

## THE VAIL LIFTED.

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Our forefathers gathered in that "plain in the land of Shinar", said: "Come, let us build us a city, and a tower, whose top may reach unto Heaven." They were fair representatives of the race. Created to "seek God, if haply they might feel after Him and find Him",<sup>1</sup> men have ever been prone to make the search without effort or desire to secure the divine aid. They have sought by their own knowledge to find out God, and by their own labors to build a way to Heaven. And it is doubtful if even yet this spirit of arrogant self-sufficiency has ceased to prevail among the nations, although the world's history is largely only a record of the utter failure of their efforts.

May we not hope, however, that the time is near at hand when this supreme demonstration of man's folly will be clearly evident unto himself? For let it be remembered that for full six thousand years and more, whose history we may read today, God has suffered man to continue his efforts under circumstances doubtless as favorable as can ever come to him in this world, and as a result he has grown nothing better but rather worse. The truth of this will become more evident as we consider the bearing of our Lord's resurrection on man's understanding of the future.

Man has doubtless never been able to contemplate himself without concern. Certainly from the earliest times of which we have any record he has been interested in the *whence* and the *whither* of his being. He has desired much to know the source from which he came into this world, and especially has he been concerned to know into what he would pass at death. Is death a cessation of be-

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<sup>1</sup> Gen. 11:4.

<sup>2</sup> Acts 17:27.

ing, or is it but the gateway to another life? And if it is the entrance to another life, what is the nature of that life? Such questions as these would not be put aside, and no inquiries concerning man himself have elicited more prolonged and earnest thought. But before we pass in brief review the various replies given to these questions by the peoples of history let us clear the way a little.

### I. THE ISOLATION OF GOD'S PEOPLE.

God has never been without a people in the world that He could truly call His own, and never will be. But since the call of Abraham His people have been isolated. Whether wandering in Palestine, shepherding or serving in Egypt, or dwelling in the land of promise, the chosen family never ceased to be apart from the life of the world about them. Before and during the exodus their manner of life formed a barrier about them, and after the conquest this was reinforced by the physical conformation of the land in which they dwelt. Nor has it been otherwise since the Israel of blood has been replaced by the Israel of faith. It is true the look of Christianity is outward and not inward. Its spirit is to receive and not to exclude, to reach out after rather than to repel. In this it differs in a marked way from Judaism. But historically it still remains true that God's people under the new covenant as well as under the old have been isolated. Speaking generally, for sixteen hundred years after Christ only one continent out of six, and that the next to the smallest in size, was to any considerable degree influenced by Christianity. And even with the additional spread of the gospel occasioned by the discovery of America, the Reformation and the modern missionary movement, it is still true that the vast majority of men remain in almost utter ignorance of the fundamental doctrines of Christ.

All this becomes still more significant when it is borne in mind that the sections of the world above all others

shut out from contact with the people of God through these millenniums are, since Christ, Asia, the very cradle of the race, and, before Christ, the northern and western portions of the Mediterranean basin. The history of the civilizations which have flourished in these regions is the history of man at his best. In these lands noble Aryan and devout Semitic peoples of both ancient and modern times have, under natural conditions as favorable as can be found anywhere, sought with great earnestness some degree of certitude concerning the future and have found it not. God has, as it were, by thus isolating His chosen ones, deliberately left man to himself that the demonstration of his impotence to read the future might at last become evident to himself and make him ready to accept the light which God would give him. The story of this struggle through the centuries is such a story of pathetic failure as finds no parallel. Whittier's beautiful lament becomes surcharged with meaning here:

“Alas for him who never sees  
The stars shine through his cypress trees!  
Who hopeless lays his dead away  
Nor looks to see the breaking day  
Across his mournful marbles play!”

## II. THE FAILURE OF THE RACE.<sup>3</sup>

The early literature of India makes it clear that from ten to fifteen centuries before Christ the people of that land believed in a future existence, though some uncertainty remains as to whether that existence was thought of as endless. By doing the things he ought, man might pass into “that everlasting and imperishable world where there is eternal light and glory”.<sup>4</sup> In its earliest form

<sup>3</sup> The facts presented in the following paragraphs of this section are drawn largely from Salmond's “The Christian Doctrine of Immortality”. The quotations, except where otherwise noted, are from that work.

<sup>4</sup> Rig-Veda.

this belief in a future existence "is a cheerful and hopeful belief, expressive of a joy in life and a desire for life. There is no hint of the wish to be rid of the burden of existence; no suggestion of the previous life of the soul, or of the rebirth of the soul in the body of man or beast. The Vedic hymns have nothing to say of transmigration, or any dread cycle of births and deaths". Later from some unknown source the doctrine of transmigration came into Indian thought, and the cheerfulness and hopefulness of the earlier views of the future life were gradually supplanted by heaviness and despair. And now for centuries the best the future has held for the ordinary man has been only a continuous succession of births and deaths, each succeeding interval of life but little better or worse than the preceding. For the fully enlightened there is something somewhat better. These may enter into "the eternal rest of Nirvana". But that "eternal rest", whatever else may be said about it, certainly means "at least the cessation of personal life, the end of the weary way of individuality—the absorption of the individual soul in the Universal Soul". Of Buddha it has been truthfully said.

"That all the all he had for needy man  
Was nothing, and his best of being was  
But not to be."

The ancient Egyptians enjoyed the repute of having been the first people to teach the immortality of the soul. It is certain that "however difficult they felt it to explain its conditions, however they varied from age to age in their ideas of its nature and its scene, the Egyptians believed from first to last with an intense belief in the continuance of life" after death. Three stages of development in their idea of a future life may be discovered. Down to about 2130 B. C. there was "a simple but vivid belief in the perpetuation of existence after death, and that as the perpetuation of the individual existence".

After this date attention is directed more to the awfulness of death, funeral ceremonies, the shadow of judgment and the perils of the soul in the underworld. From 1530 B. C. the belief that the future will be filled with good or ill as the present life is lived worthily or unworthily becomes everywhere present. There is to be a judgment before Maat, the goddess of Justice, Truth, or Law. For those who are justified the judgment is to be followed by a long and arduous period of probation; upon those who are condemned punishments are to come which are described in words as heavy with terror as the language can furnish. It should be noted, however, that the Egyptians always thought of this future life as in some sense material. Their after existence "was neither a better order of life than the present, nor a more spiritual". And here in the Nile valley, as well as in India, the earlier and purer form of religious beliefs appears to have suffered degradation. At any rate, when Christianity came in contact with the religion of Egypt, the last and worst place is assigned to the Egyptians, who are said to have "erred more than all men".<sup>4</sup>

The Babylonians and Assyrians were religious peoples, but their religion was mostly concerned with the present world. They probably never held any view of the world that can properly be called monotheistic. Belief in a future life prevailed among them, but it was of a dark and gloomy aspect. The underworld was peopled with demons. "Darkness, dust, relentlessness, are the things that mostly belong to it." There is little evidence that any ethical ideas entered into their views of the after life. "The future which awaited the mass of men, good and evil alike, prince and slave together, was an existence which was scarce existence, in an underworld which was a land of forgetfulness, a habitation of shades, uncheered by the light of day, and without distinction of lot according to worth."

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<sup>4</sup>"Apology of Aristides."

According to ancient Persian customs and beliefs, when a man died his body was exposed and his soul crossed the Bridge of Chinvat, the Bridge of the Gatherer or Accountant. For three days the good and evil spirits struggled for his soul, and then he came to judgment. If found good, he made his way to the dwelling place of Ahura-Mazda (Ormuzd); if evil, he sank "down into the house of hell". If the balance were equal, if it could not then be determined whether he were really good or evil, he passed into an intermediate state where he was reserved unto the decision of the last day. Later these views were modified by the introduction of the ideas of a Messiah, a resurrection of the dead, and a final restoration and salvation of all. In such a doctrine of the future there was a spirit "which should have made it mighty and enduring. But it missed the mark. There were weak and beggarly elements in it which proved fatal". And it is a remarkable fact that today "the purest religion of antiquity (except the Jewish) should have almost perished from the earth".\*

In early Greek thought death was regarded as the worst of evils, stronger than the gods themselves. Something survived death, but not the full, real man. The future was dark and gloomy because of the poverty of existence. Man's future was to be spent in the "house of Hades", a place "desolate of joy". The plains were barren; the rivers were rivers of hate, sorrow, lamentation, fire; the trees were fruitless poplars; the sun never pierced the gloom and everlasting night reigned supreme. It was a place of horror to even the gods themselves. The dead were thought to have hereafter "all they had on earth, but in reduced, deceptive form". This "reduced, deceptive form" of things about him, joined with the failure of the full man himself to survive death, caused his future existence to be "so emptied of the strength and fullness of life that nothing could dispel its gloom, no

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\* Brace, "The Unknown God."

honor or consideration within its dark domain could make it tolerable". In later Grecian thought, the conception of the future became somewhat changed. The Eleusinian Mysteries gave "the hope of a better immortality" by spectacular teaching. The Orphic Mysteries introduced a moralizing element. Pindar deepened this moral element and pictured the future of the good as brighter still. Plato brought the doctrine of the future to its highest development in Greek thought. Indeed, it is hardly too much to say of his discussion that it is "intrinsically the greatest contribution drawn from philosophical speculation upon the question \* \* \* the noblest single offering the human reason has yet made upon the altar of human hope".<sup>7</sup> But even this, which doubtless marks the limits of the human mind in that direction, "did not rise to a permanent contribution to man's faith and hope. It failed to take hold of the common mind. It did not even address itself to the masses of the people". Plato's "arguments did not convince". It remained for Aristotle, for a time the pupil of Plato and later his successful rival, to formulate those views of the future which finally prevailed in the Græco-Roman world. He sternly followed "the guidance of his logic to its last conclusions".<sup>8</sup> In a formal treatise, "On the Soul", he formally examined its various elements and their mutual relations. The soul, according to his teaching, is the energy or function of an organized body. Two elements are found in it, the passive and the active. Of these the first is perishable, like the body, and only the latter is immortal. But this active element of the soul does not form a part of the man in reality—"it comes from without, and is not bound to the *me* by any organic ties".<sup>9</sup> Just what Aristotle means by this active element of the soul is very hard to understand, but there can be no question as to his conclusion. "By affirming that the eternal (active) intelligence alone was

<sup>7</sup> Geddis, "The Phædo of Plato".

<sup>8</sup> Westcott, "The Gospel of the Resurrection", p. 148.

<sup>9</sup> Weber, "History of Philosophy", p. 129.

immortal, he positively denies individual immortality. On this point of the Peripatetic teaching there cannot be the slightest dispute."<sup>10</sup>

These teachings of the great logician fell into congenial soil. More and more they spread abroad until the Christ came. And with their spread there settled down upon those Mediterranean lands such darkness as only the Sun of Righteousness could penetrate, such despair as only the Desire of all nations could relieve by hope. In the words of Dr. Breed: "The heart of the Roman world was consumed with desire which could not be gratified; shaken with the agitation of a soul no longer master of itself. The hope of annihilation was the only consolation which it enjoyed, and in this heartless, sickening, stifling, overwhelming despair the representative of the Græco-Roman world abandoned himself to anything that might afford him some relief."<sup>11</sup>

"On that hard pagan world disgust  
And secret loathing fell;  
Deep weariness and sated lust  
Made human life a hell."

From this brief setting forth of those views as to man's future which have been held by the leading peoples of the centuries, it becomes evident that wherever the human mind has been permitted to continue uninfluenced by divine revelation its tendency has been almost uniformly in one direction. Beginning with a belief in man's immortality, in some cases the belief has been degraded by later developments, and in at least two cases—and these where circumstances appear to have been most favorable to success—the outcome of centuries of thought has been positive denial of the soul's continuance. The movement has not been toward greater certainty that man will continue to be after death and more perfect knowledge as to the conditions of that existence. It has been uniformly

<sup>10</sup> Id., p. 130.

<sup>11</sup> "Preparation of the World for Christ", p. 399.



away from certainty toward a positive denial of any real immortality.

And all this despite the fact that

“There’s not a flower of spring  
That dies ere June, but vaunts itself allied  
By issue and symbol, by significance  
And correspondence, to the spiritual world  
Outside the limits of our space and time,  
Whereto we’re bound.”<sup>12</sup>

Nature has throughout the centuries had somewhat to say to man concerning a future life, but she speaks in pantomime. The returning birds and flowers at spring-time, the changing forms of animal life, the deep but half unconscious longings of our own souls—these all have joined in intimating that there is possibly, nay, even probably, a life beyond the grave. But such intimation has not been assurance. And it may be true also that, “In regnant hours the soul scorns proofs and despises arguments and exultingly sings: ‘God is; therefore I shall be, forevermore.’”<sup>13</sup> But how few hours for any man are thus “regnant”. Most of life is far less exalted, yea, is even commonplace. And the addition of this testimony of the soul in these “regnant hours” to the intimations of nature has not sufficed to produce an assurance that abides and prevails. After millenniums of earnest consideration of nature’s speech and the soul’s testimony, where revelation’s voice is not heard, man still stands beside his dead and cries, “If a man die, shall he live again?” and is not able to discern the answer. It may be the echo of his own cry returning to him. It may be sheer illusion.

### III. GOD’S RESPONSE TO MAN’S FAILURE.

But here as elsewhere, man’s helplessness has been met by God’s helpfulness. What man could not dis-

<sup>12</sup> Mrs. Browning, “Aurora Leigh”, Book 5.

<sup>13</sup> Hillis, “Foregleams of Immortality”, p. 18.

cover for himself God has revealed through Christ. The human mind could not penetrate the vail which hides the future from us, but Christ could lift it that we might peer within. With triumphant might he rose from the dead, and through a period of forty days appeared from time to time to many different individuals and under many different circumstances. The fact of the resurrection was made certain to the limit of the power of human testimony to certify such an event. "Indeed, taking all the evidence together, it is not too much to say that there is no single historic incident better or more variously supported than the Resurrection of Christ."<sup>14</sup> And with the establishment of the fact that Christ rose from the dead came a clear and satisfying response to the questionings of the human heart as to the future. If Christ rose, then man shall rise. He said: "The hour is coming, in the which all that are in their graves shall hear His (the Son of Man's) voice, and shall come forth", and His rising put upon His words the seal of eternal truth. The Corinthians, questioning as to whether the dead will really rise, were met by Paul with the evidence for this great event and a statement of its vital importance. "But if there is no resurrection of the dead", he reasoned, "neither hath Christ been raised: and if Christ hath not been raised, then is our preaching vain, your faith also is vain". But the suppositions are contrary to fact, and he concludes: "But now hath Christ been raised from the dead, the first fruits of them that are asleep."<sup>15</sup>

How glad we are to accept Paul's conclusion. It affords us unlimited satisfaction to have sufficient ground for believing that

"This is the bud of being, the dim dawn,  
The twilight of our day, the vestibule."

But it should be resolutely borne in mind that nothing less than the resurrection of our Lord could have justified

<sup>14</sup> Westcott, as above, p. 137.

<sup>15</sup> 1 Cor. 15:13, 14, 20.

us in so believing.\* Let him who appreciates what the darkness would have been indite the praise of Him who sent, and of Him who brought the light that now illuminates our way.

#### IV. SOME OTHER QUESTIONS.

But the assurance which the resurrection of our Lord gives that there is a life beyond the grave, while it affords satisfaction, also provokes still further inquiry. If we are to live after death, what is the nature of that life? How greatly will the individual be changed? And along what lines will these changes occur? What will be the nature of his environment and his relations thereto? It may not be possible to answer these questions to our entire satisfaction, but the resurrection of Christ has made some things certain as to the saved individual in the future world.

##### 1. *The Individual.*

The resurrection tells us nothing directly concerning the future of the unsaved. In fact, all that has been revealed to us as to the state of the lost hereafter can be summed up in a very few exceedingly dreadful statements. Enough has been made known to meet every requirement of faithful warning—enough, indeed, to fill any thoughtful soul with horror at the mere suggestion that such a fate may be his—but we have been graciously spared any statement of details.

With respect to the redeemed, however, revelation has been much more free. We know the saved individual will

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\* "If we look within or without we have absolutely no analogy to carry our thoughts one step onward into a realm wholly unknown: none to show that the soul will exert a power there which has been undeveloped or dormant here. Every change which we can follow is simply of the earth. Faith, or love, or instinct, may cross the dark river, but they go alone: reason cannot follow them. Nay, more: reason shows that the visions which they see are merely shadowy projections of what we see and feel now."—Westcott, as above, p. 155.

be greatly changed hereafter in many ways. It is permissible here, however, to call attention only to such changes as are revealed or made more certain by the resurrection of our Lord. These pertain chiefly to the body.

There is considerable difference of opinion as to our Lord's state during the forty days between the resurrection and the ascension. But whether we regard Him as entirely perfected from the moment of His rising from the tomb, or as gradually passing during the forty days from His earthly state to His heavenly, there can be no doubt that His body was greatly changed from the moment that He emerged from the sepulchre. The evangelists make this too evident to admit of question. He appeared and disappeared in ways altogether apart from the ordinary. Every line of the post-resurrection narratives is charged with the supernatural. He talked with His followers as if He belonged to another world. They listened to Him with an attitude of mind that indicates a realization of the same fact.

If, now, we can know in what particulars His body was changed, we can know in what particulars ours will be changed. We may not be able to attain certainty as to the extent of the changes, but we can know along what lines they will occur. Fortunately, we are not left to discover by our own wisdom the particular ways in which Christ's raised body differed from the one laid in the tomb. The inspired apostle to the Gentiles has done this for us, and we may feel all the more certainty concerning them. He declared concerning the resurrection body of the saints—and we cannot believe that he had lost sight of the resurrection of Christ, the pivotal fact of his gospel of which he had just been speaking, when he wrote the words: "It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body."<sup>1</sup> In these

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<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. 15:42-44.

four particulars at least, then, Christ's raised body differed from the one laid in the tomb by Joseph and Nicodemus. And in these four particulars at least, we may be assured, will the bodies given us in the final state differ from the ones we now possess. Each of these particulars is of sufficient importance to justify further consideration.

This present has ever been a world of decay. The opening buds of trees and shrubs are brilliant with beauty today and tomorrow begin to fade and die. The leaves hold fast to the boughs until the green of the forest gives way to the variagated hues of autumn, and then they join the myriads of other years in enriching the soil by death. The very giants of the forests, which have beheld the rise and fall of empires, tremble in the storm and crack and crash and moulder with the leaves away. The very hills upon which the forests grow, and the towering peaks that pierce the clouds above them, are one with the tiniest shrub and flower in the process of death. And what is so prevalent in the world about us also prevails within us. We bear about with us continually, even while in the best of health, the odor of the grave. Our bodies are little short of living tombs. Our very strength is a strength that comes from death and results in death. To breathe is no more certainly to live than it is to die. But hereafter all will be changed. Corruption will have given place to incorruption. The germs of decay will have been lost. We shall be clothed no longer with a living death but with a deathless life. And who will tell us all that it will mean to be thus clothed, to be thus finally released from the now constant burden of inner and outer decay?

Here, also, we bear the marks of dishonor. All are imperfect, and all imperfection is dishonorable. The perfectly formed human body is only an ideal. The perfectly developed human body has not even been conceived in thought. Injury, disease, death belong to us here and cannot be escaped. But our dread and horror of these

things brand them as abnormal and dishonorable. At best, man's body in this life is but a rosebud that gives promise of great beauty and fragrance and then declines and dies. But hereafter our bodies shall be characterized by "glory". The word Paul here uses is a strong word in New Testament usage. It is used "of that condition with God the Father in Heaven to which Christ was raised after He had achieved His work on earth".<sup>18</sup> Again, and this is more to the point, it is used of "the body in which His glorious condition is manifested".<sup>19</sup> Can it possibly be a missing of the mark to believe that Paul in thus speaking of the resurrection body has in mind the only appearance of the risen Lord to Himself? And if not, how significant the words become. The radiance of that "body of His glory" was above the radiance of the Syrian noon-day sun. It was so great that to face it for only a little while left a blindness that only the power of the same Christ through Ananias sufficed to remove. It was a glory approximating we know not how nearly that glory of the Almighty One which no one can behold and live. How marvelous will that change be, to be "sown in dishonor", to be "raised in glory"! "Beloved, now are we children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be. We know that if He shall be manifested, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him even as He is."<sup>20</sup>

Again, at present we are handicapped with weakness. We are learning from our own experience that "the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak", as the Lord said. We are altogether ready to unite with Paul in declaring that when we would do good evil is present with us, and the good we would we do not, while the evil we would not that we do. And to the extent we have discovered our weakness, to that extent has it filled us with sorrow. To love the Lord supremely, to hear His voice and long intensely to be true to Him, and then to realize that the

<sup>18</sup> Thayer, "Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament".

<sup>19</sup> Thayer, as above.

<sup>20</sup> 1 John 3:2.

weakness of the flesh incapacitates the willingness of the spirit—who will tell how poignant is the sorrow thus begotten? And who will declare the joy that lives in the firm conviction that hereafter this weakness is to give place to power? Then, cleansed and glorified, we shall run and not be wearied, we shall walk and not faint. No service will overtax our powers, no emergency will find us unprepared. As perfectly as Christ has done and now does the will of the Father, so perfectly will we do His will also.

But probably the most comprehensive contrast which Paul draws between the present and the resurrection body is this last: "It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body." It would not be easy to find a meaning for the terms "natural body" and "spiritual body" as here used that would be satisfactory to all, nor is it really necessary to our purpose. It will be well worth while, however, to look at the terms somewhat carefully. The word rendered "natural" comes directly from the Greek word for "soul", and is more correctly translated "psychical". By "natural body", therefore, Paul evidently intended to refer to a body prepared specially for the soul, and in which it found a fit dwelling place in this world. And if this be the meaning of "natural body", then by "spiritual body" he must have meant a body prepared specially for the spirit, and in which it finds a fit dwelling place in the future world. But if we would think clearly at least one other step must be taken. The terms "soul" and "spirit" must be assigned some definite meaning. And here perhaps we can do no better than to follow Professor Vincent, who regards the soul as "that phase of the immaterial principle in man which is more nearly allied to *the flesh*, and which characterizes the man as a mortal creature"; and the spirit as "that phase" of the same principle "which looks Godward, and characterizes him as related to God".<sup>21</sup> The "natural body", then, is

<sup>21</sup> "Word Studies in the New Testament", Vol. III, p. 282.

that in which the lower "phase of the immaterial principle in man" finds its proper field of life and development; the "spiritual body", that in which the higher phase of the same principle finds its proper field of life and development. And to "faith's foreseeing eye" this last, as Paul puts it in another place, is "far better". The process of losing "this muddy vesture of decay" may continue to fill us with horror, but the end becomes ever more greatly to be desired.

"Then shall I see and hear and know  
 All I desire or wish below,  
 And every power find full employ,  
 In that eternal world of joy."

## 2. *The Environment.*

It is only to be expected that the resurrection of Christ would reveal to us more concerning the nature of the individual hereafter than concerning the environment of the individual. Indeed, at first it will appear to most almost impossible that it should in any way contribute to our knowledge or certainty of the conditions under which we shall live hereafter. And yet it does so contribute, and its contribution is not without marked value.

The resurrection assists us to clearer and more certain knowledge of the future environment of the redeemed in two ways. First, it makes us more certain that all our Lord's declarations concerning the future of the redeemed are true. Attention has already been called to the part of the resurrection in assuring us that Jesus of Nazareth is the divine Saviour of men. And just as this event assured us that Jesus is indeed God's Son and the world's Saviour, so also it assures us that the things spoken by Him are true.

Not many statements, it is true, can be found in His teachings concerning the future environment of the saved, but the few are worthy of attention. In His prayer for



those who should believe on Him through His disciples' words we read: "Father, I desire 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."<sup>22</sup> A little earlier in that same evening of marvelous revelation of Himself and of the Father, He said to His disciples: "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and will receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."<sup>23</sup> Three days before, as He sat on the Mount of Olives and told of the judgment that is to come, He declared: "Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."<sup>24</sup> Thus the resurrection adds to our assurance that hereafter the redeemed are to be united in a great kingdom in the Father's house surrounded by the Son's ineffable glory.

Secondly, the resurrection reveals, as noted above, certain characteristics of the resurrection body. And are we not justifiable in assuming that the surroundings in which such a body lives will be in harmony with the nature of the body? It is certainly not to be supposed that God will provide less carefully or liberally for us there than He has provided here. And if He has determined that our future bodies shall be of the nature considered above, so pure, so strong, so perfect, surely the environment in which we shall spend eternity cannot be less glorious than that beheld by John on Patmos.

Thus by the grace of God the demonstrated helplessness of man has found relief. The darkness that enshrouded the future has been shot through with light. Our Lord's resurrection has done more than assure us that

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<sup>22</sup> John 17:24.

<sup>23</sup> John 14:2, 3.

<sup>24</sup> Matt. 25:34.

we shall not cease to live. It has made us certain that we shall live in a far more perfect body and glorious environment. In the light of this supreme miracle, "Death is enlisted in the service of Christ's people; and by destroying flesh and blood, it enables this mortal to put on immortality. The blow which threatens to crush and annihilate all life breaks but the shell and lets the imprisoned spirit free to a larger life. \* \* \* The grave becomes the robing room to life eternal."\* At the touch of the Son of God the vail has lifted and we are permitted to peer into the future and behold far down the eternal ages what we shall be.

"In this pent sphere of being incomplete,  
The imperfect fragment of a beauteous whole,  
For yon rare regions, where the perfect meet,  
Sighs the lone soul.

"Sighs for the perfect! Far and fair it lies;  
It hath no half-fed friendships perishing fleet,  
No partial insights, no averted eyes,  
No loves unmeet.

"Something beyond! Light for our clouded eyes!  
In this dark dwelling, in its shrouded beams,  
Our best waits masked, few pierce the soul's disguise;  
How sad it seems!

"Something beyond! Ah, if it were not so,  
Darker would be thy face, O brief Today;  
Earthward we'd bow beneath life's smiting woe,  
Powerless to pray.

"Something beyond! The immortal morning stands  
Above the night; clear shines her precious brow;  
The pendulous star in her transfigured hands  
Brightens the Now."

—Mary Hudson.

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\* Dods, "Expositor's Bible", 1 Corinthians, ch. 24.