

CHRIST'S RESURRECTION AND OURS -1876

by Robert Govett

Govett's biblical exposition based on 1 Corinthians 15, exploring the doctrine of Christ's resurrection and its implications for the future resurrection of believers. He examines the apostolic testimony concerning the reality and significance of the resurrection.

14 Chapters

Table of Contents

1. (a). Title
2. (b). Published
3. (c). Contents
4. (d). About Robert Govett
5. Part 1.1 (1-11) Proofs
6. Part 1.2 (12-19) Denial
7. Part 1.3 (20-28) Establishment
8. Part 1.4 (20-34) Denial (2)
9. Part 1.5 - 2nd Chapter - (v. 35)
10. Part 1.5 - continued
11. Part 1.6 - Mode (50-53)
12. Part 1.7 - Victory (54-57)
13. Part 1.8 - Practical Conclusions (58)
14. Part 1.9 - Appendix

(a). Title

CHRIST'S RESURRECTION AND OURS; or I. CORINTHIANS XV. EXPOUNDED. BY R . G O V
E T T .

Glasgow:

JAMES MACLEHOSE, PUBLISHER TO THE UNIVERSITY.

LONDON : MACMILLAN & Colossians 1876.

All rights reserved.

(Book is in the Public Domain - Prepared from books.google.com Apr. 19 2008, SFinigan, some scanner errors are present)

(b). Published

CHRIST'S RESURRECTION AND OURS;

OR, I. CORINTHIANS XV. EXPOUNDED.

PUBLISHED BY JAMES MACLEHOSE, GLASGOW.

MACMILLAN AND CO., LONDON.

London, Hamilton, Adams and Co.

Cambridge, . . . Macmillan and Co.

Edinburgh, . . . Edmonston and Douglas.

Dubtiu, W. H. Smith and Sou.

(c). Contents

CONTENTS.

I. Resurrection Doctrinally Established. 1. The Resurrection of Christ - Proofs - (verses 1-11). 2. Consequences of its Denial - (verses 12-19). 3. Consequences of its Establishment- (verses 20-28). 4. Consequences of its Denial - (1) Absurdity of Opponents - (2) Effects on Christians - (verses 20-34). II. Replies to Christians. 5. Of what kind is the Resurrection-Body? - (1) Its unlikeness to the present Body- (2) Its close connection with the present one - (3) The two types of Man - (verse 35). 6. The Mode of Resurrection - (1) Instantaneous - (2) Affecting at once the Living and Dead Saints - (verses 50-53). 7. The Victory of Resurrection - (verses 54-57). 8. Practical Conclusions - (verse 58).

(d). About Robert Govett

- Included for information only - source<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_Govett>(April 20, 2008)

Robert Govett (1813-1901) was a successful independent pastor of Surrey Chapel, Norwich, Norfolk, U K. He succeeded from the Church of England over the question of baptising infants and set up an independent work. He published many Books and tracts, and was particularly known for his distinctive views in Eschatology.

* 1 Early Life * 2 Early Ministry and secession * 3 Govett's Independent Chapel

* 4 Writings * 5 List of selected writings

* 6 Last years

* 7 Sources

Early Life

Robert Govett Junior was born at Staines, Middlesex to Robert Govett, Senior [Died 1858] Vicar of Staines on February 14th 1813. His grandfather, on his mother's side was William Romaine, Vicar of Reading [Died 1826], this means that his great-grandfather was William Romaine (1714-1795), the famous eighteenth century Evangelical preacher and author of "The Life, Walk and Triumph of Faith". In 1830 Govett attended Worcester College, Oxford]] and graduated with an MA in 1837. He was a Fellow of Worcester College 1837-1844 and was ordained into the Church of England in 1837 and started his first curacy in Bexley, Kent.

Early Ministry and secession His second curacy was St Stephen's in Norwich, Norfolk. His strong gospel preaching gave him a popular following. He resigned from the Church of England in 1845 over the question of baptism. Govett had come to hold a position of Believer's baptism and baptism by immersion. This meant that he could not conscientiously practice Infant baptism|christen infants. This meant that he succeeded from the Church of England, even though he was sacrificing great family expectations for him and breaking with the family commitment to the Church of England. This controversy saw Govett writing numerous 'Baptismal tracts', in which he sought to examine the Scriptures and the questions that were most often used in the discussion of this contentious area of Christian practice.

Govett's Independent Chapel

Govett started an independent work at the Victoria Rooms in Norwich [known as Bazaar Chapel], where he pastored a growing body of supporters. He was very influenced by 'Brethren' practices, but he always remained the pastor/leader of the Church. Though he was influenced by the writings of J N Darby and other 'Brethren' men, he was always an independent expositor of the Scriptures and could cut his own path and was able to defend his own points of view, as he did in a large number of books and tracts that he produced.

He was able to build Surrey Chapel, Norwich, which could seat 1,500. This work he headed up and remained as pastor until his death on February 20th 1901, though in the latter years his congregation dwindled to around 200. He was succeeded as pastor by David Panton, who founded and helped popularise Govett's writings in his journal The Dawn Magazine.

Writings

Govett wrote many tracts on Baptism and these were much approved of Charles Haddon Spurgeon, who was also appreciative of other books that Govett published. He became increasingly taken up with eschatology and took a distinctive Dispensationalist position, which brought in the idea of Selective Rapture before the great Tribulation, and these saints would be worthy of the Millennial Reign of Christ. Govett was an expositor who sought to give the 'Literal' meaning to Scripture and this led him, at times, into some original understandings of the biblical text.

List of selected writings * "Calvinism by Calvin" (1840);

* "Isaiah Unfulfilled" (1841);

* "The Prophecy on Olivet or Matthew 24:1-51; Matthew 25:1-46 Expounded" (1846);

* "The Saints' Rapture to the Presence of the Lord Jesus" (1852);

* "Entrance into the Kingdom; or Reward according to Works" (1853); Second series 1855);

* "The Sermon on the Mount Expounded" [Govett used the title 'Mattheetes'] (1861);

* "The Apocalypse: Expounded by Scripture" ['Matheetes' & in 4 Volumes] (1861-1865);

* "The Kingdom of God Future" (1870);

* "Christ's Resurrection and Ours: or, 1 Corinthians 15:1-58 Expounded" (1876);

* "Moses or Christ? Being the Argument of the Epistle to the Galatians" (1879);

* "Tracts on the Kingdom" [Also published as separate tracts] (1880);

* "Exposition of the Gospel of St John" [2 Volumes] (1881);

* "Christ superior to Angels, Moses and Aaron: A Comment on the Epistle to the Hebrews" (1884);

* "The New Jerusalem Our Eternal Home" (1884);

* "The Three Eatings" (1888);

* "What is the Church? or, The Argument of Ephesians" (1889);

* "Christ the Head; the Church His Body: its dangers, duties, glories; or, the Arguments of Colossians" (1890); The Righteousness of God, the Salvation of the Believer: or, the Argument of Romans" (1891);

* "The Presence of Christ in its effects on the Church and the World; being the argument of the Epistle to the Thessalonians" (1893);

* "The Fourth Kingdom of Man and his City compared with the Future Kingdom of God and His City: being the Argument of the Epistle to the Philippians" (1894);

Govett also wrote a great number of tracts, many of these were bound into volumes; eg 'Tracts on the Kingdom', 'Baptismal Tracts', etc.

Last years

He maintain his leadership and ownership of Surrey Chapel until he died on February 20th 1901. In his last years his congregation had reduced in number to some 200 members.

Part 1.1 (1-11) Proofs

CHRIST'S RESURRECTION AND OURS.

RESURRECTION;

OR, I. CORINTHIANS XV. EXPOUNDED.

THE resurrection of the dead is one of the chief truths of the Christian faith. But it is also something which is most startling to the man who hears it for the first time. Difficulties were raised against it in ancient times on two especial grounds. It was asserted to be (1) Impossible to God, and (2) Undesirable for man.

1. It was supposed to be something beyond the limits of Divine Power, to recall to its integrity the body for ages given over to corruption, of which only a handful of dust was remaining. Was it not absurd to suppose, after the corpse had been consumed by fire, or eaten by wild beasts, that the particles of which it was composed could be re-assembled ?

2. But, supposing it possible, it was undesirable in a high degree. For, according to the prevalent ancient philosophy, sin is the result of the soul's immersion in matter. Evil is the consequence of ignorance or carelessness on the part of the Creator, who was not the Supreme God, but some inferior celestial Being.

Hence death, as severing the soul from the body, was a something to be coveted. Many philosophers sought to wean the soul from the body, to macerate and overpower it; since only in this way could the spirit of man be purified. To such theorists the resurrection was therefore a great stumbling-block, and they resisted it with all their power. The denial of resurrection has in modern times found favour in the eyes of Swedenborg, the early Quakers, and the Spiritists. But resurrection is a fundamental of the Christian faith (Hebrews 6:2). The denial of it results, as the Saviour said, from ignorance of God's power, and from unbelief in the Scriptures, which testify that such is the will of God (Luke 20:27-39, Matthew 22:29). Matter is not the cause of sin ; but the wrong choice of the creature was its source. This is proved by the incarnation and resurrection of the perfect Son of God.

We enquire, then - what is death ?

It is the contrary to life; and life is the result of the union of soul and body, which together make up the man.* Death is the undoing of the bond of union. The body, severed from the soul, is borne away by survivors to the tomb. The soul goes away to a place called Hadees, or the underworld (Acts ii.,- Luke xvi.). After this separation, either part is, in common discourse, and in Scripture, called the man.

Abraham lies in the cave of Machpelah. Yet Lazarus was carried to Abraham's bosom in Hadees. The rich man " seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom " (Luke 16:23). Who are the dead?

They are those whose parts are severed; those who, having fallen under the stroke of death, abide in the state of death and corruption.

What is resurrection ?

It is the undoing of death- the restoration of the man to life. As death hath sundered body and soul, resurrection reunites them. As life at first consisted in the union of body and soul, resurrection reknits the divided parts. The soul, ascending out of the place of the departed, takes up its former body. This is proved by the whole tenor of Scripture on the point.

It is written in the facts of the Old Testament and * There is also a third part of man - the spirit. But that does not come into question at this point (1 Thess. v.). of the New. Thus Elijah brought back to the lifeless body the soul of the son of the widow of Sarepta.

Thus Elisha raised the son of the Shunammite. Thus Jesus recalled to its former body the spirit of the daughter of Jairus. Thus He raised the son of the widow of Nain, and Lazarus from the sepulchre. Thus the Lord Himself arose out of the tomb. But in our day there are those who scruple not to assert, as Swedenborgians and the Spiritists do, that '

Death is resurrection.' ' The soul's coming forth from the corpse is the only rising again that is ever to be experienced. On this view the body perishes. It is never more to be resumed. It was never designed to be aught more than what the scaffold is to the building. The spirit-state is man's final one.' This is the consequence of men's unbelief in the promised resurrection, to which God's delay in performing it has furnished the occasion.

1, 2. Now I make known to you, brethren, the Gospel which I preached to you, which also ye received, in which also ye stand: by which also ye are saved, if ye hold fast whatever discourse I preached unto you, unless ye believed in vain. The Gospel of Paul was the death and resurrection of Jesus the Son of God. He had testified this truth at Corinth. It had been received there by many as God's good news, though beyond and contrary to man's expectations and reasonings. It was now called in question by the wise of the world. The Corinthian believers were beginning to be ashamed of it; were ready to fancy they must have misunderstood the apostle's meaning, or that he was in error.

They had not, however, given up this foundation of the faith ; and Paul hastens to confirm it. It is salvation to believe in this death and resurrection of the Son of God. But he who is to be saved must hold fast the doctrine,* and not surrender it to human speculations and arguments. Whatever the story of the cross and resurrection was which Paul testified at first, it remained true still : they were to give up no part of it. Their faith was divine, it rested on the witness of God.

3. For I delivered unto you among the first things that which I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he rose the third day according to the Scriptures.

Paul built the Christian faith upon facts and prophecy :

Facts are the acts of God. These, and not human reasonings, are the basis of our faith. Other religions rest on fables and fancies. Ours on the testimony of eye and ear-witnesses to facts. * It should not have been rendered "keep in memory." It refers to a holding fast of the heart by faith.

Paul set forth that first which was of prime importance, and that was Christ's death and resurrection.

1. " Christ died." The anointed One of God died, not, as other men, for His own sin, but as a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of others.

He died "according to the Scriptures." It was no sudden thought of God to remedy an unlocked for overturning of His plans ; it was His counsel from eternity. The story was no device of a clever impostor. That death had long been foretold in the sacred books of Israel as the counsel of God, and as the result of God's justice, yet the consequence of His mercy to the fallen. In the word to the serpent in Eden, that he should bruise the Deliverer's heel, we have the first bud of the promise. Then the sacrifices from Abel downwards represented the Substitute's death as the hope of the sons of men.

2. But Christ was also " buried." This was a part of God's plan. The Saviour might have arisen from the dead without burial. But the Lord would thus strengthen the proof of our Lord's death, and increase the resemblance to the ordinary lot of man. He " rose the third day." Death took place at one moment, resurrection only after a considerable interval. The time of His resurrection is given according to Jewish reckoning, not according to ours. The Jewish Scriptures had foretold this in types. The sacrifice and resurrection of Isaac took place on the third day after the Lord's sentence (Gen. xxii.). The coming forth of Jonah out of the whale's belly took place the third day. The Saviour's resurrection - the proof of sin put away by His sacrifice - was foretold in the second Psalm, and in the sixteenth. If death were resurrection, Jesus' resurrection ought to be described as occurring at His expiring, and not on the third day after that.

We are next presented with the evidence of Jesus' resurrection.

5-8. And that he was seen (1) by Cephas, (2) next by the twelve, (3) next, he was seen by above five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain until this day, but some have also fallen asleep, (4) next, he was seen by James, (5) next, by all the apostles, (6) last of all he was seen by me also, (by me) who am, as it were, the abortion.

It is remarkable that in this list of witnesses, the evidence given by the women is suppressed. On what ground, it is not easy to say. Perhaps because it would be refused by Greeks. i. Peter, then, is the first of the witnesses here cited.

We have no detached account of this in the Gospels : but Paul was not dependent for his knowledge on them. The Saviour had made known to him all the details of the faith at first hand. But this vision must have taken place after Peter's second visit to the Lord's sepulchre. His first visit took place in company with John, upon the report of Mary Magdalene that the stone was rolled away. On that occasion they both returned, having seen nothing but the interior of the sepulchre and the disposition of the dead-clothes.

Peter went to the tomb a second time, probably on hearing the testimony of the women's second company, that they had seen a vision of angels. On that second occasion, Peter did not enter the tomb, as he did on the first. He merely stooped down and looked in, but he saw no angels ; he beheld only the linen clothes, and so came back (Luke 24:11-12). On his return it was, probably, that the Lord appeared to him.

Certain it is, that the twelve testify to the two travellers from Emmaus, that "the Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared unto Simon " (34).

2. The second instance appealed to is Jesus' apparition to the twelve. The time referred to is doubtless that of Luke 24:33-43. There the apostles are called "the eleven." Why are they here called "the twelve ?" Doubtless because Matthias was among them, who was afterwards incorporated with the original apostles. He was chosen by God as a witness to Israel of all the great facts of our Lord's ministry and of His resurrection (Acts i.).

3. The third occurrence is the Lord's appearing to above five hundred at one time. This refers, I doubt not, to the assembly of the Lord's disciples at the appointed mountain in Galilee (Matthew 28:16). That was the only occasion on which Jesus assigned the time and place of a meeting for His disciples with Himself. At that assembly all who could be present would naturally be there. This meeting in Galilee was an important part of the evidence of the Saviour's resurrection. The men of Galilee were to behold the light of God driving away the shadows of death. What could do this so effectually as the appearance of the Saviour, in resurrection the conqueror of death ? The falling asleep of the righteous now is another thing than death. It is to them robbed of its ancient sting.

4. Then He was seen by James. Really the name is "Jacob," and so it ought to have been always rendered. This James is, of course, not ' James the brother of John' whom Herod slew with the sword (Acts 12:2). It was the Jacob who was our Lord's brother, the son of Mary by Joseph (Matthew 13:55, Jude 1:1.). He was afterwards chosen to be the apostle of the circumcision residing at Jerusalem (Acts 12:17).

He is commonly called the bishop of Jerusalem.

Until the Lord's resurrection he was an unbeliever

(John vii.).

5. "Next by all the apostles." This refers, I believe, to other apostles beside the original twelve.

Beside the twelve chosen by our Lord, there are twelve other apostles named in the New Testament.

Others are mentioned in this very epistle (1 Corinthians 9:5-6). It was necessary to the qualification of an apostle, that he had seen the Lord. This was true of Paul.

6. Paul next cites his own case. The other apostles were in Christ before him. He was, as it were, the abortion, which had come last. This depreciation of himself arises out of his sense of sin in having persecuted, while an unbeliever, the members of Christ even unto death.

9, 10. For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am : and his grace which was given unto me became not vain, but I laboured more than they all; yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.

Paul does not defend himself in his previous course, as a man conscientious, even where mistaken. No : the conscience is not the highest authority ; it needs enlightening of God. Left to the darkness of nature and unbelief, it prompts a man to what is evil before God, even where the

course is acceptable before men.

Paul was in spirit an Unitarian, up to the time of his conversion. On finding, from Stephen's prayer, that Jesus was an object of worship to the Christians, far from repenting of the murder of Stephen, he persecuted God's assembly of believers at Jerusalem, and broke it up. He thought himself justified in so doing. ' Were not these Christians calling Israel to the worship of another God than the God of their fathers ? And did not Moses call for the putting to death of such polytheists ? ' He therefore blasphemed the Son of God, and compelled others to blaspheme, by stripes and imprisonment and the fear of death (Acts). But when Saul beheld Jesus appearing in the sky, clad in the glory of God, and heard Him identify Himself with the disciples whom he was slaying, his soul was shaken within; he confessed his sin. His first discourse to the astonished men of the synagogue was - that the Jesus whom the Christians worshipped was the "Son of God": - in such a sense as that he was God, the proper object of religious worship (Acts 9:20). While the Father, the Son, and the Spirit were building up the Church, he had been, like the wild-boar out of the wood, seeking to root up God's vine. Balaam's course was evil ; his was worse. Balaam attempted to injure God's assembly of old, a far inferior one. Thereby he put himself in the place of an enemy of the Most High; hardly was his life at first spared; at length it was cut off. Saul's sin was greater; for he blasphemed the God of the new congregation of God. But he was spared, and made a witness of the truth he sought to destroy. Paul joins those whom once he persecuted ; as Balaam should have done, as soon as he knew the Lord's counsel concerning Israel.

Balaam was drawn aside by the love of money and the desire of pleasing a king. But Saul, arrested by God, gave up all to follow Christ. The apostle traces the great change, not to his own honesty and upright choice, but to the favour of God. The sinner has nothing of his own to boast of. " He that boasteth, let him boast in the Lord." The effect of this sparing grace was seen in Paul's usefulness. He was no unprofitable servant. As soon as he became the servant of Christ, he exceeded in diligence and in success all of those who were apostles before him. The apostle's self-depreciation was not the affected humility which is in search of a compliment. Paul was much 'run down' among the Corinthian be-lievers. The Judaizing teachers could not bear him, or the principles he taught. His appointment to the apostleship was so ' irregular and out of course.' He threw, too, the original apostles into the shade ; and the Judaizers were annoyed at it.

Paul, then, will state fairly both sides of the question, (1.) He owns the circumstances which disparaged him in the view of others ; they lowered him also in his own eyes. He had not forgotten them ; one might almost say, that though Christ had forgiven him, he had not forgiven himself. (2.) Yet his after zeal, labour, and success were equally obvious, and this he asserts fearlessly. But he gives the glory of this where it is due. n. Therefore whether it were I or they, so we proclaim, and so ye believed. This sums up the joint testimony of all the apostles.

It all went to the proof of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. This was the powerful unbroken witness of those chief servants of God.

What shall we say about the witness of apostles?

There are only three reasonable propositions. They were either (1) knaves, (2) fools, or (3) true witnesses. Which were they? It is not difficult for the candid to decide hereon. To the determined infidel it is a problem which he cannot reasonably solve.

1. Shall we say that apostles were knaves? What is a knave? He is one who serves his worldly interests at the expense of a good conscience. He discerns at a glance the winning side in a controversy, and frames his story, and takes his part, accordingly.

He seeks above all things to please his audience.

How was it, then, in this case ? Did apostles ' make a fine thing of it?' Did they adapt their story so as to win the world's favour? to obtain greatness and power, wealth and palaces? Or did they gain by their testimony only contempt and hatred, scowls and scourges, prisons and death? Did they continue on this line of conduct long after what the issues of such a course would be ? How, then, can they be knaves ? Was Paul a knave? We have his history. We have his writings. To read his writings, to know his course, is an instant refutation of the charge. His original course as the Pharisee was the one that would alone suit the knave. His after-life can be accounted for only on the supposition of a sterling honesty. The knave-theory, then, is one that will not run upon the rail. It is a Carthaginian elephant that tramples down its friends in the battle.

2. Shall we say they were fools ? 'Well-meaning men, but weak-headed, heated enthusiasts, imagining they saw and heard what never really came to pass.'

Well, we have some of their writings. We know a good deal about their ways. Are their writings those of brain-sick visionaries ? Are they not words rather of sober sense and truth - in which the element of dreams and visions occurs but little? Their ways were sober and successful. Would weak enthusiasts have led captives the sharp-witted Greeks? or the grave and austere Romans? Some of the earlier Christian writings, after apostles were removed from off the stage, are indeed mere twaddle. But their writings task to this day the deepest thinkers and reasoners to fathom them. Beside, to what was it that they testified ? That Jesus of Nazareth was put to death. Cannot men of plain common sense know when a man is dead? They say, that they saw the same Jesus alive after His burial. Cannot a common man tell whether another is alive? whether he saw and felt him? The fool-theory, then, is a cannon that cannot easily be brought to bear on the facts, and its recoil is the destruction of those who discharge it.

3. But if they were honest witnesses of the facts which their four-times-repeated story gives, then Christianity is true, and the refusers of its testimony are lost ! Justly lost, because they turn away from God's salvation.

Between these three theories unbelievers of each succeeding age wander to and fro. They will not accept the view which is sustained by sufficient evidence, and they cannot rear up any tolerable fortress out of the other theories. So powerful are the evidences of the truth, that numbers of old accepted the story, and multitudes believe it still. The apostle now turns to refute the doctrine of those who denied resurrection.

Part 1.2 (12-19) Denial

12. Now if Christ be proclaimed that he is risen from among the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?

There were at Corinth those who believed the resurrection of Jesus, but denied all future resurrection.

Against these the apostle argues. Observe ! he is not proving the immortality of the soul. That was a philosophic doctrine; but God's witness is, that the whole man shall be restored. As death severs the parts of man, so shall there be a time when the body and soul thus forcibly sundered shall be united again never more to be severed. Apostles do not testify to the appearance of a ghost or human spirit, as in the case of Samuel ; but to the reunion of the parts of Christ which at death were divided. After death His body was laid in the sepulchre: His soul went among the souls of the dead into the place appropriated to them. But He came forth out of the tomb once more a living man. He was recognized by His friends; they saw His face, heard His familiar voice, felt His body. The marks of His identity purposely presented to them perfectly satisfied them. Thus furnished, they went forth as witnesses of the resurrection. They tell us, that on first beholding Jesus after His death they supposed Him to be an apparition, a naked spirit whose body abode in corruption. But Jesus refuses such an idea as unbelief (Luke 24:36-48). Spiritism affirms, and gives evidence in proof of, the appearing of spirits. Such appearances we deny not. But in denying the future resurrection of the dead, or the reunion of soul and body, they deny the faith of

Christ. The apostle's argument, then, is clear and decisive, (1.) If you admit the past resurrection of Christ, the future resurrection of others is possible. How, then, do you deny the possibility of resurrection? (2.) If you deny the past resurrection of Jesus, you are no Christian. This is the chief point of God's testimony, which to deny is to be an unbeliever.

If Jesus has risen, all will rise. Apostles speak of " the resurrection of the dead" not, as we generally do, of "the resurrection of the body." For that might give room for the thought, that the body alone would rise. Not so, the dead are to rise. In sleep we lie down; at death, if sudden, we fall down unable to rise. That, then, which fell down through the departure of the spirit is to rise up through the spirit's return to its tenement. Of the Two Prophets who shall one day appear, we read, that the False Christ shall "kill them. And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city." " They shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put into graves." "After three days and a half the spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet" (Rev. xi.). Christ is "the first fruits," "the first-begotten from among the dead." That is, others are to rise as He rose. The undoing of the parts of which man is composed is a humiliation which is the result of sin. The re-knit-ting together of the parts is the result of the righteousness of Christ, and will be effected by His power. Christ is really risen. This supposes the reality of His body against the unbelief of the errorists of old, who affirmed Him to be a phantom only. But how does Christ's resurrection entail the resurrection of all men? (1.) Because He is in Himself "

Resurrection and Life ; " He has the power to raise all as he raised Lazarus. (2.) Because He has testified that He has the intention of raising all that are in their graves. On the fact of Christ's resurrection, taught by the apostles as the chief point and accepted by them- selves, Paul rears the proof of the general resurrection.

They admitted, it seems, Christ's resurrection, but denied the future one of men. Paul does not till the close take up the subject of the resurrection of the just. On this point of Christ's resurrection, established by proof, Paul sets the further one.

He proves Christ's resurrection first ; lest opponents should go backward further still in unbelief, and deny that. They could not deny universally the resurrection of men as impossible, and yet own that in the case of one man it had already occurred.

Here is contradiction manifest, if one should say - '

It is impossible that stones should fall from the heavens/ while yet he owned one case established by overwhelming proof of many witnesses.* If you

* Not all the believing Corinthians denied this, but some only. On 'exclusive principles,' Paul should have required the putting-out of all such, and that as the condition of his holding fellowship with them. He should have said, ' Evil unjudged is in you; you are all defiled.' Paul does not impute to all the error of a few. Nor does Christ, in his seven epistles. As touching the subject of Communion, this observation does not suppose that faith in fundamental doctrines is not necessary in the reception of any to communion.

None is a Christian who does not own the resurrection of Christ. He is not accepted of God, or to bereceived by Christians as one (Rom. x.). But these admitted Christ's resurrection, though they denied the necessary consequence of it. 1. As regards the position of the doubters, it is of the utmost consequence. The deniers were not persons outside, waiting to be received as Christians. Then this denial would be a just reason for pausing, and questioning whether they had really received the truth. 2. But it refers to those already owned as Christians. And these (while they ought to be put out for an open transgression of act) are not to be excluded for false doctrines afterwards received. This same epistle is the witness to us on both points (1 Cor. v.).

grant that the sun has risen, how can you deny that it is day ? The one case of our Lord's resurrection was a special and peculiar instance which, once established, carries all the rest. For the Risen One here is He who, by His own prediction, is to awake all the others - a power which He shewed Himself to possess before He rose Himself.

He is described all through the first part of the argument by one title, "Christ" - not "Jesus," nor "Jesus Christ" - till verse 31. Why? Because of the Devil's deceit, even then beginning : - the dividing of Jesus Christ into two persons.

Hence Paul says, "the Christ was killed, buried, rose," because these deceivers would say that Jesus died, but would not admit it of the Christ, whom they supposed to be a Spirit - Emanation from

God.

Christ rose "from among the dead:" not merely " from death." This expression of God's is far more definite than the other. Jesus at death went among the dead. His body (Himself being divided) was put in the tomb among the tombs. His " soul " went to Hadees, or the place of the dead, and was there among the spirits of the departed, and there preached to the spirits of the angels who fell in Noah's day, through choosing to live among men

(Psalms 88:5).

It is remarkable that two different words are employed in the same sentence by the apostle, the one to mark Christ's resurrection (Gk:egeiro), the other to express the resurrection of men (Gk:anastasis), or the standing up of that which fell down, and was laid in the tomb. But the latter word is also used of Christ in the Acts. "

There is no resurrection of the dead." Of this phrase there are two possible and closely related senses, (1.) 'Resurrection of any of the dead is impossible.' That is, I suppose, the sense here.

(2.) Or the futurity of it is denied : ' There is to be no resurrection of the dead.' Hence the present tense.

13. But if there is no resurrection of the dead, neither has Christ risen. '

If the general resurrection is not to be, neither has this instance occurred.' This seems most forcibly put, if we suppose that impossibility is denied.

14. And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. The Gospel is then come to an end. It was an idle story ; based on no reality, on the part of those who proclaimed it, and of those who received it God's character as God, is bound up with His treatment of Christ. Is He the Just and Terrible to sinners, yet gracious in Christ ? All turns on whether Christ is raised or not.

15. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ : whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not.

False witness against man, our neighbour, is bad - how much worse against God, if apostles were misleading men on the chief question of all ! Here is the solemnity of false doctrine. To misrepresent God's character, and that as if they were persons specially accredited and sent by God to do so, was awful work indeed. God's threats against the false prophets in the Old Testament were then to be fulfilled on them. 'We have been saying of God that He raised from the dead His Anointed One, who is to raise and judge all men.' But this is not true, if none of the dead are to rise (Ps. xvi.). You make us guilty of a great crime in law. Much more if in God's cause - falsehood is used.' The false witness was to be severely dealt with by Moses' law.

16. For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised.

How is death known ? By the state of the body ; as truly as life is. How is resurrection to be known ?

Only by the body's becoming alive again. How does that take place ? By the soul's re-entry into the body.

17. And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins.

If Christ is not risen, your faith has no result. His death was for sins, his resurrection took place because of sin put away. And you rejoiced in it, as bringing you forgiveness of sins. That is the Gospel! Forgiveness is only true if Christ has come up from the dead. Else He still lies under our sins ; or He is not the Christ foretold at all. Our sins are still on us, if the Christ have not borne them away.

He has not borne them away, if His body is still in the tomb and His soul in Hadees. There is no for-giveness, if Christ's death made no atonement.

There is no atonement, if He is not risen. A sailor plunges into the sea to rescue a poor man overboard. But if he come not back, both are lost.

18. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ have perished.

There are two classes of the dead, (1.) Those in Adam. (2.) Those in Christ. One portion is under sin, suffering the penalty of Adam's trespass and of their own ; the others are asleep in Christ, to be waked to joy by Christ, as forgiven; and to be brought out from under the results of their sins into resurrection.

If there be no resurrection, the man has perished. A part of him may have survived the shipwreck, but the man, that twofold being, is gone. "

Perished" then means not 'annihilated.' It was not so affirmed, even by those who denied resurrection. The heathen admitted the existence of the shades of the dead (" manes"). But a part of the man has come to ruin, has been undone, is never more to be used. These believers were expecting the rising of their body. It is something never to be. They are gone into the spirit-state, and it is the spirit-state of sinners under God's wrath. That is to perish. Death is the result of sin, and the separation of the two parts of man is the result of Adam's fall and of God's sentence.

Only the undoing of this in resurrection, or the man's coming forth out of the dust, can be to us the proof of God's being at peace with us. The rising of Christ is the only proof of the fulfilled coming of the Woman's Seed to undo the power of our great enemy. This doctrine of the laying aside for ever of the body - the Spiritist's doctrine - is to Paul a "perishing." To Paul so much rests on the resurrection that he almosts overlooks - what yet he admits - the spirit-state. Existence as a spirit among spirits were the perishing of a part of the man. The dead slept.

There is, you say, no awakening. They exist, but are never, as they hoped and as we told them, to live. For existence thus divided, and one part of it lost, is not life : it is not awaking. Sleep is good ; but is it to be the perpetual attitude of the saved ? Nay ; they await Christ's awaking them. If the Head has risen, they the members shall arise. But if He have never risen, they will never rise. Death is to the believer - sleep. Of the Christ Paul says, that He " died" for on Him lay the full penalty of sin. But that put away, death is to us only a " sleep " - to be followed by Christ's awaking of us.

See, then, the opposition of the Spiritists' doctrine to Christianity. To them ' death is resurrection] and the departure of the soul from the body is awaking to life. The dead are to them the really awake, the truly alive. To Paul resurrection is something to come ; the departed are asleep - not

active, not alive. To the Spiritists this present course of things is not the result of Adam's sin. As it was from the first, so it is always to be - death, and then the body laid aside for ever. Death is not the penalty of sin, neither has Christ introduced any alteration into the matter. Nor is there to be any raising up of dead bodies at His coming, or any judgment to follow thereon. To them God is the God of goodness alone. They deny His wrath. Thus the whole of Christianity is knit together ; and thus this new system is the connected and entire denial of it.

Here, then, God tests men. Will you trust God's witness? Reason can here only judge of the proofs God gives. The Spirit begins His work by convincing of sin, by taking down the man from his high place of being God's critic and judge, to see himself one lost before God, and to behold Jesus the Son of God as the only Saviour. When we see what a Saviour-God has given, how can we startle at the wondrous results ? Infidels would have argued, had there been no such startling doctrines, that Christianity could not have come from God. ' Such tame commonplace proves itself the word of men.' Jesus must die. But if God has saved us by Christ, Jesus must be raised up. How can I tell that God is at peace with me, has made peace ? By Christ's resurrection and ascent to Him.

19. If in this life only we have had hope in Christ, we are more to be pitied than any men.

These believers (like ourselves) cherished hope in Christ all their life, that hope being the resurrection. But this, you say, is a foolish hope. So it is, if destitute of its one basis. You cut away, then, hope in Christ from the living too. And we are greatly to be pitied. Through the hope of resurrection, as declared in the Gospel of the Christ, we have given up the things of time, the hopes of nature ; and now you cut away the hopes of grace. We have surrendered, then, all that man boasts of, and get nothing in return. Our equivalent and the righting of the balance was to have been a first and blest resurrection, to be introduced by the Christ, at His return from on high. But if we are not to rise, neither has He risen.

Here is one who, on the faith of a hundred per cent. to be returned to him by a company mining for gold and diamonds in Africa, has gathered all that he has, and has reduced himself to utter poverty, expecting in ten years to be rich indeed. But it is found out that he has fallen into the hands of swindlers. There is no such name of a city in the South Coast of Natal as he gave, and the chief agent is a rogue who is spending the money of the shareholders in France in idleness and debauchery, laughing at his dupes. The poor man is greatly to be pitied who has so fallen into ruin. Our hopes lie beyond the grave. But if none has ever got beyond that, not even the Wondrous One of the Gospels, we have given up earth and have lost heaven 1 The wretchedness of disappointment is felt in proportion to the greatness of the hopes held out. Jesus sets His people against the world's current both in principles and conduct, and foretells to them trouble as the issue, resting the reasonableness of their obedience to Him on His requital beyond the tomb. But if there be no beyond, His whole system is folly, and the observers of it are cheated dupes. Secularists get at least the pleasures and profits of time, and may enjoy a good repute. The Christian was to his neighbour a fool and an impious man, a mark for robbery and persecution. But if there be a resurrection and a life beyond the grave, how unhappy are they who live for time alone, and despise God's witness of sin and of judgment ! Faith in Christ leads to hope in Christ, to a hope of His future work for us and in us. But if He have succumbed to death, it is certain we shall never get clear of it. " Have perished." Notice the contrast of this spiritually, and as to the destiny of man physically, with the doctrine of Spiritism. Spiritism denies God's wrath against sin, and that

death is the result of the breach of His law in the Garden. ' Death has been, they say, all along God's scheme, and man is - as to his final state - never to wear the body again.' Their scheme has nothing to do with Christ's work and His resurrection. It is a clog upon their system where it is admitted, as it is by Sweden- borg. For men are, in their final state, to be unlike Christ. Christ arose after death and burial. They are never to take up any body after its death and burial.

Spiritists suppose death to be resurrection; they do not own the resurrection of the dead, but only of the dying. The spirit's coming forth out of the body is the only resurrection. Now Christ's and Lazarus's resurrection took place after burial. Such is the Christian's to be, at some distant unknown time. On their views, resurrection is going on every day, and that by units, as each one dies.

According to Scripture teaching, resurrection is a miraculous act; not now going on, but at some future day to affect millions at once. On their views resurrection affects, in the same way and at the same time, the good and bad alike. Scripture doctrine is, that the holy are to rise a thousand years before the others. "

Those in their graves are to come out" The rising saints are not to come out of their bodies, but into them ; as did Lazarus. On our doctrine it is the coming of Christ in mighty power down from heaven, that can alone produce this change of the dead. On their ideas, Christ cannot come again in flesh : He has put it off. So they are antichrists (2 John 1:7). With them, death is life and activity. With us, death is sleep, and corruption begun. Spiritism denies also the millennial kingdom, the result of Christ's second coming.

Part 1.3 (20-28) Establishment

20. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept. The old deceit shaken off, the true statement is now given, and its consequences. Christ rose " from among the dead ; " He was among them, and left them still confined, their parts still severed. To a resurrection from among the dead Christians are to look forward as their hope.

You see the consequences of your denial. For yourselves and those you love all is despair.' But the contrary is true. Now is Christ risen : first- fruits of the sleepers. Christ is seen in death as the Sacrifice, as the Passover-Lamb. But in resurrection He is the first-fruits. He was sown as the ear of corn in death and burial, arising out of death the first of all (John xii.). "First-fruits." Here is a reference to Lev. xxiii. Christ's resurrection was on the morrow after the sabbath - that is, on the Lord's day. With others He rose (Matthew 27:52-53). The risen then were a sheaf presented on high by Christ the Priest.

Jesus rose in His character of first-fruits. That is, the first-fruits in the law were the prophecy of the harvest following after, and were its consecration, as accepted by God. So Christ's resurrection is not an isolated act, but closely and designedly connected with the resurrection of God's consecrated ones ; indeed with the rising of all men. As surely as the harvest in Israel followed the first-fruits, and was a specimen of what was to follow, so Christ's resurrection is God's token and pledge of the rising of His people. Only, what man had to do, under the old covenant of the flesh, in relation to the natural harvest; God now is to do under the new testament of the risen Christ. Christ's resurrection was a specimen of ours. But there was an interval between the first-fruits and their presentation to God. So there has been a long interval between Christ's resurrection and the resurrection of His people. The extent of the interval between the first-fruits and the harvest was unnoticed and unknown.

Two different expressions denote the departed here - "dead," "sleepers." Why is this? - "The dead " belong to Adam, the result of his sin ; " the sleepers' '1 - to Christ. They are the result of His work, who shall awake all the dead. Sleep bears a promise of awaking. Death is to us insuperable.

Christ has arisen from the sleep of death ; so will all, and by Him. How does His own resurrection imply that of all ? Because He rose in His character of first-fruits - and the first-fruits are a pledge of the harvest. The true sheaf of the first-fruits was cut by God. So by Him will the harvest be reaped. God means thus to carry out His harvest. This view is further expanded by the next verse.

21. For since by a man came death, by a man came also the resurrection of the dead. The history of mankind turns on two men - Adam and Christ. All are found included in Adam : all are, in one view, knit to Christ. For He has partaken of our mortal " flesh." It was God's wise counsel, that as our ruin came by one representative man, our deliverance should come by another. We are lost by Adam's sin ere we begin to act, and are possessed of a nature at enmity to God. We are saved before we begin to do good, and are renewed by the Holy Ghost because of Christ's righteousness, His obedience and death. From Adam came the death of all - the undoing of the

parts of man, the corruption of the body. By a man also is to come - yea, is already begun - the resurrection of the dead. Jesus takes up the work under the disastrous consequences of sin left by Adam.

Adam leaves men lying down. Christ has raised, or shall raise them up. If Christ is not risen, and the reknitting of the man has not in part taken place, and is not fully to take place, our religion is a fable. "The resurrection of the dead." Here is another idea. This says all the dead are to rise, leaving none in their graves. Thus it is distinguished from the expression ' - "resurrection from among the dead," which supposes that some will abide in the tombs. "By a man." The dignity of human nature here appears, and not in philosophic speculations. No angel could deliver us, only one of the nature of the fallen. As man had dishonoured God's law, so only a man could by his obedience honour the law, and by his enduring the penalty bring us glory.

Man has dishonoured God : man has glorified God more than any other being. The chief of all in heaven is a man ! The vast multitude of the fallen and dry bones of the valley of Death are due to the transgression of the one. Their rising up again clothed with flesh and having breath within, is due to the work of the One Deliverer. Christ, then, is really a man : He had flesh like ours, and blood. But He was without sin within, as well as without visible transgression.

If He were not really a man, He could not really deliver us. But He is more than man, else He had fallen before an evil nature and the temptations of Satan. He is Life and Resurrection ; else He could not, though he saved Himself, deliver others. By one man came the severance, under disgrace, of the two parts of man, visible and spiritual; and the sentence of law. By the other man comes the extrication of the body from under this disgrace and conn1ption, this weakness and dishonour, and its reuniting to the soul : no more to be separated, any more than Christ's own body and soul are to be severed.

22. For as in Adam all die, so in the Christ shall all be made alive.

Death is a moral thing, as well as a physical. Resur-

35 rection is the result, too, of righteousness. There was no death before sin.

What is the extent of "all?" Some mistake, as if it referred to those in Christ. The two opposite families of God and Satan ? Shall we say, it really includes "all in Adam" and "all in Christ?" No. This is an alteration of the order and of the sense.

All are physically in Adam, all are so in the Christ. The result of the connexion of our flesh with Adam is literal death, or the separation of body and soul. The result of Christ's partaking of our flesh is, that all will receive, not spiritual life, but physical (or natural) life, by the soul's reanimating the body and its being made incorruptible. "

All," whether saved or lost, "all die." This is the constant, regular order of things since the fall.

Hence the present tense. " All shall be made alive."

Th1s refers to a future day, a forthputting of miracle in an opposite direction to what is going on now, and, as the result of Christ's work and coming, undoing Adam's work. It will take effect on unnumbered thousands at once in a moment. The one is the result of the sin brought in by one

man, the other of righteousness brought by another. Not all are spiritually alive in Christ. Not those alone are to rise.

"Death" and "resurrection" are opposite ideas, physically and morally, occurring at different times.

Resurrection is necessary to the cleansing of the man finally, to enable him to live with God. All while under the state of death are reckoned unclean.

Hence God forbid, and forbids communication with the spirits of the dead.

If one died in the stead of all, He rose on behalf of all too.

23. But every man in his own order: Christ the first-fruits; afterwards they that are Christ's at his coming. Not all, good and bad together, are to rise at the same moment, as usually stated. It might have been so, had God so willed. But there are to be, as He says, two resurrections yet : one for those who belong to Christ, and one for those who inherit under Adam only (John 5:28). " Christ the first-fruits." Each must rise, but in different companies (Luke xx.) of the saved or lost. In which will you rise, reader ? If you rise not when Christ comes - then you will rise only in the resurrection of judgment (Revelation 20:11). "

Then those who are Christ's at His presence " - "

Then," is an adverb of order, " afterwards." "Those who belong to Christ." This is a special company; consisting of Christ's beloved ones : of those saved by Him - knit to Christ, not only as partakers of human nature, but as renewed by grace. On a different principle too; as is shown by Romans 8:11. This resurrection to take place at a different time from the resurrection of the lost. It is to take place " at Christ's presence" Not " coming," which gives a wrong idea, as if, the moment Christ descended, all His people visibly ascended to Him in an instant; and then, after meeting Christ, at once turned back to put down evil and to reign with Him.

God's scheme is different. What is the "presence?"

Now is the time of Christ's " absence," up in heaven, on the Father's throne. At His Father's signal He leaves heaven, and descends into air (Thess. iv.).

Some of His saints, both of the living and of the dead, are caught up to meet Him there. There are they judged, and their places settled, as regards the coming kingdom. The presence will be invisible. The type of this is given under the Old Covenant. God said to Israel through Moses, ' I am coming ; get ready.' Accordingly, Jehovah came down in cloud on Sinai, and His people, some waked by the trumpet, some already awake, drew near to where He was. But Jehovah remained on the mount invisible, a long while before He descended to dwell in the tabernacle ; and much had to be done by Him and by Moses, ere that took place. So the coming presence of Christ will be invisible, save to those caught up.

They, too, go up invisibly, "in clouds." Men left on earth cry, " Peace and safety," because Christ is not seen, and His people invisibly depart. Then comes destruction when men believe it not, as the sword came on the idolaters of the Calf at the mountain's foot. Moses, though present, is unseen by them. The Presence will be that period, of some unknown duration, during which Christ's people, in different battalions, are taken up to give account to Him, and to get their places and

destinies arranged. The day to come is one of reward to works. Hence Christ's is the highest place. As He rose the first, He is coming back in His power to raise us. In all things He is to have, as is fitting, the preeminence. "

I am Resurrection and Life."

Why is the kingdom not distinctly mentioned here by Paul? Because it is a question of the order of the resurrections. The first resurrection introduces the kingdom. The Kingdom of Christ is that which He has won as the Worthy One. Who can be trusted to bring to order this fallen world ? Who is so

39 fitted, who so deserves it ? Not the angels ! They bow before Christ as the Worthy One (Rev. v.). It is the reward of His sufferings, the joy set before Him, the pleasure of the Lord prospering in His hand because of His pouring out His soul to death. He is the Joseph of universal empire, the Upright One.

Israel knew when their Lord was coming : we know not. But His 'presence' begins as soon as His motion downwards from heaven into air ceases. There Christ will be found in His royal glory ; there will be somewhat answering to the banquet of the seventy elders on the mount. The Saviour's descent and His people's ascent must be invisible. After His unseen presence is over, He makes Himself visible; He and they are beheld together in the sky in glory (Colossians 3:1). The presentation of Christ's people to Him takes place at his Presence (1 Thessalonians 2:19, iii. 13, iv. 15, v. 23). That is the time of gathering to Christ (2 Thessalonians 2:2). At length, after the false Christ's reign is over, Jesus manifests His presence, which was before secret (2 Thessalonians 2:8). Of this " presence " a specimen was also given in the New Testament to the three apostles on the Mount of Transfiguration (2 Peter 1:16). That was a secret presence ; and not all His people were with Him there. The next day Jesus showed Himself and His power on descending the mount. The resurrection of the righteous takes place while Christ is present secretly as the Thief; then they and He are manifested together in the glory, to the dismay of their foes and their destruction. As, then, this '

Presence ' of Christ is a something of at least three and a-half years' duration, there may be several raptures of believers up to it. Before He appears, and during His secret presence, these raptures occur.

24. Then cometh the end, when he shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father ; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. "

Afterwards comes the end " (eira). Great is the importance of the words used to translate the Word of God. The gift of translation was of old one of the Spirit's bestowments. "Then" has two senses, (i) "at that time," and (2) "afterwards." In which sense is it used here? In the latter. It is a particle of order, as in the previous verses (5, 7). The taking it in the sense of ' at that time ' has confused many as to the events of prophecy. ' As soon as the resurrection of Christ's saints takes place, comes the end. Where, then, is your millennium?' It is not so, friends ! " Afterwards " - a thousand years afterwards, comes "the end." At once, when Christ's presence in its secrecy is finished, comes His kingdom of a thousand years, and His approved ones have part in it. The kingdom must be bestowed, and come to Him, before the giving up of it has arrived. His coming and kingdom go together (2 Timothy 4:1). His presence must be seen and felt in judgment; for He

comes to take away power from evil spirits and evil men, and to judge all (Luke 1:32, Matthew 25:31, xvi. 28, Luke 19:11, Rev. xix., xx.).

Jesus has come once, as the Lamb of God, to bear, as none has done before, the evil of men. The righteous had much to bear ; Christ bore more than they. The prophets had, as God's messengers, much to endure ; Christ, as chief of the prophets, endured more than all. David, as God's anointed one, bore much from Saul and Israel; Christ as God's King, rejected, hated, ridiculed, slain, still more. At length comes His turn of power. Every knee shall bow to Him. Chief in suffering, He is now to be chief in glory. And so they who with Him have suffered, with Him shall reign. Fear not, Christians, to suffer and to be cast out for Christ ! 'Tis a proof you are on the way to glory (Luke 6:20-26). This is settled for us with all clearness by Rev. xx., probably, too, to an extent not known to Paul, and only discovered to John in Patmos. There (in Chap, xix.) we have the gathering of the Lord's people in heaven, before He comes forth from it with them.

Then comes the manifestation of His presence, and its destruction of His foes, specially of the False Christ and the False Prophet. Then comes the binding of Satan, who is now at liberty, and is our accuser on high. Then we have the kingdom of a thousand years bestowed on those judged worthy.

Next is " the end " - the little period in which Satan is let loose, and prevails against multitudes of men.

Lastly comes the resurrection and judgment of the dead, and the winding up of all and destruction of the earth. At that time Christ gives up the kingdom which He and His have been wielding. Thence onward it is not to be a Son of Man reigning, but God all in all. Observe the difference between the many thrones of Chap. xx. and the one throne of God and the Lamb in Chap, xxi., xxii. That is the eternal state. " They shall reign for ever and ever."

Christ will then, in those thousand years and in that little period " the end," have accomplished the purpose for which God the Father assigned the kingdom to Him for awhile. There are many rebel rulers and powers ; many enemies of the Christ to be put down, (1.) Those of earth, whom He finds gathered together to do battle against Him (Rev. xix.).

After that there will be some fightings and smitings on earth. (2.) Then comes the subjection of Satan and his angels. These He has first to cast down from heaven, then from earth into the pit. Satan comes up thence only to be cast into the lake of fire, where he is for ever. (3.) Also Christ has to display His power over the creatures of earth, as the lion and wolf; and over the serpent especially.

Righteousness is at length to rule on earth. Man is to be lord of all, a Man that cannot fall, as others, when tried, have fallen. Power and righteousness, so long dissevered, are knit together at last by God.

25. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet.

Such is God's counsel, and it cannot fail of its effect. Such is the design of the kingdom entrusted to Him, and He will infallibly effect it, both the will and the power being His (Ps. ii., ex., vii.). None can overthrow His kingdom, or stay His advent. This design of God regulates the length of Christ's reign. It is planned with a certain definite object arising out of the disorder introduced by Satan's

and ^ Adam's sin. This disorder shall be rectified in a certain moderate lapse of time, not requiring all eternity. The new heaven and earth are those of eternal righteousness. The Christ has enemies of various kinds - some are secret, some open. These shall all fall beneath His hand. Shall they be reduced to annihilation ? - No ! they are to be placed in disgrace and suffering and subjection under Him. "Till He have put all enemies under His feet." They will be existing then. After the thousand years, death ceases in the final resurrection ; and His foes, raised from the dead, are cast into the 'Second Death,' - the place of torment for ever and ever. As Christ's enemies are not now being made His footstool, His kingdom is not yet begun. On the Spiritist scheme there can be no prophecy ; no winding up of earth and sin. God the Father gives the kingdom to Christ in Rev. v. The design of this delegation or concession is then given.

It is to put down, or reduce to powerlessness all the opposing forces that sin has brought in. These are spirits of evil, men on earth, and the results of sin, or powers, such as death. The kingdom of Christ is the one lost by Adam in the past. Christ takes it.

It is God's counsel, which, I believe (Psalms 8:6), at length comes to pass, spite of Satan's plot, and Adam's fall.

45 Now is the time of grace towards Christ's enemies among mankind. They are besought, specially kings and rulers, (Ps. ii.) to obey the Son. But then they will be put down by power. Turn, reader, while you may ..It is but a brief time. After that will be only the sceptre of iron, to show how terrible God is to the evil, how sacred His laws, how determined He is to reign in righteousness, let who will be broken beneath His sway. Repent, reader, if impenitent, and be at peace with God ! else you provoke a dismal, an eternal doom. You will have none but yourself to blame. To glorify God by your misery - how terrible ! To be made an example of to deter others - how awful ! Persuasion, you see, and the means of grace, will not avail to make an end of Christ's foes. They grow only more hardened in unbelief. The tares become more and more the ripe in evil. Then come the angels, and the binding, and the fire ! Power will be against Christ in the last days. But His supreme power and might will put down all enemies. "

He must reign, till." Because it is so written (Psalm Exodus 1:1-22). Here we have the Saviour's reign.

See also Ps. viii. 6. Not enemies alone, but all things are to be subject. Christ has a definite part to play. As if a great revolt were to occur in Canada, and her Majesty were to despatch the Prince of Wales with a fleet and army, and with full powers civil and military to put down the rebellion, to reward the deserving, and then to return and deliver up the authority entrusted to him. He might be unable to conquer, yea be conquered ; or be cut off by death, and obliged to entrust the work to other hands. Not so Christ. The great revolt in heaven and in earth shall be put down, and all the rebels at last subjected to just punishment. Reader, are you one? Submit ! submit now. Let not the present patience of God deceive you ! Another day of an opposite character is close at hand. Christ, now the Priest of mercy, is coming as the King, with sword of judgment to cut down His foes. What says your heart ? ' This Christ shall not rule ; I hate him.' 'He doth not (like Micaiah) prophesy good concerning me, but evil.' But reign He must.

Righteousness shall at length prevail : God's justice will not always tarry. Mercy's hour is waning. Christ's foes are growing more and more confident and presumptuous and unbelieving, just as

they are about to be overthrown for ever. Submit ! Christ is gracious and will forgive. But " He must reign." 'Tis high treason to resist Him. So fighting against Victoria is the chief state offence. Christ, now the Shepherd of grace, is coming soon as Master of the field, to cause His reapers to pluck up the tares, to bind them, and cast them into the lake of fire. He is coming as the Treader of grapes, to beat down His foes, in the day of vengeance of our God.

26. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. This is hinted at in Ps. viii. 2. Death will - though swallowed up in victory for the saints - still exist, during the millennium; (1) In the sacrifices; (2) In men's slaying creatures for food. (3) Also, while life is greatly prolonged, there will be the death of some men during the millennium ; as offenders cut down by the stroke of God, or by sentence of His rulers, or by the sword in battle. But after the thousand years - death, that is the separation of body and soul, exists no more; swallowed up for all in resurrection. God's foes cannot die. They exist in misery for ever. Paul says not, " it was the last enemy," but it will be the last to be put down. Sin came in before death. So sin is judged and coerced, before death ends.

Observe - ' Death is an enemy! Spiritists are declaring the reverse. - ' It is no proof of sin, no token of wrath. It is the entry on eternal joys.' Scarcely will they admit, indeed they deny, any evil in it. But death was not the primary state of things, but the result of sin and law. In God's view it is our enemy.

It cannot cease, till sin is made to cease on earth.

It came as the displeasure of God on broken law.

It was an enemy to Christ. He felt all its sting.

Therein was found His cup of bitterness. He, then, shall bid death end. " The last enemy to be put down is death." Here comes in the resurrection of the wicked (Revelation 20:11). The raising of the lost is not here distinctly called a resurrection. It is the swallowing up of death as an enemy. As an enemy of man, and of Christ, whom it smote with its sting, Death must itself be destroyed or " put down." It is the same word as in verse 24 (xara/D-ytw). Death is the separation of body and soul. Death, then, in regard of the wicked also, shall be undone. That is, they resume their bodies : body and soul are no more to be severed. After that, they are judged and sentenced. Then they can die no more. Their full punishment as enemies, to be set beneath the feet of Christ and God, attains there its completion. ' But the Second Death ! What make you of that ? ' That is the name of the prison of which Christ has the keys, in which the lost are to abide for ever. The disabling of Death is the last act of the kingdom of the Christ. It is so stated in Rev. xi. and xx. The

49 removal of death means the reunion of the parts of man which death has severed. This is effected in resurrection. Not merely God must prevail, and His foes must be in torment ; but it is right He should prevail, and they sin each moment who are not at peace with Him.

Christ's kingdom is very much a subjugation of evil. At the last, evil rises up in its blackest form, when Satan is let loose. Rebellion takes place at the close against the perfect kingdom of Christ. It is not, - '

Christ is to reign till all evil is banished out of the universe} Satan is tormented with the False Christ, the False Prophet, and the wicked, day and night for ever and ever.

27. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith, 'All things are put under hini,' it is manifest that he is excepted; which did put all things under him.

Verse 27 is the proof of verse 25. "He hath put." "

Death," though last named, is not the agent, but God. There is a reference to Ps. viii. 6. The Father's will is, that all things be subjected to Christ. The extent of "all things" is here declared. It admits of one exception only - the Supreme power of the Father, who gave the Son this commission. This is set forth in type in the history of Joseph.

All previous officers of Pharaoh are subjected to Joseph. " Only in the throne will I be greater than thou." This verse, then, marks the limits of Jesus' kingdom as Son of Man.

28. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.

Christ has a certain great task set Him by the Father ; a task which He alone is competent to perform, and alone worthy to do so, as is confessed willingly by the angels. This scene is given us in Rev. v. God's power given to the twenty-four elders of the angels is willingly given up to Christ, as far worthier than themselves. Then they speak of His introducing others also to a like superiority over them, by His work on their behalf. Thus the elect angels do not stumble at God's counsel with regard to the sons of men, when the day comes. God commends His scheme to them. It is not unjust and arbitrary.

They own the fitness of the new dominion, though it sets aside their own.* " Thy will be done, as in *How fully we may rest on each word of Scripture given us by inspiration ! The argument turns here on "all" and "till."

While, then, multitudes, even of God's people, dishonour His word and throw it aside for their own schemes, let us hold it fast ! "No jot or tittle shall pass away " (Matthew 5:18).

heaven." This kingdom given to Christ cannot come to an end, before the purpose for which it was given be achieved. Nor can it be delayed after that. For Christ fulfils perfectly the mind of His Father. The supreme rule of man is not to be for ever. It was for a special purpose, and that accomplished, it ends. "

Then shall the Son also Himself be subject." Here we are shown, how the ending of the kingdom of the Redeemer shall affect the relations between God and His Christ. Notice the force of "Himself." Christ, though He be highest of all, shall surrender. The Son of God delights to do all the Father's will, even though that will once was that He should be depressed fearfully under sin and death. The time of His reward because of that suffering is at hand, and He will be supreme over all. But He will, after that season is past, take the place of the Son with the Father - the subordinate place. Thus will He set to us and to all the creatures an example of subordination and obedience to the Supreme Governor. The pride of man seeks to make himself first and independent, to rule all, to do his own will.

He despises those who are in subjection to others. But that is the vanity of the flesh, vainly puffed up. The happiness of man consists in knowing and keep- ing his true place. It does not lie in self-exaltation, in doing our own will, and saying with lofty pride, " Who is lord over us?" With the

lowly are wisdom and happiness. The Father will at length receive back from the Son's hands the sovereignty entrusted to Him, the design having been fully accomplished according to the Father's mind. Herein what a contrast to man !

Many of the great of this world used the power given them to overturn the authority that commissioned them.

Thus Caesar overturned the republic that made him its general. Thus Napoleon also. Thus, too, to come to Scripture examples, the house of David used the power given it of God, to counteract God's glory. In consequence, it was (in Jeroboam's day) first divided, and then taken away. So with the power then entrusted to the Gentiles in Nebuchadnezzar's day.

It was used against Jehovah, and at last power will rear itself up in battle array against God and His Christ, and be destroyed. " That God may be all in all things." The supremacy of man over all beings but God, is the great characteristic of the thousand years. But after that - its purpose ended - empire reverts to God, who for a while delegated it. It is the eternal " Kingdom of God " that is to follow on ' the Kingdom of the Son of Man.' God is indeed now invisibly "all in all." But it is by no means apparent ; for His enemies who speak and act against Him, are upheld. It will not be the delegation of government then. It is fitting that God be seen and owned to be supreme, the Giver and Upholder of all that is good. This final state of things is shown us in Revelation. In Rev. xx. 4 are many "thrones," Christ's being the chief.

During the first resurrection, Christ and His peers are ruling together. But in Revelation 22:1 there is one throne only ; so also in Revelation 21:5; Revelation 22:3.

Risen and saved men are God's " servants," the courtiers of the Great King, - themselves reigning sub- ordinately. The subjection of the Son to the Father has already been presented in another form, as the resigning by Him of the powers previously given.

Christ is not reigning yet (Revelation 3:21). He is waiting till the Father performs His promise. Then His favoured ones are to reign too.

There are three steps of resurrection - (1) Christ;

(2) the righteous; (3) the wicked. This last is not openly called resurrection here. The resurrection of all the dead is bound up with the promise in Psalms 8:6, that all shall be subjected to a man. Then death itself shall be subjected to the Son of Man. Therefore He must raise up out of death, and out off the sever- ance it has made between the parts of men, men - all men. Thus only is death ended, namely, by resurrection. (1.) The resurrection of Christ's people happens before the millennium, that His people may have fellowship with Him, ruling in it, and partaking of His joy and reward. This earnestly seek, brethren ! Not all will enter it. (2.) The resurrection of the wicked after this kingdom of glory is over, is for those not accounted worthy. The glory of resurrection, which is to partake of the millennial kingdom, will then be gone. It will be a resurrection only in order to put down death, when God's enemies are subdued, imprisoned, tormented.

Part 1.4 (20-34) Denial (2)

29. Since, what shall they be doing who are- being immersed for the dead, if the dead rise not at all?

Why are they even being immersed for them ? This passage is noted, as one of the most difficult places of Scripture. Of it a vast variety of interpretations are given, most of them very wild and farfetched.

I. What are the reasons of this variety?

II. And how shall we, amidst this variety, perceive which is the true ?

I. The reasons of this great variety are - (1) the assigning figurative interpretations, where the literal is the true one ; and (2) the fear, lest, - if the literal sense be accepted, superstitions destructive of the faith would be introduced.

Figurative senses are imposed on three of the terms used in the passage : (1) Baptism, (2) The dead, (3) For (Gk:uper).

(1.) Some take baptism to mean 'suffering,' 'the washing of corpses for burial,' and so on.

(2.) By the dead some understand ' the spiritually dead,'

Christ,' ' death,' or ' a certain class of the dead,' and so on.

(3.) For, some would render by 'above,' or ' in the stead of.'

II. But we can easily dispose of the great majority of these views, by applying certain general principles.

1. The literal sense of a passage is to be preferred, wherever it is possible. The literal interpretation here gives a good sense, nay, the true sense.

2. Paul is here arguing with opponents. This is shown by the use of the particles - ' else ' - ' if.' The argument which he had left off at verse 19 is here resumed. Now, most of the interpretations of the passage give such a sense to it, as to make it no argument at all.

Take, for instance, this as a specimen :- '

Baptism is the lately converted believer's stepping into the ranks of Christ to take the place of one who has died. And of what use would that be if there were no resurrection ? '

Now here Paul is made to be teaching, not arguing. In the sense given to immersion, he is introducing a new premise not accepted by his opponents, and therefore no argument to them.

3. ' But if we admit literal immersion for the dead, are we not forced to accept a childish superstition, destructive of the Gospel ? '

All danger of this kind is at once removed, the moment we perceive by the terms of the passage, that the apostle distinguishes between himself and Christians in general, on the one hand; and these opponents on the other. "What shall they be doing?" "

Why are they being immersed?" "And why stand we in jeopardy ? " "I die daily." The apostle, then, is not speaking of Christian baptism as taught by himself, and as accepted by Christians in general : but he is putting down by argument a new proceeding introduced at Corinth, which speedily withered away under the fire of the Spirit. Paul did not approve the practice. He is exposing its folly and its inconsistency with itself. The basis of his argument is twofold : (1) The parties used immersion ; (2) and denied resurrection.

These observations dispose of many of the various

57 interpretations. They set aside Baxter's - "To what purpose do we in baptism profess our belief of the resurrection?" Dr. E. Robinson's - " Why expose ourselves to so much danger and suffering in the hope of a resurrection ? " The above interpretations err in two ways : (1.) They destroy all argument with opponents. (2.) They assume that the apostle is speaking of the usual Christian immersion.

Such also is the fault of Pridham's - ' Paul is appealing to the usual and past baptism of Christians. That meant death and resurrection. Baptism was on behalf of their own dead selves' Paul (he thinks) would not have appealed to a partial unauthorized custom, as worthy to be the foundation of an argument. But this interpretation also (1) overturns all argument.

(2.) Paul does not refer to the usual baptism of believers.

(3.) The immersion of which the apostle speaks, is not spoken of as past, but as then going on.

(4.) This and other interpretations offend against the tenses of the passage. " What shall they effect, who are being immersed ? " This observation overturns Macknight's idea - "

Baptism was fitly made the rite - the person who received it." The tenses of Paul are future and present.

Addington's also- 'What a part will they appear to have acted who have [in Christian baptism] been initiated.' Robertson again interprets it of Christians - '

What was the meaning of their confession in the past ? Why were they baptized ? ' The ground thus cleared, let us look at the real sense.

1. The parties thus being immersed, were, I believe, some of the Church of Corinth, whom Paul reproves of inconsistency. For they (1) used immersion to benefit the dead - while (2) yet they denied the resurrection of the dead. Here lies the argument ; a special phase of which is taken up by the second question. The apostle is not arguing on the usual and accepted meaning of baptism, but on the new baptism of a party then and there found.

2. What is the sense of do ? - in the expression "

What shall they be doing?"* It may have two closely allied meanings, (1) 'What reasonable end, * 'Doing ' has commonly these senses. Thus - ' To give brandy to a maniac won't do' - that is, will

not effect good. '

Bring me some cast-iron nails ; these won't do for garden- walls. ' And so God says to Elijah, 'What doest thou here, Elijah ? ' ' What good will you do by making this fuss ? ' ' This will never do ; we shall be too late for the train.'

59 to be attained in the future, can they be aiming at ? ' Or (2) 'What good shall they effect by it? What account can they give of themselves, so as to be wise ? ' He hints, then, their folly. In these words the reference is to some future imagined result. If there be a resurrection of the dead yet to come, this their idea might be realized. But how, if to the dead there be no future ? How, if their lot was fixed for ever when they departed?

It was not Christian believers in resurrection who were using this baptism, but unbelievers of resurrection. And Paul uses the two thoughts of (1) immersion, and (2) the denial of resurrection to break the scheme in pieces, by clashing them together. This again severs it from the baptism appointed by Christ. The benefit of that is guaranteed by

Christ. (2.) "Who are being baptized (immersed.)" This speaks of the practice as something then going on among a party at Corinth. It was not that one ordinary act of immersion, which to the believers of Corinth was already past. This was a something which might be repeated, to which no limit could be set but the fancy of those who practised it. The force of the present participle is seen in the parallel place (Galatians 5:3), " I testify to every man that is being circumcised" - or, as we should say in ordinary English - " that is getting himself circumcised." The Jews were already circumcised. Paul's word was spoken to Gentiles who, after becoming Christians, were becoming circumcised, as the result of the arguments of Judaizers. Christians in general are spoken of by Paul as being already baptized (or immersed). The indefinite past Greek (aorist) tense is used of baptism in Romans 6:3-5. God owned but one immersion - but this practice at Corinth was something then arising for the first time through the fancy of men.

3. They were immersed "for the dead" (Gk:uper.) What is the sense? Either (1) " To benefit them." So 1 Corinthians 1:13, "Was Paul crucified for you?" "

Christ our passover is sacrificed for us"

(1 Corinthians 5:7). Or (2) "In their stead." Probably there were some among the Corinthian converts who looked back on the past with dismay, in view of those who had died before the Gospel had come ; and they sought to do them good. The Saviour's sufferings had done the living vast good. Might not some act of theirs while alive, benefit the dead? These, then, after being baptized as Christians for themselves, were repeating baptism, with a view of benefiting the dead in general. It was an unauthorized idea, mere will- worship. But their belief in the vicarious work of Christ, joined with ignorant benevolence, probably engaged them to it. It is further observable, that Christ's sufferings are figuratively called an immersion. ' The dead ' here spoken of are the dead generally : - not certain special cases of Christians whom their friends sought to benefit (as having died before receiving baptism). This unlimited sense of 'the dead ' arises from the inclusive force of the article, and from the universal sense which the expression has had all through the chapter. Nor are "the dead" to be taken in any figurative sense. The argument, then, derivable from the foregoing explanation is this - ' If there be a resurrection of the dead, and the bodies of the departed are to come forth from the tomb, it is conceivable that some good might be

effected by this immersion for the benefit of the departed, when they come forth from the grave to take up anew their bodies. The immersion of the bodies of those practising this new baptism might be of some unknown advantage to the bodies of the dead, when the time of resuming them shall come. But if resurrection of the dead be impossible, and these men now alive and being immersed in their stead, are soon to join the dead and lay aside their bodies for ever, it is absurd to expect any advantage to accrue to the dead from a ceremony affecting a part of man which is never to be taken up again.'

Against this interpretation it is objected - 'But we have no proof of the existence of such a practice.' (Ans.) We need no proof beyond that which this passage supplies. Must we surrender all assertions of facts in Scripture, save those which are attested by other authors ?* *The remarkable doctrine underlying this argument of the apostle's is - That the existence of the separate spirit is not properly 'life,' and is not to be regarded as the ultimate destiny of man. It were undesirable if it were so. The believer's hope, learned from the resurrection of Christ, is to be a man once more : his body restored to him out of the tomb, as Christ's was. This hope turned, too, on his Lord's personal return, and his beholding Him in the flesh. 'Whom my eyes shall behold.' The promises embrace us as men, and as found in Christ, who is also a man.

"Why are they even being baptized (immersed) for them?" This assails the offending practice from another point of view - the opponents' inconsistency in regard of the mode taken by them to benefit the dead. For they denied at the same time the resurrection of the dead. Now, in the hope of benefiting the dead, they used a rite which carried upon its very front death, and resurrection out of death. It was in order to express this evident meaning that Christ adopted it ; and beautifully it exhibits it. The argument here is, that doctrine and rite should correspond : or, else, they mutually destroy one another.

Rites of the God of war should be held in martial array, with swords and warlike dances, trumpets, rattle, glitter, shouts. If any were to celebrate the rites of Mars by peaceful assemblies of men, arrayed only in civic apparel, walking slowly and silently with bunches of flowers in their hands, and crowns of olive on their heads, while only flutes and harps were to be used in the procession, the inconsistency between the sentiment and the rite would be seen in such glaring colours; that either the rite must be altered, or the worship of Mars would be overthrown.

Thus, then, the folly of this new ceremony is further exposed. Its rite and its doctrine were in open opposition.

They had stolen God's rite while denying God's sense of it - and that at once betrayed the theft. The new patch on the old garment was not of the same colour of cloth ; it was a piece of scarlet chintz sewed into a black coat. Thus their want of wisdom was made manifest. Either they must invent a new rite, which should be in harmony with their new doctrine ; or, if they retained the old rite, both doctrine and rite would perish. And thus it came to pass.

30. Why are we also in danger every hour ?

Paul's own conduct, and the Christian's generally in view of perpetual perils, could only be rendered reasonable by the belief in a resurrection of the dead.

Faith in a resurrection of the dead, and of Jesus in especial, roused both Jew and Gentile to persecute the Christians. Their lives were in constant danger - they were always on the verge of death, and might at any moment be thrust across the border.

Now, if there were a resurrection of the dead, a resurrection of bliss, and this were the way to it, such conduct would be reasonable; but otherwise not. The word 'also' seems to require the same ellipse as that previously suggested - 'What shall be the reasonable end we have in view, if the dead rise not?' 'What good will they effect for others?' - the dead, to wit, is the first question. The next - '

What good shall we effect for ourselves by our daily endurance, if there be no resurrection?' Paul suffered, that is, in the belief of the recompense of reward. This alone made his sufferings endurable and reasonable. The general doctrine is brought out at the close of the chapter.

31. I am daily dying, I declare by your boasting which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Here we have Paul's constant experience. He was living indeed, but in daily peril of life. New plots were hatched against him by Jew and Gentile : when one failed, another began : he was only delivered by constant grace. He was ever making foes by the truth ; and these, unable to refute him and hating him, sought his death. Thus Paul was like His Master. "I will show him what great things he must suffer for my sake." The insecurity of his life, in a region and time like that in which Paul lived, was constant. He did not expect it to be otherwise, all the time he lived on earth. He lost, then, the usual enjoyments of life : he was every day face to face with death. At any moment he might be thrust among the dead.

It was only because the Lord delivered him not into his enemies' hand, that he lived from day to day.

It became him, then, to look well to results, and to be assured of the resurrection of bliss, which alone could make his constantly painful position reasonable.* * Thus the doctrine of millennial reward is of such moment, that if it be removed, the Spirit says, that the faith is overthrown. This is to be our doctrinal shield and support, amidst the trials of life. This sense is confirmed by, " In deaths oft," " We are killed all the day long."

E 'But might not that be only Paul's nervousness?

He was a timid man, conjuring up terrors where there were none, and magnifying those few that existed.' Against such an idea, he sets his strong inspired protest. It was as true a representation, as that the existence of the Corinthian Church was a subject of boasting and of rejoicing to him. And that was not a rejoicing or boasting in the flesh, but in Christ Jesus. The men of the world saw in it no glory; no subject of self-gratulation - 'the heaping together of a parcel of fanatics !'

It was no timidity in Paul. He could easily have left such a position, had he pleased. He would have gone into the theatre at Ephesus. He stood firm before Nero. How much greater his trials than ours ! Ought he not, in consideration of his sufferings, to take a lofty place above us in the kingdom? Are you called, reader, to give up anything for Christ's sake? What is it beside Paul's? But the glory shall make amends, however great the present sacrifices called for. What are your trials beside the sacrifice the Lord made for you? Love delights in sacrifices for the loved one. And they shall turn to glory, in the day to come.

32. If as far as man was concerned, I fought with wild beasts at Ephesus, what is the advantage of it to me, if the dead rise not? let us eat and drink; for to-morrow we die.

Here is a new difficulty. Did Paul really fight with wild beasts ? That was a punishment really at times inflicted on criminals, or political offenders. To make them an amusement to the populace, they were compelled to fight for their lives in the theatre with wild beasts. Was this true of Paul ? No ! he throws a bridle over this assertion, lest we should take it literally. Our translators render the limitation, "after the manner of men." That would make the assertion to be literal : that Paul did fight with wild beasts, ' as men were accustomed to do.' But it should be rendered, "as far as man was concerned." Paul's foes condemned him, in their own minds to combat in the arena with wild beasts.

If God had not interposed, this would have taken effect. To what circumstance does he refer? To the uproar in Ephesus under Demetrius. The coppersmiths and silversmiths found this Paul a terrible enemy to their trade ; and, as they could not silence his doctrine, they were bent on silencing the voice that maintained it (which was much easier). So intent were they on his destruction, that none but the very cruel and public death of mortal combat with wild beasts would suffice them. This, then, was one of their designs in rushing into the theatre.

There this spectacle was to be held. For this, those who were in the secret shouted - ' Paul to the lions !' At that time certain Asiarchs, his friends, strongly dissuaded him against venturing into the theatre. The sight of him would have kindled their fury, and he would not have been listened to. Paul then alludes to the very narrow escape from a dismal kind of death which he had lately experienced.

It made a great impression upon him. A whole city was stirred, foes were sworn against him, yet he escaped ! To this he refers (2 Cor. i). There he speaks of " So great a death ! " He was referring to some peculiarly terrible one.

If there be a resurrection of the just, these perils will then be remembered to Paul's advantage and glory.

He will reap what shall more than compensate him. "

If we suffer with Christ; with him we shall reign." So then look, Christian, at the troubles to which faith calls thee ! Bear them and face them boldly, and they shall be by and by transformed into glories ! "

Let us eat and drink."

If the resurrection of the dead be denied, there is before us only the present life with its enjoyments. '

Let us live for them ! Man is only the chief of animals : he is to pass away for ever, as other animals do.' That would be wisdom, if its premises were sound. But they are not. This was the doctrine of the Epicureans and Egyptians,*

*Herod. II. 78. and attached to it was the further teaching, that while gods existed, they cared not for men. Now the doctrine of resurrection, while it sets man in his true position as to the future, and

so discloses the meaning of present life; manifests also the truth about God, that He is not careless of men. Nay, He has sent His Son in infinite love; and has raised Him up, in token that that also is to be our destiny. This sentiment is the natural thought of the men of unbelief, regarding mankind as possessed only of present animal existence. But it appears also in the prophet Isaiah, Isaiah 22:13. There the description is given of Jerusalem in the last evil day, when the Lord shall send on her the siege of the Gentiles ; and faith in Jehovah shall so generally have died out, that they shall not humble themselves, or seek to attain His help. But they will say, that men should live as they list, enjoying the fleeting pleasures of life, for there is nothing better, and nothing beyond it. But God accounts this a great offence : a spirit betraying ignorance and wickedness beyond that of Nineveh. That, summoned by God without any visible calamity at hand, repented. They, God's people, with trouble before and around, deny His hand, and would live worse than the heathens. This was the doctrine of the first French Revolution, out of which sprang such abundance of horrors. Over the doors of the cemeteries was inscribed - "Death is an eternal sleep." And with it came insults to Christ, and the denial of the being of a God.

33. Be not deceived. As though Paul said, - 'While I use the words of these deniers of the truth, imagine not that I accept them. They are false. They are marked by God's rebuke. There has been a resurrection in the past; there is a future one which will eternally affect us.'

Paul was not a fool in thus doing and suffering for Christ. The coming day would prove it. Fallen men are easily deceived. A foolish self-flattering heart turns them aside. "

Evil companionships corrupt good morals." This is a better rendering of the Greek. The Greek word signifies not merely "speeches," but a person's seeking and keeping the company of others. The word "morals," too, gives a truer idea of the sense of the Greek. " Manners " in old English meant rather ' principles of life,' than ' courtly behaviour.' But the apostle means to warn us against the creeping in of false principles to our heart and life, through friendly intercourse with those who hold them. This is a verse from the heathen poet Menander. It is a truth which has at all times commended itself to unassisted reason. It is then as though Paul said, 'You are listening to heathen unbelief. Let the saying, then, of a wise heathen set you right, and cause you to alter your course.'

Moral disease is contagious, as truly as many physical ailments. The evil outside us fastens on the evil within. Avoid the occasions of sin, if you would escape the sins and their issues. And the chief occasion of sin is willing fellowship with sinners.

Beware whom you take for your friends and associates.

Such as they are, such are you likely to become. No matter how strong your present feelings, and how great your intelligence in the things of God, if you ally yourself with unbelievers, you will sink to their level. Many are the analogies of nature which confirm this. A house on fire near another will set that also in flames, unless care be exercised. Sit down in a room full of ice, and no matter how warm you were before, you will soon have your teeth chattering with cold. Go into the room of one suffering from scarlet-fever, and abide there ; and it is very probable you will catch it yourself. Put coals on a blazing fire, and they will soon be on fire. He who will tarry all day in a gin-shop, is likely soon to be a drunkard, beginning with ' just a drop.'

Now, if this be true with regard to the common intercourse of friends, how much more with regard to the marriage of a believer with an unbeliever?

Here the intercourse is constant and close, and the moral and spiritual effects on the life are especially disastrous. Be warned, all you who are in danger from this snare of Satan !

34. Awake to righteousness.

These sensual principles create a species of moral drunkenness. " Awake ! " The word used is a peculiar one- it signifies the waking up out of drunken sleep, and returning to soberness. A life of sensuality is moral intoxication, and is closely connected very oft with literal drunkenness. " Let us eat and drink," then, means - ' Let us gormandize and get drunk ! ' It is probable that such results had often been the result of these friendships with Epicureans.

Thrice is drunkenness named in this first epistle.

Once as occurring even at the table of the Lord (1 Corinthians 11:21). Once the apostle bids believers refuse friendship with a believer who was a drunkard ; and once he assures us, that such will have no part in Christ's millennial kingdom (1 Corinthians 6:10). This heathen philosophy, so earthly and sensual, is full of unbelief, and leads to unrighteousness and sin.

Out of it, then, the Spirit of God calls all, and especially all who own the name of Christ. Backsliders, who have fallen back to the world and its ways, awake ! or your arousing will be full of sorrow when Christ and His kingdom come. My reader ! the awaking from sensual dreams by death and judgment, will be terrible. We know that Festus trembled, when for a moment the vail was rent which kept from his eyes the terrible array of judgment to "come." "

Sin not !" You have been looking on life as something your own altogether, which you might fill up at your own will, and regard it as a time of worldly enjoyment alone. But this leaves out of sight God and His attitude toward us as the Ruler, who forbids this, and commands that, under penalty. To do our own pleasure, denying or neglecting Him, is " sin." It is a brief drunkenness, to be followed by a dread awaking and awful punishment. "

Sin not ! " False doctrine and false practice go together : are as closely connected as the fire and water of the steam-engine are with its passage on the railway. Give free scope to doctrines of unbelief, and deeds of evil will as surely follow as nettles will arise after the sowing of nettle-seed. " Sin not ! " For this is the deep, and to many, secret reason why they are infidels. They sin on. And to these it is necessary, that they should disbelieve the evidence of wrath to come. For how else can they fail to be troubled, unhappy and full of alarm? It is the heart that prompts to almost every false doctrine.

They cannot afford to accept the truth of God. It condemns and terrifies. " For some have ignorance of God : I speak to your shame."

Taken as our translators have rendered this passage, it would prove, that some of the Corinthian church were unbelievers and unconverted men. But the rendering is too strong. There is no proof that any whom Paul addressed were unbelievers. But he is speaking of those among them who denied resurrection. This denial of resurrection was proof, not only of the absence of true views of man's destiny, but in part also it was the proof of ignorance of the God who made him. It is with

reference to this point that Paul is speaking. He is following in the train of his Master, who reproved in like strain the same denial. " Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God."

All in the Church of God must know God, at least as the pardoner of sin ; the Just, yet the Justifier of him who believes in Jesus. But on other parts of God's character there may be, there oft is, great ignorance.

There was, then, among those deniers of the resurrection great ignorance, as it regarded God's power and purposes. They knew not His intentions ; as declared in the Scriptures both of the Old Testament and the New. They knew not His power, to which the reconstruction of the human form after its undoing by death offers no difficulty. God is not known, if we understand not His power and declared intention as to our future life. It was shameful, that these scholars in God's school should be so ignorant of first truths. The Lord grant to us not to be ignorant of His counsels, and of His love and Power ! Better be ashamed now than then.

Part 1.5 - 2nd Chapter - (v. 35)

Now begins the second half of the chapter, which deals with questions arising out of this primary truth.

They are chiefly two.

I. WHAT ARE THE CIRCUMSTANCES, OR MANNER, OF RESURRECTION?

II. WHAT is THE KIND OF BODY WHICH THE RISEN ARE TO BEAR?

These are answered in inverse order - the second first. After the truth of resurrection has been settled, these are questions which naturally arise.

35. But some one will say, How are the dead to be raised up ? and with what body are they coming ? By the mode of Paul's reply we gather, that these questions were not put in the proper spirit of persons enquiring God's mind about these high matters, but in the tone of the scoffer, who believes that no answer can be given, and that it is folly to expect one. This is generally the case. The most ignorant are the most self-conceited. They are wiser, as Solomon says, in their own eyes, "than seven men that can render a reason." " With what body ? " Death is our unclathing. In that condition we are not fit for the presence of God, or for an abode in His heaven. This truth is overlooked, by those who suppose the separate spirit at once to enter heaven. We must be clothed doubly in order to see Him. We must be clothed with righteousness as to our spirit; but with a body also. For this the Christian, whether alive or dead, has to wait. "Waiting for the adoption, to wit the redemption of the body." That they are to return with a body has been already established. Now arises a further question.

"With what body are they coming?" The dead are coming back to the world, and to the land of the living when Christ comes. Now, in His absence, the living are going away among the sleepers, or the dead. So in 1 Thess. iv., we have the words, " Shall God bring with Him." For the millennial kingdom of Christ has earth for one of its centres. " With what kind of body?" The Sadducees of old thought that the risen bodies would be in all points like our present ones. Are they to be nourished, and sustained by air, food, and sleep? Thence they derived their difficulty. It was solved by a denial of their assumption, 36. Senseless man, that which THOU sowest does not come to life except it die. The word " fool " here is not the word used in the Sermon on the Mount, to which the Saviour attaches blame, when used by one believer to another. Many are devoid of reflection in the things of God. Around us, in the works of nature, are things taking place which might give us clear ideas of the future and remove difficulties, if we but considered them. From this rebuke let us learn, that believers may be made ashamed both here and hereafter. Let us seek to escape that ! '

You stumble at the idea of life springing out of death, and a new body out of the old. Have you never considered how the vegetable world yields you examples continually of God's doing that with respect to seeds, which you exclaim against as impossible when foretold of men. What ! is a man of less importance than a mustard-seed?' Our Lord uses the same comparison (John

12:23-25). Before His death, which He foretold, He declared that He should rise again; and compared Himself to a grain of wheat, which was to die, to be buried, and rise. ' Your sowing of seeds- what is it but a burial of them in the earth, that they may die, and that out of them may spring another body in another life?

So, then, the body of man committed to earth is the seed which is, by God's power, one day to be made to spring out of the earth in new and eternal life.'

Herein notice the opposition between the ideas of the Spiritists and the testimony of God. They suppose, that death is resurrection. ' As soon as the man breathes out his soul, he rises. He rises out of his body; his body is not to rise, but to rot and be scattered for evermore.'

Now, if so, Paul's argument is nothing to the point. There is no likeness between sowing a seed and the resurrection of the dead. Paul compares the dead and buried man to the seed sown. As out of the seed's burial comes up the living plant, after an interval of some days' patience, so the buried dead will come out of their tombs into new and eternal bodies. But the Spiritist's idea is very different. His resurrection has nothing to do with burial. It turns on death, which precedes burial. Paul's resurrection is a something coming, not only after death, but after burial ; after the dissipation of the body in the tomb.

Between the seed's burial in the earth and its arising out of it, some unknown time elapses. So, between the man's committal to the tomb and his arising, there is an equally unknown, only naturally far longer period. The idea of the Spiritist presents no difficulty to the faith of men. He affirms something which has been going on ever since the fall - the severance of the soul and spirit from the body. But Paul is affirming something which staggered the believers at Corinth - the rising into life and action for evermore of the man, that being of body and soul - his body taken up anew by his soul at some distant date. They affirm as resurrection what is the result of Adam's sin.

Paul asserts the new truth, resulting from the new fact of Jesus' resurrection.

What Scripture means by resurrection is seen in the case of Jesus. And His resurrection was not the soul's parting from the body at death. Nor was His body left behind in the tomb to corrupt there, never more to be used. On the contrary, it was not allowed to corrupt; it was resumed by the Saviour, presented to the apostles as the proof of His mission and His victory, and as the great truth, new and startling, which they were to carry everywhere as the proof of God's work in redemption.

These two systems, then, are in perfect contrariety the one to the other. The one is the reasoning of unbelief; the other the testimony of God accepted by faith. Paul is not telling us what is the ordinary course of things as it regards man's resurrection, but from the ordinary course of vegetable growth he is drawing a similitude to confirm the doctrine of what is to befall man in another day by the power of God.

God's plan is, first death, then burial; then the rising up of the buried out of the abodes of the dead.

So, in the seed there is its burial in order to die, and then its coming out of the earth into air and light. The plant that springs up is another form of the very seed you sowed, and you can predict what it will be ere it rises. Yet how different ! Here, then, in the same body are identity and

diversity. "To everyseed its own body." The identity of the body does not consist of its being composed of the same matter. This is seen in the case of the seed.

There will be a body corresponding to the difference of the seeds sown. So, how different will be the awakening, how different the bodies, of the saved and the lost ! The resurrection of the plant occurs not till after its burial. So with man. His resurrection is not to occur till after his burial. ' But how long after ? ' We cannot say. There is a like unknown interval between the burial of the seed and the resurrection of the living plant. But if we reckon one day to be a thousand years, the buried bodies of men will spring up in less than two days, or at the third day. We stand in the interval of patience during which resurrection is not taking place. It is now the trial of faith. Will the dead arise in masses, by the power of God, out of the tomb ?

37. And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not the body that is to be, but a naked grain^ it may chance to be of wheat or some other kind. This same analogy tells us something further, something with regard to the character of the body of resurrection. The question of resurrection is besieged with great difficulties, which have stumbled

F many, because there are two seemingly opposite truths which attach to the resurrection-body.

(1.) It is, in one sense, the same body that was committed to the earth.

(2.) In another, the body that rises is very different from the body buried. Here the difference between the buried body and the rising body is brought into view. In verses 42-44 the identity, fundamentally, of the buried body with the raised one is taught : " It is sown in corruption ; it is raised in incorruption." The grain sown is a yellow roundish body; it comes up the green blade. May not our future resurrection body be to our present one, as the green blade ' to the yellow grain ? ' The seed sown is a " naked " grain. This, then, is a wise and quiet reply to an objection which might else prove very difficult to answer : ' If the bodies of the dead are to rise, they will rise naked. Whence are they to derive clothing?' This is met by the case of the seed. ' You sow a naked seed. But God clothes it when it rises ; yes, adorns it with beautiful flowers. Cannot, then, the God who so clothes the seed of the flower of the field, clothe His children when they rise ? ' To this point the words of the Saviour with respect to the lilies, though spoken at first with regard to the living, may apply (Matt, xxviii. 30).

38. But God giveth it a body as it pleased him, and to each of the seeds its own body. " But God ! " Here we are brought to our true resting-place and centre of unity. Death came from God as the Judge ; not from chance, or from the laws of nature. So also resurrection is to come from Him.

It is to proceed from no law of nature, but from the Lawgiver ; for whom nothing is too small, nothing too great. What sort of body it is to take, depends upon the power and will of God - yea, it is already arranged. He gives to each seed a suited body.

How much more, then, shall He give to His sons a body suited to their eternal home, pursuits, and world !

It would seem as if the dissolution of death were God's purposed way to raise the bodies of His people to a higher organization and life. Certainly, if we carry out the apostle's analogy, we may say: 'As the burial of the seed is God's preparation for its arising as the plant, so the dissolution of the corpse in the tomb is God's way towards restoring it.' It is purposely put beyond the power of

any one but Himself to do so. The plant is of the same nature with the seed sown, but of a different form and colour, and composed of different particles. And God unfolds out of that small circle a whole system of root, stalk, leaf, flower, fruit !

How unlike is the sprouting acorn to the oak of a hundred years of age ! The resurrection of Jesus is to us the point whereto to recur when any difficulty on this subject presents itself.

(1.) Now, His body was the same. The very body which was nailed to the cross, and laid in the tomb, came out thence. It was recognized by the disciples. There were the marks of death.

Mary Magdalen recognizes the features and voice of Jesus. The women who clasp His feet see the same person they had known before death.

(2.) Yet His body was different also. It was not subject to confinement in the tomb. It could take on new forms; it could pass unhindered through walls or floors. It could disappear and leave the spot ; it could, and did, mount upwards to heaven.

Most Christians stumble against one of these two sides and pillars of the truth. The wise and learned of this world seek to do without God, and they are continually talking of " laws," and of the course of nature being ordered by laws, which are not to be infringed ; so that at length they drive God out of the world He has made and sustains. To them unintelligent laws are every- thing, and many deny at length that God is a free Person, a Sovereign of Infinite Wisdom, carrying out His own purposes alike in great things and in small. But God's Book treats things very differently. And they alone are truly wise, who take His account of the matter ; and see in the course of things around us the actings of a Father who loves, and who moves all for the good of His own elect. Leave the ignorant-wise of this world to look upon nature as a great steam- engine, whose ponderous arms strike blindly and without pity, and whose strokes cannot and must not be stopped or turned aside, even though they would destroy me. We will leave them without a sigh their chilly creed.

God is at work daily in each seed. He has not left the world He has made. " God giveth it a body."

It is not a law that makes the seed rise. Law has no power. Law has no intelligence. Laws are nothing, save as at first devised by the law-maker's intelligence, and carried out into execution by his power. What would be the laws of England, if there never had been king or parliament? What would become of them after they were decreed, if there were no police and no magistrates? no prisons, no courts of justice, no judges, no juries? Law supposes a law-giver to enact, and an intelligent being to perceive it.

Many seem to look on God as if He were like themselves; as if He could not carry out the infinity of details all around. They regard Him somewhat as we might a generalissimo set over a hundred thousand men. He cannot attend to the movements of each soldier, so he assembles his generals of division, and gives them orders ; the execution of which they are to commit to their inferior officers, till the whole army is moved. But God is not distracted or overwhelmed with the infinity of details. In each He is working after a settled plan. And it is only our massing together these orderly arrangements that leads us to talk of 'laws.' Laws are generalizations made by man.

God is at work on every blade of grass, on every breeze that blows, on every wave that rolls, and on every sparrow that falls. The Most High, then, is at work, carrying out His own arrangements,

which do not bind Him, though they do bind us. Wherever a rain-drop falls, or a blade of grass is springing, O Christian, your God and Father is at work ! We must fall back on the goodness, power, and promises of God ! But He does not change His order of procedure rashly, or without good reason. At the creation He uttered His decree about the seeds. The grass, herb, and tree He created at first so that each should carry its seed in itself, and propagate its kind. This continues to the present day. In it we see His glory. In it we read His will. "As it pleased Him." The course of nature is dependent on His good pleasure ; the part or the whole can in a moment be altered, if He wills. This view alone is worthy of God, and a comfort to His children. God is not like poor Darius, bound, hampered, troubled by his own word and law- " the law of the Medes and Persians " - which must not be altered ; though his chief statesman is to be put to death by a foolish and wicked edict, and though his own rest is taken away.

Moreover God's power is so great, so great His - wisdom, that He is at no loss for variety of bodies which he may impart to His various plants. It is said there are upwards of one hundred thousand species of plants. To each of these God has given different green, differently shaped leaves, odours, flowers, fruits, and different qualities within.

Each kind stands apart from every other. Moreover, although there are different species of plants, yet every individual of each tribe differs in some respects from every other individual of that tribe. Each elm- tree » Hyde-Park differs from every other. So is it in human faces now. So will it be in the resurrection to come. In this, God's minute and fatherly care and love, let us rejoice ! We are not wanderers at random in some huge factory, amidst spindles and wheels, cranks and pistons, which may in a moment blindly knock us down and crush us. We are in our Father's hand !

39. Not every flesh is the same flesh; but that of men is of one kind, that of cattle another, that of birds another, that of fish another.

We have examples round us of various kinds of bodies, not in the vegetable creation alone, but in the animal. The great classes of animate nature differ. The inhabitants of the air differ from the finny tribes of the waters ; those which tread the earth differ from them; and man from all. In the resurrection, then, my body may still be of flesh; but of so different a quality that it shall be perfectly suited to my new mode of being, and to the necessities of eternal life. There will be a retaining of all the present body's perfection ; a removal of all its imperfection. The naked grain of wheat would not be suited to the upper air ; accordingly, disorganized below, it takes on a new body suited to its new life. So God will give a body suited to the heavenly mansions ; one never more to be overcome by pain, disease, or death.

. There are also heavenly bodies and earthly bodies ; but the glory of the heavenly is of one kind, that of the earthly is of another. '

Unity with plurality,' or order with variety, is the rule of God's procedure in creation. This appears not in the earth alone, but in the heavens also.

Thus Paul leads on to another point more closely connected with resurrection. For the saved in resurrection of this and of previous dispensations are to have bodies of heavenly quality. In fact, this points onward to the millennial kingdom of Christ, with which, as we have seen, the resurrection is so closely connected. The millennial kingdom is the heaven opened over earth : " the days of heaven upon the earth," as Moses says. It is also the heavens ruling the earth - the

power which God bestows on His risen ones to govern the earth.

Hence it is called " the kingdom of heaven," or, ' of the heavens.' Peter, in the vision of the Great Sheet, was permitted to see the cleansed creatures of earth taken to dwell in heaven ; or the believing Gentiles prepared to abide with God on high (Act x.).

Paul tells us of the counsel of God which He has made known to us, in the coming dispensation of the fulness (" the seventh day " - ' seven ' Leing in Hebrew " fulness " / of times to gather up in one into Christ as Head, all things, both in heaven and earth (Eph.i. 9, 10). All things, as Paul has been telling us, are to be subjected to the feet of Christ. Jesus also instructed Nathaniel, that in a day to come heaven should be opened over Him, and the ladder of Jacob's dream be fulfilled in Himself. As Son of man He should be the ruler of earth ; as Son of God, the chief in heaven. Upon Himself the angels of God would ascend and descend, fulfilling His messages, as those of the Lord of Hosts. And those accounted worthy to partake with Him in that day, are to have their 'reward great in heaven,' and to inherit and ' rule over the earth.' The heavenly and the earthly are in that day to attain their respective glories. But the glory or beauty of the things of earth, centred round the Old Jerusalem, will be very different from the brightness and beauty of those risen from the dead, dwellers in the heavenly places. Mortal bodies of flesh will not be able to compete with the far superior splendour of the heavenly bodies of those who have for ever passed beyond death. There will be glory on Israel and the Gentiles, as Isaiah witnesses : - " The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them ; 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, and the excellency of our God" (xxxv. 1, 2). "For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted. The glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee, the fir tree, the pine tree, and the box together, to beautify the place of my sanctuary ; and I will make the place of my feet glorious" (Ix. 12, 13). "But ye shall be named the Priests of the Lord : men shall call you the Ministers of our God : ye shall eat the riches of the Gentiles, and in their glory shall ye boast yourselves " (lxi. 6). "

Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her : rejoice for joy with her, all ye that mourn for her ; That ye may suck, and be satisfied with the breasts of her consolations; that ye may milk out, and be delighted with the abundance of her glory. For thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream : then shall ye suck, ye shall be borne upon her sides, and be dandled upon her knees" (lxvi. 10-12). But the risen are to dwell in bodies of light, or glory. For the heavenly bodies are distinguished from the earthly as possessed of brightness. But even among the heavenly bodies there is variety ; variety in the nature and colour of the light they diffuse.

41. One is the glory of the sun, and another the glory of the moon, and another the glory of the stars : for star differeth from star in glory.

Observe, that in the heaven and the earth, thus presented, we find the sacred seven ; divided, as usually, into four for the earth, and three in the heaven. On earth are the bodies of 'men, beasts, fishes, birds.' In heaven the ' sun, moon, and stars.' The principle of variety holds good even among the heavenly bodies. The light of the sun is pre-eminent, and swallows up that of the moon

and stars. His is direct light thrown off from his own body ; the light of the moon is derived from the sun; much paler, and scarcely possessed of any heat. The stars, again, differing in size, and in distance from us, show differences of light; the planets' light differing from that of the fixed stars.

Moreover, among the fixed stars there are great differences in apparent size, colour, and degree of light. Astronomers distinguish twelve magnitudes of stars. The apostle says " stars " not " star ; " because between the individuals that make up that numerous class there are characteristic differences, enabling us to recognize them. So will it be also with the risen.

Their belonging to one class of glory will not prevent our recognizing the individuals by their special differences as now.

42. So also is the resurrection of the dead.

I understand, then, the apostle to have cited these three examples of the different lustres of the stars, with the purpose of hinting to us, that among the saved in resurrection-bodies there will be three great classes, answering to God's three great dispensations.

(1.) By the glory of the stars is, I believe, to be understood the brightness of the risen patriarchs. So the twelve stars round the head of the Woman in heaven (Rev. xii.) point to the twelve patriarchs.

(2.) She is clothed with the sun, which answers to the glory belonging to those clothed with the righteousness of Christ. The chief glory belongs of course to Christ. That glory, like the sun, beamed out from His face on the Mount of Transfiguration. " His face did shine as the sun" (Matthew 17:2). With a brightness beyond that of the sun, He made Himself visible to Paul, and threw him to earth (Acts 26:13). In the same brightness did He show Himself to John ; when, as the Heavenly Risen Priest, He dictated messages through His apostle to the Churches. Now, in the day of the kingdom, the righteous of this dispensation are to " shine out from the heaven as the sun in the kingdom of their

Father."

(3.) The brightness of the moon is a borrowed glory, even as the Law borrowed all its value and light from Christ. Then the saved of the Law, it seems to me, will shine with the light of the moon.

Thus the Spirit leads us to recognize the great differences of the vegetable and animal creation, the difference between the bodies of earth and heaven, the differences of the heavenly bodies as to their classes of light, and finally the difference of individuals in each of those classes. Thus it will be among the risen. There will be different heavenly glories, appropriated to different classes of the risen from the dead ; and differences individual amongst those who belong to the same class. Paul's glory will be greater than that of Apollos, Stephen's greater than that of

Demas.

Ordinary ideas, I know, class together all the saved as one, as without difference, as all alike "the Church." But that results from a hasty view of Scripture, and cannot stand examination. Variety holds good among the risen, as well as among the remnant still in bodies of flesh on earth. The patriarchs have been educated by God under one system of truth ; the men of law under another ;

the men of the Church under another system and another principle quite the opposite. Shall all these have the same functions? and occupy the same sphere? Does not the education of the lawyer fit him for one sphere? the education of the man of commerce for another? and the education of the soldier for another? and that of the minister of the Gospel for another?

Man, it is true, may mix and confound things; but God does not ! May we not, then, gather from the difference of the principles and systems of education which God has given to His saved ones of different dispensations, that He is hinting thereby the difference of the employments and spheres of service which these are respectively to fill ?

- Regard, Christian, the peculiarity of your calling !

Israel's was an earthly calling. God in calling Israel, left heaven for earth, and spoke to Moses out of the earth and its bush. He would deliver from the slavery of men His people after the flesh ; and would lead them to the possession and enjoyment of one of the best portions of earth. Their rule was strict law and justice - the rendering to God and to man their respective dues ; and exacting in turn their own. If their heritage of earth were invaded by the hand of the criminal, or by the foot of an enemy, they were empowered to right themselves by the sword. But we, Christians, are called with a heavenly calling. Our Lord and Leader is gone up to the heavens ; and thence calls us to His heavenly kingdom and its glory. Our portion is not to be of the earth. God does not offer to us as to Israel, fields and vineyards, wells and houses. Our promises are not of the fruits of the ground, and the fruits of the body, of rams or sheep, bullocks or goats. We are invited to the heavenly glory of Christ; and to the heavenly department of His kingdom (1 Thessalonians 2:12 ; 1 Peter 5:10).

Seek glory, then ; only not from earth and man ; and not now ! The coming kingdom of the heavens is the day when Christ shall distribute crowns and thrones. We are taught by our Lord Himself to covet and to attain them. He gives us the principles.

He sets before us the example (Romans 2:7; Romans 2:10; Luke, xiv.). These rewards Paul sought with ardour : earnestly as the racer in pursuit of the crown that fadeth, he sought the crown of glory which fadeth not away. Our principle of present service, under which we are educating for the kingdom of glory, is the strange, unworldly one, of grace : of doing good to the unthankful and the evil; of praying for persecutors and foes ; of not avenging, but committing ourselves, and our property and character, into the hands of our Father in heaven. As this is the more difficult course, one indeed impossible to the flesh, so will its glory and reward be greater in the coming day. That which gives it its foundation and its value is, that this is the course which the Son of God took through earth. To us it is given to tread in His steps, to do well and to suffer for it now, in the assurance that it shall be more than made up to us in the age to come (1 Peter 2:20-21). The kingdoms of earth have had their glory of arts and arms, of mighty architecture, of great cities, of greatness of wisdom, and greatness of commerce. But what shall be the glory of the coming kingdom of God, for which all these have been but the poor preparations? for which the Son of God shall come from heaven with His hosts of angels, and with His ransomed in their resurrection-bodies of glory? Let us seek to have part in that !

42-44. So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption : it is sown in dishonour ; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in strength: it is sown

an animal body ; it is raised a spiritual body.

The opening words of this verse seem connected with both the foregoing and the after-coming context, (1.) The resurrection of the dead will resemble the glories of the heaven, in being threefold in its main divisions. (2.) It will take place with difference of glories, among the individuals of each of the three classes of glory. Some will have more, some less, of the glory which belongs to the class in which they are found. This results at once from the principles on which the glory is distributed - 'to each according to his works.' If all had been arranged according to the work of Christ for us, all must have been alike in glory, and station, and so on. But God has in His wisdom determined, that while the work of Christ for us introduces us to the heavenly glory, yet the place which we take amongst others in the class to which we belong, shall depend on our lives, and our work, after our reception of Christ. The immediate consequence of this is the introduction of differences. None do exactly the same kind of work for God, or the same amount. " To each his work," is the principle Christ has laid down. As in a palace there are many servants ; some out-of-door, some indoors; some on the farm, some in the garden, some at the stables ; so is it with the present time of service. No two do exactly the same work :

99 no two do the same amount with equal degrees of diligence, devotedness, intelligence, love. "

It is sown." This remarkable word is used instead of "buried"- and is several times repeated.

Why? Because it takes up the apostle's previous argument, that burial answers to the sowing of the seed. The corpse is to God's eye the seat of the coming resurrection. To the eye of nature, interment is the final disposal of that part of man. As far as the horizon of sight goes, it is done with. But faith looks at it in the light of God. It is to be followed by a " sing up out of the earth into which it is lowered.

It is the strange seed of a marvellous arising. Hence it appears to follow, that, as the disorganization and dissolving of the seed is really a movement onwards, in order to its coming up out of the soil; so the corruption which fastens on the corpse is not its destruction or the road to annihilation, but a process leading on to its reconstruction.

_ "Jit is sown ; it is raised." Here we have the two views which were previously stated- the sameness and the difference of the resurrection body, (1.) it is the same body. The plant that comes up is one with the seed that goes down. Such as the seed sown, is the plant that comes up. The corrupting body becomes in resurrection the glorious body. That which rises is that which is laid down ; or there is no resurrection. .

(2.) But now the Spirit proceeds to speak of the diversity of the body laid down, from the body that is to come up. He first gives its characters of humiliation as a corpse. " It is sown in corruption." As soon as the soul leaves the body, the body begins to be acted on by the chemical forces around it.

While possessed of life it resisted those forces, and retained its own appearance and organization. But after death the taking down of the bodily structure begins. It assails unpleasantly the nose and eyes. Its animal compounds begin to be dissolved into the dead elements which surround us. No love or zeal will prevent this continual process going on, till at length the body becomes a heap of dust, or is dissolved into the earth. This is the result of sin - as the awaking is the effect of righteousness. But quite opposite to this process of decomposition is to be the awakening. It is not

unlikely that the objectors to resurrection supposed that the body at its restoration would be just the same as now ; built up only for a longer life ; but to be taken down again. The Holy Ghost therefore corrects this false impression, and so removes any objections that might be rested thereon.

"It is raised in incorruption" This is the same truth which is re-stated in verses 52, 53, as about to take place at a future day.

"It is ' raised in incorruption." Four different respects are given in which the risen body will be not only unlike, but a contrast to, this present one. The body that comes forth from the tomb will be an incorruptible one. The body and soul are never to be severed ; the body is no more to be acted on, to grow old and vanish away. This it was which Jesus first exemplified in His own person : all other resurrections having been only a temporary restoration of the old body. He brought by the Gospel the good news, not exactly of the immortality of the soul, but of the incorruptibility of the resurrection-body. "

It is sown in dishonour." God compels the survivors to get rid of the best beloved from before their sight. It must be shut away into darkness, unfit to be seen. It must be abandoned, "to the meanest of reptiles a peer and a prey." Abraham must bury his beloved Sarah out of his sight. However great or noble among men, dishonour visits the dead. Men may seek to forget this truth, or to surround with pomp and ceremony the corpse; but the victory at present is with Death. The body is a prisoner of war, the result of spiritual degradation.

But it shall be but a brief time thus. For the Lord has prepared through His own righteousness and victory the triumph of resurrection. Let us then wait not for death, but for eternal life, realized by the coming of the Son of God from heaven. Our bodies shall then be made like to His.

Notice, again, how the Spirit of God is refuting the theory which is gaining ground in our day, that ' death is resurrection.' That belongs to a religious system quite opposed to the Christian. 'In that false system ' the body is a prison, an encumbrance, a clog, from which at death the believer is freed with joy.

Then he enters on his real and perfect eternity; then he begins to live. The body is only the spirit's shell, to be dissolved and left for ever. It is an old and worn-out garment, never more to be worn.' Against this observe, that the apostle cannot be speaking of the soul's coming forth from the body as our resurrection. For the soul is not buried, does not corrupt, and so is not to be raised in incorruption. The true analogy with resurrection is found in the burying of a seed. The kernel of wheat does not rise as soon as we take it out of its ear, and strip it of its husk. It rises only after it is buried, at some unknown time after its committal to the soil. Even thus it is with man. His resurrection is to be at some unknown interval after his burial.

It has not yet taken place. It is to take place at a period when God shall put forth His life-giving power in a way quite opposite to anything seen now.

Now God abandons to corruption, and to " the slavery of corruption," the bodies of his best-beloved ones. Fetters hold them fast which we cannot undo. The iron eats continually deeper, not into their souls, but into their bodies. But then He shall turn His hand, and the chains will in a moment snap; and the prisoner escape, God's freeman for evermore ! "

It is raised in glory" This will be the most prominent of all the characters of the living body- - "glory." Our present bodies absorb light, but reflect no brightness. It was to the honour of Moses, that his face, after forty days' intercourse with God, shone. But it was so strange to those who beheld him, that they were afraid to come nigh. But then these dull bodies will be changed into bodies radiating light on all sides. Thus it is with our Lord's body, who is our forerunner on the way of resurrection and immortality. His body, His face shine as the sun. When a specimen of His honour was to be given on the Mount of Transfiguration, both His person and His dress shone. And to Paul and to John He appeared with a brightness beyond the sun's.

It is, however, worthy of note, that this brightness did not make its appearance immediately upon His rising again. No luminousness of His body is mentioned at the disciples' interviews with Him after His resurrection, and up to His ascension. This was wisely done; for the brightness of glory would have made Him unfit to commune with His disciples. When John so beheld Him, he fell at His feet as dead. The proof of His being the same person would therefore have been sadly marred. The disciples would have feared such astonishing light, more than Israel feared the inferior brightness of Moses' face. Moreover, it would have been a further stumbling- block to enquirers after the truth of resurrection; and would have upheld the cause of those who affirmed that Jesus was not a real man. This glory, then, did not attach to the Saviour's body till His ascent to His Father. "

It is sown in weakness ; it is raised in power."

Power ebbs fast from the strong upon the bed of death; till at length the warrior cannot lift his arm, the orator cannot make his whisper heard. All flesh is grass : how easily it is withered !

Regeneration of the soul does not alter the body.

Some of the ungodly have died wrestling fearfully and despairingly with death. ' I can't die ! I won't die ! I am not ready to die ! ' A sense of the dismal result awaiting the terrified soul was upon them. But the strong messenger tarried not; he arrested the culprit in the midst of the struggle. The silence of Scripture is as worthy of note as its testimony. I read nothing concerning the beauty of the deathless body. Yet this is a point oft rising in our thoughts, as is testified by hymns and the prose descriptions of the glory to come - " On the cold cheek of death smiles and roses are blending, And beauty immortal awakes from the tomb."

Again - ' When I stand before the throne, Dressed in beauty not my own." The characteristic of the corpse is relaxation, and weakness. None can retain his spirit. The corpse can repel no assault, though in life it were the body of Samson himself. The bearer away of the gates of Gaza cannot now lift his hand. It cannot repel the fly or the worm. We see something of this in the history of the Two Witnesses (Rev. xi.). There those men of power are laid powerless in the streets. But that is only for a while. At the hour of resurrection the body arises the entire opposite of this - clothed in a frame of perpetual vigour, like the angels that excel in might. God's hand is the right hand of power. The arm of the risen will partake of the power of God. Christ has become weakness, that we might obtain power. At present, frail flesh could not see God and live. But then it shall be fortified, to dwell ■with Him evermore. " It is sown an animal body; it is raised a spiritual body." *
*Literally " sonlish body " - We know what an " animal " body is. It is that which the creatures around us possess ; nourished by food, dependent on the breathing of air, and recruiting by sleep.

A body which begins to live at birth, and is liable to be deprived of life by a thousand accidents ; or which, at any rate, gives up the ghost through old age. It is that body which has three main centres of life, the brain, the heart, the lungs ; and the ceasing of any one of these to play entails the ceasing of both the others. The meaning of the contrasted terms "animal" and "spiritual," is that each describes the ruling principle of the respective bodies, and the purpose they are designed respectively to serve. By a "steam- engine" you do not mean an engine composed of steam as its material, but an engine in which steam is the ruling principle. Suppose now, it were found

107 that like results could be attained by electricity as the ruling power applied to the engine, then we should call it an " electric-engine ; " and there would be certain new adaptations necessary in order to fit it to drag the train along its rail, though in the main its wheels and pistons might be allowed to remain. An " animal body " - literally a " soulish body " - a body designed to serve the purposes of an animal soul, like that of the beasts. We have here lost much light on Scripture, through the translators neglecting to render the Hebrew by one English word. The ' soul ' (or vs:) as distinguished from the ' spirit,' is a real, an abiding part of man's threefold nature -"

Spirit, soul, and body" (1 Thessalonians 5:23). To it belong those appetites which the living creatures around us feel. We are apt to speak of hunger, thirst, etc. as bodily affections. Scripture speaks of them as affections of the soul (Genesis 34:3, Proverbs 13:25, Isaiah 29:8, liii. 12, Numbers 11:6, xxi. 5). The soul is that which moves the body. At its departure the body becomes motionless. The soul imparts warmth. At its departure, the body soon becomes and abides cold. Its return to the body is renewed life. At present, there is a struggle between the lower soul and the superior spirit, as to which shall use the body in its purposes. The body more readily yields to the animal soul, than to the wants of the spirit. The regenerate man is more easily led by nature to eat when hungry, than to prayer when his spirit leads him to it. At the spirit's call for prayer and praise, the soul pleads weakness, sleepiness, weariness. But while now the body is fitted especially to receive from without the impressions which affect the soul, and to go on its errands, it shall hereafter be adapted to carry out the purposes of the spirit as its ruler. The soulish body is a body designed for a passing life like the present; a body in which the soul, or inferior power, rules and guides; pressing us away from higher duties by the imperious calls for eating, drinking, sleeping. But the resurrection is to send the body forth constituted on a new pattern, or at least for another world ; to be subject entirely to the will and guidance of the spirit, the higher power and part in man - "a spiritual body." That expression does not chiefly mean, that it will be of rarer character, like the ghost, capable of being seen, but unable to be handled. Our Lord's body is here again the pattern to which we must make appeal.

It will not be plied with hourly recurring wants of

109 the flesh. It will be independent of things which are now the needful fuel of life. " A soulish body." So we call vessels by the purpose they serve, or the liquids they hold. Yonder is a " wafer-bottle " - there is a " wine-bottle." We do not mean, that the vessels are made of water or wine ; but that they are adapted to hold the one liquid or the other. And so, if we determined that a certain bottle, which hitherto had been destined to hold water, should henceforth hold wine only, we should call it a "wine bottle." This may illustrate in part the apostle's use of the terms, " animal " and " spiritual" body.

How much the usual views of Christians have wandered from the truth of the Scripture regarding resurrection, may be seen in popular hymns - "

More happy, but not more secure, Are the glorified spirits above." The idea of " glorified spirits " is quite unscriptural.

It supposes that the soul of the saved at once enters heaven and glory : that death, and not resurrection, is the victory. So again - "

Then in a nobler, sweeter song [after death] I'll sing thy power to save, When this poor lisping, stammering tongue Lies silent in the grave."

This supposes that the soul is in glory while the body lies in corruption; and that it is singing to God praises of victory, while redemption is yet to be waited for.

It is of the utmost moment, against the Spiritism fast coming in, to testify that the resurrection of the body is the Christian's hope. Corporeal existence is our final destiny. All systems which ignore or refuse this are not Christian. For Christ's resurrection is a type of ours. And the Lord is for our body, and will raise it by His own power. He keeps it and retains it by the Spirit's indwelling. While the body is under corruption, the separate spirit cannot be in glory. We are " waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body." The body of the living believer is already judicially dead because of sin. Its mortality means only that death is deferred. ' But as Adam's sin and our own bring it death, so Christ's righteousness shall bring it life. Nay, our spirit is not only alive, but "life, because of righteousness"

(Rom. viii.).

Burial, in the sentence of God on the guilty pair, seemed to be the end of man. For sin alone was before the Judge. But now life has come through death and burial ; because righteousness has entered, in the person and work of Christ. Burial and its corruption is a humbling thing to proud man ; but it is knit to hope. ' Sinful ' is the word traced upon the features of the dead ; but, if they be Christ's, they shall be redeemed from corruption and all its traces. Incorruption of the body is the fit answer to eternal life bestowed by Christ on the soul. The body of the saint is the Lord's, no less than the spirit; and He will leave the enemy no spoils of victory. "

If there is an animal body, there is also a sp1ritual body:'

All must grant, that there exists an animal body ; a body which resembles those of the beasts that perish. But if so, there is also a higher kind of body, of a far superior pattern and principle of construction. Do we find ourselves now in possession of a body of flesh and blood, fitted to enjoy, and to act upon the present world ; to minister to whose wants this world was framed ? It is certain, then, that God will provide us another body, suited to the better world on which we are soon to enter : a body fitted to our higher and eternal employments. God's adaptation of the one to the present world is to us a pledge of another adapted to the future world.

Then he is to put forth His power, and will be seen to be the God of the men of faith. Men of unbelief deny His power to raise the dead. But believers in a God who raises the dead, in a God who has raised His Son from the dead, are His children ; and He will put forth His power and goodness in giving them a body worthy of the dwellers in His presence. The apostle is now, and

ever since the 36th verse, treating of the resurrection of the saved. The "spiritual body," then, does not mean 'a body composed of spirit;' but a body (1) in which the spirit is the ruler, and (2) to the purposes of which spirit it is designedly adapted by God. It will be adapted also to the new world in which it is to act, as well as to the inward processes and outward agencies of the man. Now the strong calls of nature drive off the spirit from its appropriate exercises. The headache, or toothache, extreme heat or cold, weariness, or insanity, unfit for thought, or speech, or action suited to the renewed spirit. But these disadvantages shall be overcome in the new body which God will then bestow, a body adapted to the new wants and new faculties of the risen.

Still, a body belongs to the resurrection-state. It shall not be something gaseous and ghostly only, incapable of being handled or held. In spite of any inward or outward changes we shall feel it to be still our own body. Here is a piece of charcoal. If any chemist should light on the discovery how diamonds are made, he might change this block of coal into a diamond. It would indeed be a wondrous change, and yet there might be there only the old particles : in a very intelligible sense it would be the same body. The two bodies are connected with the two great Heads of men. Paul gives proof, that there is both an animal and a spiritual body. On Christ as the pattern, the new body is moulded.

45. So also it is written, The first man (Adam) became a living soul; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. "

It is written." How much is made of that by God ! How much should be made by us ? It is not an oral tradition, or a story handed from mouth to mouth, that is the basis of our faith. It rests on unchangeable and written words inspired of

God. A written promise binds a man. A written cheque gives a strong hold on money. Much more does God's word give us a hold on God. But this has a double aspect. How joyful to the man who accepts it ! How terrible to him who refuses it ! How awful to be made an example of the truth of God in His justice, in eternal fire ! "In eternal punishment," as it is written. Hold fast against all deceits and threats of man and Satan, God's note of hand. 'It is written,'

It is our authority. May we cleave thereto ! It was enough for the Son of God : it may well be enough for us.

Adam and Christ are the two great heads of their respective races, the two great forms of human nature ; and these are, as far as we can see from Scripture, both to abide for ever. Men in the flesh and the risen of mankind are both to live side by side during the millennium. This all are agreed on who own a millennium. But what happens at the close? Satan, let loose, deceives a large portion of men : they come up against Israel, his land and city, and are cut off by instant death in judgment from God. Then earth is burnt up, and the dead are judged (Rev. xx.). But what becomes of Israel - the nation of men living in the flesh? What becomes of the nations of Europe and America, and of the islands of the seas, which go not up on this impious expedition ? They are not cut off by death. They are not judged among the dead, for they are still alive. What becomes of them ? They are transferred while still in the flesh from the old earth to the new; on which new earth are seen "the nations " as the staple of the population. " The nations " mean the same thing on the new earth, that they did on the old. Save that only the elect of the nations enter the new world, and no more can they fall.

They dwell outside the city of God, and are those over whom the risen saints rule as kings. The connexion of this verse with the previous one is not easily seen, for the links formed in the original have in the translation been snapped. It would be necessary, in order to present them to an English reader, to render it - "There is a soulish body, and there is a spiritual body. So it is written, 'The first Adam became a living soul.' " Swedenborg and his followers assert, that the body is no part of the man - that man is by nature a spirit, and that he appears in his true character only when the body is thrown off at death. Hence they say that we have never really seen any of our living friends, but only their outside, not their real selves. Now this is contrary to reason and Scripture. Men speak of the corpse of a man sometimes as the man ; sometimes they speak of the soul of the departed as the man. The two parts into which the man is divided are called indifferently by his name. We say, " Pitt and Fox are buried in Westminster Abbey." We say also, "Whitefield is now a departed spirit." So does the Scripture. It calls the corpse the man. "As they were burying a man they cast the man into the sepulchre of Elisha, and when the man was let down, and touched the bones of Elisha, he revived, and stood up on hisfeet" (2 Kings 13:21). "Then his brethren and all the house of his father came down, and took him (Samson), and brought him up, and buried him" (Judges xvi. 31). "Where have ye laid him!" says our Lord of Lazarus. "There (in Machpelah) was Abraham buried, and Sarah his wife" (Genesis 25:10). And yet Jesus says, of the soul of Lazarus and of the soul of Abraham, "The beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom." " He seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom "

(Luke 16:23).

Adam is called 'man' when he was simply the moulded form of dust (Genesis 2:7); shewing God's design, that the body should be an integral part of man. He took his name, Adam, apparently from the red earth. The first and second Adam are distinguished, first, as to standing in the scale of existence, then as to origin. This refers us back to the record of Adam's creation. As the result of God's breathing into the clay frame, Adam became a " living soul," the superior animal of earth, and the ruler of animals. For this is the description in the Hebrew of the other animals of earth (Genesis 1:30), " To every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the heaven, and to everything that creepeth upon the earth, wherein is (margin) a living soul, I have given every green herb for food." A living soul ' - that indicates that there may be also ' a dead soul.' We use the phrase indeed often, but understand it to signify a spirit dead to the things of God. Scripture, however, means by it 'a dead body.'¹ Man living in the flesh is a ' living soul.' But in death he becomes ' a dead soul.' This surely speaks of the body as being an integral part of man.

Take some examples - " Ye shall not make any cuttings in your flesh for the soul" (of the dead) (Leviticus 19:28) ; "

Neither shall he go in to any dead soul" (Leviticus 21:11);

"All the days that he separateth himself to the Lord he shall come at no dead soul" (Numbers 6:6). Our present body, then, is ' a soulish body,' derived from him who was originally created a 'living soul.' But a second Head of our race has come to bring in something far superior. " The last Adam became a life-giving spirit." This last sentiment is not a Scripture quotation, as the first quotation might lead some to suppose. But it is the apostle's inspired statement.

Why is not Christ called "the second Adam?" That was the natural designation. But He is called "the last Adam," lest any deceiver should introduce the idea of a third Adam, superior to any of the former. That cannot be ; for the Second Adam is the Son of God, the Creator and Preserver of all creatures. Than Him there can be no superior: hence in Him man attains his highest point. And as, after that, he is not to lose his standing of glory, it is justly said, " the last Adam."

Jesus, then, in His quality as Head of the new type and specimen of man, is " the life-giving spirit." On both counts He is superior to Adam : even as the spirit is above the soul of the beast, and as the Giver of life is superior to that which only possesses life of His gift.

Thus the two bodies and the two answering lives are connected with the two great heads of men - the first and second Adam. As surely as the first and second Adam have been on earth, and as the Saviour possesses still His resurrection-body, so surely shall Christ introduce His people to their superior bodies. When is Christ "the life-giving spirit?" He was at first the man after Adam's type, in the likeness of flesh of sin. But in resurrection He has taken up the new body, never to be touched by death. And He proclaims Himself to Martha as " Resurrection and Life" - able and willing to impart the life for evermore, which shall be granted to His own at His coming.

Thus, then, Paul's doctrine of the two kinds of bodies and patterns of men is confirmed by what is related of God's creation of man at the first. But the second great Head had afterwards to come and to shew how, instead of unrighteousness and death, life eternal and resurrection could enter through the righteousness and resurrection of the second great Head of men. Greatly will the saved of this dispensation be elevated above the position which Adam by disobedience lost. Our fall has thrown us in the way of a great Deliverer, and out of it have sprung victory and eternal inheritance. Suppose a poor woodman, wandering on a wintry night, to have fallen into a pit in the forest belonging to the Queen of England. The Prince hears his despairing cries, discovers where he is, bestirs himself to procure ropes and to hoist the man up out of his dangerous, dark, damp, and cold abode. It is not enough for the Prince to rescue him ; finding that he is bruised and faint with hunger, having been there two days, he sends him a physician, prepares him food, appoints him to a post in the royal household. He is a made man. The fall was not pleasant, the feelings of hunger and fright and powerlessness to escape were sore trials. But the end makes more than amends. It is so with the saved. The reference here is to Adam while unfallen. He was a "living soul," capable of being overtaken by death. The Saviour is referred to as the life-giving Spirit, in view of His present attitude and power in resurrection. The citation is made from Genesis to prove that Adam's was an animal or "soulish" body. As his body at that time was suited to this world and its life, so is it not suited in many points to the new sphere into which eternal life in resurrection is to introduce us. The spiritual body, or the new one suited to the new and eternal employments of the risen, comes to us through the righteousness of Christ, and it will partake of Jesus' eternity and power. Jesus is " the life-giving Spirit." For He will raise up those that are His at the last day. " I give unto them eternal life, and they shall not perish for ever." " Because I live, ye shall live also." This is fully declared - " Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is even able to subdue all things unto himself" (Php 3:21). Jesus did what Adam had not done - He obeyed in perfection. He undid what Adam had done - for Adam transgressed.

Jesus first wins life for us, then imparts it to us. Out of the essential superiority of the new Adam springs the eternal superiority of the resurrection-body. Christ has become the last Adam in resurrection. Not till then did His body, of the seed of the woman, connected with that of the old and fallen family, cease to be mortal. He put on the body of humiliation and weakness first, before He put on the body of eternal glory in which He now dwells.

Christ first gives life to the soul; we are now waiting His giving life to the body. If the spirit be renewed first, the renewal of the body shall follow. The discord that now is felt between the renewed soul and the fallen body shall soon be removed, and the man shall feel at unity throughout. Joseph's old and dirty raiment might suffice for his prison-lot; but, if he is to stand before Pharaoh, his dress must be quite changed.

46. But not first (comes) the spiritual, but the animal; then the spiritual. That is, the plans of God are going forward, continually advancing. It is the boast of modern times, that we are progressing. This is the character of God's plans. We see that it is to His glory they should be so. Yet this must be learned from Himself, with His promises and designs. For in general His plans have ended in apparent discomfiture. There was progress in creation from light to the dry land, the vegetables, the animals that peopled the new earth, and finally to man. But when Satan came in, and ruined our first parents - was that progress?

There was progress when God smote Egypt with His plagues, and at length drew His ransomed out of the kiln and the furnace and from the lash, and knit them to Himself as a covenanted people. But was that progress - when the people turned God their glory into the likeness of a calf that eateth hay ? There was advance when the Son of God came down in grace and power, and the Spirit of God descended in light and might, raising up churches in Israel and among the Gentiles. But was that progress, when the Church under Constantine, allied itself with the world, and when the worship of dead men and their bones came in, instead of faith in Christ and His Spirit ?

There is now going on, side by side with progressive knowledge of Scripture and of the Mind of God in Christ, a progressive refusal of His truth, and cleaving to Satan's opposing falsehood. The wheat is advancing toward the ripe ear. But the darnel is also progressing to its last unmistakable difference from the wheat. False spirits are leading on to the entire falling away from Christianity. Beware, then !

Enquire, in which direction you are progressing? Is it in likeness to Christ, in obedience to Him and His Word ? or is it advance in the confidence of the flesh ; in man, and in his powers of reasoning and action !

There has, then, been on God's part continual advance in His plans. They have been successively broken, but when broken He has not restored them,

123 but has introduced something new and better. For He has brought in the Great Restorer, who shall Himself carry out completely the plans previously ruined. The millennium will be the knitting together in Christ of what has been broken by man and Satan.

All things, then, are, as far as God is concerned, moving onwards in their right and blessed order of progress. First comes Adam, the living soul that falls; then Adam, the life-giving Spirit, who raises the fallen.

First come God's people of the flesh, then the people of the spirit. This is the carrying out of Christ's principle - the last first. God's after-creation is an advance on the former. But we must beware of progress, in a sense in which it is customary to talk of it now. It is true that science, and manufactures, and the engines of war are advancing. But do not imagine that in things spiritual the changes now enacting are 'progress.' There are those who are scouting or debasing the Scriptures of God, as if inspiration were possessed by us now as much as by Paul and Peter. No. There is progress in understanding God's Word now, compared with the views of the third century, or even of the Reformation. But man cannot add to the perfection of the Word of God, unless He can improve on God Himself. There is really a falling-back since the days of the apostles, since we have not the Spirit in inspiration or in miracle. " Whosoever progressed, and abideth not in the doctrine of the Christ, hath not God " (2 John 1:9). This is the true reading.

There are, then, two great types or forms of man. The First man, the animal man, as seen in Adam un-fallen. The Second, Christ the Righteous, the Risen One, possessed of a glorious, powerful, eternal body. And it was fitting that the inferior of these should come first.

47. The first man is out of the earth earthy (dusty); the second man is out of heaven. The idea that Christ had in heaven a heavenly human body before He appeared on earth, and that this passed indeed through Mary, but was not of her substance, is an awful error : but it has made its appearance once and again. Now, if so, there is no Incarnation. Christ was not a man as we are; He was not, as promised, the Seed of the Woman, the Son of Adam or of David. He did not really atone by His death in our nature, or rise for us. This verse leads us to the account of Adam's creation.

It was out of the dust of the earth. After sin, the parts of man, as foretold, were severed by death. And God told Adam he should return to the dust ; as out of it he was taken, so to it he should return. As

125 the composition of his body was of earth, so his soul ranged among the things of earth, and found here his home and resting-place. He was ruler of earth ; and here was his domain, here rested his desires. " But the second man is out of heaven." The words, " the Lord," have been added. They are omitted in the best manuscripts. To what time does this sentiment relate? To Jesus' becoming flesh for us? or to His coming again in His glorified body ? Be it first observed, that the parallel is not exactly kept up. It is not said, ' The second man is out of heaven heavenly? This it would have been natural to expect ; but, if so stated, it would have countenanced the Gnostic idea that Jesus' body, as born into the world, was of another quality than ours : not fleshly, but heavenly ; not human, but spiritual.

Perhaps we may say, that both times are alluded to.

Christ, or the new man - the God-Man - is, as to His person, from (or out of) the heaven. He says Himself - " And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven" (John 3:13). He says again - "

I am from above, and ye are from beneath. I came down from heaven. I proceeded and came forth from

God." The point insisted on is the different original places of the two types of mankind. They are respectively earth and heaven.

48. Such as the earthy one, of such a character are the men of the dust, and such as the Heavenly One are the heavenly ones also.

Thoughts, acts, life, desires, spheres - all throughout speak of man's previous original, the ground. The stream does not rise above its fountain. Adam begat a son in his own image, after he was fallen from God ; and to this day his posterity are like him, and unlike

God. But Christ has come as the Head and Leader of another class of men, the renewed in spirit by the Spirit of God ; who do not here find their heritage or their resting-place, who are looking for the day when God's heavenly family shall be assembled together in their Father's home above. The two classes, though shaken together in daily life, still remain distinct in spirit, as one day they are to be in habitation and employment. It is now like the memorable night when Israelite and Egyptian were crossing the depths of the sea. They were near in locality, but hostile in spirit; and the one was overwhelmed in wrath, the other led onward to glory and victory.

Part 1.5 - continued

There are two great representative men - Adam and Christ. Mankind by nature are copies of Adam the fallen. The risen will be copies of Christ, our

Head. The body enters into the reality of both. As the body of the risen Christ is glorious, so will His saved ones have bodies of glory and power. Christians may speak of "glorified spirits above," but Scripture does not. Glory belongs to the body of the risen, even as it did to our Lord on the mount. And so Moses and Elias, who were with Him on the mount, were men in the body. Close and potent as is our connexion with Adam, so close and powerful is and will be found to be our union with Christ in its eternal effects. Our connexion with Adam in flesh and spirit introduced us into a body of weakness, pain, disease, and death, and a soul at enmity with God. Our connexion with Christ has given us a soul at peace with God, renewed by the Holy Ghost, and a body is preparing for us never to hinder us in good, or to tempt us to evil, but incorruptible, never to be touched by death.

49. And as we have borne the image of the earthly (man), let us also bear the image of the heavenly

(man).

There is here a slight difference in the reading of the best manuscripts, which, however, materially affects the sense. We read it, " we shall bear." But the most valuable manuscripts read as given above - "Let us bear " - an exhortation. Now this strikes us at first as not worthy to be received. Is not the apostle dealing with the kind of body we are to have in resurrection? And how, then, does exhortation come in ? How can we affect the character of our resurrection-body ? Does not that rest wholly on the Almighty power of God ? To clear up this difficulty, it is to be observed that the Holy Spirit has here changed the phrase. Before it was the origin of the body which was spoken of - " As is the earthy (man), such are the men of earth." But now we have a new phrase - " The image of the earthly; the image of the heavenly." Therein is couched, I believe, a reference to a further word of God in Genesis 5:3, telling us the results of the fall as perpetuated in Adam's posterity. Adam "begat a son in his own likeness, after his image; and called his name Seth." This image of fallen Adam takes in, not the body alone, but the soul and spirit also.

Men by nature are such as the apostle describes in the 2nd of Ephesians - dead in trespasses and sins, following the desires of the flesh and of the mind.

They are such as we find Cain and his posterity, wandering away from a just and condemning God, and seeking, by developing the resources of the earth whence he was taken, to fill up the void occasioned by the absence of God. The tense of the verb confirms this view. It is the indefinite past, or Aorist. Had Paul been speaking of the body alone, he would have used the present - " As we bear the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." No change has been yet introduced into the condition of the body of the believer. But there has been a change in the condition of the soul. We were once of one condition throughout ; we were entirely

in the image of fallen Adam. But grace has changed and is changing our spirits into the image of the Son of God. The time of that change is undefined, being different in each believer. The Spirit of the Son sent into our hearts is renewing us into the image of Him who created us (Romans 8:29). Like Moses on Sinai's top, beholding the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, we are being transformed from glory to glory by the Lord the Spirit (2 Corinthians 3:18). We are changing into the image of Christ, who is the image of God. We have put off the old man, and have put on the new, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him who created Him (Col. iii).

10). The believer is not, like Adam ^«fallen, ignorant of the knowledge of good and evil. He is not, like fallen Adam, left to the lusts of the flesh, and condemned by the conscience he stole. Nor does God mean to take out of us that knowledge of good and evil so unjustly acquired, but to bring us entirely to obey the sense of what is good. By the past tense the apostle is referring to the change which grace has made in our conversion.

Hence the word of exhortation comes in - 'Let us resemble the heavenly man more and more.' It is towards this image that God is transforming us. Here, dear Christian reader, is room for us all to advance.

How is it to be ? By beholding the Son of God. By the knowledge of the Word of God and faith in it applied by the Spirit.

Part 1.6 - Mode (50-53)

50. But this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot obtain part in the kingdom of heaven; nor does corruption have part in incorruption. The first word of this verse should be rendered 'but.' It is a limitation of the exhortation which has gone before. However far we proceed along the line of the exhortation presented to us, there is one clear limit. Our spirit may grow indefinitely more and more into the likeness of Christ, and so resemble the heavenly type of man, whose hopes and heritage, whose city and Father are in heaven. But this advance of the spirit of the believer does not affect his body. The body of the believer of the very highest spiritual attainments is as weak and as liable to accident and death as the bodies of the ungodly. Paul has shown that resurrection is possible ; now he proves it necessary. Here comes in a consideration of the necessary change of the bodies of the redeemed in order to fit them for their new sphere in the eternal state of glory. That is, the apostle is now dealing with resurrection. The bodies of the believers, whether in the state of life or death, are unfitted for the life and the employments which are to be theirs at Christ's coming.

He treats first of the most favourable case - that of the living believer.* *Some seem to take the expression "flesh and blood" as meaning fallen human nature, or nature spiritually considered. And it is true that that will not enjoy the kingdom of glory. But the apostle is not treating of the spiritual question now. The present body may be described as "flesh and blood" (Matthew 16:17). It is the body made out of the dust, the animal body which we possess in common with the inferior animals. This body Christ Himself took at first, in order to lift us out of it into the heavenly and spiritual one. "

Forasmuch, then, as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself in like manner took part of the same" (Hebrews 2:14). The blood is its peculiar characteristic. Out of the blood the parts of the body, which are in a continual change and flux, are from hour to hour built up. But this continual change tells of its conclusion in death. The balance between accession of substance and removal of it is lost. Our body, then, as possessed of its present life, which is in the blood, the living fluid of the animal world, is not fitted for the life of the coming millennial day, and still less for eternity. It is built to last, at the best, but seventy or eighty years. Hence a new condition must come in. The blood is to be removed, as we see by the example of our Lord. By the scourging, the nailing, and the wound of the spear after His death, our Lord's blood was drained away. To be without blood, to have it taken away, is certain death to us now. But Christ gave up His blood.

It was to be divided between His people and His God. Even so we read concerning the blood of the mediating sacrifices in the covenant made at Sinai. " And Moses took half the blood, and put it in basins, and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar. " The second half, mixed with water, he sprinkled on the people. So Christ has presented His blood once for all on high as the ransom of His people. But His blood is also the blood of sprinkling on us.

We have seen that He partook of 'flesh and blood' at first. But after the resurrection He describes Himself by another phrase. When the astonished disciples, beholding Him risen, imagined Him to

be but a ghost or disembodied spirit, He said, " Handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have" (Luke 24:39). Hence, now, it is said of believers - not ' we are of His flesh and blood ; ' but " we are members of His body, out of His flesh and bones " (Ephesians 5:30). While concerning His blood we read of its being poured out at the foot of the cross, we read of His bones - "Not one of them shall be broken." To this removal of the blood was doubtless owing the peculiar and new powers which our Lord's body possessed. It was no longer confined by walls ; it had power to disappear at will, and to soar on high. The incorruptible body which He took in resurrection was afterwards, on His ascension to heaven, glorified; or made to pour forth light on all sides like the sun. Thus He was seen by Paul and by John. Then fully did He reach the type of the heavenly man, to which believers are one day to be conformed. Believers, then, though living, are, in respect of their present bodies, unfit to enter on the kingdom of God.

What is 'the kingdom of God' here spoken of?

Clearly not this present time ; it is not the Church, or the Gospel. Our present bodies are suited to the Church state, but they are not fitted for the heavenly department of the kingdom of glory. This phrase refers to that kingdom to which believers are now invited, and towards which they are gradually, while obedient, moving on (1 Thessalonians 2:12, 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, 2 Thessalonians 1:5, Galatians 5:25). The manifested kingdom of God has two aspects - its first (or imperfect), and its final state. Its first phase is the kingdom when given into the hands of Christ, who is to subdue all to His Father. Of this mention has been made in some previous verses of this chapter. During that thousand years it is called " the kingdom of the Christ and God" (Ephesians 5:5, 2 Timothy 4:1). It is then the kingdom of God, in opposition to the previous four empires of men. But that is imperfect. It is not meant to last for ever. Its design is to glorify and reward Christ, and His working and suffering people. Satan, set at liberty, discovers anew his wickedness and the wickedness of man; and then earth with all it has, is burnt up.

Then is the eternal state and kirtgdom of God introduced.

Now, to that eternal state, its atmosphere, its enjoyments and employments, our animal bodies are not suited.

Paul is speaking of believers under the Gospel.

There will be Jews and Gentiles dwelling in bodies of flesh and blood, who will have part in the millennial promises on earth. But that is not true of believers under the Gospel. These last either are lost, or they enter on eternal life in bodies suited to that state. The English word ' inherit ' gives a false idea of the sense of the Greek. It means ' to have part in a thing;' it does not mean 'to receive an estate by virtue of birth.'¹ Though new birth be necessary for the millennial kingdom, that alone is not enough. These bodies, then, of flesh and blood cannot enter the kingdom, because they would be unfit for the presence and glory of God. They could not sustain its atmosphere; their possessors would fall down as dead. The whole man, then, must be fitted to enjoy the kingdom. Our spirits are preparing for it now. But we retain to the end of our present course the present outward man. Grace, even in Paul,* *He here uses the word "brethren" to intimate his entire oneness with them in this. His body and theirs were quite on a level. No words of Scripture are useless or mere form. left his body one of flesh and blood. The outward man was tending to decay at the same time that the inward man was being built up and renewed from day to

day (2 Corinthians 4:16). The two parts of us, then, are at discord ' but God means to remove that discord, and to set the whole man fully to enjoy his eternal kingdom of glory.

A body, animal and mortal, is not suited to the new stimulants and sphere of the life to come. How could it bear service day and night? Much more, how could it bear the presence of God? And even if it could support these, it would soon be worn out. But as eternal life is won for us, so is an eternal body also. "

Neither doth corruption enjoy incorruption."

Paul in these words disposes of the other case, the body of the dead believer. If the body of the living believer be not fit for the kingdom of glory, much less the body of the departed. If the body of the living be unfit, because of its being but flesh and blood ; much less is the body which is turned to corruption. That is not fitted even for this world - is obliged to be hidden away. The kingdom of glory is a kingdom into which death cannot enter, and that cannot be enjoyed in bodies over which death and the curse of the Garden have dominion. The city of God is one of the living : it is never to be defiled by the bodies of the dead; never to be entered by disease or pain. Death defiled the persons and habitations even of the living in Jerusalem. But God's city is the seat of incorruption. Decay and its products, animal or vegetable, are to have no place there.

Corruption, then, or the opposite state, is diametrically unfit for the place, employments, and life of the sons of God. This must be got rid of, therefore, before they can enter on that kingdom and its triumph over death. This twofold condition of the believer, as alive or asleep, is one of which Scripture takes note always. So Paul in 1 Thess. iv. deals with the sleepers and the waking. So throughout the rest of this discussion he uses two words, in order to take in the two different aspects hereby introduced.

Observe here the opposition of Scripture to Sweden- borgianism and Spiritism. Death is to them necessary, in order to enter man's final and blissful state. Not so with God. The happy, they think, are to enter on their bliss, only by what Scripture calls an w«clothing. To the Scripture, the dead and the living are alike unfit for the kingdom of God (however right as respects their souls), because of the unfitness of their bodies. This fitness for glory must be given by a new and eternal establishing given to the bodies, both of the one and of the other. The departed believer cannot enjoy the kingdom, because it is a kingdom of in- corruption, and his body is in a state of corruption.

Till, then, that difficulty is wholly removed by the body which has been laid in the tomb becoming changed into an incorruptible one, he cannot enter.

According to these errorists, a part of the man is laid aside for ever, and was always meant to be abandoned. Death and corruption (to them) are not the penalty of sin, and the body may rot, for it never more is to be used. The reply of the Swedenborgian to the question of the text must have been in entire opposition to that of the apostle. " How are the dead raised up ? " The errorist would have said - '

Every day you behold it. Death is resurrection. The soul extricating itself from the corpse is the only resurrection. It has been going on thus from the first : it ever will be so. It is a natural and inevitable process, taking effect at once alike on the righteous and the wicked.' " With what body

are they coming?" He would have said - ' There is no " coming " at all. It is rather a going away. Your question supposes some great change as about to be introduced. I tell you, nay.

It is throughout a natural process, and from the foundation of the world to eternity there will be no change in the matter. You ask about the kind of body. It is a body ordinarily invisible, and incapable of being touched by the living ; though capable, through mediums, of being seen and sometimes handled.' And, if so, it must be wholly unlike the body of our Lord, who yet is set forth to us by Scripture as the pattern of our redemption in resurrection.

51, 52. Behold I tell you a secret; we shall not all sleep, but all shall be changed. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump. In the ancient manuscripts there are considerable diversities of reading in this verse, some contradicting the text we have, by transferring the ' not.' " We shall all sleep, but not all shall be changed." These changes have arisen out of dislike of the sentiment, and inability to reconcile what is said here with that other word - " It is appointed unto men once to die." '

How, then, if all men are to die [the word " all " is very frequently added to the text of Hebrews 9:27], can it be true that some are not to sleep (or die)?' The difficulty is solved by seeing, that Paul is there speaking of what is appointed to man fallen, unredeemed, and under judgment. For he goes on to say - " After death comes judgment." Nor is Paul there speaking of what he is treating of here - a mystery or secret not before revealed - but of what was testified to Adam and his sons ever since the fall.

What is meant by " mystery ? " In English we usually mean ' something not cleared up or unintelligible.' ' Who the man in the Iron Mask was, must ever remain a mystery} But that is not the Scripture sense. In the New Testament it signifies what was once a secret of God's bosom, but is now revealed.

It does not mean 'what cannot be understood ;' on the contrary, the revelation given of it makes it perfectly capable of being understood and clear, as clear as any other ordinary portion of the Word of God.

Now the apostle proceeds to deal with the second of the questions suggested in verse 35. He has been treating first, and up till this moment, of the question - ' With what kind of body are the dead to come?'

Now he returns to that which was first suggested - ' In what manner are the dead to be raised V He has prepared the way for this by stating the difficulty, or rather moral and physical impossibility, which lies in the way of the believer's entering, in his present bodily state, on the glory which is prepared for him.

However holy he may be, even if it were the apostle Paul himself, his body is but the 'animal body' of flesh and blood, which is unsuited for the heavenly places and for an eternity of life. And if the bodies of the living believers are unfitted for it, how much more the bodies of the departed, whose remains are ' corruption?' Till this point was by Paul cleared up, great difficulties beset the way ; of which the Epicurean adversaries of resurrection who were found at Corinth doubtless took advantage. It has been put thus : ' Either all will die, and then who will bury the last? Or, not all will die; how, then, shall they arise again?' This we answer by observing- (1) That Paul is now treating

of believers only, and of all believers. They are caught away out of the world, both Jews and Gentiles. Whoever are accounted unworthy are left still on earth. Some believers, then, will be found alive on earth when Christ comes. '

We shall not all sleep.' This also was Paul's testimony in 1 Thess. iv., where the saints of that region supposed that only the living would be able to have part in the millennial kingdom. But Paul omits there to treat of the question which is here mooted. There he had spoken of the rapture both of the living and the dead. But he had not spoken of their bodies, or of the obstacle to their glorification which is found to attach to the bodies of believers, whether found in life or under death. The Thessalonian believers were in trouble only concerning the dead saints. Paul therefore calls them 'the sleepers in Christ,' whom He will easily awaken. But here he treats of the difficulty which attaches equally to the living believer. This physical hindrance in both cases will be shaken off in a moment by the miraculous action of Christ (Phil. iii.). While, then, some will be found still alive at the moment of Christ's coming, a change must take place upon their bodies, as well as on the bodies of the dead, in order to fit them for the atmosphere, the companionships, the employments, the eternity of the glory. "We must all be changed." The 'all' here does not mean 'all mankind.' Paul is speaking of believers, and among them he ranges himself. ' We must all be changed.' For Scripture distinguishes resurrection where ordinary theology confounds it. Till within the last fifty years prophecy was not studied, nor had the distinction between the first and the second resurrections been observed and accepted. For till then Romish ideas on prophecy held their ground. The Reformers were content to consider the primary question - How sinners were to be saved ? Until that was settled to the satisfaction of the soul, there was no room for the doctrine of the resurrection of the righteous apart from that of the wicked. Rome, by its doctrine of infused righteousness, had made a man's salvation turn on his perfection of inward holiness ; instead of on the perfect work of Christ outside him. Hence none felt really justified or accepted before God, or able to go to Him with the confidence of sonship. The privileges of believers were therefore unseen. None durst regard himself as a saint and in favour with God. That was ' presumption and fanaticism, for had he not evil within him?' Hence the blessed distinctness

143 of resurrection, as it affects the saved and the lost respectively, was naturally overlooked. The doctrine of the resurrection of the righteous a thousand years before others was set aside, and the book of the Apocalypse dismissed as a mystery that none could penetrate. Resurrection, consequently, was one great act at the same moment for all alike, the saved and the lost. Hence the eyes of most fastened on the parable of the Sheep and Goats, as alone answering to their views. All were to rise, and there, in the presence of Christ, were for the first time really, perceptibly, and eternally to be distinguished. Not till the angels had severed the Sheep from the Goats would the saved know that they were saved. But that parable really says nothing about resurrection. It treats of the judgment of the Gentile nations, who will be alive on the earth. The case of the saved of the Church, whether living or dead, has been already disposed of by our Lord in the previous parables - of ' the Days of Noah,' 'the Robbed Householder,' 'the Faithless Steward,' ' the Ten Virgins,' and ' the Talents '

(Matt, xxiv., xxv.). These were all decided on principles utterly unlike those of the Sheep and Goats. The above named parables treat of those who are of the Church of Christ, who are to be caught up to the Lord's presence before He appears in glory, and to come with Him. The Gentiles (or Sheep and Goats) are judged only after Christ has appeared as the Son of Man attended with

His angels, and has descended to earth to judge the nations according as they have dealt by a third party - 'His least brethren' - that is, the nation of Israel.

Observe, too, another point touching the same views of Rome, for what end was the one great resurrection which they taught, to take place? For judgment. For the decision of the question - 'Are you to be saved or lost?' And so it is still said (where God's truth about this matter has not penetrated), that the archangel will sound his trump and cry - 'Arise ye dead, and come to judgment.' But Paul is not treating of the judgment for life or death. That he had summarily touched on above, after he had spoken of the previous resurrection of the saints at the Lord's descent, and during the time of His Presence (verse 23). Then comes the Saviour's kingdom (verse 24), and in that thousand years His favoured ones are to have part. That kingdom is to put down all opposing force, and specially and finally to end the force of death. This ending of death, the last of our foes, will take place after the thousand years of bliss and of the kingdom are over. The true position of the Christian, then, as already saved and owned of God, puts to flight all these ideas.

Those who are already Christ's are caught up to His presence before the Jews or Gentiles alive on earth are dealt with, as is proved by verse 23, and by the testimony of both Epistles to the Thessalonians. There we see that as soon as the Lord descends, His people, alive or asleep, mount up to meet Him, as stated in 1 Thess. iv. After that comes the day of wrath upon the world, and a destruction which overtakes them quite unprepared, after they have lulled themselves into the sleep of unbelief. The same appears also from 2 Thess. ii. There the saints are assembled to Christ's presence in secret, and so escape the trial and wrath which fall upon the world after their removal, because of the abandonment of the Christian faith, the rise of the Antichrist, and his reign of blasphemy and power for three and a half years. When that is complete, the Saviour and the saints, already on high in their pavilion of cloud, suddenly appear to earth by the rending of the cloudy curtain, and the power of the Great Usurper is gone, Satan's kingdom is ended, and the thousand years of Christ's empire are begun.

Again, it is supposed that "the trump of God" sounds in order to the general judgment of all mankind. But not so the Word of God. We may say that the

trump of God is only used in reference to God's people, either that of Israel, or of the Church. And to this the shadows of the law bear witness (Num. x.).

There were to be two trumpets. God has two people; one of the earth and the flesh, one of the spirit and of heaven. The design of the trumpets was to gather the assembly of God's people to Moses and to God.

Five special times the trumpet is named in the New Testament. Hebrews 12:19 notices the assembly of Sinai, when the congregation of Israel, on the third day, was summoned by God, and was led by Moses to meet Him at the Mount of God. It was not all the world that gathered at that sound, but only God's ransomed ones. Probably that trump was not heard save by Amalek and the Edomites, or those near to Sinai. At any rate, none but the redeemed from Egypt collected themselves at that signal. And answerably hereto, Jesus tells us, that after He has appeared in the sky, and Israel have repented, He will send His angels with a trump of loud sound, and gather His Israelite elect from the four quarters of the earth (Matthew 24:31). But His heavenly elect are already on high with Him in the glory, and Christ has been with them for years in the heaven.

There are, then, three other New Testament passages in which the trumpet is referred to. These are, 1 Thessalonians 4:16.

There Paul is comforting the saints of God possessed of the resurrection-hope, and distinguished from " the Gentiles, who know not God." At that, the signal of Christ's descent, as at Sinai, the saints are to mount up to God. In this chapter Paul is speaking of the trump in connexion with the Lord's people only. At that, as God's signal, the saints are to be changed. In Thessalonians, then, the apostle speaks only of 'the trump of God,' for he is telling of our great assembly and our gathering together unto Christ (2 Thessalonians 2:1).

Here he speaks of " the last trump," because he is telling us of something to take place upon all the saints after the rapture ; that is, he is speaking of the great and final change of glory. The last passages are found in Rev. x. and xi., which give us intimations of the last of the seven trumps. In Revelation 10:6, the angel-witness who comes from heaven testifies on oath, that in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God shall be finished. Accordingly, in Revelation 11:15, when the seventh angel sounds, not ' earth is burnt up,' but its kingdoms become those of God and of Christ, and His reign for evermore begins. Then the elders recognize that as the time of God's resuming to Himself the power which for awhile He lent to the Gentiles. The Gentiles are wroth, and God's wrath cuts them off, His living foes. Then comes the season of the thousand years, in which the dead are judged, and reward is given to God's servants, both of the Old Testament and the New. Moreover, as we advance further into the book we find, that the thousand years of the kingdom and its reward precede the judgment of the dead, who are to be tried for salvation or damnation. The trump, then, refers not only to the assembling of the people of God to Christ, but to the kingdom of Christ's glory. By sound of the last trump, a thousand years before the judgment of the rest of the dead, the kingdom of the Christ is proclaimed, and the reward of God's saints and servants is entered upon. That is "the last trump." There, is then, no other last trump of God, nor are the wicked summoned to judgment by any signal trump.

Moreover, the trumps of God's ordaining were not only to proclaim assemblies, but also to introduce to feasts. We believe, then, that the trump of God, the last trump, introduces some into the feast of Tabernacles, the heavenly rest of a thousand years which remaineth for the people of God. Romanistic views, then, put the last trump out of its true and proper

149 place, and give it an intent not accepted in the Word of God.

But, again, a difficulty rises, which has been pressed a good deal by unbelievers. 'Is it not clear that Paul and his fellow-apostles were under a mistake in regard of the coming of Christ? Do they not take it for granted, Paul especially, that himself and the men then living would behold Christ's return in person ? Does he not speak of " we who are alive and remain to the coming (Personal Presence) of the Lord?" But the day has gone by for ages, and no Christ has appeared. We scout the idea of the destruction of Jerusalem being the Personal coming of the Son of Man. Is it not, then, evident that Paul, and Paul speaking by inspiration, was under a delusion? And, if so, what becomes of inspiration itself? How can that be trusted fully which has already deceived us ? ' To this we reply : Paul speaks not as one deceived, but as one ignorant, as was our Lord Himself, of the time of Christ's return. Our Lord commands all to be awaiting Him from day to day while we live.

Paul does so, and bids the Christians of his day and of every day till Christ descends, to be expectant of His coming. The expression he uses - "we who are alive and remain," applies to, and is used by, us of this day, as it was by him. In our mouths it means not, that Christ will come while we are alive. Neither, then, did it have that signification in his. Besides, Paul was inspired to know that he would be cut off by a violent death before the Saviour's coming (2 Tim. iv.). The great moral features of the Church in relation to the Lord's advent, and in relation to the world and its currents, are the same now as then ; and the Lord's command - ' Watch ' - applies to every disciple till the Lord is seen by us. It is still the day of God's patience, of Israel's and the world's unbelief, and of membership by faith in the Son of God as then. And whether Christ tarry till we fall asleep, or whether He come while we tread the earth, we are reconciled to either alternative. We accept the reasons for God's tarrying ; we accept also the time when that patience shall cease, and the great and terrible day of the Lord begin. To return to the text. "We shall all be changed in a moment;" that refers to the instantaneousness of the change in the case of the dead. " In the twinkling of an eye," describes the instant as it affects the mortal believer, or those still alive in the flesh. The motion of the eye is one of the last signs of life, and the involuntary motion of the eyelid, which does not really interrupt our sight, is an example of the extremes! rapidity of bodily movement. The spiritual renewal of the believer is slow, and oft hindered, but the bodily renewal of the believer, whether dead or alive, shall be effected by God's unchecked agency in an instant. So in previous resurrections wrought by the Saviour ; the rising up followed instantly on the command. But while I am able to solve the difficulties named above, there is one remaining, the greatest of all. It may be thus stated : - ' This passage tells us, that the resurrection of the righteous and the change of both the living and the dead believers, occurs at a single instant - the same for all. Moreover, that instant is fixed at the last trump. Now, from Revelation we know that seven trumps in all are to sound. The last trump of Paul, then, is the seventh trump of Revelation. The Apocalypse itself confirms this, as we have seen ; by declaring that at the seventh trump mystery shall end. By the Apocalypse, then, an orderly series of events in time is given to us. When the first trump of the angel in heaven shall sound, all may know that there must be six more before Christ shall appear, and the kingdom shall come in its glory. But, if so, how do you reconcile these truths, with what you are accustomed to teach - that Christians are always to be ready, because Christ may come any day. It appears, on the contrary, that the seven seals must be opened, and the seven trumpets blown, before the visible advent of Christ.' The difficulty is great. Darby and some others seek to get rid of it by saying - ' You are not to introduce into the question the seven trumpets of Revelation. The last trumpet is not to be taken as literally the last of a series of seven. The word "last" is to be taken in a military sense, as indicating the time of the army's motion, which was usually after one or more preparatory trumpet-notices.' This does not satisfy me. I cannot but connect ' the last' trump of Paul with the seventh of the Apocalypse. Beside, for Scripture meanings give us Scripture texts and customs, not customs of the world of Gentiles outside. My solution, then, is this. I establish, first, the truth that there are more raptures of saints than one. The omission of this leads into many difficulties. In the Apocalypse I find seven different raptures.

Let me briefly present them.

1. The first is that which occurs as soon as the Churches are no longer reckoned God's witnesses. Christ spues them out of His mouth (Revelation 3:16).

But, then, there are some Christians on earth whom

He can thoroughly approve. They are sufferers for the truth, and are at once caught up to heaven. This I read in the opening verse of chap. iv. A door in heaven is opened - the cry follows-' Come up hither ; ' then the waiting one is in spirit in heaven (1, 2). This is the type of a rapture to come.

2. Then comes the Great Multitude, gathered, not out of Israel on earth, but " out of all nations." They are set, in resurrection-bodies, before God and His throne, and serve Him there day and night in His temple. They have come out of the Great Tribulation : for this long period of the Church's trouble will then have ended.

3. The third example is that of the two Witness- Prophets, who, after being slain and lying unburied in the streets of Jerusalem three days and a half, at length awake from the dead, and ascend before the eyes of their persecutors into the heaven. Then follows earthquake, and men by millions are cut off (Rev. xi.).

4. The fourth example of ascent is seen in the Woman's Son, the Man-Child, who, before the Dragon's eyes, is caught up to God and to His throne. Satan fights to keep him out of the heavenly places, and to prevent His wresting the dominion over the nations of earth out of his grasp. But he loses the battle, and is cast down. And while heaven rejoices over his defeat, and the kingdom has come to the heavenly regions, earth's darkest, bitterest, most sinful day has arrived. Satan's king is then set up, and reigns (

Rev. xii.).

5. In the fourteenth chapter, however, there is a band on the heavenly Mount Zion in company with Christ : the redeemed out of the earth, the 144,000, the First- fruits to God.

6. Towards the close of the chapter the Harvest follows in due course, as we should expect from the types of the Law. The Son of Man, who was in the days of His flesh the Sower, now reaps. His angels are sent, and His wheat is gathered into the heavens.

7. The last rapture occurs when the day of the world's tribulation before the appearing of Christ, is almost at an end. The bowls (vials) of God's wrath have been poured out upon the followers of the False Christ as far as the sixth. The demons that aid the False Christ and his False Prophet have gone out to assemble the kings and armies of the earth to battle with Christ. Then follows the announcement of the Saviour's coming as a thief, and of the woe to any unwatchful one left to the time of the Lord's appearing. '

But,' it may be said, ' how does the proof of these seven raptures relieve the difficulty ? ' My answer is,

155 We must distinguish, as I apprehend Scripture does, between the resurrection and the rapture of the believer, on the one hand; and his change, on the other. With this distinction between the rapture and the change, we can understand how seven raptures, or even more, may intervene before the Saviour's appearing in His kingdom. There may be raptures before the first trump, and up to the seventh vial.

It has been shewn from the Apocalypse that so it will be. The first two raptures occur before one of the trumpets has sounded. But the final change of both the living and the dead believer, already rapt into heaven, may take place at one and the same instant, under the seventh trump. Thus we reconcile the two views.

There is only one objection that I see against this. It is that the dead, 'sown in dishonour, are to be raised in glory' (verse 43). If it be affirmed that that must take place at the moment of resurrection exactly, and that the dead must at once, on coming forth from the tomb, assume their bodies of brightness, I cannot see any way of escape. But I do not so take it, as far as I can see at present, (1.) The Saviour's body of resurrection, while immortal, and while He rose as the pattern of our resurrection, was not glorified. The glory did not shine out from it till after His ascent into heaven. (2.) Moreover, the dead are to rise first, before they and the living ascend into heaven (1 Thess. iv.). Now, if the dead rise glorious, they are glorified before the living. But this passage asserts, that the living and dead are both to be changed at the same instant, and that at the seventh trump. I suppose, then, that there are many raptures, each embracing some both of the living and of the dead, both of the Old Testament and of the New ; but that their final change of glory takes place at one point of time after their ascent, and that it is at the seventh trump. " The dead shall arise incorruptible." By 'the dead' are meant those whose parts - body and soul - have been severed; those parts being lodged in different places. Until the time of their reconstruction they have not entered on their final state of bliss. Their ' arising ' is the knitting together of the sundered parts, and the man's entering on his eternal sphere.

Part of the man is now under corruption, and no effort of ours can restore the fallen building, or recall the inhabitant to it. But the God that has thus severed will also, in a moment, rebuild : will undo the chains of custody and slavery from both body and soul. When the dead come forth out of their tombs, it will

157 be at the signal of the trump of God, and the bodies of His accepted ones will never more be assailed by corruption.

There must be a special previous change which shall affect the dead ; as 1 Thess. iv. shews. The dead must first arise, ere they and the living are together caught up to the Presence of Christ.

It is not said - ' the dead must arise glorious.' Our Lord's body, as at first raised, was not glorious - and He is the pattern for our resurrection. If it should be pressed - ' But it is said, " Sown in dishonour, raised in glory ; " and that, therefore, this change must take place at the instant of resurrection' - I confess myself unable to disentangle the knot. "

We (the living) must be changed." As the dead are to rise before the living are dealt with, it would seem that there is to be an after-change, which is to affect both the living and the dead at the same instant, and apparently after the ascent to the presence of Christ. The change, then, is at once to fit the believer for his entry on the Presence of Christ, and on the kingdom which follows thereon : and the signal of this is the sounding trump. And now let us consider the opposition of this, God's scheme, to the theories abroad in our day; specially to Swedenborgianism and Spiritism, which are in all essentials the same.

1. Spiritism, then, does not really allow of resurrection. The body which is laid down at death is with them never to be taken up again, never to rise, never to form part of the man. Resurrection in

Scripture is the undoing of death, the coming forth of the body out of the tomb in which it was laid, or toward which it would have to be carried, or was carrying. Such is Jesus' statement of the resurrection, as applying both to the saved and the lost (John 5:28-29). Such was His manifestation of the thing in act while He was on earth, in His raising Jairus' daughter, the young man of Nain, and Lazarus. Such was His own perfect example : laid in the tomb soon after death, He came out thence embodied on the third day.

Again, this passage adds a new feature of opposition.

Death is an unclothing ; resurrection is a clothing with a body. And while it appears that the body which is laid down will in part be resumed, it appears also that there is an element from heaven to descend on it, and complete the change. Four times we have " put on," in relation to the resurrection (2 Cor. v.).

Thus the Scripture account stands fully opposed to that which makes the man's unclothing at death his resurrection. With that scheme, the soul's escape from the body at death is the only resurrection.

2. In regard of the time of resurrection, the same opposition obtains. Scripture speaks of resurrection as about to take place at a future day, and at an unknown time. It is to be a breaking in upon the ordinary course of things at an instant, and by miracle.

It is to be effected, not by the current and active powers of nature, but by the power of God supernaturally put forth for that purpose. For this end Christ is to descend from on high, and by His mighty call and miraculous power is to summon His own elect from their graves. This, then, stands opposed to every theory which asserts that there is nothing for man beyond the usual results at death, which takes place for each singly, which have been going on thus since the world was framed, and will go on thus for ever. For this system cannot admit of prophecy.

It does not own the Son of God's return from on high. And thus it shews that its teachers are Antichrists.

Swedenborg admits but one Person in the Godhead. Jesus Christ is both Father and Son ; and the Son was put off entirely at the cross.

3. Again, as to the source of death, it and the Scripture are in opposition. According to them, death is not the result of sin, nor any expression of God's displeasure at the breach of His command in Eden. There is, indeed, no wrath at all in God.

He never will inflict the torments of hell on His foes.

There is no real future judgment for the dead who are now assembled, according to Scripture, in Hadees.

Each one, as soon as he dies, goes to his company, and continues the employments and finds the enjoyments he found while alive. As they deny the fall, there is no atonement in Christ, and no imputation of Christ's righteousness.

Each is to do his best, and that will suffice for God. His threatenings of wrath against transgressors are not to be believed. But what of His actual judgments? - the Flood, Sodom, the Red Sea?

These things are spiritualized away. Adam and Noah were churches ! Death, which Scripture calls " the last enemy" is really no enemy at all : it is the kindly porter who opens to man his eternal destiny.

4. Again, we have observed the two-fold partition of mankind which this Scripture introduces. It distributes men into the two classes of the living and the dead on the one hand, and the saved and the lost on the other. Now, the scheme we are considering does not allow of this discrimination. All at death, whether good or evil, depart to their sphere. In Scripture, on the other hand, we see that the Son of God is to assemble to Himself the righteous a thousand years before He raises the wicked dead out of their sepulchres.

5. With the Spiritists' scheme, death is the one portal of man's entrance on his eternal state. Had this been the apostle's doctrine, the trouble at Thessa- lonica, which his two epistles shew, could never have arisen; or he must have written very differently in reply. They were troubled, because, as they thought, departed believers would have no part in the kingdom of Christ at His appearing. Such an idea would never have arisen out of the teaching of Swedenborg, or of Spiritism. That affirms, that the dead are in a better position than the living. Those systems know of no return or appearing of Christ, or of any kingdom to come to heaven and earth at an unknown day.

Moreover, Paul's reply was as opposed as possible to Spiritist views. He assures the Thessalonians that death was no obstacle to the entrance on this future glory. As death had been endured and shaken off by Christ, so its fetters will in a moment be cast off by the Lord's people, who are asleep in death ; and both the living and the dead of His saints will together be caught up in clouds to meet Christ descending into air. Paul here assures us, that by reason of the state of their bodies, both living and dead believers are unfit for the coming kingdom of God's glory. Spiritism would allow that bodies of flesh and blood are unfit for man's final state. But that the dead, by reason of their bodies' ' corruption,' cannot have part in God's abode and glory, they would utterly deny.

According to them the dead are already in their eternal abodes. The body and its corruption are taken leave of for evermore. Of course, therefore, the doctrine of the thousand years, and of the reward to God's faithful servants, can have no place with them.

Thus, then, we find a noted opposition between the Scripture plan of redemption, and that of Spiritism. May I beg my reader well to notice these points, as they will steady him in any conflict with Spiritists; and if he will cling to Scripture, he will soon be set beyond their entanglements.

53. For this corruptible must put on incorruption ; and this mortal must put on immortality. As the kingdom of God must be given into the hand of Christ and His fellows, for so hath God decreed; and as these bodies, whether on this side of death, or on the further side, are unfit for those new and eternal scenes, therefore the above change is necessary to both parties. The dead bodies must be changed into incorruptible ones ; the living must be furnished with bodies unassailable by death.

Observe the seeming inconsistency, as related to the resurrection-body, of the two expressions here used. ' This - must put on.' The resurrection-body, then, will be derived from two diverse sources : one of earth, and one of heaven. One portion will be taken from its present substance; one will be an addition from heaven, made thereto by Christ. It will not be wholly a new creation,

entirely independent of anything now possessed. That is established by the previous assertions, that the new body stands related to the old one, as the plant that arises is related to the seed sown. The same truth is assumed in the word "this." The same is true also, in its own way, of the body of the living saint. Hence the apostle says not only, "this corruptible," as referring to the dead; but "this mortal," as embracing the case of the living. But it appears, too, that while the body is in part preparing for its final state, a heavenly element must be imparted, which is described as a "putting-wz."

Four times is this new feature noticed. It is something distinct from the present body, as a dress which is preparing for us is distinct from our body. The same truth is as definitely asserted by Paul in his Second Epistle. The Holy Ghost there teaches that the complete human being of eternity is made up of two parts - now separable, and oft actually separated. Paul speaks of them, therefore, as 'the outer man' and 'the inner man.' On these parts of man two different processes are now at work, in the case of the believer. The 'outward man' may be perishing, as exposed to the perpetual conflicts and employments of life, waxing old through the lapse of time, even if not (as in Paul's case) also through the strokes of persecution, and the excess of labour. But 'the inner man' - the jewel in this case - is being renewed or polished day by day (2 Corinthians 4:16). Then follows a more expanded account of the matter. "For we know that if our earthly house of the tent be taken down." Here death is compared to the removing of a tent. The pole has been lifted, and the canvas stretched out, and fastened by pegs into the soil. But the owner would take it down. He strikes the tent-pole, and the canvas is a heap - a tent no longer; unable to shelter the man.

Just so does death make of our body a heap. Its tension is gone; the muscles are relaxed; the inhabitant is turned out of it. "

We have a building out from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

Here, then, is a view of the heavenly and unseen body which is to come upon our earthly one, and is to be for ever knit to it. "For in this we groan" - it is quite habitual -

"desiring to be clothed upon with our house that is out of heaven." That does not refer to the mansions in which the risen are to dwell. They are to go up to them; but this is to come down on and to be put on by them: something as near and as habitual to them in all places, as their clothing. "If at least, even when clothed, we shall not be found naked."

Here is one of Paul's striking and startling sayings; not understood at a glance, and yet containing matter of the utmost moment. There are, then, two clothings - as there are two parts of the man. When the outer man is clothed with the new body, the inner man may be ««clothed.' But how is that possible if the apostle be speaking, as he is, of believers? 'How shall we be found naked? "

Thus: not a few at Corinth, and since then, though clad in the righteousness of Christ imputed, are not clad in "the fine linen, which are the righteous acts of the saints." Hence Paul states this as a check on the desirableness of the change into the new body. Some believers are not ready for Christ's coming and kingdom, and so do not and cannot echo Paul's statement of the desirableness of the change. "For we that are in the tent groan, being burdened, not that we wish to be unclothed, but clothed upon, that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life." The present body is to our future one only as a tent - so slight and moveable an affair - is to a house, with its firm and eternal foundations. Moreover, the troubles of life make us wish for a change - a new

scene, that shall prove an escape from the perils and trials of the wilderness. Yet observe, Paul does not say, that he desires death as the final, or the superior scene. He expressly excepts this. 'Not that we would be unclothed.' As unclothed, we are not fit to be presented to God as His sons. We are to wait for His presence till we are clad. But we wish "to be clothed upon!" Here, then, we find the heavenly and completing element of the resurrection-body. In this view it is to be a house coming down from God, a house in heaven and out of heaven ; yet not a house made with hands, as houses ordinarily are. Then shall mortality be swallowed up by life. Thus, then, the eternal body shall be a compound, a development from within and from below, a clothing-on with what is from above and from without; and these two shall remain firmly amalgamated and abide fastened together for ever. Thus the bodies of the dead saints and the living are to be transformed in a moment from their present conditions in relation to death and its effect, corruption. The corrupt is to take on incorruption. The mortal is to put on immortality. Thus Scripture does not assert the natural immortality of the soul - true though that be. That view of man's eternal destiny was one which suggested itself to philosophers, away from Israel and the Church. They believed, generally, that the soul survived death, and disputed about its immortality. But the Scripture doctrine is that which to the wisest Greeks appeared unphilosophical and foolish ; the restoration of the whole man, the re- knitting the scattered parts, and the redeeming the body from the slavery of corruption for evermore. At this the wise Greeks mocked. They knew neither the need of redemption, nor the work of God's Redeemer, whom Paul would make known to them.

Part 1.7 - Victory (54-57)

54. But when this corruptible shall have put on incorruptibility, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, ' Death is swallowed up in victory?

Observe, first, when the victory is not won. Not a few have elevated death into the place assigned by Scripture to resurrection. They expect to die, and if there be a happy falling asleep of the believer, it is to them victory. We hear oft of a triumphant death. But the Scripture speaks of resurrection, not death, as the Christian's triumph. Death, even in the believer's case, is rather Death's victory over him - at least visibly. Though Death has been conquered by Christ for the believer, and His sting is drawn; yet death is not victory, either (1) toward God, (2) the believer, or (3) the saints.

(1.) The saint's death is not an ascent to the glory of God in heaven; it cannot be. For death is an unclothing, and God refuses to accept the unclothed. A part of the man is still under bondage, the slavery of corruption; and God does not visibly own His sons, till they are wholly free from the effects of the curse. (2.) It is not victory to the man himself; for his soul goes into the custody of Hadees (Zechariah 9:11-12). He is a prisoner - though a prisoner of hope ; and though to depart is to be with Christ, which is far better than life. His body also is detained in the chains of the last enemy. The body of the believer is as much the slave of corruption, as the body of the godless. He has ' fallen asleep.' But sleep is not a victory, though it may recruit the warrior for victory. (3.) The death of the saint is not a victory in regard of the Church whence he is taken. Its aspect and present feeling is that of sorrow. It may be the dead was a chief among the servants of God, and his removal will cause a blank among the troops, and encourage the enemy to a fiercer attack. It is then an occasion of sorrow to the forces of Christ; as when a general in battle is struck down visibly and borne away, unable to take part any more in the conflict. Death is the result of sin, and till this severance of those intimate friends - body and soul - is removed, and they are reunited, victory cannot be said to have taken place.

(2.) The true time of victory is resurrection. Death is an unclothing, part of the penalty of sin. But resurrection is a victory, and it is a clothing upon.

It is the loosing by Divine Might of the prisoners of death - of the body from the tomb, and the soul from Hadees. While, then, to Spiritists, the putting off of the body is victory ; to Scripture the only real victory is the putting on of a body incorruptible.

(3.) Observe, again - Incorruptibility, or immortality, refers not to the soul, but to the body ; or rather to the man as a whole. Scripture does not speak of the natural immortality of the soul, but of the incorruptibility of the dead at resurrection. ' The mortal is to put on immortality,' or deathlessness. For man, while alive, is subject to that separation of soul and body, which we call death. But what Scripture promises, is, that the body and soul of the man shall be welded together, never more to be parted. "

Then shall take place the saying."

Here the Greek word means - ' at that time.'

Observe, that it is at a future moment, affecting at once believers, both the living and the dead. In order that death's hold may be utterly wrenched away, it is not enough that the dead should rise, and be clothed with bodies inaccessible to corruption. For living believers carry bodies in which are already the seeds of death. Nay, the Holy Spirit says- "And if Christ be in you, the body indeed is dead because of sin." Death, then, would be expecting the living as his prey sooner or later, after his old prisoners were wrested from his grasp. Therefore, the wisdom and power of God provide for a complete victory ; a deliverance not only of those already in custody, but of those whom Death expected soon to take captives. Salvation is not truly come till death - the effect of the curse - is for us blotted out wholly, the scars removed, and the liability to it in the living is overcome.

Paul, to prove his point, cites Scripture here, as he does generally. If the inspired man quotes the Scripture in proof of his assertions, though they are guaranteed by inspiration, how much more ought our conclusions to be so proved? The Saviour and His apostles rest on Scripture with perfect satisfaction and confidence. So should we.

Paul appeals to the prophetic word. No jot or tittle can pass away till all be fulfilled. These heavens and earth are kept in existence only until the completion of the Scripture. "

Death is swallowed up in victory."

Whence is this testimony derived? From Isaiah xxv. A section of that prophecy is found included between chaps, xxiv. and xxviii. Without the millennial key the Jewish prophets are unintelligible.

Even with that key there are many difficulties. But the section indicated is not so difficult when viewed as a connected whole, describing the great and terrible Day of the Lord, and the coming of Christ and His kingdom during that day. Isaiah xxiv. is God's judgment of the whole earth, without respect of faces. It gives the state of the world, when smitten by the latter- day judgments of His wrath. The nations generally will have broken the covenant with Noah, which requires the putting of the murderer to death. On the observance of Noah's covenant depends the regularity of the seasons. On the breach thereof, God's plagues interfering with the ordinary course of nature, break in. The world will be a place of sorrow. Joy will have left it. Only a small remnant out of the thousand millions of earth's inhabitants will survive. That day will be a fearful one, ending in the earth's utter an- nihilation. At the beginning of that day the devil and his angels shall be cast into the pit (verse 21), and, after the thousand years and the little respite, they are called up for judgment. Then we have the prediction of the Saviour's personal reign at Jerusalem for the thousand years, in conjunction with His twelve apostles. Chap, xxv. is the song of Israel's deliverance from Satan and from the Gentiles. Zion (or Jerusalem) shall be the place of Christ's glory (verse 6). The deceits of Satan, which now destroy the masses of the world, shall then be torn away. Then shall be the feast of victory at Christ's return. Then comes our present passage.

God gives joy to the smitten, sorrowful, battered earth.

Christ is visibly come (verse 9). This dispensation will not convert the world (xxvi. 10). Not all will rise at this day of glory (verses 13, 14). Israel, after its scattering and smiting by judgment, shall be increased and blest. The blessed of Israel arise (verse 19). Woe to the earth in judgment (verse

21). The personal coming of Christ is here.

Thus it is seen, that the context whence our passage is taken refers to the same time ; and it is manifest that the place in Rev. xx. is not ' an isolated passage, on which no stress is to be laid.' On the contrary, all the millennial doctrine here stands confirmed.

There is a first resurrection, when Israel is restored. Though Christians have forgotten Israel, and its place in God's plans at the end of this day of grace, God has not. Of His calling of the earthly people He will never repent. Here Israel is brought back to its place of sovereignty and of blessing on earth, by Christ its Redeemer returned in power, as soon as they call Him blessed. This first resurrection of the Church of Christ together with the accepted of former dispensations, is not an unconnected thing. It is part of God's counsel to gather together in His Son both the heavens and the earth.

Death, then, shall be " swallowed up." There is a reference here, I believe, to the destruction of Pharaoh and His host in the Red Sea. They were pursuing the mass of fugitive slaves just escaped, and expected soon to arrest them. They were seemingly in the height of their power, when the host of Israel was safely led through the waters, and their foes were drowned at an instant, suddenly. Israel is first set free, before destruction overwhelms their pursuers. Woe to those then overtaken by death ! So completely are the foes triumphed over, that they do not appear again. As it was said to Israel : " The Egyptians whom ye see alive this day, ye shall see them again no more for ever."

Perhaps, too, there is a reference to the scene of Korah and his friends. They who rose up against Moses and Aaron, are swallowed down by the earth, and disappear out of the camp. Thus shall death, in all its force, depart suddenly and completely from the army in which Christ is found as Head and Chief. It is a swallowing up 'in victory.' The maw of Hadees has hitherto engulfed God's people. But then the tables will be victoriously turned upon him. The captives shall triumph over him who led them captive. The deliverance shall be for ever.

55. O Death, where is thy sting? O Hadees, where is thy victory ? This is apparently a quotation from another Old Testament prophet. Words to this effect are found in Hos. xiii. 14. Let us for a little glance at the context.

Hosea describes the time when God, for idolatry, was casting off both the ten tribes and the two. Yet, amidst the denunciations of judgment, there are promises of final mercy (ii. 18-23). The days of visitation and vengeance will surely come. For, beside the sin of Israel's earlier days, there are notices added of their sins against the Saviour when a man upon earth. Our Lord, when led to death, describing the time of awful woe which will overtake Israel and the world at large because of their transgressions, and especially because of the slaughter of the innocent and the holy, quotes words out of Hosea (Hosea 10:8). In this prophet we have also God's love to Christ as the representative of Israel, and His call, when a child, out of Egypt ; as cited by Matthew (Hosea 11:1). At the close, Jehovah Himself steps into the scene of Israel's self-made ruin, and will be their King (Hosea 13:9). Then comes ransom out of the hand of Hadees and the tomb (verse 14). There is some difference between the Hebrew, as read by the Septuagint, and the Hebrew as now found. ' I will be ' and ' where ' are in Hebrew made up of the same letters, differently arranged. The apostle agrees with the LXX., and so should we. Death and his sting will be taken away by the

work of Christ.

These words, then, are the joyous cry of the captives released out of the place of long custody. They have for ever passed beyond death and his power as the enemy to trouble them. Risen from the dead, they are beyond the temptations to sin which now beset us.

They are the escaped out of Hades - which detained them so long out of their hopes. So could Samson sing, when he came forth from the walls of Gaza, in which the Philistines thought to detain him to his death. But, through the work of Christ, ' the gates of Hades' shall then no longer prevail against His people (Matthew 16:18).

56. The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. This verse seems a comment on the preceding words of the prophet. A few words of explanation. The worst part of death is not the natural pains of departure ; not the breaking of purposes and plans, often of much moment ; not the disruption of earthly ties of the strongest and tenderest character. It is the sense of divine displeasure. Death might have been effected in the kindest form possible, had not sin come in. But now it is to men in general the penalty of sin; and the passing out of life and its blessings into the dark beyond, is attended with dread. But more awful still it is to go to the nearer presence of a God, against whom man has so oft offended. It is sad in the case of the infant, to see death where there is only the bane of original sin. But that trouble is increased, when to the fall men have added frequent transgressions. The sting takes its direst venom, and wounds the deepest, where the Gospel has been listened to and not accepted - and the man is dying without hope, and expecting to meet the God of justice, unforgiven. " The sting of death is sin;" and one of the chief of sins, is the putting-off or despising the Gospel of God's grace. Awakened conscience will not be pacified, but feels that the hour of reconciliation is past. Has my reader never yet closed with the offer of Christ's pardon ? Let him do so this hour ! How oft has the word gone up - ' 'Tis too late now ! I am lost ! Hell is begun ! It is not the pain of body I suffer - that is a trifle ! But oh ! the wrath of God ! ' ' " But the strength of sin is the law." How strange and startling the words would be to many if they heard them for the first time ! To most men Law is the great friend of man- they are thinking to find it salvation. They are attempting to observe what they call (and Scripture does not) 'the Moral Law,' not perceiving that law bears nothing for them but condemnation, death, and the curse. Others, advanced beyond this to perceive that by our obedience to law none can be justified, are yet entangled in the idea that the Law of Moses, or at least the Ten Commandments, are the basis of all morality, and the Christian's rule of life. ' If they cannot justify, at least they will sanctify? How clearly do these few words ring the knell of such a fancy ! Does law sanctify ? It is " the strength of sin."

You think it will deliver those under it from sin. The Holy Ghost asserts, that it is the power of sin. This is Paul's first utterance of that solemn truth,

in which in Romans vi. and vii. he afterwards, by the grace of God, so expanded. "

LAW IS THE STRENGTH OF SIN." For it stirs sin to activity by its prohibitions; it draws out man's enmity of heart against God as the Ruler who forbids evil. It makes sin the more fearful in its character, the more it is shown to be opposition to God. It draws out transgression, and then pronounces sentence of death and the curse. It leaves its victim in despair, chained in the condemned cell. It gives no strength to obey its commands ; and the more an exercised

conscience is stirred to attempt to match itself with its demands, the more it detects the flaws of human obedience, and the moral impossibility of obtaining approval from it by any service of ours. Therefore, God, in His great mercy, delivered Christians from Moses and His law, to set them as sons under the opposite principle of grace. Of this Jesus is Lord - and grace can justify, grace can sanctify, can impart strength, and smile approval on the efforts of its rescued ones to serve God. " Sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under law, but under grace." "

I through law, died to law, that I might live to God."

57. But thanks be unto God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. ' Victory ' - is the key-word of this concluding part. The three occurrences of it are characteristic.

1. The victory, in the first instance, lies with sin, and death, and Hadees. The souls even of the saved are still severed from their bodies, still detained in custody in Hadees. The living believer will be seized by death, if the Lord come not speedily.

2. But death, sin, Hadees, and the Law are all overcome already, or will soon be, by Christ's power.

3. The victory, as to its source, is a gift ; not won by our own deserts, but the bestowal of God in Christ.

Hence praise must be rendered where it is due ; not to us, but to God.

Death is the huge boa swallowing down its prey after it has broken its bones. But though often the destroyer of men, Death is destined to be destroyed and swallowed up itself. There is perhaps a reference to the history of Jonah. The whale swallowed him.

Then, at God's command, it gave him up and threw him on the land. Suppose, that as soon as the whale had touched the sand, and had yielded up Jonah, itself had been swallowed up by the yawning earth ; and you would have something illustrating this.

Over what is the victory ?

Over (1) SIN, (2) LAW, (3) DEATH, (4) HADEES.

1. Christ has put away sin by His sacrifice of

Himself.

2. He has overcome death by His resurrection. As He rose, so His people in Him.

3. Law, too, was one of our foes, which Christ must meet and overcome, ere we could be free. Man is slow to accept the tidings, that Law is one of his chief foes. Ignorant of his deserts as a sinner, and of his inclinations to evil, against both of which Law sets itself, condemning and cursing him ; he looks to it as a friend, that is to acquit and to prepare him for life eternal. It is law which has brought in sin, death, and Hadees. Therefore, Jesus obeyed law for us, as well as suffered death. Law would not let go its hold on our Surety, unless He had given it its full due. It has received from Christ both obedience as its claim, and death as the penalty due to the transgressor. Thus the Christian is free. He is no longer under law. Paul, the Pharisee, himself, in this very Epistle, declares he is no longer under law (1 Corinthians 9:20).* *That the reference is

really to the Law of Moses, see in this Epistle ix. 8, 9, 20 ; xiv. 21, 34. The Redeemer from sin takes away the sting of death, law, and the power of sin. As Christ has passed through Death, it has become one of our friends. As it could not detain Him, it must in a moment let go those that are Christ's.

Why is the present tense used ? ' Who giveth us.'

It seems probable that it is used in the future sense. But 'the victory is already begun. It needs only the last blow.

Part 1.8 - Practical Conclusions (58)

58. Therefore, my beloved brethren, become ye steadfast, immoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

How many Christians of our day would have addressed the Corinthian believers, after the trouble they gave him, and the evils so rife among them, as " my beloved brethren ? " Would they not rather have refused them even the title of "brethren" till they had 'purged themselves of the evil?' Would not Paul, in using such words, have been by many considered as encouraging them in evil, and himself defiled by participating in it, if he had not been owned to be an inspired apostle ? This verse is the general practical conclusion from, the previous argument and doctrine. Paul first lays doctrine firmly as the foundation, and then erects practice on it, as the superstructure. There cannot be true action where true faith has not gone before. And Christian service is a service of freedom, now that Christ has gone in advance, and has swept from our road the mighty robbers that seized, plundered, and detained in their dens and slavery, the passers by. "

Become ye steadfast, immoveable."

They were not steadfast when he wrote; but as the result of his inspired communication, they were to become so. The true believer may always, from Scripture, be adding to the certainty and sphere of his knowledge. True practice, also, is a great con- firmer of the truth in our hearts. Practice of the Saviour's words is the founding the house upon the rock.

Why are two words used ? - ' Steadfast, immoveable.' In a writer so concise as Paul, every word has its own sense and weight.

1. By the first word seems intended the inward steadfastness communicated by the full acceptance of the truth (vii. 37 ; Colossians 1:23).

2. Probably the second may refer to the believer's practice. He is not to be shaken from without by the efforts of those who would lead him into error. The truth here attacked was resurrection. That shaken, Christian practice was shaken along with Christian truth. If the truth of the resurrection were taken away, there was removed also the resurrection of the just, which Paul assures us is the Christian's main hope and spur to activity. Overturners of that overturn the truth. "

Abounding in the work of the Lord alway."

Here is the command - the practical result of the fundamental truth of resurrection. This truth is undermined or disbelieved in the minds of many Christians. Where it is so, the fruits of grace are but few, and the source of activity is drying up. Paul was the man of strong faith, Paul the man of constant activity in the service of Christ.

There are, then, as these words hint, two spheres of labour, (1) The flesh, and (2) the Lord.

1. The flesh works from motives of nature, and with hopes of present reward on this side death. But it is full of vanity and vexation, and often empty of result. - 2. But there is a better field - the sphere of work for the Lord. This is a sphere among the things unseen. It supposes a man to be a child of faith, new-born to behold the things unseen and eternal.

Diligence in the labours of life is not always successful. The proverbs of nations tell us how precarious is the step between the cup and lip. ' One sows, another reaps.' One sowed in youth and health, but he is cut down ere the sheaves of his own field. Or yon farmer sowed indeed well, but as it came up it was blighted by frost, battered by hail, eaten by slugs, withered by mildew. Or he sowed, and it waved a plenteous harvest; but the bands of the enemy came in, reaped, and bore it away.

Now these things, which so often dishearten the labourer in the flesh and for the world, have no power over the Christian's harvest. Our labours for Christ the Risen One are beneath His hand and keeping. The Syrian plunderers cannot cross this Jordan. The blights of earth do not affect the sowing in the Lord.

There no seeds are lost, or eaten up, or grow mouldy. Our treasures committed to Christ are beyond the incursions of death.

Herein, too, we may give God thanks for our difference of standing as compared with the Law. Read the book of Ecclesiastes, the wisdom of Solomon in stating the value of present things. And what does the King of kings say? 'All is uncertainty in result.

Even when all is enjoyed, and to the full, it leaves the spirit dissatisfied.¹ He ends with the certainty of judgment, as the result of Law and of God's government. But there is no certainty as to the issue on earth touching each one. The king confesses bitterly the truth which the apostle here implies. "I hated all my labour which I had laboured under the sun, because I should leave it to the man that should be after me. And who knoweth whether he shall be a wise man, or a fool? yet he shall have rule over all my labour wherein I have laboured, and wherein I have showed myself wise under the sun. This is also vanity" - (Ecclesiastes 2:18-19). "For what hath man of all his labour, and of the vexation of his heart, wherein he hath laboured under the sun? For all his days are sorrows, and his travail grief; yea, his heart taketh not rest in the night. This is also vanity " - (ii. 22, 23).

Also iv. 1, 2. Solomon wrought in the flesh, and found only emptiness in all his wisdom. How great, then, the change which Christ's work and wisdom have wrought ! Our gains shall not be lost ; shall not be left behind, or carried off by another. For we have really, in Christ, passed beyond our enemies, and the domain over which they plunder. We behold a sphere beyond death and above the sun. We see resurrection and the life therein, and the kingdom which is assured to Christ, a part in which He will give to the diligent servant. Oh then, Christian, work on ! Your footing is firm, march on boldly ! Work for Christ ; for there is reward in resurrection, reward in the resurrection of the just. ' Each shall receive his own reward, according to his own labour.' Christ is coming, and shall pay the labourers their wages. The reaper of God's farm shall rejoice with the sower of God's field in the early day. Not that the believer must go out of the way of his usual calling in order to serve the Lord. Many mistake here. They think that only service specially religious is work in the Lord. They cannot or do not see, that we may be working in the Lord and for the Lord, amidst the

common-place duties of life. The needlewoman at her shirt-making, the kitchen- maid amidst her washing of dishes, the gardener in his digging and planting, may do all in the name and spirit of Christ, and to the glory of God. What ! Do we forget that Christ was some twenty years and more working with axe and chisel, with saw and plane, like any common carpenter of our day ? Was not that work which the Father had set Him ? And did He not do it to the glory of God ? Yes ! and so may you, Christian ! Do not think - ' While I am in the world I must do the work of the world; I come to this Christian assembly to leave the world, and to serve God.' Nay, you may do your work in the world according to the spirit of God. Do it to the Lord !

Servant, remember your service to your master and mistress, rightly rendered, is service to Christ.

Hold fast, then, the doctrine of reward ! All objections to it spring of the flesh, and not from God. The more diligent you are, the more thoroughly you are spurred to labour by the hope of the praise of God, and partaking the glory of Christ, the more you glorify God.

Part 1.9 - Appendix

APPENDIX.

NOTE TO PAGE 55.

What is a begging the question ? On this the reader will find no light, either in Whately, or in any other treatise on logic. Yet to know what it is is of the utmost moment in argument.

All logic is the endeavouring to prove to opponents that they are inconsistent with themselves, and unreasonable, if they accept not the conclusion we would enforce on them. We have then to shew that our conclusion is implied in the truths which they have already granted.

Then we shall prove them inconsistent with themselves^ if they allow not our conclusion. The propositions or truths granted are then the fulcrum on which we rest our lever of proof. But the premises granted are continually varying with the views of the parties against whom we are arguing.

Sometimes much is granted, and the process is easy and short. Sometimes little is yielded, and we have a long

190 and difficult process to carry through ere we reach our conclusion.

If, now, we assume as the basis of our argument a point or points which our antagonists do not grant, we are begging the question as to them. All logic then is an argumentum ad hominem : meaning thereby, not an individual only, but a special class, holding such and such views.

Suppose, now, that I am arguing that there will be a resurrection of the dead, with those who believe and grant, that the Scriptures are the inspired standard of truth. Then I am warranted in making any passages of the Old or of the New Testament the foundation of my reasoning.

But, if I am arguing with a Jew, and quote as decisive of my conclusion passages taken from the New Testament, / am begging the question; for he does not admit their inspiration. When Christ was proving the resurrection against the Sadducees, He takes His ground of proof neither from the prophets or the Hagiographa, because (we are informed) they allowed only the five books of Moses. He rests his proof, then, on a passage taken from the Pentateuch : and that ought to have satisfied them.

It is necessary, therefore, in every argument to know at the outset how much is granted by our opponents. That must be the basis of our proofs, or we beg the question, as far as they are concerned. Hence argu-

191 ments which are perfectly convincing to the Christian are of no force to the unbeliever. Before you can adduce the Scriptures as decisive, you must prove to him, on premises which he grants, that they are the inspired Word of God.

It is because of this constant variation of the data with the differing views of opponents, that it has escaped observation, or at least direct statement, wherein begging the question consists. THE END.

PRINTED AT THE UNIVERSITY PRESS.

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
 - 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net