THE

RESURRECTION.



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THE resurrection of the dead is a cardinal truth of the Gospel. By resurrection, we of course mean that which concerns our bodies.

The Christian as in Christ is risen with Christ (Col. iii. 1). But being risen with Christ and resurrection by Christ are two very different things. Of resurrection we would now treat. concerns the human race, and is confined to that race only. Of course it concerns all who die; for all such will be raised (John v. 28-29). But in another way, it concerns all men, for all must have to do with Christ, who Himself is risen from the dead. one on earth therefore can really afford to be indifferent to this article of the Christian man's faith, since first and foremost in illustration of this truth is the Lord Jesus Christ the example. He is "the first-fruits of them that are asleep" (1 Cor. xv. 20). Some before His resurrection had been brought back to life by miraculous power; as the man, whose dead body touched Elisha's bones (2 Kings xiii. 21); the nameless son of the nameless widow of Nain (Luke vii. 14); Lazarus (John xi.); and others (Luke vii. 22). But all such died again. Brought back to life on earth, they subsequently succumbed to death like others of their race. Lord Jesus, however, was raised from the dead to die no more (Rom. vi. 9). Those saints too, for of saints only is it stated, who were raised after His resurrection, as mentioned by Matthew (xxvii. 52-53), never we believe, re-entered the portals of death. With resurrection then, the body never again to succumb to the power of temporal death, are we in this paper concerned.

The possibility of this is unquestionable for Christ is risen. The certainty for all who die is assured beyond eavil or dispute, for, "If the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised" (1 Cor. xv. 13-16). Annihilation, the dream it may be of some, is a delusion.

All the dead, whilst dead to us, live to God (Luke xx. 38). All that are in the grave shall at the summoning shout of the Lord Jesus come forth from the tomb (John v. 28-29); and He died

and rose, that He might be Lord of both the dead and living (Rom. xiv. 9).

We have quoted definite statements from New Testament revelation, yet it was not a thought undreamt of by the worthies of old. It was held by saints as a truth. They looked for resurrection in a coming day. It was taught, we learn, indirectly, vet certainly in Exod. iii. 6, where God addressing Moses said, "I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob," and the authority for making the statement as to this passage is of the highest order. The Son of God Himself has declared it, adding, "He is not the God of the dead, but of the living" (Mark xii. 27). Then the graphic description of the King of Babylon's reception in the under world (Isa, xiv. 9-12), as well as that of Pharaoh, King of Egypt, in the same region (Ezekxxxii. 21) attest that temporal death was not held as involving cessation of existence. And of this Samuel was a witness, when he who had died years before, appeared to Saul at Endor, that unhappy man recognising that it was the prophet who had anointed him as king, and whose command to destroy Amalek, he had failed to carry out. The body indeed sleeps in death, but the soul lives, and will live for ever.

Out of that sleep, the slumber of which no mere human voice can disturb, David, who predicted the Lord's resurrection in Ps. xvi. as confidently awaited his own, when he penned the words "I shall be satisfied when I awake with Thy likeness," (Ps. xvii. 15). In this hope orthodox Israelites lived and died. It was an article of their creed (Heb. vi. 2), as the denial of it by the Sadueees plainly evidenced; and during the Lord's ministry on earth, no scribe nor Pharisee disputed the correctness of that tenet, when He spoke to the Jews of resurrection at the last day (John vi. 39, 40, 44, 54). Much that the Lord taught was stoutly resisted. But the truth of the resurrection of the dead was never so much as called in question by His bitter opponents, the Pharisees. answer silencing the Sadducees evidently met with approval on the part of Scribes and Pharisees. Then Martha expressed to the Lord what was the common belief of the Jews, when she said of her brother, "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day" (John xi. 24). Here we may well call attention to a truth in connection with this subject, which was first revealed by the Lord. He spoke of resurrection of the dead, i.e., that all the dead shall rise. He spoke too, of resurrection from the dead (Mark ix. 10), i.e., that some would rise, leaving others still in their graves. This last is Christian teaching, while the former tenet is common to both Jews and Christians.

Of both these the Lord is an illustration. He is risen who died. Then there can be, and is, resurrection of the dead. He is risen whilst bodies of saints, and of others still slumber in the tomb. Then there is such a thing as resurrection from the dead. And that, which caused a questioning among the three disciples when descending from the Mount of Transfiguration, is a subject with which all Christians should be familiar, seeing that Christ is risen from the dead, and lives to die no more.

Of His resurrection on the third day the Lord had spoken, not once, nor twice only (Matt. xii. 40; xvi. 21; xvii. 23; xx. 19; John ii. 19-21). The Pharisees had not forgotten the first intimation of it, related in that chapter in John (Matt. xxvii. 63). The disciples however had never taken up its meaning, else why did the bulk of the apostles disbelieve Mary Magdalene's testimony that she had seen Him (Mark xvi. 11). As idle tales they regarded the news furnished by her, and by the other women (Luke xxiv. 11).

Then had the women understood the Lord's repeated foretelling of His resurrection on the third day, would they have prepared spices and ointments for the embalmment when the Sabbath was past, and have carried them to the sepulchre on the morning of the third day (Luke xxiii. 56; xxiv. 1)? Had Mary, too, devotedly attached to Him as she was, apprehended the Lord's meaning, would she have run to Peter and John and declared that men had taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and she knew not where they had laid Him? Or would she have lingered at the tomb, and offered to the gardener as she supposed, to take away the body from the place to which he had removed it (John xx. 2-15)? Clear are the Lord's words to us, as we read them after the event. They however had not grasped them. Now, surely to comfort the disciples that announcement was so often repeated, yet mourning and weeping characterised them (Mark xvi. 10), instead of a confident expectation. Hope should have become brighter and brighter in their hearts as the third day approached. That hope, however, none of them had cherished (1 Peter i, 3) whilst the Lord's body lay in the tomb. So the women went to the garden on the first day of the week, expecting to find the dead body in the tomb, as Joseph and Nicodemus had left it. But the stone had been rolled away. and the tomb was without its occupant. Instead of the dead body an angel was seen in human form, sitting within, clothed in a long, white garment (Mark xvi. 5). The crucified One was risen, as they learnt, and that in accordance with His own prophetic announcement. Resurrection therefore was no myth, no fact to be laughed at by philosophers (Acts xvii. 32), nor its possibility to be denied as in after years some were doing in the Christian assembly at

Corinth (1 Cor. xv. 12). Ocular proof, too, was furnished of the possibility of resurrection in another way. For many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of their graves after the Lord's resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many (Matt. xxvii. 52-53). Any in Jerusalem that day to whom these saints appeared had ample proof, if they required it, of the possibility of resurrection, and ample illustration too, of resurrection from the dead, as they beheld their friends or acquaintances alive from the dead. The Lord appeared when risen, only to disciples. These, it would seem, did not confine themselves to members of that company, "they appeared unto many."

But whether our remark is true or not, all interest is centred, and centres in the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. God raised Him from the dead (Acts iii. 15). He was raised by the glory of the Father (Rom. vi. 4). It was a divine act, and the Father's glory was concerned in effecting it; for how leave His body in the grave who had glorified His Father by obedience to death, the death of the cross. Divine power then was put forth, God's

mighty power (Eph. i. 19), in raising Him from the dead.

He rose, but no convulsion of nature took place on that eventful morning, till He had left the tomb.* No angelic chorus announced the fact, such as that which the shepherds had witnessed at His birth. Whilst all the world was asleep, and ere morning light had fully illuminated the earth (John xx. 1) the Saviour rose from the dead. The soldiers guarding the tomb saw not, that we learn, the Lord emerging from the sepulchre, though they saw the angel who came down roll away the stone by which Joseph of Arimathea had closed its aperture. The arrangements to keep the body in the sepulchre, proved unavailing. Human watchfulness however vigilant, human power however active, were alike unable to prevent the resurrection of the Lord.

He rose! Do we think of that as just a fact in history, an event to be classed with many another unforseen occurence? This fact is fraught with consequences to every member of the human race, and all creation, too, is concerned with results which flow from it. Centuries have passed since He rose, yet the full consequences of His resurrection await development; for, till His final dealing with the powers of evil (Rev. xx. 10-15; 1 Cor. xv. 25-26), all will not have been worked out. Far reaching indeed are they. Let

us look at them in order

^{*}The earthquake (Matt xxviii. 2) took place in connection with the descent of the angel, and the rolling away of the stone. This the conjunctive for intimates, God raised the Lord (Acts iii.); and the Lord raised Himself (John ii.). No creature had a hand in that.

And first, as to the person of Christ, His resurrection proclaimed His spotless haliness. For, charged with being a blasphemer by the High Priest, and delivered to Pilate as a traitor, in that He made Himself a King, both accusations, if true, meriting capital punishment, how should all that be met and definitely refuted? Peter told his audience on the day of Pentecost, speaking as filled with the Holy Ghost, that "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye by the hands of wicked men have crucified and slain. Whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be holden of it." Death is by sin. On Him therefore, the sinless One, it had no claim, though on Him our iniquities had been laid. Men unjustly put Him to death. So the Psalmist predicted His resurrection from the dead as certain to take place when he wrote, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thy Holy One to see corruption" (Acts ii. 23, 24, 27). To death He submitted. Corruption He saw not. He was God's Holy One. His walk, His ways, betokened that. His resurrection fully demonstrated it.

Further, of His relationship to God His resurrection is a witness. He is the Sou, and "was declared to be the Sou of God with power, according to the spirit of Holiness, by resurrection of the dead" (Rom. i. 4). So wrote the apostle Paul. The Lord's power exercised in raising the dead, Himself and others, betokened that He was in the relationship of Son to God. As the Son He spoke in the court of the Sanctuary at Jerusalem (John ii. 16-21), of raising the temple of His body. He did what He foretold, so is now declared to be the Son of God with power. Little did the Jews think of that. The military guard placed by Jewish authorities at the tomb, effectually prevented any attempt on the part of the disciples to take the body away, if indeed such had ever been made. Yet the sepulchre was found empty. How was that? What then He had declared about Himself was true. He was the Son of God. What the Jews said of Him, viz., that He was a deceiver, and had a demon (Matt. xxvii. 63; John viii. 48-52), was also refuted by His resurrection. Fully was He cleared who waited patiently for God to do it. What light then was cast on His Person, and on His relationship to God!

Another truth, and a very solemn one also comes out as to His Person. Judgment of men must take place. But who is to do it? That judgment is committed by the Father to the Son (John v. 22), the very day being appointed in the Divine counsels. For the apostle Paul told his audience on Mars Hill "that God hath

appointed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom He bath ordained, whereof He bath given assurance unto all men in that He hath raised Him from the dead" (Acts xvii. 31). To the same effect Peter spoke at Casarea to the company assembled in the house of Cornelius, the Judge Himself, that apostle averred, having commanded His servants "to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is He which was ordained of God to be the judge of quick and dead" (Acts. x. 42). Athenian philosophers on Mars Hill, exercised souls at Casarea, and all men everywhere should hear of it. The world i.e., the inhabited earth, will be judged by Christ, hence repentance was to be preached for all who would give heed, to manifest fruits of it. Judgment to an ungodly person is an unwelcome truth. Would such an one seek to persuade himself, or others, that a future judgment is a myth, and that the doctrine has no solid foundation to rest upon. That tomb in the garden near Calvary, once tenanted by the body of Christ, but tenanted by it no longer, is a witness of the certainty of coming judgment, and can speak too, of the Judge.

Now judgment concerns both the quick and the dead, as the creed expresses it. By the quick are meant those who will be found alive on earth, when the Lord returns to reign. By the dead is intended all who pass into the grave. But Scripture distinguishes more particularly. Of the quick Psalm I. speaks, referring there only to Israel; whilst Matt. xxv. 31-46, also treats of the quick, but refers to Gentiles, the nations on earth when the Lord returns

in power.

Then Rom. xiv. 10, speaks of coming judgment for Christians, whilst 2 Cor. v. 10, declares that it concerns all men, embracing Old Testament Saints as well as the finally lost, and of these last John v. 29, and Rev. xx. 11-15, distinctively treat. No class, no individual even of the human race will find himself excepted, though believers on the Lord, and all true saints of God will not come into judgment to be tried according to their works (John v. 24).

From speaking of the Lord's Person—His holiness, His souship, and His office of Judge, we turn to that which He has done, manifested by His resurrection. Death, which to man is naturally so terrible, and indeed by Christians should never be thought of lightly, being God's governmental dealing on account of our sins, death is for the Christian annulled. It exists, but its power is broken, for life and incorruptibility are brought to light by the gospel (2 Tim. i. 10); life, as we believe the apostle here speaks for Christians who will not die, incorruptibility on the other hand, for all saints who will have entered into the tomb. Nor is that

all, for Christ has by His death "annulled (not destroyed) him that had the power of death, that is the devil; and delivered them, who through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Heb. ii. 14-15). Who of men understood this on the morning of the resurrection?

So far we have noted results in connection with the Lord Himself. We must now remind the reader of results of Christ's

resurrection in which saints are specially concerned.

And first as regards Christian standing. We learn that believers have a deep interest in the resurrection of Christ. For attesting as we have pointed out that it does, the holiness of the Lord Jesus, it witnesses also to us of our acceptance before God, seeing that Christ was "delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification" (Rom. iv. 25). By His resurrection, who suffered the Just for the unjust, bearing our sins in His own body on the tree (1 Pet. ii., iii.), the acceptance by God of His sacrifice is thereby declared, and so our acceptance by virtue of it is fully assured. For the acceptance of the sacrifice by God involves the acceptance of those on whose behalf it was offered. This elementary teaching was early made known. Abel learnt it, and we too know it. As then the Lord was raised who had been our substitute on the Cross, we know that the whole question of our sins and of our acceptance has been settled, and can never be re-opened. Christ died, and was raised, never to die again. Hence believing on God, who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, we are justified by faith, and so have peace with God. And now an expectation, a hope is ours of which none would ever have dreamed, and what is more, of which none can deprive us. rejoice in hope of the glory of God" (Rom. v. 1-2).

Far reaching results then there are as we think of that glory. Yet still more distant results flow from the Lord's resurrection. To those which have reference to saints must we however first

confine our attention.

Christ rose, and rose as the first fruits of resurrection. On that same day as we have already noticed, many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of their graves, and appeared unto many. The first resurrection then commenced, which will not be completed till all the sleeping saints shall rise. Eighteen centuries and more will have run out ere that is a fact accomplished, for not one saint who shall have entered the grave, ere the Lord Jesus appears to reign, but will have his part in the first resurrection. Of this Rev. xx. informs us, which comprises more than the Old Testament saints and Christians. To this scripture we must return later.

Meanwhile pursuing our subject of the resurrection in its chronological order, we come to the consideration of the next, or proximate event connected with it, viz., the sounding of the trumpet, the raising of the sleeping saints, and the change of the living, all to be caught up to meet Christ in the air (1 Cor. xv. 23). Here

of course we pass into the region of the future.

Of two resurrections the Lord had spoken (John v. 28-29) distinguishing (and this was a new revelation) between the resurrection unto life, and the resurrection unto judgment. the former alone have we at present to do. Suddenly will that resurrection come about. "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eve, at the last trump, for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we, (i.e., Christians then on earth) shall be changed." But though suddenly, very orderly will the events take place, as 1 Thess. iv. 15-17 clearly states. The Lord Jesus Christ will 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. Hades will be cleared that morning of every saint of God who shall have passed into death ere the trumpet shall sound. A shout will be heard in the realm of death, but only responded to by those in Christ. That the voice of Christ can wake the dead, the record of the raising of Lazarus illustrates. The Lord cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus come forth; and he that was dead came forth." The trappings of burial still around him, hindered not his obedience to the summons of So will it be when the Lord shall descend to raise His The short will go forth. The voice of the archangel will The trumpet will sound. The dead in Christ will be raised incorruptible. Nothing will hinder them emerging from the tomb.

After that the living saints will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord (1 Thess. iv. 17). All is arranged for, and is to us made known. How that speaks of Christ's interest in His people. He will come Himself for them. How it tells too of His care for all His own, for His first thought will be for His sleeping saints. A number that we cannot yet estimate will come forth from the grave at His call. All the Old Testament saints will then rise, with all the Christians who have died since Pentecost. What a vast crowd will meet the Lord in the air; for we must add also to those just mentioned every true Christian then alive upon earth: and all to be for ever like Him, bearing the image of the Heavenly One (1 Cor. xv. 49). The Body of Christ composed only of Christians will then have been completed, and manifested

to all in heaven. The whole company too, symbolised under the twenty-four elders of Rev. iv.-v. will also have been made up to be displayed as such to all the heavenly host. Yet the full tale of those who will share in the first resurrection will still await its completion. Christian saints and Old Testament saints together do not exhaust it. Two companies of saints will still have to meet death in faithfulness to God and to Christ, being martyred for their testimony. They too will be raised from the dead ere the Lord comes forth out of heaven, riding on the white horse, and with the armies of heavenly saints in His train (Rev. xix.)

He is coming to reign, to bless fully His earthly saints, and to put down all opposed to God and to Himself. As the first man was placed on the earth to subdue it, and everything here put under his sway: so the second man will have all things in the universe put under His feet (Heb. ii. 8): and He will reign till He has subdued all things unto Himself. But His reign will not begin till all His heavenly saints are gathered up on high to come with Him out of heaven. No one who has witnessed here for God, or has in this scene confessed Christ, but will reign with Christ a thousand years (Rev. xx. 4). Man's day how short it is, seventy or eighty years, or a little more. Christ's day how long, a thousand years of uninterrupted sway, and none of the faithful will be forgotten in that day. How gracious is this!

We have mentioned two companies of martyrs to be called out after Christian times shall have run their course. For God since the days of Seth has never left Himself long without a witness here, nor ever will. So in the darkest hours that are yet to come, there will be martyrs for God, and confessors too, these last being preserved alive for the coming day of Christ's power and glory.

But our immediate concern at present is with the martyred ones of that time: for of course they only will share in resurrection unto life. Of these two martyred companies, the first, the earliest called out to die, are seen under the fifth seal (Rev. vi. 9). Some of them, when that seal is opened, have already been slain: but others they learn must share in martyrdom, ere their number will be completed. We have said these form the first and carliest company, but it by no means follows that all the number will be slain ere the rise of the beast, and the narryrdom of those saints who will refuse to worship him, or his image.

Of this last company we would now make mention. Those composing it are seen in Rev. xv. 2-4, as standing on the sea of glass, having gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over the number of his name. This company is there viewed as complete, no more being mentioned to be added to it; for the

Lord's coming to reign will then be close at hand. The awful time of Satanic power will then very soon be terminated, and men, his dupes and instruments, will be permitted no longer to persecute the saints of God. These martyrs had gotten the victory, it is said, "over the beast," yet they had been slain by him, or his adherents. How different is heaven's estimate from that of men of the earth! The latter would think that the beast had overcome them, and driven them off the scene. He had triumphed, they would say, over them. But in heaven the slain ones are viewed as the conquerors. Faithful martyrs unto death, their names here east out as evil, and themselves viewed as unfit to live, in God's eyes they are the conquerors, and will assuredly reign with Christ. But of their resurrection we have no detailed account. That would not directly concern us.

With these two martyred companies raised, the whole number of heavenly saints will at length be completed. Rev. xx. 4 demonstrates this without possibility of a doubt. For the Apostle writes, "I saw thrones and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them." To the elders of ch. iv.-v. John evidently here refers. The Elders, as we have already remarked include all Old Testament saints and all true Christians as well. The Apostle then proceeds, "I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the Word of God." This, the first mentioned martyred company, is that referred to in Rev. vi. 9. There is a third company he sees, as the Revised Version makes clearer to the reader, "and such as worshipped not the beast, neither his image, and received not the mark upon their forchead, and upon their hand." These form the company seen in Rev. xv. on the sea of glass. All these three mentioned companies live and reign with Christ a thousand years.

The number of those who share in the first resurrection is at last filled up, all enjoying the fruit of the Lord's atoning sacrifice, whilst witnessing in their own persons to His power as Son of man. So, now, the Apocalyptic Seer guided by the Holy Ghost writes of their blessedness, "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years" (Rev. xx. 6). A second time is the duration of the reign mentioned. So a reign of ten decades there will be, the heavenly saints sharing in it, and saints and other men on earth greatly enjoying it, for no saint alive on earth at its commencement will ever die. A duration of life here they will know such as none of the Antediluvians ever experienced.

Here let us mark two expressions only met with in Revelation,

the first resurrection, and the second death. The first resurrection implies a second, but no blessedness is connected with that second. The first is the resurrection unto life. The second is the resurrection unto judgment. The first of these completed, of resurrection from the dead, there will be no further expectation. cleared a second time, it will be tenanted by none of that class ever again. Those only will then remain in it who have to face the resurrection unto judgment. For we read, "the rest of the dead lived not until the thousand years were finished" (Rev. xx. 5). Death, as we now know it, will have ceased for God's saints after the rapture has taken place. No saints after that will die what is called a natural death. Martyrdom will be the only way out of this scene for any saints between the Lord's coming into the air (1 Thess. iv. 15-16), and His appearing (2 Thess. i. 7-8). die in that short interval, but they will be ungodly (Rev. vi. 4: ix. 18; xi. 13), suffering judicial dealing at the hand of God. also during the milleunium, death will overtake those who transgress the inflexible rule of the kingdom (Isa, Ixv. 20). But for saints the prophetic word will have been fulfilled, "He will swallow up death in victory," or for ever (Isa. xxv. 8).

. The first resurrection then completed, the days so long expected of the millennial reign of the Lord Jesus will begin. He appearing out of heaven, with His heavenly saints, the opposing powers which men could not check, as the beast and antichrist, with their following arrayed for war; then a little later, the northern power, with its huge host, and after that the invasion of Gog (Ezek. xxxviii.; xxxix.), all signally defeated, that halveon time of rest and peace will commence and last throughout the millennium. Neither Satanic power on the side of the beast and antichrist, nor human power, however numerous may be the assembled host, will arrest the certain setting up of the kingdom of the Lord Jesus For the words of Psalm ii. 8, will receive their accomplishment, and the beautiful picture of Psalm Ixxii, be displayed to all in heaven, and all on earth, and prayer will be heard on high, vet not such as now reaches the ears of the Almighty. No longer will the cry of distress go up, nor the groans of oppressed ones enter into the ears of the Lord of Hosts; but the prayers will be for the continuance of the kingdom of Christ, and the unbroken enjoyment of earthly blessedness under His sway (Psa. Ixxii, 15). Praise, too, will be heard from all parts of earth; for the beneficial character of His reign will stimulate men to praise Him, who was the subject of taunts, and the object of derision, when in grace He hung on the cross. Joy and gladness will at length be known in Jerusalem, thanksgiving and the voice of melody.

Earth, too, will rejoice. The glory referred to in Rom. viii. 18 will be displayed. Fertility will abound. Fruitfulness such as that to which we have been strangers will be the rule, and this earth will appear in festal array. Then "the wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly and rejoice even with joy and singing; the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it: the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the Lord, the excellency of our God." So wrote Isaiah (xxxv. 1-2), two thousand five hundred years ago; his spirit doubtless refreshed, as guided of the Spirit he penned these words to be a refreshment in anticipation to saints age after age, who might feel the burden of things here while waiting for the day of brightness to dawn on this troubled and sin burdened scene.

It will come. The Lord will return to reign, and all His heavenly saints coming with Him will witness the change wrought on earth by His return in power and blessing; whilst the earthly saints, both of Jews and Gentiles, will bask in the sunshine of His pre-

sence, and rejoice in the full tide of millennial blessing.

But others who once trod this earth, and lived for pleasure and self-indulgence without God, or real thought of the Lord, where will they be? Annihilated? No, all live unto God. No immortal creature is, or can be annihilated. But of all such, alas how many, their bodies will be clumbering still in the tomb. To see the day of millennial glory will never be their lot. To behold creation in its festal robes will not be permitted to them. All heaven rejoicing, all on earth made glad, they will be still in the under world awaiting the day of their final doom. Separated from the godly, with whom when in life they may have mixed in business, or the duties of life, as soon as they left earth, they were separated for ever. trumpet sound to call the sleeping saints they will not hear. a voice, the voice of Christ, will reach them, will awaken them and summon them to His presence, to see Him on the great white throne, and to hear Him pass sentence on them, a sentence final and irreversible.

The number of the heavenly saints, as we have seen, completed, ere the Lord comes out of heaven to reign, the number of the lost, however, will still be swelled, and only filled up when Satau's last effort shall have been put forth at the end of the Lord's millennial reign. Let out of prison then he will go forth to deceive the nations in the four quarters of the earth, to gather them together to battle, the number of whom, writes the Apocalyptic Seer, will be as the sand of the sea (Rev. xx. 8). The overthrow of the beast and his armies (Rev. xix.), as well as the utter collapse of the

northern power in its attempt against the nation of Israel (Dan. xi.), and that too of Gog, invading the land as foretold by Ezekiel xxxvii.-xxxviii., will have all been forgotten. Those mad attempts against the Lord Jesus Christ and His people, though signally and decisively frustrated, will have left no permanent impression on the hearts of unconverted men found at that time upon earth. will the beneficent character of the Lord's millennial reign have changed them, and lessened one bit the enmity of their hearts to God, and to His Son. Ready to rebel, when the opportunity is offered, Satan will find them tools suited for his purpose. For yielding as they will, when he is bound in the bottomless pit, but feigned obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ (Ps. xviii. 44: 1xvi. 3, see margin) they will, on the devil's re-appearance on the scene, enlist under his banner, and flock to encompass the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city. But fire from heaven will devour them.

The undying enmity of the devil to God then manifested, the terrible wickedness and folly of unregenerate men will be awfully illustrated by this last outbreak on their part, to be met by the immediate token of the divine displeasure (Rev. xx. 9), in fire out of heaven devouring them. Now will the long conflict with the devil come to an end. He will be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, in which the beast and false prophet will have been for a thousand years (Rev. xix. 20; xx. 10), and torment, continued and everlasting torment, will be the doom of those three. That fire prepared for the devil and his angels (Matt. xxv. 41), his dupes will one and all have their part in it with him.

But first must take place the resurrection unto judgment, and the Judge appearing on the great white throne. John saw this in vision. He on whose breast he had leant at the supper (John xiii.), and to whom all judgment is given (John v. 22-23), will again exercise it, whilst nature will be convulsed, earth and heaven fleeing away from His face. A great white throne it may well be called, for there will be meted out judgment in rightcousness—judgment which none will call in question. We say will again exercise it; for ages previously the heavenly saints will have stood before His judgment seat. Ages too will then have passed, since the quick of Israel (Psalm I.), and those of the nations (Matt. xxv.), heard the Lord's judgment about each one of them.

Now (Rev. xx. 12), the dead, small and great, are seen standing before the throne for judgment; and this time not like that of the quick, but like that of the heavenly saints, it will be a judgment that concerns but one class. In the former case it was only saints redeemed by the precious blood of Christ. In this case it will be only lost ones to be consigned to everlasting perdition. Standing there the books will be opened, and the dead judged out of the books, thus each one confronted with the record of his life on earth, whilst the book of life will be opened, shewing that their names were not recorded therein. Nothing of their past we must believe, will be found to have been forgotten, and judgment according to their works will go forth. Is this just the conception of a man? Nay, it is the solemn, but plain statement of the inspired word, "according to their works," so runs the inspired record. An awful thought now, an awful fact then.

All the dead, small and great. Not one will be forgotten, not one will be left in the grave, for the sea will give up the dead which is in it. Death and hades will deliver up the dead which are in them, And a second time it is stated that the dead will be judged according to their works (12-13). Surely that repetition is intended to impress each reader and hearer of the Book of Revelation. How many deeds will multitudes have desired to be forgotten, but in vain. Comforting it is for saints, that God will remember their sins no more (Heb. x. 17). The word of our God assures us of that. The same One by His Word tells of the impenitent being judged according to their works.

Hades cleared at length of all its occupants, the lake of fire must receive the full number of those who are to have their part in it. Satan, his angels, the fallen angels too (Jude 6), and all the lost of the human race will be cast into it. A small number of these last will it be? Alas, the Lord has told us it will be anything but that, many there be that will enter the gate of destruction (Matt. vii. 13). Then the second death, the lake of fire will be the abiding portion of the lost, and death and hades needed no longer, will also

be cast into it (Rev. xx. 14).

Christ must reign till all enemies are put under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death (1 Cor. xv. 25-26). So writes Paul, and John describes it as carried out, death being east into the lake of fire. For everything connected with sin is viewed as unclean. Resurrection will now have been completed. Resurrection from the dead fully effected, when all the heavenly saints shall have been raised to reign with Christ; resurrection of the dead will be a fact accomplished, when the dead, small and great, rise again to stand before the great white throne.

An important question needs here a notice. The dream of some in our day, and the teaching of certain books is in the direction of the idea of the annihilation of the wicked. Does scripture countenance it! The dead it speaks of not living again till the thousand years are ended. Clearly then, temporal death, i.e., of the body

does not involve annihilation of the individual. As we remarked in an earlier page, "all live to God," and if the dead shall live again they cannot have been annihilated ere standing before the great white throne. For all the ungodly dead, both small and great, will be there, to be judged and cast into the lake of fire.

Will annihilation follow, the fire consuming them? What scripture teaches that? The Lord in Matthew addressing the ungodly, tells them to depart into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels, and He ends the subject with the statement, "These shall go away into everlasting punishment, and the righteous into life-everlasting" (xxv. 41-46). No language could better indicate a final and enduring condition of the two classes spoken of—"everlasting punishment everlasting life. Could we suppose that the Lord would thus have spoken if annihilation of the wicked after a time of punishment in the lake of fire could be true? Of course, if their punishment is not final and for ever, can the righteous expect life for ever? Take away the perpetuity from the punishment, and you must take it away also from the life. Who is prepared for that? Then we read in Revelation xiv. 9-11, that those who worship the beast, and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name, shall be tormented with fire and brimstone. For a time shall we say? The divine prediction runs, "The smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever, and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name." No thought of annihilation is there here. Then too, the beast and the false prophet shall with Satan be tormented in the lake of fire day and night, for ever and ever (Rev. xix. 20; xx. 10). Is the action of that fire to consume? The beast and the prophet will have been in it a thousand years before Satan is cast into it, yet not consumed, for they with Satan will be there together. Now, since all the lost are to be cast into that fire, will some be annihilated thereby, and the rest be tormented for ever? No word is there of such a difference, and certainly the last statement about the funsaved (Rev. xxi. 8). suggests nothing short of a final doom. Cast into that lake, nothing more is said about them. It was the lie of the serpent in the garden, saying "ye shall not surely die." It is the lie of the devil now attempting to deceive the impenitent with the thought that they will not exist for ever. God's word, however, was fulfilled in the former case. His revelation will be found awfully true in the latter. And be it remembered that everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power (2 Thess. i. 9), is not a statement equivalent to annihilation. Far, very far from it, whatever some may say.

We have endeavoured in that which has gone before, to trace out something of the history of the resurrection, and from the only book which can speak with authority upon it. Resurrection will demonstrate the power of Christ, for He will raise all the dead. It will manifest too, the care of Christ, for He will raise His sleep-

ing saints to be with Him for ever in glory.

But there will be a number of saints, which as yet none can compute, who, never dying, will never be subjects of the Lord's power in resurrection; of such in the past there have been just two examples, Enoch, in antediluvian times, and Elijah in the dispensation of the law. By and by there will be a large accession to this class. For the Lord will call up direct from earth every Christian alive down here on the morning of His coming into the air (1 Cor. xv. 52-54; 1 Thess. iv. 17). We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, writes Paul, who tells us also by express revelation that those who do not sleep will be caught up with the risen saints to meet the Lord in the air. How near that day may be none of us can tell.

Then in the interval between the rapture and the appearing of Christ, great multitudes which no man can number, writes John. of all nations, and kindreds, and peoples, and tongues, together with the sealed ones out of the tribes of Israel (Rev. vii.; and another company of Jews it would seem (Rev. xiv. 1-5), will also be kept alive on earth, throughout the trials and persecutions to which they will be subjected. Before the flood then, under the law, connected with Christian times, as well as with the little interval between the rapture and the appearing, there will be those who will never see death, the death of the body.

And finally, no saint on earth during the millennium will die, enjoying as they all will, in unclouded bless, millennial blessing to the full. What numbers then, to us as yet countless, will never enter the tomb! Death is not for saints a necessity, though now the common lot of men. We have said saints, for of the ungodly only two that we read of will never pass into it-the beast and the false prophet we refer to. They will be cast alive into the

lake of fire burning with brimstone (Rev. xix. 20).

Now, calling out His co-heirs, the Lord will come with them to reign; and delivering the earthly saints will bless these latter in a special way; carrying them on to the eternal state on the new earth, when there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away (Rev. xxi. 4). Death being no more, resurrection will by them be unknown.