Signs of the Times)

The Late ELDERS C. B. and SYLVESTER HASSELL

of North Carolina

(Authors and Publishers of Hassell's Church History. The following is part of the obituary which Elder Sylvester Hassell wrote of his father, in which he states they both believed in the resurrection of the body.)

At father's advanced age, his close confinement in 1879 to the preparation of this history gave the finishing blow to his excellent constitution. He studied and wrote on it almost incessantly, feeling that his time was short. It was with him a labor of love, but it was too excessive. For at least six months before his death he had been visibly failing. His mind dwelt almost entirely upon heavenly things. He earnestly exhorted his brethren to show their faith by their works; to be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord. The churches that he served were not composed of dead members. Spring Green Church, a year before his death, built a large new house of worship, and Skewarkey meeting-house was being thoroughly repainted during his last illness. The dear brethren and sisters in these churches, as well as his family, feel that they are irreparably bereaved. He preached at Skewarkey for the last time on February 8, 1880. His text, No. 2,096, used on that occasion, was Ephesians iv. 4-6, especially the words, "One Lord, one faith, one baptism." He spoke an hour and a quarter. He preached at Spring Green for the last time on February 22. His text, No. 2,097, used then, was 2 Corinthians v. 1-4: "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved," etc. He preached fifty-five minutes. Though not able to travel, he went to the Skewarkey Union Meeting at Conoho, Martin County, February 27, and preached fifty minutes, the introductory sermon, from Hebrews ii. 17, 18: "Wherefore, in all things, it behooved Him to be made like unto His brethren," etc. Thus his last public discourse was upon the most precious object of his affections – the Lord Jesus Christ. His favorite hymn was,

"Thou dear Redeemer, dying Lamb,
We love to hear of Thee."

And through life his favorite motto, often quoted, was "Jehovah Jireh:" "The Lord will provide." In communion at the Union Meeting on Sunday afternoon, with eyes mostly directed towards Heaven, he dwelt, in strains that seemed almost in-spined, upon the sufferings of Jesus for sinners, and upon the Divine and eternal glory of His church. That night (February 29), at brother S. W. Outterbridge's, he was taken with a severe pain in his right side, proceeding from an enlarged and indurated liver. Nothing could give him much relief. At his request, Hicks' Farewell (No. 623, Lloyd's Selection), beginning,

"The time is swiftly rolling on
When I must faint and die,"

was sung. Next morning he got into his buggy, and his wife drove him home. He obtained temporary relief from the pain by a light dose of calomel. On the evening of Sunday, the twenty-first, he had himself taken downstairs into the prayer meeting room, and addressed those assembled in the most tender and loving manner, as though he knew it was for the last time. On the evening of the twenty-

eighth he was also taken there, but seemed to have strength enough only to say, "Sing on." He kept declining in flesh and strength. His whole nervous and digestive apparatus seemed utterly exhausted, and gave way. On March 31 the same pain returned in his right side, and under the repetition of the mercurial treatment it was one day and two nights before it left him. After that he had no more pain, but kept weakening to the last. Six physicians visited him, but he was beyond human restoration; God was about to call His aged and faithful servant home. I was by his bedside almost constantly, day and night, for a week. In all his illness he never manifested the least anxiety in regard to his future state. Not a cloud dimmed his prospect of a blessed immortality. A little before the last he said, "I am passing to a better world. I am going from the land of the dying to the land of the living. To live is Christ, and to die is gain. It is far better to depart and be with Christ than to stay in this sin-deified world. It may be a disadvantage to those he leaves, but it is an advantage to the Christian to die. He exchanges this state of sin and sorrow for the perfect peace and happiness of the paradise of God. There are some things that we do not know, and that it is best for us not to know; but there are some blessed things that we do know. We do know that when our earthly house of this tabernacle is dissolved, we shall have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens. We do know that when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with Him in glory. We do know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose. We do know that though we walk through the valley of the shadow of death, we shall fear no evil; for God will be with us, His rod and staff will comfort us even there. Nothing shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. O what a good and a faithful God! Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless His holy name. Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him. No other one is worthy of our trust. Others will disappoint your expectations; but God cannot deny Himself – He will be perfectly faithful to all His blessed promises. Love one another. Walk in the way of His holy commandments. Trust in God. Be perfectly resigned to His holy will, which must be done, and ought to be done, and is always best. Bury me in a plain wooden coffin, and without display, or ceremony, or preaching, in the simple manner of the apostolic age. I have never engaged in funeral preaching. Just let my friends gather in silence around, when my body is deposited in its last resting place. Bury me at Skewarkey, by the side of my children."

For almost every one that called to see him he seemed to have a special message and some heavenly advice. His family and friends, brethren and sisters, crowded around him, and were loth to lose a single word. He seemed to me a Christian patriarch dispensing his dying blessing to his children. His last words to me were: "The Lord's blessing and a father's blessing go with you and yours, my dear son, through life, and bring you to a better world." His most frequent expression during his illness was, "Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless His holy name." On the last day, when he was too weak to say scarcely anything, he often repeated, "All right! all right!" When quite restless and tossing about, towards 12 o'clock Saturday night, April 10, he was asked if he wanted anything, and he said, "Nothing in this world." He seemed conscious to almost the very last, and about 1 o'clock Sunday morning, without a struggle, a sigh, or a gasp, his spirit quit its mortal tenement and ascended to the bright mansions of rest. A placid and heavenly smile rested upon his countenance. In his last will, written in 1879, he had said, "I resign my body to the dust, from whence it came, and my spirit to God who gave it, confidently expecting a happy reunion beyond the grave." Death had no terrors for him. He is

"Asleep in Jesus! peaceful rest!
Whose waking is supremely blest."

Monday, April 12, was a bright, cold day. Numbers of sympathizing friends began soon to gather at my father's house. At half-past two P.M. the procession started for the cemetery at Skewarkey, a mile distant. Every store and shop in Williamston was closed. Almost the entire population of the town and surrounding country, of all parties and denominations, young and old, rich and poor, black and white, issued forth and respectfully accompanied the remains to the grave. In tearful and almost reverential silence they gathered around the body of their father and friend, and looked for the last time in this world upon the loved features. The coffin was gently lowered into its receptacle by the hands of dear brethren, and noiselessly covered with earth. On the morning of the last day the body thus sown in weakness and dishonor will be raised in power and glory, and rejoin its companion spirit; and the devoted servant of Christ will be welcomed to a blissful and everlasting association with his God. May Divine grace prepare us to follow him to that sinless and tearless state.

SYLVESTER HASSELL



The Late ELDER H. B. JONES

THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD

What do the scriptures teach on the subject? Who or what are the subjects of it? Those are pertinent questions and important ones to all who wish to be guided by the word of God – all who believe the Bible is the only in-spired divinely authorized and infallible standard, or rule of faith and practice for true worshippers of God. The doctrine of the resurrection of the dead is a fundamental principle of the doctrine of God our Saviour, the denial of which is a denial that our Saviour, Jesus Christ, did what the holy scriptures say he came into the world to do, i. e., “Save His people from their sins.” However there were those – even in the church before the apostles had passed off the stage of action who denied it, for we hear an apostle saying, “But shun profane and vain babblings for they will increase unto more ungodliness and their words will eat as doth a canker, of whom is Hymeneus and Philetus, who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already and overthrow the faith of some.” I have gathered the idea from the writings of some prominent among Old School or Primitive Baptists, as writers, that there were those in the church at Corinth in the days of the Apostle Paul who denied that Christ had risen from the dead which gave rise to Paul's argument in first Cor. 13th chapter. That is this was their idea about it. But this looks hardly reasonable, for one could hardly have retained a position in the church any length of time, who denied a fact so vital and important. But it is evident that there were those in the church at Corinth, who denied the future resurrection of the dead, and this was the heresy the apostle was opposing. The apostle was basing his argument on the fact that Jesus had been raised from the dead. Such had been preached among them and such they had believed. 1st

Cor. 15:11. But this (i. e. that Jesus Christ had been put to death, been buried and had arisen from the tomb) were a falsehood, if so be that the dead are not raised.

“But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen and if Christ be not risen then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain... “For if the dead rise not then is not Christ raised. And if Christ be not raised your faith is vain, ye are yet in your sins. Then they which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ we are of all men most miserable. But now is Christ risen from the dead and become the first fruits of them that slept.” 1st Cor. 15:13-20. Since then Jesus (that same Jesus that was buried in and came up out of Joseph’s new tomb) arose and “became the first fruits of them that ‘slept’ the raising up of all them who sleep in Him is sure. By reference to the latter clause of the 6th verse of this same chapter, we get the idea as to who or what it is that sleeps. A prominent writer and editor, writing on this subject a few years ago, after quoting Mat. 22:31, 32 said “Thus we see Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, while dead to us as men, are living unto God and are really not dead at all.” (How about David? see Acts 2:29) “All of God’s people are just this way, none of them die.” (Then, I would ask, can there be any further resurrection of the dead?) Christ having risen from the dead, and they being partakers of this first resurrection, the second, or corporal death can have no power over them. Above this in the same article we find this language. “Those for whom Christ died cannot die, they have everlasting life. The second death, the death of the mortal body, has no power over them, for while their mortal bodies do die and return to the dust the spirit or life cannot die,” etc. “When the earthly house of this tabernacle is dissolved, they shall be clothed upon with that building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. Two different houses, but the same child of God that now dwells in this earthly house shall dwell in that other house not made with hands,” etc.

Those quotations embody a theory that denies the resurrection and change of our physical, material or mortal bodies. (I do not want to misrepresent any one, and if I am mistaken, or wrong in my deductions and the writer I am quoting, believes in the future resurrection or that those bodies are the children or any part of the children of God I will gladly make correction.)

In my humble judgment it teaches also, the theory of Hymeneus and Philetus, “that the resurrection is past already.” 2nd Tim. 2:18 “The child of God” is a being that dwells in this mortal body or “earthly house” until this mortal body dies, or the house is dissolved and then simply changes houses or goes into another house. If there is any future resurrection of the dead in this theory I have to confess I am too dull of comprehension to see it. This is the theory, evidently, that the apostle was combatting, in 1st Cor. 15th chapter, and that I understand the scriptures everywhere contradict. It is true that in a sense the saints do not die. As Jesus says “He that liveth and believeth on Me shall never die.” John 11:26. It is just as true that in another sense they do die. To assert unqualifiedly that the saints or believers do not die, is to contradict the Apostle Paul in Acts 20:10, “and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the high priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them.” I presume that none will deny that the terms, saints, believers, and children of God, as used in the scriptures allude to the same characters. We learn from the above that the apostle considered men and women (children of the earthly Adam) saints, as he could not have “shut up” spirits in prison or “put them to death.” The children of God bear a relationship to two different heads – the one earthly, the other heavenly. “The first man Adam who was of the earth earthy,” the second Adam a quickening spirit.” His first or earthly relationship must be dissolved. He cannot die. In other words, in Adam he must die. In Jesus he never dies. “For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But

every man in his own order. Christ the first fruits, afterwards they that are Christ's at His coming, 1st Cor. 22:23.

“So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many, and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation.” Heb. 9:28. If we would know something of this second appearing of our Saviour, let us turn to Acts 1:9-11. “And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold two men stood by them in white apparel which also said, “Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven.” Again we read, “The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall 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. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.” 2nd Thess. 4:18. This will not fit the theory that teaches that the “appearing” of Jesus is only in the personal experience of each individual believer and that “the last day” is the day of each one's death, because it speaks of His coming as a second coming, and “without a sin.” This signifies beyond a doubt, that there was a previous appearing with sin. That evidently was when He came the first time bearing our sins in His own body etc. In the personal experience of the saints (with some of them at least) there are many “appearings” when Jesus is revealed as precious to their faith. Then the testimony is that some of the saints shall not die, but “shall be changed,” etc. For it is written “Behold I shew you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible and we shall be changed.” (not merely exchanged). “For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on in-corruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, “Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?” 1st. Cor. 15:51-55. If the dead are not raised up at the last day, as God hath appointed and this corruptible never puts on incorruption, nor this mortal never puts on immortality, then the saying that is written, “O death, where is thy sting. O grave where is thy victory,” will never be brought to pass. The theory that the “inner man, as an enduring spirit just dwelling in this mortal visible body only, is the “Child of God,” the subject of regeneration, and the resurrection, can never be harmonized with the above quotation, and many other passages we might quote, for we cannot reckon this innermost soul or spirit,” which takes its leave of this body at death, to be mortal, or corruptible, and in the resurrection of the dead “corruptible is changed to incorruptible and mortal to immortal.”

It has been said the word “mortal” means “subject to death, destined to die; as man is mortal,” which definition is correct, but the deductions drawn from this declares all the above scripture untrue, because it is said “the body after death is not mortal for the reason the life that made it mortal has taken its flight.” It is very clear that our bodies now are mortal, but that “the life made it so,” is not so clear, but it is clear that the writer does not believe that our bodies which are now mortal, is that which “is sown a mortal body and is raised an immortal body, is sown a natural body and raised a spiritual body.” Is the mortal that put on immortality the thing resurrected and changed reckoned a “vile body.” Can this be said of either the inner man, or of the church collectively? In Phil. 3:21 we read “Who shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able to subdue all things unto Himself.” In Rom. 8:11 “But if the spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also, (in like manner) quicken your mortal bodies by His spirit that dwelleth in you.” The advocates of the theory above mentioned have

contended that the quickening mentioned in this verse, means a quickening in a personal experience here in time, as to life in duty, etc. But it seems clear that the words “shall also” implies, that God hath raised up our Saviour from the tomb, and that we shall be raised up the same way. I cannot understand the word resurrection as used in the scriptures to apply to something living, but always to the dead. There is no room for guessing when it comes to what the penalty was passed upon when the law was violated in the Garden of Eden, for it is written, “For dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return.” Gen. 3:19. This same evidently is the subject of salvation, hence the subject of the resurrection of the dead.

We are not unmindful that this subject is composed of soul, spirit and body. In 1st. Thess. 5:23-24 we read, “And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly. And I pray God your whole spirit, and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.” If the theory that denies the resurrection and change, of those mortal bodies from mortal to immortal be true, then this test among many others is untrue, for the body as well as the spirit and the soul is preserved blameless, and neither can be lost. “Why should it be thought a thing incredible” with any one “that God should raise the dead.” Acts 26:8. Is not our Bible a record of miraculous works that God hath wrought? We read “that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust.” Acts 24:15.

This text does not say that there has been, or that there is going on now, but that “there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust.” “The hour is coming in 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 to the resurrection of damnation.” John 5:28-29. The scriptures teach therefore that there is a time appointed, when Jesus Christ, our blessed Saviour and Redeemer will come again to this earth “the second time,” and all the dead shall be raised up, both the just and the unjust. Do we believe it? But do we want to spiritualize the facts away? It is not much for us to know the work will be done, or how we shall appear after death. But do we believe we shall, (all of us, spirit, soul and body) appear at all? Shall this “vile body” be raised up at the last day, changed and fashioned like the glorious body of Jesus? Shall we stumble at the fact, that since the beginning of time, so many of Adam’s race have existed on the earth, and have died in so many ways, perishing by thousands on the battlefields, buried at sea, burned to ashes and hundreds of other ways, in which the dust is mingled with other dust, and often scattered to the winds? I say shall all this stagger our faith in the word and promise of God? The inspired writers knew all these things, yet they clearly assert the resurrection of the dead, in that future day which God hath appointed. We who believe the doctrine should do likewise, offering no apologies, and asserting no more than the scriptures assert in endeavoring to explain. The general Arminian theory of the future state, is as far from the truth as the one we have been opposing. In corporal death we are separated from all earthly relationships, and shall live in them no more. And in the kingdom of heaven, “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for ye are one in Christ Jesus.” Gal. 3:28. “For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven,” Matt. 22:30. “Beloved now are we the sons of God and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when He appears we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as he is.” Like David may all his children say “As for me I will behold Thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake in Thy likeness.” Psalm 15:17. Our corporal death is not the “second death” mentioned in Rev. 2:11, 20:14, 21:8. That evidently alludes to the final state of the wicked. But our death is only a falling asleep in Jesus, from which we are to be awakened. 1st Thess. 4:13.

Winnesboro, Tex.

H. B. JONES

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The Late ELDER W. N. THARP

OUR BODIES WILL BE RESURRECTED

CHAPTER I

Elder R. W. Thompson; Dear Brother: I have been impressed of late to write for the Monitor some thoughts on the doctrine of the resurrection. While a belief in the resurrection is almost universal, there is quite a variety of notions as to the manner and nature of the resurrection. There are some very strange notions among the heathen, but the most common idea among professed Christians is that the body will appear in the resurrection just as it is in this life. This is the idea that the Sadducees had of it, which, no doubt, led them to disbelieve it. See Matt. xxii, 24-28. This is also the view of most all Arminians of the present time. The Sadducees, having no interest in Christ, pointed to the difficulties of renewing the present state of existence. The Arminians, not being able to comprehend anything higher than the present state, take comfort in the thought of family reunions beyond the grave.

Another notion of the resurrection, which I wish to notice more especially, is that the flesh has no part in it, and that it is a spirit resurrection. Although those holding this view agree on the main points, there are so many shades of difference and different expressions used by them, that one becomes confused in attempting to determine just what they believe. They either stand on a higher viewpoint than others, or they do not see the matter clearly themselves. I cannot concede the first, and I suppose they will hardly concede the second.

Others affirm a belief in the resurrection of the body, but deny that there will be a future general resurrection. They say that which is buried will never come up. One brother, in resenting the charge that he disbelieved in the resurrection, said in the same letter, "This old shell of ours, the body, will never rise from the ground." This same writer claims that in I Thessalonians 12:16, Paul is describing a resurrection that is past.

The word "resurrection," as used in the Scriptures and as generally understood in common parlance, means a coming up out of death. That which dies shall live again. The same thing that goes down in death shall come up *again*. And as the resurrection is affirmed of the body by the holy Scriptures, we feel safe in saying, and are constrained to believe that the identical body that is ours now, and is alive, will be brought up out of death into life.

The first text that occurs in the Bible that I think of as bearing testimony to this truth is Gen. v, 24; "And Enoch walked with God, and was not, for God took him." The next is like unto it: "And Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven;" II Kings ii, 11. In corroboration of these we have two texts in the

New Testament: “And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them and carried up into heaven;” Luke xxiv, 51. “Then we which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord;” I Thes. iv, 17. If there were no other texts in the Bible pertaining to the resurrection of the material body these would be sufficient ground for contending for that doctrine. The first three testify that material bodies were taken up from the earth into heaven, and the fourth is a positive declaration by an inspired apostle that a great company shall be likewise translated.

Paul said, “By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found because God had translated him.” “That he should not see death” means that the body should not die; for in all other respects he was as other men. His body was not found because God had taken it with the spirit. Elisha saw Elijah go into heaven. If his body had been left, Elisha could not have seen his spirit go up, and he certainly would have mentioned the body and told what disposition was made of it.

A careful account is given of the burial of the patriarchs and prophets who “saw death” as other men see it. Even the body of Moses is accounted for, though no man saw it after death. Yet such plain testimony as this is challenged. A brother said in a letter to me, “I believe that Jesus’ body of flesh went up in that cloud, but who knows what disposition God made of it? Then who will speculate or dare claim that that same body is in existence in that cloud or somewhere else yet?” Mark says, “He was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God.” Is it speculation to claim that the body of Jesus is in heaven still, when the testimony is so clear that he was received up into heaven and sat on the right hand of God? Would it not be worse than speculation to admit that God received the body into his presence and favor and afterwards rejected it, cast it out or made some “disposition of it” – annihilated it because it was not needed?

Is there any reason given, or can there be any theory advanced, to explain why those three bodies were received into heaven, other than that it was their final reward in heaven? Does God receive and afterward reject? Or was it all a make-believe to deceive the “elect”? Stephen, long after the ascension, was enabled to see the “Son of man standing on the right hand of God” in heaven. Notice the words, “Son of man”, which could only apply to him as the *risen* son of Mary. Though full of the Holy Ghost, was he yet deceived. Could he, and did he only see the Spirit of God that once dwelt in the Son of man standing on the right hand of God. If you are convinced that these three human bodies were received into heaven and that they were not afterwards cast out, then it is conclusive that every one who has found favor with God, will dwell in heaven with their bodies as they do or that these three are the exception, they alone having their bodies in heaven.

To put the foregoing syllogism in form, we have:

First. The future state of the elect are identical.

Second. The bodies of Enoch, Elijah, and Jesus are with God in heaven.

Third. Therefore, the bodies of all the saints will be with God in heaven.

This we believe to be an unanswerable argument in favor of the resurrection of the bodies of the saints.



CHAPTER II

Job believed in the resurrection of his body of flesh. After bewailing his frailty and showing that his endurance of this life was inferior to that of a tree he said, “So man lieth down, and riseth not: till the heavens be no more. They shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep. Oh, that thou wouldst hide me in the grave, that thou wouldst keep me secret, until thy wrath be past, that wouldst appoint me a set time and remember me! If a man die, shall he live again? All the days of my appointed time will I wait till my change come. Thou shalt call, and I will answer thee: thou wilt have a desire to the work of thy hands;” Job xiv, 12-15.

Why does Job ask to be hid in the grave and to be kept secret until God’s wrath be past, if the grave is final? Why should he ask, “If a man die, shall he live again?” He had just acknowledged that he could not live again in this world when contrasting his life with the life of a tree. What change was appointed him for which he was waiting? He must have been waiting for the resurrection, to-wit: the redemption of his body.

Hear his solemn words spoken a little later from the depths of his heart, and we believe by inspiration: “Oh, that my words were now written! Oh, that they were printed in a rock forever! For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth; and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God, whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me.” This is certainly the language of faith. – A prophecy of “Jesus and the resurrection.” He could not have been speaking of his restoration to health, for his body was not destroyed in that sickness. He did not speak of God’s appearance to him in that affliction as recorded in the latter part of the book; for the entire narrative indicates that that appearance was unexpected and it occurred so soon that it was unnecessary that his vision of it should be “graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock.” He was speaking of an event that was to occur “in the latter day”; after he had been hidden in the grave until the wrath of God be past, and his body destroyed by worms after his Redeemer, Jesus, had stood on the earth in the latter day.

David believed in the resurrection of his body; for he said, “Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope;” Psa. xvi, 9. Also, “As for me, I shall behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness;” Psa. xvii, 15. David, in this, saw by faith what Paul afterward declared, when he said, “For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection;” Rom. vi. 5. Note that the resurrection is here spoken of as still in the future. How could David’s flesh rest in hope if the grave is its final destiny? David, like all other persons, knew that his flesh was failing from day to day and that it must perish, but he had hope that it would rise again. But some one may say, David was personifying Jesus. Admit it and the evidence is strengthened, for David was speaking what was written in his own heart and experience, and whatever is done for the flesh of Jesus, is done for the flesh of David; for our resurrection depends on his resurrection; and David’s faith embraced his resurrection in Christ, even in his very likeness.

John iii, 2, also bears testimony with Job and David: “Beloved now, are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise: awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead;” Isa. xxvi, 19. This is a figure pointing to the restoration of the kingdom of Israel in and by Christ. But Daniel shows that

there is real substance in that figure when he says, “And many of them that sleep in the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt;” Deut. xii, 2. Matthew records similar language, Chap. xxvii, 52, 53. Another figurative use of the resurrection is recorded in Rev. xi, 11; “And after three days and a half the spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet: and great fear fell upon them that saw them;” read the entire chapter.

The thirty-seventh chapter of Ezekiel is highly figurative. Thus we have three circumstantial witnesses to prove the resurrection, that it is impossible to impeach, for these witnesses are true and speak no lie. They have not drawn their figures from fiction, but from things in truth. Figures, types and parables in the Bible are always drawn from real substantial facts; never from the unreal. Jesus spoke of sheep, seed, plants, metals, water and many other things because there were such things, and by using them in figure we can better understand the subject in hand. The subject with Ezekiel was the death and decay of the Jewish kingdom and the establishment of the kingdom of Christ instead. Death and the resurrection is a strong and well-taken figure. The Jewish kingdom came from God, but was temporal and must perish; even as our human nature though coming from God, is temporal and must perish. And as our future holy being must be the transformed spiritualized human being, so was the kingdom of Christ the transformed Jewish kingdom. So complete is the figure that Judea is laid as the site of the resurrected kingdom. David is restored to the throne, not as his former self, but as the exalted Christ. The people are to be the same people, but transformed even as their King. So wonderful is the change, and so much better is their state and condition, that they are no more to be divided. “Neither shall they defile themselves any more with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions: but I will save them out of all their dwelling places, wherein they have sinned, and I will be their God.” No other figure could so forcibly illustrate the wonderful difference between the kingdom of God in its temporal, legal form, and its exalted spiritual form. The inhabitants of the kingdom of Christ are, in their spiritual natures, immune from sin, free from harm, fed with the bounties of heaven and clothed with righteousness. If there is no resurrection of the material body, this figure would not have been used. Hence we have here developed another syllogism, which put in form is:

1st. All figures, types and parables in the Bible have their foundation in fact.

2nd. The resurrection is used in figure to illustrate other subjects.

3rd. Therefore, the resurrection of the material body is a fact. Unless the first proposition in this syllogism is proved false, it remains an unanswerable argument in favor of the resurrection of the material body.



CHAPTER III

Jesus taught the resurrection of the body from the grave. When the Sadducees came to him and said, There were seven brethren: and the first took a wife, and he died childless. And the second took her to wife, and he died childless. And the third took her; and in like manner the seven also: and they left no children, and died. Last of all the woman died also. Therefore in the resurrection whose wife is she? for seven had her to wife. And Jesus answering said unto them, The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage: but they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection

from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels, and are children of God, being the children of the resurrection. Now that the dead are raised, even Moses shewed at the bush, when he called 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; Luke xx, 29-37. See also Matt. xxii, 25-32; Mark xii, 20-27.

For a correct understanding of this text, like all others we must know the premises. The Sadducees did not believe in any kind of a resurrection; neither did they know what Jesus taught concerning it, but thought to confound him with the confusion that would necessarily follow a restoration of the present life and its relations. This is an important lesson brought out in the life of Christ which forever refutes the common idea that the resurrection is a return to our present state in which we will recognize and reunite with our kin-rection in the future. It was the inconsistencies and the difficulties that they thought they saw in the resurrection that caused them not to believe it, and this is the common objection to the doctrine. After answering their question, he with a single quotation that was a favorite with the Jews, put them to silence. If Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had no existence beyond this life, then the Lord is not their God. But they are alive unto God, and with God. Jesus adds further testimony to this statement when he says, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life;” John v, 24. Again, “Whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die;” John xi, 26. And finally on the cross he said to the thief, “To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise.” If Jesus taught anything, he taught the continued conscious existence in life of those who are born of the Spirit. And as the Spirit does not die, there can be no resurrection but of the body.

“Being born again”; “Quickened with Christ”; “Raised up together and made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus”, might very appropriately be called a resurrection, but it is not the resurrection that Jesus contended for with the Sadducees.

There are those who contend that as Jesus spoke of the resurrection in the present tense, “are raised”; Luke xx, 37, he meant that it was then occurring, – a progressive work, but this is putting one part of this text against another, and against every text that speaks of a future resurrection, especially John v, 28. But established facts are often spoken of, using a verb in the present tense where the time of the occurrence is not in consideration, as in the following quotations: “Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the Lord’s hand double for all her sins;” Isa. xl, 2. “For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given;” Isa. ix, 6. Here in two short quotations are four examples of future events spoken of in the present tense, although the events were more than seven centuries in the future. In a very vivid and accurate description of the life and sufferings of Jesus (Isa. liii), there are six verbs denoting present tense, and twenty-eight verbs denoting past tense. If we would make this prophecy conform strictly to the precedent given by those who speculate on the verb “are” in Luke xx, 37, we should have to change the thirty-four verbs referred to, and almost as many other words, for words expressing the future tense, or contend that the whole chapter, instead of being a prophecy, is simply a narrative of events which had just passed or were then transferring.

Jesus again spoke of the resurrection as future when he said, “For thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just;” Luke xiv, 14. In speaking to the Jews, after healing the impotent man at the pool of Bethesda to which they objected, Jesus said: “Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.” Soon

after this he demonstrated his statement by raising from death the son of the widow of Nain. But following that statement he said, “Marvel not at this [bringing back to life those who have just died] for the hour is coming, [but it is not now] in the which all that are in their 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 damnation.”

There are three very important things presented in this text: 1st. The time is future, and the tense is emphasized by being put in contrast with his miracles of raising the dead literally. 2nd. It declares that the dead shall be called from the grave. It is not to be “marveled” at that he should raise Lazarus and Janus’ daughter to natural life again, for the dead shall be called out of the grave, and since the body only is put in the grave, it follows that he is teaching that the body shall be raised up out of death. 3rd. He declares the resurrection of both the just and the unjust.

It has been said by those who do not believe in a future general resurrection, that the word “grave” is used figuratively in this text; but to say that for which we need proof – a bare assertion, – is presumptuous. Making alive from the dead is the subject, and the text is the premise laid, and then the subject immediately dropped without any argument or illustration, hence if it does not mean what it says, who is to tell us what it does mean? I should have as much right to put a construction on it as anyone else. But says one, “It was so revealed to me.” Shall I submit and say it is enough? Dare I trust his claim to revelation against the plain reading of the Scripture? Would he trust me if I should claim a revelation, which did not accord with his views on any subject? I would prefer one Scripture quotation, that needs no construction to make it applicable to all the “special revelation” claimed by men since the days of the apostles.

But another says, “There is a literal and a spiritual meaning to the Scriptures.” Yes, but the one never contradicts nor nullifies the other. There can be but one reason for not accepting the Scripture as written, and that is the objector does not believe it to be true.

One brother, in speaking of the Pool of Bethesda,” said there was no such troubling of the water with healing power. If he can challenge this text may he not challenge any other, and how is he to answer those who might be disposed to challenge texts that he relies on for proof? I have even known the narrative of the temptation of Jesus in the wilderness disputed, saying that he was not separated from his friends. With such a course pursued by all the ministry, the Bible would be made a jumble of falsehood and contradictions, with no standard of test but each one’s own notion of what he thought it ought to say.

My next letter will be on the testimony of the apostles.



CHAPTER IV

The apostles believed and taught the resurrection of the bodies of the saints, and they predicated their resurrection on the resurrection of Christ’s body; so that if the body that Jesus’ disciples handled and the soldiers nailed to the cross came up, even so must our bodies which have suffered and must die, as a result of sin, have part in his glorious victory, or else the victory over sin is not complete. What can

Paul mean when, in I Cor. xv, 51, he says, “We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed?” The word “sleep” unquestionably means death. We shall not all die. We shall not all be “hid in the grave,” “but we shall be changed.” The same change or resurrection is necessary for both the dead and those who “are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord.” Here a time in the future is indicated; and the time is so definite that the event will occur “In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.” So certain is it that this is one event to all, that Paul said that, “We [the living] shall be caught up together with them” [the risen dead]; I Thes. iv, 17. “For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality;” I Cor. xv, 53. This text should forever put to silence every one who contends that the corruptible and the mortal is cast off and returns to the earth forever, for the text plainly declares that this corruptible, mortal body, must and will be raised up and clothed in incorruption and immortality.

What will be the effect of this change from corruption to incorruption, and from mortality to immortality? Answer: The victory for which Jesus fought will be complete. For, “Death is swallowed up in victory.” “The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.” Can it be said, “O, grave, where is thy victory” if all that it receives remains with it forever? The victory of all things that held us bound under the law comes to us “through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

It is evident that the apostles consider the resurrection of prime importance in the gospel, for they selected one, in Judas’ stead, to witness with them “of his [“Jesus’] resurrection:” (Acts i, 22), and they were careful to preach it from the start; and that it pertained to the body is evident from the fact that it is often affirmed of the body and never affirmed of anything else.

“The priests, and captain of the temple, and the Sadducees came upon them, being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection of the dead;” Acts iv. 1, 2. Paul said to a Jewish council, “I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee; of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question;” Acts xxiii, 6. “But this I confess unto thee, that after the way they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets: and have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust;” Acts xxiv, 14, 15. Paul did not complain that they misrepresented, but frankly admitted believing in the resurrection both of the just and the unjust.

“So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you;” Rom. viii, 8-11. I wish to call special attention to this text. Paul, in the context, argues that our service to God is not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, and reasons from this that the bodies of the saints are dead because of sin from which the body has not yet been redeemed, in the sense of personal deliverance, of which he speaks in the twenty-third verse: “Waiting for the adoption; to-wit, the redemption of our body.” Until this redemption is accomplished, our bodies will remain dead to the service of God, and can only be used as “instruments of righteousness” in our service. But in the redemption of our bodies they will be quickened into life, – spiritual life, – by the same Spirit that raised up, or quickened, the body of Jesus, and in the same nature, or in the likeness of his quickened body.

In I Cor. xv, is found the clearest and most convincing argument that has ever been recorded on the subject. The writer first establishes the resurrection of Christ with such an array of testimony that there is left no room for doubt, verses 4-8. Then he rebukes those who say “there is no resurrection of the dead,” and shows that our resurrection depends on his, and is just as certain to occur as his occurred, and that as one is, so is the other. “If there be no resurrection from the dead, then is Christ not risen,” as much as to say Christ rose that we might rise, and if we shall not rise, Christ died and rose in vain. “But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept;” verse 20. This clearly shows that the resurrection of Christ and that of his people for whom he died are similar. His resurrection is a sample or forecast of what shall follow in the general resurrection. As to the use of the word “first fruits,” see also Ex. xxiii, 19; Num. xv, 20, 21; Deut. xviii, 4; xxvi, 2; Ezek. xlv, 30.

“For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead;” I Cor. xv, 21. The principle of similarity is again shown in this. Death came through Adam to all his posterity, and their death was just like his death. So life, the resurrection from death, comes to each of the chosen of God through the one man, Christ, and that resurrection is like his as certainly as their death is like Adam’s death. For it is to man and by man that death came; so it is to man and by man (Christ Jesus) that the resurrection comes. “But every man in his own order: “Christ the first fruits (or sample); and afterward they that are Christ’s at his coming. Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death;” verses 23-26. The events spoken of here as future are still in the future. Death still reigns and will reign until the resurrection. The destruction of death will be the resurrection. The remainder of this chapter is a reply to criticisms and some illustrations on the subject.

A seed is used to illustrate the subject – a live grain, a grain of wheat or some other grain. This grain is Christ, as is also presented in St. John xii, 24: “Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.” This Jesus says concerning his own death and resurrection: “It (this grain, Jesus,) is sown in corruption;” “in dishonor;” “in weakness,” and “it is sown a natural body.” All this is true of Jesus in his incarnation, and it produced death. He was planted in the earth, therefore in corruption. He was made under the law with our sins upon him, therefore in dishonor. He was in the flesh the seed of Abraham, therefore he was weak in himself, and of himself could do nothing. And as the multitude of grains at the harvest is like the bare grain that is planted, so shall the “much fruit” (the multitude of bodies at the resurrection) be like the risen Jesus, blessed with the glory that he had with the Father before the planting or incarnation.

Some have thought because Jesus said, “I am the resurrection and the life,” that there is no resurrection except his. The same might be said of all spiritual blessings, even of life, for it is coupled with the resurrection in the text, and as certainly as we shall experience the life, we shall experience the resurrection: “Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you.” This text is conclusive proof that we shall each of us personally realize and experience the resurrection even as Jesus did. The raising up in this text is the same as that spoken of in Rom. viii, 11, and if our raising up is not like that of Christ’s, then the comparison has no force or meaning.

Paul, in writing to the Philippian church (3rd chapter), speaks in strong faith of the resurrection in the future, and in verses 20 and 21 he says, “For our conversation is in heaven; from whence we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his

glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself". That which is changed is not destroyed or discarded. The butterfly that flits in the air, on gaudy wings is the same that before crawled in the dust at our feet, a repulsive worm; but it is now raised up to a higher order of life. It has no resemblance to its former self, yet it has not lost its identity. Our vile bodies, now polluted with sin, will be changed (not cast off). Although they will not be as they are now, the identity will be the same. The fashion of it will be that of Christ's glorious body.

That the resurrection is at one certain time in the future, is clearly presented in I Thes. iv, 15-18: "For we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall 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. Wherefore comfort one another with these words." This text teaches that the Lord has a set time to visit the earth, and that when he comes some of the elect will have died (will be asleep in death), and some will yet be alive; "for we shall not all sleep." It also teaches that the dead will rise before those that are alive shall be changed; and that those who come up from the dead, and those who have not died, will be "caught up together to meet the Lord in the air." If this is not its meaning, how are we to know its meaning, and how are we to "comfort one another with these words?" If these words are so obscure that we need an inspired interpreter to tell us their meaning, how are we to know that his inspiration is of the Lord?

I wish, in conclusion, to call attention to some relative proof recorded in I Cor. vi: "Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body. And God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by his own power;" verses 13, 14. The words "both" and "also" show that there is no distinction between the nature of his raising up and theirs. It will be by the same power, from the same death, and to the same life. "Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid;" verse 15. Will Christ cast away his members? "No man ever yet hated his own flesh." Will Jesus hate the members of his body? "What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are his." Will God destroy his temple? Will he reject that which he hath bought with a price? "I pray God your whole spirit, and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ;" I Thes. v, 23. No distinction is made between the soul, body and spirit. What Paul asks for the soul and spirit, he asks for the body.

May the Lord keep us all from evil and lead us in the way of truth, is the earnest prayer of one who has hope toward God that he shall have a complete victory over sin through Jesus who died for us and rose again that we also should be exalted with him in glory.

W. N. THARP
LIBERTY, IND.

(Article published in pamphlet form)

I verily believe the foregoing treatise of our dear departed brother to be according to the word of God.

July 15, 1925

The Late ELDER JOSHUA T. ROWE

THE RESURRECTION

Sometime ago a sister told me that a certain preacher said, I do not know anything about the resurrection. Thinking this over the following scriptures have come to my mind. John 5:28-29, Jesus says, “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; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.” Romans 8:11. “But if the spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.” 1st Thes. 4:16-17. “For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall 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.” Matthew 22, read from verse 23 to 32. Luke 20:37. “Now that the dead are raised, even Moses shewed at the bush, when he calleth the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” 1st. John 3:2. “Beloved now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; But we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.” Col. 1:18. “And he is the head of the body, the Church, who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead, that in all things he might have the pre-eminence.” Phil. 3:21. “Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.” Matthew 27:52-53. “And the graves were opened, and many bodies of the saints which slept arose. And came out of their graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many. And then read fifteenth chapter of first Cor., 12th to 58th verses, and if these scriptures do not convince any open mind that the natural body is to be raised a spiritual body, I do not see the reason why. I would like to ask one question of any one who desires the resurrection of the body, or who may be skeptical on the subject, and that question is this – If Christ and his apostles did not mean by the words they used to teach that this natural body composed of flesh and bones is to be raised a spiritual body, pray tell me what words would they have used or should have used to teach that doctrine? It is so plain that they do teach it as the capstone of the whole gospel system, that I am surprised that any man called of God to preach the gospel and who reads the Bible and studies to show himself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth, should say, I know nothing about the resurrection. There is nothing more positively affirmed, or more clearly proven than that this natural body is raised a spiritual body, and our Apostle Paul says if it is not so our preaching is vain, your faith is vain, ye are yet in your sins. Some one says, I have not experienced the resurrection so cannot say about it. I ask, have you not learned enough of Jesus to believe his word. He says, “They that are in the graves shall hear his voice and come forth.” Do we not believe that the Holy Ghost taught the apostles of Jesus Christ what to say, and how to say it. Paul tells us that, “This mortal must put on immortality.” Again, “It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. Can we not credit the word of God concerning things we have not as yet experienced. Jesus said, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed; blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed. John 20:29. Some things are

seen only by faith. Abraham had not seen the land God would give him, but God said to him, get thee to a land I will show thee, and Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. The Lord's word is sufficient. Joseph had no knowledge of possibility of a virgin becoming a mother, so when he knew Mary's condition he was minded to put her away, but when the Lord told him it was the Holy Ghost, he knew it was so and was satisfied. Brethren, let us believe the word of God, and rest on it, and in it.

JOSHUA T. ROWE
of Baltimore, Maryland
(He was an associate Editor of Zion's Landmark)



ELDER W. D. GRIFFIN

THE RESURRECTION

Is there something about you that God has put into your mortal body that is to live forever? Is that indefinable something the same that fell into sin and condemnation in the morning of time when our mother Eve was deceived and led Adam to take of the forbidden fruit? We know such cannot be. If nothing of me (the poor lost sinner) is to enter heaven, except something that was put into me, what is benefited? Does language mean anything? If brethren cannot accept plainly written words to mean what authorities say they mean, then why take one set of scriptures to mean emphatically what they say and another to have a meaning that suits their fantastic theories? Brethren say that salvation is by grace. True. But why argue that the dead in sin hear the voice of the Son of God and live, then say that the bodies or those sleeping in the graves will not come forth. Each of them are to hear the same voice of the same omnipotent Son. One group is to live. If this does not mean the dead sinner, the man, that is to hear His voice then what does it mean? This wonderful work is going on now.

It is coming in the future and it is taking place right at this time. But those that are in the graves are not hearing His voice now. They are going to hear His voice sometime after these words were spoken by Jesus Christ. If brethren want to speculate they can do so for my part, but thru all the fiery trials and afflictions of time and tho this vile body shall again molder away to dust, yet do I believe that when He calls it will come forth. The Father raises up the dead and quickeneth them. Not just whom He wills as tho He willed to leave some of them dead but the plain statement is that the Father raises up the dead and quickens them. Now the Father judges no man, but has committed all judgment into the hands of His Son. He has all power that the Father has, and, in the same omnipotent way that the Father raises the dead, the Son quickeneth whom He wills.

Now brethren, some times, in a way beyond my comprehension, say that when a child of God dies all of that child goes into heaven that will ever get there and the body is never to be raised or molested in any way. But let us not forget that the Father raises and quickens the dead but the Son quickeneth whosoever He wills. Does the God of heaven quicken the same thing twice? We hear the same objections raised today against the resurrection that we did in the day of Paul. Some say, How are the

dead raised up? With what body do they come? We hear so much these days about us quitting the fight. Let us quit contending for the fundamental points of God's Church. We need each other and we ought not to make any defense against those that stand out for other things than those we know and identify the true Church thru the ages, what the Bible teaches and what our little experience has taught us. But just as soon as those that are needing us get everything that is labeled Primitive Baptist into one group can show me that Christ and His apostles were unstable enough to receive and compromise everything that came before the Church dealing gently and using all kinds of subtle means to keep together all those professing to believe in salvation by grace, then will I say to those going out from us to come on, dearly beloved brethren and let us have a get-together meeting so that we can take down all the bars and love in peace (?) ever afterwards. Now if you feel that way about it then notice Paul. Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die. (1. Cor. 15:36)

We are dead to sin and our life is hid with Christ in God. But why misconstrue this to mean that nothing of us (the poor hell deserving sinners, if you please) goes to glory. It is your life that is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our Life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory. Now this appearing is not the coming of Christ into the being of the poor sinner because the apostle was writing to those already born again. Hence this appearing is to make manifest. To make manifest is to be seen. When He shall appear then shall we appear in Glory. What a wonder to behold! If the spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies (Rom. 8:11). In every theory or in every idea, whether that truth deals in religion, science or society, it is recognized that where the head goes the body is sure to follow. If our Head and Husband suffered tribulations and trials while in the world can we as the body escape them? Can we? No, no! Altho I hear it said on every hand that we could have blessings galore, if only we obeyed, I know that what the Head of His body suffered the body is likewise to suffer. So if the Head of the Church was buried and arose will His body not be buried and arise? If these mortal bodies die and never come forth then they molder back to dust and go the way of all creatures that die, altho Paul said that in the same manner that Christ was raised from the dead our mortal bodies should be quickened. Now if Christ arose from the dead how can we say there is no resurrection of the dead? (1 Cor. 15: 12) If we say that the dead do no rise then in as positive a language as we can command we say that Christ did not arise. If he did not arise, then is our preaching vain. Not only is our preaching vain, but our faith is vain and the whole thing that we base our hope of salvation on becomes a flimsy fabric! It just looks to me that Paul makes the thing as plain as can be. If Christ (notice carefully) was raised, then as a man, He being dead, the dead are certainly raised. If we say the dead rise not then Christ was not raised and every word we have ever said in a preaching way has been in vain and really was only a lecture instead of preaching. Not only was our call to the ministry a call of nature, but our faith is a natural faith and we are still in our sins. "And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain (bare, naked), it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain. But God giveth it a body as it has pleased him, and to every seed his own (not another's) body. (1 Cor. 15:37, 38). We put our loved ones beneath the sod expecting some day that, by His grace, we shall see them again. Not as we plant them. Oh no, never! Not as the bare grain that is planted but we do hope to see it clothed upon and in the likeness of the Savior. We do not yet know anything about the body that shall come forth. It is speculation for us to say that we will know each other there as we know them here. But as the bare seed is planted in the spring to come forth in a more glorious body so the Lord will give it a more glorious body as it is pleasing to Him, yet every seed his own body. Can language be made plainer? This is not some mystical illusion nor any speculative theory. It is plain enough for those that are satisfied with the plain, inspired word of God. It shows to any that are satisfied to go to what God's word has revealed

that it is the dead bodies that naturally come forth. It (this bare grain) is sown in corruption. It is raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonor, and raised in glory; it is sown in weakness and is raised in power; it is sown a natural body and made or changed into a spiritual, but it is raised a spiritual body. Now no longer does it bear the marks of a perishing body; no longer is the stamp of death and decay seen; no longer is it a bare, naked, unclothed body, but it is clothed in the garment of righteousness that Jesus' skillful hand has wrought for them and tinged in His own precious blood!

Behold, I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed. It would seem that those non-resurrectionists would go on to the Catholics if they say this sleeping applies only to some thing that has been put into a house of clay as long as the clay lives. But we shall not all sleep. If this does not mean the people of God who are dead what does it mean? But, altho we shall not all sleep, we shall all be changed. Wonderful language this! We shall (unless living at His return) sleep but not forever. From a sleeping state we shall arise changed into a living state. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump, for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal (who?) must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal (who?) shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O Death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? (1 Cor. 15:51, 55). But if the writer and my readers as men and women die and lay forever in a moldering grave, who gets the victory? The grave forever is triumphant over something and the victory never is won. But thanks be to God which giveth us the victory (over what?) through our Lord Jesus Christ (v. 57).

Stop for a moment dear reader. Look around you. Don't you see your fellow pilgrims falling asleep one by one? Shall we see them again? Shall we again mingle our voices together in hymns of praise? Shall we triumph in grace over death, hell and the grave, that we might spend our undivided time in the ceaseless ages of eternity singing redeeming love? Listen to this testimony. "For the Lord Himself (He trod the wine press alone and of the people there was none to help, hence He is coming Himself for His people), shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall arise first; then we which are alive and remain shall 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. Wherefore, comfort one another with these words."

In hope of the resurrection,

W. D. GRIFFIN

Fayette, Alabama

(Article appeared in Old Faith Contender, September 1, 1936)



ELDER H. H. LEFFERTS

THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST IN US

Elder E. L. Cobb,

Dear Brother in the Gospel:

The Lord enabling me, I shall reply to your recent letter in which you ask my views on the 11th verse of the 8th chapter of Romans. This passage of the inspired Word declares that if the same Spirit which raised Christ from the dead dwells in us who believe, that this same Spirit shall raise our mortal bodies in the future resurrection to take place when the Lord Himself shall descend from Heaven, as is promised in the first epistle of Paul to the Thessalonians, chapter four, verses 16 and 17. According to our Lord's words in John, chapter 5, verse 29, there are to be two resurrections. The one unto the resurrection of life, the other unto the resurrection of damnation. The first of these shall be that of the redeemed unto glory, the second shall be that of the finally impenitent, reprobate wicked, unto eternal punishment. Paul, by inspiration, in Romans 8:11 announces to the Lord's people that the assurance that they are to be raised in the first resurrection which shall be unto life and immortality, is that the Spirit which raised up Christ from the dead already dwells in the elect here in this present life which we now live in this present evil world. This indwelling Spirit is proof, or pledge, that the mortal bodies of the saints shall in due time be quickened and changed into conformity with the glorious body of Christ which He himself now wears in Heaven. Our body is now mortal, but then it shall be immortal; now it is corruptible, then it shall be incorruptible. The word "mortal" means being in subjection to death; not simply being liable to die, but definitely subject to death; and when dead, being in subjection to death. Unless we who are now living on the earth are among those to be alive and remaining on the earth when our Lord comes, death shall one day take these bodies of ours. However, if the Lord is to come during our lifetime, we shall not die, but shall be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye at the last trump. Should our Lord tarry, then we shall die as have the past generations of all who have truly believed in God and in His Son Jesus Christ. Yet death shall not be able to forever enchain in the grave these bodies of ours. They are a part of the purchased possession whose redemption is promised in Ephesians 1:14. It is for this adoption, which is the redemption or resurrection of the body, we wait and hope. These bodies now mortal, shall be quickened. The Holy Spirit in the Word tells us by what means it is to be accomplished. The same Spirit which raised Christ from among the dead when He arose, is the same Spirit by which the children of God are brought to believe savingly in Christ. Ephesians first chapter, 19th and 20th verses, so declare. And this same Spirit which indwells the believing child of God is the abiding earnest, or pledge, that our mortal bodies SHALL also be quickened by means of this very Spirit, when the time set by God to do so, shall arrive. The word "SHALL" is important. The scripture doesn't declare that this Spirit "IS" quickening our mortal bodies, but that it "SHALL" do so. It is yet future, it is not something experienced by us while in this present earthly life. The notion that there is such a thing as the quickening of the mortal body now in our present experience, is not in accord with scripture teaching. The theory that this quickening of the mortal body is in our present experience of God's grace, is not in accord with Paul's experience as set forth by him in Romans 7th chapter. In the Spirit's work of regeneration, the sinner comes into possession of a divine nature imparted to him and planted within him. The old human nature is not rooted up and cast out, neither is

it quickened or a whit changed from what it was prior to regeneration. The “body” remains the same: “dead because of sin.” Romans 8:10. So long as the child of God stays here in this world, he carries with him this “dead body.” The stench of it intrudes into all his best endeavors, its impurities stain his prayers and meditations and spoils his efforts to obedience. There is no quickening of the body this side of the “first resurrection.” The essence of that for which we now hope, is the coming of the Lord from heaven to change our vile bodies and fashion them like unto the body of His own glory. “Looking for that Blessed Hope, the appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.” Then, and not until then, we shall awake in Christ’s likeness and be satisfied forever. What evidence have you or I, or has any one, that we are to have a place and part in the “first resurrection”? That is, the future coming forth of the complete and whole redeemed church in body and in soul and in spirit from among the dead? The evidence we have is this indwelling of the Holy Spirit in our mortal bodies now. Our bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost. I Cor. 6:19. Likewise, it is declared that our bodies are the members of Christ. Being the members of Christ, can they be lost forever in death? To say so would be to say that part of Christ can remain forever dead. It cannot be. Death shall be swallowed up in victory, the grave itself shall be led captive for having so long held captive the bodies of the saints. When the Lord Himself shall be revealed from heaven bringing with Him the spirits of all them that sleep in Him, to unite them to their resurrection bodies, then the “creature itself shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God.” This is the divine fulfillment of our Salvation in Christ for which we wait in hope. This present earth and heavens in which we are now is being reserved unto fire and unto the day of judgment of ungodly men, in which the elements being on fire shall melt with fervent heat, and the earth and all the works therein shall be burned up. Is not this the lake of the fire of the second death which is to engulf in eternal torment all of the finally impenitent, reprobate wicked? This “second death” shall have nothing to do with those having part in the “first resurrection” which is the coming forth from among the dead of all the elect of God in Christ.

We who hope in Christ and who look for His appearing in glory to bring us into that glory with Himself, and so to be with Him and like Him, are not looking for the “fire” nor into the “fire,” but we look for the new heavens and the new earth in which shall dwell righteousness. Even now, we are citizens of that new creation by reason of that blessed Holy Spirit which now abides in the children of God. Though we are in the world, we are not of it.

This is a grand theme and I glory in it. I wish I had the ability to set it forth in some measure of the beauty and grandeur in which I have been made to believe in it. I have but scanned it, just hinted at it. I have a blessed Hope, unworthy though I am in myself, that I shall one day see Jesus face to face and be like Him. To be like Him will necessitate our having a body like His. This He has promised us. That body which we shall then wear, which body is to be like His, shall be this present mortal body quickened, changed, made immortal and incorruptible. This the scriptures teach, and thus am I blessed to believe it.

Yours in the best of bonds,

H. H. LEFFERTS

Leesburg, Virginia

(Article appeared in Zion’s Landmark February 15, 1941)

ELDER J. C. SIKES

THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD

There is no truth more plainly taught in the Bible than the resurrection of the dead. Any man who can read can see that the Bible plainly teaches that the bodies of men who die and are buried in the earth shall be raised from the dead when Christ appears the second time unto salvation, whether he believes it or not. Some one is ready to say, You are wrong, for Paul says the resurrection of the dead is a mystery, and a mystery is something which we do not understand. Paul did not say the fact that the dead shall be raised is a mystery. The mystery is how it can be done in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. Men who have died and have molded to dust, and perhaps their dust has been scattered to the four winds of the earth, will, at the word of God, be reassembled and changed to immortal beings, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. The mystery is not that the dead shall be raised incorruptible, but is how it can be done so quickly. Listen to Paul's statement. He says, "Behold, I shew you a mystery: We shall not all sleep [die], but we shall all be changed [from natural to spiritual], in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." Nothing could be more plainly stated than the fact that at that time, which is at the last trump, the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and both the living and the dead shall be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. And he then tells just what kind of a change that shall be, for he follows this by saying, "For this." Mark the word "this." It means something that is present, or near in place or time. And Paul meant to tell the saints at Corinth that his, and also the corruptible and mortal body of each of them, which they then possessed, must, at the last trump, be raised from the dead, and be changed from corruption to incorruption, and from mortal to immortal, and he therefore said, "For *this* corruptible *must* put on incorruption, and *this* mortal *must* put on immortality." If people who read would stop and study the meaning of the language used in what they have just read they would avoid many mistakes which they often make which oftentimes lead to confusion. The foregoing quotation is a full sentence in Paul's discourse on the subject of the resurrection of the dead, and a clear understanding of each word in the sentence will give a clear understanding of what it is that shall be raised from the dead. The first word in this sentence is "for," which is here used as a conjunction, joining that which follows it with that which had just gone before, and means the same as "therefore." The next word is "this," which means that which is present, or near, in space or time. The next word is "corruptible," which means that which may be corrupted; that may become putrid; subject to decay and destruction; as our bodies are corruptible. This word cannot be applied to our bodies after they have died, putrified and come to a state of corruption. Christ died, but his body did not see corruption. But David's body did see corruption. (See Psalms xvi. 9, 10; Acts ii. 25-32.) This proves that the word "corruptible," as it occurs in this text, can only be applied to a human body before decomposition sets in. This is proven by the Scriptures themselves in the promise God made to David concerning Christ. He said, I will not leave his soul in hell, neither will I suffer my Holy One to see corruption. The Jews then, as they do now, believe that it meant David, their king, should arise from the dead and occupy his throne as a literal king, and all the dead of national Israel should be raised from the dead, and all Israel be gathered together into one place and live forever with David as their king. But Peter, on the day of Pentecost, denied this, and said, Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the

fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne. He, seeing this before, spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. This settles forever what is meant by the word “corruptible.” It means the fleshly body of a man, which is subject to corruption after it dies, but in the case of Jesus did not see corruption, nor did the bodies of Enoch and Elijah, nor will the bodies of any of God’s people who are alive on earth at the second coming of Christ, when he shall appear the second time without sin unto salvation from the last enemy to be destroyed, which is death, see corruption. See Heb. ix. 27, 28; 1 Cor. xv. 25, 26, and you will see that I am right on this point.

The next word in the text which we are considering is “must,” which means to be obliged; to be necessitated, etc. It is the strongest word in our language we can use to express absolute necessity. In this text it means that the end under consideration cannot be attained without it. What is it that *must* be done? This corruptible *must put* on incorruption. “Put on” here means to invest with, as clothes or covering, as to put on a cloak. So this corruptible must be clothed in incorruption before the aimed at can be attained. And following the next sentence after this one we are told what it is that shall come to pass when the things herein mentioned as that which *must* be done, have taken place.

The next word in the sentence is “incorruptible,” which means that cannot corrupt or decay; not admitting of corruption, as gold is incorruptible. Spirits are supposed to be incorruptible. Our bodies shall be changed into incorruptible and immortal substances. Wait. See Webster. There are two more words in the sentence which I have not yet given the authoritative definition of, and they are “mortal” and “immortality.” Mortal, as an adjective, means subject to death; destined to die; as man is mortal. As a noun, it means man; being subject to death; a human being. The last, and only word in this sentence which I have not given you the definition of, is the word “immortality.” It means the condition or quality of being immortal; exemption from death and annihilation; unending existence. Thus, I have given the meaning of every word in this sentence as they are given by our standard authors. They certainly show that the word “corruptible” cannot mean a human body which has been dissolved by putrefaction. Neither does the word “mortal” mean a dead body. This sentence, therefore, proves beyond a shadow of a doubt that Paul was talking to the saints at Corinth about his and their then present living, fleshly, mortal and corruptible bodies when he said, For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. Therefore a certain scriptural saying can never come to pass until these things take place, for Paul goes on to say, So when *this* corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and *this* mortal shall have put on immortality, then (and not until then) shall be brought to pass the saying, Death is swallowed up of victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? Why any one who can read cannot understand the only meaning the words contained in this sentence will admit of, I cannot understand. The reason I have taken so much pains to define and bring out the meaning of each word in the sentence contained in the twenty-third verse of this chapter is that I might leave no room for a doubt as to what is meant by the resurrection of the dead. When you have found the exact meaning of the language used in this sentence you may know of a truth that every other inspired truth in the Bible on this subject is in perfect harmony with it.

The third verse above this one, in view of what is contained in this verse, is easy to understand. It says, Now this I say brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. This means that our natural, physical, mortal, flesh and blood body must undergo the change already mentioned and discussed before it can inherit the kingdom of God. The body, after it has died and gone into a state of corruption, cannot, while in that state, inherit incorruption. No, it must be changed; not exchanged. This is absolutely proven by the next verse,

which I have already quoted, which begins by saying, “Behold, I shew you a mystery: We shall not all sleep [which means die], but we shall be changed [both the living and the dead must be changed. The living from their mortal state to a state of immortality, and the dead from a state of corruption to an incorruptible state], in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall .be changed.” I do not know how language could make anything plainer than Paul has made this matter. He starts out in this chapter, after the caption of his letter, with an argument, affirming the resurrection of the dead, based on the resurrection of Christ.

Now let us go back to the beginning of this chapter, and read it verse after verse, commenting on each verse as we go, and see whether or not we can arrive at an exact conclusion as to what, or whose body, or bodies, he had under consideration in his affirmation of the resurrection of the dead. Follow me closely, dear reader, and test carefully what I say, and if I do not present the exact meaning of the language in what I quote, please write me and call my attention to my mistake, that I may reconsider and correct it, if indeed I have made a mistake.

Paul begins this chapter by saying, “Moreover, brethren, I declare [in the present tense] unto you the gospel which I preached [in the past tense] unto you, which also ye received [in the past tense], and wherein ye stand [in the present tense]. “We learn in this first verse that Paul was at that time preaching unto them the same gospel that he had preached unto them before, and which they had received, and wherein they yet stood. There are two things in this verse that we should keep in mind. First, that whatever it was that Paul had preached unto them, and which they had received, and wherein they were yet standing, Paul called it the gospel, and let me add just here that there can be no gospel of Jesus Christ if the dead are not to be raised. The name Jesus means Saviour, and the angel told Joseph that He should save his people from their (in the plural) sins. And I know of no people who are sinners except the offspring of the earthly Adam, who died at the age of nine hundred and thirty years, because he was a sinner. It was the creature man which God made of the dust of the ground who died at that age, and it was the mortal body that died, and this is the kind of people Paul is discussing the resurrection of, for he speaks of them as being mortal and corruptible. So the next verse says, “By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached [in the past] unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.” There is a saving power in the gospel to the saved, but not to the unsaved. (See 1 Cor. i. 18.) In the next verse Paul says, “For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures.” He is here referring to what he said at the first, as what he had preached to them in the past, and that they had received it and were still standing in that belief. But a little later he found some who did not accept what he was then preaching, and he asked them how they could say what they were saying, since the first could not be true unless what he was then preaching to them was true. The next verse goes on to say, “And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures.” In the foregoing verse he continued to tell them what he preached unto them first of all, and which they had accepted, and still believed it, and in the next four verses he is telling how many people saw Jesus after his resurrection, the greater part of whom he said remained unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. Keep in mind that he means by “the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep,” that the greater part are yet alive, but some of them have died. It is common with him, and with many of the scriptural writers, to speak of the dead as being asleep, and especially when they are talking about the resurrection of the dead. He ends that part of it by saying, “And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.” Then he does not mention the resurrection in the next three verses. They are given to statements concerning himself. But he begins the twelfth verse by saying, “Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say

some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?” Keep in mind the fact that they are not differing as to whether or not Christ had risen from the dead, for he affirms that he had preached the resurrection of Christ from the very first of his preaching among them. He says that he did that first of all, and he says that they received it and were still standing in that belief. So it was not the resurrection of Christ which some were now denying, for in the next verse he follows that statement by saying, “But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen.” Let me here say that the phrase in this verse does not mean, *If Christ did not rise in the past*, nor that he, or any one else, is now, at the present time, rising from the dead. The language will not admit of such a conclusion. And, beside this, the expression in the twenty-ninth verse, which says, “Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all?” “What shall they do?” is in the future, and “if the dead rise not at all” is in the future tense. This thought of the future resurrection of the dead bodies of the saints runs through this entire chapter, and is found clearly indicated in almost every place in the Old and New Testaments where the resurrection of the dead is mentioned. Job tells us that it shall not take place until the heavens be no more. This places it at the time of the second coming of Christ, when, Peter says, the heavens shall pass away with a great noise (2 Peter iii. 10), and which John saw take place in his vision on the isle of Patmos (Rev. xx. 11), where he said, “And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.” And he saw, immediately following this scene, the resurrection of the dead, both small and great, all of whom stood before God to be judged; and he saw all places which held the dead, give them up, among which places was the sea, for he said, “And the sea gave up the dead which were in it.” We surely ought to understand what kind of dead the sea will give up to be judged, for they are now going down by the thousands almost daily. Job was certainly inspired, for the time set by him is fully corroborated by these writers fifteen hundred years after he wrote.

But back to Paul. He said in the next verse, “And if Christ be not risen, then is your preaching vain, and your faith is also yam.” Why was the preaching of the apostles vain if Christ had not been raised from the dead? It was because he had been preaching that Christ died to save them from their sins, but that end could not be accomplished by a dead Christ. For Paul said in Romans v. 10, “For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.” If he remained dead we could not be saved by his life. This will be made more evident as we go on down. The next verse says, “Ye, and we [the ministers] are found to be false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not.” Paul is here arguing that if the dead should fail to rise, then the entire end for which Christ died would be a failure, and all they (the ministers) have preached is but a farce and a falsehood, and there is nothing to it.

The next three verses say, “For if the dead *rise not*, then is Christ not raised: and if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished.” The direct consequence that could possibly befall God’s people is, and will continue to be a fact, if the dead are not to be raised in the future. And the reason is made very plain in these three last verses. “For if the dead rise not, then is Christ not raised: and if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins.” There can be only one reason why Christ should not have risen from the dead, if he did not rise, and that would be that he failed to satisfy the law for those for whom he died. Jesus himself said, “Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.” Christ went under the law to redeem his people from under it, so neither he nor his people can ever be freed from under it, and rise from the dead, unless he fulfilled it to its last jot and

tittle. If he failed to do this he is perished, and all they which are fallen asleep in him are perished, and all the rest of mankind at their death will perish forever, because he failed to satisfy for their sins. Their faith is vain; they are yet in their sins. And he follows this up by saying, "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable." He means by that saying that God's people suffer more in this life than the wicked do. (See Psalms lxxiii. 3-6.) Their hope in Christ is that in the resurrection they will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. (See Romans viii. 18-25). They also hope they will then obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory. But if Christ did not rise he failed to put away their sins by the sacrifice of himself, and they are yet in their sins, and are left without hope and without Christ, and are of all men most miserable. But thanks be unto God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ, Paul did not leave us without hope, for the next verse says, "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept." In my mind's eye and ear it seems that I can almost see him and hear him triumphantly waving his blessed right arm, with something in his glorious hand, and shouting, "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death." A most glorious truth is this, for he hath said of his people, by the mouth of the prophet Hosea, "I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be they plagues; O grave, I will be they destruction: repentance shall be hid from mine eyes." Meaning he will not turn from this promise and fail to fulfill it. Paul, in what I have already quoted, tells us just when this promise shall be brought to pass. He says, "So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, *then* shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" It is wonderful how those Old Testament writers and the New Testament writers are so perfectly agreed on this subject.

I mean, if the Lord is willing, to continue to write on this subject until I have commented upon every place in the Scriptures which I think will throw any light on the subject, and as it will be too long to print in the *Signs* I aim to publish it in pamphlet form, with this article in the beginning of it, and I would like for all who read this, and would like to have one of them, to write me, so I can enroll their names and know when I have enough to meet the expense of getting it out. The price will be as low as it can be to pay for getting it out and handling it. I mean to show that the end for which God made everything which was, and is, is to make manifest, or make known, his eternal glory, the riches of which can never be made known without the resurrection of the dead. For Paul said, "What if God, *willing to shew his wrath*, and to *make his power known*, endured with much longsuffering the *vessels* of wrath fitted to destruction: and that he might *make known the RICHES of his glory* on the *vessels* of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory. Even us, whom he hath called, not of the *Jews* only, but also of the *Gentiles*."

You will note that I have put certain words in italics, to which I wish to call special attention, and have put the word "riches" in small capitals, and have italicized the phrase "of his glory," to show that the RICHES of his glory can only be known on the vessels (Note this word "vessels") of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory. This will not take place until the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, and he shall be seated upon the throne of his glory to judge the quick ((living) and the dead, and God shall call for all nations to gather before him to be judged. He will then "say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring my *sons* from far, and my *daughters* from the ends of the earth; even every one that is called by my name; for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him." I will show that all the foregoing applies to the outward man, the flesh, which perisheth; while the inward man, which consists of two parts, which are

called the spirit and soul, is renewed day by day. Those inward parts are where Jeremiah says God promised to put his laws. (Jer. xxxi. 33) Paul said to the Thessalonians, "And the very God of peace sanctify you *wholly*." Meaning every part of you, and named them, by saying, "And I pray God your *whole* spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." Then he adds the blessed part of it, by saying, "Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it." Does any one think that man's whole spirit, soul and body will be preserved blameless in God's account unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and then God will condemn the body to everlasting annihilation? I do not. Back in creation, where God made man, when he stretched forth the heavens and laid the foundations of the earth, he formed man's spirit in him, and if you will consult Deuteronomy xxix. 29, you will not ask any one what he formed it of. And I have never read of the spirit or soul of man dying and returning to dust, or of being buried, and a promise that they should be raised up at the last day. Jesus taught that men can kill the body, but they cannot kill the soul. (Matt. x. 28.) And I aim to show that the work of changing man from the image of the earthy and conforming him to the image of the heavenly is begun *in* man while in this life, and will not be completed until the day of Jesus Christ. Paul said to the Philippians, that he was confident of this very thing, that he which had begun a good work *in* them would continue it until the day of Jesus Christ. (Phil. i. 6.)

I mean to try to present the exact scriptural teachings on these things, if God is willing. I also aim to show that the resurrection of the dead bodies of the saints was the foundation of the hope of the prophets, of Moses, of the fathers and of Paul, and that the entire end and aim for which God created all things will be a failure if the dead do not rise in the glorious image of his blessed Son. John said, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." Then he added, "Every man that hath this *hope* in him, purifieth himself, even as he is pure." From this we see that this was the hope of John, and the believers of his day, and it is my only hope for a blessed immortality beyond this life. I am in my eighty-third year, and this doctrine grows sweeter to me as I approach nearer the end of this life.

When I begin the continuation of this subject, I will leave off the last part of this article, and go back to where I left it at the twentieth verse of the fifteenth chapter of 1 Corinthians, and finish the investigation of that chapter, for there is much more proof in that chapter to substantiate the position which I have herein taken. I will bring in those things which I have proposed to prove, at the proper time and place.

If any wish to write me concerning this article, they will please address me at Sulphur Bluff, Texas, R. F. D. 1, Box 65.

I remain a poor old sinner, but in hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised before the world began.

J. C. SIKES

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ELDER GEORGE RUSTON

1 CORINTHIANS 15:22-26

“For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the first-fruits; afterward they that are Christ’s at his coming. Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.”

Of Adam it is written: “And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul. Genesis 2:7. Also, “God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.” Genesis 1:27. Thus the first man was of the earth, earthy, for the name Adam signifies red earth. Adam lived, begat sons and daughters in his own likeness, and died when he was nine hundred and thirty years old. Adam’s family, each generation of them, has died, down to the present time, except two persons. One, Enoch, the seventh from Adam, was translated that he should not see death, and was not found, because God had translated him. The other was Elijah, who also was taken from the earth without dying. Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven. These two gracious men are exceptions, but it can be said, “in Adam all die.” We believe that death passed upon Adam and all his seed the day he transgressed. When he begat children they were conceived in sin and shapen in iniquity, and went from the womb speaking lies. They were dead in trespasses and sins, lost and ruined by the fall. The soul of man, made by the breath of God, was through that transgression dead to that holy innocency which man once enjoyed when he walked with his God, and alive in sin in which man was conceived. When man’s body has lived out the number of his days, that body dies. He may be killed by his fellow-man, but his soul lives on, either in a state of blessedness or of everlasting woe. Jesus said “Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.” Matthew 10, 28. It is Adam’s body that died, and all his family, from the beginning to the present time, have gone that way, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. Paul asks, “Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?” Acts 26, 8. The Sadducees said that there was no resurrection, the Pharisees believed in the resurrection of the just and the unjust. Paul had a hope towards God, which they also allowed, that there SHALL BE a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust. If the resurrection was just Christ’s body being raised, why does he say he has a hope, for hope that is seen is not hope. Paul had been born again, so he was not hoping for that, but he had a hope towards God, which they also allowed, that is the Pharisees. Some, who may have contrary views, will say, when the resurrection is spoken of, you believe just like other religions. The Pharisees believing it did not make it wrong. Other religions believe in the Word of God, both Old and New Testaments. Shall we renounce the Bible for that reason? Let us consider the words “even so,” which means without limitation or subtraction but just as he says. Jesus said, “Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight.” Taking these words in their simplicity, God having hid these things from the wise and prudent and revealed them unto babes, he would have it just that way without any reservation. It is the man made of the dust of the ground that has sinned and who must die and after death be judged according to the deeds done in his body, whether good or bad. Adam was a sinner when he begat his first son, and that son was born dead in trespasses and sins, but he did not know this, nor ever would in this life unless he were quickened by the Spirit of God. That body is not quickened here, it is the soul

who was alive in sin. By the Spirit's work it is made alive to sin, and the flesh not then being changed, from that day there is a warfare of flesh against spirit and spirit against flesh. It was this truth that made Paul to cry "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Another rendering of the translators is, who shall deliver me from this body of death? When deliverance first came to us from our burden of sin, it came through the operation of the Holy Spirit. Christ was born in our hearts the hope of glory. "And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness." Such have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, although the body is still in the bondage of corruption, but they have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry "Abba Father." Thus we are enabled to worship God in the Spirit and have no confidence in the flesh, the Spirit bearing witness with our spirits that we are children of God. In spirit, children of God. In body, sons and daughters of Adam. In the body we find infirmities, in it we groan, suffer pain and privation, yet Paul says, "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God," "Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." Romans 8:22, 23. God's children already have the Spirit of adoption which Paul calls the first-fruits of the Spirit, as distinct from the first-fruits of the body, which is in Heaven in the person of Jesus Christ. We have the Spirit of adoption, but are waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body. Some might ask, where is the body redeemed from? We answer, according to the Word, it shall be redeemed from the grave. It would be interesting here to look at the word resurrection, does it not mean the raising up of that which has gone down in death? It is like the awakening out of sleep or the quickening of a seed. It is the same IT that is sown in corruption that is raised in incorruption, the same IT that is sown mortal is raised immortal. If the same body be not raised, then it is not a resurrection but a creation. If one died and were immediately quickened and taken to Heaven, it would be a quickening but not a resurrection. There is an order in this matter in the fulfillment of God's purpose. Let us examine it, for they are not changed into the likeness of Christ at death. Jesus' Spirit went to Paradise at death, so did the dying thief's, for Jesus said, "Today shalt thou be with me (my Spirit) in Paradise." The spirits, all that have departed in Christ, are in Paradise, the "Paradise of God." Their bodies are sleeping in the graves until the last trump. Not so, the Spirit of Jesus. It left Paradise, joining his blessed body, God raising him from the dead. This is referred to by Paul as fulfilling the second Psalm. "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." From that moment the Eternal Son of God had an *immortal body*. His mortal body died and was raised immortal, so that he, Jesus, hath brought life to light. More than that, he hath brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel. Paul tells us that the trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be raised incorruptible. Some have inferred that this trumpet is the gospel trumpet, but follow the thought a little further. Does the blowing of the gospel trumpet raise the dead? The Arminians may think so, do we? No, the trump of God is not the gospel trumpet. It has never been blown by man. It will be blown at the end spoken of in our subject. Christ's body was laid in the grave with the whole company of those who had died before, but Jesus has risen from the dead and become the first-fruits of them. Under the law, as was the first-fruits, so was the harvest. Jesus was acceptable unto God as the first-fruits of them that slept, and all them that ever will sleep in the grave. We say again, he has already risen. The rest, that is, those who are Christ's, will be raised at his coming. Does this just mean when he comes by his Spirit to comfort his children, or when he came to destroy the Jewish nation, and scatter them as wanderers upon the face of the earth? No, we do not feel that. That is not the coming here spoken of, for we see in the following

when his coming will be. It will be before he has delivered up the kingdom to his Father, before the end spoken of in our text. It will be at the last day, whatever and whenever that day will be. Until then, the heavens have received him until the times of restitution of all things, and he now sits at the right hand of God, expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. That body, which was crowned with thorns, is now in heaven, “decked with resplendent wounds,” yet glorified. John speaks of him as the Lamb in the midst of the throne, the Lamb, to show that it is the same Jesus who suffered, who is now Lord of all. How glorious and soul-comforting is his truth to God’s despised and afflicted people, for they shall be his face. The disciples saw him taken up into heaven, a cloud receiving him out of their sight. “And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold two men stood by them in white apparel; Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This *same Jesus*, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.” But had he not said “Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” His Spirit is with his people while he is in heaven on his throne. He will come in like manner and he will be the same Jesus, and every eye shall see him. We look for his appearing. The Church of God, as wise virgins with their lamps trimmed, is waiting for her Lord. Paul said the Thessalonians had turned from idols to serve the living God; and to *wait* for his son from heaven, even Jesus. I said that those who have departed this life and are in the Paradise of God, are waiting also, but what different waiting is theirs to ours. With our waiting, temptations and care annoy, sin distresses us, and our joy is damped, while in this tenement of clay, for we that are in this tabernacle do groan, here we are never satisfied. They are satisfied to wait, for they are with his presence satisfied, he leads them to fountains of living waters, and the Lamb in the midst of the throne feeds them. With them, as with God, a thousand years is but as yesterday when it is past. Being heirs of God and joint-heirs with our Lord Jesus Christ, they are waiting for all the joint-heirs to be made manifest, they wait for all the family to come home, for that time when death shall be swallowed up in victory. Instead of death being swallowed up now, death is swallowing up young and old. They wait, but it is pleasant waiting in perfect love, what restful waiting where perfect happiness abides. John says in Revelation 6, “I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they shall rest yet *for a little season*, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.” There is an interesting account of an experience of Paul’s related by himself in 2 Corinthians 12, which dates back to fourteen years to the time recorded in Acts 14:19. Paul was stoned, then drawn out of the city and left for dead. We do not desire to speculate, but does not this circumstance suggest that his soul for a while left his body. This occurred in the twelfth year of his ministry, and fourteen years after this experience he wrote his letter to the Corinthians. He was caught up into the THIRD HEAVEN. Whether in the body or out of the body he could not tell. He was caught up into PARADISE, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.

Of the coming of the Lord, Paul often reminded his brethren. Especially do we see this in his first epistle to the Thessalonians, where he mentioned it in every chapter, and in the fourth chapter he gives us more particulars. His words are “For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain (unto the coming of the Lord) shall 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.” Our corruptible bodies are not changed until then, even if we should be here when the Lord comes, because these bodies must beget children who shall be conceived in sin. If the body was born again here, it would beget a seed

that would not need salvation, nor would any of them enter into perdition. This will go on, men and women marrying and being given in marriage until he comes. The dead in Christ shall rise first. There will be two resurrections as set forth in the Word of God. The bodies of the saints are being preserved in the earth, blameless, unto his coming, the bodies of the wicked are being preserved blameable. The resurrection of the dead in Christ will be first. John saith of them, "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power." The resurrection of the ungodly will come later, for the upright are to have dominion in the morning. Psalm 49:14. His coming is to deliver his saints from the WRATH TO COME, but how different God's Word declares it will be for the wicked. Let us see what Paul says of them, "And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord: Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe." Do we need more proof? Jesus said "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 damnation." In Job's afflictions he was made to confess that he had heard of him by the hearing of the ear, but he said, now mine eye seeth thee. This was the eye of faith, which the soul is given, and by which the soul beholds Jesus as the altogether lovely and the chiefest among ten thousand. At such a sight of him Job said, "I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." So with Job it did not yet appear what he should be, yet he said earlier, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine EYES (plural) shall behold, and not another." That is, it would be that same Job whose eyes would behold his Lord. Over seven hundred years B.C., Hosea wrote, "I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction." Isaiah, about the same time prophesied "He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces." When Jesus came as our sin-bearer, he came weeping, bearing precious seed, and here we fellowship him with penitent and broken hearts. "And they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him." His second coming is referred to by the Psalmist, who says "He shall DOUBTLESS come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." During Christ's ministry on earth, death was not swallowed up in victory, and in Paul's day, he called it a saying, but when the trump of God shall sound, and we are raised incorruptible, then shall come to pass the saying. It has not come to pass yet, but it will come to pass when he comes from heaven with a shout. Revelation 21:4. tells that "God shall wipe away all tears from their EYES; (plural) and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away." This corruptible must put on incorruption, and this is not putting on Christ in our profession and walk, as the new man of the heart desires to do, for the new man of the heart never dies, and is not corruptible, but is created after God in righteousness and true holiness. I have heard it said several times by good brethren that they had enough trouble with, and in, this old body in this life that they would never want to see it again after death, but let us all remember that the Word saith "Who shall change our vile body, that IT may be fashioned like unto his glorious body." None of us want our old bodies as they are. David did not, but he said, "As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied when I awake, with thy likeness." Psalm 17, 15. How often we have longed to be like him, but it doth not yet appear, but when he shall appear we shall be like him. "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, EVEN SO them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him." For, "we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent (go before) them which

are asleep.” It will be no harder for God to change those that are alive, than to raise those that have been dead, whether in the earth or seas. Our God made this earth, and all that in it is, out of nothing. He who assembled everything, giving it being when it had none before, can, in his time, assemble that which has been. It is admitted that those bodies will be different from what they were here, in likeness they will be like him. Their qualities will be different, but the substance will be the same there, as it was in Jesus, and as it is in the plant or blade that has come up from the seed. 1 Corinthians 15. Thus the substance which was corruptible, it did not see corruption, nor did it need salvation, for he was not a sinner. We say the substance will be there, for it will be a body of flesh and bones. We say flesh and bones, for Jesus said, “Handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.” This is to show that it was not his spirit, but him. Paul says, “Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.” This is of course a form of speech, he means mankind as it is. We have shown that mankind is dead, and all that he inherits here from Adam are sickness, pain and ills that are legion, but through our Lord’s resurrection from the dead, we have been begotten unto a LIVELY HOPE, to an inheritance which is incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time. In conclusion we ask our readers to read 2 Thessalonians 1. to see when this will be revealed.

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