

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

"Teaching the things concerning the kingdom of God..."

FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE

Part 221

THE FIRST RESURRECTION

“And I saw thrones, and they sat upon 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...this is the first resurrection*” (Rev. 20:4-5).

Of all the dreams the heart of man has ever entertained, none has been more desirable, precious, and worthy of attainment, regardless of the cost, than the dream of immortality. Let's be honest; if there was an elixir that was developed guaranteed to give immortality to our physical bodies, we would all buy it and drink it! Kings and emperors who have conquered the world would gladly have exchanged the power, glory, and wealth of their kingdoms for immortality. But all the wealth of all the nations that lay prostrate before their victorious armaments, even combined with all the riches amassed in their vast treasure houses, could not buy them so much as one single second's extension of time.

“It is appointed unto man once to die,” say the Word of God. And, short of the coming into the world of Jesus Christ, nothing would ever have changed that! It is as inevitable as God Himself can make it. Millionaires may offer their doctors vast fortunes to prolong their lives a month...a day...at least an hour...or even a few minutes. From time to

time I have seen the advertisement of a new drug which is touted as a *major breakthrough* in the fight against some dread disease, which is exceedingly expensive, costing thousands of dollars per treatment, only to discover that in the studies that were done it prolonged the victim's life by a mere three or four months. But there comes a time when all the money in the world cannot stay the hand of death. The word "death" has many meanings to many people. And it also has various applications and significances in the scriptures. To some it means the final and futile end of all their efforts — the leaving behind of all that they have striven for all their lives. There were no pockets in the ancient burial shroud, for those departing this world take with them only what they have in their hearts. All other treasures — no matter how valuable, or what the cost to the individual accumulating them — are left behind. Then, too, there is the sorrow of departing with loved ones. This is death's most devastating blow — the absence of someone we love so dearly. And, if this were the end, we would be most miserable indeed. **BUT IT DOES NOT END THERE!**

The resurrection from the dead is indeed a thing which seems incredible to the mind of the natural man. Yet almost two millenniums ago Jesus of Nazareth proclaimed by the Spirit of God these startling words: "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die" (Jn. 11:25-26). This, of course, is the greatest thing anybody could ever know and this assurance centers in Jesus Christ and His resurrection. This is the hope and the only hope of all mankind! Until Christ came into the world men had no hope. We do not realize that today. We think that people have always had hope. But that is not so! Except for those few people who clung to the promises of God given in the Old Testament, most of the world, more than 99.9 percent of them, dwelt in absolute hopelessness. There was no substantial promise; there was no concrete evidence; there was no man in any civilization, culture, or religion that had ever conquered death or risen from the grave; there was nothing but the vain wish which was so often the father of the thought that perhaps people who died lived still in another world, or should come back reincarnated in another body, and thus live again. Everywhere, people watched with great despair as their loved ones were lowered into the grave. "If a man die, shall he live again?" was the burning question left unanswered. There were nothing

but shadowy unsubstantial wishes that filled the hearts of men. And in the night watches, those cold doubts came swirling into the heart and mind, chilling the soul; thoughts that came right out of the sepulcher and the tomb.

But then...Jesus came and all was changed! Life and immortality were brought to light by Christ and His resurrection from the dead. The dark door of death was broken down, and One stepped back into this world from that dread realm. This was no vain speculation; this was a CERTAINTY! Hundreds of credible witnesses saw Him, talked with Him, touched Him, held Him. This was no mere argument but a resurrected Christ! This was nothing like the pale hopes of the Egyptians who thought that their people would come back and through some transmigration of the soul would go into one sort of animal after another until finally they made it back into human form again. This was nothing like the foolish hopes of the Eastern religions and so-called Metaphysics who trusted in the reincarnation of their souls into mortal human bodies again and again throughout long ages, to bring them ultimately to perfection and oneness with God. Instead of reincarnation the Bible teaches resurrection. What a difference! This was nothing like the early Greeks described by Homer in the Odyssey, where Odysseus and Achilles go into the nether world and see those miserable shades, the ghosts of people who had died. What a terrible picture they paint, where all alike are miserable. Ghosts flit aimlessly about, some more tormented than the rest, but none finding joy or satisfaction, until Achilles says, "I would rather be a poor paid servant in a poor man's house and be above the ground than be king of kings among the dead."

Jesus Christ came and offered no vain speculation or philosophical argument, but offered His living body as the One that had risen from the dead. Christ arose from the dead and that was the greatest moment in the history of this world. He declared, "Because I live, ye shall live also" (Jn. 14:19). What a wonderful thing that is, to live forevermore! To live forevermore in a new body *fashioned like unto His glorious body* with no more pain, no more aches, no more arthritis, no more back trouble, no more diabetes, no more clogged arteries, no more gout, no more cancer, no more weakness, ageing, nor death! All of that is gone. We shall have a new body, fashioned after His own body of glory and

power, a body of immortality and incorruption, where the sting and the dark victory of death shall be forever abolished. Aren't you glad!

Therefore the Spirit saith, "We look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able to subdue *all things* unto Himself" (Phil. 3:20-21). Here we have the top of the ladder, reaching into the celestial realm — the blessed end to which Christ and life in Him is to lead. Beloved brethren! Let us lay aside all presumption and purge ourselves of every form of deception. I admonish you this day — do not allow any man to deceive you into believing that he can in some way minister immortality into your mortal body — unless he himself dwells in an immortal body! Some have professed to be able to baptize people into immortality, while others have said, "Come and follow me, grab onto my coattail, and I will lead you into life and immortality!" Some have held seminars to teach people how to put on immortality, some have attempted to confess or meditate their way into life, while others have foolishly hoped to live forever by eating health food. I can tell you without any fear of contradiction that all the fruitarians and vegetarians and food faddists of all previous generations are now lying silent in their graves along with all who subscribed to any other "method" or "technique" devised by man for putting on immortality. Jesus was the first man to break the death-barrier and He did not do so by employing any of the methods listed above! Some in our day have professed to have already put on immortality, to have even now passed over the grave; but it should be obvious to any thinking mind that the wrinkles in their skin, the gray in their hair, the redness in their tired eyes, the daily need for food, water, and sleep, the constant need for air, and the unchecked ageing of their bodies give the lie to their confession. I remember sitting in one man's living room who said that he was already immortal and could not die, and, furthermore he recounted thrilling stories about him and his wife traveling about from place to place caught up by the Spirit as was Phillip in the book of Acts. Yet as I sat before him he was unable to rise from his chair because of intense pain he was suffering, which he attributed to demons that were attacking him because of his stand for truth. I passed his way again a couple years later only to discover that he had died and was now both dead and buried.

The word cannot be broken: “For our conversation is in heaven, ***from whence we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: WHO SHALL CHANGE OUR VILE BODY...***” How can corruption impart incorruption? How can any man lift either himself or others out of the pit of corruption by his own corruptible boot straps? “To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the TREE OF LIFE WHICH IS IN THE MIDST OF THE PARADISE OF GOD,” saith the Lord. Let me present this Tree of Life: Christ, risen, glorified, and exalted above all heavens! HE is the tree of life in the paradise of the kingdom of heaven on earth! It is there in that paradise of God where it is blessedly true that He “hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus” (Eph. 2:6). Oh, yes, we are seated together *with Him* in the heavens of the Spirit of the Lord!

Once we see that in that kingdom we have been *translated into* we are living and walking *in heaven*, understanding will soon dawn of what the apostle means when he says that “our conversation is *in heaven*.” The word “conversation” literally means “manner of life” or “lifestyle.” The living out of our life is a heavenly reality! We dwell in a heavenly dimension! Having first placed us “in heaven” the apostle then continues, “***From whence we look*** for the Saviour.” He is not saying that the Saviour is coming from heaven, and when He comes He will change our vile body. Oh, no! Heaven in the apostle’s statement is not connected to Christ’s coming, it is connected with OUR LOOKING. “For our conversation is in heaven, ***from whence we look...***” Can you not see the mystery? IT IS OUT OF OUR HEAVENLY LIFE IN CHRIST THAT WE ARE LOOKING FOR THE SAVIOUR TO CHANGE OUR VILE BODY! It has nothing to do with Christ “coming” to change us. It has everything to do with our heavenly expectation, that just as we are seated *with Christ* in the heavens — so we are looking for Him to also ***change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body.***” This is not merely revelation, to be left for the future; for the full development of our life in sonship we must seek to enter into and appropriate it. We do this as we learn to triumph over death on every level. We do it as we learn to look to Christ as the Lord of our body, claiming its entire consecration, securing even here and now victory over the terrible dominion sin has had in the body. “Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.” It did so in Adam and Eve, and it will also do so in us. We appropriate His life for our

whole man as we allow the powers of the coming age to possess us, to lift us up into a life in the heavenly places, to enlarge our hearts and our views, to anticipate, even here and now, the things which have never entered into the heart of man to conceive.

Let us now see how it is that “in Christ” all shall be *made alive*. The verse under consideration is found in I Corinthians 15:22, and this entire chapter deals with resurrection. The word resurrection is so inadequate to express the true thought or idea that the Holy Spirit is conveying to us. The common conception of this word carries with it the idea of opening all the graves in the world and the arising out of them of the physical bodies of those who have died. But since death is something more than dead bodies, you can be assured, dear ones, that resurrection is something far beyond bringing bodies out of tombs. To have a false or limited view of the resurrection is to have a false and limited view of God’s work throughout the ages until now. If our view of the resurrection is dwarfed, then our whole view of God’s plan is dwarfed.

“For as in Adam *all die*, even so in Christ shall *all be made alive*.” So we read that in Christ ALL SHALL BE MADE ALIVE. The contrast is not between corpses and walking bodies, but between the dying process and the life process in God. The Greek text actually reads, “As in Adam *all are dying*, *so* in the Christ shall all be made alive.” The terms “are dying” and “shall be made alive” are in the incomplete tense in the original, which denotes an action in progress. The long drawn out activity of death in dragging men down to sin, sorrow, death, and the grave is put in contrast with the endless activity of life imparting holiness, power, incorruption, and glory. Both are a *process!* All who endured the first shall enjoy the second. Here is a message for mankind which should lift it above its misery! The process of His life, and hence, the process of resurrection has already commenced with us. It began the moment we were first quickened by Him and will consummate when we have fully grown up into Him in all things! Truly, “*He hath quickened us* together with Christ...and *hath raised us up*” so that “If ye then *be risen* with Christ, seek those things which are above” (Eph. 2:5-6; Col. 3:1). We all know we have been quickened and raised up and made to sit with Him in heavenly places, but we also know that we still have a corruptible, mortal body. The

work of resurrection has therefore begun in a part of our being, and is being progressively worked out until our total transformation is complete. Yes, it is a process!

To be “made alive” is more than some instantaneous event to take place some time in the distant future. “Made alive” is not a blasting open of graves and the coming forth of the bodies that have been buried in them. “Made alive” does not point to some event when people will be soaring off into the heavens. When Jesus stood before the tomb of Lazarus, He rebuked Martha for looking for some manner of event in the far distant future, for she had said, “I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection *at the last day.*” Jesus told her that the RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE WAS STANDING THERE BEFORE THEM. “*I AM the resurrection and the life.*” Oh, saints of God, do you not see that the eternal Father within the Christ was and is the resurrection? “I live by the Father,” Jesus declared. The resurrection was not some *thing* that happened to Jesus, not some *event* of which He was a partaker, not some *day* marked by the calendar. The resurrection was and is A MAN! “I AM!” — there it is! “I AM the resurrection and the life.” To possess the Man, to put on the Man, to come into union with the Man, to grow into the Man is to have the resurrection, for the Man IS the resurrection. “*In Christ shall all be made alive.*”

This is what Paul is speaking of in the fifteenth chapter of I Corinthians. He bases his argument on the fact of whether or not the Christ has risen from the dead. In verse sixteen we read from the Diaglott, “For if dead persons are not raised up, NEITHER HAS CHRIST BEEN RAISED.” Please notice, and most other translations bear this out, Paul says, “If dead persons *are not* (present tense) raised up...” He did not say, “If dead persons *will not be* (future tense) raised up...” He placed it in the present, that if the dead *are not* raised up, then the CHRIST IS NOT RAISED. If Jesus the Christ is the *only one so far* raised from the dead, He is most assuredly having a lonely time of it, and He too is looking with wistful eyes into the unknown future, waiting for the graves to open. But there is a note of triumph in Paul’s epistle, and that epistle comes right out of Paul’s own personal experience, when he proclaims in verse twenty, “BUT NOW IS CHRIST RISEN FROM THE DEAD, and become the firstfruits of

THEM THAT SLEPT.” Ah, the word “sleep” is in the past tense, them that SLEPT. This can but mean that they are not sleeping now, and Christ has already led forth from the dominion of death an unknown host who are WITH HIM IN THE LIFE OF THE RESURRECTION! “If ye then *be risen* with Christ, seek those things which are above.”

Truly the resurrection is not a future hope — it is a present reality. As those in Adam “are dying” so in Christ men “*are being made alive.*” Men do not die in one day, but they “are dying” and one day the process is complete and the body goes to the cemetery. So in Christ men “are being made alive” and they are not made alive in the totality of being in one single day or in one spiritual experience. Receiving of His life we find it to be a RESURRECTION LIFE. The word “resurrection” is from the Greek word *anastasis* meaning — a standing or rising up. It denotes much more than our English word resurrection which we term to mean a restoring to life again. The Greek word means the WHOLE PROCESS OF ADVANCING AND RISING UP UNTIL THE HIGHEST POSSIBLE REALM IS REACHED, and our goal is nothing short of full conformation into the image of God that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him. Merely coming back to life, to this miserable life we have known in corruption, is not enough! We want to know Him in the power of HIS RESURRECTION! Resurrection is the process of *standing up* and *advancing*, it is arising from the dust and the low realm of the earthy, to bear the image of the heavenly. Resurrection is the process of having our life lifted up from the earth, to be raised in spirit, soul, *and* body into the heavenlies, joined in one in the fullness of the Spirit of God. Our alienation and separation from God, with all the dreadful attending sorrows, are already beginning to end in this life as through Christ WE ARE MADE ALIVE!

The hope of all the glory to come is the Christ that is in His body on earth now. The hope of the resurrection to come is that He is *now* our resurrection and our life! The Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwells in us now. Does this not make us the body in which Jesus Christ is walking today? No longer the carpenter of Nazareth, or the teacher by the shores of Galilee, having God in Him, but now in this 21st century, He is living on earth not only in one, but in a multitude of bodies. “*Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost?*” Jesus said, “*The Father and I will come and make our*

abode with you.” Jesus Christ lives in every member of His body! That is the mystery, that with our limitations, our frustrations, our weaknesses, with the marks of the Fall still upon us it is said of us, “Greater is He that is in you, than He that is in the world.” We are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. One of these days, as He becomes more and more expressed and manifested in us, He will “change these vile bodies, that they shall be made like unto His glorious body.” Corporately He is arising more and more in His body! Paul says, “We groan within ourselves, we who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, waiting for the adoption *which is the redemption of our body.*” As glorious and wonderful and mighty as it is to have the life of Jesus Christ made manifest in this mortal flesh, the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead expressing and manifesting through these mortal bodies, we can never be satisfied until this life of His within shall do such an ultimate work of transformation that, as Paul said, “*Behold, I show you a mystery: We shall **not all sleep**, but we shall all be **changed** in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.*”

We are moving into the days of the seventh angel of Revelation 10:7 sounding the last trumpet. “*For the trumpet shall sound and 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***” (I Cor. 15:52-54). The life of Christ in us will conquer all sin and death! It begins with a mystery and it ends with a mystery. Whenever you begin with God you must end with God. It begins with the mystery of the unveiling of Christ in the church which is His body, and it ends with the mystery when the trumpet blows and the mystery of God is finished and this corruptible puts on incorruption, and this mortal puts on immortality. It is a mystery all the way through and the mystery produces a progressive change within us from one glory to another, beginning in our spirit and working out into the soul, and finally swallowing up the body. If you stop short of the second mystery it would give the idea that because Christ who conquered death lives in you He will conquer death in you and you simply will not die. But do you want to live forever in the shape you are in today? Yes, the life of Christ fills me with joy and peace and victory today and He has given*

wonderful gifts of healing, provision, and blessings of many kinds. But there is something greater than this! In order for the full power and glory of HIS RESURRECTION to be brought to its ultimate completion, our soul must be fully saved and these bodies must be changed to be like HIS GLORIOUS BODY. It is necessary that that life and that glory which has resided in these limited, mortal, dying bodies shall then have an opportunity for a full expression in a glorious, incorruptible, immortal body. It is indeed wonderful!

While it is gloriously true that Christ has given His life to all men, to the whole world, yet it is evident that there must be a progression in the development of that life in the experience of every man until every vestige of the death realm has been swallowed up, spirit, soul, and body. To those who walk with Christ there is an ever-increasing consciousness, growth, increase, unfoldment, maturation, and triumph of that life! The mighty working of His power within is followed by this very precious and understandable result: “If the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ shall also *quicken* (make alive) your *mortal* (dying) *bodies* by His Spirit that dwelleth in you” (Rom. 8:11). I believe I now see more clearly than I have ever done why it was that Paul, who, as you and I do, still dwelt in the hellish bondage of a mortal body cried out, “For this corruptible **must put on incorruption**, and this mortal **must put on immortality**...then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, **Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?**”

We are, indeed, terribly in bondage to the *body of this death*, and with us the whole creation is groaning, waiting for the day when the sons of God will fully come into their own and then deliver all creation from *the bondage of corruption*. I do not need to argue with any man to prove our present mortality in the flesh. If you must *sleep* to live, you are mortal. If you must *eat* to live, you are obviously mortal. If you must *breathe* to live, you are unquestionably mortal. We are all aware of our constant and unrelenting decay as the aging process etches its marks upon us. Our present mortality is naught but death, although we live in the spirit. Think of it! Meditate deeply upon it and cling to this realm of death no more. Reach up, my beloved, with the blessed arm of faith and embrace that bright realm above where that which is true in

our spirit reaches down and ***takes hold upon our outer man***, where this mortal ***puts on*** immortality, where death in all its aspects is ***swallowed up of life***, where in that final victory of His life within the sons of God will upon this earth shout in triumph over both death and the grave!

The process of resurrection implies *change* all along the way. Human beings, it seems, have always been afraid of change. When Sir Francis Drake learned about the potato in Peru and brought it back to Scotland, people refused to grow potatoes because they aren't mentioned in the Bible. When street lamps were introduced in Boston, local ministers preached against them, contending that "If God had intended this, He would have made the sun brighter and the moon more brilliant." The use of painkillers was also exposed by clergy who argued that bodies were created by God and should not be interfered with by chemicals. Change, however, is inevitable, and while some changes are bad, many of them are good. Not all change represents progress, but without change there can be no progress. Change is often unpleasant because it means surrendering what is familiar and leaving behind what we once valued. We often prefer to live by man-made rules that we think are constant and unchangeable. But God wants us to be controlled by His wind, by His Spirit! God's Spirit living within us HAS THE POWER TO CHANGE US FROM ONE DEGREE OF GLORY TO ANOTHER!

Truly we yearn for this change, for our desire is not to be unclothed, that is, to put off this body of flesh, but ***clothed upon*** with that glorious body of Christ out of the heavens that mortality may be swallowed up of life (I Cor. 5:1-5). Yes, we groan inwardly for this transformation to take place. As I have mentioned previously, I have met many brethren through the years who confessed that they had already put on immortality, had already passed over the grave and could not and would not die. I must be very honest and frank with you, my beloved brothers and sisters. I have not one whit of a desire to live forever IN THIS BODY OF HUMILIATION. There is no more frightening thought, no more repugnant possibility, than the idea that I might live forever, or even for a thousand years, in this body of humiliation! Thank God, there is to be a ***change!*** Hear it! "***Who will transform and fashion anew the body of our humiliation to conform and to be like the body of His glory and majesty, by exerting that power***

which enables Him even to subject everything to Himself” (Phil. 3:21, Amplified) What a marvelous thing!

The thought of merely adding immortality to *this body of humiliation*, with no other change, the suggestion of such limitation, that I might have to bathe, anoint my body with deodorant, brush my teeth, gargle with Scope, and do the thousand other things mortals must do to ameliorate the offensiveness of this flesh body, the hint that I might retain this base form, that I might remain *as I am* with only the added quality that I can't die, falls as far short of what I conceive of a body ***transformed and fashioned like unto the body of His glory and majesty*** as hell falls short of heaven! The body of incorruption shall resemble this vile body no more than does the oak tree resemble the chemical elements of the earth which were raised up into the substance of the tree by the mighty working of the subtle and mysterious life-force sown in the earth as a seed.

Sons of God! If we would be fashioned like unto Him, co-sharers of His glory and power and wisdom as the God-man, we must not simply rest content with the faith that trusts in the cross and its pardon; we must *follow on* to know the fullness of the New Life, the life of glory and power in human nature, injected into man through the resurrection of Christ from the dead, of which the Spirit of the glorified Jesus is the witness and the source. Now, practically everything in relationship to our sonship depends upon the clearness with which this great truth that I have stated is recognized. The Holy Spirit of God inspired the message of these words through the apostle Paul, “Much more then, *being now justified* by His blood, we *shall be saved* from wrath through Him. For if, when we were enemies, we *were reconciled to God* by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we **SHALL BE SAVED BY HIS LIFE**” (Rom. 5:9-11). The double provision of Christ is here clearly set forth: ***reconciled*** by His ***death***; ***saved*** by His ***life***. Oh, the mystery of it!

Christ's ***death*** is the atonement, reconciling men to God, granting a full and free admittance back into Eden's lovely garden from which our disobedient foreparents were once banished. But Christ's ***life*** is the Tree of Life in the garden, the source of the life which will work in us the complete transformation into the divine nature. Sin, sickness,

sorrow, fear, and death are all part of a *power* in our life; let us fully understand that it can only be met by another *higher power*. The power of sin and death works all through our life. The death of Christ, which is the atonement, reconciles us to God, but only the life of Christ can come against the power of sin and death and deliver our life from destruction. Reconciliation places us, in God's eyes, back in Eden's garden; but the Tree of Life is the power that delivers my life from the dominion of sin and death. He redeemeth my life, by His life, from death! Christ's life, not His death, living in our life, absorbing it, impregnating it, transforming it, causes us to live. This is the meaning of the profound sentence in which Paul records the first great work of salvation and pointedly distinguishes it from the second great work of salvation, saying, "If, when we were enemies, we were *reconciled* to God by the *death* of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we *shall be saved* (from sin and death) *by His life!*" The first is pardon, forgiveness; the second is transformation into His image and glory!

"We shall be saved by His LIFE," says Paul. Paul meant no disrespect to the atonement when he said, "We shall be saved by His life." He was bringing out one of the great facts of salvation. If God gives atoning power with one hand, and power to save the life from destruction with the other hand, there is no conflict between these. Both are from God! If you call the one justification and the other glorification, God is the author of them both. If Paul seems to take something from the one work and add it to the other, he takes nothing from God. Atonement is from God! Reconciliation is from God! Power to conquer sin and death in the full glory of Christ's resurrection is from God! Christ is all in all, the beginning and the end. When the thing we want is deliverance from the guilt of sin, which is condemnation, let us appropriate the gift God has given to remove our guilt — the DEATH of Christ. "In whom we have redemption through His blood, even the *forgiveness* of our sins" (Col. 1:14). When the thing we want is power to redeem our life from sin, corruption, and death, then let us apply the gift which God has given us for our life, the LIFE of the Son of God! "He that hath the Son *hath life.*"

With my small and limited ability I cannot make the truth of the transforming power of Christ's indwelling life to be a *living* reality in your heart. But I can share words of exhortation with the prayer that the

Holy Spirit will quicken them within your understanding thus releasing the power of life in your innermost being. There is a beautiful parable of this process of life which comes to us from the experience of the children of Israel in the wilderness as they journeyed toward their promised land. The story is told in the twenty-first chapter of Numbers. The people began to murmur and complain and they spoke against God and against Moses. “Why have you brought us out of Egypt to die in the wilderness,” they asked, “for there is no bread, neither is there any water, and we are tired of this manna.” Then the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people: and they bit the people and many Israelites died. The people came to Moses, and said, “We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord and against you: pray to the Lord, that He may take away the serpents from us.” So Moses prayed for the people. The Lord said to Moses, “Make a fiery serpent of bronze and raise it up on a pole; and everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, shall be healed and live.” So Moses made a serpent of bronze and put it on a pole, and if a serpent had bitten any man, when he looked to the serpent of bronze attentively, expectantly, with a steady and absorbing gaze, he was healed and lived.

When an Israelite was bitten by flaming serpents in the wilderness, he never thought of applying *manna* to the wound. The manna was for his *life*. But he did think of applying the bronze serpent. The manna would never have cured his snake bite, nor would the bronze serpent have kept him from starving! Suppose he had said, “Now I am healed by this serpent, so I need not eat the manna anymore. The serpent has spared my life and done everything for me, and I am preserved.” The result would have been, of course, that he would have *died*. The man, to be sure, was cured, delivered from the judgment of his rebellion against God, but he has to LIVE, and if he eats no manna his life must languish, and end in destruction and death. Without going to any trouble about it, simply by the inevitable processes of nature, he would have become a dead man. Thus we see that it was not a choice between the bronze serpent and the manna. He did not require one or the other — he must have *both*! The serpent must first redeem him from *judgment*; and then the manna was God’s provision to perpetually give him *life*, and only in the strength and energizing of the manna would he be enabled to reach his promised land — the fullness of God — if he continued on in faith. Now there is no contradiction between these two things — the bronze

serpent is from God and the manna is from God. But they are different gifts for different things. The serpent removed the judgment, but could not sustain life; the manna gave life, but could not deal with the sentence.

Now to apply this to the truth under consideration. The *death* of Christ, on the one hand, is the bronze serpent. “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up (on the cross)” (Jn. 3:14). Christ’s *life*, on the other hand, is the manna — the bread of life. “This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof and *not die*. I am the living bread which came down from heaven: *if any man eat of this bread*, he shall *live forever*, and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world” (Jn. 6:50-51). In the light of these remarkable words we can reach only one of two conclusions. Either *all* who have believed on Christ since that blessed day when these wonderful words poured from His divine lips have partaken of Him, eaten of His living flesh, and have *not died* but have begun to *live forever*, or, NO ONE HAS EATEN OF HIM FROM THAT DAY TO THIS, for all, saint and sinner alike, have continued to go by way of the grave. Either Christ *has* given eternal life to all who eat of Him, and there is a life — consciousness and being that transcends the grave — or He lied and did not give His flesh for the life of the world, so that none has ever sat at His table and received the life of which He spake. Do you really believe that God is that wicked that He would send forth redemption and then withhold it for another two thousand years? Let me ask you a question, my friend. If you had the power of immortality in your hand right now, would you wait another two thousand years to share it while billions of mankind continued to go out into endless nothingness? Wake up! my beloved, let us get beyond the fantasies and fairy tales of a merely carnal and earthly and physical understanding of truth! “He that hath the Son HATH LIFE,” saith the Lord. “And we *know* that we HAVE PASSED FROM DEATH UNTO LIFE,” add all who know and love the truth.

Of all the wealth of scripture truth nothing is more certain or clear than the fact that our sins are not forgiven by bread, nor are our lives nourished and supported by death. Our life is not made incorruptible and eternal by Christ’s death, nor transformed from glory to glory from the power of sin, death, and the grave by the atonement. Our life is not

redeemed from destruction by the crucifixion of Christ, nor is it brought to perfection from day to day by the death of Christ. But we are saved, as the Holy Ghost sayeth, “by HIS LIFE.” We cannot live upon death. And after, by the atonement, we are forgiven, and have entered by faith through the gateway into Eden’s fair garden, the kingdom of heaven on earth, having acceptance before God, we shall then be saved, delivered, changed, perfected, transformed, and fully glorified BY HIS LIFE!

The pattern for all this is clearly laid out in the opening chapters of Genesis. When man sinned, he was expelled from the Garden, from the life of the spirit in the presence and power of God. When the sinning and sorrowful couple left the Garden of God, the Lord placed fiery cherubim with flaming swords at the entrance to Eden to prevent man from entering back in, specifically to shut man up from the Tree of Life. That is clearly what the Hebrew text intimates. Now, some brethren have taught that in order to enter back into Eden we must pass through the flaming swords of the cherubim and have our flesh nature burned away. But that is a serious mistake! We do not enter back in through the flaming swords. Oh, no! We are forgiven, pardoned, reconciled and justified by the *death* of Christ. Can we not see by that that upon our pardon and reconciliation God *removed the cherubim with their flaming swords* so that we could re-enter Eden by *His sovereign grace*. It is grace that brings us in! “Just as I am without one plea, but that Thy blood was shed for me; and that Thou bidst me come to Thee — O Lamb of God, I come...I come!” That is the mystery. And why does He bring us back in by pure grace? **SO WE CAN BEGIN TO EAT OF THE TREE OF LIFE AND LIVE!** You don’t eat the fruit of the Tree of Life to get in; you are ushered in so you can have access again to the Life. And that is what will bring you to life, perfection, and glorification!

To sum up, therefore, it is one thing to be reconciled by the death of Christ, and quite another to be saved by His life. If forgiveness, reconciliation and justification could make men to be **CONFORMED TO THE IMAGE OF THE SON OF GOD** then all the baby Christians in all the carnal church systems of man would be well on their way to *sonship*. The death of Christ can make one a justified believer, bringing him *to life*, but only the mighty working of the indwelling Christ, only a constant and continual eating of the Tree of Life which He is can enable

us to put on the mind of Christ and be transformed in soul — mind, will, emotion, and desire — and then transfigured in body by the power of HIS RESURRECTION. He redeemeth my life from destruction. How? By His life! This is the power of a full and complete salvation! Unspeakable are the blessings of the high and heavenly realm of God's incorruptible life which flow from the glorified Christ in our spirit outward to the soul and at last to the body. Blessed Tree of Life! *It is ours*, for Jesus is ours. Blessed life of the ages! We have the possession within our earth of its hidden power, and we have the prospect before us of its fullest glory. May our daily lives, in all we think and say and do, be bright and blessed proof that the hidden power dwells within, daily preparing us for the glory yet to be revealed. May the eternal and incorruptible fruit of our redeemed life within be the power to live to the glory of the Father, our fitness to share the glory of the Son!

THREE STEPS IN REDEMPTION

As we meditate upon these words of truth concerning the power of His resurrection, surely we must realize that the process of resurrection touches the *whole man* — spirit, soul, and body. We are in a travail to partake of His fullness, being conformed to His likeness, and the basis of this travail can be more fully appreciated when related to the three parts of man's being. Paul enumerated these when writing to the Thessalonian saints: "And I pray God your whole *spirit* and *soul* and *body* be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (I Thes. 5:23).

Everything God created consists of many "parts." The geologist can explain to you the many "parts" of planet earth. The botanist is able to give you the names and functions of the various "parts" of a flower. The astronomer will point out the many billions of "parts" that make up the vast universe. God has also created man with many "parts." These are not just the physical parts or organs of the body, but also parts of the mind or soul, and parts of the spirit.

The human body is that part of our being which we all know best. It is the physical, natural, earthly tabernacle made up of members such as feet, legs, arms, eyes, ears, and organs such as heart, lungs, and kidneys. But we have other parts of our being besides these. Do not

think that the term “parts” in respect to our inner life originated with me! The Holy Spirit spoke through the prophet Jeremiah with this promise, “But this shall be the covenant that I will make...after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their *inward parts*, and write it in their hearts” (Jer. 31:33). The “inward parts” in which God places His law are not the kidneys, liver, or gall bladder! They are, rather, the inward parts within our soul; not the inward parts of our body. The passage above is quoted in the New Testament this way: “I will put my laws into their *mind*, and write them in their *hearts*” (Heb. 8:10). Here we see a slight, but important, variation. Jeremiah says “into their inward parts” but the writer to the Hebrews renders it “into their mind.” This comparison shows that the inward parts are not of the body, because “mind” is not of the body. Our “brain” is of the body but not our mind. A corpse has a brain — but no mind! I have seen living people, heart beating, all vital functions stable, but with no mentality — mind. The mind, therefore, exists only through a union of physical brain with *life essence*. The Psalmist adds this testimony concerning the inward parts of man, “Behold, Thou desirest truth in the *inward parts*: and in the *hidden part* Thou shalt make me to know wisdom” (Ps. 51:6).

In the creation account in Genesis we read that God formed man out of the dust of the ground and “breathed into his nostrils the breath (spirit) of life.” The result of the uniting of the body with the breath or spirit of life is said to be that man “*became a living soul.*” Let us now note carefully the process by which the first human soul was brought into being, as this will help us to understand more clearly just what a soul really is. The scriptural account of this we have just quoted. The soul is here shown to be the result, or product, of a union of the body, or organism, with the breath of life — “man *became* a living soul.” Here I would draw your attention to two significant facts. The word “breath” in Hebrew is the same word as “spirit.” And in the New Testament the term “living soul” is in the Greek text *zoe psuche*. *Zoe* is the Greek word for “life” or “living” which in every case is used for *divine life*, *God life*, and *eternal life*. *Psuche*, of course, is the word for “soul.” The term signifies a *divinely living soul*, not created through the union of the air of our atmosphere with the human body, but through the union of *divine spirit* with the human body. Thus, it was not the infusion of earth wind or air into Adam’s body that made him a living soul, but GOD

BREATHED into his nostrils the SPIRIT OF LIFE and man *became* a *divinely living soul!* The soul itself is not the spirit, just as it also is not the body.

Now a soul can die even as a body can die! “Behold, all souls are mine...the soul that sinneth, IT SHALL DIE” (Eze. 18:4). The soul can also be saved from this death (Heb. 10:39). Thus seen the soul is really that which results from the union of organism (body) with the life-giving qualities of the “breath of life.” Scientists still don’t know just what “life” really is! The “breath of life” is certainly something more than breathing in air. If breathing in air was all it means then we could pump air into a corpse and it should live. Life is more than that! The breath that “God breathed” into man’s nostrils is *spirit*. And the spirit *is life*, Jesus said. A simple illustration is the electric light. The mechanism of the bulb with its internal vacuum, filament, etc. is not the light; neither is the electric current that flows through that mechanism the light. It is the *union* of the mechanism with the electricity that *produces* the light. Destroy the bulb (body) or cut off the electricity (spirit of life) and the light (soul) goes out. Thus, the soul of man is in reality his *personality* — existing in the four primary parts of *mind, will, emotion, and desire*. This four-fold personality and expression of man’s being is produced by the union of the intricately designed mechanism or organism of his wonderfully made body with the in-breathed spirit of life. There must be *life* for man to possess soul, human personality.

When man first came into being as a living soul from the creative hand of God he was perfect in all his ways and for a time walked with God and lived by the spirit and the word of God. They knew nothing of evil; for they had never experienced it and had no knowledge of it. While they had flesh bodies, they did not walk in the desires or emotions or mind or will of the soul — they walked in the overwhelming presence and spirit of the Lord God. They were totally yielded to God, God-conscious rather than self-conscious, living in intimacy of fellowship and vital union with their Creator and Father. They did not live carnal, fleshly, selfish, self-centered, sensual, demonic lives because they were so caught up in God that they were not even aware that they were *naked* — that is, their “flesh” (the carnal realm) had never been exposed or manifested to them! They lived under God’s spirit law, His every word, and GOD was in control of their beings

through His in-breathed *spirit of life*. This means that both their soul and body were yielded up to the will of the spirit. Their mind, will, emotions, and desires were all dominated by the spirit of God within them!

But then — they met the serpent! That ancient serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, is not the carnal mind of man, for man's carnal mind is portrayed under yet another symbol in Eden — the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The eating of the fruit of this tree added to man's soul two new dimensions — *human reasoning* and *conscience*. This tree of the *knowledge* of good and evil also brought into man's life the *experiencing* of good and evil! Both good and evil are carnal. Adam and Eve had never before lived by either "good" or "evil" — they had lived by LIFE! Life is in the spirit. Good is something less than life just as evil is the opposite of life. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil separated them from life and awakened them to the carnal, earthly, fleshly, sensual, satanic realm. Even as the Tree of Life (Christ, the Spirit) brings forth the attributes of God, the "*fruit of the spirit*," so the tree of the knowledge of good and evil produces the "*fruit of unrighteousness*" unto death. To be *carnally minded is death!* Every tree is known by its fruit. But let us ever be alert to the fact that the serpent and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil are ***not symbols of the same thing!*** The serpent is something deeper than the carnal mind of the tree of knowledge. The serpent is the one who *introduced* them to the tree of knowledge!

How cunningly Satan appealed to Eve's "inward parts," those "hidden parts" of her own soul, her own mind, will, emotions, and desires, which under the influence of the spirit had lain hidden away, unknown, undiscovered by her until now. These inner, carnal, selfish, sensual, egotistical, reasoning, fleshly, twisted potentials within her had never been stirred before. Satan commenced to *draw out* these hidden, unknown aspects of her SELF, her soul, and began to awaken them within her consciousness. Suddenly she was confronted with thoughts, attitudes, motives, emotions, desires, will...that she never knew existed. This is the power of *temptation*, for the apostle James eloquently describes it thus: "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man. But ***every man*** is tempted when he is ***drawn away of his own***

lust, and **enticed**. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin, and sin when it is finished, bringeth forth death” (James 1:13-15). And remember, my beloved, it was not the serpent that **enticed** Eve. The serpent **beguiled** (deceived) her (Gen. 3:13; II Cor. 11:3) but she was **enticed** by the tree of the knowledge of good and evil — her OWN CARNAL MIND!

It is all there in a nutshell in Genesis 3:6: “And when the woman saw that the tree was good for *food* (the lust of the flesh), and that it was pleasant to the *eyes* (the lust of the eyes), and a tree to be desired to *make one wise* (the pride of life), she took of the fruit thereof (the works of the flesh) and did eat.” All of this was **influenced** and **instigated** by the serpent! And the thing we need to see in order to understand this great mystery is that as long as man’s soul was under the influence of the Spirit he walked in righteousness, power, wisdom, and life. As soon as his soul came under the influence of **another spirit**, self came into prominence. There was established an affinity, a union between the serpent and man’s self-life, the serpent now becoming “the *spirit* that now worketh *in* the sons of disobedience.” And once man had eaten of the tree of the carnal mind, the flesh, HE BECAME ADDICTED TO IT. And man has been eating that fruit ever since, living in self, the soulical realm, after his *own* satanically inspired desires and emotions, out from under the control of the life-giving Spirit. The whole sin of man, then, was in departing from the Spirit, walking independent of the Spirit, “doing his own thing.” This is the sin of man today!

But now, thank God, through the blood of His Son, God has brought us back into Eden and made available to us that realm of spirit-life from which man was driven out. Only this time there is a change. An improvement! The first man was made a “living soul” and walked under the spirit’s dominion as a living soul. But now the second man, the last Adam has come forth and He is not a living soul but a QUICKENING SPIRIT. God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son, the Quickening Spirit, into our hearts and a new man is being raised up within us, a new Adam is standing up in our lives! Our new man **is Christ** brought forth into an individual identity of power and expression within each one of us. Blessed Tree of Life! “He that is joined unto the Lord *is one spirit*.” The Spirit of Christ within you gives you the potential to bruise the head of the serpent in that same blessed Eden

where Eve was beguiled. Oh, yes! Where did you think the serpent's head would be bruised? And the Spirit of Christ within you now enables you to bring both your soul and your body *under His dominion* that the *spirit might reign* producing life within. Old Adam was a living soul, but the last Adam is a quickening spirit! Only as the Spirit rules over soul and body can the soul be *saved* and the body be *transformed!*

Perhaps now we can understand why the scriptures do not speak of *saving spirits*. Only "souls" can be saved! Redemption is not for the spirit, but for soul and body. When Jesus died He cried out, "Father, into *Thy hands* I commend my *spirit*." His spirit did not suffer and die on our behalf. But Christ in the agony of Gethsemane cried out, "My *soul* is exceedingly sorrowful, even *unto death*" (Mat. 26:38). And the prophet prophesied of Christ's death, "Thou wilt not leave my *soul* in hell, neither wilt Thou suffer thine Holy One to see (*bodily*) *corruption*" (Ps. 16:10). And then we read, "But we are not of them that draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe unto the *saving of the soul*" (Heb. 10:39). The Psalmist declared, "The Lord redeemeth the *soul* of His servants" (Ps. 34:22). Redemption is also for the body: "Even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the *redemption of the body*" (Rom. 8:23). Your spirit doesn't need saving for it is the off-spring of God, therefore of His own nature. God cannot sin and God cannot die! Is it not self-evident that that which is *not created* but is the *offspring* of God likewise cannot sin and cannot die.

Wonderful words were spoken at the very dawn of human history, recorded in the oldest book of the Bible, which state simply and powerfully the reality of man. "There is a *spirit* in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding" (Job 32:8). Thus, "*the Spirit* (of God) beareth witness with *our spirit* that we are children (offspring) of God" (Rom. 8:16). The writer to the Hebrews reminds us, "Furthermore, we have had *fathers of our flesh* which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection to the *Father of spirits*, and live?" (Heb. 12:9). Someone says, "Oh, yes, God is the Father of the spirits of all those who have been born again." Yet the scripture cries out, "O God, the God of the *spirits of all flesh*" (Num. 16:22). Jesus taught all men, before Pentecost and the "born again" experience, all the vast multitudes that

thronged Him, that God was THEIR FATHER IN HEAVEN. Thus our **true Father is not a man on earth, but our Spirit-Father who is in heaven!** Our flesh, however, body and soul, is the offspring of the first man Adam, the soul-man, and therefore **must be redeemed** and brought back under the dominion of the Spirit, Christ. This is how we truly become the BODY OF CHRIST! To live in the soul brings sin and death. To live in the spirit produces life eternal — not merely a length of life, but a quality of life. Both soul and body are raised into life by the reigning of the indwelling Spirit. “Now if the Spirit of Him that raised Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also *quicken your mortal bodies* **BY HIS SPIRIT THAT DWELLETH I-N Y-O-U**” (Rom. 8:11).

This is the travail of this hour, in this new day of the Lord. The travail is that there shall be a company of sons of God who, with Jesus, come into their *full redemption* — that place where in spirit, soul, and body they are saved, transformed, and made LIKE HIM. When this work is fully accomplished the manifest sons of God, for whom the whole creation is expectantly waiting, will be pure as He is pure, holy as He is holy, glorified as He is glorified, to sin and die no more. The curse of death will be swallowed up and full redemption will be a glorious and eternal reality. The way back into life is simply in *returning* by the same route that led man into death! Jesus is our *forerunner* who has opened up the way back into life. As we enter in with Him, appropriating the full provision and victory He has made available, we become the FIRSTFRUITS of His redemption and the forerunners for the residue of men, the whole creation, which travails with us for the manifestation of God’s sons.

Man, because of his naturalness, always begins in his consciousness with that which is most obvious to him — the body. God, in His dealings, always begins in the reverse order with that which is most closely related to Himself — the spirit. With man it is always “body, soul, and spirit.” With God it is always “spirit, soul, and body.” Redemption, therefore, being the work of God, begins with the spirit, for the spirit is the first thing man abandoned in the fall. The spirit is the *key* to the salvation of the soul. Thus God *begins* His redemptive and restorative process by moving mightily upon man’s spirit, joining with His Spirit, and causing man’s spirit to STAND UP AGAIN IN POWER

AND GLORY. This is what we call metaphorically the “new birth.” Now the spirit must woo the soul, and raise it up into life in union with the spirit. If you can receive it — THIS IS THE FIRST RESURRECTION! Then spirit and soul together shall swallow up the body into union with themselves until it also is changed, transformed, fashioned into a body like unto HIS BODY OF GLORY! Oh, the mystery of it! Oh, the wonder of it!

To be continued...

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