

tears to be wiped away, there are so many burdens to lift, there is so much to be achieved for Christ, we sometimes wish that from the first of January to the last of December we could toil on without stopping to sleep, or take any recreation, or to rest, or even to take food—that we could toil right on without stopping a moment in our work of commending Christ and heaven to all the people. But we all get tired. It is a characteristic of the human body in this condition; we must get tired. Is it not a glorious thought that we are going to have a body that will never grow weary? O glorious resurrection day! Gladly will I fling aside this poor body of sin and fling it into the tomb, if at Thy bidding I shall have a body that never wearies. That was a splendid resurrection hymn that was sung at my father's burial:

So Jesus slept, God's dying Son
Passed through the grave and blessed the bed.
Rest here, blest saint, till from His throne
The morning breaks to pierce the shade.

O blessed resurrection! Speak out, sweet flowers, beautiful flowers. While you tell of a risen Christ, tell of the righteous who shall rise. May God fill you this morning with anticipation!

I heard of a father and son who, among others, were shipwrecked at sea. The father and the son climbed into the rigging. The father held on, but the son after a while lost his hold in the rigging and was dashed down. The father supposed he had gone hopelessly under the wave. The next day the father was brought ashore from the rigging in an exhausted state, and laid on a bed in a fisherman's hut, and after many hours had passed he came to consciousness, and saw lying beside him on the same bed his boy. Oh my friends! What a glorious thing it will be if we awake up at last to find our loved ones beside us, coming up from the same plot in the graveyard, coming up in the same morning light—the father and son alive forever, all the loved ones alive forever, nevermore to weep, nevermore to part, nevermore to die.

May the God of Peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant make you perfect in every good work, to do His will; and let the brilliant scene of this morning transport our thoughts to the grander assemblage before the throne. This august assemblage is nothing compared with it. The one hundred and forty and four thousand, and the "great multitude that no man can number," some of our best friends among them, we, after a while, are to join the multitude. Glorious anticipation.

Blest are the saints beloved of God
Washed are their robes in Jesus' blood,
Brighter than angels, lo! they shine,
Their wonders splendid and sublime,
My soul anticipates the day,
Would stretch her wings and soar away,
To aid the son, the palm to bear,
And bow, the chief of sinners, there.

RISEN WITH CHRIST

By Paul S. Rees, D.D.

Text: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live." John 5:25.

You might think that we have here the basis

for a sermon on the resurrection of the body. Such, however, is not the case. A careful reading of the whole paragraph will show that Jesus deals with two resurrections, one of the soul and the other of the body. One is present, the other future. It is a spiritual coming to life of which he is speaking in the words of our text.

One of our American pastors tells of the thrilling joy which was his on a certain Sunday that he spent in Denmark a few years ago. The breath of spiritual revival was at that time blowing strongly through the little land of the Danes. To an ancient church, whose Gothic arches went back to medieval times, the peasants and farmer folks of the countryside were gathering with eagerness on this particular Lord's Day. There they sat, the men in their stiff black suits, the women in their black and white bonnets. Not all of the worshippers were "regulars." One family belonged to the upper class. It was a most unusual thing for them to be at divine worship. Only a short while ago they were living—or at least they thought they were living—without any regard for Christ or his church.

What had happened to bring them to this humble sanctuary of the faithful? One week earlier they would not have thought of attending. The mother, a divorced woman, had turned her talents and the drive of her forceful personality to the profession of an interior decorator; but she was frustrated, worried and nervous. Members of her family had been walled off from each other by one evil thing or another. One child had become addicted to dope. Another had been inwardly poisoned with resentments and fears. Another had felt herself unwanted in the family and had withdrawn morbidly within herself. One of the sons had confessed that for a long time he had wanted God in his life but no one had come into the circle of his acquaintance to whom he could open his heart on the subject. Now God was real to him because he had just met him in Christ. Here sat the family of seven, waiting to receive their first Communion—united, joyous, full of hope for the future.

How are we to account for so radical and so radiant a change in the lives of those seven persons? Call it by whatever term you will, the pith and point of the whole thing was that they had surrendered themselves to Jesus Christ the Lord, and their living experience of him had revolutionized them, both individually and as a family. It was conversion! It was salvation! It was resurrection! They had heard the voice of the Son of God—and now they lived in him.

We are going to think about spiritual resurrection in these moments. What happened in that Danish family would happen in many a family if only we would listen to that Voice of Love and Grace that still speaks new life.

Consider, first of all, that the Voice is Addressed to the Dead.

Are you trying to get on in this world apart from God, without an actual surrender to his will, without trust in his grace as revealed in Jesus Christ? Then, according to the testimony and verdict of Christianity, you are dead. I know how blunt and dogmatic that sounds. It wounds pride. It rips through our comfortable self-complacency like a fleet of army tanks demolishing a forest. But before we decide not to listen to another word of such "rubbish," let us make sure that the Holy Scriptures are wrong and that we are right. We ourselves might be mistaken.

These early Christians, whose experiences

light up the pages of the New Testament, declared again and again that the finding of Christ was like a resurrection from the dead. "We know that we have passed from death unto life," they cried. That was exaggeration, you say. Very well, what will you say to the witness that Jesus gave us. It is in the Parable of the Prodigal. The wayward son is home now. The broken ties are mended. And Jesus makes the father say, "This my son was dead, and is alive again!"

The sober truth is that multitudes of us who have never had our obituary notice in the paper are nevertheless dead. Take a self-centered existence, for example. Isn't that a form of death? "She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth," declared the Apostle Paul. Forever catering to self is the same as building a narrow tomb around one's shrunken soul. It is death.

Or, take the aimless existence that characterizes so many of our fellow beings. That too is a form of death. A traveler was about to swing aboard a railroad car, when the Red Cap spoke up in friendly protest: "No, don't take that coach," said he, "for it ain't hitched to nothin' that's goin' somewhere." Doesn't that homely, ungrammatical bit of dialect describe the experience of someone now listening to this preacher. To be honest you would have to say that your life is hitched to something that isn't getting you anywhere.

To be sure, the emergency of war gave us a temporary feeling of something to live for and work for and perhaps make a few sacrifices for—something that sort of pulled our human world together and gave it at least a measure of unity and value. In the same breath, however, one has to confess that the very war itself has been almost the last stroke of futility to countless numbers of our people. Especially is this true when they see so many evidences of the same old selfishness, the same old tricks of grab and greed and political witchcraft, that marked the old days before the war.

War or no war, they have no scale of values in which something eternal—or, better still, some One eternal—stands out above all else, to give life its glory, its meaning; its goal, and its power. War or no war, they are not quite sure of anything; no high and kingly convictions hold sway over them. War or no war, they feel that the turbulent and often torturing world into which they have been born is a world without sense or sympathy. Bertrand Russell takes pretty much this view. For him there is no God, no soul, no immortality, no hell or heaven. But, being a philosopher, he shrinks from suicide or some other shortcut to oblivion; so he says grimly, "We must build our house on the rock of unyielding despair." In a word, life is aimless and hopeless, but we must try to be brave about it. That, I submit, is a form of death.

Then too there are those who have a merely formal religious existence. That also is death. In the last book of the New Testament we read of some church members who received a startling message from the Lord of the church. The message ran like this: "I know thee . . . I know thy works . . . I know that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead." (Revelation 3:1).

Is there anything deader than dead religion? We congregate, but do we fellowship? We pray, but do we receive? We bow the head, but do we worship? We repeat the hymns, but do we adore? We recite the creed, but do we burn with compassion? We approve the

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