

DEATH  
*AND*  
AFTER



by  
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# DEATH AND AFTER

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## 1.—DEATH—ITS MEANING

The cause for death in relation to man we are clearly and simply told is *sin*. "By one man sin entered into the world, and by sin death; and thus death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (Rom. 5: 12).\* Death is thus the penalty prescribed by God, and in its reign we have the constant witness to man's fall and its consequence in relation to him as God's creature, who because of his condition must be removed from the place in which he should have abode except for his disobedience.

But death is not *cessation* of existence, it is the *separation* of man's being—the body, which is mortal, going to the grave, the soul and spirit going to hades,

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\* Throughout the scripture quotations are from *The New Translation*, J. N. D.

the unseen world.† Thus there is continued existence, though in another state, of which we intend to speak as relating more particularly to the believer.

Again, death, this separation of man's being, is *provisional*. It is to be done away. We read: "The last enemy that is annulled is death" (1 Cor. 15: 26). And so we are told of that scene where "death shall not exist anymore" (Rev. 21: 4), because sin, with which death ever keeps company, then will be more.

In another way its provisional character is also shown. *Resurrection* ends it for those who have died, saved or unsaved, though that end comes to them at different times, as we shall see, for there are two resurrections—that unto life, and that unto judgment; that of the just, and that of the unjust—and 1000 years separate them. When the wicked dead stand before the Great White Throne for judgment, there are no longer any dead, for death is then annulled, and *all* again live—the saved of all ages in the scene where death exists no more, the lost of all ages in the lake of fire.

Furthermore, the provisional character of death is involved in the statement: "It is the portion of man once to die, and after this the judgment" (Heb. 9: 27). For the judgment, as just remarked, resurrection must come in, ending forever the state of death; and those thus brought out of the state of death do not die again, but in the full unity of creature-being consciously pass into eternal punishment.

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† For a full scriptural examination of man's being, the distinctness of, yet inter-relation between his body, soul and spirit, and what death is in respect to them, the reader is referred to F. W. Grant's book, "Man and the Future State."

Death, then, though it terminates one form of existence, introduces to another as real and actual as the former, which again will be terminated by resurrection in which the separation death brings to the unity of man's being is overcome and that unity restored—body, soul and spirit—so that man then passes into the eternal condition which belongs to him according to his relation to God. That relation is determined *before* death, while he is in the body, for once becoming absent from it there can be no change, the eternal issues are settled; and though immediately after death all is not in its final aspect, the final disposition reached, still the unalterable foreshadow of what that will be is already entered. For the great gulf is already fixed across which none can pass. Thus, too, in that world unseen, hades, coming events cast their shadow before them.

It is no wonder that when men stop and consider, the anticipation of death brings fear and terror to their hearts, and stirs up conscience. Sin is the sting with which the thought of it strikes them, and judgment is inseparable from the fact of sin, even in fallen man, and God whose creature he is must be the judge. **SIN—DEATH—JUDGMENT!** How like arrows these pierce the armor of his pride and supposed self-sufficiency! They make him tremble, little though he may confess it; and no matter what his philosophy, and however much he may have sought to reason himself out of belief in God, still under such circumstances the thought of God comes up before him like an unwelcome spectre of the night—God! If such there be, what then? The devil may opiate the troubled soul, and lure it on to doom, but how many may be the times, through one circumstance and another, that in His long-suffering, in what seems like the importunity of love, God sends some

shaft from His quiver to wound and thereby awaken to repentance the thoughtless, godless soul. How many such efforts unheeded and thrust aside by the wilful soul, will appear in the day of judgment! Indeed, God by them will be justified when He judges, and the judged own His righteousness in so doing, while every lost opportunity will then only deepen the torment of memory, make louder the wail of despair, while the remorse because of what might have been will be like fire unquenched.

## 2.—SALVATION—ITS BLESSING

How fearful the portion of the lost who must cry, "The summer is ended, the harvest is past, and we are not saved." The death-line once crossed all is fixed beyond change. But as to those who hear and heed the voice of God, and take the salvation which He has provided to fully meet all the issues of sin, death and judgment, how blessed their portion! How different for them death (should it come) and what comes after, since as saved through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ who is salvation to all who believe, death has been robbed of its sting and judgment is past forever.

For them the gospel of God concerning His Son, whereby they are saved and in which they stand as believing (1 Cor. 15: 1, 2), makes them know already that death is annulled and that life and incorruptibility has been brought to them through "our Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Tim. 1: 10). For such sin, the sting of death, is taken away, because the judgment it required (and to which death was but the precursor for man) has been fully visited upon the blessed One who is "our Saviour." Sin in its totality, both as to my nature and its fruits—in its lawlessness, its offence, its enmity, its ungodliness—is all once and forever dealt with and removed from before God by the one sacrifice of "our Saviour." That was what took place at the cross, where He was made sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. There He died for our sins, there He

bore them in His own body, there His soul was made an offering for sin, there sin in the flesh was condemned, there what judgment upon sin means He suffered as forsaken of God, there He tasted death, for all the penalty must be borne by "our Saviour," and so He died and was buried. After all the suffering, after all the judgment, then death. The awful darkness of Calvary must be followed by the darkness of the tomb. Oh, how dark! What a blasting of hopes! What a terrible loss! "Jesus, the Nazaræan...delivered to the judgment of death and crucified...But we had hoped that He was the One who is about to redeem Israel" (Luke 24: 19-21). Could *He* not be spared death? Ah, no; He must enter its domain, He must lie dead in the tomb. Why? That He may come forth from it untouched by the power of death to corrupt, proved to be the One upon whom it had no claim, though it could rightly claim as its prey all the sons of Adam—"In Adam all die," but He is the Second Man and Last Adam. And so *He* rises from the dead, and the angel triumphantly declares, "He is not here, for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay." The cross was empty, and now the tomb is empty too! He met God in judgment upon sin, He met Satan and his power in death. He is raised by the glory of the Father, the surpassing greatness of God's power is seen in the empty tomb *and the filled throne* (Eph. 1: 19-21). What a complete victory! He sits on the right hand of the greatness in the heavens (Heb. 8: 1)—"OUR SAVIOUR."

He was delivered for our offences, and was raised for our justification; now ascended He appears in the presence of God for us. In the truth of His death and in the power of His life is our salvation. We are accepted in Him. There is no condemnation for those in Him,

for "it is Christ who has died, but rather has been also raised up; who also is at the right hand of God; who also intercedes for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?"

What now of sin, death and judgment?

Sin—we have been washed, we have been sanctified, we have been justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God (1 Cor. 6: 11).

Death—it is annulled, its sting is gone, its terror removed, the bondage of its fear broken. The keys of death and hades are in the hand of "our Saviour." Should death come to the believer, his Saviour must have opened its door for him, and at the crossing of its threshold He will welcome him to the "far better" of His presence. What a triumph! God gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Judgment—it is impossible. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, that he that hears My word, and believes Him that sent He, has life eternal, and does not come into judgment, but is passed out of death into life." "Blessed they whose lawlessnesses have been forgiven, and whose sins have been covered: blessed the man to whom the Lord shall not at all reckon sin" [that is, "not account of him as having any"]. If God has accepted us in Christ, then judgment must touch Him first; and He is on the throne. Sin cannot be reckoned to Him, and therefore cannot be to us, for what could thus have been charged against us, and all that we are found to be in ourselves, has been fully judged at the cross. As to all of that matter He has forever sat down, and we are forever perfected by the one offering of the body of Jesus. As He is, so are we in this world. It is after this fashion that He, the Just, has brought us, the unjust, to God.

“To Him who loves us, and has washed us from our sins in His blood, and made us a kingdom, priests to His God and Father: to Him be the glory and the might to the ages of ages. Amen.”

### 3.—DEATH FOR THE BELIEVER

Every element that would make it to be dreaded, all uncertainty as to what it is and what comes after it, has been taken away for the believer. In that sense already it has been annulled for him, and he knows life and incorruptibility as brought to light in the gospel. This from the divine side, but that does not mean that from the human side we do not feel the sorrow due to separation caused by death. Paul who knew it was far better to depart and be with Christ, nevertheless faced the seeming certainty of death in the case of Epaphroditus with much sorrow. He says, "God had mercy on him, and not on him alone, but also on me, that I might not have sorrow upon sorrow." The Lord Himself felt the sorrow of death and manifested His feelings, as we see in John 11. But for the believer the sense of sorrow and loss which death may bring through present separation is blessedly tempered, its bitterness sweetened, by knowing that our believing dead are enjoying a portion which is far better than the best could be while here in the body, and by knowing also that in due course they will be raised incorruptible.

How then is death spoken of in view of what has been brought to light in the gospel?

Death applies to the body, our mortal bodies. As life means the body animated by the soul, its principle of life, so that man is in contact with, enjoys fellowship with his fellow-man in all the variety of action in which the

body is used, so when God takes away the soul that once actively used body ceases all movement, and it is without power to perform the very slightest motion—it is prostrate. Viewed in its stillness we can understand how the thought of sleep became associated with death. In the Old Testament we are repeatedly told that this one and that slept with his fathers. The Lord used it in regard to Lazarus, "Lazarus sleepeth," and then because the disciples did not understand He told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead." Stephen prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit," and shortly we are told "he fell asleep." Paul thus speaks of David (Acts 13: 36), and so he speaks of some of the brethren having "fallen asleep," and again, "fallen asleep in Christ" (1 Cor. 15: 6, 18). In that same chapter he says, "We shall not all fall asleep," and repeatedly he thus speaks of the dead in Christ (1 Thess. 4: 13-15).

As we consider the use of this term we see at once that its connection is with the body, and (as we shall see later) does not imply a state of unconsciousness after death. It very simply and beautifully describes the cessation of activity as far as the body is concerned, it is as asleep, outstretched in slumber, at repose. But there is more when we think of it in the light of the gospel. Sleep does not mean cessation of life, it is rest while life is still maintained, and it means that there will be the awakening. It is a word of comfort and hope—comfort because it means rest from the toil, the pain, the groan, the burden of life in the body; hope because the awakening (resurrection) is in view, while between the falling asleep and waking life goes on even as with one who is asleep—where and in what condition for our beloved dead we shall shortly consider. Thus "the Christian thought of death as sleep brought with it into

Christian speech the kindred thought of a chamber of rest, and embodied it in the word 'cemetery' (*koimeterion*), *the place to lie down to sleep*" (Vincent).

So from this term we learn the relation of the dead to the scene in which they moved when in the body. It clearly intimates that they have no place, nor do they participate in what is going on in this world. What natural sleep does temporarily, death does permanently, as far as this present world is concerned; they take no further part in its affairs, nor will they awake to do so as in the past, their awakening (*i.e.*, resurrection) is to take their place and part according to their changed condition in a new world order (Matt. 22: 30; Mark 12: 24, 25; Luke 20: 34-36). Thus having fallen asleep, all toil, and all that troubled, disturbed, burdened, or caused pain and sorrow, enter no longer into their condition; what tried them when here in the body does not try them now, nor are they concerned in or affected by what is of that nature, as it continues in this scene while they are absent from it. As to all of this, being absent from the body, they are as those asleep.

Let us linger over some other terms it has pleased the Holy Spirit to use as to the death of the believer.

Paul speaks of his departure (Phil. 1: 23; 2 Tim. 4: 6). The word in the latter passage is derived from the former, and it appears to be a military metaphor meaning *to break camp*. One scene of activity left, the tents are taken down and folded, the accoutrement of service separated and packed until the new camping-ground is reached, and meanwhile life continues amid new scenes and under different conditions until the chosen place is reached. In 2 Cor. 5 the metaphor is the striking of a *tent*, and this is evidently used in contrast to the *building* of which he speaks later. It serves to empha-

size the transient character of the body, as we now know it, with that body of the resurrection which is eternal, belonging to and suited for the heavens. It is the body needed for the inheritance of God's kingdom, for that cannot be in present flesh and blood condition but must be in incorruptibility, in the image of the heavenly One. Well, he says, if this tent suited to the earth is dissolved, literally *loosened down*—the stakes pulled up, the cords loosened, the pole lowered, the canvas folded up and all laid aside, no longer used, for the busy scene of life which once took place within that outspread tent has ceased and there is rest, sleep, as the loosened tent lies folded and outstretched upon the ground where all was once busy life, so the body lies in death as though outstretched in sleep, the camper, the tent-dweller, has gone —“We have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.”

Here the apostle is looking forward to the possession of that building instead of the tent, that body of glory which the Lord will give when He comes as Saviour from heaven, when what is mortal will be swallowed up of life. He is not desiring to be unclothed, that state which death brings, but clothed with the house which is from heaven. He is looking, as we all should be looking, for the coming of Christ and the change which will then be effected. Believers can rejoice that God has wrought them for the glory and blessing of that clothed state, and of this we have already the earnest of the Spirit. For “if the Spirit of Him that has raised up Jesus from among the dead dwell in you, He that has raised up Christ from among the dead shall quicken your mortal bodies also, on account of His Spirit which dwells in you” (Rom. 8: 11).

Then briefly and pointedly he defines the tent-state.

It is being present in the body but absent from the Lord, for we walk by faith not by sight; and then to be unclothed means absent from the body (the tent has been loosened down, the camp broken up), and present with the Lord. And even as to this he says: "We are confident, I say, and pleased rather" to be thus absent and present. The unclothed state is better than the tent-state, and the clothed state of the future will be the fulness of blessing and glory.

It is thus that the meaning and character of death has changed for the believer through what "our Saviour" has done. From an enemy it has been made a servant. The light of life has been thrown upon its dark chamber, and the power which overcomes its corruption and will bring into incorruption is known. "And having the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, I have believed, therefore have I spoken; we also believe, therefore also we speak; knowing that He who has raised the Lord Jesus shall raise us also with Jesus, and shall present us with you," for we shall be in the likeness of His resurrection (2 Cor. 4: 13, 14; Rom. 6: 5).

#### 4.—AFTER DEATH FOR THE BELIEVER

From the terms we have just considered we learn what death is, as far as this side of the line is concerned. It is a happy and blessed release. What about the other side of the line? Whence goes the released soul and spirit of the believer? What portion is there known? Since life continues, what are the features of its activity there? How much, if any, light does Scripture afford us as to the present state of those fallen asleep—the dead in Christ. Let us see.

If we ask, Where? the answer is very simple. We have heard the apostle give it already:

“Present with the Lord.”

Again he speaks of having desire for departure and

“Being with Christ.”

And the Lord Himself said to the dying man beside Him,

“Today shalt thou be with Me in Paradise.”

Clearly then the first and best thing to know about our beloved dead is that they are with “our Saviour.” It is the blessed fact of the

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with whom they are now present. But let us take a closer look. In 2 Cor. 5: 6-8 the words “absent” and

“present” deserve notice. The latter means “to be among one’s own people and not to travel abroad,” and “there is a play upon the words which might be expressed by *at home* (present) and *from home* (absent).” To be absent from the body is to be from home, viewing us in relation to the body we now have and as in which we have our home here. But to be so absent, though it mean a real sense of sorrow and loss to our own people, is gain, for it is to be present, at home, with the Lord. It is *home* in a better, higher, more perfect sense for those who have departed, than home could be here at the best. And it is *with* the Lord.

Though in each of the three statements quoted we have the word “with,” the fact is that in each case a different preposition is used by the Holy Spirit, and though rightly rendered “with,” they each give us a shade of difference in thought. In the first case it is *pros*. The force of this as used here is not that of merely “being near or beside, but as a living union and communion; implying the active notion of intercourse.”\*

Thus this statement gives us the happy thought of living, active relation in communion with the Lord, that which indeed belongs to being at home.

“With Christ,” here the preposition is *sun*. This gives not merely the idea of co-existence, but close association, and hence is used of the fellowship of believers with Christ; for example: Rom. 6: 8; Col. 2: 13, 20; 3: 13; 1 Thess. 4: 17; 5: 10. It gives us the happy thought of intimate spiritual fellowship. What was thus begun on earth while in the body is blessedly continued when

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\* For examples compare Matt. 13: 56; 26: 55; Mark 6: 3; 9: 16; John 1: 1 (with God); 1 John 1: 2 (with the Father); 1 Cor. 16: 6.

out of it and with Him in whom we have our every blessing. This is gain because continued without the impedimenta of our present bodies.

In what the Lord said we find the preposition *meta*. It signifies "in association with" in a local sense, as being in the same place or circumstances; and so the Lord here speaks of location—"in Paradise." It is not fellowship any longer at a distance, as we know it now in the body and so by faith, but as being in the same place with Him. "At home with the Lord."

How blessed these intimations of the

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now enjoyed by those who are absent from us! Putting them together, we can better understand how the apostle could say, "to die [is] gain," and to be with Christ is "far better." It is certain there cannot be less of what is good, and that which is not good cannot enter there. *Here* there is mixture, *there* the separation and evil no longer intrudes or troubles.

But that word "better" deserves our attention. It conveys the thought that what is referred to is better as being more useful or profitable; the departure brings into what is superior, more excellent, of a higher nature, more valuable than what is known as present in the body. For Paul to live in flesh was good, because for him to live was Christ, but it was better to depart and be with Christ. That would be gain. It would be all the good he knew here in an increased degree. But this comparative term rendered "better" is intensified by the words connected with it. Literally this expression is: *by much more better*. Paul multiplies comparatives as if language were too weak to express the superiority. And let us

remember that Paul knew, for he had been caught up to Paradise (2 Cor. 12: 1-7). He had been in the

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of which the Lord spoke to the dying thief. To be absent from the body and present with the Lord, to depart and be with Christ, means to be in that place with Him. Where is He? He told us He was returning to the Father; we are told He has entered heaven; He has entered within the veil, meaning that He is in the immediate presence of God; He there appears for us. To depart is to be with Him there in the intimacy of spiritual fellowship, in the "by much more better" portion that such nearness to the Person of our Saviour in such a place must surely mean. Blessed indeed to be thus absent from the body, and knowing this we have comfort for our hearts, though feeling the separation death brings in for a little while. To this we who remain have the added consolation of the blessed hope—our gathering *together unto HIM*, that we may live *together* with HIM. This is what we look for while waiting here, but it must be also the glorious

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which those who are now with Christ still anticipate. They learned of it here with us, we spoke of it together, we enjoyed the wonder of it as we considered all that it would mean—that glorious consummation of our salvation through Christ. Now *there* they still look for it to take place, only it must be with greatly quickened desire, and with a deeper sense of what it will mean. That which is our hope is still their hope. We may illustrate this: One whom I love goes on a long jour-

ney, thousands of miles separate us; that one is in different surroundings, and moves in a different scene of action to mine, and yet there are the things and interests common to us both that no distance can annihilate. There are hopes mutually cherished, objects mutually loved, possessions mutually shared, in spirit, if not through bodily contact. Just so with those who are absent from us here; yet still how much we know which they knew, and still know, as to which in spirit we are still one—things which time, and sense, and place in no wise change but abide eternally.

This may lead us to ask what light has been given us as to the consciousness of those fallen asleep. All that we have considered enforces the *fact* of it upon us. Apart from it the words used would be empty, deceiving words, and that they cannot be.

It is the Lord Himself who draws the veil aside from that unseen world, revealing what is tremendously solemn and marvelously blessed (Luke 16: 19-31). Plainly, the picture He draws is given to show what happens after man dies. Its connection with the preceding part of the chapter is evident (see ver. 9). For those to whom I write there is no need to enter into arguments to prove its application, or answer the vain efforts to set it aside.\* Our present interest is in what it teaches as to consciousness after death.

First, notice the fearful contrast of condition. "But now he [Lazarus] is comforted here [in hades], and thou [the rich man] art in suffering" (ver. 25). "Comforted"—that is a precious word! It is a word which in its

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\* Those who wish to examine the matter are referred to F. W. Grant's book, "Facts and Theories as to a Future State."

form here means to be cheered, to be glad, to rejoice. It is closely allied to the word used for *consolation, comfort*, as for example in Rom. 15: 4; 2 Cor. 1: 4-7; 7: 4, 7, 13; Phil. 2: 1; 2 Thess. 2: 16; Philem. 7. And so the thought of cheer, joy, enjoyment is associated with it. Then follows in close relation the word which in its substantive form means an advocate, intercessor, one who pleads the cause of another, and a consoler, comforter, bestowing spiritual aid and consolation; thus it is used of the Holy Spirit, whose presence was to compensate for the departure of Christ. As we trace these connections how much they seem to suggest as to the term the Lord used. It is being comforted as being with our great Comforter, who makes good to those with Him all that that word means, as we have noted. "Far better" indeed to be so comforted than to have the best of joy, comfort, cheer which could be known on earth.

But it will be noted that the mass of detail given in the Lord's picture is related to the suffering rich man, and not to Lazarus. This is doubtless because it was given as a warning to the unscrupulous and self-seeking Pharisees who mocked Him, and were on the road to just such a condition through wilful unbelief. Nevertheless we may surely conclude that the elements of consciousness which are related to him could not be absent from the man who was comforted in Abraham's bosom—the familiar figure to the Jewish mind of Paradise. What then are those elements of consciousness as the Lord depicts them?

We know that both men are in the disembodied state. They are "unclothed." Yet the Lord speaks of the rich man seeing—there is recognition (ver. 23). He is suffering, though there is no flesh. He has desires: for relief (ver. 24); but no matter what desires may be entertained

by those on either side of the great gulf there can be no intercommunication (ver. 26); for warning to be sent his brethren (vers. 27, 28). He can remember—remember that when in the body water cooled the hot tongue, remember that he had received his good things in his lifetime and Lazarus evil. He thinks—for he considers those left behind, he has not forgotten their state.

In this way the Lord would impress upon us the state of consciousness in which those are who to us are dead, by speaking of one who has no body as seeing, feeling, hearing, speaking, remembering, thinking. We know what all this means for us as in the body, but it is evident the Lord would have us realize that what these things mean in relation to conscious being still persist in connection with soul and spirit without the body. It is terrible to think of this in the state of torment. On the other hand what is true of the one must be true of the other in the state of comfort. So those who are with Christ must surely experience what answers to these features of conscious being but *all as being comforted*.

This picture presents to us the features of recognition, remembrance, desires, regard for the welfare of those still living on the earth. While it is certain that they participate in no way *with* us now in the circumstances and events through which we move, it seems certain also from what we have considered that they have not lost their memories, and that in view of their present state and what it means to them, they entertain desires for those still living in the body (even the tormented rich man did in regard to his brethren, and why not those blessed and comforted?—though it would be desires of very different character to his, and according to their spiritual knowledge and fellowship with Christ). In this very connection, as already suggested, shall we not think of

how they cherish the fulfilment of hope at the Lord's coming? Let us remember that Christ is waiting, and they are with Him and must share in this. The souls under the altar (thus described because they were martyrs) are in the intermediate state, and they are anticipating, looking for the coming day of judgment and vindication—their fitting viewpoint as belonging to another dispensation; just as surely those belonging to the Church who are now with Christ will be thinking of and looking for the Rapture, with its resurrection for them and the change for the then-living saints.

## 5.—RESURRECTION AND AFTER

They wait there, we wait here. "But now Christ is raised from among the dead, firstfruits of those fallen asleep. For since by man came death, by man also resurrection of those that are dead. For as in Adam all die, thus also in the Christ all shall be made alive. But each in his own rank: the firstfruits, Christ; then those who are the Christ's at His coming." That those fallen asleep are said to be made alive does not mean that till then they do not live, for all that we have considered proves that they do live; but resurrection is the subject of 1 Cor. 15, and that relates to the body, hence to living again in the body, in that sense alive, as to die means to be out of the body.

What it means to be thus made alive is clearly stated in this chapter. We read:

"Thus also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruptibility. It is shown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body: if there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual one. Thus also it is written, The first man Adam became a living soul; the Last Adam a quickening Spirit. But that which was spiritual was not first, but that which was natural, then that which is spiritual: the first man out of the earth, made of dust; the Second Man, out of heaven. Such as he made of dust,

such also those made of dust; and such as the heavenly One, such also the heavenly ones. And as we have borne the image of the one made of dust, we shall bear also the image of the heavenly One. But this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit God's kingdom, nor does corruption inherit incorruptibility. Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all fall asleep, but we shall all be changed, in an instant, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must needs put on incorruptibility, and this mortal put on immortality. But when this corruptible shall have put on incorruptibility, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall come to pass the word written: Death has been swallowed up in victory."

Many and wonderful are the details of this chapter, but we must limit ourselves to those which relate to our present theme. In doing this, however, it will not be amiss to consider, if ever so briefly, the main features of the truth as to resurrection.

What, then, does resurrection mean? To get our answer we must first understand what death means in relation to man in so far as it affects the organization of his being.

Man is a tripartite creature—body, soul and spirit. These in the unity of his being, form two parts of different character—*material*, the body; *immaterial* or spiritual, soul and spirit. The former is as a tabernacle, or house, for the latter; but all are closely inter-related in the various activities and experiences which make up man's conscious existence while living in this world.

Death is the separation of these two parts of man's composite being. "The body without the spirit is dead." The tabernacle dissolves, goes to corruption. The spirit returns to God who gave it, and He puts it in one of two places. As redeemed, absent from the body means to be present with the Lord, so that to thus depart and be with Christ is far better than remaining in the present condition; if not redeemed, it goes to the place in which the rich man was found after he died. Soul and spirit, though distinct in that there are particular features related to them respectively in the Scriptures, are not spoken of as separated.

By the separation which death involves as to man's state of being, he passes into that company called "the dead"—not so called because that separation prevents continued existence (for in the survival of soul and spirit man still lives, fully conscious), but rather because that is what they are who compose that company ("the dead") relatively speaking, as before they were of that company called "the living." Compare 1 Pet. 4: 5. Thus both of these designations bear relation to man and his sphere of natural life on the earth. But as to God "all live unto Him" (Luke 20: 38).

Now resurrection terminates the condition in which those are who are called "the dead"—whether we think of those who are "the dead in Christ," or "the rest of the dead," that is, the wicked (1 Thess. 4: 16; Rev. 20: 5). This termination, however, does not take place at the same time or under the same conditions as already mentioned; but for each class in their own order and time, resurrection means the end for them of being the company called "the dead," and is the reorganization of their being in its tripartite character—body, soul and spirit.

What this involves we may gather from the two scriptural words used for resurrection—*anistemi* and *egeiro*. Both words are similar, in that they convey the idea of “making to stand,” or “rise up;” but there is this difference, that *anistemi* regards it as being from a recumbent position, while *egeiro* brings in the thought of being awakened out of sleep. These terms lead us to think of the normal position of the body in death, and of its condition—one of inactivity, fittingly spoken of under the figure of sleep (John 11: 11-14; 1 Cor. 15: 51; 1 Thess. 4: 14; 5: 10). But resurrection is the termination of both the position and the condition. The dead are made to stand up and to be awake, that is, live again, even as the wicked do also (Rev. 20: 5).

Now as to the *body* given in resurrection, this also is treated of in our chapter, but particularly in relation to the redeemed, as we see from the verses quoted. After reproving the ignorance which would question the possibility of the resurrection of those who are dead, the apostle turns to consider objections raised by such ignorance of God, as he calls it. He propounds two questions (ver. 35), and answers them (vers. 36-57). We cannot at this time consider the wealth of detail presented in this scripture, and must be content with pointing out the following two important features:

First, there is *identity* between the body laid down in death and the body given in resurrection. This is enforced by the lesson from the seed sown, which dies and then is quickened, in doing which “God gives a body as He has pleased, and to each of the seeds its own body”—a body suited to it and related to what was sown (vers. 36-38). “Thus also is the resurrection of the dead. *It* is sown in corruption, *it* is raised in incorruptibility. *It* is sown in dishonor, *it*,” etc. (vers. 42-44).

Secondly, there is *difference*, between "the body that shall be," and the one laid down in death. This again is taught us in the lesson of the seed, as seen in the bare grain sown and then the body God gives it. The element of difference is further illustrated by the reference to the difference in flesh (ver. 39). In each case it is flesh, but flesh suited to the environment in which it lives. This suggests that the body given in resurrection will be of similar material to our present body, so that identity is maintained, but so constituted that it will be suited to the new condition of existence to which resurrection introduces. The same lesson is to be drawn from the fact that there are heavenly and earthly bodies, and though similarity of substance pertains to these, nevertheless each is fitted to its own environment and each has a glory suited to it individually in its own setting (vers. 40, 41). So these three illustrations from nature lead us to conclude that there is identity maintained, that there is similarity of substance, and yet difference, as necessary to the change of state consequent upon resurrection.

The conclusion is: "Thus also is the resurrection of the dead" (vers. 42-44). The last statement of these verses is expanded in vers. 45-50. In them we learn about the great contrast between the body belonging to Adam and his race—natural, out of the earth, made of dust—and that which will be the body of those who belong to the Last Adam, the Second Man, and His race. This enlarges our understanding of the difference between the body laid down in death—the natural, the earthly, the body of the first man—and "the body that shall be" for all who are Christ's—spiritual, heavenly, the body of the Second Man, for we are assured that the likeness shall be to His body of glory (Phil. 3: 20, 21).

Turning to other scriptures which bear upon this subject we learn that there are *two classes* in the resurrection. Though little detail is given as to the wicked dead, yet the fact of their resurrection and everlasting punishment is clearly affirmed. "There is to be a resurrection both of *just* and *unjust*" (Acts 24: 15; Luke 14: 14). The Father has committed all judgment to the Son, and "all who are in the tombs shall hear His voice, and shall go forth; those that have practised *good*, to resurrection of life, and those that have done *evil*, to resurrection of judgment" (John 5: 27-29). All of the dead are to be raised out of the state in which they are found as such, and are to stand up in their fully reorganized being, individually, and are to so pass into that eternal condition which belongs to them according to their respective standing before God, whether just and good, or unjust and evil, the former being the company characterized by faith, the latter by its absence. "Without faith it is impossible to please God."

From the Lord's words just quoted we also learn of *two characters* of resurrection—"life," "judgment." Those of faith will then enter the full realization of redemption, of life in its perfection for the creature as forever freed from the presence of sin, whether within or without, and from the very last vestige of the results of its presence and working, as this is seen in relation to the body while they are still of the company of "the dead," though happy as to their spirits in the presence of the Lord. Thus for them resurrection means the full and perfect reorganization of their being—body, soul and spirit—according to the power of eternal life. For those who are not of faith, while resurrection means that same re-organization of their being, it is for them to go into judgment—everlasting punishment in the place

prepared for the devil and his angels, the lake of fire, which is the second death.

Finally, as there are two companies, each with its own distinct character and destiny, in relation to resurrection, so there are *two periods* at which this work of God's power is accomplished. First, it is all those who are Christ's at His coming (1 Cor. 15: 23). And in that connection let us remember that His coming is not a single act, but is in two stages with an interval of time between. Following upon His appearance in glory, all who have part in "the first resurrection" (that which is "of life") live and reign with Christ a thousand years. But "the rest of the dead did not live till the thousand years had been completed" (Rev. 20: 4, 5). Thus the Millennium intervenes before the wicked dead are raised, for that company must be left until there is added to them those who will finally rebel under Satan's leadership after the thousand years have been completed—a fearful demonstration that that evil spirit-being remains unchanged, though imprisoned for a thousand years, and that the heart of man, apart from new-birth, remains unchanged, though he be under the benefits and blessing of the righteous reign of Christ for so many years (Rev. 20: 7-10). Then we hear of a second resurrection, that of "judgment," when all upon whom death has been inflicted because of sin and unbelief shall be raised to stand before the Great White Throne to be judged and sent to their eternal habitations.

Let us now pass on to what will follow the accomplishment of resurrection for the dead in Christ, and the change of the living saints. Consequent upon our gathering together unto Him at His coming we shall all be in bodies like unto His body of glory. We are then conformed to the image of God's Son, and He is

seen as the Firstborn among many brethren. As John says, "We shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is...and in Him is no sin." Following this there will be our manifestation "before the judgment-seat of the Christ, that each may receive the things done in the body, according to those he has done, whether it be good or evil." This is a judgment of our *works*, not of our persons. It could not be the latter, for we who appear there are in full likeness to Him who sits to judge. But on this particular subject let me give the words of another:

"I am not aware that this expression, 'the judgment-seat of God' or 'the judgment-seat of Christ,' is found anywhere else than in Romans 14 and 2 Corinthians 5: in the first of these passages with a view to prevent individual judgments; in the second with a view to provoke to do good. The subject in itself is one of the most solemn and at the same time most blessed, and this so much the more as we understand it rightly. I believe that each act of our lives will be manifested then before the tribunal, according as the grace of God and His ways with us in connection with our own acts will be known then. We read (Rom. 14) that, 'Every one of us shall give account of himself to God;' and the word, in this passage, mentions the tribunal in connection with the exhortation to brethren not to judge one another in respect of days, meats, or any other such thing.

"I am disposed to think that the *acts* alone will be subject to manifestation; but all the private acts of our life depend so intimately upon our inward feelings, that it is, in a certain sense, difficult to distinguish the acts from the simple thoughts. The

acts manifest the power of the thought or of the feeling. I believe that the whole of our acts will be detailed there, before the judgment-seat, not for us, however, as if we were in the flesh, and thus to our condemnation, but to make evident to our own eyes the grace that occupied itself with us—regenerate or unregenerate. In the counsels of God I am elect before the foundation of the world; hence I think that my own history will be detailed before the judgment-seat, and, parallel with it, the history of the grace and of the mercy of God toward me. The why and the how we did this or that will be manifested then. For us the scene will be declarative, not judicial. We are not in the flesh before God; in His eyes by His grace we are dead. But then if we have walked according to the flesh, we must see how we have lost in blessing thereby, and what loss we have incurred; and, on the other hand, the ways of God toward us, all ways of wisdom, of mercy, and of grace, will be perfectly known and understood by us for the first time. The history of each one will come out in perfect transparency; it will be seen how you yielded and how He preserved you, how your foot slipped and how He raised you up again, how you were drawing near danger and shame, and how He by His own arm interposed.

“I believe this is the bride making herself ready, and I consider that moment as a wondrous one. There will be no flesh then to be condemned; but the new nature will enter into the full knowledge of the care and of the love, which, in true holiness and in righteousness and even in grace, have followed us step by step all through the running of

the race. Some parts of our life, till then entirely unexplained, will be fully disclosed and become altogether plain; some tendencies of our nature, that perhaps we do not judge to be so pernicious and deadly as they are, and for the mortification of which we are perhaps now subjected to a discipline that we may not have interpreted aright, will be then perfectly explained; and, what is more, the very falls that plunge us now into such bitter anguish will be seen then to be that which God used to preserve us from something more terrible. I do not think that until then we shall ever have had a full knowledge of the badness of our flesh.

“How blessed for us to know that then it will be not only all over with the flesh in the counsel of God, but that the flesh will no longer be attached to us! On the other side, I doubt not, the manifestation of God’s grace toward us individually will be so magnificent that even the sense of the perversity of the flesh that we had, if it could possibly enter there, would be excluded by the greatness of the sense of divine goodness. Why do we not deny and mortify the flesh when we think of that hour? The Lord grant that we may do so more and more to the glory of His grace. This great subject of the judgment-seat brings the soul to a very full knowledge of our individual standing.”\*

We think of what follows that momentous scene of adjustment, of appraisal, of award. Doubtless, as thus made ready, we will know the joy of the marriage feast, and then in due course the glorious appearing to share

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\* From J. N. D., *Collected Writings*, Vol. 23, pp. 556-558.

in the victory and reign of Christ in the kingdom and glory. We, the Church, His Body, will participate with Him in that administration of the fulness of times, in His inheritance of all things, for we are His joint-heirs. He will accomplish the subjugation of all things unto Himself, and then deliver up the kingdom to the Father that God may be all in all. Then comes the eternal rest.

## 6.—THE ETERNAL REST

(Rev. 21: 1-8)

This closing vision of the Revelation though brief, gives the consummation of all the ways of God. It is the end toward which He has worked through all the ages, and it stands as the accomplishment of Him into whose hand God placed all things in heaven and earth, so that prophetically He is called, "The Father of Eternity" (Isa. 9: 6, R.V.). In His death He laid the foundation, in resurrection as Man He entered the place of administrative power in both spheres. As the result of the exercise of that power He will effect the reconciliation of all things to the fulness of the Godhead, as well as the reconciliation of those persons who are of His faith. This glorious purpose of God came to light through His manifestation in the fulness of time, and in it the Church which is His Body, now being formed by the Holy Spirit, occupies a special and distinctive place.

The first references to a new heaven and a new earth are found in Isaiah 65: 17; 66: 22. The context of these passages clearly relates to Millennial conditions. In these passages the Lord speaks by way of promise. It is certain—"Behold, I create"—yet still future—"which I will make." Thus the Millennial age is not the final and complete change seen in Rev. 21, but it is its necessary prelude. During it those actions take place which are essential to the establishment of that com-

plete change, and the new moral order which then obtains in both heavenly and earthly spheres is the earnest of the other. This being so the Lord declares what the final issue will be. What takes place during the Millennium is really part of the creative process which culminates in the great physical change at the end.

In this connection the Lord's use of the word "regeneration" in reference to the kingdom in glory is quite suggestive (Matt. 19: 28). It is used in only one other place (Tit. 3: 5). There it applies to what is true of the believer. It is the changed condition upon which he enters by faith in Christ, as a result of which he now possesses and exercises power over that which formerly overpowered him. Practically, it means walking after the Spirit and not after the flesh, so that though sin in the flesh is still in the believer he governs it instead of being governed by it, and the Holy Spirit daily renews along this line. Now this is in marked contrast with the former mode of living according to the course of this world, and it compares to the Millennial age when man's day and Satan's rule will have ended for the earth, and righteousness will reign, peace being the result, as even now with the believer. But he is going on to the perfect condition when there will be complete deliverance from the presence of sin, not simply from its present dominion, for we are to be conformed to the image of Him in whom is no sin. So too the time is coming as to heaven and earth when it will not be simply the reign of righteousness, but the dwelling of righteousness. For this to be realized there must come the great change of which Peter speaks, even as the believer also will be changed to enter fully upon the perfect condition for which he is predestinated. This parallel is both suggestive and illuminating.

In the New Testament Peter is the first to mention a new heaven and a new earth. He chiefly refers to the great physical changes incident to this final state, while John rather brings out what is moral in the closing scenes leading to its establishment. We are not without light from Paul also, for it must be plain that 1 Cor. 15 bears upon this subject. The same end is before us, reached through events beginning with Christ's second coming, then His reign until the last enemy is put under His feet, after which He delivers up the kingdom to the Father that God may be all in all. This answers to what we find in the more detailed description of John.

Now similarly Peter refers to the coming of Christ in relation to the last scenes. The world boasts in the supposed stability and endurance of the present order of creation. Mockery is the answer to the announcement of the Lord's coming. Peter discloses that the present heavens and earth are reserved by God for a fiery dissolution, involving three features of judgment:

The destruction of ungodly men,  
The burning up of the earth and the works in it,  
The heavens dissolved, and the elements melted through  
heat.

Out of this conflagration God brings forth according to His promise new heavens and a new earth.

Notice Peter's reference to the day of the Lord. He first links it with the fulfilment of the promise as to the Lord's coming, and then speaks of it as that in which the universal dissolution will be effected. Its duration is, therefore, at least 1000 years. This passes into "the day of God," when doubtless what Paul states as to the kingdom will take place. Peter's last word is: "To Him

(our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ who is the Father of eternity) be glory both now and to the day of eternity." Let us not forget the deeply practical and sanctifying effect the knowledge of these things is expected to have on our present conduct (2 Pet. 3: 1, 2, 14, 17, 18).

Turning now to John, we get both confirmation of and addition to the previous testimonies. Paul particularly emphasized resurrection in relation to those who were Christ's, and this John refers to as "the first resurrection," in which all who have part are blessed and holy. The rest of the dead, all wicked, are raised when the 1,000 years are over, but not before the final testing when Satan is loosed from prison, by which means all who are wicked but then living on the earth are manifested as such, so that they too may be added to the company which will appear at the Great White Throne judgment. The fiery deluge from God out of heaven seems to answer to Peter's conflagration with which he associates the destruction of ungodly men. Then that the heavens and earth flee away from before Him who sits to judge apparently corresponds to their dissolution, followed as this is by the introduction of the new.

Here the question may arise as to what happens to the living saints—those of Israel and the nations who have inhabited the earth during the Millennium—when this dissolution takes place. Since flesh and blood cannot inherit God's kingdom in its eternal condition, that is, we cannot enter it in our present mutable condition (hence the change at the coming of Christ for all who are His), we may conclude that the saints of that coming age will likewise be changed, and this it would seem must be coincident with the dissolution of the earth and heaven, they then passing into the new and eternal condition which follows—the *eternal rest*.

These closing scenes end the course of time, and finally dispose of all the issues raised during it. Thus all the agencies of evil, and all those subject to the wrath of God are put in their own place—the lake of fire, the second death.

The eternal rest follows, and John gives its characteristic features.

The word for “new” is *kainos*—new in quality, of different character. This is in contrast to another word used for “new,” *neos*, which means new under the aspect of time. There are eight statements which indicate the difference in character:

1. The first heaven and the first earth had passed away.
2. The sea exists no more.
3. He shall wipe away every tear.
4. Death shall not exist anymore,
5. Nor grief,
6. Nor cry,
7. Nor distress,
8. For the former things have passed away.

This difference involves the physical constitution of both creation and men; the moral state in which all subsists, that of being without sin; the experiences of this condition have nothing in them of creature infirmity, vanity and vexation no longer obtain. In the realm of the spiritual, God is with men, and they are in intimate relation with Him.

Of central importance to this glorious scene of blessing is “the holy city.” It is holy, peaceful, heavenly, ever abiding in bridal beauty. Thus “the tabernacle of God is with men and He shall tabernacle with them.”

This city must be that one spoken of in other scriptures, the one looked for by those of faith in the earliest ages. Abraham "waited for the city which has foundations, of which God is the Artificer and Constructor." Those ancient worthies sought what was heavenly, "wherefore God is not ashamed of them, to be called their God; for He has prepared for them a city." And this city is to be distinguished from the Church, for they are mentioned separately: "The city of the living God, heavenly Jerusalem...and to the assembly of the Firstborn who are enregistered in heaven." The similarity of language argues for identification with Revelation 21, while also it makes evident the distinction of the city from the companies spoken of, whether angels or redeemed men of the present or past ages. Yet though there is distinction to mark, evidently there is such a close identification of this city with "the bride, the Lamb's wife," that the vision of the city can be presented as a vision of her. It is the Bride-city because it is the home of the Bride; what she is makes the city what it is. Still it would seem that the rest of the redeemed must have their place within its sphere, even Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob who looked for this city. Only the wicked are spoken of as without. Finally, it may be well to note that the vision of the city is retrospective, presenting it in Millennial relations, not those of the eternal state, as evidenced by reference to kings, nations and their healing. This indicates that the former things have not yet passed away. But whatever changes the present heavens and earth pass through, this city abides unchanged in bridal freshness and beauty and is so brought into relation with the new heaven and earth.

In this eternal rest God dwells with men, they are in relationship with Him, amid all things made new. The

full and perfect accomplishment of all is assured by Him who sits upon the throne. *He* declares these things to be true and faithful, and can say, "It is done," for He is the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the Ending, Himself the Eternal.

## 7.—SUNSET AND COMING DAWN

### I.

The day declines,  
The sun well past meridian height  
Is sinking fast in yonder west,  
And soon will fall behind the hills,  
To leave its varied after-glow  
Upon the cloud-flecked evening sky;  
There clouds dark-faced as evening falls  
Are rimmed with fringe of golden light,  
While some take on the hue of rose,  
A silhouette of changing form  
Against the sapphire blue of heaven,  
Where soon the orb of day will hide its light  
As in some darkened vault,  
And then the night—

Its falling darkness brings a hush,  
The busy scene of day is past;  
That hands that clutched the tool or spade,  
The feet that quickly sped to aid  
In answer to the call for help,  
Then cease their toil;  
The mind that studied hard and strained  
To do the task of daylight hours,  
Soon finds release and seeks its ease—

It bringeth rest;  
The tumult past, the restless crowd,  
It goes, the strife and rush subside,

As lengthening shadows at day's close  
Grow deep, then merge, and mantle all  
In night and rest.

## II.

If life here ends  
By call of Him who holds the keys  
Of hades—world unseen—and death;  
If He would have its gate swing wide  
To let me pass, then I desire  
The closing hours to be like to  
That after-sunset glow of light—  
A clustering of memories  
With hope of that new day to come,  
    Gold-tinted,  
    Rose-hued,  
    Against the blue,  
Before the veil of night drops down  
To hide me in those realms unseen,  
Where comes the rest like that of night,  
In peace divine.

## III.

Hid for awhile,  
We soon shall meet again in light  
Of dawn without one earth-born mist;  
And on that day the sun will rise  
To its meridian height, and stay—  
Its glory ne'er to fade or fail.

\* \* \* \* \*

No clouds will then arise, for they  
Are born of earth, and made of dust,

Filled with the water-drops drawn up  
From earthly streams and restless sea—  
Our tears drawn forth by penitence,  
Or sorrow's urge in this earth's way—  
Sometimes so thickly spread and dark  
They've turned our brightest day to night,  
While thunder-crash and lightning-flash  
Have made us shake with fear, and bow  
Before the power and will of Him  
Who has His way in wind and storm;  
And yet again their showers have come  
To gladden and refresh the soul,  
Parched in the drought of worldly care:  
Such are our clouds in this life's day.  
Their blessing for us lies in this:  
They are the dust—these clouds—on which  
He treads His way who guides our steps  
To where we'll walk the street of gold  
In light that shineth from the Lamb,  
The Lamp of glory's every ray  
That lighteth God's eternal rest.  
But *then* no clouds will form again!  
*There is no sea!*

## IV.

God's sabbath day!  
That rest will come as cometh dawn—  
A light outspread where darkness ruled,  
And then the rising orb of day,  
The Sun of Righteousness, will come  
With wings of healing, grace, and power,  
Their pinions reaching forth to touch  
Creation's farthest bounds, that 'neath  
The brooding shadow of His love

The curse may pass,  
And all be brought,  
On earth, in heaven,  
As one within His hand, nail-pierced,  
Yet holding universal power  
To crush to lowest depths of doom  
The devastating power of Sin;  
To lift, by right of blood poured out  
In agonies of judgment's hour  
On Calvary's Cross,  
All things, and those who are redeemed  
As trusting Him whose precious blood  
Doth cleanse, bring nigh, and sanctify  
To God according to His will—  
Lift all into harmonious life  
In unison with God, the Son,  
In whom the Fulness pleased to dwell,  
That with It all might be made one.  
Eternal end to lawlessness  
And pain—eternal day of bliss!  
God all in all!

\* \* \* \* \*

O Lord, how long?

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