



CREMATION AND RESURRECTION



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The following has been written to enlighten as to Cremation, and brighten the hope and expectation of believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, as to Resurrection unto Life.

IN days of so called enlightenment and civilization it is surprising that so many people favour the cremation of their bodies, and are easily persuaded, for plausible reasons, so to arrange for the disposal of their mortal remains. Cremation means burning, generally in connection with the burning of the bodies of human beings, and sometimes of animals by chemical process.

How crude was the funeral pyre of the ancients, or the method which is adopted at the present time in some oriental countries! We remember also the passing through the fire to Moloch in idolatrous practices (2 Kings 16. 3, 17. 15-17, 31, 21. 6); in each case said to be an abomination to the Lord. Those who so arrange for the destruction of their bodies after death, do not express the hope of a blessed resurrection. Some have dreaded the possibility of becoming conscious again after burial, but such fears are often the fruit of idle tales. Others plead reasons of hygiene.

Let the believer, however, in the Lord Jesus as Saviour and Lord, take only the Scriptures as his guide book, in all such matters. It is good to review what men of God did, as recorded therein for our learning.

Abraham, the friend of God, bought a field wherein to place the remains of his beloved wife. There was not only a cave, but trees were growing therein, and his beloved wife's body was seed, and THAT was above all else (Gen.

23. 17-20). Abraham's body also was sown there (Gen. 49. 29-32). Isaac, Rebecca, Jacob and Leah, were all buried in the same field. All these expected resurrection life. They will not be disappointed, for do we not read in Matthew 8. 11 of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob sitting down in the kingdom of heaven? Their bodies were sown in corruption, they will be raised in power. Seed is ever sown in expectation, to grow as the beautiful flower. Joseph died in Egypt, but he would not appoint for his bones to stay there. He said, "God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry my bones up hence." These were put in a coffin in Egypt, ready for the journey to the land of promise. It was a matter of great importance to him, and he made his brethren take an oath, that they would do as he had commanded them.

No Egypt for Joseph, the promised land was best;
Until the resurrection **there** his bones must rest.

These all died in **faith** (Heb. 11. 13), strangers and pilgrims on the earth, and away from their heavenly home, but journeying towards it.

Death did not rob them of their heavenly home, or country, or land, or promises. They saw them afar off. As mortal eyes were closed in death, they saw the things eternal.

They were persuaded of them, and no sceptic could make them doubt. They embraced them, and were convinced that what God had promised, He was able also to perform. They declared they sought a country, that is, a heavenly. Pilgrims and strangers here, Heaven was their home.

We do, however, read of the burning of people in Scripture, but it was by God's fire, as upon Sodom and Gomorrah, with fire and brimstone of judgment, from which none could escape, except in the mercy of God (as Lot and his two daughters). The wrath of God was, and will be, revealed from heaven (Rom. 1. 18) and it was, and will be, upon all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. The Judge of all the earth does right. The people who died in this past great

fire will still come up for judgment: their souls did not cease to be (Matt. 11. 23-24). We also read of the two sons of Aaron (Lev. 10. 1-3). This also was the fire of God. They offered strange fire, and were consumed by HIS fire. Truly our God is a Consuming Fire to all who defy Him (Heb. 12. 29).

Peter speaks of a tremendous fire yet to come, from which there will be no escape (2 Pet. 3. 7-13). This will not be merely local but universal: "The earth and the works therein shall be burned up." The reader would do well to ponder these passages of Scripture carefully, and be diligent to be one of those who look for new heavens, and new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. In Luke 16. 23-31 we have the view of a human soul after death, and THERE we see the eyes of one looking upward, who could not ascend to freedom. THERE is thirst, and no water, torment, and no comfort. THERE is anguish, and no relief, anxiety, and no rest, a plight, but no rescue, a wish to warn others, but too late. No escape then! Now is the acceptable time, now is the day of salvation. The Lord Jesus said, "Fear Him Who has power to cast both body and soul into hell" (Matt. 10. 28) where the fire never goes out, and the smoke of their torment ascendeth for ever and ever. The great white throne, the final judgment, the second death, the lake of fire and brimstone (Rev. 20. 11-15, 21. 8) can never be avoided, nor their terrors averted, by any human effort.

Cremation cannot prevent resurrection unto judgment (John 5. 28-29).

Now, beloved reader, let us turn away from the gloom of judgment, and the doom of the ungodly, to the blessedness of resurrection unto life. Our God is the God of all grace, the Father of mercies, the God of all comforts, the Father of lights, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. And there is no fire for those who belong to Him. There have been the fires of persecution, but these never prevent resurrection unto life. The Lord's persecuted people know the meaning of those wonderful words written in Isaiah 43. 1-4: "When thou walkest through the fire thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee"

(note Dan. 3. 23-29). They also know the comfort of the following precious claims:—

“ I have redeemed thee.”

“ Thou art Mine.”

“ I will be with thee.”

“ I have called thee by thy name.”

“ I am the Lord thy God.”

—all spoken by God through His prophet, to His own people. Truly life and immortality have been brought to light through the Gospel (2 Tim. 1. 10). When the Lord Jesus died they did not cremate His precious body; it was laid carefully in a tomb specially reserved for Himself, wherein never man was laid (John 19. 38-41). He was truly with the rich in His death (Isa. 53. 9), and in 3 days He was alive again. No sealing of the tomb, no setting a guard of soldiers, and no human precaution, or effort, could prevent the resurrection of Him, Who became, in the early dawn of that first day of the week, the First Fruits of them that slept (1 Cor. 15. 20). “ He is risen,” “ He is alive ” were the exclamations of those who saw and knew Him. And He Himself could say later, “ I am He That liveth, and was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore ” (Rev. 1. 18). No cremation, but a glorious resurrection. When Stephen died, devout men carried him to his burial; and his spirit was commended to the Lord Jesus in heaven (Acts 7. 59, 8. 2). When John the Baptist died the disciples came and laid his body in a tomb (Mark 6. 29). Should we have had the manifestation of resurrection power, as recorded in John 11. 43, 44 had there been cremation? The body was in the tomb, and the dead one ready to hear the voice of the Son of God (John 5. 25). “ Lazarus, come forth,” and he that was dead came forth bound hand and foot with grave-clothes.

The feet were freed to walk again:
The hands were loosed to serve!

When Paul the apostle was expecting to depart, he said, "To me to live is Christ, to die is gain," "To depart and to be with Christ, which is far better" (Phil. 1. 21-23). And for a believer, absence from the body is presence with the Lord (2 Cor. 5. 6-9); may each believer, therefore, whether present or absent, be acceptable to Him (2 Cor. 5. 9). Now we come to that delightful passage in 1 Thessalonians 4, where we have words with which we are to comfort one another. When the trial of the decease of beloved believing relatives come to us, such are asleep though Jesus. It is through **Him** they are asleep, to await the resurrection morning. Without Him there would be no resurrection morning, and no raising unto life. The sleep in the tomb for a believer is only "Till He come." Then shall His voice be heard, and the dead in Him shall rise. Our beloved Lord said of Lazarus, "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth, and I go that I may awake him out of sleep." Christ alone is the **Resurrection** and the **Life**. The Lord **Himself** shall descend from heaven with a shout; and the dead shall hear His voice (John 5. 27, 29).

O blessed voice,
And with what power,
Beyond our choice,
He then will shower
Bless'd resurrection life.
On each in love
For whom He died:
With Him above
Each will abide,
For ever freed from strife.

Cremation can but have a gruesome sound,
Nor can be in the Holy Scripture found
"The burning of the body" do we read?
Nay! It is said to be a precious seed;
We read that it is sown as a BARE grain
When in the grave through death it must be lain.

It is terrestrial, made by God of dust,
And, since sin came, become corrupt it must ;
But when the body of a saint it is
He gives a body as Himself shall please :
A heavenly celestial one 'twill be,
Which will not base corruption ever see.
'Tis sown in weakness, and in glory raised,
Henceforth to live to Him, Whose Name be praised !
No longer to be sleeping in the dust,
But raised in power, with Christ in Whom we trust.
(1 Cor. 15. 42-44.)

Now blessed is the man who has iniquities forgiven,
Through precious blood they're blotted out, and he will enter
heaven,
This blessedness shall come on all who are in Christ believing
The promises of God in Him, by grace they are receiving.
(Rom. 4. 6-8.)

Their being sanctified, through faith, is in God's will
appointed
That saints should pure and holy be, with heavenly oil
anointed,
For He has said of His redeemed, " Ye are a holy nation,"
Now be ye one, and be for Him, a holy habitation.
(1 Thess. 4. 3, 4.)

Become not yoked unequally with unsaved unbelievers,
You're temple of the living God, and of His grace
receivers :
Between the light and darkness there can never be
communion,
Nor with the sons of Belial, by saints with Christ in union,

In love the Holy Spirit has by grace to saints been given,
And in their hearts is shed abroad the love of God from
heaven,
He helpeth our infirmities and maketh intercession,
That we may walk the narrow path possessing our
possession.

Predestinated — Justified — Glorified.

'Tis wonderful that saints are those Whom God Himself
foreknew,
Before they saw the light of day, He knew what He
would do,
For these He did predestinate, He also them did call,
And, in His only blessed Son, He justified them all.

And those whom He has justified He glorified as well,
To have the glory of the Lord, with Him for aye to dwell;
Conformed unto His image then, like Him to ever be,
Enjoy redemption through His blood, His face for ever see.

We all with face unveiled do now behold as in a glass;
The glory of our Lord, and long for time to quickly pass:
For now we're being changed into His glorious image bright,
From glory unto glory, till we're glorious in His sight.

(2 Cor. 3. 18.)

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