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Asa and Jehoshaphat

2 Chronicles 16: 1-10; 2 Chronicles 20: 1-30.

One hardly knows anything more sad than this account of Asa. No doubt he was the Lord's, but he was out of communion, and relied on his own resources. And he begins by robbing God. Then he asked a worldly man to do a distinctly dishonorable thing: *"Then Asa brought out silver and gold out of the treasures of the house of Jehovah and of the king's house, and sent to Ben-hadad, king of Syria, that dwelt at Damascus, saying, There is a league between me and thee, as there was between my father and thy father: behold, I have sent thee silver and gold; go, break thy league with Baasha king of Israel, that he may depart from me"* (vers. 2, 3). If we get out of communion there is no saying what we may do. It is sad to think that the flesh has more scope in a believer than in the unconverted.

Asa gets his way with Ben-hadad, but Jehovah sends a messenger who tells him he is only a sufferer by getting his own way. Then he adds: *"For the eyes of Jehovah run to and fro throughout the whole earth to show himself strong in the behalf of those whose heart is perfect towards him"* (ver. 9). Those whose hearts are perfect are not those perfect in flesh, but those who know there is nothing good in them. *"Cease ye from man,"* and begin with yourself.

We need mercy, we need wisdom. Let us ask of God, Who giveth liberally and upbraideth not. We have had here a word of warning. Now let us turn to chap. 20: 1-3.

Oh, how blessed! There is nothing finer than this. David, and rightly, *"enquired of Jehovah,"* but Jehoshaphat *"set himself to seek Jehovah,"* and then proclaimed a fast —setting aside the flesh. Oh, how delightful to see the people of God realizing their weakness, and gathering together to seek the Lord as in

ver. 5! Mark Jehoshaphat's reasoning: he makes it a question of God, to Whom all power belongs. Clearing the ground altogether, he makes it a question of God, and God's ability.

What a delicious verse is ver. 6! But he is taking the very highest ground in ver. 7. *"Abraham, thy friend!"* Twice do we get the father of the faithful spoken of as the "Friend" of God! Here for the first time, then in Isaiah 41, and lastly in James 2. Doubtless, the people had behaved very badly, and Jehoshaphat is ready to own it; but if grace gives us high ground it is the merest pride to reject it. Some think it wrong to know the forgiveness of sins; but no, God says it, and the believer ought to occupy the high ground His grace gives.

Mark how he piles it up in vers. 8, 9. It is very beautiful. There is no boasting, but telling God how they have rested in Him, and now they are doing exactly what God would have them do, answering to Solomon's prayer, and relying on His promise, and He cannot deny Himself.

"And now, behold, the children of Ammon and Moab and mount Seir, whom thou wouldst not let Israel invade, when they came out of the land of Egypt, but they turned from them, and destroyed them not; Behold, I say, how they reward us, to come to cast us out of thy possession, which thou hast given us to inherit. O our God, wilt thou not judge them? for we have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do: but our eyes are upon thee." How blessed! He pleads with God all that His grace has given, and asks if God is going to allow the enemy to triumph. He would have us trust in all He has given us. But he makes no preparation —no war loan —no fresh taxes! No; *"our eyes are upon Thee."*

Then *"All Judah stood before Jehovah,"* and the little ones are given first. You know what parade is. Here the little ones come first. The Lord Jesus was much displeased with those who would keep the little ones from Him. Here the little ones stand first before Jehovah, then the wives —not the warriors.

The sons of Asaph were singers, and of them, says ver. 15 *"Hearken ye, all Judah and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem, and thou king Jehoshaphat, Thus saith Jehovah unto you, Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude; for the battle is not yours*

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but God's," etc. And God owns to it. They had owned God, and He answers to it. God knew exactly the place where the enemy was; they might go to their beds, for He that keepeth Israel was watching over them, and *"Ye shall not need to fight in this battle: set yourselves, stand ye still and see the salvation of the Lord with you"* a remarkable expression. Not salvation for you as at the Red Sea, but with you—with the little ones, the wives and the children. *"Go out . . . for Jehovah is with you."*

Ver. 18: What a lovely scene! Here are these people, with the foe to be dealt with tomorrow, worshipping the LORD. There was no nonsense about it (ver. 19). Why should they not stand up to praise the LORD with a loud voice on high?

"So shall ye be established" (ver. 20) that was the point. "I commend you to God," said the apostle. "We want implicit trust in our God and Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ." Believe His prophets" —yes, always the word of God for all. Our sorrows arise because we have acted without the sanction of the word.

Ver. 21 "Beauty of holiness," rather "In holy splendor." They were not going to do it in tinpot style but "in holy splendor." They were rather previous, but they were all right, It is a very good receipt to praise beforehand. If God has promised, may we not give thanks? They began the song of triumph, and Jehovah set ambushments.

"And when they began to sing and to praise, the LORD set ambushments against the children of Ammon, Moab, and mount Seir, which were come against Judah; and they were smitten." How lovely! Israel never shot an arrow; this war never cost them a farthing; no one got a scratch. God said He would fight for them and this is how He did it. To me, this is most delightful. The enemies all slay one another. Judah had said, *"Our eyes are upon Thee,"* now they get another sight—all dead bodies.

"They were three days gathering the spoil" (vers. 25). Can we think of these three days without thinking of that Blessed One Who won the victory for us? And on the fourth day they blessed the LORD (ver. 26). On their side it was a perfectly bloodless battle! not one soldier missing!

I am looking at it in a practical way for ourselves, but when He comes as the rightful Conqueror, we shall come with Him. They started from the house of Jehovah, and they returned there (ver. 28).

It is a true thing to look to Him. In the early days of our short little history they had not much trouble

with those who wanted to come into communion the fear of the Lord was over them. If we fail, always at once confess it; keep short accounts, and rely on Him, and be obedient to the word of His grace.

James; Faith Seen in Works, **James 1:9- Faith tested by life's conditions** *Joel Portman*

James next considers the relative attitudes of the poor brother and the rich brother. In this epistle we will see how often he considers rich and poor men. We read of differing attitudes toward rich and poor in 2:1-16 and then in 5:1-6 he reprimands those who are rich for their attitudes toward poor workers. Here he is teaching that how the rich or poor react to changing circumstances of life reveals the reality of their faith in God. God can and will change our conditions according to His purposes, and those changes will be seen in the spiritual realm and even in the physical.

It wouldn't be difficult for a poor brother to realize that in Christ he has been made rich. The poor in those days were often in genuine poverty so they wouldn't have anything of the riches of this world to lose. But those believers, in faith, would see that they have been lifted "out of the dunghill", (Psalm 113:7) through the riches of God's grace and placed in an elevated position in Christ. It may have also been true that the poor man might even have been an elder in a local assembly and have a work and place that would never have been his in secular life. Because his life lacked many pleasurable physical aspects, he could subsequently be found pursuing and emphasizing those things that are spiritual so that he made more spiritual progress than he might have otherwise.

On the other hand, the rich brother has many possessions in life and we know that riches can be a hindrance to a believer. For one thing, those who are rich tend to think more highly of themselves than of others (Romans 12:3). They can be elevated in their own minds above others, and in times of trial, they have more to lose in their position and property. We also learn from 1 Timothy 6:17 that they might "*trust in uncertain riches*" rather than in "*the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy.*" This is not always true of every rich person, but it is characteristic of many. When such a person becomes a believer in Christ and associates himself with others who may be

poor, it is being "made low", yet it should be a cause for rejoicing in that he is now linked with those of "*like precious faith*" in Christ. Times of trial may come to this person resulting in the loss of riches and property, but those conditions that bring him low should cause joy if he has the wisdom of faith because they indicate that he is being favored by God by being allowed to suffer for the sake of Christ. Moses, we read in Hebrews 11:26, was "*esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than all the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward*" when he made that choice to forsake Egypt. He is an example of faith that rests on the God of all riches "in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Colossians 2:3).

James draws his illustration once again from nature. The literal translation of 1:11 is more vivid than our English translation and some have expressed the aorist point tense of the verbs in this way: "*For the sun rose with a burning heat, but it withered the grass, and the flower thereof fell, and the grace of the fashion of it perished: so also shall the rich man fade away in his days.*" He is emphasizing the reality of what he seeks to teach, and that is that such a fading condition characterizes all that is of earthly glory; even riches, glory, and position are temporary and can be lost in a moment of time. As a result, the rich man who loses those riches should rejoice that he has gained something in Christ, and that is "*an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you.*" (1 Peter 1:4).

Blessedness of Trial, v. 12

It's interesting that following the description of the fading glories of riches and this world's pleasures, James considers the unfading crown of life awaiting those whose faith is proven by trial. We know that the crowns of reward that the Lord has promised us are all unfading; Paul writes about the "incorruptible" wreath of reward that is assured to believers in 1 Corinthians 9:25. What is of the earth is always fading and corruptible, but what is from heaven and is spiritual is an unfading crown of glory. Peter also writes about a "*crown of glory that fadeth not away*" in 1 Peter 5:4. So those who have pursued the riches and prestige of earth are devoting time and energy to a temporary possession rather than seeking for that which is eternal and enduring. Which are we seeking and living for in our lives? Paul's one ambition and purpose of living was Christ (Philippians 1:21) and his

overwhelming ambition was to gain Christ (Philippians 3:8).

James tells us that there is blessing in trial (the same word in Greek is used for both trial and temptation. The context must determine meaning). Both senses might apply in this case for there is reward for those who resist and overcome either trial or temptation. D. Edmund Heibert, in his profitable book on James says, "The former is still the meaning here, since an inner enticement to evil would call for resistance rather than endurance." This writer agrees that the thought is linked with the previous context and is speaking about the trial of our faith. "Blessed" indicates that this is true happiness, that this person is fortunate and should be envied by others. This is usually not the case, even among Christians but if true, it reveals a truly spiritual mind. It is not the passing through trial that is blessed; it is the enduring of it in a manner that proves the genuineness of one's faith. "Tried" is not speaking of the process of trial, but the result. It means that after he is proven, then he will receive the reward. It doesn't mean that he is free from any more trials but that he has persevered to the end of the trial without giving up so that he has passed the test that has proven the reality of his professed faith. This would give a great deal of joy to the Christian, but the Lord promises more, and that is a "crown of life". All believers enjoy eternal life as a possession that has been received by faith in the Lord Jesus, so this means more than mere possession of that life. It seems to mean that he will receive a larger or higher portion of all that eternal life entails. It may be possible that this can be enjoyed in some measure even in this lifetime, for a Christian who has passed through trials and has experienced victory will enjoy a larger sense of all that eternal life involves with a closer relationship to the Lord and a larger assurance of inward spiritual power.

Warning about Temptation, v. 13-15

Verse 13 may follow so closely because in a time of trial one might think that the trial is designed to entice him to do evil. Or it may suggest that verse 12 is also dealing with the possibility that the trial might induce him to think or commit evil as a result. Regardless, James wants to correct that kind of thinking by telling us that the temptation to do evil is not of God. One has written that "Satan tempts to bring out the bad; God tests to bring out the good." (Dr. Griffith Thomas). Since there is no evil in God and all that God does is never evil, it follows that He cannot be the source or

cause of temptation to commit evil. We have more than enough in ourselves to cause all the evil things that we do for which we can't even blame Satan or his emissaries! James emphasizes this by writing that "*every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed*" (v. 14). Lust within us is more than enough to cause our response to temptation, and that lust draws us away from a pathway of obedience to God and His Word. He takes us to the results of lust in ch. 4:1, showing that in interpersonal (or larger) interactions it causes quarrels and conflicts. We respond to any temptation because we yet have within us a nature that responds to sin (Romans 7:18); our Lord could not sin (1 John 3:5) because He had no nature within Him to respond to sin, either from the devil in the wilderness or from men. We are like Eve, who listened to the serpent, looked at the tree, thought about its benefits, took it, and then ate it, though it was forbidden to her. Her lust was conceived (like the conception of a child) in her heart and it gave birth to sin. It was not the thought that was sin in that case; it was the act of taking and eating the fruit. We follow the same pattern when we sin. We respond to a thought, we continue to harbor that thought in our minds, and eventually we commit the act. The sad truth is that when sin has its complete work, it results in death. In the early days of this dispensation, that may have even meant physical death, as in the case of Ananias and Saphira in Acts 5, or that of believers in Corinth in 1 Corinthians 11:30. If such a one is truly saved, it cannot mean that they would lose their salvation, but they could lose any ability to function for the Lord and instead, express a form of spiritual inactivity, or death.

We notice that once again James has used an illustration from natural life. The expression that he uses, "*drawn away...enticed*" indicates that act of one using a lure to attract the prey to draw it out of its hiding place or to catch its attention. When we fish using bait or lures, we are doing that; we use something that appeals to the fish, but in responding to the bait or lure, the fish doesn't realize that there is a hook attached that will capture it and bring it under the control of the fisherman. This is the action of lust; it draws one away from a place of security by attracting the mind to something that is of interest and for which there is a natural response. The result is ruin, or "death". Once again, James is drawing a sharp contrast. He has written concerning the "crown of life" and now he warns against the result of lust, which is death. The one seems to be contrasted with the other.

Then James gives his warning: don't be deceived, or don't make a mistake about this important

matter. Don't ascribe to God or to His actions those deeds and results for which we must accept responsibility. Some, when they sin say, "the devil made me do it," but that's only an excuse. As stated earlier in these comments, there is more than enough in any of us to cause all the sin in the world without the devil's help! So we must recognize and responsibly deal with the rising of lust within as we realize its sad results.

Perfect Gifts from Above, v. 17-

Mr. Albert McShane, in his book on James has said, "James pays special attention to the origin of things. In these verses he not only shows us the source of all sin, but also the source of all good." In contrast to causing evil that springs up from man's lustful nature, James writes that what comes from above is only good and perfect. It really couldn't be otherwise, could it? It is coming down from One who is only good and only perfect. What James is actually teaching is that every good "act of giving" and every perfect gift comes down from God. It is not only that the gift is good, but that the motive, manner, and purpose of the giving is good. In addition, the gift itself is complete, without defect, and entirely for the benefit of the recipient. We think of many gifts that men give in life; often the motive for giving is evil or deceitful and the gift may be missing those things that are most beneficial and helpful. Also, many gifts that are given have bad results and cause harm to the one who receives them. But what God gives is only good, and we have received and know the proof of this. How much good we have received from the kind and gracious hand of our God! Salvation is the most important gift but He has added to it all that His rich grace can provide to us. The new birth of regeneration is one that has come down from above (lit. John 3:3). James tells us in 3:17 that the wisdom that is pure and perfect is not from men, but it has come down "from above." These gifts are only a portion of what our generous God has given to us, the unworthy sons of men! Even more, the tense of the verb "giving" indicates that it is an on-going, continuous giving. What we have received, we continue to receive, and He continues to give more. How glorious is the thought that our God is a giving God! Sadly, men have the opposite thought of Him and fail to respond to His offer of such great and valuable gifts. *"He that spared not his own son but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things,"* (Romans 8:32). We have "all things" in Christ!

Nature of the Giver (1:17b)

The Giver of all these things is the "Father of lights" who has no variableness or changing. Every other light source appears to change, and the only source of physical light in this solar system is the sun. In one sense, it never changes, even though there are eclipses that change its appearance. The moon's reflected light has its phases and is constantly changing. So James may be thinking of how it appears from man's point of view; as we observe both the sun and moon, they seem to change, even though they may not actually be changing. Using that illustration of man's perspective, it seems to many men that God changes. They may think that He is open-handed and gracious at one time and harsh and cruel at another. But that isn't true. His desire is always to bless, but we are often not in a condition of soul to receive and respond to His blessings. It is not that He desires to give at one moment of time and to refuse to give at another. He always desires the best, good gifts to those who are willing to receive them, but sin bars the expression of His goodness.

(continued)

The Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ

Wade Steers

The ideas and beliefs about resurrection are not unique to Christianity. Zoroaster taught that 3000 years after him there would be a new Saoshyant. At this time there would be a general resurrection and a new incorruptible world.¹

During the Inter-Testament Period several mystery religions also propagated a resurrection idea. For example, in Egypt, the follower of Osiris who was a divine king in Egypt believed that through association with Osiris by way of re-enacting the sufferings and death that Osiris experienced they were guaranteed life beyond the grave.² Without a doubt Zoroastrian ideas and other concepts anticipated the teaching of Christ and the Holy Spirit relative to the ideas of resurrection.

"If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable." (1 Corinthians 15:19). Such was the writing of Paul as he sought to testify by way of letter about the resurrection of saints who had

died in the Lord. In a very persuasive way, he says in effect that if the dead in Christ rise not then Christ is not risen for the one truth parallels the other. *"But now is Christ risen from the dead and become the first fruits of them that slept."* (1 Corinthians 15:20). Thus, Paul concludes that since Christ is risen, the dead in Christ will also rise. In view of the above it is little wonder that one could say that "The resurrection of Christ is the keystone of the faith of the Christian."³

In the New Testament the Greek word *anastasis* which denotes either a raising up as in Luke 2:34 or as in the case of Christ a raising from the dead as in Acts 1:22 conveys the idea of resurrection. The Greek word *egersis* which means a rousing is used in connection with the resurrection of Christ in Matthew 27:53.⁴ Thus the original language of the New Testament clearly refers to a rising from the dead.

As we are dealing with the resurrection of Christ in a general way at present, consider the method used in the New Testament in presenting this truth. In the four gospels we see recorded the history of the resurrection. The fact of the resurrection is declared in the Acts. (Acts 2:24,32). The doctrine of the resurrection is expounded in the Epistles. We note that according to 1 Corinthians 15:4 that the resurrection of Christ is an essential part of the Gospels. It is the theme of the Apostolic preaching. In his record, Matthew has recorded the Lord's own affirmation of His resurrection. (Matthew 16:21).

Thus far we have referred to the resurrection of the Lord Himself as taught in Acts 26:23. Secondly, mention has been made regarding the resurrection of His people as found in 1 Corinthians 15:23. There shall also be a resurrection of the ungodly or as stated in the Gospel According to St. John, *"the resurrection to damnation."* (John 5:29).

One might pose the question, "What power energized the resurrection of Christ?" Full credit is given to God for the resurrection of Christ. According to the writings of Paul, God attested the Sonship of Christ by raising Him. (Romans 6:4). According to Luke, God confirmed the words of Jesus when He raised Him. Finally, many were witnesses of Christ whom "God raised up." Therefore, God established the claims which Jesus asserted to the people.

Let us now look at the resurrection of Christ as a fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecy and as an event that was foreshadowed in the Old Testament Scriptures.

The prophets went far beyond the resurrection in their prophecies. As they were interested mainly in

the results, described the exaltation, glory, and kingly rule of the Messiah. (Zechariah 14:4-9). Therefore, because they saw the exalted position of Christ, they must have realized His Resurrection.

There are only a few references which have any direct bearing to the resurrection in the Old Testament. Job attested to the truth that in his flesh he would see God after his physical death. (Job 19:6). There is no doubt a reference to the resurrection of the just with the other resurrections inferred. *"For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption,"* (Psalm 16:10) is a reference to the resurrection of Christ. Luke repeats the verse in the Acts of the Apostles thus reinforcing the truth. (Acts 2:25-28).

A beautiful picture or type of the resurrection of Christ is that which we have pictured in the offering of Isaac on the altar. (Genesis 22). Indeed, the near sacrifice of Isaac depicts the death of Christ. Remember that Isaac experienced death vicariously with the ram as substitute. Even as Isaac rose from the altar assisted by Abraham, so Christ rose from the dead at the command of God. After forty days Christ ascended into Heaven. We are reminded Isaac also returned to his father's home. Similarly, an analogous type is seen in the life of Joseph.

"Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?" (Acts 26:8). Such were the words of Paul while he reasoned with King Agrippa. The very nature of this question indicates that King Agrippa wanted proof of the risen Christ.

Rising from the dead is contrary to the laws of nature. Therefore, according to David Hume, it is a miracle.⁵ In view of this, Hume further points out that the rational investigator could not accept miracles. They are only believed through the exercising of faith. Certainly, today the so-called laws of nature are relatively unimportant inasmuch as man must break them to orbit the earth. Surely the orbiting around the earth is accepted by the rational investigator. Other examples could be cited but the above one will suffice. What are we trying to say? Namely this. If man can overcome the laws of nature, we ought not to think it ludicrous when the Creator changes nature's course.

Christ said that He was going to prepare a place for His own. (John 14:2). Realizing that the people would need a spiritual guide during His absence, Christ promised them the Holy Spirit. (John 14:26). The Holy Spirit came, and we infer that Christ

had risen from the dead and had gone to Heaven even as He pronounced He would. (Acts 2).

In his book, Brookes refers to the treatise of Leslie where Leslie introduces four marks which he thinks are imperative if a marvelous event is to be considered valid at the time and also for posterity.⁶ Of necessity the event must appeal generally to the basic senses. Furthermore, the event must not have occurred in private but rather in public. If the event satisfies the senses as to its validity, then a record or monument must be noted. Finally, it is pointed out that the record must be dynamic or enacted. The keen observer will note that that the first two qualities satisfy the people who are living at the time of the occurrence while the last two qualities satisfy succeeding generations. One may desire to add further characteristics or even to delete some. However, for our purposes we accept the suggestions and now proceed to see how these apply to the resurrection of Christ.

From the careful reading of the New Testament, it is noted that Christ was observed by Mary Magdalene (John 20:16), Peter (Luke 24:34), the two on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:31), ten disciples (John 20:19), and then by the eleven disciples (John 20:26). Later Paul records that He was seen by five hundred brethren (1 Corinthians 15:6) and indeed last of all by Paul himself (1 Corinthians 15:8). During the forty days between the resurrection and the ascension it is interesting to note that Christ was observed speaking (Acts 1:3), eating (Luke 24:43), and blessing (Acts 1:8). He was later observed by the martyr Stephen (Acts 7:55), and, as already suggested, by Saul (Acts 9:1-9) who later became known as Paul. In his First Epistle, John catalogues the senses which were involved in his observations and those of others as he refers to the "Word of life". (1 John 1:1-3).

What is the memorial linking the resurrection to future generations? It is the Lord's Supper (Luke 22:19-20) which is enacted on the Lord's Day (Revelation 1:10) which is the day of resurrection- the first day of the week (Acts 20:7). In the record of Paul, we note that the Lord's Supper implies not only the death and burial of Christ but also the resurrection, for reference is made to the second coming of Christ and therefore His resurrection is implied (1 Corinthians 11:23-26).

Why were guards placed at the tomb of Christ since He had foretold His rising on the third day? Because of fears the disciples would come and steal His body, Roman guards were ordered to guard the tomb (Matthew 27:64). If Christ rose from the dead this would prove His sonship to God (John 17:1). Thus, in His resurrection unwilling witnesses were present.

Nature itself in its quiet and sublime way parallels, in a sense, the truth of resurrection. "*Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.*" (John 12:24). Speaking within the range of the people who would know that germination occurs only after the seed is dried, Jesus sets forth the principle involved in the resurrection. As the seed eventually brings forth much fruit, Jesus teaches that He also shall bring forth much fruit after rising from the dead. Present believers in Christ can testify to this. Paul takes up the same idea as Jesus when he proves successfully that dead people rise. (1 Corinthians 15:35-38).

We note then that the resurrection was observed publicly, and that records and remembrances were set up for posterity. Surely if there were no resurrection such would not have been allowed to happen. This is especially true when we consider the experiences of some in defense of the Gospel. (2 Corinthians 11:24-33).

Let us pause for a moment and consider some of those who ridiculed the resurrection of Christ. The Jewish Sadducees, a religious sect, refuted a physical resurrection when they spoke with Jesus. (Matthew 22:23). Some who gathered at Corinth in the days of Paul disbelieved the idea of resurrection. (1 Corinthians 15:12). Others of more recent dates made rebuttals. Some claimed that the whole teaching pertaining to resurrection was a deliberate fraud.⁶ It was asserted by others that Jesus experienced a swoon and later, after being taken down from the cross, was revived.⁶ Strass claimed it to be myth while the Frenchman Renan asserted that those witnesses previously mentioned in this paper suffered from psychological hallucinations.⁶ Keim rebutted it by saying that it was a mere apparition.⁶ These thoughts have continued down to the present day. Possibly it is because of the scoffers that the resurrection supports the fact that God will one day judge the world in righteousness (Acts 17:31) and deal with unbelievers in a just way. (Revelation 21:8).

What does the resurrection mean to God? The resurrection vindicated God completely. He provided salvation for the masses and by virtue of the fact He brought forth Christ from the dead, the last divine act in God's plan of salvation was completed. In other words, God is satisfied. God's plan for man's salvation is satisfied. The resurrection elicited an outflow of love from God to Christ because Christ performed so perfectly the will of God. (John 10:17-18). The resurrec-

tion allowed God to enable the Son to prove His deity for the words which Jesus spoke were fulfilled. (John 2:19-21). In conclusion then, because the work of Christ was completed, God saw fit to give glory to His Son. (1 Peter 1:21).

For the believer, salvation, which is the deliverance from sin(1 Peter 3:18), complete justification (Romans 4:24), and the privilege of entering God's presence (Hebrews 10:19) has been provided. The future hope will be referred to presently.

In accepting Christ, the believer may associate and identify himself symbolically with Christ through the ordinance of baptism which represents the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. (Romans 6:5-6). We also contend that partaking of the Lord's Supper is an association with Christ.

Paul teaches that if there be no resurrection of the dead then Christ is not risen, our faith and our preaching are in vain and thus we are false witnesses yet in our sins and soon will perish as miserable men (1 Corinthians 15:12-19). But as we mentioned earlier in our paper, he further asserts that "*Now is Christ risen*". According to one record, Christ said, "*I am He that liveth and was dead and behold I am alive forevermore.*" (Revelation 1:18). Another record proclaims that Christ said, "*Because I live ye shall live also.*" (John 14:19). This is the significance for the church. This is the hope of those who have been made alive—those who are Christians. Death is defeated. Death has lost its sting. "*For the Lord shall descend from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.*" (1 Thessalonians 4:16-18).

Irrefutable are the words of the Lord Jesus Christ. Are you ready to meet Him? Accept Him as your Savior and upon trusting Him you are saved!

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Opportunity

In the private journal of a lady in New York these words were found after her death:—"I expect to pass through this world but once. Any good thing therefore that I can do, or any kindness that I can show, let me do it now. Let me not neglect or defer it, for I shall not pass this way again." Our Lord Himself saw the limits of our opportunity with great clearness. We "*must work while it is day*" (John 9: 4) . Even the Eternal Christ had only a day in which to work; the very healing of the blind man hastened the night; yet the day was enough; within that little limit was wrought out the salvation of the universe. Our 'day' is a section purposely cut out of eternity for us, and it defines the limits in which all our work can be done; a day, short as it is, always equals the business of the day. But there must be intense concentration. "How desperate the case of those we are sent to save, and how short the time in which to save them!" (Spurgeon) . It is a 'must' charged with infinite power: -- a Divine commission; a desperate need; a priceless service; a lessening band; a hastening night—"We MUST."

For our Lord lifts the limit sharply on the horizon. "*The night cometh, when no man can work.*" The Savior's own activity was never strained, but it was always full; and when the disciples wondered, He explained that He had so much to do and so little time in which to do it; for (He said) night comes, when work is over. Jesus thus confirms Solomon's word: — "*Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might: for there is NO WORK, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave, whither thou goest*" (Ecclesiastes 9:10) . There are insects that are born, mature, breed, and die all within twenty-four hours. So

Our little life

Is rounded with a sleep.

As the light was fading on the evening before the Battle of Waterloo, Napoleon, pointing towards the setting sun, said: — "What would I not give for Joshua's power, to hold back that sun for two hours!" The old naturalists used to say that no swallows fly so fast as the Norwegian, because their summer is so short.

So the burning heart of it all lies in the fact for all of us that the Lord reveals. "*The night is coming.*" Canon Knox Little says:—"By waning power, by failing health, by weakening memory, you find in some way or other that the finger of God is touching you. The world may not see it; friends may not read it; those who are dear to you may not tell it; but you know it—the witness, whatever it is, is come. It speaks to you in the silence of the night. It wakens with you when you waken

in the morning; it travels with you as a settled consciousness, when you are going about the world; it is the whisper of that unrelenting law of unchanging changefulness—*"the night is coming."*

So one golden maxim irradiates our horizon. *"While we have the opportunity, let us do good"* (Galatians 6:10). Should we not be very much more tender and more habitually kind in speech and action if we only realized the brevity of our opportunity? *"For this I say, brethren, the time is shortened"* (1 Corinthians 7:29). A well-known Christian figure in Norwich said to a friend inside the chapel, where a meeting had been held—"I am good for another ten years yet"; and as he crossed the threshold, he fell dead. Could anything be more unutterably sad than this—that as a husband once placed a flower care-fully and tenderly in the dead hand of his wife, a bystander said, "That is the first flower he ever gave her?" Could anything be more unutterably pathetic? It was Carlyle's heart-broken cry over his dead wife, after the sad years of estrangement—"Oh, that I could see her again for five minutes, to tell her that I loved her through it all!"

A little girl approached the lifeless form of her grandfather, and taking his hand in hers she said, "Dear grandpa, you know I was always good to you while you were alive." What a world it is worth to be able to say that! Perhaps few of us, looking back on all we have done and said to loved ones, would not say that the past does not bear thinking about; or would not say, "I should be so glad if I had never said that word, not have taken that line of action, and never done what I did!"

A wife was offered a kiss of reconciliation by her husband at the cottage door, ere he departed for business, after a domestic misunderstanding, and she refused it. At midday he was brought home dead. "O God," cried the heart-broken woman, "if I had only spoken to him as I should have done!" Let the law of kindness be upon our hearts and upon our tongues before it is too late. We are accustomed to heap flowers upon the bier: Mary did not wait till the Savior was dead before she broke the oil upon His feet.

On the fortieth year of his ministry Mr. Cuff preached in Shoreditch Tabernacle from the text on which he had preached his opening sermon forty years before; and there were but five of the old faces in that vast congregation, only five who heard both sermons.

Oh, friends, I pray tonight

Keep not your kisses for my dead cold brow,
The way is lonely, let me feel them now.

Think gently of me; I am travel-worn,
My faltering feet are pierced with many a thorn.

Forgive, O hearts estranged, forgive, I plead;
When dreamless rest is mine, I shall not need
The tenderness for which I long tonight.

Our opportunity is at least as magnificent as it ever was: if we have run steadily, our influence is greater, our opportunities are more numerous, our circle is wider than it ever was; and it is possible for all of us to begin seeking the highest and the best: God is as strong as ever; Christ is as fresh as ever; the Holy Ghost is as, full of love and the power to impart love as ever He was.

After the last speech Mr. Gladstone ever made in the House of Commons, when the House had emptied, another Member saw the old man go and stand alone behind the Speaker's Chair, and, shading his failing vision as he looked out over the arena of all his battles, he knew that he looked out upon it for the last time: then the old man quietly slipped out of the House for ever. It was the last look. Some year it must be so with us. As we stand today shading our eyes and looking out over the misty unknown, and remembering that there must come a year when we are looking out for the last time; backward also over the life—how it makes us feel the pilgrim spirit, and desire to use wisely the little time in the old home—the old church—the old business; for today, for aught we know, we may be taking the last look. "While we have the opportunity, let us do good;" a whole harvest may be gathered in in the closing weeks: "unto all men"-unto all who come within the circle of our touch.

There are moments quickly passing,
Opportunities which rise
Nevermore to cross our pathway
As we journey to the skies;
Opportunities, God-given,
With these precious moments flow,
Oh if we are watching, waiting,
We shall seize them as they go.
There are moments quickly passing,
Soon our little day is done;
Soon beyond the far horizon
Fast will fade the setting sun:
Let us use these golden moments
Which the Lord to us cloth give,
Till at length with Him in Heaven
We the life of lives shall live.

D.P.

