

Resurrection and Judgment.

No doctrine of the Holy Scriptures has been so much perverted as its teachings concerning the dead and their future life. With the mass of mankind there is no such thing as death; neither can there be a revival from the death state for the plain reason, according to popular *theology*, *there are no dead ones to raise.*

We are gravely informed by pagan philosophers and christian divines, that what to our senses has the appearance of death, is the very opposite. They inform us that what we call death is an entrance into life, a release from our prison house of clay, and a happy escape from earth to heaven. Death is represented as a great deliverer, who performs such inestimable services to the pious of pagan, catholic and protestant communions. He releases their immortal souls from their connection with vile matter and conveys them upward to the paradise of the blest.

But unfortunately for the claims of Death to such signal merit, the Scriptures ascribe all this honor, claimed for death by doctors of divinity, to Jesus the Resurrection and the Life. Here, then, is a collision of claims. Whose claim can be made good? Is Jesus, or Death, the deliverer of mortal man from the bondage of corruption? If Death is our true deliverer, we had better discard the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead as an encumbrance to our creeds, a fungus growth, an inconvenient appendage to our ideas of man's future destiny.

If our bodies are only prison houses for the soul, then surely the resurrection is far from being a joyful subject of hope to those who expect an entrance into the highest heavens as soon as Death separates the soul from the body.

A certain creed teaches "that the souls of believers at death do immediately pass into glory, and are received into the highest heavens," and it is added, "they wait for the full redemption of their bodies." But this waiting is superfluous. They can rise no higher. They are already in the highest heavens, and if an unhappy thought could enter into the mind of an inhabitant of the highest heavens, it would scarcely be the thought of being again imprisoned in a material body. The splendor of their prison would be a poor compensation for the unrestrained freedom of a disembodied state.

But this is all a dream, or a creation of an unenlightened brain. Death is death and not life. The Divine testimony is in opposition to this conceit of the natural man. That testimony is, "In death there is no remembrance of God."—Ps. 6: 5.

"The dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down to silence."—Ps. 115: 17. Instead of dwelling in the highest heavens, or the depths of a fiery hell, the Scriptures represent the dead as "dwelling in the dust."—Isa. 26: 19; and the abode of the dead is called "the land of forgetfulness," the land of the shadow of death, of darkness, without order, where there is no knowledge, device, and where its inhabitants know not anything.—Job 10: 21, 22; Ps. 88: 12; Ecc. 9: 5.

But from this abode of death, darkness and forgetfulness, there is a deliverance. There is a joyful release promised to the prisoners in the pit wherein is no water by the blood of the everlasting covenant. Zach. 9: Jesus is not only Jehovah's servant to bring Jacob, or the twelve tribes of Israel again to him, and to be a light to the Gentiles, that he may be his salvation to the ends of the earth; his work also, is to say to the prisoners "go forth," and to them in darkness "show yourselves."—Isa. 49: 6, 9. These prisoners in darkness are the dead in Christ, to whom he will say "Live" when he comes in power and great glory to raise the dead and quicken them by that mighty energy, or Spirit life power, which the Father hath given him to have in himself.—John 5: 26.

But all the race of Adam are not the subjects of this awakening from death. Multitudes of dead ones are in *Sheol* forever. To them the gates of death will never be unbarred. They sleep a perpetual sleep and never wake up.—Jer. 51: 57. "They are dead, THEY SHALL NOT RISE." Isa. 26: 14. They shall remain in the congregation of the dead.—Prov. 21: 16.

But this is not the destiny of the heirs of promise. God has provided some better thing for them.—Heb. 11: 40. That better thing is a victory over the grave—a putting on of a deathless nature—the being clothed upon with a house from heaven, that is an investiture of immortality, an elevation to angelic nature, or the divine nature, when mortality is swallowed up of life.

To these statements many of our readers will heartily respond, as expressive of their faith and hope; but we fear, nay we are certain, that some will dissent from what we have further to say on the resurrection of the dead. With what bodies do the dead come forth? As soon as they hear the voice of the Son of God, do they spring forth from the dust incorruptible and immortal? The moment they awake to consciousness are they equal with the angels? These are important questions, and on the nature of the answers given to them depends other questions. If the dead

come out of the ground, incorruptible, then immortality has its origin in the dust of the earth, and John should have seen the holy city ascending out of the earth instead of coming down out of heaven.

We are taught by Paul that the first man is out of the earth (*ek geas*) earthly; 1 Cor. 15: 47; the second man is the Lord out of heaven (*ex ouranou*). This teaching is plain, nothing can come out of the earth; but an earthly body, and such we believe the body of the resurrected man shall be, when called forth out of dust. The putting on of immortality is an after affair. The dead are made alive by the breath of life as the first man was; but we are not yet perfected by the Spirit birth. The birth of the Spirit is not emerging from the earth; but the passing out of mortal nature into the angelic.

This view of mortal resurrection harmonizes with some after-scenes, which some are quite overlooking in their haste to get the dead quickened into undying existence. The scenes to which we refer are "the judgment to come."

But is there a future judgment for the saints? Has each individual saint to give an account of himself to God? Surely not, if the dead come out of their graves immortal. To judge immortal men sounds very much like the clerical notion of bringing saints out of heaven to be judged when Christ comes at the last day. Others, to evade the force of the argument in favor of a coming out of the grave in a mortal state, drawn from the judgment, maintain that the judgment is going on now. This sounds very much like the assertion that the meek do inherit the earth, instead of they shall; for Paul teaches that we shall all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, Rom. 14: 10.

As this is a serious matter, let us calmly look it in the face. If there is no further account to be rendered, if there is to be no appearing at the judgment seat of Christ, if the king will take no further account of his servants, then let us dismiss the subject from our minds as a trouble-some affair, a mere creation of fancy or imagination. But if there is a reality in it, if there is no crown of life, no putting on of immortality, no entering into the joy of the Lord, no welcome voice heard saying, "come ye blessed of my Father," till after the account is rendered; is it not a serious matter to be claiming to be children of the light, and yet unacquainted with such a trial to be passed through before we can eat of the tree of life which grows in the midst of the Paradise of God.

But assertion is not proof, therefore we now proceed to the proof of our proposi-