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SCRIPTURAL PROOF
OF
THE DOCTRINE
OF
THE FIRST RESURRECTION.

BY
BENJAMIN WILLS NEWTON.

LONDON:
HOULSTON AND WRIGHT, 65, PATERNOSTER ROW.

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WE must never forget that the bias of the human mind is *against*, not towards, Revealed Truth. It is one of the consequences of the Fall—one of the results of “sin that dwelleth in us,” and of the power put forth against us by Satan. In the reception of *natural* truths it is otherwise. There, for the most part, the mind is ready to receive anything that is proposed to it by competent authority. In its own generation it is wise. But in religious truth, men not only manifest an indisposition to receive, but also a disposition to lose that which they have received. What more remarkable example of this than when the Corinthians, even under the Apostle’s own eye, began to question the fact of there being any resurrection? “How say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?” If, then, among those whom the Apostle himself taught, the fact of there being any resurrection was disputed, can we wonder that in these latter days—days in which the Scripture tells us

falsehood would flourish—can we wonder that now the truth of the First Resurrection should be denied? Shall we, because few believe and teach it, say that it is false? Or shall we, remembering the tendency in man's mind to quit its grasp on truth, refuse to be led blindly by the authority of others, and search for ourselves, humbly and diligently, the Scriptures of God?

Resurrection is, at present, seen only in Christ the Lord. He alone has risen into glory as "the First-fruits." "David," says the apostle, "hath not ascended into the heavens." The spirit of David is indeed with Christ in the paradise of God, there, together with the spirits of all departed saints, comforted and blessed with joys unspeakable; but David, as to the integrity of his person, that is, in *body* as well as soul and spirit, is not there. He is still, as to this, numbered amongst those "that have fallen asleep," whose "first-fruits" Christ is. All, therefore, that Rome teaches respecting the assumption of the Virgin Mary, and the condition of the saints in heaven, is a blasphemous fiction—a lie from the father of lies. Mary and the rest of the saints remain yet, as to their bodies, in the dishonour of death. Their flesh has seen corruption. The worm has fed on them. They wait for the resurrection-morning.

The resurrection of the Lord Jesus is to us the *manifested* proof that the mighty debt which He undertook to discharge on behalf of His believing people has been fully paid. As the Surety of His people, performing for them what they could not perform, and bearing for them what they could not

bear, Jesus lived and died. But as soon as He was able to say, "It is finished," the claim of Divine Justice was satisfied. The debt was fully paid: and this was *proved* when He burst the prison of the grave, where He had lain to fulfil the Scripture, and to show not only the reality of His death, but also that death had no longer power against Him; for it could not prey on Him. His holy body saw no corruption. Death never had any power against Him except as the Surety discharging the debt of others. As soon, therefore, as that debt had been discharged, death lost its title against those whose Surety He was: and of this His resurrection afforded the manifested proof. It proved that every claim against them was satisfied for ever.

Moreover, the Lord Jesus rose as "the First-fruits"—that word being the pledge that all His believing people shall finally be conformed to His heavenly likeness. In Him, too, their new covenant Head, they have life. "Our life is hid with Christ in God." In the Epistle to the Ephesians we read of the exceeding working of God's mighty power to us-ward who believe, which He wrought in Christ when he raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places. This mighty power was towards *us*, because, in raising Christ, it raised Him as our Head. Consequently, believers, though personally on earth, are *representatively* in heaven. In Christ risen they are quickened; in Him they are "raised up and made to sit in heavenly places"; all this the result of His resurrection. By resurrection, too, He has entered as our great High Priest within the veil, able to save to

the uttermost those that come unto God through Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them.

But there is an hour coming when the life which is now hidden for us with Him in God, will be no longer hidden, because the time of fruition and manifestation will have come. But when, and under what circumstances? We know that the earth is, in the Scripture, promised a period of millennial rest, when "nations shall learn war no more"; when converted Israel shall "blossom, and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit"; when creation, which now groaneth, shall groan no longer; when the wolf and the lamb shall feed together; when Satan shall be bound; when the Lord shall be King over all the earth, and His name *alone* be exalted; when at last it shall be *truly* said, "O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness: fear before Him, all the earth. Say among the Gentiles that the Lord reigneth: the world also shall be established that it shall not be moved: He shall judge the people righteously. Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof. Let the field be joyful, and all that is therein: then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice before the Lord; for He cometh, for He cometh to judge the earth; He shall judge the world with righteousness, and the peoples with His truth." (Psalm xcvi.) Blessed words! that shall be fulfilled in their season. But when the hour of their fulfilment comes, what shall be the condition of those who have fallen asleep in Jesus? Will Abel and Abraham—will the patriarchs, prophets, and apostles, and all who have followed them in the

path of suffering for Christ's sake, be shut out from the joy of that morning of life? Will their bodies be still left in the corruption of death? or, will one of the first acts of their Lord in the day of His manifested glory, be the calling from the grave all who have suffered for His name's sake, that they might share His joy, and administer His power?

One thing certainly is evident, that that day of gladness cannot be until the dark day of evil described in the Epistle to the Thessalonians shall have first run its course. The Apostle there teaches us that the mystery of iniquity then working should continue to work silently, until it should be at last manifested in all its fulness under "the man of sin," "the wicked" or "lawless one." Now, without here inquiring who "the man of sin" is, this, at least, is manifest, that the reign of righteousness and peace cannot be coincident with the reign of "the man of sin." Men cannot at the same time obey Christ and Satan. The nations cannot at the same time bow down before Christ and before Antichrist. The mystery of iniquity and its head must cease to be, before truth and righteousness triumph. To what then does this last great head of iniquity succumb? By what is he consumed? By "*the brightness of the coming of the Lord*," says the Apostle. Therefore the brightness of the coming of the Lord *precedes* and *introduces* the reign of peace.

But there is another event mentioned in this chapter as taking place at the coming of the Lord. In the first verse the Apostle speaks of "our" (*i.e.* believers) "being together gathered unto the Lord." "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the

intercourse of men. An Indian may come to me and say in simple language, "I desire to make peace with thee"; or he may use figurative language and say, "Let us bury our weapons beneath the tree of peace"; or he may say nothing, but, silently, in symbolic action, may dig a grave beneath an olive tree, and there deposit his bow and his battle-axe: the modes of communication are in the three cases different, but the same substantial fact is conveyed by all, viz., his desire to make peace with me. Nor is it otherwise in Scripture. Thus, the future restoration and union of the twelve tribes of Israel (which when accomplished will be a literal fact) is taught sometimes in simple language, as when we read in L / Jeremiah ~~ix~~ 4: "In those days, and in that time, saith the Lord, the children of Israel shall come, they and the children of Judah together, going and weeping: they shall go, and seek the Lord their God. They shall ask the way to Zion with their faces thitherward, saying, Come, and let us join ourselves to the Lord in a perpetual covenant that shall not be forgotten." And again in Hosea i, 11: "Then shall the children of Judah and the children of Israel be gathered together, and appoint themselves one head, and they shall come up out of the land: for great shall be the day of Jezreel." In these two passages there is no figurative language, nor any symbol. But in Ezekiel xxxvii, 18, we find the same event taught in symbol. Ezekiel was commanded to take two sticks; to write on one, "For Judah, and for the children of Israel his companions"; and on the other, "For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and for all the house of Israel his companions: and join them one

to another into one stick ; and they shall become one in thine hand." Such was the symbol presented to the eyes of the people, and thus it was explained, " Say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the Gentiles, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land : and I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel ; and one king shall be king to them all : and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all." Surely, after such an example we cannot say that a plain literal fact cannot be taught by symbol.

But now to return to the passage quoted from the Revelation : the Apostle saw in the vision thrones occupied by persons who sat thereon, and to them " judgment " (that is, authority to rule) " was given." " I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given unto them." He saw, also, those who had suffered for the name of Jesus under Antichrist, in a disembodied state, for it is said he saw their " *souls* "; but it is added, he saw them " *live*," that is, become repossessed of their bodies. " They lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not (*οὐκ ἐζησαν**) until the thousand years were finished."

Let us suppose that to ourselves such a vision had been sent—suppose that we had seen those whom we had first beheld in a condition of death,

* Such is the right reading in this passage.

coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together unto Him." If, then, we are to be gathered to Him at His coming (and the fourth chapter of the previous Epistle describes how) it is evident that the resurrection of all who shall have believed in Christ up to the hour of His appearing, shall take place when He comes to destroy the wicked one, and to introduce the glory of the millennial age.

If, indeed, the history of the earth were to terminate at the coming of the Lord to destroy the wicked one—if there were to be no reign of peace—no period when righteousness shall flourish in the earth—then, doubtless, there would be no second period of resurrection, and consequently there would be no FIRST resurrection. But if forgiven and converted Israel are to be in the millennial earth "holiness unto the Lord"—if the spared heathen are to receive through Israel the gospel of grace—if Ethiopia shall then, at last, "stretch out her hands unto God," and the millennium be the great harvest-time for gathering souls into the heavenly garner, will they who shall be thus born again through the word of truth, never be brought into resurrection glory? Will they never bear the heavenly likeness of their Redeemer. Will they always remain in an earthy, fallen body? No! this cannot be. Well, then, if they are to be finally changed and glorified, there must be a second period of resurrection unto life: and this, Scripture uniformly teaches.

In the twentieth chapter of the Revelation we find the following passage: "I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given

unto them : and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands ; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection : on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years."

The obvious meaning of this solemn passage is frequently sought to be evaded on the plea that the Revelation is a symbolic book. Now, what does this mean? Does it mean that, because symbols are employed as the medium of instruction in the Revelation, therefore, no *facts* are taught therein? It would seem to be the thought of some that symbols and figurative language can indicate nothing except that which is shadowy and impalpable. It seems to be imagined that plain and intelligible facts can only be taught where no symbols and no figures are ; and that the presence of these is a sign that the interpretation may be as loose as the symbols are supposed to be uncertain. Yet does not such a thought impugn the wisdom of God, who has been pleased in the Scriptures so frequently to employ figures and symbols ; shall we say that He intended that the trumpet should give an uncertain sound ?

Literal facts may be taught either by simple language, or by figurative language, or by symbols. This is true both in Scripture and in the ordinary

LIVE and reign with Christ, should we have *needed* to be told we had seen a *resurrection*? I think not. But what if we had also heard an authoritative voice that said, "THIS IS THE FIRST RESURRECTION. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years,"—could we have doubted, after hearing this solemn comment of God?—I say comment, for these words were spoken, not so much to show that "resurrection" was taught in the preceding vision, as to show what resurrection it was, and what was the blessedness and honour pertaining to those who were included therein.

Observe, also, these words: "They" (the saints) "LIVED and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead LIVED NOT until the thousand years were finished." Few, I suppose, will doubt that the last clause of this passage refers to the general resurrection described at the close of this chapter. If, then, the word "LIVE," as applied in the last clause to the wicked dead, means resurrection, can we arbitrarily attach another meaning to the same word in the first clause, and say it does *not* mean resurrection? No principle that at present guides us in the interpretation of language would remain, if such licence as this were allowed.

And if a resurrection unto life be not taught in the passage we have been considering, what evidence is there of there being any resurrection at all? The same arguments that nullify the force of the words LIVE and RESURRECTION in this passage, would

nullify these words, or any like words in any other part of Scripture. The reasons urged against "resurrection" meaning "resurrection" in the central part of this chapter, tell with equal force against that solemn passage which describes the last resurrection at the close of this chapter. The doctrines of a first and of a last resurrection stand or fall together. If the first be a mere figure of speech, so is the other. Surely we must beware of explaining away on neologian principles, the "true sayings of God." Does it not approach very nearly to the sin described in the concluding chapter of this book? (See Rev. xxii, 19.)

It has frequently been said of late that the words, "THIS IS THE FIRST RESURRECTION," indicate not a resurrection of *persons* but of *principles*. The principles of the martyrs, which will, as it were, have died out, are, it is said, to be revived in great power at the commencement of the millennium; and this is termed a resurrection.

But does not such an interpretation as this lack the very semblance of plausibility? For, in the first place, how can the principles of the martyrs be said to die out, when we know that during the whole antichristian period, on to its very end, they will be manifested in a power unequalled by any thing that has been seen among Christ's servants since the Apostles died? And, secondly, how can the *distinctive* principles of the martyrs be found in the millennium, seeing that then the time of the Truth's sufferings will have passed, and, consequently, martyrdom will have ceased to be?

Moreover, is it not said that they who are raised

in the first resurrection shall be made priests and kings unto God and unto Christ? We can understand this of *persons*, but how could *principles* be made kings and priests unto God? Is it not also said that over those who rise in the first resurrection, the second death shall have no power? Can we speak of principles being subject to the second death? Can principles be cast into the lake of fire? And if the first resurrection be a resurrection of principles, why is not the last resurrection a resurrection of principles too?

But the Revelation is not the only book in which the doctrine of the first resurrection is taught. In the first Epistle to the Corinthians, in the chapter which is specially devoted to the subject of resurrection, we find a passage which expressly treats of *the order* of resurrection. "Every one in his own order: Christ the FIRST-fruits; AFTERWARD (*επειτα*) they that are Christ's at His coming; THEN (or NEXT, *ειτα* not *τοτε*) cometh the end." The words translated *afterwards*, and *then* or *next* (*επειτα* and *ειτα*) are what are called "particles of sequence," that is, they indicate succession of events at certain intervals, as when we say, *first*, *second*, *third*. Accordingly, in this passage we are taught that the order of resurrection is, first, Christ's own resurrection: secondly, the resurrection of those who are Christ's at His coming: *thirdly*, the resurrection of those who live between that coming and the time when the last enemy, Death, is destroyed; which event, both here and in the Revelation, is said to be at the close of Christ's millennial reign; after which, "He that sitteth

upon the throne, saith, Behold, I make all things new."

Unless, therefore, we can obliterate the words "AFTERWARD" and "NEXT," we must acknowledge that there are two distinct periods in which the saints will rise in life; one when Christ (having, according to Daniel vii, been brought before the Ancient of Days and formally assumed the sovereignty of earth) shall come forth to put down all enemies; the other, when that object shall have been effected by the destruction of death, the last enemy. Thus both the commencement and the end of the millennial reign of Christ—that is to say, the period when He shall come forth *in order to subjugate* all enemies, and the period when *He shall have subjugated* all enemies, will alike be marked by a putting forth of that glorious power, whereby, as Son of the living God, He will quicken and bring into His own heavenly likeness those of His servants whom death will for a season have grasped. If, then, there were no other passage but this in the Corinthians, we should be constrained to say that there is a *first* resurrection. I scarcely need point out the accordance of this passage with that in the Revelation.

In the fifth chapter of John, also, we find a passage in which the first resurrection is referred to in contradistinction with the last. The 25th verse speaks of the first resurrection, and the 29th verse of the general resurrection; but as these verses, in order to their being properly understood, should not be separated from their context, it will be needful to consider the whole passage.

In the 24th verse of the fifth chapter of John we find these words: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment (*κρισιν*), but is passed from death unto life." This verse speaks of the power put forth through the preached gospel—the word that Jesus was then preaching, not in the power of His manifested glory, but in humiliation—as the sower going forth to sow. By that word believers were and are quickened *as to their souls*—"born again," says the Apostle, "not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, **BY THE WORD OF GOD.** And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you." But this blessed word, which when received bringeth our souls unto life, reacheth not our bodies. Death still preys upon them, and the outward condition of believers contrasts sorrowfully with that of the "new man" within. But it shall not always be so. The quickening power of life that is in the Lord Jesus *has* reached the souls, and *shall* reach the bodies of his saints. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead (*οἱ νεκροί*, the dead in body) shall hear the **VOICE OF THE SON OF GOD**; and they that hear shall live." Observe the words, "voice of the Son of God." This is not the word which He preached in humiliation—a word often rejected and despised; that which the Apostle calls "the weak thing (*το ασθενές*) of God," the foolishness of preaching." "Voice" is a word denoting authority and manifested power, as when at the grave of Lazarus, "He cried with a loud **VOICE**, Lazarus, come forth." And when He shall descend

from heaven with a shout, it is with the VOICE of the archangel, and with the trump of God. Jesus spake of the hour when this glorious power is to be manifested, as future: "The hour is coming." He said not this of the word of reconciliation which He was preaching, *that* was present; but the hour when death shall be effectually triumphed over in the grave is even yet not come. We still wait for it in hope. Nevertheless, although the appointed hour for the full *display* of that power whereby death is triumphed over is yet not come, yet the power whereby this is to be effected was present in the earth when Jesus was present in the earth, He being Himself "the resurrection and the life," One in whom "all fulness dwells." There is no form, no character of glorious power, that shall in the ages to come be displayed in Jesus glorified, that was not present in Jesus rejected, therefore, He adds the words, "*now is.*" "The hour is coming, and now is." Of these last words the grave of Lazarus supplied the evidence; the scene there witnessed being the pledge to us that the same mighty voice that called Lazarus from the grave, shall soon be heard by every saint that sleeps. Then death shall cease to sever those that have known and loved one another in Christ, and all be happy, and all be perfect, because all shall alike bear the image of their Lord. But observe, *all* the dead are not spoken of as raised at that hour. On the contrary, the concluding words of this verse put an express limitation—"THEY THAT HEAR shall live"—as if all the dead would not then hear that voice of power. Nor will they. "The rest of the dead lived not until the thousand years were finished."

And see how clearly this intervening period of the Lord's millennial reign is referred to in this passage. *After* He has spoken of the first resurrection in verse 25, but *before* He speaks of the general resurrection in verse 29, He says that the Father had "given Him authority to exercise judgment also" (*i. e.*, kingly rule), "because He is *the Son of Man*." As Son of the living God He quickens; but it is as *Son of Man* that He is to be brought before the Ancient of Days, to be clothed with the millennial power of earth. "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like *the Son of Man* came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him. And there was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages, should serve Him; His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." In the eighth Psalm also it is Jesus, as *Son of Man*, under whose feet all things are to be subjected. But His power is not limited to this. He is not only to quicken, first the souls, and then the bodies of His saints, and to give them rule with Himself over the millennial earth; His power is also to reach back over all the past, over all the world of the dead; and He shall summon them all to life again, and shall be their Judge. "The hour is coming, in the which ALL that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." This is the last, the general resurrection. All the wicked dead of every

dispensation, as well as the countless multitude of those who have lived and died in faith during the millennium, will be there, the righteous rising in the resurrection of life, the others in the resurrection of damnation, to know for ever the second death. And observe, how contrasted are the words of this passage with those of the preceding verse, where a *limited* resurrection is spoken of. There it is said, "THEY THAT HEAR shall live"; but here, "ALL that are in the graves shall hear His voice." Surely no words can more plainly contrast the two periods of resurrection. Thus, too, the proper succession of these verses is preserved; for their subject is power appointed by the Father to be exercised by the Son, and its successional development is said to be this: first, that which He exercises through His preached word in quickening souls; secondly, that which He will, at "the end of the age," exercise in quickening the bodies of His saints; thirdly, that which He will exercise during the millennial reign; fourthly, that which He will exercise at the close of that reign, when the hour of the last resurrection shall have come.

Nor is the indirect evidence of Scripture less conclusive as to the truth of a FIRST resurrection. How, if there were not a resurrection of special and distinctive privilege, could we explain the words of our Lord in Luke xx, 35? "They that shall be counted worthy to obtain that age (*αιωνος*) and the resurrection from the dead," etc. Here a resurrection is spoken of that cannot be universal, for it will be attained only by those who shall be "counted worthy." It must therefore be distinguishing and

peculiar. So also in the Epistle to the Philippians the Apostle says, "If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection from the dead." He could not thus speak of the general resurrection, inasmuch as all *must* then arise. His words could only apply to a resurrection that is distinguishing and peculiar, which the *first* resurrection is. Observe too, the expression FROM (ἐκ, out of, or from among) the dead—*ἀναστασις ἡ ἐκ νεκρῶν*. It is not the same expression as "resurrection of the dead," *ἀναστασις τῶν νεκρῶν*. Accordingly, it is never used of the general resurrection. Indeed, such words could only be applied to a resurrection that is distinguishing and peculiar. When we say of any that they have been taken out of an assembled multitude, our words imply selection: they imply that those not thus selected are left behind.*

* The word *ἀναστασις* is once used in Scripture in its primary sense of rising again, in the sense in which one rises after a fall. "Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again (*ἀνίστασιν*) of many in Israel." In every other place, (and it occurs forty-one times) it is used of resurrection, properly so called, *i. e.* resurrection of the body.

The reason why it is never applied to the quickening of the soul is obvious. In that case, there is a *new creation*, not the rising again of anything that in any sense existed previously. Accordingly, in Ephesians, we read of the "NEW MAN which after God is CREATED in righteousness," etc., and similar expressions are used in the Colossians. Now, "creation" and "resurrection" are contrasted exercises of Divine power, and therefore we never find "resurrection" applied to the quickening of the soul.

Moreover, quickening of the soul must in every case *precede*

Nor could the expression "church of the firstborn ones" (ἐκκλησία των πρωτοτοκων) be explained unless there were a *first* resurrection. Chrst is called, "The first-born from the dead," because He has *first* risen into glory. On the same ground a part of the church are called, "The church of the first-born," because they precede another part of the church, who will in due time follow; and form in the new heavens and new earth, which will be created *after* the millennial heavens and earth have passed away, one glorified church for ever.

And if we turn to the Old Testament, how conclusive the evidence there! In the last chapter of Zechariah, for example, we are taught respecting the coming of the "Day of the Lord," and how it will usher in the long promised blessing to Jerusalem and to the earth: "In that day Jerusalem shall be lifted up and inhabited in her place, . . . and there shall be no more utter destruction, but Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited." "In that day the Lord shall be king over ALL THE EARTH; in that day there shall be one Lord, and His name one." No one can say that these things have been fulfilled as yet; no one, unless he rejects the testimony of the prophet, will deny that these things will be fulfilled in their season. But what event

the resurrection spoken of in the passages above quoted. St. Paul was already quickened when he spoke of pressing on towards the resurrection from the dead. The souls of those "beheaded for the witness of Jesus" were quickened before they were beheaded, and consequently before they "lived and reigned."

is spoken of as *preceding* the period of blessing to Jerusalem and "all the earth"? The manifestation of the Lord with all His saints. *That* is the preceding event. "His feet (the feet of the Lord) shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, . . . the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee." No one, I suppose, will affirm that the saints who thus accompany the Lord when He stands upon the Mount of Olives, will be in a *disembodied* state. If any should affirm it, they may be referred to the Epistle to the Thessalonians, where the Apostle teaches us that the saints, in changed and glorified bodies, will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and to come with Him. Now, if they meet the Lord in glorified bodies *in the air*, they must be in glorified bodies when His feet stand on the Mount of Olives. If then, as is taught by Zechariah, the saints accompany the Lord when He comes to the mount of Olives, and if Jerusalem and the earth teem with inhabitants afterwards, there must be two periods of resurrection; for those in Israel and among the nations who are brought into the fold of faith during the millennium, must finally be changed, and bear the likeness of their risen Lord, otherwise, they could not be saved persons. All the saved must finally bear the image of the Heavenly, even as they have borne the image of the earthy.

Again, in Daniel vii, where the Son of Man is seen to receive "dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages, should serve Him," we are also taught that "the saints of the high places shall take the kingdom, and possess the

kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever": and again, "Judgment was given to the saints of the high places; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom." Shall we say that those who will thus reign together with Christ from the "high" or "heavenly places" are disembodied saints? If not, there must be a first resurrection.

Again, observe the quotation from Isaiah in the fifteenth chapter of the first of Corinthians. The Apostle is speaking of the time when "the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory." These words,—“Death shall be swallowed up in victory”—are a quotation from Isaiah xxv. But in what connexion do they there occur? They occur in a passage which describes the final forgiveness and blessing of Israel, and the blessing of all nations in connexion with Israel. The passage in Isaiah is as follows: "Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the Lord of Hosts shall reign in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before His ancients gloriously. . . . And in this mountain (Zion) shall the Lord of Hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, . . . and He will destroy in this mountain (Zion) the face of the covering cast over all people, and the vail that is spread over all nations. HE WILL SWALLOW UP DEATH IN VICTORY; and the Lord God will wipe away

tears from off all faces ; and the rebuke of His people shall He take away from off all the earth, for the Lord has spoken it. . . . In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah," etc. If then the words of St. Paul in the Corinthians are to be fulfilled at the time when "the rebuke of Israel is to be taken away from off all the earth," and when they, together with the nations, shall be converted to the Lord, is it not very manifest that the resurrection of the saints precedes the reign of peace ?

In the succeeding chapter too—a chapter devoted to the description of forgiven Israel's confession and praise—we find the following words addressed by the Lord to them : "Thy dead men shall live, my dead body, they shall arise.* Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust ; for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead." The departed saints of Israel are here spoken of as Christ's *mystical* body, at present dead. The Lord calls them, "My dead body." But in the morning of Israel's joy, they shall arise. They shall be bound no longer then in the bonds of death. Surely, it well becomes the great Head of Israel, in that day of glory, to call those who have mourned with Him over Israel's and the earth's darkness and woe, to rejoice with Him in the day of Israel's and the earth's gladness.

And do we doubt that at present all creation groaneth ? "The whole creation," says the Apostle, "groaneth and travaileth in pain together until

* Such is the proper rendering of this passage.

now." When, then, is this groan to cease? When is creation to be delivered? At "the *manifestation*" (or rather '*revelation*,' ἀποκαλύψις) of the sons of God." Such is the statement of the Apostle in the eighth of Romans. Shall we reject it?

Our appointed hope, therefore, is not resurrection only, but resurrection accompanied with certain circumstances of joy and triumph in earth and heaven, which, by God's appointment, throw an added halo of blessing around that hour of life. The coming of the Lord to "reign gloriously," and to fill the earth with the blessings of truth, and righteousness, and peace; the destruction of the great human head of evil—Antichrist; the binding of Satan; the conversion of Israel, and subsequently of the nations; the release of creation from its groan; these, and like events are, *together with* our own resurrection, our appointed objects of expectation and hope. And remember, it is God who appoints these objects, and therefore, it is not for us to substitute for them any self-chosen objects. Truth only sanctifies. "Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth." Our expectations are to be guided, not by our own conjectures, but by Scripture. If God had bidden us wait for the general resurrection as our hope, then that would have been the right sanctifying object of expectation. But if He has not commanded us this; if He has commanded us instead to wait for the joy of the millennial morning, when the heavens shall rejoice and the earth be glad; if He has been pleased to describe the character of the glory that is then to be ours, and has made the commencement of the day of the joy of Israel, His people, the moment

also of *our* being raised into glory, shall we venture to despise these things, and say that they will never be ours ; and persist in expecting things that God has told us not to expect—cancelling, as it were, the promise of His holy word.

I would not desire to speak with undue harshness of those who reject the truth of the first resurrection ; but we are bound, for the truth's sake, energetically to resist their statements. It is no light thing to assert, as one well known opponent of these truths is wont to do, that creation no longer groans. What ! have we indeed no ear to hear the groan ? Did the Lord Jesus, when He trod this earth, think that creation did not groan ? Did the Apostle Paul think so ? And surely the condition of creation has not altered since. If creation had ceased to groan, the sons of God would have been "REVEALED" long since in their glory. (Rom. viii.) Are they thus revealed ? "Beloved," says the Apostle, "now are we the sons of God, but it hath not yet been manifested (*οὐπω ἐφανερώθη*) what we shall be." The same principle that would lead us to say that the sons of God have been manifested, and that creation had ceased to groan, would lead us also to say with Hymenæus and Philetus, that the resurrection was past already.

Another well known Christian minister, in sermons preached before the University of Oxford,* affirms

* Bampton Lectures for the year 1854, preached before the University of Oxford, by the Hon. and Rev. SAMUEL WALDEGRAVE, M.A., Rector of Barford St. Martin, Wilts, and late Fellow of All Souls College.

that the millennium has already passed, having ended at the Protestant Reformation! During the thousand years that preceded the Reformation, he affirms that the saints of God (the Albigenses and Waldenses, for example) "lived and reigned with Christ: for although persecuted and martyred, they were, nevertheless, quickened together with Christ, and raised up together with Him," according to the second of Ephesians; and this Mr. Waldegrave holds to be the same thing as "reigning" with Him. Now, if indeed, the "reigning with Christ," be identical with "being quickened" with Him, and if none reigned previous to A.D. 517, nor after A.D. 1517, it is obvious that St. Paul, and the other saints who lived before the supposed reign commenced, and Luther and others who have lived after it, cannot have been quickened with Christ, nor raised up together with Him. It could not have been true of the Ephesians that they were seated in heavenly places in Christ; and we of the present day must have been all mistaken in supposing that we could read the second chapter of the Ephesians and apply it to ourselves. According to Mr. Waldegrave, it describes a reigning with Christ—a reign that commenced in A.D. 517, and ended in A.D. 1517,* in which, therefore, the Apostles and ourselves can have had no part.

Mr. Waldegrave further thinks that during the

* In A.D. 1517, Luther published his propositions. In that year, therefore, we may place the commencement of the Reformation; when, according to Mr. Waldegrave, the millennium ended.

thousand years that preceded the Reformation, Satan was bound and shut up in the bottomless pit, and ceased to deceive the nations—the nations being interpreted to mean (for what reason does not appear) “nominal Christians.” Mr. Waldegrave thinks “the bottomless pit” to be “a symbol for the people and nations upon earth,” so that when Satan is described as cast bound into the bottomless pit, it implies merely that “he is forbidden to propagate any new religious delusion amongst nominal Christians.” But the Scripture says that Satan is to be bound “in order that he might not any longer deceive the nations” (*ἵνα μὴ πλανᾷ ἐτι τὰ ἔθνη*), i.e., that he might not deceive them at all. Have we any authority to alter the words of God, and to say that Satan is to deceive with old, but not with new deceptions? And if “the bottomless pit” means “nations,” will Mr. Waldegrave say what the key of the bottomless pit symbolises? And does Mr. Waldegrave really mean that the interval betwixt A.D. 517 and A.D. 1517 was the millennium of God, “when the kingdom, and dominion, and greatness of the kingdom UNDER the whole heaven, was given unto the people of the saints of the Most High—when the wolf and the lamb fed together—when nations learned war no more? Does he really mean to say that there were no *fresh* delusions of Satan during that period? Popery itself was not consolidated until A.D. 606; and Mahomedanism dates from A.D. 622. Was Mahomedanism no fresh delusion? Were the crusades and the sanctification of chivalry, and the sale of indulgences, no fresh delusions? Had Satan nothing

to do with these things? We have certainly been accustomed to believe that from the days of the Apostles until now, Satan has been "the prince of the power of the air, the spirit *that now worketh* in the children of disobedience": we have thought that he, and the evil spirits that are under him, were "the rulers of the darkness of this age"; against whom every saint has had to wrestle; and that he had never ceased from being "the roaring lion going about seeking whom he might devour." But, according to Mr. Waldegrave, all this must have ceased to be true during the thousand years that preceded the Reformation; and the Epistles of the New Testament must of course have ceased to apply, for they throughout describe Satan as *acting*.

Again in the fourth verse of Rev. xx, we find these words: "They (the saints) lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead **LIVED NOT UNTIL** the thousand years were finished." Now, although the description of the final resurrection at the close of this chapter, where all the dead, small and great, were seen to stand before God, might be supposed sufficient to deter any interpreter from explaining the words, "**LIVED NOT UNTIL**," of any other event; yet Mr. Waldegrave boldly affirms that these words have no reference to resurrection. He understands them to refer to a spiritual quickening of a great body of souls that are to be brought to God after the thousand years are finished. But observe what such a statement as this involves. In that case, the millennium, instead of being what Scripture declares it to be, the great harvest-time of souls, is made

the scene of the dominant power of evil under him "whose coming is after the working of Satan," etc. (although Satan is at the same time supposed to be bound), and "the little season" after the millennium, when Satan is *unbound*, is to be the great period for the ingathering of souls. Observe too, that the words, "the rest of the dead," are strictly *universal*; including, without exception, *all* who are dead at the time spoken of. If, then, "dead" here means those who are spiritually dead, all the spiritually dead throughout the whole earth must be quickened and brought to God the moment after the millennium is ended. Who, then, will remain for Satan to deceive? Is he to deceive those who have thus been brought to God? And is he to bring them up against God to be consumed by fire from heaven, the moment after they have been converted?

Many other similar statements might be commented on, but I have said enough—perhaps, more than enough—on this painful subject. It is useful, however, to observe what hopeless perplexities involve us if we quit the plain obvious sense of Scripture. Perhaps Mr. Waldegrave may reconsider and recall these statements. If he were solemnly to consider the early declaration of the Apostle, that the heavens are to receive the Lord Jesus, not till *the destruction*, but "till the times of RESTITUTION of all things," if he would remember that there is to be a time when the dominion "UNDER the whole heaven" is to be given to the saints: and that the stone which is to smite the image is not to become a great mountain, and fill the whole earth, until that Gentile image which now stands so strong is first

ground to powder; and that the Son of Man cannot be brought before the Ancient of Days in the manner described in Daniel, until the time comes for the ten-horned beast, the last inheritor of the power committed to the Gentiles, to be destroyed; if he were to consider these things he would soon see that his present opinions, and the statements of these passages, cannot co-exist.

It is no doubt true that many incautious and unscriptural statements have been made by millennial writers, both in the early centuries and now. But it is not impossible to separate between chaff and wheat. Truth is not to be rejected because its advocates may err.

We may hold the doctrine of the first resurrection and of the millennial reign of Christ without renouncing the truth that Jesus was, and is, and ever shall be, a King. He is also the great Melchisedek *priest*, and will be for ever. They who are converted in the millennium will be dependent on His priesthood and intercession, as much as they who are converted now. In the millennium it will still be true, that in Christ there is "neither Jew nor Gentile, male nor female, bond nor free," all being one in Him risen. Nothing that is now *spiritually* true of believers will cease to be true of Christ's people in the millennium. In this dispensation we forestall the *spiritual* blessings of the millennium; but, seeing that it is a dispensation of suffering, not of triumph, we have not the outward blessings.

But although it is true that Christ sitteth on the throne of God, and exerciseth the power of that throne, having all power in heaven and earth, yet it

is also true, that from the days of Daniel until now, the throne of God has *delegated* certain power in the earth to successive Gentile empires, the last of which has not yet run its course. Now, delegated power must of necessity *belong* to him who delegates it; but its immediate administration is in the hands of those to whom it is delegated. This delegated power is to be resumed by the throne of God when the Ancient of Days shall sit, and Christ will enter on the *administration* thereof; and this "taking to Himself His great power" will commence the millennial reign.

Again, even as the *earthly* distinction between male and female, bond and free, subsists now, between those who are nevertheless one in Christ risen (the man having, even in the church, privileges which the woman has not), so in the earthly arrangements of the millennium, although governmental precedence will be granted to Israel in the earth ("to thee shall it come, even the first dominion, the kingdom shall come to the daughter of Jerusalem"), yet this will not prevent Jew and Gentile being one in Christ risen.

Nor do we in saying that Christ and the risen saints will reign over Israel and the earth, imply that earth will ever again be their home. Heaven will be their home. The saints are themselves called "the saints of the high or heavenly places." We do not doubt that Moses and Elias appeared in glory on the holy mount. They stood on earth, and were seen on earth. Yet earth was not their home. They went away into the cloud of glory above.

Nor is the millennial the final dispensation. It is

not "the dispensation of the fulness of times." After the millennium has passed, He who sitteth on the throne shall say, "Behold, I make all things new"; and then new heavens and a new earth will be made, where no traces of the first Adam will be found; where the flesh will cease to be, and all be formed in suitability to the heavenly glory of the Second Man. The millennial saints will say, even as we now do, "We wait for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." The resurrection of the church of the FIRST-BORN will be a step onward in the path of blessing, but it will not be the consummation. If these things be remembered, no doctrine connected with the first resurrection and the millennial reign will be found to jar with any part of the faith once delivered to the saints, nor will one part of Scripture be found at variance with another; the Old Testament and the New Testament will be found to bear concurrent witness to the sufferings of Christ and the glory that is to follow, and the suffering saints will not be deprived of their appointed objects of faith and hope.

NOTE.

“The rest of the dead LIVED NOT.” (Rev. xx, 5.) Such is the right reading in this passage — *εζησαν* not *ανεζησαν*, “lived not,” and not “lived not *again*.” It is important to observe how “*live*” is thus by itself used to signify resurrection. Just, therefore, as the personal name, David, is not applied to the soul or spirit of David as it now exists in the paradise of God, but is reserved to denote David when restored to the full possession of all his powers *in body* as well as soul and spirit (on which account the Apostle says, “David is not ascended into the heavens”) so, the words “live” and “life,” when used in their full and proper sense, denote not existence merely, but the *possession* and *development* of all those powers which pertain to man in the integrity of his nature, *i.e.* as having a *body* as well as soul and spirit. Consequently, although the souls of the departed are with Christ in conscious blessedness (there is no such thing as the sleep of the soul) yet the saints are not said to LIVE in the sense of this passage, until they receive their spiritual bodies, and are therefore able to develop the proper powers that pertain to their condition.

Accordingly, the word *ζωοποιεω*, which properly means “to make alive,” and is commonly translated quicken, is continually used of resurrection. “He

that raised up Christ from the dead, shall also *quicken* (ζωοποιήσει) your mortal bodies because of His Spirit that dwelleth in you." (δια το ενοικουν Πνευμα. See also the use of ζωοποιεω in 1 Cor. xv, where it is used of resurrection throughout.)

In the conversation also of our Lord with the Sadducees, as recorded in Luke xx, 34, His argument rests upon the force of the word "live" as meaning *resurrection*. The Sadducees said that there would be no resurrection. Our Lord replies that in that case God could not be called the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. If they were not to be raised, if their bodies were to remain in the power of death, God would not be called their God, for "He is the God, not of the dead, but of the LIVING." The dispute of the Sadducees with the Lord did not relate to the existence of the disembodied spirits of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but to their *resurrection*.

There is also a passage in Daniel xii, the explanation of which depends on "LIFE" meaning resurrection. "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting LIFE, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." This verse will be seen from the context to belong to the time when Antichrist is destroyed and Israel forgiven. At that time all who have followed Antichrist, even all who have worshipped the beast or his image, shall not be raised again, but shall "awake" in the second death. The wicked dead generally, will, at the last resurrection, be restored for a short season to the possession of their bodily powers, and "live" in

order that they may stand before the great white throne and be judged according to their works. Thus they are seen in three conditions:—First in death; secondly, raised again in order to be judged; thirdly, cast into the lake of fire, which is the second death. But they who follow Antichrist will be an exception to this appointment. Their doom is pronounced already. (See Rev. xiv, 9—11.) They will be destroyed by the brightness of the Lord's coming, and immediately after, their bodies will be revived in the second death. "They shall go forth, and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh." (Isa. lxvi, 24.) The word "awake," therefore, in this passage of Daniel, does not imply resurrection; but "awake unto LIFE" does.

A text sometimes quoted as if opposed to the doctrine of the first resurrection is 2 Tim. iv, 1. But the true reading of the passage is as follows: "I testify before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who is about to judge the quick and the dead, both His appearing and His kingdom." This the Apostle says was the continual subject of his testimony. Διαμαρτυρομαι ενωπιον του Θεου, και του Κυριου Ιησου Χριστου του μελλοντος κρινειν ζωντας και νεκρους, και την επιφανειαν αυτου και την βασιλειαν αυτου.

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