

had seen that Christ was held as a prisoner by the greatest powers on earth. Methinks I see the angelic host as they gathered around the throne of God and looked up into the face of Omnipotence, and if ever there was a time when there was silence in heaven for half an hour it was before the morning light of the third day dawned. I hear them say, "How long shall man triumph? How long shall human power exalt itself? How long shall the powers of darkness hold jubilee? Let us away and roll away the stone; let us away and frighten yonder Roman guard and drive them from the sepulchre."

They waited until permission was given. I see the angel coming down from the opening doors of glory; he hastens outside the walls of Jerusalem and down to the sepulchre; when they saw him coming the keepers shook, they became like dead men; he rolls away the stone and sets himself by the mouth of the sepulchre. Christ, girding himself with all the power of his divinity, rises from the grave. He leads captivity captive, tears the crown from the head of death, and makes light the darkness of the grave. Behold him as he rises just preparatory to his rising up to glory. Oh, what a moment was that! Hell was preparing for its jubilee; the powers of earth were preparing for a triumph; but as the grave yields its prey, Christ, charged with being an impostor, is proved to be the Son of God with power; it is the power of his resurrection from the dead.

There was Christ's resurrection from the dead. He became the first fruits of them that slept. But to give the amplest proofs of his resurrection he lingered on earth to be seen of men, and to be seen in such a manner as to show that he was still the Saviour Christ. In my younger days I used often to wonder why was it that Mary Magdalene came

first to the sepulchre, and the mother of James that stood there—why he should appear to them; but in later days I have said it was to show that he was the Saviour still; that the same nature was there which had made him stoop to the lowliest of the low—the power that enabled him to heal the guiltiest of the guilty; that that power, that compassion, were with him still.

Though now raised beyond death and triumphing over hell, he still had within him the Saviour's heart. Methinks I see, when Peter had run in anxiety to tell the news, Mary remained there; she could not fully comprehend it; the grave was open, the napkins were there; it was said he was not there, but he was risen. And yet, there was a darkness upon her; she could not fully conceive, it seems to me, the resurrection of the dead. She stood wondering, when she heard a voice behind her which said, "Woman, why weepest thou?" Bathed in tears as she was, she turned round and saw the man standing, and taking him to be the gardener, and supposing that he had taken the body and carried it away as not fit to lie in that tomb or be in that garden, she said: "If thou hast taken him away, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away. If he must not lie in this tomb, if he cannot lie in the garden, if as a malefactor he must be cast out from man, tell me where the body is and I will take it away." It was a proof of her affection.

A voice said, "Mary, Mary." Oh, she recognized it, and her heart cried out: "Rabboni, my Lord and my God!" and then she would have thrown herself at his feet and bathed those feet again with her tears, but he said: "Touch me not, I am not ascended to my Father; go and tell the disciples and Peter that I am risen from the dead." See the compassion of the Saviour! and then that message! "Tell the disciples

and Peter." Why send a message to him? Because he cursed and swore and denied the Master. The other disciples might have said, If Christ is risen, he may receive and bless us all; but Peter is gone, hopelessly and irretrievably gone; he that forsook his Master and denied him, there is no hope for him. And yet, said Jesus, "Go and tell the disciples and Peter"—poor backslidden Peter.

Jesus knew his sorrow and anguish and almost felt the throbbings of his broken heart, and he sent a message to Peter. He may be a disciple still—may come back and be saved through the boundless love of Christ. Oh, the compassion of the Son of God! Thank God that Peter's Saviour is on the throne this morning.

Not only was he seen by these, but he met with the disciples journeying by the way and explained the Scriptures to them; and as they met in the upper room he was there. When the doors were unopened he came in their midst and said, "Peace!" breathed on them and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." Thus he met with them, and said to Thomas, "Reach hither thy fingers, and be not faithless but believing."

Then afterward he was seen by five hundred, and from the Mount of Olives, while the disciples were gathered around him, he was received up into glory. They saw him and as he went he blessed them. The last vision that ever humanity had of the Son of God ere he ascended to heaven was that of spreading out his hands in blessing. Oh, my Saviour hath thus gone up, and he dropped from those outstretched hands a blessing which falls to-day like the gentle dew all over the earth; it reaches heart after heart. It hath reached patriarchs, apostles, martyrs, fathers, and mothers and little children, and, thank God, the heavenly dew, as from those outstretched hands, is coming down on our assembly this

very morning. On this glad day blessings are dropping from the throne of God upon us from this risen Saviour. He hath ascended up on high, the gates have opened for him, and he hath gone to his throne in glory.

Let us look at a few of the results that flow to us from these facts thus sustained of his death and resurrection from the dead!

In the first place it establishes all Bible declarations. It had been predicted that he should not stay in the grave, and when he arose it put the seal to the Old Testament as the Word of God. The prophecy in him fulfilled gave glorious proof that the other parts of it should be also fulfilled as the word of an unchanging God.

Again in his resurrection we see a proof of his divine power. No man hath been raised from the dead by his own power. All died, from Adam to Moses, with the exception of Enoch and Elijah, who, because of their devotion and acknowledgment of the divine head, themselves became prophets of a coming Saviour. He rose by his own power. He conquered death itself, the grave, and the whole powers of humanity.

Jupiter is represented by an old classic writer as saying to the lesser gods that if all of them combined together and should endeavor to throw down his throne—if all power was arrayed against him—he, by his own might, would be able to overcome them all. What was fiction with the ancients becomes gloriously realized in Christ. Take all the powers of humanity—the Jewish power, the Roman power; the power of learning, of art, of public opinion; take all the powers of earth and hell, death and the grave, and combine them all against the Saviour and, without one effort, without one single apparent movement—the sleeper lies in death, his eyes are

sealed, and, as if all unconscious, for the warning had not been given before—in an instant those eyes were opened, that frame rises, the grave yields up its prey, death retires conquered, and Christ demonstrates himself to be the ruler of the whole universe. He made the earth to tremble, the sun to put on sackcloth, the very air to grow dark, the graves to open, the dead to come forth, and proclaimed himself to be the conqueror of death and hell. So we have proof of his being the Son of God with power.

In that resurrection from the dead we have a pledge of our own resurrection. Christ has become the first-fruits of them that slept. You know the figure of the first-fruits as understood by the Jews. Their religion was connected with the seasons of the year—with the harvest crops; one of their feasts was called the feast of the first-fruits, and was on this wise: When the first heads of grain began to ripen in the field and there was thus a pledge of harvest, they cut off those first ripened heads and went up to Jerusalem.

Before that the grain was not crushed, no bread was baked out of it, and nothing was done to appropriate that crop to man's use until first those ripened heads of grain were brought up to Jerusalem and presented to the Lord as a thank-offering. He was acknowledged as Lord of the harvest and they were laid up as a kind of thank-offering before God. They were the first-fruits. Then they went away to the fields and all through Judea the sickle was thrust in, the grain was reaped and gathered into sheaves, and when the harvest was secured they baked the bread for their children out of this first grain. They came up to the temple, where the first-fruits had been laid, and they held a feast of thanksgiving and shouted harvest home. The old harvest feast seems to be descended from this ancient custom.

Christ rose as the first-fruits, and there is to be a glorious resurrection. Christ came, the first man to rise in this respect, by his own power, from the grave, having snatched the crown from death, having thrown light into the grave, having himself ascended up toward glory. He goes up in the midst of the shouts of angels; the heavens open before him; yonder is the altar; there is the throne and around it stand the seraphim and the cherubim; and Christ enters the victor and sits down upon the throne, from henceforth expecting until his enemies be made his footstool. He is the first-fruits of the harvest, but the angels are to be sent out like the reapers, and by and by humanity is coming.

As Christ, the first-fruits, passed through the grave and went up to glory, so there shall come from their sleeping dust in Asia, in Africa, in Europe, and in America, from every mountain top, from the depths of the sea, from deep ravines, and from plains outspread—oh, there shall come in the time of the glorious harvest—the uprising of humanity, when all the nations, waking from their long sleep, shall rise and shall shout the harvest home! Thank God! at that time none shall be wanting.

Oh, they come, they come, from the nations of the past and from the generations yet unborn! I see the crowd gathering there. Behold the angels are waiting, and as the hosts rise from the dead they gather round the throne. Christ invites his followers to overcome and sit down with him on his throne, as he overcame and sat down with the Father on his throne. In that is the pledge of our resurrection from the dead. Can I not suffer, since Christ suffered? Can I not die, since Christ died? Let the grave be my resting-place, for Christ rested there. Is it cold? The warmth of his animation is in it. Is it lonely? He shall be beside me in all his

spirit's power. Does the load of earth above me and beneath which I am placed press upon me? Christ hath power to burst the tomb; he shall burst the tomb, though deep it be, and I shall rise through his almighty power.

Yes, let the malice of men be directed against me; let me be taken, if it must be, as a martyr and be bound to the stake; let the fagots be kindled, let the flame ascend, let my body be burned; gather my ashes, grind my bones to powder, scatter them on the ocean's surface; or carry those ashes to the top of yonder volcano and throw them within its consuming fire—let them be given to the dust—and yet I can sing:

"God, my Redeemer, lives,
And ever from the skies
Looks down and watches all my dust,
Till he shall bid it rise."

Thank God! it may be scattered on the wings of the wind—Christ is everywhere present; he has marked every particle and it shall rise again by his own almighty power. And what is it to sleep awhile if I am Christ's? To die, if I am like Christ in dying? and be buried, if I am like Christ in being buried? I trust I shall be like him when he comes forth in his glory. I shall be like him, for the Apostle says, We shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is; we shall be changed from glory into glory, into the same image as by the Spirit of God.

It would be a great change to be changed from glory to glory, from saints to angels, from angels to cherubim, from cherubim to seraphim, from glory to glory; but, thank God! we shall not stop being changed; for the change shall go on from glory to glory until we shall be transformed into the likeness of the Son of God, brighter than angels ever shone, more glorious than were ever cherubim.

We shall be near the throne; we shall sit beside him, for he hath made room for us there. Then, if we can calmly look at death and face him, because his strength has been overcome, it reconciles us to parting a little while with friends. A father or a mother may be taken from us, but we shall see them again; they shall not sleep forever. The little ones that drop from our arms, we can almost see them this morning; some of us can almost feel them in our arms—can see the glance of that beautiful eye and hear the sound of that little prattling lip; they seem to be with us now, as a little while ago they dropped from out of our arms. We followed them to the grave and we left them there, where the winter's storm has been howling around them.

Sometimes loneliness like that terrible storm has swept over our hearts and left them almost in despair; but through Christ's resurrection we see our children yonder in glory, safe in the Saviour's arms. Their little forms shall rise all-glorious from the tomb in the morning of the resurrection; we shall find them, for Jesus is the resurrection and the life.

All this comes to us from the resurrection of Christ from the dead. He died once; he dies no more; the condemnation of death is forever gone; he sits on the throne of everlasting dominion; his kingdom is an eternal kingdom; and as he died once and has risen to die no more, so when we have died once and gone to the grave and entered the dark valley and shadow of death and we come up safely on the other side, thank God! death is passed forever; we shall then put our feet on the neck of the monster and shall be able to say:

"Oh death, where is thy sting?
Oh grave, where is thy victory?"

Looking at the resurrection of Christ we exclaim, Thanks be unto God who hath given us the victory! Such is the eter-

nity of glory and blessedness that awaits us. Thank God for a spiritual body! Here some of us long to triumph over nature. We would grasp, if we could, angelic wisdom; but our brows will ache with pain, our frames decay, our eyes grow dim, our hearing fail. This flesh of ours will not stand hours of painful study and seasons of protracted labor; but, thank God! when the body that now oppresses us is laid in the grave a spiritual body will be given to us, pure, ethereal, and holy. Oh, what an extent of knowledge shall flash upon us! what light and glory! what spirituality and power! Then we shall not need to ask an angel anything. We shall know as we are known. Jesus will be our teacher; the Everlasting God, the Man whose name is Wonderful, the Counsellor, the Prince of Peace. He himself shall be our Leader. We shall know then as also we are known.

Then rejoice in God. Dry up those tears. Cast away that downcast look. Child of the dust, you are an heir of glory. There is a crown all burnished for you; there is a mansion all ready for you; there is a white robe prepared for you; there is eternal glory for you; angels are to be your servants and you are to reign with the King of kings forever. But while you wait on earth, be witnesses for God; attest the glory of your Master; rise in the greatness of his strength; bind sin captive to your chariot wheels; go onward in your heavenly career, and be as pure as your ascended Head is pure. Be active in works of mercy; be angels of light; be flames of fire; go on your mission of mercy and convert the world unto God before you go up higher. When you go, not only go forward to present yourself, but may every one of you be able to say: "Here am I, and those which thou hast given me."

ALEXANDER H. STEPHENS



ALEXANDER HAMILTON STEPHENS, American statesman, was born near Crawfordsville, Ga., Feb. 11, 1812, and died at Atlanta, Ga., March 4, 1883. Educated at the University of Georgia, he studied law and was admitted to the Bar in 1834. Two years later, he began his political career by entering the lower house of the State legislature, where he continued until 1840. In 1841, he became State senator, and from 1843 to 1859 was a Representative in Congress for Georgia. He advocated the annexation of Texas, but opposed the Mexican War policy and was a supporter of the Compromise of 1850. He was greatly averse to the dissolution of the Union, and in 1860 delivered a strong Union speech. He supported the nomination of Stephen A. Douglas, and early the next year, in the Georgia State convention, he eloquently opposed Secession. When, however, the Ordinance of Secession was passed, he acquiesced in the result, for although he doubted the wisdom of the policy he still maintained the right of Secession. He was chosen Vice-president of the provisional government of the Confederacy and was elected to the office in the following autumn, but it was soon evident that he and President Davis differed widely on not a few important matters. On the fall of the Confederacy, Stephens was imprisoned for some months in Fort Warren, in Boston Harbor, but was released on parole in the following October (1865). In February, 1866, he delivered a strong speech in favor of reconstruction, and in the same month was elected to Congress as Senator, but was not suffered to take his seat, as Congress ignored the return of Georgia to the Union under President Johnson's proclamation. In 1874, he was permitted to reënter Congress, and served there until, in 1882, he became Governor of Georgia, dying during his period of office. His political course often seemed contradictory, but he ever acted upon some principle quite clear to himself, though not always at first sight apparent to others. He was a life-long believer in State rights and local self-government. Mr. Stephens published a work entitled "War between the States," and a "History of the United States."

ON THE EVILS OF SECESSION

DELIVERED IN THE SECESSION CONVENTION OF GEORGIA, JANUARY, 1861

THIS step [the secession of Georgia], once taken, can never be recalled; and all the baleful and withering consequences that must follow (as you will see) will rest on the Convention for all coming time. When we and