

Lesson 8

Saturday, August 15

The Power of Christ's Resurrection

As a Christian submits to the solemn rite of baptism, the three highest powers in the universe—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—place Their approval on his act, pledging Themselves to exert Their power in his behalf as he strives to honor God. He is buried in the likeness of Christ's death, and is raised in the likeness of His resurrection. . . .

The three great powers of heaven pledge Themselves to furnish the Christian with all the assistance he requires. The Spirit changes the heart of stone to the heart of flesh. And by partaking of the Word of God, Christians obtain an experience that is after the divine similitude. When Christ abides in the heart by faith, the Christian is the temple of God. Christ does not abide in the heart of the sinner, but in the heart of him who is susceptible to the influences of heaven.

The light that shines forth from the life of the true Christian testifies to his union with Christ. Self is hidden from view, and Christ is revealed. . . . "Now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is" (1 John 3:2). Then those whose lives have been hidden with Christ, those who on this earth have fought the good fight of faith, will shine forth with the Redeemer's glory in the kingdom of God.

My brother, my sister, God's purpose for you is that you shall live a life that will make others better—a life which will show that Christ is formed within, the hope of glory. It is His purpose that you shall be able to say with the apostle Paul, "I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me" (Galatians 2:20). In perfect content, resting in the love of Christ, trusting the Redeemer and Life-giver to work out for you the salvation of your soul, you will know, as you draw nearer and still nearer to Him, what it means to endure the seeing of Him who is invisible. . . . The contentment that Christ bestows is a gift worth infinitely more than gold and silver and precious stones. . . .

Our lives are pure only when we are under the control of God, and happy only when we hold communion with Him. The luster possessed by those who have gained the richest experience is but the reflection of the light of the Sun of Righteousness. He who lives nearest to Jesus shines the brightest. — *Reflecting Christ*, p. 107.

Sunday, August 16

Proclaiming the Resurrection of Christ

The events of Christ's life, His death and resurrection, the prophecies pointing to these events, the mysteries of the plan of salvation, the power of Jesus for the remission of sins—to all these things they [His disciples] had been witnesses, and they were to make them known to the world. They were to proclaim the gospel of peace and salvation through repentance and the power of the Saviour.

Before ascending to heaven, Christ gave His disciples their commission. He told them that they were to be the executors of the will in which He bequeathed to the world the treasures of eternal life. You have been witnesses of My life of sacrifice in behalf of the world, He said to them. You have seen My labors for Israel. And although My people would not come to Me that they might have life, although priests and rulers have done unto Me as they listed, although they have rejected Me, they shall have still another opportunity of accepting the Son of God. You have seen that all who come to Me confessing their sins, I freely receive. Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out. To you, My disciples, I commit this message of mercy. It is to be given to both Jews and Gentiles—to Israel, first, and then to all nations, tongues, and peoples. All who believe are to be gathered into one church.

The gospel commission is the great missionary charter of Christ's kingdom. The disciples were to work earnestly for souls, giving to all the invitation of mercy. They were not to wait for the people to come to them; they were to go to the people with their message.

The disciples were to carry their work forward in Christ's name. Their every word and act was to fasten attention on His name, as possessing that vital power by which sinners may be saved. Their faith was to center in Him who is the source of mercy and power. In His name they were to present their petitions to the Father, and they would receive answer. They were to baptize in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Christ's name was to be their watchword, their badge of distinction, their bond of union, the authority for their course of action, and the source of their success. Nothing was to be recognized in His kingdom that did not bear His name and superscription. —

The Acts of the Apostles, pp. 27, 28.

Monday, August 17

The Risen Christ, Our Only Hope!

Hope has been set before us, even the hope of eternal life. Nothing short of this blessing for us will satisfy our Redeemer, but it is our part to lay hold upon this hope by faith in Him who has promised. We may expect to suffer, for it is those who are partakers with Him in His sufferings who shall be partakers with Him in His glory. He has purchased forgiveness and immortality for the sinful, perishing souls of men, but it is our part to receive these gifts by faith. Believing in Him, we have this hope as an anchor of the soul, sure and steadfast. We are to understand that we may confidently expect God's favor not only in this world but in the heavenly world, since He paid such a price for our salvation. Faith in the atonement and intercession of Christ will keep us steadfast and immovable amid the temptations that press upon us in the church militant. Let us contemplate the glorious hope that is set before us, and by faith lay hold upon it. . . .

We gain heaven not through our own merits but through the merits of Jesus Christ. . . . Let your hope not be centered in yourself, but in Him who has entered within the veil. Talk of the blessed hope and the glorious appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ.

It is true that we are exposed to great moral peril; it is true that we are in danger of being corrupted. But this danger threatens us only as we trust in self and look no higher than our own human efforts. In doing this we shall make shipwreck of faith.

In Christ our hope of eternal life is centered. . . . Our hope is an anchor to the soul both sure and steadfast when it entereth into that within the veil, for the tempest-tossed soul becomes a partaker of the divine nature. He is anchored in Christ. Amid the raging elements of temptation he will not be driven upon the rocks or drawn into the whirlpool. His ship will outride the storm. —*That I May Know Him*, p. 79.

Will not our church members keep their eyes fixed on a crucified and risen Saviour, in whom their hopes of eternal life are centered? This is our message, our argument, our doctrine, our warning to the impenitent, our encouragement for the sorrowing, the hope for every believer. If we can awaken an interest in men's minds that will cause them to fix their eyes on Christ, we may step aside, and ask them only to continue to fix their eyes upon the Lamb of God. . . . He whose eyes are fixed on Jesus will leave all. He will die to selfishness. He will believe in all the Word of God, which is so gloriously and wonderfully exalted in Christ. —*Maranatha*, p. 99.

Tuesday, August 18
Christ, the Firstfruits

During His ministry Jesus raised the dead to life. He raised the son of the widow of Nain and Jairus' daughter and Lazarus. But these were not clothed with immortality. After they were raised they continued to be subject to death and decay. But those who came forth from the grave at Christ's resurrection were raised to everlasting life. They were the multitude of captives who ascended with Him as trophies of His victory over death and the grave. . . .

These went into the city, and appeared unto many, declaring, "Christ has risen from the dead, and we be risen with him." Some were terrified at the sight. They bore the most undeniable evidence not only of their own resurrection, but of the resurrection of the crucified Redeemer. After His resurrection, Christ did not show Himself to any save His followers, but testimony in regard to His resurrection was not wanting. It came from various sources, [including] from the five hundred who assembled in Galilee to see their risen Lord. This testimony could not be quenched. The sacred facts of Christ's resurrection were immortalized.

Those who had been raised were presented as trophies to the heavenly universe—samples of the resurrection of all who receive and believe in Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour. They were a symbol of the final resurrection of the righteous. That same power that has raised Christ from the dead will raise His church—as His bride—and glorify it, with Christ, above all principalities, above all powers, above every name that is named, not only in this world, but in the heavenly courts, the world above. . . .

Christ was the firstfruits of them that slept. This very scene, the resurrection of Christ from the dead, was observed in type by the Jews at one of their sacred feasts, called the feast of the Jews. They came up to the temple when the firstfruits had been gathered in, and held a feast of thanksgiving. The firstfruits of the harvest crop was sacredly dedicated to the Lord. . . .

As Christ ascends while in the act of blessing His disciples, an army of angels encircles Him as a cloud. Christ takes with Him the multitude of captives as His trophy. He will Himself bring to the Father the firstfruits of them that slept, to present [them] to God as an assurance that He is conqueror over death and the grave. —*Christ Triumphant*, p. 286.

Christ arose from the dead as the first fruits of those that slept. He was the antitype of the wave sheaf, and His resurrection took place on the very day when the wave sheaf was to be presented before the Lord. For more than a thousand years this symbolic ceremony had been performed. From the harvest fields the first heads of ripened grain were gathered, and when the people went up to Jerusalem to the Passover, the sheaf of first fruits was waved as a thank offering before the Lord. Not until this was presented could the sickle be put to the grain, and it be gathered into sheaves. The sheaf dedicated to God represented the harvest. So Christ the first fruits represented the great spiritual harvest to be gathered for the kingdom of God. His resurrection is the type and pledge of the resurrection of all the righteous dead. —*The Faith I Live By*, p. 180.

The resurrection of Jesus was a sample of the final resurrection of all who sleep in Him. The risen body of the Saviour, His deportment, the accents of His speech, were all familiar to His followers. In like manner will those who sleep in Jesus rise again. We shall know our friends even as the disciples knew Jesus. Though they may have been deformed, diseased, or disfigured in this mortal life, yet in their resurrected and glorified body their individual identity will be perfectly preserved, and we shall recognize, in the face radiant with the light shining from the face of Jesus, the lineaments of those we love.

At His second coming all the precious dead shall hear His voice, and shall come forth to glorious, immortal life. The same power that raised Christ from the dead will raise His church, and glorify it with Him, above all principalities, above all powers, above every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in the world to come.

He will receive us with honor. To us will be given a crown of glory that fadeth not away. —*The Faith I Live By*, p. 180.

Our personal identity is preserved in the resurrection, though not the same particles of matter or material substance as went into the grave. The wondrous works of God are a mystery to man. The spirit, the character of man, is returned to God, there to be preserved. In the resurrection every man will have his own character. God in His own time will call forth the dead, giving again the breath of life, and bidding the dry bones live. The same form will come forth, but it will be free from disease and every defect. It lives again bearing the same individuality of features, so that friend will recognize friend. There is no law of God in nature which shows that God gives back the same identical particles of matter which composed the body before death. God shall give the righteous dead a body that will please Him.

Paul illustrates this subject by the kernel of grain sown in the field. The planted kernel decays, but there comes forth a new kernel. The natural substance in the grain that decays is never raised as before, but God giveth it a body as it hath pleased Him. A much finer material will compose the human body, for it is a new creation, a new birth. It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.

He [the believer] may die, as Christ died, but the life of the Saviour is in him. His life is hid with Christ in God. "I am come that they might have life," Jesus said, "and that they might have it more abundantly." He carries on the great process by which believers are made one with Him in this present life, to be one with Him throughout all eternity. . . .

At the last day He will raise them as a part of Himself. . . . Christ became one with us in order that we might become one with Him in divinity. —*Maranatha*, p. 301.

Thursday, August 20
Final Victory Over Death

The voice of the Son of God calls forth the sleeping saints. . . . From the prison house of death they come, clothed with immortal glory, crying: "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" (1 Corinthians 15:55). . . .

The living righteous are changed "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye." At the voice of God they were glorified; now they are made immortal and with the risen saints are caught up to meet their Lord in the air. . . .

Before entering the City of God, the Saviour bestows upon His followers the emblems of victory and invests them with the insignia of their royal state. . . . Upon the heads of the overcomers, Jesus with His own right hand places the crown of glory. For each there is a crown, bearing his own "new name," and the inscription, "Holiness to the Lord." In every hand are placed the victor's palm and the shining harp. Then, as the commanding angels strike the note, every hand sweeps the harp strings with skillful touch, awaking sweet music in rich, melodious strains. Rapture unutterable thrills every heart, and each voice is raised in grateful praise. . . .

Before the ransomed throng is the Holy City. Jesus opens wide the pearly gates, and the nations that have kept the truth enter in. . . . Then that voice, richer than any music that ever fell on mortal ear, is heard, saying: "Your conflict is ended." "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matthew 25:34).

Now is fulfilled the Saviour's prayer for His disciples, "I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am" (John 17:24). "Faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy" (Jude 24), Christ presents to the Father the purchase of His blood. . . . Oh, the wonders of redeeming love! The rapture of that hour when the infinite Father, looking upon the ransomed, shall behold His image. . . .! —*God's Amazing Grace*, p. 357.

Jesus is coming, but not as at His first advent, a babe in Bethlehem; not as He rode into Jerusalem, when the disciples praised God with a loud voice and cried, "Hosanna"; but in the glory of the Father and with all the retinue of holy angels to escort Him on His way to earth. All heaven will be emptied of the angels, while the waiting saints will be looking for Him and gazing into heaven, as were the men of Galilee when He ascended from the Mount of Olivet. Then only those who are holy, those who have followed fully the meek Pattern, will with rapturous joy exclaim as they behold Him, "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us." And they will be changed "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump"—that trump which wakes the sleeping saints, and calls them forth from their dusty beds, clothed with glorious immortality, and shouting, "Victory! Victory over death and the grave!" The changed saints are then caught up together with the angels to meet the Lord in the air, never more to be separated from the object of their love. —*Early Writings*, p. 110.

Friday, August 21
For Further Reading

Conflict and Courage, "Home Again!" January 17, p. 23.

Christ Triumphant, "Firstfruits of Victory Over Death," October 6, p. 286.