

I Am the Resurrection and the Life

by Thomas Bradbury

Jesus is the source of life and resurrection, and those who believe in Him will live even in death.

Scripture: Psalm 45:11, Psalm 107:5, John 3:36, John 8:58, John 10:30, John 11:25, John 12:46, John 14:6, Romans 8:1, Galatians 2:20, 1 Peter 1:23

Topics: "Jesus Christ", "Eternal Life"

Description

Thomas Bradbury preaches on the profound revelation of Jesus as 'the Resurrection and the Life,' emphasizing the assurance that all spiritual needs will be graciously met by Him. He delves into the various titles given to our Lord in the Scriptures, highlighting the significance of Christ revealing Himself as 'I AM' in different contexts to meet every necessity of His beloved. Bradbury explores the gloomy surroundings of sickness and death, the glorious speaker Jesus as the Resurrection and the Life, the gracious characters of believers experiencing spiritual death and life in Christ, and the grave question posed to believers: 'Believest thou this?'

Transcript

"I am the Resurrection and the Life." (John 11:25)

IN a variety of titles our blessed Lord and Saviour is pleased to reveal Himself in the written Word, and by the grace of His own Spirit, to the hearts of those who are eternally loved by Him, everlastingly saved by Him, perfectly washed by Him from all sin, and completely clothed by Him in the garments of salvation, and in the robe of righteousness provided for them in His perfect obedience to the Father's law. There is not a necessity that one of His brethren can experience, but He is sure to be revealed in some character, office, or title in which He will fully meet, answer, and supply the same, causing the heart to understand and rejoice in the blessedness of those words spoken by the man of God to the penurious Amariah, "The LORD is able to give thee much more than this." (2 Chron. 25:9) Whatever revelation He gives of Himself down here, is but a faint earnest of what He intends to reveal in Himself. Whatever may be the blessing He is pleased to bestow upon me, it is sure to prove small in comparison to the subsequent unfoldings of those spiritual blessings which the Father committed to His keeping, and which He, as a faithful steward, must communicate to me.

It is a blessed exercise, when led by the Holy Ghost to look, and meditate feelingly upon the various titles given to our Lord in the Scriptures of truth, and especially in this Gospel by John. Here we are taught to rejoice in the sweet assurance that all our spiritual necessities will and must be graciously supplied.

"When Christ reveals His gracious name,
He calls Himself the great 'I AM,'
And leaves a blank His loved ones may
Supply those things for which they pray."

And we in darkness? Ofttimes we are. He says, "I AM come a Light into the world, that whosoever believeth on Me should not abide in darkness." (John 12:46) Are we mourning over our deadness? He says, "I AM the Life." Do we lament because of our ignorance of the God we love? He says, "I AM the Truth." This is equal to His saying, All you may know apart from myself is false and deceiving. Do we feel we are wandering in uncertainty and dread? He will not be far off, for He goeth before, saying, "I AM the Way," (John 14:6) and, according to His Father's covenant arrangements, He follows us in the beaten path of tribulation, in which we have experienced many a pang and many a pain, and gently whispers, "This is the way, walk ye in it." (Isa. 30:21) I ofttimes stumble in my journey, but His gracious appearance inspires and cheers me, so that I go on my way rejoicing in hope of the glory He has in store for me." Am I hungry? Yes, and often to such an extent that, according to Ps. 107:5, "Hungry and thirsty my soul faints within me." He comes and makes Himself precious to me with this revelation, "I AM the Bread of Life." (John 6:48) Am I exercised concerning the object of my worship and adoration? He gently whispers, "I AM thy Lord, and worship thou Me." (Ps. 45:11) It was only the other day I received a precious letter from an afflicted one at a distance whose mind is much exercised as to which of the Persons in the Godhead she ought to address in her approaches to the mercyseat. The Father had been made so precious to her that all her prayers, petitions, and lispings are to Him. She is anxious to know whether she dishonours the Son and the Holy Ghost. My dear friends, every child of God must address the throne of the heavenly grace according to the revelation JEHOVAH is pleased to give of Himself. Does the Holy Ghost lead me into a blessed apprehension of my place and portion in the one family? Does He witness with my spirit that I am a true-born son of the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ? Has the Father had compassion upon me in my helplessness, pitied me in my distress, and borne with me in my waywardness and wanderings, making that word life and power to my heart, "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him. For He knoweth our frame; He remembereth that we are dust?" (Ps. 103:13,14) Then, I shall delight to lisp the hallowed name of Father. Is the Holy Ghost pleased to reveal the beauty and blessedness of a precious Christ as my Brother born for adversity, (Prov. 17:17) and give me sweetly to experience those spots of adversity through which He went as my Forerunner? (Heb. 6:20) I cannot help but speak to Him, and address Him in the words of that precious hymn we have just now sung,

"Jesus, Thy name indeed is sweet,
In every scene, at every hour,
All that I need is there complete;
Love all Divine, Almighty power;
Yet full of tenderest sympathy,
My soul would rest its all on Thee."

Do I experience unmistakable evidences of the grace and indwelling of my Friend and Companion God the Holy Ghost? I am compelled by the sweet omnipotence of His love to speak to Him, and say,

"And Thou eternal Spirit vast

What love can Thine transcend?

Since Thou Thy lot with me hath cast,

Indwelling God and Friend."

As He witnesses with my spirit that I am a child of God I cannot keep from communing with Him. But how does He witness with my spirit that I am born of God? Not always in communicating His heavenly consolations, but sometimes in creating the necessity for His consolations. He creates a hatred and horror of sin in the revelation thereof, which is the necessity I experience for God's salvation, and He brings about great searchings of heart as whether I am amongst the few men of the Firstborn, the One who excels in strength for me. As He works these enquiries in me, it is only that He may graciously answer them by taking of the things of Christ, the great and glorious God-Man Mediator, who could say to those around Him, "Before Abraham was I AM." Thus we are brought into the enjoyment of a Saviour's love which enables us to sing in the precious language of dear old Samuel Medley,

"In every office He sustains,

In every victory He gains,

In every counsel of His will,

He's precious to His people still."

Our own God favoured us highly this morning in causing me to read in your hearing a very precious portion of His blessed word, the glorious eighth of Romans. As I read it my spirit was moved to a spiritual apprehension of my interest in the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, which hath made me free from the law of sin and of death, and to rejoice that in Christ Jesus I have no condemnation and from Him no separation. (Rom. 8:1,2) But it is ours to seek for a little instruction, consolation, edification, and establishment in the things of God from the precious words I have read for you by way of text,

"I AM the Resurrection and the Life."

In seeking we will notice,

I. THEIR GLOOMY SURROUNDINGS Sickness and death.

II. THE GLORIOUS SPEAKER "I AM the Resurrection and the Life."

III. THE GRACIOUS CHARACTERS "He that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live."

IV. A GRAVE QUESTION "Believest thou this?"

I. THEIR GLOOMY SURROUNDINGS Sickness and death. We find at the commencement of the chapter, "A certain man was sick, named Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha. Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus." I know of no sight upon earth so delightful as that of a family,

father, mother, and children all one in the things of God. I know a few such cases and could enumerate them, but time would fail me, and there is no necessity. It is a special mercy and precious privilege for relatives to be "Heirs together of the grace of life." (1 Pet. 3:7) Here we see a family, a brother and two sisters, loved by the Lord. Why is Martha named first? Some say it is because she was the mistress of the household. Well, I have no desire to question that statement, but I think I see, by the Spirit's guidance, a far better, and more spiritual reason why her name is mentioned first. Can you tell me why Peter's name should have been singled out from the rest of the apostles and mentioned on resurrection ground? "But go your way, tell His disciples and Peter that He goeth before you into Galilee." (Mark 16:7) Was it not because He who has compassion upon the ignorant and upon them that are out of the way, (Heb. 5:2) would have His honest but wavering disciple specially remembered, to magnify His grace, and show forth His loving concern over His tried and tempted one? Martha was of a busy, bustling spirit. Ofttimes things are said concerning our busy Marthas which would be as well unsaid, for you may rest assured the Master has need of His careful and serving Marthas as well as of His quiet and patient Marys. Notice those words, "Jesus loved Martha." That is a precious narrative at the close of Luke 7, in which Jesus is set forth expressing His love and concern over the greatest sinner in the house, according to the judgment of those surrounding her. To Simon Jesus said, "Her sins, which are many, are forgiven. And He said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven." To the weaklings of His fold the gentle Shepherd shows His wondrous love and tender care.

It is pleasing and instructive to notice the reason given by the sisters why the Master should visit His sick friend and speak His healing word. "Therefore his sisters sent unto Him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom Thou lovest is sick." It is not, Lord, he who loves Thee, but, "he whom Thou lovest." That was a powerful reason why the Master should come. Oh, how blessed it is to sing intelligently with Toplady,

"No sinner can be beforehand with Thee:

Thy love is almighty, preventing, and free."

Now comes the test of friendship and the proof of love. "When Jesus heard therefore that he was sick, he abode two days still in the same place where He was." These few words fall upon my ears with peculiar sweetness sometimes at our prayer meetings on Friday evenings,

THY DELAYS ARE NOT DENIALS."

The delay of a precious Christ in the communication of His love and sympathy to the hearts of any of His children is never a denial, for, "Blessed are all they that wait for Him" (Isa. 30:18) though their waiting may be that of a whole lifetime, like that of dear old Jacob, who, on his dying couch could say, "I have waited for Thy salvation, O LORD." (Gen. 49:18) Then why did Jesus delay? For the glory of God, as He declares in a subsequent portion of this narrative. "Then after that saith He to His disciples, Let us go into Judea again. His disciples say unto Him, Master, the Jews of late sought to stone Thee: and goest Thou thither again?" Self-preservation, as well as concern for their Master's safety, lurked beneath this saying of the disciples. Mark well His reply to them: "Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world." What is the lesson contained in these words? It is that found in these precious lines,

"Plagues and death around me fly,

Till He bids I cannot die;

Not a single shaft can hit

Till the God of love sees fit."

Jesus as much as said to His fearing disciples, Never mind the danger you fear, or the doubts which harass and perplex you, or the anxieties and cares which wear away your spirits. While it is day we must work that which the Father has appointed to us, and neither earth nor hell can frustrate one of His plans. "These things said He: and after that He saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth: but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep." Here we have two very blessed expressions death is a sleep and Lazarus is a friend.

"Then said His disciples, Lord, if he sleep (that is, soundly), he shall do well. Howbeit Jesus spake of his death: but they thought that He had spoken of taking rest in sleep. Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead. And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe; nevertheless let us go unto him." Here we see the kindness and patient grace of our blessed Lord and Master. A precious sight for the eye of God-wrought faith to contemplate!

A loving, kind, and patient Master surrounded by dull, ignorant, short-sighted, unbelieving disciples. You may get into some company who profess they are always believing. Believing brethren! Well, I tell you honestly, I do not believe in them at all, for they are not at all like the brethren who surrounded our blessed Lord even on resurrection ground, as we shall see shortly. From the first to the last of His ministry upon earth, the Lord Jesus Christ gathered around Him the doubters, the fearers, the unbelieving believers, the sorrowful and the sad, and these were possessed of His life, gloried in His love, and walked in His light alone.

"Then said Thomas, which is called Didymus, unto his fellow disciples, Let us also go, that we may die with Him." Some would have us believe that Thomas meant dying with Lazarus; but Thomas really meant, Let us go with our loved Master into the midst of all the dangers which may encompass him, and, if need be, die with Him. Yet, when the testing time came, where was Thomas? He was among the rest of the disciples, of whom it is recorded, "And they all forsook Him, and fled." (Mark 14:50) Though Jesus knew this would be, yet in Thomas's plaintive desire there must have been something to touch the tender heart of his sympathizing Friend.

Jesus went to Bethany. "Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met Him: but Mary sat still in the house. Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. But I know that even now, whatsoever Thou wilt ask of God, God will give it Thee." Here we see a mixture of faith and unbelief. "If Thou hadst been here." Time and space are as nothing to JEHOVAH-JESUS. At the close of chapter 4, we have an account of the healing of the nobleman's son though Jesus was not there.

He speaks the word from His high throne in glory down to the deepest depths of a redeemed sinner's need, and relief and deliverance are experienced. Martha added, "But I know that even now, whatsoever Thou wilt ask of God, God will give it Thee." She evidently did not then see that the Lord Jesus Christ was one with the Father in His eternal power and Godhead. All that was necessary was for Him to will, or, according to the faith of the centurion who said to Him, "Speak the word only and my servant shall be healed." (Matt. 8:8) "Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again.

Martha said unto Him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day." Future things occupied the mind of Martha; but present tense blessings alone can comfort the heart of the exercised child of God. Spiritual realities in experimental possession are the joy and rejoicing of true-born children of God. The earnest of future bliss and blessedness is the very life of God in the soul of His child. It is not simply a belief in something which may take place, but it is the blessed foretaste of the unclouded and uninterrupted enjoyment of that glory which God has treasured up with undisturbed security for all them that love His appearing. This brings us to notice the way in which our blessed Lord answered Martha in the words of the text.

II. THE GLORIOUS SPEAKER "I AM the Resurrection and the Life." Look at the revelation of His nature and character as the great JEHOVAH given in those two words, "I AM." Here He declares His oneness in essence and attributes with the Father and the Holy Ghost. Is the Father the glorious JEHOVAH? Jesus says, "I and My Father are One." (John 10:30) Is the Father the great I AM? Jesus says, "Before Abraham was I AM." (John 8:58) The words of the text are full of sweet encouragement to the drooping and dreary children of God.

"I AM the Resurrection and the Life" to My people during the whole of their sojourn in these wilds of sin, suffering, disappointment and death. Those of us who are acquainted with the New Testament Scriptures know, that after Jesus was risen from the dead the resurrection was the prominent truth in the preaching of the apostles. There was a necessity for this, for the chief priests and the Pharisees declared our Lord an impostor, and after His death, according to Matt. 27:62,63: they went to Pilate, "Saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while He was yet alive, After three days I will rise again."

The Lord Jesus Christ a deceiver? His resurrection proved Him to be the Truth and no deceiver. Yes, it was God's proof that He was His Son. See Romans 1:4, "And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." The marginal rendering is, "determined to be the Son of God by the resurrection from the dead." The grand qualification for the office of apostle was, a sight of the Lord Jesus Christ in the flesh after His resurrection from the dead.

See how Paul declares this in 1 Cor. 9:1, "Am I not an apostle? am I not free? Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?" Again, in 1 Cor. 15:3-8, "And last of all He was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time." Paul was an eyewitness to the fact that Christ was appointed by the Father to the work of His people's salvation, that He wrought out a perfect righteousness to the law, that He suffered the doom and death due to His people, triumphed over the power of the grave for them, ascended into heaven's highest glory, where He ever lives as the Witness to the validity of the Father's purpose, the perfection of His salvation, and the reality of the work of His own blessed Spirit in the experience of His redeemed.

Jesus risen is the Father's attestation to the truth of His Messiahship, righteousness, and salvation. This is the burden of the apostle's argument in 1 Cor. 15. Look at the twelfth verse: "Now if Christ be preached that He rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen. And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith also is vain. 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.

For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised. And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept." According to this Scripture the resurrection Jesus Christ is not only the Father's attestation to His Messiahship, but it

is the pledge of the future glorification of the whole election of grace. Did Christ the Head of His body rise from the dead? All the members of His body in the purpose, decree, and determination of the Father rose in Him. This is the earnest of the spiritual resurrection of every soul given unto Him and blessed with His eternal and unceasing interest in them.

See how the apostle describes this glorious truth as wrought in the experience of all true believers in 2 Cor. 4:10-14: "Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh. So then death worketh in us, but life in you. We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak; knowing that He which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you." Here resurrection life and power is not represented simply as a future event, but as a present and blessed reality. In Phil. 3:10,11: Paul opens us this glorious truth from his own inner and hidden life: "That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death, if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead." Resurrection in the experience of the living child of God is a spiritual reality. See how this is portrayed in the resurrection of Christ's body from the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea. The entrance to the sepulchre was blocked with a huge stone which was sealed. The picked men of the Roman army were set as a watch, but when the morning of the resurrection-day dawned, the glory of the Lord shone as dazzling brightness, and a living Christ issued forth victorious from the tomb.

"Vain the stone, the watch, the seal,

Christ hath burst the gates of hell."

Hell's designs were overthrown, death's power was destroyed, the world, represented by the Roman soldiers, lay as dead at His feet. Where is the world in relation to you and me this morning? Listen! "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." (Gal. 6:14) Oneness with a risen Christ places the world beneath our feet, with all the world calls good or great. Lifted up into resurrection oneness with Him we enjoy the blessedness of that set before us by the apostle in Eph. 2:4-6, "But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace ye are saved); and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." Mark you, this is not a resurrection in prospect, but one in present experience and blessed enjoyment. It was this that caused the apostle to say, "Our citizenship is in heaven: from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change the body of our humiliation that it may be fashioned like unto the body of His glory, according to the working whereby He is able to subdue all things unto Himself." (Phil. 3:20,21) The resurrection from the dead of the Lord Jesus Christ is the declaration of the Father's approbation of, and delight in His obedience and blood-shedding, the earnest and pledge of the spiritual resurrection of the members who stand in eternal oneness with their great and glorious Head. Turn to Acts 4:33, "And with great power gave the apostle witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all." The faithful witnessing to the resurrection of Christ by hearts that feel and know its power must be attended by the grace and power of God the Holy Ghost in the quickening, counselling, and comforting of the soul eternally loved.

III. THE GRACIOUS CHARACTERS "He that believeth in Me, though He were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die." The living children of God are here set before us in

two characters, one believing, yet dead, the other believing and alive. As we know and experience the preciousness and power of Christ's resurrection, we are painfully conscious of death working in us. Before resurrection there must be death. This is revealed in the Saviour's declaration to Martha, "He that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live."

It is set forth in the words of our blessed Lord, as recorded in John 5:24, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My words, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life. Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live." That you may have a right understanding of this glorious truth, let me ask you, what know you of death by the killing power of the law and the convicting grace of God the ever-blessed Spirit?

It is a precious, but painful privilege to be led into the true understanding of that set forth in JEHOVAH'S dealings with His ancient people Israel recorded in Psalm 78:34, "When He slew them, then they sought Him; and they returned and inquired early after God. And they remembered that God was their Rock, and the High God their Redeemer." These were slain before they sought. This death is described by Paul in Rom. 7:9, "For I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came "not when I went to the commandment, read, or made use of it, but "when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.

And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me." This killing process goes on wherever God's righteous, spiritual, and fiery law is brought home to the heart by the power of the Holy Ghost. Then these terrible words are heard and spiritually understood: "The soul that sinneth shall die." (Ezek. 18:4) I know by painful experience that I not only have sinned, but do sin, and shall sin as long as I am in this body.

This causes me to know, and feel, and confess that nothing but death is mine. If I judge of myself before my God according to anything that can spring from this wretched nature of mine, death is my portion. If I look at the best performances of my hands, death is their only due. If I weigh well my own words, they are the pourings out of an open sepulchre. See! "Their throat is an open sepulchre." (Rom. 3:13) That speaks of the mouth of every man, woman, and child by nature, and indicates that all coming there from is nothing but corruption when judged in the light of JEHOVAH'S infinite holiness.

All my prayer, praise, and preaching, apart from the hidden movements of God's blessed Spirit in my heart, are but the exhibitions of spiritual death hatred and abhorred by Him and by every poor sinner whom He brings into the searching light of His sacred and solemn presence.

Death! Ofttimes the living children of God experience this when they would be most alive. They long for the reviving power of God the ever-blessed Spirit in their heart; but they are languid and drooping. They would ascend in spirit to the heights of the covenant: but the depths of the earth and cleaving to the dust is their portion. They long to hear the voice of the Beloved saying, "Because I live ye shall live also," and to be blessed with the assurance expressed in the language of Paul, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless, I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I know live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." (Gal. 2:20) The God-sent preacher ascends the pulpit sometimes with a feeling sense of desertion, dreariness, and death; he groans for the reviving power of the Holy Ghost, he longs for the enjoyment of the resurrection life of his glorious Lord, he begs for living words, words of grace made life to him, causing him to live above himself and make him a spiritual comforter to the tried and tempted in Zion.

He attempts to forget himself and think of nothing but Him who is his only Life and Love; but the more he tries, the more he fails. He struggles to free himself from the death which depresses him, and from the grave clothes of nature; but the more he struggles, the more he is entangled. Yet in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, ere he is aware, streams of rich and sovereign grace flow from the heights above where a precious Jesus ever lives for him, and he is enabled to speak, from a heart boiling and bubbling with spiritual gratitude, of the things which he handles and feels, and there is joy and rejoicing in the presence of his God.

The same death is oftentimes felt in the pew. Frequently you come here with the plaintive inquiry, "What think ye, will He come to the feast?" You hope He will. I know it is so. I have tried to join in singing sweet Gospel hymns when my heart has been as hard as a stone. The prayer has been breathed before the presence of the King, but not a God-breathed motion have I experienced within. The preaching has been a glorious declaration of God's sovereign truth, every statement corroborated by the written Word and made life and power to some, while I have had to lament with Job, Lo, He goeth by me, and I see Him not: He passeth on also, but I perceive Him not." (Job 9:11) No life or vitality experienced, but a death that may be felt, and my only comfort is that the dead know nor feel not anything.

It is no mean mercy to the child of God that he can sit in a place of worship and feel the death which he hates, and long for the life which a covenant God in Christ alone can communicate. Is this in keeping with God's blessed Word? Yes. Look at the experience of Heman in Psalm 88:3, "My soul is full of troubles, and my life draweth nigh unto the grave. I am counted with them that go down into the pit: I am as a man that hath no strength. Free among the dead, like the slain that lie in the grave, whom Thou rememberest no more; and they are cut off from Thy hand.

Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit, in darkness, in the deeps." I know this was the experience of the Head when here upon earth, and you may depend upon it, Heman felt it in measure. The cry still goes forth from living souls, "Wilt Thou show wonders to the dead? shall the dead arise and praise Thee?" Yes, blessed God, they shall and do within these walls when He makes Himself known as the Resurrection and the Life. "Shall Thy lovingkindness be declared in the grave? or Thy faithfulness in destruction?

Shall Thy wonders be known in the dark? and Thy righteousness in the land of forgetfulness?" Most assuredly all this shall be experienced by the living in Jerusalem. Paul says, "we shall be saved by His life." (Rom. 5:10) What life? His resurrection life. Saved from what? Saved from that barren, cold, and lifeless state over which we so often grieve. And here let me ask you, Was not this the experience of our dear old friend Jonah? I style him, our dear old friend, because I can claim kindred with him as he is revealed in that precious second chapter of his: "I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the LORD, and He heard me; out of the belly of hell," or, the grave, "cried I, and Thou heardest my voice.

Then I said, I am cast out of Thy sight." No experience of the life of God in the soul, no realization of the hope with which He inspires the hearts of His people; yet blessed with this evidence of His life, "I will look again toward Thy holy temple." Now turn with me to Isaiah 38:14, "O LORD, I am oppressed: undertake for me." In Hezekiah's complaint we have a Scriptural description of God's believing people. They believe, yet are tormented with accursed unbelief. They are unbelieving, doubting, fearing, and oftentimes, according to their own judgment, dead.

But the testimony of the Master to those unbelieving believers is, "I am the Resurrection and the Life; He that believeth in Me though he were dead yet shall he live." To them He brings His precious promises

home with power, and cheers them with the warm assurance of His undying interest in them. Let us look at the other character.

"Whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die." Are we in possession of His life? It is everlasting. It may be hidden from the judgment of its possessor, but it is safe and sure. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." (John 3:36) Are we born again? Then we can never die. See 1 Peter 1:23, "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." No death, decay, or destruction to the life seed sown by JEHOVAH in the hearts of His people. The possessors experience the changing spiritual seasons and in them they are taught to fear their God, and sometimes express themselves in that language of plaintive assurance, "Thou, which hast showed me great and sore troubles, shalt quicken me again, and shalt bring me up again from the depths of the earth." (Ps. 71:20) God knows we oftentimes want quickening again; we want to know the mind of God and are left in doubt about it; we long to enjoy His love, but we mourn over our enmity; we desire and pray to live in the Spirit when nothing but the flesh surrounds and influences us; we beg to feast upon the bounties of His table, but we are left to sigh and cry at mercy's door. Blessed be His dear name, He has premised to bring us safely out of all our troubles.

IV. A GRAVE QUESTION "Believest thou this?" Fleshly religious highflyers believe not this. They cannot believe it, understanding none of those exercises peculiar to those referred to in the words of our Lord Jesus Christ: "He that believeth, though he were dead." The children of God love to have pertinent and pungent questions put to their hearts by the blessed Teacher and heart-Searcher. "Believest thou this?" There can be no resurrection or reviving power felt in the heart, nor any experience of the life of God to His people. As the question is asked, you may hesitate to answer, but it will be your joy to read your character in that of those who were your Master's associates upon resurrection ground. Look at that wonderful chapter, Mark 16. The fifth verse reveals affrighted seekers of Jesus. Well may you frightened and timid seekers of Jesus rejoice at such a declaration as this. Look at verse 8: "And they went out quickly, and fled from the sepulchre: for they trembled and were amazed: neither said they anything to any man: for they were afraid." Read verse 9: "He appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom He had cast seven devils." Mark well verses 10 and 11: "And she went and told them that had been with Him, as they mourned and wept. And they, when they had heard that He was alive, and had been seen of her, believed not." Then notice verse 14: "Afterward He appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen Him after He was risen." These were the character with whom a precious Christ was associated on resurrection ground: Frightened seekers; tremblers; amazed; Mary Magdalene; mourners; weepers; unbelieving believers! We can bless and praise His hallowed name for the assurance that He is still the same in identifying Himself with us. When He comes revealing Himself in His resurrection power and glory, searching our hearts with the question, "Believest thou this?" we may well answer Him in the words of Martha, "Yea, Lord." That is a confession of His sovereignty. "I believe that Thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world." There is gracious certainty in this.

May the Lord add His blessing for His name's sake. Amen.

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