



# Christian Resurrection

**A. W. Pink**

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The title of this booklet will probably suggest to most of our readers that we shall treat therein exclusively with the future condition of the believer's body. Really it is deplorable that such a circumscribed view should obtain so widely in this twentieth century—that “resurrection” should connote nothing more than physical resuscitation. Surely little more than a glance at the Epistles is needed to discover that in the New Testament “death” and “life” are used with a much broader and higher signification than merely physical—that “resurrection” is connected with other things than the body—that it has a present, yea a past, bearing upon the Christian as well as a future, that it has a forensic application as well as a literal. Believers are greatly the losers if they confine the resurrection to a mere emergence from the grave. The New Testament treats first of the Christian's *legal* or representative resurrection; second of his *spiritual* or regenerative one and finally of his *corporeal*. As the first is now so little apprehended by God's people we shall devote most space to it.

Resurrection presupposes death and to understand what death is we must go back to the Fall. “In Adam all die” (1 Cor. 15:22): that is the basic fact, death being the wages of sin, the penalty of the broken law (Rom. 5:12). In Adam all died: what is meant by that? This: their relationship with God was radically altered and they experienced a fearful change in themselves. More specifically: first, they ceased to be well-pleasing in the sight of their Maker, they were no longer favourably regarded by Him. Positively, they fell under His curse and became “the children of wrath.” Second, they forfeited the Holy Spirit, became “alienated from the life of God” (Eph. 4:18). His image and likeness in them was greatly marred, communion with Him was severed. Third, corruption entered their bodies, the seeds of mortality obtained lodgement, disease invaded their earthly tabernacles. And, unless they are recovered from these calamities the “second death” or everlasting separation from God in endless torment in the Lake of Fire, will be the final consummation of that death which is the wages of sin.

In the sovereign grace of God it pleased Him that His chosen people should be recovered from those dreadful calamities and be spared the second death, not by revoking His sentence nor by modifying its severity but by exacting the same upon a sinless Sponsor and Substitute so that legally they died in and with Him. Christ came to earth as the Head and Representative of His people. His obedience unto death was no mere vague expedient through which mercy may be shown to all who choose to take advantage of it. The Good Shepherd gave His life for the sheep: from Bethlehem to Calvary He was acting and suffering for them. His obedience in all its perfections was theirs, just as their sin in all its aggravations was made His by imputation. As in Adam all the elect died, so also in Christ they all died. All the condemnation under which they lay was executed upon them in Christ. In Him they have met and satisfied every claim of Divine justice, so that “there is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 8:1).

In Romans 5:14 it is affirmed that Adam was “the figure of Him that was to come,” upon which it has been well remarked: “These are the two men, type and Antitype, in whom human history centres. Their relations to the one and to the other ultimately divide all men into two classes, each receiving nature and destiny from its head. All the individuals who comprise either class have been so represented by these heads that it has been justly said, ‘there have been but two men in the world and two facts in human history.’ The two men are Adam and Christ; the two facts are the disobedience of the former and the obedience of the latter by which many are made righteous. By the former came ruin, by the latter came redemption; and neither ruin nor redemption can be Scripturally apprehended except as it is seen to be accomplished by these representatives and except as we apprehend the relationships expressed by being ‘in Adam’ or ‘in Christ’ ” (James Inglis, 1871).

What has been just quoted above is only another way of saying that God has dealt with men throughout on the principle of one for many: true alike in the relations of nature and in the relations

of grace—the many are included and represented by the one (see Rom. 5:18, 19). In the sight of God, in the accounting of His Law, every Christian has died twice—in Adam and in Christ, the former of which is more readily understood by the believer than is the other. Because Christ was their federal Head, what He did and suffered was regarded by God as His people doing and suffering. Since they were in Christ by federal constitution His death was their death, they bearing the wages of sin in the Person of their Surety. Christians could not have more really suffered the penalty than if they had been personally cast into Hell. The broken Law can no longer denounce any believer, for in the Person of Christ he has suffered its vengeance and from its threatening he can claim complete exemption by pointing to the Surety in whom he has already died.

In view of what has been pointed out above Christian readers should now have less difficulty in perceiving the force of that exhortation, “reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin” (Rom. 6:11), though for a clearer and fuller understanding thereof it will be necessary for us to give a brief exposition of its context. The chapter opens with two questions. First, “What shall we say then?” that is, what inference shall we draw from the blessed doctrine propounded in Romans 4 and 5? Second, “Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?” In that query the Apostle anticipates an objection: “If the ungodly are justified by faith without any works of their own and if where sin has abounded grace has much more abounded (5:20), then may we not continue sinning without restraint so that grace may more and more abound?” Such has ever been the favourite, though unfounded objection, made by opposers of the Gospel. In what follows the Apostle shows that such is the believer’s Union with Christ that his living in sin would be as great a contradiction in terms as to speak of a living corpse or a holy degenerate. Union with Christ is the source of purity and not of uncleanness.

“God forbid, How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?” (Rom. 6:2). This “God forbid” is Paul’s usual mode of expressing denial and abhorrence. We that are “dead to sin” is

literally “that died to sin,” the Greek denoting a specific act of our past history. Formerly Christians were dead *in* sin, now they are dead *to* it, delivered *from* it. To many this may seem a startling statement for they are painfully conscious that sin is very much alive in them. Then exactly what is the meaning of this expression? Certainly it does not signify that Christians are dead to the *power* of sin—this verse speaks not of an exceptional attainment of a favoured and matured few, but of a fact which is true of all believers alike. It should also be carefully noted that this verse is in the form of a doctrinal statement and not an exhortation setting forth an experience to which we should aspire and after which we should strive. Nor is it something which God promises to make good unto us in the future: it is affirmed as an *accomplished fact*. The same may be remarked of all parallel passages containing similar statements.

“We that died to sin.” If we carry with us into Romans 6 the truth set forth in the representative characters of the two Adams in the previous chapter, we have the key for interpreting the expressions used in this. The suretyship of Christ and the federal nature of His atonement as the act of one for the many is brought forward into Romans 6, only with this difference: here *we* are described as doing what our Representative did; that is, the one corporate act is described from our sharing in its transaction. As we were condemned to death in the first Adam, so we endured the penalty in the last Adam. The judgment which came upon us to condemnation was once and for all executed, for “we died to sin” in the one man Christ Jesus. And how shall we live any longer therein? His first answer is we shall not, we cannot, for in the constitution which God appointed we are one with Christ and having in Him suffered the penalty of the Law we died to the guilt of sin, to its condemnation, to its power to separate us from God. “Died to sin” has no reference to any *change* wrought within Christians but relates only to their *standing* before God because of their oneness with Christ.

The force of “died to sin” is made unmistakably manifest in the verses that follow. “Know ye not that so many of us as were

baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Therefore we *were* (not “are”) buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life” (vv. 3, 4). It is quite needless for our present purpose to enter into a critical discussion upon the nature of the “baptism” here alluded to, whether the baptism by the Spirit which effectually joins to the Lord (1 Cor. 12:13) or water baptism to symbolize our oneness with Christ in His death—suffice it now to point out that in Scripture baptism always signifies the removing of its subject out of one condition, relation or standing, into another. Here it is affirmed that all believers have been taken out of the first Adam into Christ and were “baptized into His death.”

“For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection” (Rom. 6:5). This amplifies the preceding statement, for in this and the next two verses the Apostle shows that such is the nature of the Christian’s *union* with Christ that if he is one with Him in His death he must be equally so in His resurrection. We agree with Charles Hodge that the “we shall be” does not express futurity: “the reference is not to what is to happen hereafter, but to the certainty of sequence or causal connection: if the one thing happens, the other shall certainly follow.” The opening “For if” indicates that the Apostle is showing what logically and inevitably follows from his previous statements. The “planted together” signifies the closest union of any kind, as being incorporated or joined with. The “likeness of His resurrection” does not here (as in Phil. 3:21) signify that there is an analogy between Christ’s resurrection body and that of believers, but that they were as truly one with Him when He rose from the dead as when He died on the tree.

“Knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him” (Rom. 6:6), or as it may be more literally and tersely rendered “our old man was co-crucified.” Here we have a direct answer to the question when and how Christians “died to sin.” It was when Christ was crucified. Here, too, is conclusive proof that

this death to sin is not a subjective one but an objective and historical fact. There is nothing here which savours of monkish mortification or self-mutilation, for of all forms of death, crucifixion is the most impossible for one to inflict upon himself. When Paul declared, “I am crucified with Christ” (Gal. 2:20), or as the Greek signifies and as the R.V. and Bagster’s Interlinear renders it, “I have been crucified with Christ,” he gave utterance to that which is equally true of all genuine Christians—it was a past transaction and not a process now being experienced. It is also worthy of note that the verb “was crucified” in verse 5 is in the passive voice, denoting that it was accomplished wholly outside of themselves in the Person of their Head.

It is important that we define aright “our old man,” especially since the views of the older and best writers were confused thereon. Even Hodge and Haldane understood by this expression “our carnal” and “our old nature”—their experience should have taught them better, for neither the work of Christ *for* them nor the work of the Spirit *in* them has effected any change in the “flesh” or sinful nature that we all inherit from Adam. Unless we distinguish sharply between the *person* and his *nature*—as the Apostle does so emphatically in “I myself,” etc. (Rom. 7:25)—we are bound to err. That distinction was maintained and broadly asserted by Paul in another passage where he speaks of “the old man which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts” (Eph. 4:22). The “old man,” then, is our old personality or standing in Adam, as may be seen yet further from the “body of sin” being distinguished from it in this very verse.

“That the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin” (Rom. 6:6). In those words is expressed the design of our old man being crucified with Christ: it is not that at some later date the body of sin will be destroyed and that we shall be delivered from serving sin but that this purpose *was* accomplished at Calvary. The “body of sin” is synonymous with “the body of this death” in Romans 7:24, the reference being not to our physical body but to the corruptions of the old man. The “flesh with the affections and lusts” (Gal. 5:24) is termed a

“body” because it is viewed as an organized entity—in Colossians 3:5 allusion is made to its “members.” In what sense was it “destroyed?” *Judicially*. It was not merely weakened, nor was it annihilated. The Greek word may be rendered “annulled.” It is used again in Hebrews 2:14 of the Devil: that tyrant has been dethroned, his power or right by virtue of conquest (at the Fall) has been rendered void. Consequently Christians are delivered from the service or slavery of sin. Death cancels all obligations. The believer is “the Lord’s freeman” (1 Cor. 7:22).

“For He that died hath been justified from sin” (Rom. 6:7). Observe the change in number here: it is no longer “we” as in each of the preceding verses, but “He.” The reference is to Christ the Head, just as the “He” in Romans 6:10 also contemplates Him. Again the tense is in the aorist and should be rendered (as Bagster’s Interlinear) “has been justified.” That the marginal “justified” is to be used rather than “freed” is clear from the fact that the Greek word occurs fifteen times in this Epistle and twenty-five times in other parts of the New Testament and excepting this verse and one other where it is translated “righteous” it is uniformly rendered “justified.” Nor should we deem such a statement strange or difficult because it is made of Christ, for to be “justified” refers not to any subjective change or work, being strictly a legal term, a judicial pronouncement, meaning to “declare righteous.” “In justification, which is a judicial and irrevocable sentence pronounced by God there are two parts: the one includes absolution from the guilt of the breach of the law: the other, the possession of that obedience to its precepts which the law demands. These being inseparable, they are both included in the expression ‘justified from sin’” (Robert Haldane).

“For He that died hath been justified from sin.” Those words express most forcibly the reality of Christ’s substitution for His people and testify to the completeness of their representation by Him. He died in their place and put away sin, their sin—their sin imputed to and borne by Him in the sacrifice of Himself. And assuredly He who was their Sin-bearer must be justified from sin if His death achieved its end. When the Lord Jesus Christ stood in



Herod's judgment hall and was about to be brutally dealt with by them, when He gave His back to the smiters and His cheeks to them that plucked out the hair, He consoled Himself thus: "For the Lord God will help Me . . .

He is near that *justifieth Me*" (Isa. 50:6-8). We know that His expectation was realized— "God was manifest in flesh, justified in spirit" (1 Tim. 3:16). Both Pilate and the centurion who crucified Him could justify Him from man's accusations but because He had taken our guilt and was made sin for us, so from our sin and guilt He could only be justified through the death which atoned for them. His justification could be declared by none other than the One to whom He offered Himself a propitiation. God's raising Him from the dead demonstrated that Christ was "justified from sin."

"Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him" (Rom. 6:8). It should be clear to all who have followed closely our exposition above that the resurrection here postulated is not a subjective one as is regeneration, nor is it a promise of bodily triumph over the grave, though both of these follow as necessary *consequences*. Rather is the life here mentioned an *objective* one, something outside of ourselves. Three details are to be carefully noted. First, as the "died with Christ" is an external and legal transaction and not an inward experience, so also is the "live with Him." Second, the plural pronoun connotes that this predication is made of all those whom Christ represented: it is a *corporate* life and not merely individual. Third, it is not a life "through" Christ, derived from Him, but by virtue of our identification and judicial oneness "*with Him*." When Christ was made alive from the dead all the elect rose with Him. When the Head was "justified from sin" so were all His members (though application thereof is not made till they believe: Acts 13:39). The righteousness of Christ secures "*justification of life*" (Rom. 5:18).

How far does this argument of the Apostle's answer the question raised in verse 1? Does the doctrinal affirmation of the believer's oneness with Christ in His death and resurrection effectually dispose of the practical objection that justification by

grace through faith without any works of ours tends to moral laxity and encourages a course of sinning? Answer, we frankly aver that so far from such a reply satisfying the natural man, it will appear “foolishness” unto him. Yet it is far otherwise with the spiritual mind, so we hope to show in the sequel. Motives inspire the believer which have no effect upon the unbeliever. Arguments and incentives move the regenerate which do not and cannot affect the unregenerate.

The Apostle next declares, “Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead, dieth no more, death hath no more dominion over Him” (Rom. 6:9). First let us point out this opening “knowing that” clearly fixes the meaning of “knowing this” in verse 6 and shows that the commentators quite missed the point there. How, in what manner, do Christians know that death has no more dominion over Christ? Answer, solely by the testimony of God. It is not by virtue of any inward experience of which they are the subjects but by the infallible declarations of the Word of Truth. In like manner, it is by the witness of Holy Writ and by that alone, believers know their old man was crucified with Christ—that their standing in Adam then came to an end before God. “We *know* that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren” (1 John 3:14). Why is love for the brethren an infallible evidence and assurance of regeneration? Because God says so, because He declares it to be such.

“Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead, dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over Him” (Rom. 6:9). This is both unspeakably solemn and inexpressibly blessed. The inescapable implication of these words is that death once had “dominion over” Christ. He was its lawful captive because He took the place of His guilty people and bore their sins. But having received sin’s wages in full, having completely discharged the awful debt of His people, the Law had no further claim upon Him—its penalty had been enforced, justice was satisfied. Christ can die no more: “whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it *was not possible* that He should be holden of it” (Acts 2:24). A truly remarkable word is that: righteousness had

been outraged if the sepulchre continued to hold the One who had earned a complete discharge from death's exactions. The object of His voluntary death having been accomplished, Christ lives forever more. How emphatically, then, does this verse intimate that Christ has "made an end of (the) sin" of His people (Dan. 9:24)!

"For in that He died, He died unto sin once but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God" (Rom. 6:10). This is explanatory of that which immediately precedes. Death derives its "dominion" from the reigning power or authority of sin, and when sin is destroyed its dominion ceases. Christ not only died "for sin" (Rom. 8:3) but "unto sin." Sin had "reigned unto death" (Rom. 5:21), and having put Himself in the place of sinners, Christ came under the legal sway or dominion of sin—the power which it derived from the Law. But by expiating sin Christ fully satisfied the Law and therefore the Law supplies no more "strength" to sin (1 Cor. 15:56) to reign over Him unto death. Such was the efficacy of His sacrifice that it need not be repeated (Heb. 7:27; 10:10), for by it He "finished transgression" (Dan. 9:24). The Law having no further penalty to inflict, Christ is forever beyond the reach of death. The death of Christ was the death of death as the wages of sin, not only for Himself as the mediator but for all those on whose behalf He transacted.

"In that He liveth, He liveth unto God." There are two separate things here, and unless we distinguish carefully between them we shall miss the principal point of this passage. "In that He liveth" concerns the judicial side of things—"He liveth unto God" the practical. The breaking of the Law involves death, the keeping of it *life*. The commandment was "unto life" (Rom. 7:10); "the man which doeth these things shall live by them" (10:5) was the original promise of the Law. The Divine Law is vested with sanctions: a penalty for disobedience, a *reward* for perfect obedience. Perhaps we can better grasp the force of these terms by remembering that the "death" and the "life" which is the sentence of the Law, is first and foremost a *relationship*—a relationship to God involving a state of experience corresponding

therewith. When Adam died he forfeited God's favourable regard and fell under His curse. When Christ had received the wages of sin, because He had previously rendered unto the Law a perfect obedience, He was entitled to God's favourable regard and worthy of His blessing. "In His *favour* is *life*" (Psa. 30:5)—the two things are inseparable.

When God raised our Surety from the dead it was not an act of grace or mercy unto Him but one of bare *justice*, such as the Law required. "Righteousness delivereth from death" (Prov. 10:2) and Christ was the Righteous One. Concerning Him it is written, "He asked life of Thee" and the Father gave Him, "length of days, forever and ever" (Psa. 21:4). He Himself declared, "I have set the LORD always before Me . . . therefore My heart is glad . . . My flesh also shall rest in hope. For Thou wilt not leave My soul in Hell, neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou wilt show Me the path of life" (Psa. 16:8-11). When Christ asks it is not for a favour, but a suing of His legitimate right. "Ask of Me," says God, "and I shall give Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession" (Psa. 2:8)—because He had *purchased* them. "Father I *will* (not "request") that they also whom Thou hast given Me be with Me where I am" (John 17:24)—because such is His *due*. Thus it was when He asked for "life."

"He liveth" (Rom. 6:10). Is that a reference to the reunion of spirit and soul and body in the person of Christ and His emerging from the sepulchre? No, rather does it contemplate the cause and ground thereof. The grave could not retain the One upon whom the Law announced the reward of "life." Or, to express the same idea in more personal yet equivalent terms, the Father could not leave in the disembodied (and so, imperfect) state, the One on whom He now looked with complacency. Christ had gloriously overcome sin and death: not only so, He had magnified the Law and made it honourable by His obedience to it. Therefore God was honour-bound to own Him as His righteous Servant. As such He was entitled to and become possessed of a life forever beyond the reach of sin and death. That "life" of Christ is "eternal life"

because it is based on and is the reward of the “everlasting righteousness” which He brought in (Dan. 9:24). Life (instated to the approbation of God) is as truly the reward of righteousness as death (the judicial disapprobation of God) is the penalty of sin. “He liveth unto God” is the consequence of the former.

“In that He liveth, He liveth unto God” (Rom. 6:10). This is predicated of Christ not as a private person, but as the Head of His people. It was as their Representative He had satisfied both the precept and the penalty of the Law. And representation involves *identification*: if the One acted on behalf of the many, it is equally true that the many acted in the One. Christ and the Church together form one body and God never views the one apart from the other. Accordingly we read, “But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us *together* with Christ” (Eph. 2:4, 5). The reference there is not to regeneration (though it involves and requires it), for it is not an individual experience (as the new birth is ) but a *corporate* transaction which is in view. The following words prove this: “and hath raised us up *together* and made us sit together in the heavenlies in Christ” (v. 6). The life to which the Law pronounced Christ entitled is also conferred upon all His people.

“Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin but alive unto God in Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom. 6:11). “Likewise:” just as Christ died unto sin—unto its penalty—and now lives unto God in the enjoyment of the Law’s reward, so regard yourselves as participants of the same. “Reckon ye:” what is true in itself, make true in your convictions and consciousness. “Reckon” does not mean “suppose” or “fancy yourselves” to be something you are not. It is not try and persuade yourselves to be “dead indeed unto sin,” but because God declares you *are* so, set to your seal that He is true— receive His testimony without doubting. In Romans 2:26 the word for “reckon” is rendered “counted,” that is, “accounted.” In 3:28 “conclude” and in 2:3 “thinkest.” Christians are to think of themselves as God has described them in His Word, namely, as *one with Christ*, as the

actual participants of His death and of His life; to conclude themselves to be what God affirms they are.

In point of truth Christians are partakers legally of Christ's death and life and therefore they should so regard themselves: this is not a fiction but a *fact*. They are therefore enjoined to look upon themselves as God sees them: forever freed from the penalty and doom of sin, entitled to and possessors of the Law's reward. When Abram was bidden to offer up his beloved Isaac, he obeyed, "*accounting* that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead" (Heb. 11:19): the word for "reckon" in Romans 6:11 is here rendered "*accounting*," and it was a true accounting. Believers are "dead to sin," not to its power, not to its activities within them but to its guilt and wages. They are so because in the Person of their Substitute they have already borne and exhausted its penalty. Furthermore, they live in Christ and stand before God in all His acceptableness. In God's sight they are completely justified, spotlessly righteous. In God's reckoning they have passed out of death into the realm of life and *faith* is to lay hold of God's testimony thereto.

"Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin but alive unto God in Jesus Christ" (Rom. 6:11). Here is the *initial resurrection*, the foundation of the spiritual (regeneration) and the bodily. And it is one of which we are to enjoy the blessedness and comfort even now. This verse is in the form of a positive command. It is the Christian's duty as well as privilege to be fully assured of his identification with and participation in all that Christ is and has done. This is not a matter of feeling but of faith. It is the will of God that His children should be convinced of their interest in Christ and perfect standing before Him. So far from its being presumptuous for them to do so, it is rank *disobedience* not to! And this command is binding upon all believers alike. This injunction to "reckon," to believe and account, is not made only unto those of strong faith and deep experience, but to babes in Christ equally as to full-grown Christians. We are to view ourselves as *God* sees us—dead to sin, alive unto Him in Christ.

Now Christians are not only to reckon themselves to be what God declares they are as to their standing or status before Him but are to regulate their lives and order their conduct accordingly. Hence we find the Apostle immediately adds, "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, but yield yourselves unto God as those that are alive from the dead" (vv. 12, 13). That exhortation is founded upon and flows from all that has been before us. The doctrinal *fact* is we died to sin in Christ; the practical *lesson* is, live not in subjection to the sin which slew Him. Legal union with Christ calls for practical holiness, His wondrous love supplying the motive power. Live agreeably to the good news announced by the Gospel. Let your behaviour correspond to your standing. Christians "*are* alive unto God," then let them abandon all which characterized them in their unregenerate state. Let your judicial identification with Christ furnish the motive for practical conformity to Him. Since you are "alive unto God," do all you do for His glory.

A similar exhortation, based upon the same doctrinal fact, is found in Colossians 3:1-5. "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God" (v. 1). A better rendering would be, "Since then ye were raised with Christ." The "if" of the A.V. is not designed to express a doubt, but draws an inference. Because the Colossian saints *were* raised with their Surety: upon that is based the "seek those things which are above." It is the same form of speech as when it is said, "If you are citizens of the country, you ought to obey the laws of the country." No doubt or uncertainty is expressed, any more than in the "if" of John 14:3. Since, then, you were raised with Christ: that is, when He was raised, His resurrection as the Head of His Church being virtually the resurrection of all His people.

That the resurrection here referred to cannot be a *moral* one—a raising of the thoughts, desires and affections of believers—is evident from the exhortation which follows. The Apostle would

not say, since then you are heavenly minded, be heavenly minded, but since you were really raised with Christ, then live accordingly. “Seek those things which are above where Christ is seated at the right hand of God” (Col. 3:1)—if you are united to Him, it becomes you to be tending to Him—and He is in Heaven, and not upon earth. “For,” continues the Apostle, “ye are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God.” It is to be regretted that the present tense “ye are dead” is found in our version, for it not only contradicts the previous verse but hides from the reader the scope and meaning of the whole passage. They “died” when Christ died, as they rose with Him, and now their life is hidden with Him in God, to be openly manifested one day for, “When He who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory” (v. 4).

Thus continual and eternal is the believer’s union with the Lord. He is so joined to Christ, so truly a member of His body both legally and vitally, that what is true of Christ is true of him also. The whole merit and virtue of Christ’s work passes over to him as his present and rightful heritage. The Lord Jesus has passed through death and resurrection in triumph to the skies and His triumph is equally the triumph of His people. The anchor of the soul which is the security of the saints “entereth into that within the veil, whither the Forerunner is *for us* entered, even Jesus” (Heb. 6:19, 20). Christ has entered Heaven in our name, on our behalf. One by one His purchased people are passing there and when they are all gathered then shall the opened heavens reveal their oneness with Christ. What a glorious consummation to His work—the Bridegroom and the Bride one in heavenly glory! This is a future thing in actuality but faith makes it present and real. It is faith which regards our union with Christ in His death and resurrection as effectually our own.

In Romans, as we have seen, the death of Christ is presented as the Christian’s death unto *sin*, but in Colossians 3 that death is seen separating him from the *world*. Christ tabernacled on earth but at the grave His earthly life ended. He passed through death and resurrection away from this terrestrial sphere into a new and



heavenly country where He now lives and reigns. The earth as well as its inhabitants lie under the curse. The world is a Divinely condemned place. Christ could not stay here and His people cannot. They have been delivered “from this present evil world” (Gal. 1:4) as well as from their sins. Even now their “conversation (citizenship) is in Heaven” (Phil. 3:20) and Heaven is their Home. The more faith lays hold of that fact, the more will they realize that they are “strangers and pilgrims” (1 Peter 2:11) in this scene. And the more their affections are set upon things above, the more of Heaven will they enjoy in their souls and not only will the Holy Spirit be witnessing with their spirit—that they are sons of God—but He will grant them increased earnestness and foretastes of heavenly blessedness.

Here, then, is the real secret of heavenly-mindedness: not through a forced aversion from the world while we are yet in love with it, not by the power of ecclesiastical vows or monastic mortifications, nor the proud rigour of the Pharisee or the sulky seclusion of the ascetic, but by *faith*—by a faith which has attained to heavenly things and which drops the earthly because they are so poor and perishing. It is life drawing us away from death, riches from poverty, celestial rest and blessing from worldly confusion and disorder. “This is the victory which overcometh the world, even our faith” (1 John 5:4). It has always been so. It was so with the early Christians in their bitter persecution: “ye took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have *in Heaven* a better and an enduring substance” (Heb. 10:34). It was so when the Puritans scorned the honours and wealth of this world. It is so still. Why covet material riches when God is saying to us, All things in Christ are yours? Why lust after mundane dignity when called by God His *sons*, made His kings and priests forevermore? Every reason have we to set our affection upon things above.

Thus we see again the true relation of sound doctrine and godly practice—the effect which the former should produce upon the latter—and which it does produce when “mixed with *faith*.” Where doctrine is only received intellectually it has no influence

on the life, but when laid hold of by a living faith it acts as a powerful dynamic upon the affections and issues in a godly walk.

“Life” and “death,” “death” and “life,” sum up the Christian’s history: the former terms his standing and state in Adam; the latter, his standing and state in Christ. First he had life in Adam, and then he died in him. Second, he died with Christ, and is now alive in Him. His “death” in Adam affected first his standing before God—he became “alienated from His life” (Eph. 4:18) and fell under His wrath (Eph. 2:3). Second, his state was made to correspond with his standing: he became depraved and corrupt, devoid of any spiritual life in his soul. Third, the outcome of this is that his body returns to the dust. Contrariwise, having died to sin with Christ, the believer is now “alive unto God in Him” (Rom. 6:11). The Christian has first a *legal* resurrection, which concerns his standing: he is reconciled to God (Rom. 5:10), instated into His favour and blessing (Gal. 3:13, 14). Second, and because of the former, the Christian’s state is brought into accord with his standing—a new nature, spiritual life is communicated to his soul—previously he was in Christ, now Christ is in him. The outcome of this is that his body will yet be raised in glory.

Above we have employed the expression “legal resurrection.” As this will be a term new to most of our readers, a word or two by way of definition and explanation are called for. Legal resurrection is the pronouncement of the Law, “life” being its reward to those who have fulfilled its requirements. Legal death is the Law’s capital-sentence. A man becomes legally dead the moment punishment is pronounced by the judge, though usually there is an interval of a few weeks before actual execution takes place. During that interval he could not marry, nor cast a vote, or be sued for any new debt he then contracted; any will made by him in that period would be invalid, because in the sight of the law he no longer exists. Legal death is a falling under the curse. Contrariwise, the “life” which the Law pronounces and bestows upon those whom it rewards is one of unmixed blessing—“the blessing, even *life* for evermore” (Psa. 133:3). Now just as the murderer is legally “dead” for some weeks before he is hanged or

electrocuted, so the people of God received legal or primal “life” in Christ long before they are regenerated.

The Christian has “life” in Christ before he has life *from* Him. In Christ His people have met every claim of Divine justice, consequently there is now “no condemnation to them” (Rom. 8:1). Or, to state the same in its positive form: they are “made (legally constituted, as in the former clause) the righteousness of God in Him” (2 Cor. 5:21). As the inexorable doom of sin followed and rested upon all who were in Adam when he fell, so the inevitable reward of righteousness followed and rests upon all who are in Christ (Rom. 5:21). The atonement of the Lord Jesus was no mere expedient for getting rid of the doom of sin, but a satisfaction made unto God which met every requirement of His Law, entitling Him to its reward, and as a consequence thereof believers are made sharers of that “life” in which their Head came up from the grave, where all their sins were buried. For if it is true that Christ was “delivered for our offenses” it is no less a fact that He was “raised” again for our justification (Rom. 4:25).

It is most important that we should be quite clear as to the *ground* of our justification, for Socinians present justification in the risen Christ in such a way as to repudiate the very foundation of our faith and hope. Denying as they do the imputation of Christ’s perfect obedience to the account of all who believe in Him, they advance the conceit that it is the life of Christ *after* His resurrection and our participation of the same by the new birth which constitutes us righteous before God. It is true that it is in the risen Christ believers are justified, because they *are* in Him and He *is* risen; but He is risen because “life” was what His righteousness, His perfect obedience to the Law entitled Him to, and believers are justified solely on the ground of His righteousness being reckoned to their account. “For if by one man’s offense death reigned by one, much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ” (Rom. 5:17): the “gift of righteousness” *entitled them* to “reign in life” for as the wages of sin is death, so the reward of righteousness is life.

It remains for us now to point out that the relation between Christ and His people is *more* than a *legal* one: it is one of vital union and communion of nature, too. “Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead (in sins) shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live. For as the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself” (John 5:25, 26). That is said of Christ not in connection with His original place in the Godhead, but of Him as Mediator and in relation to His people. It is in that relation only that the Father has “*given to the Son to have life in Himself.*” It was not life for Himself alone, but life to share with and give to His people, as He Himself affirmed: “as Thou hast given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given Him” (John 17:2). It is similar to, in fact parallel with, that other word of the Saviour’s, “the glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them” (John 17:22). Life communicated from Christ at the new birth, when they are vitally “joined” to Him and become “one spirit” (1 Cor. 6:17).

Regeneration is the spiritual resurrection of the Christian. The new birth is no mere development of a spiritual germ with which each one is born. It is a lie of evolutionists that man is born with a spark of Divine life which needs only to be educated and cultivated for its fanning into a flame. Refutation of such an error is found in Christ’s declaration, “Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink His blood ye have no life in you” (John 6:53). Conversely, those who appropriate to themselves the sacrifice of Christ give evidence of spiritual life and that life is imparted to them at the new birth: “you hath He quickened who were dead in trespasses” (Eph. 2:1). This Divine quickening is spoken of as a passing “from death unto life” (John 5:24). It is a miracle: a miracle of Divine grace and power. Clearly so, for resurrection, be it spiritual or corporeal is outside of man’s providence. No corpse can quicken itself, nor can all the doctors and scientists of the world re-animate one. Only the living God can speak the word which will call forth a Lazarus from the tomb and He alone can regenerate.

Now regeneration or spiritual resurrection is the consequence of Christ's death and resurrection and His peoples' interest therein. This is clear from John 3:3-16, though few perceive the coherence of the passage. The "Son of man *must* be lifted up" of verse 14 looks back to the, "Ye *must* be born again" of verse 7, the pressure of which made Nicodemus to say, "How can these things be?" Christ made him a twofold answer, consisting of recrimination (vv. 10-13) and explanation (vv. 14-17). That which Christ here pressed on Nicodemus was: No one could be born again or have eternal life but as the result of full satisfaction having been made to the claims of a holy and righteous God. The Holy Spirit could not regenerate except on the ground of Christ's atoning death. It is not sufficiently realized that the work of the Spirit *in* God's people is based directly upon the work of Christ *for* them. The Old Testament types make this plain: the "oil" (symbol of the Spirit's work) was always placed upon the blood (Lev. 14:14-17). The Spirit comes *to* us *from* Christ (Acts 2:33).

"According to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, which He shed on us abundantly *through* Jesus Christ our Saviour: that being justified by His grace we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life" (Titus 3:5-7)—our regeneration and being "made heirs" is founded upon our justification. Again—the Father "according to His abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (1 Peter 1:3). The meaning of our being begotten "by the resurrection of Jesus Christ" is most explicitly brought out by Paul in his prayer that the saints may know "what is the exceeding greatness of His power to *usward* who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He *wrought in Christ* when He raised Him from the dead" (Eph. 1:19, 20). The words we have italicized are the key to the deeper meaning of this passage: that which was "wrought" by God to *usward* nearly two thousand years ago has been steadily *manifesting itself* ever since, and will continue to until the whole of the "*usward*" are "quickened" (2:1).

One other word on John 3:14-16. If these verses be interpreted in the light of their context and in harmony with other passages they cannot signify (as commonly supposed) that sinners are born again because they believe. Those dead in sin do not savingly believe in Christ crucified. In all things God must act on the sinner *before* the sinner will act toward God. To “believe on” Christ and to “come to” Him are essentially the same thing (John 6:35) and none can come to Him without the Father “drawing” (John 6:44), and that “drawing” is accomplished by regeneration. In John 3:14-16 our Lord was completing His answer to Nicodemus’ “How?” by showing that the way in which God’s regenerating power takes effect and acts upon and in the sinner is that of *faith*. Being “born of the Spirit” the sinner “believes on the Son”—the “believe” of John 1:12 is explained by the “which *were* born of God” in verse 13. So, too, the “believeth” in John 5:24 is accounted for by “is passed” (Greek “hath passed”) from death unto life. Faith does not procure life but *evidences* its presence—see further 1 John 5:1.

At his spiritual resurrection or regeneration the Christian is made partaker of the Divine nature (2 Peter 1:4) so that new desires and affections are awakened within him. Those spiritual longings were expressed by the Apostle when he said, “that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable to His death: if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead” (Phil. 3:10, 11). It is strange that so many miss the meaning of verse 11: surely Paul was not referring to the resurrection of his *body*, for no “if” is attached to *that* nor is it in anywise a matter of “attainment.” The whole context shows it was a *present* experience and not something future on which his heart was here set—that he had no doubt about the future of his body is clear from 2 Corinthians 4:14, etc. Paul was already “risen with Christ” legally (Col. 3:1) and what he now yearned for was to experience more of the power of this in his soul and the transforming effects thereof in his daily walk.

The Greek of Philippians 3:11 is, “If by any means I might

attain unto the resurrection from among the dead,” the dead here being the *unregenerate*. A similar allusion is made in Ephesians 5:14, “awake thou that sleepest and arise from the dead,” which is addressed be it noted to *believers*: bestir yourselves, put on the new man, make evident your spiritual life, distinguish yourselves from the unregenerate. Go back to verse 10: “that I may know Him,” more intimately, “and the power of His resurrection,” that His life may be communicated more freely to my soul. True, every increase of that life would bring him into sharper collision with the opposing powers of this world, yet so far from shrinking from that he desired further to know “the fellowship of His sufferings.” Though judicially “crucified with Christ” (Gal. 2:20) Paul longed to be still more “made conformable unto his death” and thereby “attain unto” the resurrection from among the dead, that is, he might stand forth in sharp contrast and manifest distinction from the surrounding mass of spiritual corruption and decay—a living man in the midst of spiritual corpses, a light in the midst of dense darkness.

The above interpretation of Philippians 3:11 is obviously borne out by the verses which immediately follow. “Not as though I had already attained (the goal of my spiritual aspiration) either were already perfect (in my experience of the power of Christ’s resurrection), but I follow after (ever seeking a fuller manifestation), if I may apprehend (lay hold of ) that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren I count not myself to have apprehended: 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” (vv. 12-14). Paul was still conscious that in his flesh dwelt no good thing. He was still in weakness and nothingness, with the feeblest believer, struggling on in the strength of the Lord toward the prize which was not yet in his actual possession. But though not yet within his grasp, there was no uncertainty as to the issue, for he had been laid hold of by Jesus Christ for this very end and eventually He would change his vile body and make it “like unto His glorious body” (v. 21).

As in Adam the doom of sin is advancing by a slow but sure process unto the “second death” (Rev. 21:8), so in Christ the reward of righteousness is advancing surely to its consummation. Even now believers are the sons of God and if sons then heirs, but “it doth not yet appear what we shall be” (1 John 3:2). Christians have already received the “first fruits of the Spirit” the earnest and foretastes of what is coming, yet they are “waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body” (Rom. 8:23). The new Life which they have received shall yet be clothed with a body suited to it and since Christ Himself is our Life (in every sense and application of that term), it must be a body fashioned like unto His glorious body, for “as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly” (1 Cor. 15:49). It is on the Resurrection morning that there will be “the (full) *manifestation* of the sons of God” and then shall appear their “glorious liberty” (Rom. 8:19, 21)—freed from every vestige of sin in spirit and soul and body!

We come now to the third resurrection of the Christian. This, too, he owes entirely to Christ: as his legal or representative resurrection was *in* Christ, as his spiritual or regenerative resurrection is *from* Christ, so his bodily resurrection is the *fruit* of His death and resurrection. “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” (Heb. 9:27, 28). Since Christ expiated those sins, the “many” no longer lie under the doom of death and judgment, and therefore verse 28 goes on to assure us, “and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time *without sin* unto salvation.” Thus, so far as the original appointment goes, believers stand on the other side of death and condemnation. Accordingly, the Apostle says, “Behold, I show you a mystery: we (Christians) shall not all sleep” (1 Cor. 15:51)—“sleep” being the Scriptural name (cf. 1 Thess. 4:14, etc.), for that in the case of believers, which in the case of unbelievers is termed “death.” In all outward appearance it is the same event to both, but in its doctrinal import it is *not* the *penal* result of sin to the saint.



The mortal body of a Christian with its defects, frailties and diseases, is unfit for the glorious destiny of the children of God: “flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, neither doth corruption inherit incorruption” (1 Cor. 15:50). The believer’s body in this life is the same as is that of the unregenerate and runs its course exposed to the contingency of ordinary mortality. Should that course be run out before the coming of the Lord, this tabernacle will be dissolved, to await a blessed resurrection at His coming. But the original appointment of Hebrews 9:27 does not hold good against believers and so the Apostle declares, “we shall not all sleep, but we shall be changed in a moment in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump” (1 Cor. 15:51-52). Thus what is fundamental and necessary here is not death or physical dissolution but change—the latter being incidental only to those whose earthly career is run before the coming of the Saviour to effect the change. In its general character that “change” is a transformation from “mortality to immortality.” More definitely it is a transformation and conformity of our present body to that of Christ’s glorious one, for in this respect also we shall be “like Him” (1 John 3:2).

The transformation of this vile body into the likeness of Christ’s glorious body is the fitting issue and completion of our regeneration, when our *souls* were made alive spiritually. The essential difference between the “old man” and the “new man” is brought out in the strongest possible manner in the language of inspiration. There is not only the marked difference of moral characteristics but an *essential difference*. Paul traces this to their respective origins: “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 second man is the Lord from Heaven” (1 Cor. 15:45, 47). Men in their natural descent from the first Adam share his nature or life; believers, in their preternatural union with the last Adam, share His nature or life. And it is to the words used to describe these two distinct natures that we direct attention, as showing that the difference is in *essence* as well as in character.

There is an expressiveness in the Greek which is difficult to

transfer to the English: the first Adam was made “a living *soul*.” The Greek word is “*psuche*” and the word rendered “natural” in verse 44 is an adjective formed from *psuche*—*soulical*, if we may coin a term. The last Adam is “a quickening spirit” and therefore the life derived from Him is “spiritual.” The same two adjectives are found again in 1 Corinthians 2:14 which affirms that a man must be born again ere he can receive and know spiritual things. “There is a natural body and there is a spiritual body” (v. 44): in other words, there is a body suited to the nature or life which we inherit from Adam; and likewise a body suited to the nature or life derived from Christ. In order to perceive the force of this it is necessary to go back a step in the Apostle’s exposition of the doctrine of bodily resurrection.

In reply to the cavil of an objector, “How are the dead raised up? with what body do they come?” (1 Cor. 15:35), Paul refers to the established order of nature in the reproduction and perpetuation of vegetable life. When a seed is deposited in the ground in order to the production of a plant, first of all the seed itself must be decomposed before the germ or vital element which it contains can be developed. The seed itself does not come forth—“that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain” (v. 37)—the vital principle which it contained being liberated by the decomposition of the seed, is developed in the new plant. The life contained in every kind of seed is developed in its own appropriate plant; wheat-life or nature, in the wheat plant; barley-life or nature, in the barley plant. “God giveth it a body as it hath pleased Him, and to every seed his own body” (v. 38). The same is true regarding the life or nature of animals: each by the wise appointment of the Creator becomes clothed with, or is developed in, its appropriate body. The *body is* in every case suited to the *nature*: “one flesh of man, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, another of birds” (v. 39).

According to this Divine law and order, the old Adam nature has its own proper body, and since he was made a living soul (*psuche*) the body is a natural (*psuchical*) one. But such a body is unsuited to the new nature derived from Him who is a quickening

spirit, though this is not yet made manifest. To all appearances a child of God in this world is like any other man, because he has only the natural body. The new life which is “spirit” (John 3:6) is not only a stranger in a hostile world but is ill-accommodated by the body in which, for the present, it dwells. “We that are in this tabernacle do groan being burdened” (2 Cor. 5:4). We long to be clothed upon with our house which is from Heaven—a spiritual body adapted to the new life. At death, the natural body, so alien and unsuited to the new nature, is laid aside: at resurrection the new life is invested with a spiritual body, though it must be remembered that decay in the grave is not absolutely necessary to this transformation.

In 1 Corinthians 15 the Apostle also points out that in the wise arrangement of the Creator everything in nature, whether celestial or terrestrial, has a “glory”—beauty and excellence adapted to the sphere in which it is designed to move and in harmony with the purpose it is made to serve: “there is one glory of the sun and another glory of the moon and another glory of the stars” (v. 41). Thus the change effected in resurrection includes also our investiture with glory and honour meet for the place we are to occupy. A man shining in heavenly glory would be very much out of place in a world of sin and misery; and in like manner the Christian in a body of corruption would be most unseemly for the courts above. The Divine wisdom which has fitted everything for its sphere and made everything beautiful in its place and season will invest those ordained to occupy the highest places of creation with suitable glory: that which is sown in dishonour and weakness shall be raised in glory and power.

“As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly” (v. 49). The life of Christ has already been communicated to the believer’s soul but it is obscured and hindered in a natural body; but the Christian will possess the likeness as well as the life of Christ (Psa. 17:15). Men speak of a “sound mind in a sound body:” yet there is no such thing today, but in the resurrection morning there will be more than that—the mind of Christ in a body fashioned like unto His glorious body.

That is redemption completed. Only when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption and this mortal shall have put on immortality will “death be swallowed up in victory.” Whether we look at what has taken place in the Person of Christ the Head, or at our relation to Him and the life we derive from Him at the new birth—whether we consider our fellowship with Christ and what is necessary in order to our entering into His glory and sharing the blessedness of His exaltation—it is evident that the resurrection of believers is a necessity in the nature of the case.

But it is equally evident that what has just been said above applies only to believers. The resurrection of unbelievers rests upon another ground entirely, is of a very different nature, and is ordained for a vastly different end. That their resurrection is certain we know: “*all* that are in the graves shall come forth” (John 5:29). The power of Christ shall raise them. Yet it will not be by virtue of union to Him but because of His dominion over them, that He may be vindicated in their judgment. They have not His spirit of life within them and therefore there will be no change from corruption to incorruption, from dishonour to glory; rather shall they awake “to shame and everlasting contempt” (Dan. 12:2)—with features that are hideous and repulsive. Nor is there the slightest hope of amelioration: their doom is irrecoverable, they come forth “unto the resurrection of damnation” (John 5:29). Their bodies will be “fitted to destruction” (Rom. 9:22), capacitated to endure *eternal torment*.

Let us return to the resurrection of the believer. There has been considerable difference of opinion concerning the resemblance between the Christian’s present body and his future one. Instead of canvassing the rival views we shall express what we believe the Scriptures to teach thereon. Many we believe have been misled by the term “spiritual body,” as though it signified something intangible and ethereal but that would deny its connection and identity with the first body and instead of being a “resurrection” would involve a *creation*. Moreover, it clashes with the language of our risen Saviour who said to the eleven, “handle Me, and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye

see Me have” (Luke 24:39)—observe that it is Luke, “the beloved physician,” who records this anatomy beyond the tomb. Equally explicit is the Prophet’s detailed analysis of what resurrection is: “I will lay sinews upon you (the naked “bones”), and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin” (Ezek. 37:6)—it is all one whether the Prophet be referring to a bodily, spiritual, or symbolical (national restoration) resurrection, for the Holy Spirit would not mislead by employing strained or false figures of speech.

The Christian’s body in Heaven will be the same as he has now, the same as was laid in the grave unless the Lord returns before then, only a body characterized by glory and fitted for the celestial realm, yet preserving its identity with the old one. “We shall rise again with the same bodies we have now as to the substance, but the *quality* will be different” (Calvin). The word “raised” would be meaningless unless it be the same body restored and transformed. Christ has redeemed the bodies of His people as well as their souls (1 Cor. 3:16; 6:20). That such a resurrection requires a miracle is granted, but Christians believe in a miracle-working God, nor does the supposed “flux of particles” in the human body present any difficulty to Omniscience. Lazarus had gone to corruption, yet he was raised. “Why should it be thought a thing incredible that *GOD* should raise the dead?” (Acts 26:8). The omnipotence which originated the body can certainly re-originate it!

Let us now ponder what is said of the resurrection body in 1 Corinthians 15:54. “This corruptible shall put on incorruption.” Over the resurrection body the curse shall have no power and as there will be no more death there will be none of the disorders which lead thereto. The present body is subject to diseases in endless variety but not so the future one. It will contain no element or germ of disease and will not be subject to decay. Its bloom will never fade, its faculties will never weaken, its members never tire. It will be perfectly holy and therefore in the enjoyment of perfect health. Immortal youth will characterize it: “They are equal unto the angels . . . being the children of the

resurrection” (Luke 20:36). Though the angels were created before Adam, yet never once in Scripture are they represented as aged but rather as men in their prime (Mark 16:5). Adam was created not as an infant or a young child, for that had not represented perfect humanity, but probably as one of thirty, for that is the age of man’s prime (Luke 3:23) and it is likely we shall appear and forever continue thus.

2. “It is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory” (1 Cor. 15:43). The body which is laid in the grave was the habitat and instrument of a depraved soul. It was polluted by evil lusts and disgraced by carnal passions. Its hands performed unholy deeds: its feet trod forbidden paths: its ears listened to ungodly sounds: its eyes beheld vanity. Every member was defiled. It will be the very opposite with the resurrection body: all its faculties will be fully consecrated unto God and devoted to His service. How loathsome the body becomes when disease and death seize upon it. What is more revolting than a putrefying carcass? But the one that is raised is glorious! The saints shall be clothed with a body of surpassing beauty and symmetry. It will be a resplendent body, luminous and reflective: “The righteous shall shine forth as the sun” (Matt. 13:43), “The difference between the unsightly seed and the beautiful flower, or that between the loathsome caterpillar and the beautiful winged insect into which it is transformed is but an imperfect figure of the difference that shall exist between the bodies of the saints laid in the grave and those with which they shall be clothed in the period of resurrection” (J. Brown).

3. “It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power” (1 Cor. 15:43). The present life of man is but a battle of self-preservation. All his toil is for procuring the things necessary to maintain his existence but at the end he has to mutely confess his own impotence. All flesh is as grass and its glory as the flower of the field. Helpless when he enters the world, weakness is stamped upon man. Bodily exertion soon wearies the muscles and stiffens the joints, prolonged mental exercise produces brain fatigue. Good resolutions are formed and high ideals cherished but we lack the moral power to carry them into execution: the spirit is willing but

the flesh weak. But when awakened from the dust of earth we shall no more be subject to infirmities and never suffer from fatigue. Our bodies will be instinct with unflagging energy fitted for a state of uninterrupted exertion.

4. It is “a spiritual body.” All that is connoted by those words it is probably impossible to grasp in our present state. As intimated before we understand them to signify, generally, that as the life of Christ is communicated at regeneration to the soul, so at resurrection a body is given suited to be the abode of one who is freed from all sin and fitted for the celestial realm and its occupations. More specifically, we understand a “spiritual body” to signify, first, one which is delivered from the restrictions of the present one—not subject to the law of gravity, never in need of sleep. Second, one that is endued with sublimated senses and additional faculties. Third, one that is in more immediate union with and fully controlled by the Holy Spirit, quickening and forever sustaining it without the assistance of any natural or animal means. It will be substantially physical, but functionally spiritual.

5. It is “heavenly” in its capacities and destiny. “As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly” (1 Cor. 15:48, 49). There is an identity of kind between the stem and its branches. The “earthy” is Adam (see v. 47), “they that are earthy,” his descendants: the “heavenly,” is Christ, “they also that are heavenly” are His risen people. As the progeny of Adam had borne his image both in soul and body (Gen. 5:3), so the redeemed receive both a holy nature and body from Christ. That the Sanctifier and the sanctified are “all of one” (Heb. 2:11) is a truth on which the Holy Spirit now nourishes the faith of believers. They are as He is, even now in promise; they will be so, in fact, when He returns to claim them for His own. An illustration of the difference between an earthy and heavenly body is seen in the case of the angel in Judges 6:21 who apparently ascended in the flame: he had a tangible body, yet not subject to

fire. The same is beheld again in the mysterious fourth form by the side of the three Hebrews in Babylon's furnace: material and visible, yet indestructible.

6. "This mortal shall put on immortality" (1 Cor. 15:54). It is necessary that a radical change shall take place either by dying and being raised or being changed without seeing death, for we cannot enter Heaven as we are. Our present mortality is incapable of sustaining the light and glory, the revelations and enjoyments of the celestial state. Manifestations of the Divine glory have produced painful effects upon the bodily frame of those to whom they were made. Daniel, after one of his visions "fainted and was sick certain days" (8:27); and on another occasion he declared, "there remained no more strength in me" (10:17). Habakkuk said, "when I heard, my belly trembled and my lips quivered at the voice" (3:16). When the Apostles beheld their transfigured Lord they "fell on their faces and were sore afraid and became heavy with sleep." But in that Day mortality shall be "swallowed up of life" (2 Cor. 5:4) and then shall we be capacitated to dwell with "the Prince of Life."

7. To complete the picture presented in 1 Corinthians 15 we must add, "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" (Phil. 3:20, 21). Here is redemption completed: here is salvation consummated: here is our "glorification." The resurrection body of Christ was able to pass through closed doors. When Saul of Tarsus beheld it, he was blind for three days. And Christ is "the *First fruits* of them that sleep"—both the pledge and pattern of the coming harvest. This same transformation will also be effected in those of His which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord (1 Thess. 4:17). The "like unto" of Philippians 3:21 denotes perfect resemblance but not absolute equality, for in all things must the Lord of glory have the pre-eminence—as He was anointed with the oil of gladness "above His fellows" (Psa. 45:7), so is He exalted with a greater glory. We shall be "like Him" (1 John 3:2): with a brightness and beauty similar, though not on a par with His, shall the bodies of



His people be adorned.

In conclusion we would direct attention to a point which has almost, if not entirely, escaped notice, as is evident from the language universally obtaining among the Lord's people. Four times over in 1 Corinthians 15 occur the words "it is raised" and we would naturally suppose the correlative term would be "it is buried." Instead, we read "it is *sown* . . . it is raised." The writer has been deeply impressed by the fact that never once after the Sin-bearer was laid in the tomb is any of His people said to be "buried," save only in connection with their being "buried with Him by baptism unto death" (Rom. 6:4; Col. 2:12), which is not exceptional but confirmatory. "Burial" is done with the object of getting finally rid of a repulsive object; but "sowing" is with a view to a future appearing! The bodies of Christians are "sown" in the cemeteries and not "buried!" "Deep down in the bowels of the earth, by a process no mortal knows, charcoal turns to diamond: the substance is the same, yet beyond comprehension different: the charcoal has been swallowed up of diamond. The softest of minerals becomes the hardest, most durable, most valuable mineral known. So also is the resurrection of the dead" (D. M. Panton).

