

Christian Expectation

A Sermon

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II. We shall now proceed to consider in the second part of the subject the Christian's expectation. He looks for the Saviour from heaven. This expectation is founded,

1. Upon the express promise of Christ himself. He said to his disciples while speaking of the proceedings of the last judgment, "that when the son of man should come in his glory and all the holy angels with him, he would sit upon the throne of his glory: and before him should be gathered all nations, and he would separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth the sheep from the goats---In view of his departure from the world, and the sorrow of his disciples because of his absence he said to them, "Let not your heart be troubled, ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions if it were not so I would have told you, I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go and prepare a place, I will come again and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also"---
2. The promise of ~~Christ's~~ our Lords second coming is corroborated by the messengers who attended his ~~triumphant~~ ascension ~~to the throne of God~~ from earth to heaven which was the most triumphant act ~~of his life~~ that he ever performed in the presence of human witnesses. He had been in the world upwards thirty years, during which time he was a man of sorrows and acquainted grief—He was the subject of persecution—the subject of want—the subject of emperial punishment, and finally he was made the subject of death ~~by the cruelty of his enemies~~, and deposited in the cavern of a ~~solid~~ rock where he was securely guarded by a band of soldiers—But on the morning of the third day, he ~~shook the earth~~ to awake from the slumber of the grave—The soldiers fell to the earth like dead men, an angel from the heaven rolled ~~off~~ back the stone from the door of the sepulcher, and the son of God came forth unfettered by the chains of death, to the joy of his friends and the confusion of his enemies. After he had exhibited himself on several occasions & in the presence of many witnesses, so as to remove all doubt as to the fact of his resurrection—After he had remained with his disciples for the space of forty days instructing them more fully in the system of divine economy which he came into the world to establish—After he had renewed their commissions to go & teach all nations—After he had thus finished the work of his mission, he lead his disciples out to Bethany about two miles distance from Jerusalem, in order to pronounce his parting blessing upon them, and afford them the privilege of witnessing his return to heaven—While the eleven disciples

stood around him, with feelings which could not be expressed, he lifted up his hands to pronounce his benediction upon them, and while he spoke, he began to rise from the earth—as he continued to ascend a luminous cloud gathered around him—a convoy of hymning angels came to shout him welcome home, which filled the air with heavenly melody. The disciples were so transported with the sight, that after the Saviour had gone beyond the reach of their vision, they still remained unmoved like marble statues gazing upon the blue sky which the Saviour had ascended with so much beauty and triumph.

While they thus continued to look steadfastly into heaven, two persons came and stood by them clothed in white apparel, and uttered the following important & (?) words—“Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven. This same Jesus which is taken from you shall come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.

3. The same fact is also testified by the apostle in their various epistles to the church—It is said by St. Peter that “the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise and the elements shall melt with ferment heat; and the earth, and all its works shall be burnt up” It is said by St. Paul to the Thessalonians, that the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the triumph of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:—In the words of our text he declares that our conversation is in heaven, from where we look for the Saviour the Lord Jesus Christ. Having briefly considered the grounds of the Christians expectation, we shall point out what thy Christian expects Christ to do for him. When he comes from heaven —they expect him to change his vile body that it may be fashioned like unto his own glorious body. On this part of the subject, we shall consider the quality of the human body in its present organization---the nature of the change which will be brought upon by the Lord Jesus Christ at the resurrections. The (?) by which this work will be effected, and the benefits accruing to believers from the hope of the resurrection the grave.

1. Respecting the human body in its present organization, we are told in our text that it is vile. This is evidently true, when we consider that the human body was originally framed of dust—that it is the host of numerous diseases—the instrument by which the soul commits sin, and finally will fall by the blow of death, & become an object of decay, corruption, and decomposition—Dust we are and to dust we shall return again—our body which is now the curious habitation of an active spirit will become the object of the most loathsome degradation—This reflection should check our fondness for external (?) and lend us to seek the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which in the sight of God is of great price when we are triumphed to give too much attention to the (?) man, we should suffer our thoughts to dwell upon our condition in the grave, where darkness reigns and no morning sun will break upon that land of shades to cheer the slumbering inhabitants. Lamb of the tomb. There the body will mix with its mothers element or become food for worms, or enrich the grass which waves in silence upon its lonely prison. If the most enthusiastic lover could behold the object of his charms after it has been deposited in the earth but a few days, he would turn away with the utmost disgust. But we are told in our text that this vile body shall be charged after the pattern of the glorious body of Christ.

2. On this part of the subject the inquiry has arisen, whether a change of the substance of the body be meant on some minute and in distributable part of it—The latter thing has been adopted by some divine to avoid certain supposed difficulties, but it is very certain that this change is spoken of in the scriptures without any nice distinctions; and the same body which is laid in the grave is represented as the subject of this change from death to life by the power of Christ. Thus our Lord was raised in the same body in which he died, and his resurrection is constantly held forth as the model of ours which is expressly asserted in the words of our text—“ Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like him to his glorious body—”

The only passage of scripture which appears to favor the germ theory --- that the immortal body will be raised from some indestructible part of it is found in Saint Paul’s first epistle to the Corinthians, and reads thus;--“But ~~will~~ some men will say how are the dead raised up, and with what body do they come. Thou fool that which thou sowest is quickened except it die, & that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be but bare grain; it may chance of wheat or some other grain.” But if it had been the intention of the apostle, holding this view of the case, to (?) objections to the doctrine of the resurrection, grounded upon the difficulties of conceiving how the same body in the popular sense could be raised in substance, we might have expected him to correct this misapprehension by declaring, that this was not the Christian doctrine: but that some small parts of the body, bearing as little proportion to the whole body, as the germ of a seed to the grain would be preserved and unfolded in the perfect body at the resurrection. But instead of holding this view, he goes on to state the difference between material bodies as they now exist; between the plant and the bare grain; between the flesh of men, beasts, fishes and birds; between celestial and terrestrial bodies—He goes on farther to state the difference not between the germ of the body to be raised, and the body given at the resurrection, but between the body itself which dies, and the body which shall be raised—“It is sown says he in corruption, it is raised in incorruption, which would not be true of the supposed imperishable germ of this hypothesis; and can only be affirmed of the body itself considered in substance, and its present state corruptible—

The change spoken of therefore will not destroy the form nor identity of the human body; but remove every impediment to its immortality and bestow upon it every qualification for the future state of the righteous.

1. In the first place our bodies will be changed from corruption to incorruption by which they will be freed from ~~all~~ death and the evils which sin has entailed upon it in this present world. The human body here, is but a frail tabernacle, subject to sickness, pain, infirmities, and sufferings of various kinds, but here after it will be rendered healthy and incorruptible, free from disease and decline.
2. Our bodies will be raised in glory—The righteous shall as the sun in the kingdom of their fathers—We shall be fashioned like unto our Lords glorious body—When he was transfigured while upon the earth, his face shone as the sun and his raiment became as white as snow—St. Peter was so delighted with the ~~sight that he desired to fix his above~~ ~~in this heavenly place~~—The glory of the ~~human~~ body will arise ~~from~~ probably from the happiness of the soul—The unspeakable joy will break through the body and shine forth in the countenance—The joy of the ~~soul~~ heart even in this life has some ~~influence~~ effect upon

the countenance, a man's wisdom says Solomon makes his face to shine—If such be the effect of religion in the present state of existence what will be the righteousness of the saints when their bodies shall be rendered incorruptible, and their souls shall realize that joy which will be (?) at the right hand of God? Well might the apostle exclaim, the sufferings of the present life are not worthy to be compared to the glory which shall be revealed in us. Our bodies shall be raised spiritual, freed from all the clogs of dull mortality, and rendered as light as the air, to fly at ease through the distant provinces of Jehovah's vast dominions, and float forever upon a tide of heavenly glory—

The power by which this great work will be accomplished will be nothing less than the omnipotence of God. Tho' there are mysteries connected with this subject that the human body may be scattered to the four winds of heaven or become sustenance for different species of animated nature, yet let us rest secure in the promises of God – At his command every particle of the human body will be restored and so constituted as to render it incorruptible & immortal fitted for a nobler and a more exquisite state of happiness.

You perceive that the change which we have contemplated refers to the bodies of those who shall rise from the grave, These we are told shall rise first, but then in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye as the sound of a trumpet the living will be changed in a manner equivalent to that experienced by those who shall rise from the grave.

The benefits according to believers from this doctrine are numerous and invaluable. In the first place, it enables us to give up our pious friends to the cold hand of death with Christian resignation & fortitude—Lay aside, the expectation of a future resurrection, and death is one of the most gloomy and horrific subjects upon which the human mind can dwell—it would chill the blood in our hearts, and hope would grow sick and die; but in view of this change, we can submit to the agonies, privations, and degradations of death, & give up our pious friends in joyful hope of seeing them again when the day of eternity shall break up on the world. Behold the pious woman & the devoted husband about to be separated by the of death—Of them it may be said in the language of Thompson (?) are they the happiest of their kind, whom gentle stars unite, and in one their beings, their lives and their fortunes were blended and harmony itself bound their peace, but death comes and dissolves the union—But the pious man in hope of this change can bid a pleasing good night to his family & friends in of waking up in the morning of the resurrection ---The family can go to the grave and behold the husband, the father and the master laid in the gloomy vault with Christian composure—

What a pleasing doctrine to parents who are called up on to give up their children in the days of infancy & childhood—

But this is a subject of terror to the wicked—

The resurrection will witness a scene of terror on the one hand, and a scene of glory on the other—

Conclude by general reflections---