

(SERMON SERIES.)

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SERMON BY PRES. W. W. BLAIR,

DELIVERED AT THE

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Subject, **THE FUTURE STATE.**

AFTER reading the forty-ninth Psalm the speaker said: "Man that is in honor and understandeth not, is like the beasts that perish." It is in regard to obtaining an understanding in respect to the purposes of God with regard to our creation, the pilgrimage through which we are passing in this world, his will, and his administrations and purposes with regard to the future of man, including what relates to the intermediate state, the resurrection state, and the celestial glory, that I now undertake to speak. Here is a basis so broad that we shall not think to cover it with anything like a careful analysis, a thorough discussion, in the one hour that is allotted us this morning, but shall simply present some important facts that tend to bless for the life that now is and that which is to come.

As a religious body we believe that God designed and decreed the creation of man before the foundation of our earth was laid; that he foresaw the vicissitudes through which man would pass in this life; that he provided means for man's present happiness and welfare, also for the religious service that man should render unto him in this life, and provided likewise the way and means by which to make men happy in all its fullness in the life that lies beyond the grave.

Furthermore, we believe that God has made no mistakes in his works; that wherever mistakes are found they are traceable to man—to the perversity of the human heart, or to the lack of understanding on the part of man. We believe still further, that all the race of mankind, (and we would to God that all mankind everywhere could hear it,) with the exception of one class—and they we believe will be few in number—will be benefited and blessed by virtue of having been brought into this world and passing through the experiences of earth life. And we furthermore believe that man will be benefited

and blessed in proportion to his diligence and faithfulness to the principles of truth and righteousness as manifest in his own conscience, in the light of God's word, in the strivings of the Spirit, and in the revelations of truth environing the pathway of his life.

We are aware that is a broad view, that it is widely different from that of our fathers in days past and gone, but the prophet has declared that the time would come when people would say, "Our fathers have inherited lies, and vanities, and things wherein there is no profit." What we want is truth, the truth ordained of God; for that it is that blesses, makes anew, and saves the sons of men both in the life that now is and in the life to come.

It would seem in reading the history of the past, and observing as we may at the present, that God has implanted in the human soul a longing after life, and an intuitive belief, a perception if you please, that there is a life that lies beyond the grave; and at the same time he has impressed upon the souls of the sons of men in all ages of the world that their future condition will depend largely upon the conduct and character exhibited by them in this present life. This becomes a mighty means, a mighty incentive, a mighty uplifting force in leading men from the ways of error and evil into the ways of truth and righteousness. And had we time to trace the history of the past in detail we would discover that mankind everywhere, in every period of the world, have given evidence of their belief in a future life. The ruins of Babylon and Nineveh that have been but recently exhumed, open their stony lips and speak out in no uncertain words telling the sons of men that that people, who were skilled in the arts and sciences in a very remarkable degree, believed in the future life. Their hieroglyphics and other sculpturings

are of such a character that no one can mistake the fact that they believed in the life that lies beyond the grave. And when we come to holy writ, the clearest evidences abound in the Bible that God's people believed in the life that lies beyond this present one. When good old Jacob found, after he had spent a hundred and twenty years of pilgrimage, that he was about to pass away, he said: "I am to be gathered unto my people; bury me with my fathers in the cave that is in the field of Ephron the Hittite, in the cave that is in the field of Machpelah, which is before Mamre, in the land of Canaan, which Abraham bought with the field of Ephron the Hittite for a possession of a burying-place. There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife; there they buried Isaac and Rebecca his wife; and there I buried Leah." You discover from this what was the sentiment of that inspired patriarch when death should have done its worst for him in this life, that it would simply remove him to the estate of his fathers.

But now when we come to America, we learn from the traditions we have of the nations who once inhabited this continent, and likewise from the archaeological discoveries now becoming apparent, that the peoples who once inhabited North, South, and Central America believed, as with one common consent, that God had ordained that man should live beyond the grave. They likewise believed in the resurrection of the dead, of which we shall speak at length in due time. I mention this in order to refresh the minds of my hearers in regard to what God has inspired in the human soul in all the ages past, whether it be with the enlightened and civilized nations, or with the barbarous ones, implanting within them the innate consciousness that there is a life that lies beyond the grave, and that there are conditions of being which lie beyond that shall be determined by our conduct in this present life.

We believe as a religious body that mankind will be raised into conditions in the future life that shall be suitable to their deserts according to the judgment of a just God. And as a consequence, when we come to the resurrection of the dead, we find that mankind is to be raised as the great apostle of the Gentiles teaches, that, "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive; but every man in *his own order*: Christ the first-fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and

power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." Then there shall be no more death. The story of a future life is taught in the Holy Scriptures from Genesis to Revelation, and great emphasis is given everywhere in God's word to this fact, that the Lord God will judge and reward mankind as *their works* shall be.

I am aware the time has been in past ages of confusion and mysticism that have preceded us, and that it largely obtains to-day, that it is by faith and *faith alone*, that man is to become reconciled and recommended to God. We do not believe the doctrine! We believe it a reproach on the Almighty! On the contrary, when we examine God's word both with reference to the world that is without, and those that are within the fold, God judges and rewards them according as *their works* shall be, and this even to a large degree in this present world. Here is one instance that I may cite that will serve to illustrate this: There was a man down at Cæsarea, one of the worthy ones of earth, a noble man in fact if not by title. That man feared God with all his house; he prayed to God always; he gave much alms to the poor; and yet, mark you, he was a heathen man. He was neither Jew nor Christian, and the probabilities are that he had no faith concerning salvation in Jesus Christ. An honorable man of the Roman army, a centurion of the band called the Italian Band, and so important were his prayers, his almsgiving, and his upright life, that he charmed the very angel of God down out of paradise. And the angel said to him: "Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God." He was a heathen man, made no profession of the Christian religion, neither to the Jewish doctrine; yet God was watchful over him and recognized his prayers and his kindly deeds among the sons of men. Note well this testimony, taken from holy writ, establishing the fact that God's watchcare is over all his work, whether they be Christian, Jew, or Heathen, and that he proposes to reward every man according as his works shall be. The angel said to Cornelius: "Now send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter: He lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the seaside: he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do." He was not in a saved condition fully, although God loved and honored and blessed him and sent his angel to tell him where he should go in order to find the truth in its fullness, that which should bring ultimate and complete redemption to him. I remark again, we as a religious

body believe that God will judge and reward the entire human family according as their works shall be. And furthermore, there will be no man, no woman, no child that has ever breathed the breath of life but what will have been benefited by the experiences of the life through which they pass, in some degree at least, except it be they who have attained to the knowledge of the truth and have maliciously and willfully and persistently resisted the light of God. For such there is no redemption in the world that now is, nor in the world to come. Remember what Jesus taught in this regard, and what the apostles taught in their day. For such we are not to pray. It was said of Judas Iscariot, by the Master, "Good were it for that man if he had never been born," and the easy implication is, that it were better for all other than the class that Judas represents to have lived. What a comforting thought this is when compared with the dogmas, of which we heard in some small degree last night; viz., that all who are not privileged to hear of Christ in this world, and those who make no profession of religion in Jesus Christ, have all gone down to the seething sea of fire to suffer in agony, pain, and darkness, throughout the endless ages of eternity! What a contrast between the two! Which one is it that reflects the love, the wisdom, the care of God and his enduring mercy? In holy writ we are told that in proportion as man lives near to the commandments of the Almighty, as he walks near to the light of God, he shall be blessed in it; and that this appertains to the man outside as well as to him that is in the fold. But when man comes into the narrow way, into the gospel church and fold, the very sunburst of heaven will light up his pathway and lead him onward and forward until he shall be saved in all the fullness of celestial glory, and be made one with Jesus Christ in dominion, in power, in majesty, and in glory. Such are the teachings of holy writ. Wonderful promises! all-glorious scheme! If this were simply a matter that had been proffered by the sons of men, we would think it impossible that men could ever attain it. But God is able to make us partakers of that salvation and glory and dominion.

We learn furthermore, in God's word, that when man shall have passed through this world's experience and enters the silent waters of death, if he is a righteous man he will pass into the paradise of God, into the condition that was known to the Jews as "Abraham's bosom," as you will learn by consulting Josephus, the Jewish historian, who says that that condition is one of peace, of restfulness, and a comparative degree of glory and honor. There

man attains to further knowledge of God and moves forward in the way of progression that shall fit him for still higher conditions in the resurrection of the dead and celestial glory. You remember that when the penitent thief was perishing with Jesus upon the cross on Calvary he said: "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom," Jesus answered him and said, "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise." The word *paradise* signifies a condition of safety, of purity, of rest, of peace; a condition of blessedness. That was the meaning of the word in the times when Jesus used it, and this may be further seen where Paul says: "I knew a man in Christ about fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such a one caught up to the third heaven. And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) how that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for man to utter."—2 Cor. 12: 2-4.

Now that individual must have been righteous and holy in order to enter into paradise bodily, or by his spirit simply. It signifies this, nevertheless, that it is a condition of light, of blessedness, of honor, in the way of salvation. And in the Revelation of St. John Jesus said: "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God." It was there then; and you discover that this was an honor, it was a blessing in the form of a reward for diligence and faithfulness in enduring unto the end in Christ Jesus our Lord. We believe that when the righteous dies, he passes into that better state, the intermediate state. The little child that goes to school enters first into the primary department, passes through that, encountering a great many trials and disappointments, and by and by if faithful, he steps forward and goes into the intermediate department. So it is when the righteous pass from this present life; they enter into that better condition, that higher degree of being where there will be greater manifestations of God's glory in knowledge and power and blessedness than man can attain to in this present world. And it is in view of this, without a doubt, that Paul wrote to the Philippians as he did, saying he had "a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better." He yet had a desire to labor in the interests of the church and comfort the tried and troubled saints of his time, but he knew by his experiences, and by the revelations of God, that just beyond the Jordan of death there were better conditions for him, more choice con-

ditions for him than he could possibly attain to in this present world.

Now we believe, on the other hand, in regard to those that are not righteous; we believe all will be blessed by this passage into the beyond,—benefited and blessed,—and enter into conditions of happiness and progression, unless it should be the incorrigibly wicked. There are a great many wicked, and they need discipline for their own good, for the good of society, and for the vindication of God's government. When those that are not righteous in the sight of God pass away, they enter into varied conditions, and they are conditions of discipline; they are under the chastening hand of an all-wise God, and that for the very purpose of bringing them to an acceptance of truth and righteousness; for the punishments of God in the world to come, as they are in this present world, are administered with reference to man's reformation, to recover him from the evils of his ways and bring him to the standard of truth and righteousness and obedience to the government of God. All along from the days of Abraham until the days of John upon the isle of Patmos you may see this. I may give you one instance: We read of an individual named Jonah who was sent on a mission, and he substituted his own wisdom for the commandment of God and turned aside to go into another city. The vessel on which he was going was storm-tossed, the sailors aboard that vessel were troubled in their hearts, and they cast lots to learn if they could what the cause of this trouble was, and they found that it was with Jonah. They tossed him over the vessel's side, and God had prepared a great fish which swallowed him. Now, my dear friends, Christ indorsed that story about Jonah, and likewise repeated it as a symbol of what he would pass through in death and in the resurrection. Now we come to the purposes of God in respect to Jonah's experiences in being thus swallowed by the fish. Afterwards, in writing his book, Jonah says: "I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the Lord, and he heard me; out of the belly of hell cried I, and thou heardest my voice."

And what does this signify? The word *hell* as we find it in King James' Translation is usually *sheol* in the Hebrew, and signifies the state of the departed. "From the belly of hell cried I, and thou, Lord, heardest me." From this we may learn something of the designs and purposes of God's punishment. Jonah repented of his evil course and resolved to keep the commandment of God, and in due time he was delivered from hell, and he then went on his way and proclaimed the word of God. From this we discover what is true in all

holy writ, that God punishes the sons of men in order to reform them and recover them from the error of their ways, and teach them obedience to his commandments. And we teach what the Holy Scriptures teach in regard to those that go down to hell, that it is for their punishment and reformation that they may be chastened and brought under the government of God, and that when that is effected they will be made sharers of some degree of glory according to the mercy and just judgment of God.

Paul declares in 1 Corinthians 15: 41, 42, that in the resurrection of the dead "there is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory." So also is the resurrection of the dead." And that glory, mark you, that is symbolized by the stars, is just as varied as the light emitted by the starry world on the brow of night. You see this idea agrees precisely with the fact of God's judging and rewarding all mankind according as their works shall be. They that come to Christ according to his gospel and embrace it in its fullness and power, live in harmony with the best light they have and *retain* the Holy Spirit, they are made "heirs of God, and joint heirs with Jesus Christ;" that is, equal heirs with Christ Jesus our Lord, inheritors of all things that the Father hath; so that whether it be "the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's." That same apostle tells us about the wondrous glory for which the Saints were striving in his day. He lacked language to depict the beautiful glory, the majesty and the dominion of that blessed state, but he tells us something of its exalted excellence when he says: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for those that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit." Man can never conceive the grandeur, and purity, and refinement, and the glory and dominion that is prepared by God for those who love him and keep his commandments. This condition, we understand, pertains to that celestial glory to be given those who, having been buried with Jesus Christ by baptism into death, rise into newness of life and receive "the gift" of the Holy Spirit, serve God in righteousness, and continue to *retain* that Holy Spirit down to the end of their days. It appertains also to innocent children, likewise in some degree to those who have lived to the very best light they have had, and like the worthy ones in the past in the heathen world have

sought to shed what light and truth and blessedness they could upon their fellow man and thus glorify God.

I remember reading in the writings of the Seer where he said that upon one occasion when he was seeking God by prayer, the heavens were opened and he saw the burning gates through which the children of God will pass into celestial glory, and he saw his Brother Alvin there, one that in this life had never obeyed nor heard the perfect gospel. There he saw others likewise who had not obeyed the gospel in its fullness in this life; and the voice of the Spirit came to him saying, "All those who have died without a knowledge of this gospel, who would have received it if they had been permitted to tarry, shall be heirs of the celestial kingdom of God; also all that shall die henceforth without a knowledge of it, who would have received it with all their hearts, shall be heirs of that kingdom, for I, the Lord, will judge all men according to their works, according to the desire of their hearts." How just! how gracious! how grand! How blessed is this presentation of the far-reaching plan of redemption in Jesus Christ our Lord! We believe this, my dear friends, and we teach it.

I now want to speak in regard to the condition of mankind as it shall be accomplished in the resurrection of the dead. In these days very little is taught in regard to the resurrection of the dead, and yet the Bible abounds with it; it was one of the most distinguishing features of Christ's doctrine, and it was the consummation of his work,—the resurrection of the dead and his ascension on high. You all recognize this fact when I suggest it to you. But in the lapse of time, when apostasy had fallen upon the church and darkness had pervaded the minds of men everywhere, this glorious doctrine of the resurrection of the dead was dropped, went into disuse, and the pagan idea of man passing on into the spirit state and forever remaining there,—that became the prevailing sentiment of what was then called the Christian world. And hence, in the revival of God's work in these latter days, it was and is proper and right that there be a revival of that doctrine and every distinctive feature of it; for there is none more prominent than that which relates to the resurrection of the dead.

Philosophers may tell you that there can be no resurrection of the dead; skeptics will tell you the same; and faint-hearted Christians may tell you that there can be no literal resurrection of the dead. There are a great many of that kind of Christians who will change and pervert the word of God in order that it shall not teach the

literal resurrection of the dead. But yet it stands here revealed in God's blessed word, as plain as language can make it, that there shall be a resurrection of all the dead. "Why"—as Paul said to King Agrippa and others—"Why should it be thought a thing incredible that God should raise the dead?" You know that you live to-day, and is it a greater stretch of the power of the infinite God that you should live again than that you live to-day? You know you have a conscious existence, separate and distinct, the exercise of your powers, while you exist by the power of God. Again I remark, it is no greater stretch of divine power that man should live again than that he lives to-day! But where are the evidences of it? If we look into nature there are a great many things that suggest that a man may live again. As springtime and summer, clad in beauty and excellence, succeed the winter with all its rigors and its desolation, this in itself is a symbol in some degree of the race of mankind living again. Again when we see the progress made in the material world as well as the spiritual, that of itself is suggestive of man's living again, and living in conditions that are far beyond and superior to what he now enjoys. Nothing in nature, I remark, when you consider it aright, amounts to an evidence against the literal resurrection of the dead or that man shall live again. And when we come to God's word,—and that is the final arbiter in respect to this matter,—when we come to that the testimony is clear and conclusive that, if a man die he shall live again. This is just as true as the voice of God by the prophets; just as true as the voice of God by Jesus Christ; just as true as the teaching of the Holy Spirit by God's servants and apostles. And all this is confirmed by the testimony which God by His Holy Spirit communicates to all those who receive the gospel and live it faithfully. It is true in God's word that, "as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive; but every man in his own order." Jesus said when here on earth, as you will find in John 5: 28, 29: "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." The testimony of Jesus, and of Paul, are identical in regard to this matter. You discover that *all* that die shall live again.

We turn back now to the Prophet Isaiah, chapter twenty-six, where God says to Israel by the mouth of that prophet: "Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing,

ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead." Mark you, here is a prophecy that reaches the entire race of mankind, from the most righteous and noble personage that ever graced the footstool of God, to the humblest, and, indeed, to the vilest and the worst! All men shall come forth from their graves to be judged according as their works shall be. And passing on, we find the same sentiment taught in the Revelation of St. John; for in the 20th chapter of that book we see that they that are in Christ Jesus will rise at the beginning of the thousand years' reign: "On such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years." "But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the *first* resurrection;" that is, in point of time and in point of rank likewise.

After the thousand years are ended, and "a little season," then comes another resurrection; then comes the time when "all they that are in their graves shall come forth;" "death and hell" (hades) shall deliver up their dead, and they shall be "judged every man according to their works." That is the last resurrection; and at that time when the judgment shall sit, they whose names are not "written in the book of life," and are therefore heirs of life and immortality in some degree,—they are to be "cast into the lake of fire" which "is the second death." That class we understand to be those who have had an opportunity and have attained to the knowledge of the truth, and maliciously and persistently rejected that truth and rebelled against the government of God. For such there is no redemption, either in this world or in the world to come, as Jesus, and Paul, and others teach us.

How will the resurrection of the dead affect us? Paul says, in discoursing upon this, that our bodies in death are laid down in corruption, in weakness, and mortality, and that on the other hand they will rise in incorruption, are raised immortal; and that whereas they go to the grave a natural body, they will be raised a spiritual body. Such are the teachings of holy writ.

We now go back to the days of Jesus for a precedent that shall govern us in the further consideration of this matter. We learn that when Jesus was crucified in fulfillment of prophecy and of his own words, after he had laid in the grave for three days and three nights, he took his body from the tomb. We read that on the morning of the third day an angel of God descended from on high, robed in

white, whose appearance was terrible, and "at whose presence the keepers fell back as dead men." The angel rolled the rock away from the mouth of Joseph's tomb, and Jesus, clad in immortality and eternal life, the pledge and the pattern of the righteous dead, came forth. Mary and others of the women saw him, afterwards the eleven apostles, and after that a great many of the saints saw him; and Paul tells us that "above five hundred brethren at once" saw Jesus,—saw the risen Savior. I think it very probable that these were five hundred ministers, but that does not matter. Here was a great cloud of witnesses, added to the apostles, concerning Jesus having risen from the dead. How truly did Jesus say "I am the resurrection and the life." Blessed thought! Christ Jesus has purchased eternal redemption for man, and has given assurance to the race in that he arose from the dead, that he will raise all the sons of men in their own order, that they may be judged and rewarded according as their works shall be. Blessed assurance!

We now take the person of Jesus Christ. He exhibits himself in the midst of his disciples. He was in the form, just the same form he always had before; and when his disciples,—probably in a rather dimly lighted room at night,—when they saw Jesus some distance from them in the room, they were affrighted, and supposed he was a spirit. Does not this teach us that those disciples who were with Jesus Christ over three years thought that a spirit was in the same form as man? They thought he was a spirit, and Jesus knew it, and he said to them, "Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have." What, then, in regard to this precedent? What in regard to this pattern of the resurrection of the dead? This man Jesus stands the pledge, the assurance, and the wonderful and all-glorious pattern! How with him? In the resurrection of the dead he had a body of "flesh and bones." "Handle me, and see." He said to Thomas, "reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side; and be not faithless, but believing." Afterwards he ate "broiled fish and honey-comb" with some of his disciples, and likewise ate with the two disciples that were journeying from Emmaus.

Passing on to the time when Peter took the gospel to the Gentiles, he preached unto them the resurrection of the dead through Jesus Christ, and declared that Jesus was raised from the dead in fulfillment of prophecy, and said: "Us who did eat and drink with him after he arose from the dead." How literal! How real! To

me, my dear friends, the resurrection of the dead is just as literal, just as real as that we exist corporeally and distinctly to-day. And, thank God it is, if we are found faithful, in a far more advanced condition than we can ever attain in this present world of mortality.

This life is where we are being educated and developed, where we are being chastened and tried, where we learn in regard to the government of God and the dispensations of the Most High. This is a state of humiliation, and holy writ declares that for this resurrection of the dead man was created: "He that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God." Christ Jesus is the pattern and the pledge of the resurrection of the dead; he ministered in his resurrected body in the midst of his disciples, went out and in among them for forty days, and finally took them out upon Bethany and there, when he was giving them his parting words, his last counsels while with them here personally on earth, a cloud of light and glory came down out of heaven and the glorious chariot bore him away into the heavens! I am not surprised that the apostles were filled with wonder and astonishment at the blessed vision, seeing Jesus pass up into the heavens above. They had been with him through all his wonderful ministry; they had seen his power; they had partaken of his love; they had seen the marvelous display of God's wisdom in him as no mortal had ever exhibited before; they had seen him in his resurrected condition after he had suffered the ignominy of the cross; they had been with him forty days and forty nights receiving words of knowledge and wisdom from him, and now when he passed into the heavens, it is no wonder they gazed in astonishment. Two angels stood by them in shining raiment and said to them: "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." Blessed thought, always the hope of God's people in every age of the world, that Jesus will come in glory! When he comes he will be crowned, and will take the empire of the world and reign King of kings, and Lord of lords. He ascended into heaven bodily, with the same body he took from the grasp of death, the same that laid three days in Joseph's new tomb. There is the pattern, and it applies directly to us. It is a testimony of the fact that the resurrection of the dead shall be literal, real, and tangible; that we as separate entities and conscious persons will be thus brought into being again, just as much so as we are conscious beings to-day.

Afterwards Jesus appeared, but it was in glory,—he had ascended to his Father and been glorified. A young man, very zealous for the Jewish faith,—reared at the feet of Gamaliel, one of the most celebrated doctors of the law,—honest and zealous, but believing Jesus was an impostor, was going hither and thither in various towns and cities persecuting the Christians. He finally went down to a neighboring city, and as he drew near to that city, suddenly, about noonday, a light shined round about him and Saul was smitten to the earth by the glory of that light, and a voice said to him: "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" (he was persecuting Jesus when persecuting the Christians,) and Saul cried out, "Who art thou, Lord?" "I am Jesus of Nazareth whom thou persecutest," was the answer. And Saul, trembling and astonished, said, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" And the Lord said, "Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do." He went, and after he had reached the city, Ananias came to the house where Saul was, and, putting his hands on him said: "Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost."—Acts 9:1-18. And Saul arose and was baptized and washed away his sins, that he might as an obedient child of God, call on the name of the Lord (Acts 22: 16). Notwithstanding he had been marvelously blessed in his conversion, until baptized he was still out of the ark of safety; he was not a member of the family of God. Saul had this vision of Jesus Christ in his glory, and that glory was so splendid, so powerful, that its light smote him with blindness!

Again, we go to the Revelation: John was upon the isle of Patmos. We read in the first chapter where John says he was "in the Spirit on the Lord's day;" he heard a voice behind him, and turning to see who it was speaking, there he saw a wonderful vision, in it the "seven golden candlesticks" as was had under the Mosaic economy in the tabernacle and temple. He saw a personage standing in the midst of the golden candlesticks, and he says he was "like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; and his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters; . . . and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength." And who was this? It was Jesus; the risen, the glorified

Jesus! And how does this apply to you, my dear friends? How does it apply to Latter Day Saints? It should be hailed with joy by anyone who has confidence in Jesus Christ as the Savior, for Paul says he "shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself." God has the power; Christ has the power; heaven has pledged that our vile bodies, if we are found in Christ Jesus, shall be fashioned like unto Christ's. What a blessed thought! O, what a beautiful vision flashes in upon the soul as we contemplate the glory of the redeemed! Think of it! Millions, and millions, and myriads of redeemed ones clothed with celestial bodies, radiant with light; bodies pure, powerful, and as literal and real as the bodies we bear now, and "fashioned" like unto Christ Jesus' glorious body! Christ is able to do this; God is able to do it. Do not doubt it, my dear friends.

If you examine the works of nature,—as we sometimes do,—and reason from what we see to that that is unseen, we can very readily gather arguments and proofs that will support us largely in the grounds we occupy. I take, for instance, a little seed not larger than a grain of sand; I plant it in the earth, and under favoring conditions of light and heat and moisture, it germinates and sends off a little stem, and by and by a little stalk; and presently it branches out, its branches spread, then come the leaves, and in due time there come the buds, and by and by the buds burst and the flowers appear, fragrant and rich and beautiful in their development. It is the work of the infinite God. Under the fostering care of the Almighty, under the laws of germination, the little seed grows and develops and expands until finally an object of beauty and excellency is presented to us in the open flower. The white lily with all its purity, and the brilliant "lily of the valley" all spring up and develop from those very lowly and insignificant conditions. And if God does so much for the plant of the field, pray tell me what he may not do for the human soul,—that soul that hungers and yearns and longs for and sometimes sacrifices even life itself in order that it may attain to life everlasting! Is not God able to satisfy this longing, and to give to man the object of these inborn yearnings?

Yes, thank God; the power is with the Almighty, and we should never distrust him. God is able under the gospel economy, under "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus," to transform and fashion these vile bodies that they shall be as glorious, as all-powerful, and as blessed as the body of Jesus Christ our Lord.

I beg of you, my hearers, in the name of Jesus Christ, to be reconciled to God through Jesus. I beseech you to embrace the gospel and to live it faithfully. And you that have made the profession of Jesus Christ, I exhort you in his name to not let this great salvation slip. What would be your condition in eternity,—and eternity knows no end,—to look back upon life here, its opportunities and privileges, and think upon the invitations extended to you to love God and keep his commandments that you might attain unto all this blessedness and joy, and yet find yourselves without them, and yourselves short of them,—to find that you have forever let them slip! And what is to be done? We answer you in the language of Jesus Christ, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Heaven has ordained these conditions. Paul in the 6th chapter of his letter to the Romans says: "For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection." "We are buried with him by baptism into death." As Jesus was buried in the tomb, in the midst of his enemies, so man must be "buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." We go down into the cold waves and receive baptism according to the example and appointment made by Jesus Christ, thus showing by our obedience our fidelity to God and our faith in the redemptive plan. There is another condition and this you will find mentioned by Saint Paul in the 3th chapter of his letter to the Romans where he says: "But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you."

May God bless you and inspire your hearts to walk in his ways and secure life everlasting and the fullness of celestial glory, in Jesus' name. Amen.