

A VISIT TO THE TOMB NO. 1081

A SERMON
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON

*“He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.”
Matthew 28:6*

THE holy women, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary, came to the sepulcher, hoping to find there the body of their Lord, which they intended to embalm. Their intention was good, their will was accepted before God, but for all that, their desire was not gratified, for the simple reason that it was contrary to God’s design: it was at variance with even what Christ had foretold and plainly declared to them. “He is not here: for he is risen, *as he said.*”

I gather from this, that there may be good desires in our hearts as believers, and we may earnestly try to carry them out, yet we may never succeed in them, because through our ignorance we have not understood, or through our obliviousness we have happened to forget, some word of Christ that stands in our way.

I have known this to be the case in prayer. We have prayed, and we have not received, because we had no warrant in the Word of God to ask the thing we did. Peradventure there was some prohibition in the Scriptures, which ought to have restrained us from offering the prayer. We have thought in our daily life, amidst the pursuits of business, that if we could gain such and such a position, then we should honor God, and though we have sought it vigorously, and prayed about it earnestly, we have never gained it. God had never intended that we should, and had we succeeded in compassing our own project, it might have been evil rather than advantageous, an entail of trouble instead of a heritage of joy.

We were seeking great things for ourselves, we forgot that exhortation of the Lord, “Seekest thou great things for thyself? Seek them not.” Do not, therefore, expect to realize all those desires which seem to you to be pure and proper. They may not happen to run in the right channel. It may be that there is a word from the Lord that forbids your ever seeing them brought to pass.

These good women found that they had lost the presence of Him who had been their greatest delight. “He is not here,” must have sounded like a funeral knell to them. They expected to find Him, but He was gone. But then the grief must have been taken out of their hearts when it was added, “He is risen.” I gather from this that if God takes away from me any one good thing, He will be sure to justify Himself in having done so, and that very frequently He will magnify His grace by giving me something infinitely better.

Did Mary think it would be a good thing to find the dead body of her Lord? Perhaps it would have given her a kind of melancholy satisfaction. So she thought, according to her poor judgment. The Lord took that good thing away. But then Christ was risen, and now to hear of Him, then presently to see Him, was not that an infinitely better thing?

Have you lost anything of late around which your heart had inter-twisted all its tendrils? You shall find that there is good cause for the privation. The Lord never takes away a silver blessing without intending to confer on us a golden gain. Depend upon it, for wood He will give iron, and for iron He will give brass, and for brass He will give silver, and for silver He will give gold. All His takings are but preliminaries to a larger giving.

Have you lost your child? What if you find your Lord dearer than ever? One smile of your Lord will be better to you than all the cheerful frolics of your child. Is He not better to you than ten sons? Have you lost the familiar companion who once cheered you along the valley of life? You shall now by that

loss be driven closer to your Savior. His promises shall be more sweet to you, and the blessed Spirit shall reveal His truth more clearly to you. You shall be a gainer by your loss.

There is many a plant that has been protected by a great tree, whose spreading branches covered it from the drenching rain and the downfall of hail. Anon, the tree has been cut down by the cruel woodman's axe. At the fall of that tree the little plant has been ready to cry out for fear. Henceforth it will remain unprotected. Not so, these sad bodings quickly vanish, for now the sun has come upon it as it never came before, and the dews have fallen more plenteously, and the rain has penetrated to its roots, and the little tender plant springs up to a stature it could never otherwise have known, seeing it was dwarfed by the comfort it enjoyed.

You shall find that full many of the comforts taken from you were drawbacks to your high culture, and in the absence of them you shall get an abundant compensation, a tenfold blessing. "He is not here"—that is sorrowful. But "He is risen"—this is gladsome. Christ, the dead one, you cannot see. You cannot tenderly embalm that blessed body. But Christ, the living one, you shall see. And at His feet you shall be able to prostrate yourself, and from His lips you shall hear the gladsome words, "Go, tell my brethren that I am risen from the dead."

That lesson may be worth your remembering. If God apply it to your soul it may yield you rich comfort. Should the Lord take away one joy from you, He will give you another and a better one. "He does not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men." You never deny your children any pure gratification I am sure, without intending their real good. How many of you have a way, when you put your child into a little self-denial, of making it up to him again so that he is no loser by it. And your heavenly Father will deal quite as gently and tenderly with you His children.

With these two preliminary remarks, we proceed to our text itself. And it may be well to say that some of us have been this afternoon to the funeral of a dear friend and deacon of this church. And as such, the thoughts that stir in our breasts, and the words that will flow from our lips this evening would be more appropriate if the open grave were before us. Let us stand there in imagination, and conceive, if you will, even yonder bell—though it often hinders our devotions so that I wonder why any Christian people need annoy other Christian people with it—to be a funeral knell for us. Let it help to bear us on the wings of sound to the grave, that we may the better realize the position in which these meditations will be congruous to the occasion.

The text contains, first, *an assurance*, and secondly, *an invitation*. First, an assurance: "He is not here, for he is risen," secondly, an invitation: "Come, see the place where the Lord lay."

I. The assurance: "He is not here, for he is risen."

Jesus Christ has really RISEN FROM THE DEAD. What though savans and sciolists have tried to prove that this well-attested fact is but a fabulous myth. There is not one doctrine of holy writ which has not been in like manner spirited away. At first they denied out and out that such things ever happened, and said that they were a pure invention. But afterwards, when abundant evidence was brought to prove a resurrection, this gross incredulity gave place to a more refined skepticism.

Yet beyond a doubt it can be shown that there is as much evidence for the resurrection of Christ as for any fact in history. There is, probably, no fact in history which is so fully proven and corroborated as the fact that Jesus of Nazareth, who was nailed to the cross, and died, and was buried, did rise again.

As we believe the histories of Julius Caesar—as we accept the statements of Tacitus—we are bound on the same grounds, even as historical documents, to accept the testimony of Matthew, and Mark, and Luke, and John, and of those persons who were eye-witnesses of His death, and who saw Him after He had risen from the dead.

That Jesus Christ rose from the dead is not an allegory and a symbol, but it is a reality. There He lay dead, friend or foe to witness—a corpse fit to be committed to the grave. Handle Him, and see. It is the very Christ you knew in life. It is the very same. Look into those eyes. Were there ever such eyes in any other human form? Behold Him! You can see the impress of sorrow on His face. Was there ever any

visage so marred as His, any sorrow so real in its effects? That is the Emperor of Misery, the Prince of all Mourners, the King of Sorrow! There He lies, unmistakably the same.

Now, mark the nail prints. There went the iron through those blessed hands, and there His feet were pierced, and there is the gash that found out the pericardium, and divided the heart, and brought forth the marvelous blood and water from His side. It is He, the selfsame Christ! And the holy women lift limb by limb, and wrap Him in linen, and put the spices about Him, such as they had brought in their haste, and they lay Him down in that place—in that new tomb.

Now, let it be known and understood that our faith is that those very limbs that lay stiff and cold in death, became warm with life again—that the very body, with its bones and blood and flesh, which lay there, became again instinct with life, and came forth into a glorious existence. Those hands broke the piece of honeycomb and the fish in the presence of the disciples, and those lips partook thereof. And He held out those wounds and said, “Reach hither thy finger, and put it into the print of the nails.” And He bared His side, the selfsame side, and said, “Reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side; and be not faithless, but believing.”

He was no phantom, no specter. As He Himself said, “A spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have.” He was real man, as much after the resurrection as He had been before. And He is real man in glory now, even as He was when here below. He has gone up: the cloud has received Him out of our sight. The selfsame Christ who said unto Peter, “Lovest thou me?”—the selfsame Jesus who said to all His disciples, “Come and dine”—a real man has really risen from a real death into a real life.

Now, we always want to have that doctrine stated to us plainly, for though we believe it we do not always realize it, and even if we have realized it, it is good to hear it again, so as to let our minds be confirmed about it. The resurrection is as literal a fact as any other fact stated in history, and is so to be believed among us. “He is not here: for he has risen.”

Pursue the narrative, beloved, and you will see that when our Lord Jesus Christ had risen on that occasion, being quickened from the slumbers of death, it was not only true that He had really risen from the sepulcher, but He had risen in order to His being further raised up in His ascension into the glory which He now possesses at the right hand of the Father.

When He had burst the iron bonds of the grave, the disciples had this for their consolation—that He was now beyond the reach of His enemies. During the few days that our Lord lingered upon earth, none of His enemies attempted to do Him harm. Against Him not a dog dare move his tongue. We can scarcely tell why, but so it was. There seemed to be a remarkable acquiescence in the minds of all His foes during the time in which He sojourned amongst His people below. He was beyond the reach of His enemies. They could hurt Him no more. And it is so now.

He is not here, in another sense, and He is now beyond the reach of all His malignant adversaries. Does not this cheer you? It does me. No Judas can betray the Master to be seized by Roman guards. No Pilate can now take Him and suborn justice and give Him over to be crucified, though he knows Him to be innocent. No Herod can now mock Him with his men of war, no soldiery can now spit in His dear face. Now none can buffet Him, or blindfold Him, and say to Him, “Prophecy who it is that smote thee.”

The head, the dear majestic head, of Jesus can never now be crowned with thorns again, and the busy feet that ran on errands of mercy can never be pierced by the nails any more. Men shall no longer strip Him naked, and stand and exult over His agonies. He is gone beyond their reach. Now they may rail and seek to spite Him through His people, who are the members of His body. Now they may rage, but God has set Him at His own right hand, and He is inaccessible to their malice.

It comforts me, just as I think it would comfort the soldier in the day of battle, when he saw the fight going very hard, to feel that the commander whom he loved was out of bullets' range. “There,” he would say, “you may smite us as you will. The bullets may rain red death through our ranks, but our commander-in-chief, upon whom all the conflict hangs, is safe.”

Oh, blessed are those words, and blessed was the pen that wrote them, and blessed was the Spirit who dictated them—“Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is

above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus is Lord to the glory of God the Father.”

It matters not, dear brethren, what becomes of us poor common soldiers. We feel as if our being slandered, our being disgraced, our being persecuted, our being put to death, would not matter the turn of a straw in view of the momentous issues, so long as the head that once was crowned with thorns is crowned with glory now, and He who stood at Pilate’s bar to be condemned, now sits on His Father’s throne, waiting till He shall come to judge the princes and kings of the earth.

With regard to our Lord’s not being here, but having risen, it should console us to think that He is now beyond all pain, as well as beyond all personal attack. I comforted myself in thus reflecting of our friend who is lately deceased. He was struck, as many of you know, suddenly with paralysis, and he has lain some six weeks.

If it had pleased God he might have lain six years or sixteen years, and it would have been a very painful thing to see him with life still in the body but with a mind sorely darkened. We are thankful—I feel personally grateful to God—that our friend has fallen asleep—that he has escaped from the miseries of this present evil life.

But how much more grateful ought we to be concerning our dear Lord, whom our soul loves! Oh, can you bear to think of Him, that He had not where to lay His head? Who among us would not have left his couch to give Him a night’s rest?—ay, and have forsworn the bed forever if we might have given Him soft repose. Would we not ourselves have taken to the hillside, and been there all night, till our head was wet with dew, if we might have gained rest for Him?

He is worth ten thousand of us, and did it not seem as if it were too much for Him to have to suffer—to be homeless and houseless? He was hungered, brethren, He was athirst, He was weary, He was faint. He suffered our sicknesses, we are told that He took them upon Himself. Often had He the heartache. He knew what “cold mountains and the midnight air” were to chill the body, and He knew what the bleak atmosphere and bitter privation were to freeze the soul.

He passed through innumerable griefs and woes. From the first blood-shedding at His birth, down to the last blood-shedding at His death, it seemed as if sorrow had marked Him as her peculiar child. Always was He troubled, tempted, vexed, assailed, assaulted, molested, by Satan, by wicked men, and by the evils that are without!

Now there is no more of that for Him, and we are glad that He is not here for that reason. He is no child of poverty now, no carpenter’s shop for Him now, no smock frock of the peasant, woven from the top throughout now, no mountain-side and heather for His resting place now, no jeering crowds around Him now, no stones taken up to stone Him now, no sitting at the well, weary, and saying, “Give me to drink,” no needing that He should be supplied with food when He is hungry.

No more can there be any scourgings and flagellations. No more will He give “His back to the smiters, and his cheeks to them that plucked off the hair.” No piercing His hands and His feet now, no burning thirst upon the bloody tree, no cry of “Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani!” God’s waves and billows went over Him once, but no more can they assail Him. He was brought into the dust of death, and His soul was exceeding sorrowful once.

He is beyond all that. The sea is passed, and He has come to the Fair Havens, where no storms can beat upon Him. He has reached His joy, He has entered into His rest, and He has received His reward.

Brethren and sisters, let us be glad about this. Let us enter into the joy of our Lord. Let us be glad because He is glad—happy because He is happy. Oh that we might feel our hearts leaping within us, though we for a little while longer are on the field of battle, because He is clean gone from it, and now is acknowledged and adored King of kings and Lord of lords.

The fact that our Lord has risen has not only these consoling elements about it, with reference to Him, but we must remember that it is the guarantee, to every one of us who believe in Him, of our own resurrection. The apostle, in the first epistle to the Corinthians, makes the whole argument for the

resurrection of the body hinge upon this one question—did Christ rise from the dead? If He did, then all His people must rise with Him. He was a representative man, and as the Lord our Savior rose, so all His followers must. Settle the question that Christ rose, and you have settled the question that all who are in Him, and conformed to His image, must rise too.

As for ourselves, it is certain that we believers in Jesus, if we shall die and be put into the grave, will be fed upon by the worms—will go back to mother earth and molder. For my part, I would never wrap the body in lead, or do it up in any way that would keep it from melting back speedily to the earth from which it came. It seems fittest and holiest to let it speedily molder back to its native dust.

But here is the appointed issue. No matter what becomes of that dust, and through what transitions it may pass. It is true the roots of trees may drink up this form. It is true it may turn to grass and flowers to be fed upon by beasts. The winds may waft it thousands of miles away atom from atom, bone may be scattered from its bone, but as surely as the Savior rose, we shall rise, too.

We say not that each actual particle of this flesh shall rise, it is not necessary for the identity of the body that it should be so, but still the body shall be identical, and the selfsame body that is sown in the earth shall rise again from the earth, in a beauty and a glory of which we know but little as yet—be assured of it.

That body of the dear child of God to which you bade farewell some years ago, shall rise again. Those eyes that you closed—those very eyes—shall see the King in His beauty in the land that is very far off. Those ears that could not hear you when you spoke the last tender word—those ears shall hear the eternal melodies. That heart that grew stone cold and still, when death laid his cold hand upon the bosom, shall beat again with newness of life, and leap with joy amidst the festivities of the home-bringing, when Christ the Bridegroom shall be married to His church, the bride.

That selfsame body!—Was it not the temple of the Holy Ghost? Was it not redeemed with blood? Surely it shall rise at the trumpet of the archangel and at the voice of God! Be you sure of this, be you sure of it—sure for your friend and sure for yourself.

And fear not death. What is it? The grave is but a bath wherein our body, like Esther, buries itself in spices to make it sweet and fresh for the embrace of the glorious King in immortality. It is but the wardrobe where we lay aside the garment for a while. It shall come forth cleansed and purified, with many a golden spangle on it which was not there before. It was a work-day dress when we took it off, it will be a Sabbath robe when we put it on, and it will be fit for Sabbath wear. We may even long for evening to undress, if there is to be such a waking and such a putting on of garments in the presence of the King.

Further—not to linger too long on any one thought—let us remember that our Lord's not being here, but having risen, has in it this consolatory thought, that He has gone where He can best protect our interests. He is an advocate for us. Where should the advocate be but in the King's court? He is preparing a place for us. Where should He be who is preparing a place, but there—making it ready? We have a very active adversary who is busy accusing us. Is it not well that we have one who can meet him face to face, and put the accuser of the brethren to silence?

I think, if Christ were here at this very moment in proper person, we would be inclined to say to Him, "Good Master, You can serve us well here. Your going about to heal the sick and teach the ignorant is very blessed, and we love to see You. The vision of Your face makes earth heaven to us, yet still, our great interests demand Your absence, for, good Lord, our prayers want someone to present them at the throne. As one by one our prayers go up to heaven, we would not have You here, and send them away to a place where You are not.

Besides, where the enemy goes to accuse, we want You there to defend, and since our best heritage is up above, we want a keeper who shall preserve it for us. Good Master, it is expedient that You go away." We have not to say that to Him, for He is gone, and if ever the one Christ was of double value, if ever the advantage of His position enhanced the value of His services, it is now that He is in heaven. He would be precious here, but He is more precious there. He is doing more for us in heaven, than it could

have been possible for Him to do for us here below, as far as our finite intelligence can judge, and as truly as His infinite wisdom can pronounce.

Meanwhile His absence is well compensated by the presence of His own Spirit, and His presence there is well consecrated by His personal administration of sacred service for our sake. All is well in heaven, for Jesus is there. The crown is safe, and the harp is secure, and the blessed heritage of each tribe of Israel all secure, for Christ is keeping it. He is, to the glory of God, the representative and preserver of His saints.

And does not this truth, that Christ is not here, but is gone, fall upon our ears with a sweet force as it constrains us to feel that this is the reason why our heart should not be here? “He is not here,” then our heart should not be here. When this text, “He is not here,” was first spoken, it meant that He was not in the grave. He was somewhere on earth then. But now He is not here at all.

Suppose you are very rich, and Satan whispers to you, “These are delightful gardens, this is a noble mansion, take your ease”—reply to him, “But *He* is not here, He is not here, He is risen, therefore I dare not put my heart where my Lord is not.” Or suppose your family make you very happy, and as the little ones cluster around you and sit around the fireside, your heart is very glad, and though you have not much of this world’s goods, yet you have enough, and you have a contented mind. Well, if Satan should say to you, “Be well content, and make your rest here,” say to him, “No, *He* is not here, and I cannot feel that this is to be my abiding place. Only where Jesus is can my spirit rest.”

And have you lately started in life? Has the marriage day scarcely passed over? Are you just now beginning the merry days of youth, the sweet enchantment of this life’s purest joy? Well, delight yourself therein, but still remember that *He* is not here, and therefore you have no right to say, “Soul, take thine ease!” Nowhere on earth is Christ, and therefore nowhere on earth may our heart build her nest. Nowhere—no, not in the high places, or in the quiet resting places. Not in the garden of nuts, or in the beds of spices. Not in the tents of Kedar, or between Solomon’s curtains. Not even at His sacramental table, nor yet among the means of grace, is Christ bodily, actually present.

So we will take the sweetness of all, and the spiritual good there may be in all outward means, but still they shall all point us upward, they shall all draw us away. As the sun exhales the dew, and attracts it upward towards heaven, so shall Christ magnetize and draw our hearts away, and our thoughts up, and our longings up, and our whole spirits up, towards Himself! “He is not here.” Then why should I be here? Oh, get thee up, my soul, get thee up, and let all thy sweetest incense go towards Him who “is not here, for he is risen.”

II. I must leave that point, and come with a few words, to speak upon the second point which is AN INVITATION. “Come, see the place where the Lord lay.”

Not, beloved, that I am going to take you to Joseph of Arimathea’s tomb. About that I shall not speak much. But I think any tomb might suffice to point the same sacred moral. I felt this afternoon, while I stood by the open grave in Norwood Cemetery, as though I heard a voice saying, “Come, see the place where the Lord lay.” It does not matter much to us about the precise spot. He lay in the grave, that is the prominent fact that preaches to us a pithy sermon.

Any grave may well suit our purpose. In the little town of Campodolcino I once realized the tomb of Christ very vividly, in an affair which had been built for Catholic pilgrims. I was upon the hillside, and I saw written upon a wall, these words, “And there was a garden.” It was written in Latin. I pushed open the door of this garden. It was like any other garden, but the moment I entered there was a hand, with the words, “And in the garden there was a new tomb.” Then I saw a tomb which had been newly painted, and when I came up to it I read thereon, “A new tomb wherein never man lay.”

I then stooped down to look inside the tomb, and I read in Latin the inscription, “Stooping down, he looked, yet went he not in.” But there were the words written, “Come, see the place where the Lord lay.” I went in, and I saw there, graven in stone, the napkin and the linen clothes laid by themselves. I was all alone, and I read the words, “He is not here, for he is risen,” graven on the floor of the tomb.

Though I dread anything scenic and histrionic and popish, yet certainly I realized very much the reality of the scene—as I have this afternoon in standing before the open tomb. I felt that Jesus Christ was really buried, really laid in the earth, and has really gone out of it, and it is good for us to come and see the place where Jesus lay.

Why should we see it?

Well, first, that we may see how condescending He was that ever He should lay in the grave. He that made heaven and earth, lay in the grave. He who gave light to angels' eyes, lay in the darkness three days. He slept in the darkness there. He, without whom was not anything made that was made, was given up to death, and lay a victim of death there. Oh, wonder of wonders! Marvel of marvels! He, who had immortality and life within Himself, yields Himself up to the place of death!

“Come, see the place where the Lord lay,” in the next place, to see how we ought to weep over the sin that laid Him there. Did I make the Savior lie in the grave? Was it needful that before my sin could be put away, my sweet Prince, whose beauties enchant all heaven, must be chill and cold in death, and actually be laid in the tomb? Must it be so? O ye murderous sins! Ye murderous sins! Ye cruel and cursed sins! Did you slay my Savior? Did you tear apart that tender heart? Could you never be content until you had led Him to His death, and laid Him there? Oh, come and weep, as you see the place where the Lord lay.

“Come, see the place where the Lord lay,” that you may see where you will have to lie, unless the Lord should come on a sudden. You may take the measure of that tomb, for that is where you will have to repose. It does us good to recollect, if we have great landed estates, that six feet of earth is all that will ever be our permanent freehold. We shall have to come to it—that solitary mound, with two spears' length of level ground:

*“Princes, this clay must be your bed,
In spite of all your towers;
The tall, the wise, the reverent head
Must lie as low as ours.”*

There is no discharge in this war. To the dust return we must. So “Come, see the place where the Lord lay,” to see that you must lie there too.

But then, “Come, see the place where the Lord lay,” to see what good company you will have there. That is where Jesus lay, doth not that comfort thee?

*“Why should the Christian fear the day
That lands him in the tomb;
There the dear flesh of Jesus lay,
And left a long perfume.”*

What more appropriate chamber for a Prince's son to go to sleep in than the prince's own tomb? There slept Emmanuel. There, my body, you may be well content to sleep too! What more royal couch can you desire than the bosom of that same mother earth, whereon the Savior was laid to rest a while? Think, beloved, of the ten thousand saints that have gone that way to heaven. Who shall dread to go where all the flock have gone?

You one poor timid sheep, if you alone had to go through this dark valley, you might well be afraid, but oh, in addition to your Shepherd, who marches at the head of all the flock, listen to the footsteps of the innumerable sheep that follow Him. And some were very dear to you, and fed in the same pasture with you. Do you dread to go where they have gone? No, see the place where Jesus lay, to see what good company is to be had, though it may seem to be in a dark chamber.

“Come, see the place where the Lord lay,” to see that you cannot lie there long. It is not the place where Jesus *is*. He is gone, and you are to be with Him where He is. Come and look at this tomb. There

is no door to it. There *was* one, it was a huge rock, a monstrous stone, and none could move it. It was sealed. See you not how they have set the stamp of the Sanhedrim, the stamp of the law, upon the seal, to make it sure, that none should move it? But now, if you will go to the place where Jesus lay, the seal is broken, the guards are fled, the stone is gone. Such will your tomb be.

It is true they will cover you up, and lay on the sods of green turf. If you are wise you will prefer these things to the heavy slabs of stone they sometimes lay upon the dead. That sweet mound, with here and there a daisy, like the eye of earth looking up to heaven asking mercy, or smiling in joy of expectation—there, there will you sleep. But just as in the morning you do but open your eyes and the curtains are up-drawn, and you come forth, none standing in your way, to do the labor of the day, so, when the trump of the resurrection sounds, you will rise out of your bed in perfect liberty, none hindering you, to see the light of the day that shall go no more down forever.

You have nothing to confine you. Bolt and bar there are none, guard and watchman none, stone and seal none. “Come, see the place where Jesus lay.”

I would not care to go to bed in a prison, where there stood a turnkey with his iron key to fasten me in. But I am not afraid to go to sleep in the chamber out of which I can come at the morning’s call a perfectly free man! And such are you, beloved, if you be a believer. You come to lie in a place that is open and free—a fit slumbering place for the Lord’s free men.

“Come, see the place where the Lord lay,” in order to celebrate the triumph over death. If Miriam sang at the Red Sea we also may sing at Jesus’ tomb. If she said, “Sing unto the LORD, for he hath triumphed gloriously,” shall not we say the same? If all the hosts of Israel went out with her, the women with dances, and the strong men with their voices, in the song, so let all Israel go forth this day, and bless and praise the Lord, saying, “O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?” The place where Jesus lay has told us that—

*“Vain the watch, the stone, the seal!
Christ hath burst the gates of hell.”*

Now let us sing unto Him, and give Him all the praise.

I was thinking to say to you, beloved, let us come and see the place where Jesus lay, to weep there for our sins, let us come and see the place where Jesus lay, to die there to our sins, let us come and see the place where Jesus lay, to be buried there with Him, let us come and see the place where Jesus lay, to rise from that place to newness of life, and find our way through resurrection-life into the ascension-life in which we shall sit in the heavenly place, and look down upon the things of earth with joyous contempt, knowing that He hath lifted us up far above them, and made us to be partakers of brighter bliss than this earth can ever know. But I will forbear.

I have done. I would to God that all here present had some share in this. You all have a share in dying. There is a tree growing out of which your coffin will be made, or perhaps it is already cut down and seasoning against the time when it shall make you a timber-suit—the last suit that you shall ever need. There is a spot of earth that must be shoveled out for you to be laid into to fill up the vacuum.

And your soul shall live, your soul shall never die. Let not those who tell you of annihilation be believed for a moment. It must exist. Put it to yourself whether it shall be with the worm that never dieth and the fire that never shall be quenched, or with Christ who liveth in His glory, and who shall come a second time to give glory to His people and raise their bodies like His own.

Oh, it will all hinge on this—“Do you believe in Jesus?” If you do, you may welcome life and welcome death, and welcome resurrection, and welcome immortality. But if you believe not, then a blast has come upon you, and to you it is terrible to die. It is terrible even to live, more terrible to die, it will be terrible to rise again, it will be terrible to be damned, and that forever! God save you from it, for Christ’s sake! Amen.

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