

Primitive Preacher by Elder Grigg Thompson
THE RESURRECTION

“But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept;” [1Co 15:20](#).

The apostle has affirmed in our text a great and vital truth; one upon which the whole Christian system rests. It is the foundation stone upon which is built all our hopes and prospects for a better life than this. This doctrine was opposed by the Sadducees and the disciples of Epicurus, and the Corinthian church had become divided by these philosophers, and were disputing among themselves, some denying the resurrection. The apostle commences his argument by simply declaring what the old gospel was, and how they had believed it, and were saved by it, if they had kept in memory the things they had believed, unless what they believed is all a falsehood, and so in believing it they believed in vain. “For when I came to Corinth I preached unto you the gospel as I received it: 1st, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; 2nd, that he was buried; 3^d, that he rose again on the third day according to the Scriptures.” This was the beginning, the middle, and the end of Paul’s gospel; and it would have been happy for the church if the teachers of the gospel in all ages had made the apostle their example in this matter. It is a remarkable truth, that all attentive readers of the Acts of the Apostles must observe, that there is not a single sermon there recorded but Christ and the resurrection is the substance of the whole discourse; and it would be better for us today, and for the cause of Christianity, if we would pay less attention to the learning of the schools, and follow the example set by the Primitive or New Testament preachers.

The three points which constitute the gospel preached by Paul is the foundation stone upon which the Christian temple stands. Remove this foundation, and the whole super-structure falls, -every thing belonging to the Christian religion is a myth, a falsehood -a delusion. All our hopes of a future life are false, and when we die, we die like brutes, and that will be the last of us. Your friends, your brethren, your fellow-sufferers, who have fallen asleep in Christ, have perished.

1st, that Christ died. It is a **fact** stated by the apostle. It is not an argument, a conclusion, or speculation, or **mere opinion**, but a **fact** witnessed by the senses, for they had witnessed his trial, his crucifixion, and his death. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, have all recorded his death, and have stated where he died. The very mountain is named on which he was crucified. The day upon which it was done is named, by whom he was condemned, and all the

circumstances connected with his condemnation and crucifixion are so stated that there could have been no difficulty in disproving them all, if they had not been true. It is unreasonable to suppose that the Jews and Romans would have suffered such a statement to be published and circulated at home and abroad uncontradicted, if it had been untrue. But this truth was never denied by Jew or Roman, Sadducee or Pharisee, all have acknowledged that he did die. It was witnessed by them. Their own eyes looked upon him, upon the cross, and heard him cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

2nd, He was buried. The witnesses to this state and name the very man who requested his body for burial; whose tomb it was that he was laid in; and that a guard of soldiers was placed around it to guard it, that no one should steal away the body. All these things are stated in such a way that it would be no trouble whatever for their falsehood to have been shown, if, indeed, they were false. But not one of his most inveterate enemies, Jew or Roman, has ever denied these facts; except what was said by the soldiers who were appointed to keep watch, who said, "His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept." This fact is noticed by the witnesses of the resurrection, and the priests and elders are charged with giving the guards money if they would so report, and promised them if the thing came to the governor's ears, they would intercede and persuade for them, that no harm should befall them. (It was death, by the Roman law, for a soldier to sleep at his post when on duty as a guard.) We have no evidence that this charge was ever denied by the priests, elders, soldiers, Sanhedrim, or any writer, or witness of that age. Let this testimony have what bearing it may on the resurrection, it proves that he was buried, and that the place of his burial was no secret; his tomb was known and watched. And this brings us to the last point in Paul's gospel.

3rd, that he rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures. This is the first thought proclaimed in our text. "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept." And I propose to discuss it in that order; first, the resurrection of Christ, second, the resurrection of the saints. The resurrection of Christ is affirmed by the apostle and a host of witnesses referred to, who are all ready to testify to the same truth. But he does not leave it by making this general reference to witnesses, but tells us that Christ, after his resurrection, was seen by Cephas, then of the twelve, after that of above five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain ready to testify, and after that he was seen of James, and then of all the apostles. "And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time." We have the facts of the resurrection here stated, and the evidence adduced. Now for the arguments derived from the evidence submitted. For

this evidence to be properly weighed and estimated by us, let us remember that Paul had bitter enemies at Corinth, old materialists, and Sadducees, who denied the resurrection, and the immortality of the soul. Now, as the enemies of Paul, and the opposers of his doctrine, they would scrutinize every thing he would say, and, if possible, detect any error, weakness, or falsehood that might appear in his arguments. Of this the apostle was conscious, and mark how he challenges them: **“How say some among you that there is no resurrection, of the dead?”** He is bold and defiant Surely, in this shrewd and polished city of Corinth, learned in all the science of the age, which was complimented by Cicero as the **lumen totius Graeciae**, the eye of all Greece - surely, if Paul is vulnerable, if what he has stated as facts were false, and his arguments weak and inconclusive, the **“eye of all Greece”** will see it, and the ambition, the hatred, and wounded pride of his opposers will prompt them to publish it, and expose him before the world. But they are silent; not one fact affirmed by Paul is denied by them.

The apostle has here named the witnesses by whom this **fact** is to be proved, and has stated what they will testify. I shall first notice the character of the witnesses, and second, their opportunity of knowing the **facts** to which they testify, and the circumstances under which they testify which evidence their sincerity.

1st, The character of the witnesses: Who can read the New Testament, and learn the character of these witnesses, and not admire the wisdom of the Savior in the selection he made? Had he gone into the palaces of the rich, the learned, and influential, and made his selection, the whole story of the cross might have been treated as a cunningly devised fable, the invention and product of human wisdom. But he chooses the poor, the illiterate, and those who have no worldly influence, and the account given of them is that they were dull of understanding, not capable of making up and connecting a system of deception that would confound the wisdom of the world. In fact, worldly wisdom was not necessary; for it was not opinions, and scientific questions that they had to settle. It was **facts**, such as they could see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and handle with their hands: to have good ears, good eyes, and the sense of feeling, was important. Men who had followed fishing all their lives, who had been reared upon the waters, amidst the sound and roar of the waves, must have good hearing, or they would not hear the word of alarm, or the command when given. They must have good eyes to see objects and determine their shape and size and a keen sense of feeling that they may determine when any thing touches their vessel whether there is danger in the touch. It is reasonable to suppose that those reared and trained

fishermen had educated and cultivated these senses, and these were the essential things to qualify them to bear testimony to the facts of which Christ had selected them to be the witnesses. Christ charged them with sloth of understanding, and it seems that they never comprehended his teaching until after his resurrection, ascension, and descent of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost. The highest ideas they seemed to have of Christ and his kingdom were temporal and earthly. Although he had plainly taught them that he would be put to death, and that they would be persecuted and brought before the kings and rulers of this world, and by them be condemned, they seemed not to comprehend it, but looked upon Christ as the one that was to free Israel from political bondage, and make her the mistress of the world. The resurrection of Christ from the dead seemed not to have entered their minds. When Mary, Joanna, and the other women, visited the sepulchre, very early in the morning of the first day of the week, and found the sepulchre open and empty, they were astonished, and could not think what it meant: and, "Behold two men stood by them, in shining garments. And as they were afraid, and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen;" [Lu 24:4-6](#). These women bore the news to the disciples, who were equally astonished. "And their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not. Then arose Peter, and ran to the sepulchre, and stooping down, he beheld the linen clothes laid by themselves, and departed, wondering in himself at that which was come to pass;" verses 11,12 [Lu 24:11-12](#) The same day two men went to a village called Emmaus, and on their way they talked of the things which had happened, and Jesus himself drew near and went with them. "But their eyes were holden that they should not know him. And he said unto them, what manner of communication **are** these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad? And the one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering, said unto him, Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days? And he said unto them, what things? And they said unto him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people: And how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death and have crucified him. But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and besides all this, today is the third day since these things were done. Yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulcher. And when they found not his body, they came saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that he was alive. And certain of them which were with us, went to the sepulchre, and found it even so as the women had said: but him they saw not. Then he said unto them, 0

fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken;” [Lu 24:16-25](#).

While the enemies of Christ knew that he had taught the resurrection, and securely fastened the tomb and guarded it with soldiers to prevent its being robbed, and his resurrection being reported, his disciples seemed not to have thought of such a thing, and were overwhelmed with astonishment when his resurrection was reported to them, and none of them would believe it until they had seen him with their own eyes. When those who had seen Jesus told it to Thomas, one of the twelve, he said unto them, “Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe;” [Joh 20:25](#). It seems that none of them were willing to believe that Christ had risen from the dead; the thing looked to them unreasonable, and was what they were not looking for, or thinking of. Let those in whom they had the utmost confidence, and would believe any thing they said about other things, tell them and solemnly affirm that they had seen the Lord, yet they would not believe. Now look at the character and conduct of these witnesses, and who can question their veracity! First, they were poor and illiterate men, not capable of concocting a deep-laid plan of deception; second, they did not expect any thing but a temporal deliverer in Christ; third, they did not think of his resurrection, or comprehend the benefits to be derived from it, and would not believe it when reported to them by their nearest and dearest friends. Nothing but to see him with their own eyes would satisfy them, or make them believe. Is this the caution of men who will bear false witness? This brings us to examine:

2nd, **Their opportunity of knowing the fact to which they testify**. I need say but little on this point, for we have already seen that three or more of the women, and two of the men, visited the tomb and entered it, early in the morning of the third day after the crucifixion, and found it empty, the body gone. That he was dead, and buried there, they all knew, and that his grave had been guarded by soldiers, they knew. They saw the place where the Lord lay, and the linen clothes in which he was buried lay by themselves, but the body was gone; and this filled them with wonder, for they knew not what it meant. “Then the same day in the evening, being the **first** day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace **be** unto you;” [Joh 20:19](#). Then he exhibited unto them his hands and his side. Then they knew it was the Lord and were glad. But Thomas was not with them, but when he met the other disciples they said unto him, “We have seen the Lord,” but he believed them not, and said unto them, “Except I shall see in his hands

the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.” After eight days the disciples were again together, and Thomas was with them, and Jesus entered the room and stood in the midst, and said, “Peace be unto you.” And, addressing Thomas, he said, “Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands: and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side, and be not faithless but believing.” This was the second time he had met with them and shown them his hands and his side. But after this he showed himself a third time, at the sea of Tiberias. Here he conversed with them, and took bread and fish and gave them, and after they had dined Jesus gave Peter the command to feed his lambs; [Joh 21:1-17](#). On one occasion when he met with his disciples, they were alarmed, supposing that it was a spirit, but he told them to handle him and see, and, “Behold my hands and feet; it is I, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as you see me have;” [Lu 24:37-43](#); and he did eat broiled fish and honeycomb with them. Thus he was with them for the space of forty days, showing himself alive by infallible proofs, they seeing him often, conversing with him, examining his person, his hands, and his side, and eating with him. Every opportunity was afforded them to detect a deception if there was any; and they would certainly have detected it had there been any, for they would not believe without this infallible proof. Honesty is written on every act of the disciples, and no witnesses ever had a better opportunity of knowing the truth of the things whereof they affirmed, and one of them affirms that they bear witness of that “which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled;” [1Jo 1:1](#). This brings us to notice:

3d, The circumstances under which they testify. The pages of history may be searched, and the apostles and’ first propagators of Christianity are the most extraordinary men the world ever saw. As historical writers, and laborers to establish and propagate the gospel of their Master, they have a character perfectly **sui generis**. They were selected from among the poor and illiterate, without wealth or influence. They witnessed the worldly poverty, the persecution, and ignominious death of their Master. The worldly kings, rulers, priests, and elders, were their deadly enemies. Prisons, the whipping-post, the cross, and the flames, were the penalties before them if they proved loyal to Jesus, and bore their faithful witness before the world. But none of these things moved them, and they would not “count their lives” dear unto themselves so that they could bear their faithful testimony. Their patient endurance of the severest tortures and death, and their boldness in the midst of them all, surely give incontestable evidence of their sincerity. But it may be said that thousands have suffered death, and tortures of the most barbarous

character, rather than to renounce opinions that were evidently false. This is doubtless true, and proves beyond a doubt that they were honest in their opinions. But there is a marked difference between the two. Those who have suffered for their opinion, suffered for what they had reasoned out, voluntarily chosen, and become confirmed in. But not so with the apostles. They testified to **facts** that they had seen with their eyes, had handled with their hands. It was not conclusions drawn from reasoning, or mental or philosophical investigation, but **facts** exhibited to their senses of seeing, hearing, and feeling. We may be as honest in our opinions as Paul was when he verily thought he was doing God's service in persecuting the saints, and our opinions may be equally false as were his. But when we state **facts** seen with our eyes and handled with our hands, there can be no mistake. We either state what we know to be true, or to be false. The witnesses of the resurrection of Christ have knowingly stated a truth or a falsehood, and they have done it under circumstances calculated to impress every candid mind with confidence. There was no earthly inducement to cause them to make such knowingly false statements, but every thing to the contrary. They must be deserted by friends, hated by the world, suffer the wrath of kings and governors, and all the tortures that cruel and unfeeling persecutors can inflict upon them. The courage and patience shown by these witnesses under their tortures, show that the things they stated were true; and that supernatural and miraculous power sustained them. Mr. Addison says, "I can not conceive a man placed in the burning chair at Lyons, amid the insults and mockery of the crowded amphitheater, and still keeping this seat; or stretched upon a grate over coals of fire, and breathing out his soul among the exquisite sufferings of such a tedious execution, rather than renounce his religion and blaspheme his Savior. Such trials seem to me above the strength of human nature, and able to overbear reason, duty, faith, conviction, nay, and the most absolute certainty of a future state. Humanity, unassisted in an extraordinary manner, must have shaken off the present pressure, and have delivered itself out of such dreadful distress by any means that could have been suggested to it. We can easily imagine that any person in a good cause might have laid down his life at a gibbet, the stake, or the block-but to expire leisurely among the most exquisite tortures, when he might have come out of them, even by a mental reservation, or a hypocrisy which was not without the possibility of being followed by repentance and forgiveness, has something in it so far beyond the force and natural strength of mortals, that we can not but think there was some miraculous power to support the sufferer."

Let it not be forgotten that it was for **publishing facts, sensible facts**, and not for propagating opinions, that the witnesses of the resurrection suffered martyrdom. To suffer martyrdom for opinions proves the sincerity of the martyr, but it proves the **facts** when the person dies in attestation of a **sensible fact**. Call up in your mind the number of witnesses who testified to this **fact**, and for it suffered the tortures described by Addison, and not one of them admitted that they were mistaken, but with their dying breath said, "He has risen from the dead, and we are eye witnesses of the truth." How could such testimony, given under such circumstances, be disbelieved?

But it will be said by the skeptic, these disciples were the friends of Jesus, and had been taught by him what they should publish after his death. To this I answer, It is, true they were his friends, and believed him to be a temporal deliverer that should deliver Israel, but of his resurrection they had no thought, and when he was put to death all their hopes in him were put to death, and they all returned to their old occupations, feeling that they were deceived. This is confessed by Peter when he says, "Hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead;" [1Pe 1:8](#). All the visions they might have had of an earthly kingdom and earthly honors had passed as a myth from their minds, and they were content to return to their fishing, and live by it. They had no thought of the resurrection, and would not believe it until they had seen the person of Jesus, handled him, examined his hands and side, and found every mark possible to identify his person. Witnesses never could more conscientiously and critically examine a **fact** to know it was a **fact** than did these witnesses.

It will be objected, however, that these witnesses were interested witnesses. If Jew or pagan believed this fact, the moment he confessed it he forfeited the respect and friendship of all, and put his own life and all he had in jeopardy. Now to the mind of a fair logician every convert made to Christianity in those days is a **disinterested** witness, and a most credible one, too. The apostles were the most competent and credible witnesses the world ever saw. They resembled in no point persons carried away by enthusiasm, attachment to opinions about which honest men might differ; but as men whose sole business it was to proclaim **facts** which had been submitted to the cognizance of all their senses. They do not merely affirm that they only saw the Savior after his resurrection, but they urge the matter by every other kind of sensible and incontrovertible proof. They proclaim that he repeatedly and familiarly conversed with them for forty days, and that during that time he had by many **infallible proofs** shown himself to be the identical person whom they had seen crucified, and concerning whose identity there could not exist the shadow of a

doubt. Their testimony differs **toto celo** from any testimony on the subject of speculative opinions. Their sincerity is also a sincerity **sui generis**, of its own peculiar kind. I have been thus particular in presenting the circumstances under which they testified, to show that they were unimpeachable, and that no witnesses that ever testified to any fact were entitled to more credit, or stand before the world freer from any just charge of interestedness or deception. Their testimony not only proves the resurrection, but the resurrection of the **identical body that was crucified, and torn, and wounded upon the cross, and buried in Joseph's new sepulchre.**

This brings us to consider, **The resurrection of the saints.** However abundant may be the proofs in the Bible of a universal resurrection of the good and the bad, the one resurrected to life and the other to damnation, the apostle in this chapter is only discussing and proving the resurrection of the saints, or those, resurrected to life and a blessed immortality and that is the point we now have before us, and all our arguments will have reference to the saints, or those resurrected to life and immortality.

The doctrine of the resurrection is learned from the Bible, and the Bible alone. There is nothing in nature or human science, apart from revelation, that would ever beget the thought of a resurrection of the body in any rational mind. In fact human philosophy contradicts this, and teaches that our bodies die, return to the earth, fertilize it, and pass into the composition of other bodies, and that their resurrection would be impossible. This doctrine was taught in Paul's day, and he refers to it, and shows how human philosophy is at fault upon this subject, for he says, "**Thou** fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened except it die: and that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain; it may chance of wheat, or of some other **grain**: but God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body." This is no resurrection, but is a propagating after its own kind. The life, nature, and character of the thing produced are not changed, but are after the kind of seed sown, for to every seed is given its own body, and it will only produce after its own kind. For the apostle further shows that, "All flesh **is** not the same flesh: but **there is** one **kind of** flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, **and** another of birds;" [1Co 15:36-41](#). These all propagate after their own kind, and if this is the resurrection, the body raised would not be the same body that was sown, but-it would be after the same kind, nature, and character. But in the resurrection of the dead it is not so, for, "It is sown in corruption, it," (the thing sown,)" is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonor, it," (the same thing again,) "is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body, it," (the same

thing again,)” is raised a spiritual body;” verses 42-44 ([1Co 15:42-44](#)). Then it is very evident that the doctrine of the resurrection is not taught in the sowing of seed, or the propagating of bodies. Neither is it taught in the changing of the caterpillar, and the appearing of the beautiful butterfly. This is **transmigration**, or the passing of one thing into another, or of one substance into another body. This was the doctrine of Pythagoras, who taught that the soul passed into another body, and is the doctrine of all in the present day who deny the resurrection of the body. To deny the resurrection of the body is a total denial of the doctrine of the resurrection, for there is nothing but the body that dies and goes into the grave. This is clearly taught by the Savior when he says, “And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul, but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell;” [Mt 10:28](#). And it is clearly affirmed by Paul when he says, “We are confident, **I say**, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord;” [2Co 5:8](#). The souls of the martyred saints that were seen under the altar, were in a conscious, sensible, state, although absent from their martyred bodies; [Re 6:9](#). The resurrection applies only to that which dies and goes into the grave. Death is the consequence or penalty of sin, for the apostle says, “Wherefore as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that,” (margin, **in whom**,)” all have sinned;” [Ro 5:12](#). Thus death passed upon all of Adam’s posterity, for all sinned in him, and all inherit his fallen, corrupt nature. This fact should be written in your minds and not forgotten: **That we inherit the corrupt nature of Adam, because we were created in him, and had a seminal existence in him; but we receive the righteousness of Christ by imputation, because we were legally represented in him.** If we were created in him when he was created, and had a seminal existence in him, and proceeded from him as a progeny, or generation, then his righteousness would be inherently ours. The modern Arian, two-seed party teach that Christ in his mediatorial headship of the church was the first thing God created, and **simultaneously** and **identical** with his creation the church was created in him, and seminally existed in him. And as they have falsely represented, and labored to make the saints believe, that that faithful old servant of Jesus, who stood high in the confidence of all the churches, was with them in their unscriptural doctrines, I shall here give a quotation from his own pen that should forever silence them, and make them blush with shame for their misrepresentation. He says, “Many have talked and written much about a spiritual headship of the church, which they say was created before all worlds; that is, this spiritual life and immortality of the church, was created long before creation, and the church, as a spiritual seed in this spiritual head, life, and immortality of the church, was also created in,

and simultaneously with this spiritual, immortal creature. All this fabric is outside of the Bible, and God has never revealed it in that book, and neither we nor our children have any use for it, so we will let it pass back under its native shade.” (Life of Wilson Thompson, page 462). Thus it will be seen that he denounces this “**simultaneous creation**” doctrine as untrue and is out side of the Bible. They who represent him as believing their heresies are slanderers of the dead, and deserve not the confidence of any good and fair-minded people.

The Mediator between God and men is affirmed by the apostle to be, “**The man, Christ Jesus;**” [1Ti 2:5](#); not some spiritual existence that was neither God nor man. He is called the man of God’s right hand, that he had made strong for himself; [Ps 80:17](#). This man was made of a woman, made under the law to redeem them that were under the law; [Ga 4:4-5](#). God was his Father, and he was the Son of God, as no created being ever can be. For it was said to Mary, “The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God;” [Lu 1:35](#). And the angels sang to the listening shepherds, “For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Savior, which is Christ the Lord;” [Lu 2:11](#). In this man dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; [Col 2:9](#); and he was God manifest in the flesh; [1Ti 3:16](#); and he was the Word that was made flesh and dwelt among us; [Joh 1:14](#). This man was made flesh; and a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death; [Heb 2:9](#); and as man he could carry our sorrows, bear our sins, hunger, thirst, and suffer weariness, pain of body and soul, all for us and in our room and stead, as our legal representative and substitute, and not at all on account of any sin or depravity of his own nature, for he was holy, harmless, and undefiled; [Heb 7:26](#). This man was put to death in the flesh, bore our sins in his own body on the tree, and put them away by the sacrifice of himself; [Heb 9:26](#). His soul was made an offering for sin; [Isa 53:10](#); and his body a sacrifice; [Heb 9:26](#). Thus, after a life of strict obedience and suffering, in which he fulfilled all the precepts of the law, he died the shameful, lingering, and painful death of the cross. His God forsook him, and there was none to help him. So he paid the penalty of the law by his death. He died according to the Scriptures, and was buried, and rose again the third day according to the Scriptures; [1Co 15:3-4](#). “So by man came the resurrection of the dead;” verse 21 ([1Co 15:21](#)). It was as man, and Mediator between God and man, that Christ died for his people; and the same man was resurrected from the dead, and in his resurrection from the dead was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness; [Ro 1:4](#). “The union of Christ and his church was a legal

union, a oneness in the life and nature of Christ as man and Mediator. This oneness of nature as man was not the nature of man after his fall, but the uncorrupted nature of man before his sin.” ******(Life of Elder Wilson Thompson, page 464. The Elder here negatives the ETERNAL VITAL UNION heresy, and teaches it to be a legal, or covenant union or oneness, existing between husband and wife, shepherd and sheep, surety and principal, and shows that by covenant arrangement Christ died as surety, or substitute for his people.)

The resurrection of Christ is laid down by the apostle as the foundation upon which rests the resurrection of the saints. He then proceeds to introduce his witnesses, who, as we have seen, for clearness and harmony of testimony, are unparalleled, and then, in effect, seems to challenge those who doubt the resurrection of Christ to enter their protest while the witnesses are alive, and can be examined and cross-examined; but no man ventured to accept the challenge. This, with Paul, was the great, the vital question of Christianity; “For if Christ be not risen, the dead rise not; and if the dead rise not, they that have fallen asleep in Christ have perished; we are found false witnesses for God; your faith is vain; you are yet in your sins; your baptism is vain, a foolish and unmeaning ordinance, commemorating an untruth. All the pains and persecutions I have endured by land and by sea, among false brethren, and among wild beasts at Ephesus, in the prison at Philippi and at Rome, - they are all in vain, for I shall die as a brute, and be no more, if there be no resurrection of the saints.” And well we may say, “If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But now is Christ risen from the dead,” and has, according to the promise of God, spoiled the grave; [Ho 13:14](#); and hath brought life and immortality to light. The bright bow of hope hangs over the tomb where the body of the saint lies, and we mourn not as those that have no hope.

It was the body of Christ, the same body that was crucified and buried, that was resurrected, the first fruits of them that slept; and as he is, so shall we be, for the whole crop will be like the first fruits. The apostle uses the resurrection of Christ’s body to prove the resurrection of the mortal body of the saints. “But if the Spirit of him that raised up 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 in you;” [Ro 8:11](#). It is therefore the mortal body that is to be quickened and raised from the dead. If that is sown mortal, shall be raised immortal. The man of Uz, when sorely afflicted, and overwhelmed with grief and sorrow, would look beyond the troubled scenes of life, and the dark prison-house of the grave, and say, “For I know **that** my Redeemer liveth, and

that he shall stand at the latter **day** upon the earth; and **though**, after my skin **worms** destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God; whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; **though** my reins be consumed within me;" [Job 19:25-27](#). The sweet singer of Israel, when looking at the prosperity, the wickedness, and oppression of the wicked in this world, and his own sorrows and afflictions, would envy their condition, and feel that his lot was hard; but when by faith he would look beyond this stormy sea, and see the happy land prepared for the Lord's poor and afflicted ones, and feel the Spirit's witness that he had a portion there, he would sweetly sing, "As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness;" [Ps 17:15](#).

Modern Sadducees deny the identity of the resurrection, saying, "The body is of the earth, and will return to the earth, and that will be the last of it." But the apostle, in arguing the resurrection, says, "These vile bodies;" "quicken your mortal bodies." It is that which is sown mortal, shall be raised immortal. The graves shall deliver up the dead that are in them; [Re 20:13](#). Jesus says, "All that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth;" [Joh 5:28-29](#). All this shows that it is the identical body that is sown, -that is sown a mortal body, -that shall be raised from the dead. But it shall be raised a spiritual, incorruptible, and an immortal body. This change shall be effected by the Spirit of him that raised up Christ from the dead. Flesh and blood, in its present depraved state, cannot inherit the kingdom of heaven, neither can corruption inherit incorruption. Corruption was no part of our original nature, but was brought on us by sin, and was never redeemed, but the man, soul and body, was redeemed by Christ, and will be delivered from all this corruption, which is called by the apostle the "old man," or, "the body of the sins of the flesh." Corruption is not essential to the existence of man. He brought it on himself by disobedience, and will be cleansed from it by the blood of Christ. So it will never be raised with the saint, but will be put off, and immortality put on. The work of Christ was not to restore man to his former state of natural purity, which he lost in Adam, for that would not prepare him for the spiritual kingdom of God, for the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit, neither can he know them. Natural purity could never prepare us for heaven, hence we must be born of the Spirit, -be made spiritual. This change is wrought in the nature and condition of the soul in the new birth, or regeneration, which is also called a resurrection from death in sin; [Eph 2:5](#); [Col 2:13](#); [Joh 5:25](#). In this new birth, or resurrection from death in sin, the nature and affections of the soul are so changed that it is prepared to enter into and enjoy the spiritual comforts of the gospel. In the resurrection

the body will be made spiritual, and prepared to enter into and enjoy the spiritual kingdom of God. Hence the apostle says, “We wait for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.” When this shall be accomplished the work of Christ in the redemption of his saints will be finished, and he will deliver the kingdom up to the Father.

Now the man, soul and body reunited, spiritual, immortal, and incorruptible, enters into and possesses that spiritual, immortal, and incorruptible estate, now reserved for him in heaven. In the resurrection of Christ as the first-fruits of them that slept the apostle shows more clearly the resurrection of the dead, the change which will be effected in it, with the glorious results which shall be realized by the victorious saints, when Christ shall come in the shining clouds of heaven, in power and great glory, to receive them and welcome them into the kingdom prepared for them. We must notice that a mere resurrection does not change the nature of the body, nor immortalize or spiritualize it. This is clearly proven in the resurrection of Christ, for he said to the disciples, “Handle me, and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have.” This not only proves the identity of the body, and that body not yet made spiritual, or a spiritual body which his spirit had assumed, but the identical body that died on the cross. The resurrection of the body, and the ascension of the body into heaven, are very different things. The intermediate space between the resurrection of Christ and his ascension to heaven was absolutely necessary to give his disciples the fullest opportunity to test the real identity of his bodily resurrection, that they might be prepared as witnesses to testify with certainty, and also to give him opportunity to teach them the nature of his kingdom, the gospel they were to teach, and the field of their labor, and to distinctly show, in the order of time, all the process of the resurrection of the body itself, and to show, as the “first-fruits,” all the change necessary to be wrought on the body to prepare it to ascend to heaven, and enter into its spiritual and immortal enjoyments. The character and appearance of this glorious change was exhibited to Peter, James, and John on the mount of transfiguration, and in his ascension was manifested in the presence of them all, as he entered the cloud; [Mr 9:2-3](#); [Ac 1:9](#). It was the same body that was transfigured, his raiment shining exceeding white as snow, so that no fuller on earth could whiten it, that died on the cross, was buried, and rose from the grave, and forty days afterwards ascended into heaven, and of this truth all the apostles and hundreds of the saints were witnesses.

Some contend that it is by virtue of the resurrection of Christ that the race of men universally will be raised. This is questionable and speculative, and the

apostle does not so argue the question. He clearly shows that if Christ is not risen, the dead in Christ rise not; they have perished, for Christ, as the first fruits, exhibits what the whole crop shall be. For in his resurrection, “life and immortality,” (not life and damnation,)” are brought to light in the gospel.” It is evident that the saints shall be raised first, and the apostle says that their resurrection will be because of or by the Spirit of him that raised up Christ from the dead dwelling in us. In regeneration we receive the very Spirit by which, or because of which, our mortal bodies will be raised and made immortal and spiritual. This blessed resurrection is made sure to all the saints through the resurrection of Christ, the “first-fruits,” who in his death destroyed him that had the power of death, and in his resurrection spoiled the grave; who burst its vault, and triumphed over it; who has in his own hand the key to unlock the gloomy prison, and bring the prisoner out of the pit wherein there is no water. And he, having received power from his Father to quicken and raise up the dead, will quicken, revive, and raise up their sleeping dust, changed, spiritualized, and immortalized. The last enemy, which is death, will then be destroyed in the person of all his saints, and in their bodies that were once mortal, corruptible, and subject to pain and death, but now spiritual, immortal, and incorruptible, and beyond the power of sickness, sin, pain, or death. Beyond the stormy sea of death, and freed from the dark prison-house of the grave, their feet planted securely upon the bright and shining shore of a blessed and glorious immortality, with their vile bodies changed and fashioned like the glorious body of Christ, their Lord and Redeemer, they will be filled with divine delight, with heavenly ecstasies, and with immortal voices they will shout the victory and sing, Death is swallowed up in victory! 0 death, where is thy sting? 0 grave, where is thy victory?

**This glorious hope revives
Our courage by the way,
While each in expectation lives,
And longs to see the day.
From sorrow, death, and pain,
and sin, we shall be free,
And perfect love and friendship reign,
In blessed eternity.**

Blessed be God for the doctrine of the resurrection! And blessed be his holy name for the incontestable evidence he has given us, that these vile bodies of ours shall be changed, and made like the glorious body of our Lord and Savior. With soul and body in that glorious, divine, and heavenly image, we shall be satisfied, and have all that our immortal powers could desire or ask

for. Then we shall know as we are known; shall see as we are seen. That which is in part shall be done away, and we shall fully possess that which is perfect. White robes, made white in the blood of the Lamb, shall adorn our person, and palms shall be in our hands, and we shall be crowned with crowns of rejoicing. Sorrow and sighing have fled away forever, and all tears are wiped from our eyes, and with immortal voices we will cry, "Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, forever and ever!" "Alleluia! for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth!" The marriage supper of the Lamb has come, the bride arrayed in her bridal garments has entered into the bridal chamber. Her winter is over, the storms and trials of time are past; no longer shall she wet her pillow with tears, and mourn the absence of her Beloved; no clouds shall rise between them, or doubts or fears destroy her peace. It was the hope of this blessed resurrection that sustained the poor, persecuted, and tortured women, who refused deliverance, feeling that to die was gain, and that their wounded, tortured, and mangled bodies might rest awhile in the dark and gloomy grave, but there was a glorious resurrection, and that He who has said, "Because I live ye shall live also," would resurrect their dust, immortal and glorious, like his glorious body. It is this hope that looks beyond the stormy sea, and makes us patiently bear the trials of this present life, and sing as we pass along,

I would not live away, I ask not to stay
Where storm after storm rises dark o'er the way;
The few lurid mornings that dawn on us here
Are enough for life's woes-full enough for its cheer.

I would not live away, thus fettered by sin;
Temptation without, and corruption within:
E'en the rapture of pardon is mingled with fears,
And the cup of thanksgiving with penitent tears.

I would not live away, no-welcome the tomb;
Since Jesus hath lain there, I dread not its gloom.
There sweet be my rest till he bid me arise,
To hail him in triumph descending the skies.

O, who would live away -away from his God,
Away from yon heaven, that blissful abode?
Where rivers of pleasure flow o'er the bright plains,
And the noontide of glory eternally reigns.

Where the saints of all ages in harmony meet,
Their Savior and brethren transported to greet,

**While the anthems of rapture unceasingly roll,
And the smile of the Lord is the feast of the soul.**

This is the hope of the saint, and while I am speaking I know that there are many in this house, that by faith are looking beyond the river to that shining shore, and longing to rest there from the storms and billows that now toss their little barques, and fill them with fear and trembling. But, "Fear not: the waves shall not overflow you, nor the waters drown you." Every wave makes one the less, and brings you nearer the shore. Sorrow may last for the night, but joy cometh in the morning. The night will soon pass, and the day that has no night will soon break upon us, and in the shining robes of heaven we shall enter into the marriage supper of the Lamb, and will sorrow no more. O, it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but when He shall appear we shall be like him, and shall see him as he is. For he will come, and the dead in Christ shall rise first, and they that live and remain shall be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, and we shall all be caught up with the Lord in the air, and so shall ever be with the Lord. "Comfort one another with these sayings."

Dying sinner, you, too, will be resurrected. The sea, the grave, the rocks, and the mountains, cannot hide you from Him that sitteth upon the throne, and from the face of him you have slighted, for they that pierced him shall see him. You that live and die in sin shall hear his voice, and shall be resurrected unto damnation. O, my soul! what a word to sound in the ears of an ungodly sinner, who is living without hope, and without God in the world! The day is coming when all that know not God, and obey not the gospel, shall be forever destroyed from the glory of his power, and sink down where the smoke of their torment will go up forever and ever. This, dear sinner, is the certain doom of all who die in their sins. None can deliver you but Jesus, and the gospel presents him as a full and complete Savior, able to save. O, that the Spirit may enlighten your minds, and that you may be led to feel your need of Christ, and with a broken heart and a contrite spirit come to him, for he will never cast any such away. O, if you are burdened, weary, and heavy-laden with sin, Jesus says, "Come unto me, and I will give you rest?" But if you are hard, unfeeling, and in love with sin, and delight in the road that leads to death, I have not a promise for you. I have not an encouraging word, but must take my seat, grieved in heart on your account, and leave you in the hands and to the tender mercies of a just God, who will deal rightly with all his creatures.