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**North Road Chapel (Evangelical)
BIDEFORD**

GLORIFICATION

PART 1

The eternal purpose of God in His sovereign election unto salvation of an innumerable company of Adam's fallen race is, that in the ultimate, they shall be GLORIFIED. *"God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: whereunto He called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the **glory** of our Lord Jesus Christ"* (2 Thessalonians 2;13,14). It is important to note that this scripture does not simply speak of obtaining glory, it is obtaining the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is high doctrine which the finite mind can never fully comprehend.

As believers, we enjoy fellowship with Christ and He communicates Himself to us by His grace. In His infinite goodness our Redeemer holds communion with us, His failing and often wayward children. As our Head, He ministers out of His fulness and we receive grace for grace (cf John 1:16); grace is multiplied to us (cf 1Peter 1:2). All needed grace is given to those who seek it and this alone meets our present state for we are all sinners, saved sinners maybe, but still prone to sin and in need of constant help. However in the world which is to come, our state will be entirely different; then in resurrected bodies the mortal will have put on immortality. Our present vile bodies are to be fashioned like unto His glorious body (cf Philippians 3:21). The Psalmist summarised this in a few words, *"The Lord will give grace and glory"* (Psalm 84:11); the grace we have now but the glory is yet to come. The elect are vessels of mercy which God hath afore prepared unto glory (cf Romans 9:23).

In His wondrous high priestly prayer our Lord said, *"The glory which Thou gavest me I have given them"* (John 17:22). These words are spoken as if it was an accomplished fact; the meaning of this is, that the Saviour has acquired the right of this glory for all His people. Christ has given to His own the title to the glory which has been bestowed upon Him as the Mediator and Head of the redeemed; consequently all that company are as sure of it now as if they already possessed it. A word of great assurance on this is given in the New Testament, *"Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus"* (Hebrews 6:20). "Forerunner - one who comes in advance to a place whither the rest are to follow" (Unger). All the elect are to follow and obtain the glory of the forerunner, who is our Lord and Saviour. This chain can never be broken, for the everlasting covenant is ordered in all things and sure (cf 2 Samuel 23:5). *"All the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him Amen"* (2 Corinthians 1:20); *"When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory"* (Colossians 3:4). Peter states that he is *"a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed"* (1 Peter 5:1).

There is an indissoluble link between our union with Christ and the glory which is to be ours. Referring again to our Lord's prayer, He said, *"The glory which Thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one"* (John 17:22). This latter clause gives us the reason why Christ shares with His people the glory which the Father gave to Him, *"that they may be one even as we are one"*. This is the similitude of the ultimate union in glory between the Redeemer and the redeemed. The union between the Father and the Son is absolute; it is a holy union, yea an inexpressibly **glorious** union which will be made manifest in heaven between Christ and His elect. It is true that whilst believers are still on earth they are vitally and savingly united to Christ, but because of sin and constant failure, communion is so often affected; even at best it is very imperfect, hence their need of constant help and grace; however

this will not be so when they are **glorified**. Just as communion and harmony within the Trinity can never be marred or broken (for these three are **one**), such will be the Church's communion in heaven, "*one even as we are one*".

John chapter seventeen gives us a clear revelation of this matter of union and glory; each word is so meaningful; "*Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which Thou hast given me: for Thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world*" (John 17:24). Our beloved Lord is addressing God as Father, that most intimate relationship of Father and Son, and it is His believing people who are in view. Christ is suing a **child's** portion for them, not wages or rewards, but an inheritance which the Christian enters into by virtue of relationship, for through the sovereign grace of God, believing sinners are sons, "*Heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ*" (Romans 8:17); as heirs they are to inherit. Commenting on John chapter seventeen verse twenty-four, Thomas Manton speaks particularly on the two words "**I will**". He says, "It is our Lord's last will and testament and when Christ made His 'will', heaven and glory were among the legacies which He bequeathed to us". This is in perfect accord with the words of our Lord to His own whilst still upon earth, "*I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me*" (Luke 22:29). In the same manner as God the Father appointed to His Son the kingdom, so has the Son appointed us, His heirs, to the same by sovereign grace.

Such is the union between Christ and His Church that whatsoever relates to the Bridegroom - Christ, relates to His bride - the Church. It is this truth which lies behind our Lord's petition "*That they also whom Thou hast given me be **with me** where I am*" (John 17:24). Nothing will give true lovers real joy or satisfaction except to be in each other's presence; in like manner the risen Christ awaits the redemption of all His elect,

then will the Church be complete and as His bride, called forever into His presence, this is the moment for which He waits with long patience (cf James 5:7); it is the joy which was ever before Him (cf Hebrews 12:2). It is when Christ's glorified bride is at His side that His joy will be fulfilled, when *"they be with me where I am"*. In like manner neither shall **we**, if we be truly born of God's Holy Spirit and in consequence are His redeemed children, be satisfied here upon earth, our heart and affections will be set upon Christ and where He is at the right hand of God (cf Colossians 3:1,2). We shall ever be anticipating the glory which is to follow. The language of the Psalmist will be ours *"I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness"* (Psalm 17:15); not until then.

The analogy of Bride and Bridegroom concerning Christ and His Church was not chosen by God without reason, for in it lies the deepest and most intimate union which mortals can appreciate. As the Bridegroom, our Lord said, *"I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also"* (John 14:2,3).

Christ said to the unbelieving Jews, *"Where I am, thither ye cannot come"* (John 7:34). Unbelievers have no title whatsoever to glory for they are not heirs, their names are not in the 'will'; paradise is barred to them by a flaming sword just as it was in Genesis chapter three verse twenty four, *"Thither they cannot come"* but such is His grace to His elect that He says *"Where I am, there ye may be also"*. We are His portion (cf Deuteronomy 32:9), His special treasure (cf Malachi 3:17), His royal diadem (cf Isaiah 62:3), His joy (cf Zephaniah 3:17).

As the Bridegroom and our Head, He publishes His 'Will' which is so worded that we are to be raised to the highest pinnacle of glory that it is possible to elevate a creature - the Father's house, His immediate presence, to behold and to share His glory.

In prayer David was contemplating this and he wrote *"In Thy presence is fulness of joy; at Thy right hand pleasures for evermore"* (Psalm 16:11).

Him and I in that bright glory
One deep joy shall share,
Mine to be forever with Him,
His that I am there.

PART 2

It is very important that we, as God's redeemed people, fully realise what is meant by our Lord's words *"That they may behold my glory"* (John 17:24). This is visual, ocular, it pertains to sight; we shall **behold**. It is not just the soul and spirit which are redeemed, it is the whole personality, and the full extent of all that the word '**glorification**' conveys will not be fully comprehended by us until after the day of resurrection; then will our **bodies** be raised incorruptible. This is affirmed in Holy Writ *"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"* (Job 19:26,27).

Human personality comprises of body, soul and spirit and it is when the whole person is clothed with immortality that we shall **behold** the glory of the eternal. Our very eyes will be enraptured with all that we see, the eternal city with its streets, its mansions and crystal clear river. How the heart thrills at the prospect of meeting its vast population, that lonely man that came out of Gilead and defied the apostacy of his day and dared to stand alone for God - Elijah, fearless Daniel, godly Ezra and Nehemiah, John the Baptist the greatest to be born of women; the great apostle to the Gentiles (Paul), who not only carried the gospel to many

countries, but also under God wrote much of the New Testament; John Gill, Thomas Manton, Stephen Charnock, John Bunyan; we shall meet them all in glory together with our own dear ones now for a while parted from us. What a gathering of the ransomed that will be! There will be no reserve, no shyness or embarrassment, no need of introduction for we shall know even as we are known (cf 1 Corinthians 13:12). Wonderful and thrilling as all this is, there is an infinitely grander prospect; the redeemed are to behold their Redeemer. We are to behold His face in righteousness (cf Psalm 17:15); "*They shall see His face*" (Revelation 22:4); the Lamb upon the throne will ever be in the midst of His people; the pure in heart shall see God (cf Matthew 5:8). All this is verily true, yet there is still a sense in which He is "*the invisible God*" (Colossians 1:15). The depth of the wisdom and the glory of the Eternal God can never be revealed through sight; the bodily senses, even when glorified, cannot comprehend the magnitude of God. While the visual aspect most certainly is contained in that word **behold**, yet does it run far deeper.

The noblest faculty of man is his mind and in our glorified state the mind is to be unlocked, it is to be enlarged and capacitated so that it can take in, understand and appreciate God in the glory and wonder of His eternal being. This is what is meant by beholding the King in His beauty (cf Isaiah 33:17). It is to have a mind so expanded as to have the ability to comprehend God and the glory of the eternal world. The soul will be sinless, the body incorruptible, the will and affections perfectly restored, judgment and reason will be unimpaired for we are to be like Him. When our personality is thus perfectly formed according to God's own heart and we fully reflect the Mediator's likeness, then shall we be entirely fitted for that supreme revelation in glory with its never-ending unbroken communion. At present no mind can fathom this, no pen can portray it, no tongue describe the holy bliss of glorified saints as they will then be perfected in an everlasting love union; love on both sides, reciprocal affection, knowing no ebb or flow.

In that wondrous state the Redeemer will see the very likeness of His own glorious person in redeemed creatures; this will draw out His heart in everlasting love and affection. We, the redeemed, with eyes and with an understanding from which the film of sin has been completely removed, so that we can **behold** His glory with unimpaired appreciation, will adore and worship Him throughout all eternity.

The believers' union in glory and the perfection of the everlasting communion of the eternal state baffles human thought; it leaves us in absolute bewilderment for this is a communion which is unrestricted. There will be no Holy of Holies which will be closed to us, no locked doors, no forbidden territory. We shall have free admission into the Divine presence; yea, even far more than this, for we shall have knowledge and appreciation of His innermost secrets, and in this most intimate association, we shall bask by the rivers of His pleasure without check or restraint, being forever at His side, constituted pure as He is pure.

The reason why Christ '**wills**' that His elect should be with Him to **behold** His glory is given us in this same verse, John 17:24, "*For Thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world*". Here our Lord is speaking of Himself as the Mediator, not as eternal Spirit, but as the God-man, God manifest in flesh. In the eternal plan and purposes of God, the second person of the Trinity had ever been viewed in this manner, even as a slain Lamb from the foundation of the world (cf Revelation 13:8). In this capacity of the Mediator, He was the special object of the Father's ineffable love. It is in His mediatorial office that the only begotten of the Father became the centre of God's vast purposes of grace. Christ's person as Mediator is infinitely precious to God, for He is the medium through which the invisible God would shine forth. Prior to the incarnation of the eternal Word, the Father saw Him in a past

eternity in this mediatorial capacity and the Scripture informs us, loved Him from before the foundation of the world.

It is against this background of the eternal counsels and the love of God, that Christ the Mediator who is the Head of the election of grace, prays in John chapter seventeen. He wants them to 'behold', to 'enter into', to 'understand' and to 'appreciate' all that lay behind the Covenant of Grace. In glory when they are transformed and able to comprehend, Christ desires that the very heart of the Godhead be unveiled and the whole of redemption's plan revealed. The heavenly Bridegroom wants His Bride to know all the secrets and planning which took place between Him, the Father and the Holy Spirit, from everlasting. They must know that Thou, the Father, didst choose them; "*Thine they were*" - **election**. "*Thou gavest them me*" and of those whom Thou gavest me "*none is lost*" - **redemption** (cf John 17:6 & 12).

In that glorious resurrection day as the eternal counsels are unfolded before us in our glorified state, so will Christ who is the centre of it, shine forth in all His glory and perfection. Then shall we see in the most convincing way **why** the Father so loved the Son in the capacity of the Mediator, for the whole engagement of man's redemption centred around Him. It was by His great work of atonement and propitiation that it was accomplished; He was the alone means, therefore did His Father love Him and He, our blessed Lord wants us to know all the detail.

Our glorified life will be an ever-expanding vision of Christ's glory and we shall eternally admire it, rejoicing in and having communion over it with **Him**. All the treasures of wisdom and knowledge which are now **hid** in Christ (cf Colossians 2:3), will then be made manifest; this is the exceeding weight of glory (cf 2 Corinthians 4:17). In contemplation of such a theme, do not our hearts respond in the words of John Kent:

"On such love, my soul, still ponder,
Love so great, so rich and free;
Say, while lost in holy wonder,
Why, O Lord, such love to me?
Hallelujah
Grace shall reign eternally".

PART 3

The question now arises, When is the believer's glorification accomplished? The answer is, Not until every one chosen by the Father and redeemed by the Son, has been effectually called by the Holy Spirit, then cometh the end. Christ comes, the great resurrection takes place and the glorification of the redeemed ensues. This poses another question, Where are the dead now? If I as a believer should pass away what would be my immediate state pending the day of the resurrection? These are very real and genuine problems which are in the minds of many of God's dear children and can cause considerable anxiety, particularly to those who are in the eventide of life.

Through the centuries countless millions of men and women have passed into the eternal world, their bodies have long since returned to the dust; what then is their present condition? This is a perfectly reasonable question, for at death the Christian does not enter into the full and final blessings of the eternal future, nevertheless he is much nearer the goal and in a far happier and more blessed state than anything which he has previously known. At the point of death, the believer has forever done with sin and the Devil; what is more, the by-products or side effects of sin such as sickness, suffering, pain, disappointments, sadness and tears are forever left behind, never to be experienced again. What a

release! Immediately the departed one is with Christ in paradise (cf Luke 23:43). *"With Christ which is far better"* (Philippians 1:23). At the very moment of death the Christian is *"absent from the body and present with the Lord"* (2 Corinthians 5:8). As soon as the Lord is pleased to dismiss any of His saints from the body by death, they are immediately admitted into heaven. This however is not the eternal state, for at this point the soul and spirit are separated from the body; the body, because of sin, goes to corruption, but this is only until the day of resurrection when it will be raised incorruptible.

Let none of God's dear children be apprehensive because of the fact that the body goes to corruption, for the instant their heart gives its last beat, they will enter heaven; they are *"with Christ"*, their eternal lover. *"Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord"* (Revelation 14:13). It is not that they **will** be blessed, they **are** blessed immediately they die. Death is the door by which the Christian enters into the actual presence of the Lord; truly conscious, in a state and condition which is far better and vastly superior to anything which he has known hitherto.

The Scriptures state *"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints"* (Psalm 116:15). It is at the point of death that He, whose heart has been set upon us from all eternity, takes us to be forever with Himself. To our blessed Lord this is a most precious moment, so it will be for us we shall discover, and let not the Devil rob any true Christian of the **immediate** hope which is before us at death.

The Scriptures however, reveal to us a further glory which far surpasses this wonderful, immediate blessedness of those who die in the Lord. Being with Christ whilst the body lies in the grave is but intermediate, a period when the spirit is *"unclothed"* (cf 2 Corinthians 5:1-4). In this state, we await the resurrection, the redemption of our bodies (cf Romans 8:23). It is this which will see the completion of God's great

eternal purposes of grace to the elect remnant of Adam's posterity. Not until then will His wondrous programme be brought to its climax and the natural body be raised a spiritual body (cf 1 Corinthians 15:44).

"With what body do they come?" (1 Corinthians 15:35). This is a question as old as the Bible itself, yet within its pages the mystery is revealed. There is to be a great difference in our resurrected body to the former, yet there is to be similarity. From one viewpoint the body which is to be raised is the same body that died, precisely the same, with identity preserved to every one of us. Yet from another angle it will be radically changed as in the resurrection, none are married or given in marriage (cf Matthew 22:30). Many of the bodies at death bear the marks of age; disease has reduced their once fair frame to a sad spectacle. In contrast to this, some have left this scene in a state of immaturity; they died in the flower of youth without attaining adulthood. Our Lord died at the age of thirty-three years, an age indicative of maturity, vigour and the prime of manhood. Following His resurrection, Christ was seen to ascend into heaven in His same body, yet in a glorified form; here is the similitude. Our vile bodies are to be changed, and fashioned like unto His glorious body (cf Philippians 3:21); the redeemed are to be as the Redeemer, in the prime of manhood.

On the Mount of Transfiguration, a most marvellous revelation of Christ the Mediator is given in His glorified form. He *"was transfigured before them: and His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light"* (Matthew 17:2). Within such a setting how stupendous are our Lord's words *"The glory which Thou gavest me I have given them"* (John 17:22). As we have borne the image of the earthly, Adam, so also shall we bear the image of the heavenly, Christ (cf 1 Corinthians 15:49). The prophet Daniel grasped this amazing truth. Speaking on the very subject of resurrection he said we are to *"shine as the brightness of the firmament and as the stars for ever and ever"* (Daniel 12:3). The

Saviour was depicted in prophecy as *"The Sun of Righteousness"* (Malachi 4:2); concerning His own, our Lord said, *"Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father"* (Matthew 13:43). Just as our Lord's face did shine as the sun upon the Mount of Transfiguration, so also will ours in that glad day; such is the wonder of **glorification**.

Another aspect concerning our Lord's resurrection body is revealed in the Scriptures, *"Then the same day at 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"* (John 20:19). Christ in His resurrection body passed through closed doors; it was a body which knew no limitation. Such will be ours precisely, in every detail. *"The Lord Jesus Christ who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body"* (Philippians 3:20,21). The capacity and capabilities of our redeemed personalities in their glorified state, who can comprehend? *"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him"* (1 John 3:2). We shall be **like Him**. Never let us be vague or harbour indefinite thoughts when God speaks so plainly in His Word; the glory given to Christ as the glorified Mediator is to be ours, this is God's eternal purpose, a Biblical truth which we must lay hold of by faith.

"When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory" (Colossians 3:4). Christ went up into heaven bodily through the clouds at His ascension and He will come at His second advent bodily through the clouds in glory; we too shall appear there with Him in the air. The atmosphere, space, yea outer space will not restrict our habitation or movements for we shall be limitless in this, *"Like unto Him"*. It is then, when all the redeemed are brought to this glorified state

that our Lord will see in its fullest manner the travail of His soul and be satisfied. He is to *"present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish"* (Ephesians 5:27).

In that day when He takes the completed Church, His Bride to himself, He will be heard to say, *"Thou art all fair my love, there is no spot in thee"* (Song of Solomon 4:7); for then we shall in very truth bear the image of the heavenly. This is **glorification** and then will the high honours which God has showered upon Christ the Head be shared by all His members.

The Queen of Sheba said concerning Solomon, *"I believed not the words, until I came, and mine eyes had seen it; and behold, the half was not told me: thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth the fame which I heard. Happy are thy men, happy are these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and that hear thy wisdom"* (1 Kings 10:7,8). Christ, referring to Himself said, *"A greater than Solomon is here"* (Matthew 12:42); our blessed Lord surely exceedeth all the fame which we have ever heard, and not until we actually behold, yes and share that glory, shall we fully appreciate Him.

In that endless day of indescribable glory, Christ will everlastingly delight in His bride and she will everlastingly delight in Him. There will be unrestrained opening of heart the one to the other; perfect unbroken holy communion.

SUMMARY

Before we can ever fully appreciate the glory of the Lord, we ourselves must be glorified.

W.H.Molland

The Resurrection Morning

On the resurrection morning,
Soul and body meet again:
No more sorrow, no more weeping,
No more pain.

Here awhile they must be parted,
And the flesh its sabbath keep;
Waiting in a holy stillness,
Wrapt in sleep.

For a space the tired body
Waits in peace the morning's dawn,
When there breaks that last and brightest
Happy morn.

On that resurrection morning
All the graves their dead restore -
Father, sister, child and mother
Meet once more.

Soul and body reunited,
Thenceforth nothing shall divide;
Waking up in Christ's own likeness,
Satisfied.

S. Baring-Gould

The Resurrection

"Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation" (John 5:28,29).

The bodies of believers shall be raised up to glory. The doctrine of the resurrection is a fundamental article of our faith. The apostle puts it among the first principles of the doctrine of Christ (cf Hebrews 6:2). The body shall rise again; we are not so sure to rise out of our beds as we are to rise out of our graves. The saved body shall rise again. Some hold that the soul shall be clothed with a new body; but then it were improper to call it a resurrection, it would be rather a creation. *"Though worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God" (Job 19:26).* Not in another flesh, but my flesh. *"This corruptible shall put on incorruption" (1 Corinthians 15:53).*

By what arguments may the resurrection be proved?

1. By Scripture. *"I will raise him up at the last day" (John 6:44).* *"He will swallow up death in victory" (Isaiah 25:8).* That is, by delivering our bodies from the captivity of the grave, wherein death for a time had power over them. *"Them which sleep in Jesus, will God bring with Him" (1 Thessalonians 4:14).*

2. Christ is risen; therefore the bodies of the saints must rise. Christ did not rise from the dead as a private person, but as the public Head of the Church; and the Head being raised, the rest of the body shall not always lie in the grave. Christ's rising is a pledge of our resurrection. *"Knowing that He which raised up the Lord Jesus, shall raise us up also by Jesus"*

(2 Corinthians 4:14). Christ is called the first-fruits of them that sleep (cf 1 Corinthians 15:20). As the first-fruits is a sure evidence that the harvest is coming, so the resurrection of Christ is a sure evidence of the rising of our bodies from the grave. Christ cannot be perfect as He is Christ mystical, unless His members be raised with Him.

3. If the body did not rise again, a believer would not be completely happy; for though the soul can subsist without the body, yet it has a desire of reunion with the body and it is not fully happy till it be clothed with the body. Therefore, undoubtedly, the body shall rise again. If the soul go to heaven and not the body, then a believer would be only half saved.

Shall none but the bodies of the righteous be raised?

Yes, all that are in the grave shall hear Christ's voice and shall come forth (cf Acts 24:15). There shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust. *"I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God"* (Revelation 20:12). But though all shall be raised out of their graves, yet all shall not be raised alike.

1. The bodies of the wicked shall be raised with ignominy. Those bodies which on the earth tempted and allured others with their beauty, shall at the resurrection be loathsome to behold; they shall be ghastly spectacles. *"They shall be an abhorring unto all flesh"* (Isaiah 66:24). But the bodies of the saints shall be raised with honour. *"It is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory"* (1 Corinthians 15:43). The saint's bodies then shall shine as sparkling diamonds. *"Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun"* (Matthew 13:43).

2. The bodies of the saints shall rise out of their graves with triumph; but the bodies of the wicked with trembling. The one, as about to receive their fatal doom; the other, awake from the dust too, shall sing for joy. *"Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust"* (Isaiah 26:19). When the archangel's trumpet sounds, the bodies of believers shall come out of the grave to be made happy, as the chief butler came out of the prison and

was restored to all his dignity at the court; but the bodies of the wicked shall come out of the grave, as the chief baker out of prison, to be executed (cf Genesis 40:22).

Believe this doctrine of the resurrection; that the same body that dies shall rise again and with the soul be crowned. Without the belief of this, 'all religion falls to the ground'. If the dead rise not, then Christ is not risen and then our faith is vain (cf 1 Corinthians 15:14). The body shall rise again. This was Job's comfort. *"Though worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God"* (Job 19:26). The body is sensible of joy, as well as the soul; and indeed, we shall not be in all our glory, till our bodies are reunited to our souls. Oh consider what joy there will be at the reuniting of the body and soul at the resurrection! Look what sweet embraces of joy were between old Jacob and Joseph, when they first saw one another; such and infinitely more, will there be when the body and soul of a saint shall meet together at the resurrection (cf Genesis 46:29). How will the body and soul greet one another! What a welcome will the soul give to the body! Oh, blessed body! When I prayed, thou didst attend my prayers with hands lifted up and knees bowed down; thou wert willing to suffer with me and now thou shalt reign with me; thou wert sown in dishonour, but now art raised in glory. Oh, my dear body! I will enter into thee again and be eternally married to thee.

The resurrection of the body is a cordial when a Christian is dying. The body, though it drop into the sepulchre, shall revive and flourish as a herb in the resurrection. The grave is a bed of dust, where the bodies of saints sleep; but they shall be awakened by the trump of the archangel. The grave is your long home, but not your last home. Though death strip you of your beauty, at the resurrection you shall have it restored again. As when David found Saul asleep, he took away his spear and cruse of water, but when Saul awoke he restored them again (cf 1 Samuel 26:22); so, though at death all our strength and beauty be taken

away, at the resurrection God will restore all again in a more glorious manner.

But how shall we know that our bodies will be raised to a glorious resurrection?

If we have a part in the first resurrection. "*Blessed is he that hath a part in the first resurrection*" (Revelation 20:6). What is meant by this? It is rising by repentance out of the grave of sin. He who lies buried in sin, can have little hope of a joyful resurrection; his body shall be raised, but not in glory. O then, ask conscience, have you a part in the first resurrection? Has the Spirit entered into you and lifted you up? Has He raised you out of your unbelief? Has He raised your hearts above the earth? This is the first resurrection; and if your souls are thus spiritually raised, your bodies shall be gloriously raised and shall shine as stars in the kingdom of heaven. Regeneration makes way for a glorious resurrection.

But seeing our bodies must be laid in the grave, and may lie many years rotting there before the resurrection, what support and comfort have we in this case?

1. That God will not leave His people in the grave. Our friends bring us to the grave and leave us there, but God will not. He will go to the grave with us and watch over our dead bodies and take care of our ashes. Rizpah watched over the dead bodies of the sons of Saul and guarded them against the ravenous fowls of the air (cf 2 Samuel 21:10). Thus the Lord watches over the dead bodies of the saints and looks to it that none of their dust be missing. Christian, thou hast a God to watch over thy body when thou art dead.

2. The bodies of the saints in the grave, though separated from their souls, are united to Christ. The dust of a believer is part of Christ's mystic body.

3. When the bodies of the saints are in the sepulchre, their souls are in

paradise; the soul does not sleep in the body, "*but returns to God who gave it*" (Ecclesiastes 12:7). The soul immediately partakes of those joys the blessed angels do. When the body returns to dust, the soul returns to rest; when the body is sleeping, the soul is triumphing; when the body is buried, the soul is crowned. As the spies were sent before to taste the fruits of the land, so at death the soul is sent before into heaven, to taste the fruit of the holy land (cf Numbers 13).

4. When God's time is come the "*graves shall deliver up their dead*" (Revelation 20:13). When the Judge sends, the jailor must deliver up his prisoners. As God said to Jacob, "*I will go down with thee into Egypt, and I will surely bring thee up again*" (Genesis 46:4), so the Lord will go down with us into the grave and will surely bring us out again.

5. Though the bodies of saints shall rot and be loathsome in the grave, yet afterwards they shall be made illustrious and glorious. Concerning this, consider:

a) The bodies of the saints, when they arise, shall be comely and beautiful. The body of a saint in this life may be deformed; those even whose minds are adorned with virtue, may have misshapen bodies, as the finest cloth may have the coarsest list; but those deformed bodies shall be amiable and beautiful. This beauty consists in two things; i) Perfection of parts; there shall be a full proportion of all the members. In this life there is often a defect of members: the eye is lost the arm is cut off; but in the resurrection all parts of the body will be restored again; therefore the resurrection is called the time of restoring all things (cf Acts 3:21). ii) Splendour; the bodies of the saints shall have a graceful majesty in them; they shall be like Stephen whose face shone as if it had been the face of an angel (Acts 6:15). Nay, they will be made like Christ's glorious body (Philippians 3:21).

b) The bodies of the saints, when they arise, shall be free from the necessities of nature, as hunger and thirst. "*They shall hunger no more*" (Revelation 7:16). Moses on the mount was so filled with the glory of God, that he needed not the recruits of nature. Much more in heaven

shall the bodies of the saints be so filled with God's glory, as to be upheld without food.

c) The bodies of the saints, when they arise, shall be swift and nimble. Our bodies on earth are dull and heavy in their motion, then they shall be swift, and made fit to ascend, as the body of Elias, in the air. Now the body is a clog; in heaven it shall be a wing. We shall be as the angels (Matthew 22:30), and how nimble are they? The angel Gabriel in a short time came from heaven to earth (Daniel 9:21). As the helm turns the ship instantly wither the steersman wills, so the body in an instant will move which way the soul wills.

d) The bodies of the saints, at the resurrection, shall be firm and strong. *"It is raised in power"* (1 Corinthians 15:43). Through frequent labour and sickness, the strongest body begins to languish, but at the resurrection we shall be of a strong constitution; there will be no weariness in the body, nor faintness in the spirits. This may comfort you who now conflict with many bodily weaknesses. This weak body shall be raised in power; the body, which is now a weak reed, shall be like a rock.

e) The bodies of the saints, at the resurrection, will be immortal. *"This mortal shall put on immortality"* (1 Corinthians 15:53). Our bodies shall run parallel with eternity. *"Neither can they die any more"* (Luke 20:36). Heaven is a healthful climate, there is no bill of mortality there. If a physician could give you a receipt to keep you from dying, what sums of money would you give? At the resurrection, Christ shall give the saints such a receipt. *"There shall be no more death"* (Revelation 21:4).

Thomas Watson.
(17th century)

EDITORIAL

The theme of this edition of 'The Link' is that of resurrection and glorification. Heaven and the glorious future of believers is a subject not spoken of now as it was formerly, and hymn books produced over recent years in so-called 'Reformed' circles, contain few hymns that inspire the soul to such blessed contemplation. In marked contrast, the hymn books of previous generations gave much prominence to the bliss and indescribable glory which awaits the child of God. This present lack of emphasis is greatly to the impoverishment of God's people, as with intensity this matter is stressed in the New Testament. It was when contemplating the grace of God in salvation, that Peter, thrilled with the immensity of it all, burst into a rapturous song of praise, saying, "*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you*" (1 Peter 1:3,4). Then there will be "*no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away*" (Revelation 21:4). "*So shall we **ever be** with the Lord*" (1 Thessalonians 4:17). From such infallible words concerning this blessed hope the Christian is to derive great comfort (cf 1 Thessalonians 4:18).

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With Him in glory! O wonderful word!
Eye hath not seen, and ear hath not heard,
Mind hath not fathomed the future in store,
Reserved for the children of God evermore.

Suffering over, and failure, and sin,
Like Him without and like Him within,
Bodies made perfect, and spirits set free,
We'll share in that glory, whose glory we see.

With Him in glory! Beholding His face,
With Him in glory! O marvellous grace!
Holy and happy, and reigning in bliss,
Can there be anything greater than this?