

that probably many have not thought of. You recollect that after the death of Jesus, and after he had been placed in the sepulchre, there was great anxiety on the part of the Apostles and those who had been familiar with Jesus, as to his body. They looked for his resurrection, they expected him to come forth, but they were filled with doubt and anxiety, for they had the idea that he would return king of Israel, that the set time had come for the establishment of God's kingdom on the earth never more to be thrown down. Among others who were very anxious about this, was Mary, one of the women who had attended upon Jesus. She went to the sepulchre and found that the body of her Lord and Master had been taken away, and she could not find it. She turned around, full of grief and anxiety about him whom she loved, and saw a personage standing beside her, whom she supposed to be the gardener, and she inquired of him what they had done with the body of her Lord. It was Jesus to whom she addressed herself, but she did not recognize him at first, and failed to do so until he uttered her name. When he said, "Mary," then she recognized his voice and person, and, as was very natural under the circumstances, in the excess of her joy, she rushed forward to clasp him; but he stepped back, and forbade her, in those remarkable words: "Touch me not; Mary, for I have not yet ascended to my Father; but go to my disciples, and tell them, that I ascend to my Father, and to their Father; to my God, and to their God." This was the third day after his crucifixion, and during this time he had not ascended to his Father, and he did not want to be touched, he did not want mortal hands put upon him. When I quoted this to this gentleman, said he, "Where was he then,

during this period? If he did not ascend to his Father, and if the paradise to which the thief went with him, was not heaven, then where was he?" I then quoted to him the words I first read this afternoon, "If Christ also has once suffered for sin, etc."

Here Peter gives the explanation, and it is as plain and unmistakable as language can make it. Jesus died on the cross, he was crucified and put to death in the flesh, as the Apostles say, and after being put to death he went and preached to the spirits which were in prison, spirits which were disobedient in the days of Noah, having rejected Noah's testimony, and they had been incarcerated in prison for some twenty-five hundred years. He was engaged in this labor while his body lay in the tomb, and hence, when Mary saw him after his resurrection, and attempted to embrace him, he said, "Touch me not; Mary, for I have not yet ascended to my Father, etc."

Now by this I do not mean to infer that after his crucifixion, when his spirit had left his body, he got outside the presence of his Father, for the presence, power and eyes of God are everywhere; but he did not ascend to his immediate personal presence until after his body was resurrected from the tomb. And in further confirmation of the view which I am endeavoring to set forth to you, the Apostle Peter, continuing this subject, as I read to you from the 4th chapter of his first epistle, says, "For for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit." "Ah," says one, "dead in sin!" Who told you so? What right has any man to put such an interpretation on the Scriptures? The declaration here is as plain as