

The First Appearance of the Risen Lord to the Eleven

A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, APRIL 10, 1887,
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

"And as they thus spoke, Jesus, Himself, stood in the midst of them and said unto them, Peace be unto you. But they were terrified and frightened, and supposed that they had seen a spirit. And He said unto them, Why are you troubled? And why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I, Myself: handle Me and see, for a spirit has not flesh and bones as you see I have. And when He had thus spoken, He showed them His hands and His feet. But while they still did not believe for joy, and wondered, He said unto them, Have you any food here? And they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish, and some honeycomb. And He took it and ate in their presence. And He said unto them, These are the words which I spoke unto you while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the Law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning Me." [Luke 24:36-44](#).

THIS, beloved Friends, is one of the most memorable of our Lord's many visits to His disciples after He had risen from the dead. Each one of these appearances had its own peculiarity. I cannot, at this time, give you even an outline of the special colorings which distinguished each of the many manifestations of our risen Lord. The instance now before us may be considered to be the fullest and most deliberate of all the manifestations, abounding beyond every other in "infallible proofs." Remember that it occurred on the same day in which our Lord had risen from the dead and it was the close of a long day of gracious appearances. It was the summing up of a series of interviews, all of which were proofs of the Lord's Resurrection. There was the empty tomb and the grave clothes left there—the place where the Lord lay was accessible to all who chose to inspect it—for the great stone which had been sealed and guarded was rolled away. This, in itself, was most impressive evidence. Moreover, the holy women had been there and had seen a vision of angels who said that Jesus was alive. Magdalene had enjoyed a special interview. Peter and John had been into the empty tomb and had seen for themselves. The report was current that "the Lord was risen, indeed, and had appeared unto Simon." It was a special thing that He should appear unto Simon for the disciples painfully knew how Simon had denied his Master and His appearance unto Simon seemed to have struck them as peculiarly characteristic—it was so like the manner of our Lord.

They met together in their bewilderment—the 11 of them gathered, as I suppose, for a social meal, for Mark tells as that the Lord appeared unto them "as they sat at meat." It must have been very late in the day, but they were loath to part and so kept together till midnight. While they were sitting at meat, two Brothers came in who, even after the sun had set, had

hastened back from Emmaus. These newcomers related how One who seemed a stranger had joined Himself to them as they were walking from Jerusalem, had talked with them in such a way that their hearts had been made to burn and had made Himself known unto them in the breaking of bread at the journey's end. They declared that it was the Lord who had thus appeared to them and, though they had intended to spend the night at Emmaus, they had hurried back to tell the marvelous news to the eleven! Hence the witnesses accumulated with great rapidity—it became more and more clear that Jesus had really risen from the dead! But as yet the doubters were not convinced, for Mark says, "After that He appeared in another form unto two of them, as they walked and went into the country. And they went and told it unto the residue: neither believed they them."

Everything was working up to one point—the most unbelieving of them were being driven into a corner! They must doubt the truthfulness of Magdalene and the other saintly women. They must question the veracity of Simon. They must

reject the two newly-arrived Brothers and charge them with telling idle tales—or else they must believe that Jesus was still alive, though they had seen Him die upon the Cross! At that moment the chief confirmation of all presented itself— "for Jesus, Himself, stood in the midst of them." The doors were shut, but, despite every obstacle, their Lord was present in the center of the assembly! In the Presence of One whose loving smile warmed their hearts, their unbelief was destined to thaw and disappear! Jesus revealed Himself in all the warmth of His vitality and love—and made them understand that it was none other than Himself and that the Scriptures had told them it should be so. They were slow of heart to believe all that the Prophets had spoken concerning Him, but He brought them to it by His familiar communion with them. Oh, that in a like way He would put an end to all our doubts and fears!

Brothers and Sisters, though you and I were not at that interview, yet we may derive much profit from it while we look at it in detail, anxiously desiring that we may in spirit see, look upon and handle the Word of Life manifested in the flesh! Oh, to learn all that Jesus would teach us as we now, in spirit, take our places at that midnight meeting of the chosen ones!

In this wonderful manifestation of our Lord to His Apostles, I notice three things worthy of our careful observation this morning. This incident teaches us the certainty of the Resurrection of our Lord. Secondly, it shows us a little of the Character of our risen Master. And, thirdly, it gives us certain hints as to the nature of our own resurrection, when it shall be granted us. Oh, that we may be counted worthy to attain to the resurrection from among the dead!

I. First, then, let us see here THE CERTAINTY OF OUR LORD'S RESURRECTION. We have often asserted and we affirm it yet again, that no fact in history is better attested than the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead! The common mass of facts accepted

by all men as historical are not one-tenth as certainly assured to us as this fact is! It must not be denied by any who are willing to pay the slightest respect to the testimony of their fellow men, that Jesus, who died upon the Cross and was buried in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea, did literally rise again from the dead!

Observe, that when this Person appeared in the room, the first token that it was Jesus was His speech—they were to have the evidence of hearing—He used the same speech. No sooner did He appear than He spoke. He was never dumb and it was natural that the great Teacher and Friend should at once salute His followers, from whom He had been so painfully parted. His first words must have called to their minds those cheering notes with which He had closed His last address. They must have recognized that charming voice. I suppose its tone and rhythm to have been rich with a music most sweet and heavenly. A perfect voice would naturally be given to a perfect Man. The very sound of it would, through their ears, have charmed conviction into their minds with a glow of joy had they not been frozen up in unbelief. "Never man spoke like this Man."

They might have known Him by His speech, alone. There were tones of voice as well as forms of language which were peculiar to Jesus of Nazareth. What our Lord said was just like He—it was all of a piece with His former discourse. Among the last sounds which lingered in their ears was that word, "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world gives, give I unto you"—and now it must surely be the same Person who introduces Himself with the cheering salutation, "Peace be unto you." About the Lord there were the air and style of one who had peace, Himself, and loved to communicate it to others. The tone in which He spoke peace tended to create it! He was a peacemaker and a peace giver—and by this sign they were driven to discern their Leader.

Do you not think that they were almost persuaded to believe that it was Jesus when He proceeded to chide them in a manner more tender than any other chiding could have been? How gentle the words when He said, "Why are you troubled? And why do thoughts arise in your hearts?" Our Lord's chidings were comforts in disguise! His upbraiding was consolation in an unusual shape. Did not His upbraiding on this occasion bring to their minds His question upon the sea of Galilee when He said to them, "Why are you fearful, O you of little faith?" Did they not also remember when He came to them walking on the water and they were afraid that He was a spirit and cried out for fear—and He said to them, "It is I. Be not afraid"? Surely they remembered enough of these things to have made sure that it was their Lord had not their spirits been sunken in sorrow! Our Lord had never been unwisely silent as to their faults. He had never passed over their errors with that false and indulgent affection which gratifies its own ease by tolerating sin. No, He had pointed out their faults with the fidelity of true love. And now that He thus admonished them, they ought to have perceived that it was none other than He. Alas, unbelief is slow to die!

When Jesus came at last to talk to them about Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms, He was upon a favorite topic. Then the 11 might have nudged each other and whispered, "It is the Lord!" Jesus had, in His latter hours, been continually pointing out the Scriptures which were being fulfilled in Himself and, at this interview, He repeated His former teaching. This is assuredly none other than He who always spoke His Father's mind and will—and constantly did honor to the Holy Spirit by whom the sacred Books were inspired! Thus in His tones and topics our Lord gave clear indications that it was He who had suddenly appeared in that little assembly.

I want you to notice that this evidence was all the better because they, themselves, evidently remained the same men as they had been. "They were terrified and frightened, and supposed that they had seen a spirit." And thus they did exactly what they had done long before when He came to them walking on the waters! In the interval between His death and His appearing, no change had come over them! Nothing had happened to them to elevate them, as yet, out of their littleness of mind. The Holy Spirit was not yet given and, therefore, all that they had heard at the Last Supper and seen in Gethsemane and at the Cross had not yet exercised its full influence upon them. They were still childish and unbelieving! The same men, then, are looking at the same Person and they are in their ordinary condition—this argues strongly for the correctness of their identification of their well-beloved Lord. They are not carried away by enthusiasm, nor wafted aloft by fanaticism—they are not even, as yet, borne up by the Holy Spirit into an unusual state of mind—they are as slow of heart and as fearful as ever they were. If they are convinced that Jesus has risen from the dead, depend upon it, it must be so! If they go forth to tell the tidings of His Resurrection and to yield up their lives for it, you may be sure that their witness is true, for they are not the sort of men to be deceived!

In our day there has been a buzz about certain miracles of faith, but the statements usually come from persons whose impartiality is questionable—credulous persons who saw what they evidently wished to see. I know several good people who would not willfully deceive who, nevertheless, upon some points are exceedingly unreliable because their enthusiasm is prepared to be imposed upon. Any hawker of wonders would expect them to be buyers—they have a taste for the marvelous! As witnesses, the evidence of such people has no value in it as compared with that of these 11 men who evidently were the reverse of credulous or excitable. In the Apostles' case, the facts were tested to the utmost and the truth was not admitted till it was forced upon them! I am not excusing the unbelief of the disciples, but I claim that their witness has all the more weight in it because it was the result of such cool investigation. These Apostles were, in a special manner, to be witnesses of the Resurrection and it makes assurance doubly sure to us when we see them arrive at their conclusion with such deliberate steps. These were men like ourselves, only perhaps a little less likely to be deceived—they needed to be convinced by overwhelming witness and they were so! And

afterwards they always declared boldly that their crucified Lord had, indeed, risen from the dead!

Thus far in the narrative they had received the evidence of their ears and that is by no means weak evidence. But now they are to have the evidence of sight, for the Savior said to them, "Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I, Myself." "And when He had thus spoken, He showed them His hands and His feet." John says, "His side," also, which he especially noted because he had seen the piercing of that side and the blood and water flow out. They were to see and identify that blessed body which had suffered death! The nail prints were visible, both in His hands which were open before them, and also in His feet which their condescending Lord deigned to expose to their deliberate gaze. There was the mark of the gash in His side—and this the Lord Jesus graciously bared to them, as afterwards He did more fully to Thomas, when He said, "Reach here your hand and thrust it into My side." These were the marks of the Lord Jesus by which His identity could be verified.

Beyond this, there was the general contour of His Countenance and the fashion of the whole Man by which they could discern Him. His body, though it was now, in a sense, glorified, was so far veiled as to its new condition that it retained its former likeness. They must have perceived that the Lord was no longer subject to the pains and infirmities of our ordinary mortality—otherwise His wounds had not been healed so soon—but there remained sure marks by which they knew that it was Jesus and no other. He looked like a lamb that had been slain—the signs of the Son of Man were in His hands and feet and side. Their sight of the Lord was not a hasty glimpse, but a steady inspection, for John, in his first Epistle writes, "Which we have seen and looked upon." This implies a lengthened looking and such the Lord Jesus invited His friends to take. They could not have been mistaken when they were afforded such a view of those marks by which His identity was established. The same Christ that died, had risen from the dead! The same Jesus that had hung

upon the Cross, now stood in the midst of those who knew Him best! It was the same body and they identified it— although a great change had doubtless come over it since it was taken down from the tree.

Furthermore, that they might be quite sure, the Lord invited them to receive the evidence of touch or feeling. He called them to a form of examination from which, I doubt not, many of them shrank. He said, "Handle Me. Handle Me and see; for a spirit has not flesh and bones, as you see I have." Writers have remarked upon the use of the word, "bones," instead of, "blood," in this case. But I do not think that any inference can be safely drawn from there. It would have been barely possible for the disciples to have discovered, by handling, that the Lord had blood, but they could, by handling, perceive that He had bones and, therefore, the expression is natural enough, without our imputing to it a meaning which it may never have been intended to convey! The Savior had a reason, no doubt, other than some have imagined, for the use of the terms, "a spirit has not flesh and bones as you see I have." The

Savior had not assumed a phantom body—there were bones in it as well as flesh—it was, to the fullest, as substantial as ever. He had not put on an appearance, as angels do when they visit the sons of men. No, His body was solid substance which could be handled. "Handle Me and see that it is I." He bade them see that it was flesh and bone, such as no spirit has. There were the substantial elements of a human frame in that body of Christ which stood in the midst of the eleven. Jesus cried, "Handle Me and see."

Thus our Lord was establishing to the Apostles, not only His identity, but also His substantial corporeal existence— He would make them see that He was a Man of flesh and bones—not a ghost, airy and unsubstantial. This should correct a certain form of teaching upon the Resurrection which is all too common. I was present some years ago at the funeral of a man of God for whom I had much respect. In the chapel a certain excellent Doctor of Divinity gave us an address, before the interment, in which he informed us as to the condition of his departed friend. He said that he was not in the coffin—indeed, there was nothing of him there. This I was sorry to hear, for if so, I was ignorantly mourning over a body which had no relation to my friend. The preacher went on to describe the way in which the man of God had ascended to Heaven at the moment of death—his spirit fashioning for itself a body as it passed through the air!

I believed in my friend's being in Heaven, but not in his being there in a body. I knew that my friend's body was in the coffin and I believed that it would be laid in the tomb—and I expected that it would rise again from the grave at the coming of the Lord. I did not believe that my friend would weave for himself a filmy frame, making a second body, nor do I believe it now, though I heard it so affirmed. I believe in the resurrection of the dead! I look to see the very body which was buried, raised again! It is true that as the seed develops into the flower, so the buried body is merely the germ out of which will come the spiritual body—but, still, it will not be a second body, but the same body, as to identity. I shall enter into no dispute about the atoms of the body, nor deny that the particles of our flesh, in the process of their decay, may be taken up by plants and absorbed into the bodies of animals and all that! I do not care one jot about identity of atoms! There may not be a solitary ounce of the same matter, but yet identity can be preserved—and it must be preserved if I read my Bible right!

My body today is the same as that which I inhabited 20 years ago and yet all its particles are different! Even so, the body put into the grave and the body that rises from it are not two bodies, but one body. The saints are not, at the coming of their Lord, to remain disembodied spirits, nor to wear freshly created bodies, but their entire manhood is to be restored and to enjoy endless bliss! Well said the Patriarch of old, "in my flesh shall I see God." "He which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us, also, by Jesus." I cannot see how the doctrine of Christ goes beyond the doctrine of Plato and others if it is not a doctrine which respects this body! The immortality of the soul was accepted and known as a Truth of God before the faith of Christ was preached, for it is dimly discoverable by the light of nature. But the

resurrection of the body is a Revelation peculiar to the Christian dispensation—at which the wise men of the world very naturally mocked—but which it ill becomes Christian men to spirit away!

The body which is buried shall rise again! It is true it is sown a natural body and shall be raised a spiritual body, but it will be truly a body and the same it which was sown shall be raised! It is true it is sown in weakness and raised in power, but the same it is thus raised. It is true that it is sown in weakness to be raised in power and sown a corruptible body, to be raised in incorruption, but in each case it is the same body, though so gloriously changed.

It will be of a material substance, also, for our Savior's body was material, since He said, "Handle Me and see that it is I, for a spirit has not flesh and bones, as you see I have." Still further to confirm the faith of the disciples and to show them that their Lord had a real body—and not the mere form of one—He gave them evidence which appealed to their

common sense. He said "Have you any food here? And they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish and some honeycomb. And He took it and ate in their presence." This was an exceedingly convincing proof of His unquestionable Resurrection! In very deed and fact, and not in vision and phantom, the Man who had died upon the Cross stood among them!

Let us just think of this and rejoice! This Resurrection of our Lord Jesus is a matter of certainty, for, if you spirit this away, you have done away with the Gospel altogether! If He is not risen from the dead, then is our preaching vain and your faith is also vain! You are yet in your sins! Justification receives its seal in the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead—not in His appearing as a phantom, but in His being loosed from death and raised to a glorious life! This is God's mark of the acceptance of the work of the great Substitute and of the justification of all for whom His atoning work was performed.

Note well that this is also our grand hope concerning those who are asleep. You have buried them forever if Christ was not raised from the dead! They have passed out of your sight and they shall never again have fellowship with you unless Jesus rose again from the dead! The Apostle makes the resurrection of all who are in Christ to hinge upon the Resurrection of Christ. I do not feel it necessary, when I talk with the bereaved, to comfort them at all concerning those that are asleep in Christ, as to their souls—we know that they are forever with the Lord and are supremely blessed and, therefore, we need no further comfort. The only matter upon which we need consolation is that poor body which once we loved so well, but which now we must leave in the cold clay. The resurrection comes in as a final undoing of all that death has done. "They shall come again from the land of the enemy." Jesus says, "Your dead men shall live, together with My dead body shall they arise." If we question the Resurrection of Christ, then is the whole of our faith questioned and those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished! And we are left just where others were before Christ brought this Divine Truth of God to light. Only as we are sure of the Resurrection of Jesus can we cry, "O death, where is your sting? O grave, where is your victory?"

II. Secondly, will you follow me while I very briefly set forth OUR LORD'S CHARACTER
WHEN RISEN FROM
THE DEAD?

What is He, now that He has conquered death and all that belongs to it? What is He, now that He shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore? He is much the same as He used to be! Indeed, He is altogether what He was, for He is "the same yesterday, today and forever."

Notice, first, that in this appearance of Christ we are taught that He is still anxious to create peace in the hearts of His people. No sooner did He make Himself visible than He said, "Peace be unto you." Beloved, your risen Lord wants you to be happy! When He was here on earth, He said, "Let not your hearts be troubled." He says the same to you today. He takes no delight in the distresses of His people. He would have His joy to be in them, that their joy may be full. He bids you rejoice in Him always. He whispers to you, this morning, as you sit in the pew, "Peace be unto you." He has not lost His tender care over the least of the flock—He would have each one led by the still waters and made to lie down in green pastures.

Note, again, that He has not lost His habit of chiding unbelief and encouraging faith, for as soon as He has risen and speaks with His disciples, He asks them, "Why are you troubled? And why do thoughts arise in your hearts?" He loves you to believe in Him and be at rest. Find if you can, Beloved, one occasion in which Jesus inculcated doubt, or bade men dwell in uncertainty! The apostles of unbelief are everywhere, today, and they imagine that they are doing God a service by spreading what they call, "honest doubt." This is death to all joy! Poison to all peace! The Savior did not do so! He would have them take extraordinary measures to get rid of their doubt. "Handle Me," He says. It was going a long way to say that, but He would sooner be handled than His people should doubt! Ordinarily it might not be proper for them to touch Him. Had He not said to the women, "Touch Me not"? But what may not be allowable, ordinarily, becomes proper when necessity demands it. The removal of their doubt as to our Lord's Resurrection necessitated that they should handle Him and, therefore, He bids them do so.

O Beloved, you that are troubled and vexed with thoughts and, therefore, get no comfort out of your religion because of your mistrust—your Lord would have you come very near to Him—and put His Gospel to any test which will satisfy you. He cannot bear you to doubt! He appeals tenderly, saying, "O you of little faith, why do you doubt?" He would at this moment still encourage you to taste and see that the Lord is good. He would have you believe in the sub-

stantial reality of His religion and handle Him and see! Trust Him largely and simply, as a child trusts its mother and knows no fear!

Notice, next, that when the Savior had risen from the dead and a measure of His Glory was upon Him, He was still most condescendingly familiar with His people. He showed

them His hands and His feet and He said, "Handle Me and see." When He was on earth, before His passion, He was most free with His disciples—no pretense of dignity kept Him apart from them. He was their Master and Lord—and yet He washed their feet! He was the Son of the Highest, but He was among them as One who serves! He said, "Suffer little children to come unto Me." He is the same today—

"His sacred name a common word

On earth He loves to hear;

There is no majesty in Him

Which love may not come near." Though He reigns in the highest heavens, His delights are still with the sons of men! He will still permit us to sit at His feet, or even to lean our head upon His bosom. Jesus will listen as we pour out our griefs. He will regard our cry when we are not pleading about a sword in our bones, but only concerning a thorn in our flesh. Jesus is still the Brother born for adversity. He still manifests Himself to us as He does not unto the world. Is not this clear and also very pleasant to see, as we study this interview?

The next thing is that the risen Lord was still wonderfully patient, even as He had always been. He bore with their folly and infirmity, for, "while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered," He did not chide them. He discerned between one unbelief and another and He judged that the unbelief which grew out of wonder was not so blamable as that former unbelief which denied credible evidence. Instead of rebuke, He gives confirmation. He says, "Have you any food here?" And He takes a piece of broiled fish and some honeycomb and eats it. Not that He needed food. His body could receive food, but it did not require it. Eating was His own sweet way of showing them that if He could, He would solve all their questions. He would do anything in His great patience that they might be cured of their mistrust! Just so today, Beloved, Jesus does not chide you, but He invites you to believe Him. He invites you, therefore, to sup with Him and eat bread at His table. "He will not always chide, neither will He keep His anger forever," but in His great mercy He will use another tone and encourage you to trust Him. Can you hold back? Oh, please, do not do so!

Observe that our Savior, though He was risen from the dead and, therefore, in a measure, in His Glory, entered into the fullest fellowship with His own. Peter tells us that they did eat and drink with Him. I do not notice, in this narrative, that He drank with them, but He certainly ate of such food as they had, and this was a clear token of His fellowship with them. In all ages eating and drinking with one another has been the most expressive token of communion and so the Savior seems to say to us, today, "I have eaten with you, My people, since I have quit the grave. I have eaten with you through the 11 who represented you. I have eaten and I will still eat with you, till we sit down together at the marriage supper of the Lamb. If any man opens unto Me, I will come into Him and will sup with Him and he with Me." Yes, the Lord Jesus is still wonderfully near to us and He waits to grant us the

highest forms of fellowship which can be known this side the gate of pearl! In this let our spirits quietly rejoice.

Let me call your attention to the fact that when Jesus had risen from the dead, He was just as tender of Scripture as He was before His decease. I have dwelt for two Sunday mornings [Sermons #1955—Jesus Declining the Legions and #1956—On the Cross After Death] upon the wonderful way in which our Lord always magnified the Scriptures. And here, as if to crown all, He told them that, "all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms concerning Me. And He opened their understanding that they might understand the Scriptures and said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead." Find Jesus where you may, He is the antagonist of those who would lessen the authority of Holy Scripture!

"It is written" is His weapon against Satan, His argument against wicked men! The learned at this hour scoff at the Book and accuse of Bibliolatry those of us who reverence the Divine Word! But in this they derive no assistance from the teaching or example of Jesus. Not a word derogatory of Scripture ever fell from the lips of Jesus Christ—He always manifested the most reverent regard for every jot and tittle of the Inspired Volume. Since our Savior, not only before His death, but after it, took care, thus, to commend the Scriptures to us, let us avoid with all our hearts all teaching in which Holy Scripture is put into the background! Still the Bible and the Bible, alone, should be and shall be the religion of Protestants—and we will not budge an inch from that standpoint, God helping us!

Once again, our Savior, after He had risen from the dead, showed that He was anxious for the salvation of men, for it was at this interview that He breathed upon the Apostles and bade them receive the Holy Spirit, to fit them to go forth and preach the Gospel to every creature! The missionary spirit is the spirit of Christ—not only the spirit of Him that died to save, but the spirit of Him who has finished His work and has gone to His rest. Let us cultivate that spirit, if we would be like the Jesus who has risen from the dead!

III. I can stay no longer, because I would draw your attention, in the third place, to the light which is thrown by this incident upon THE NATURE OF OUR OWN RESURRECTION.

First, I gather from this text that our nature, our whole humanity, will be perfected at the day of the appearing of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, when the dead shall be raised incorruptible and we that may then be alive shall be changed. Jesus has redeemed not only our souls, but our bodies! "Know you not that your bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit?" When the Lord shall deliver His captive people out of the land of the enemy, He will not leave a bone of one of them in the adversary's power. The dominion of death shall be utterly broken. Our entire nature shall be redeemed unto the living God in the day of our resurrection! After death, until that day, we shall be disembodied spirits, but in the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body, we shall attain our full inheritance! We are

looking forward to a complete restoration. At this time the body is dead because of sin and, therefore, it suffers pain and tends to decay, but the spirit is life because of righteousness. In our resurrection, however, the body shall also be quickened and the resurrection shall be to the body what regeneration has been to the soul! Thus shall our humanity be completely delivered from the consequences of the Fall. Perfect manhood is that which Jesus restores from sin and the grave—and this shall be ours in the day of His appearing.

I gather next that in our resurrection our nature will be full of peace. Jesus Christ would not have said, "Peace be unto you," if there had not been a deep peace within Himself. He was calm and undisturbed. There was much peace about His whole life, but after His Resurrection, His peace becomes very conspicuous. There is no striving with scribes and Pharisees; there is no battling with anybody after our Lord is risen! A French author has written of our Lord's Forty Days on earth after the Resurrection under the title of, "The Life of Jesus Christ in Glory." Though rather misleading at first, the title is not so inaccurate as it appears, for His work was done and His warfare was accomplished—and our Lord's life here was the beginning of His Glory. Such shall be our life—we shall be flooded with eternal peace and shall never again be tossed about with trouble, sorrow, distress or persecution! An infinite serenity shall keep our body, soul and spirit throughout eternity.

When we rise again our nature will find its home amid the communion of saints. When the Lord Jesus Christ had risen again, His first resort was the room where His disciples were gathered. His first evening was spent among the objects of His love. Even so, wherever we are, we shall seek and find communion with the saints. I joyfully expect to meet many of you in Heaven—to know you and commune with you. I would not like to float about in the future state without a personality in the midst of a company of undefined and unknown beings. That would be no Heaven to me! No, Brothers and Sisters, we shall soon perceive who our comrades are and we shall rejoice in them and in our Lord. There could be no communion among unknown entities. You cannot have fellowship with people whom you do not recognize and, therefore, it seems to me most clear that we shall, in the future state, have fellowship through recognition—and our heavenly resurrection bodies shall help the recognition and share in the fellowship. As the risen Christ wends His way to the upper room of the eleven, so will you, by force of holy gravitation, find your way to the place where all the servants of God shall gather at the last. Then shall we be truly at home and go no more out forever.

Furthermore, I see that in that day our bodies will admirably serve our spirits. For look at our Lord's body. Now that He is risen from the dead, He desires to convince His disciples and His body becomes at once the means of His argument, the evidence of His statement! His flesh and bones were text and sermon for Him. "Handle Me," He says, "and see." Ah, Brothers and Sisters, whatever we may have to do in eternity, we shall not be hindered by our bodies as we now are! Flesh and blood hamper us, but "flesh and bones" shall help us!

I need to speak, sometimes, but my head aches, or my throat is choked, or my legs refuse to bear me up—but it is not so in the resurrection from the dead! A thousand infirmities in this earthly life compass us about, but our risen body shall be helpful to our regenerated nature! It is only a natural body now, fit for our soul, but hereafter it shall be a spiritual body, adapted to all the desires and wishes of the Heaven-born

spirit—and no longer shall we have to cry out, "The spirit, indeed, is willing, but the flesh is weak." We shall find in the risen body a power such as the spirit shall wish to employ for the noblest purposes. Will not this be wonderful?

In that day, Beloved, when we shall rise again from the dead, we shall remember the past. Do you not notice how the risen Savior says, "These are the words which I spoke unto you, while I was yet with you." He had not forgotten His former state. I think Dr. Watts is right when he says that we shall, "with transporting joys recount the labors of our feet." It is rather a small subject and probably we shall far more delight to dwell on the labors of our Redeemer's hands and feet—but still, we shall remember all the ways whereby the Lord our God led us—and we shall talk to one another concerning them. In Heaven we shall remember our happy Sabbaths here below, when our hearts burned within us while Jesus, Himself, drew near. Since Jesus speaks after He has risen of the things that He said while He was with His disciples, we perceive that the river of death is not like the fabled Lethe, which caused all who drank thereof to forget their past. We shall arise with a multitude of hallowed memories enriching our minds! Death will not be oblivion to us, for it was not so to Jesus. Rather shall we meditate on mercies experienced and, by discoursing on them, we shall make known to principalities and powers the manifold wisdom of God!

Observe that our Lord, after He had risen from the dead, was still full of the spirit of service and, therefore, He called others out to go and preach the Gospel—and He gave them the Spirit of God to help them. When you and I are risen from the dead, we shall rise full of the spirit of service! What engagements we may have throughout eternity we are not told because we have enough to do to fulfill our engagements now, but assuredly we shall be honored with errands of mercy and tasks of love fitted for our heavenly being. and I doubt not it shall be one of our greatest delights, while seeing the Lord's face, to serve Him with all our perfected powers! He will use us in the grand economy of future manifestations of His Divine Glory. Possibly we may be to other dispensations what the angels have been to this. Be that as it may, we shall find a part of our bliss and joy in constantly serving Him who has raised us from the dead!

There I leave the subject, wishing that I could have handled it much better. Think it over when you are quiet at home and add this thought to it, that you have a share in all that is contained in resurrection. May the Holy Spirit give you a personal grip of this vital Truth of God! You, yourself, shall rise from the dead—therefore, be not afraid to die!

If any of my Hearers have no share in our Lord's Resurrection, I am truly sorry for them. O my Friend, what you are losing! If you have no share in the living Lord, may God have mercy upon you! If you have no share in Christ's rising from the dead, then you will not be raised up in the likeness of His glorified body! If you do not attain to that resurrection from among the dead, then you must abide in death, with no prospect but that of a certain fearful looking for of judgment and of fiery indignation. Oh, look to Jesus, the Savior! Only as you look to Him can there be a happy future for you. God help you to do so at once, for His dear name's sake! Amen.