

CONSOLATION FROM RESURRECTION

NO. 2046

A SERMON
DELIVERED ON LORD'S DAY MORNING, SEPTEMBER 30, 1888,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be your plagues; O grave, I will be your destruction: repentance shall be hid from My eyes.”
Hosea 13:14.

THIS verse stands in the midst of a long line of threats. Like a rock of mercy, it rises in the midst of a sea of wrath. Hence many critics have felt bound to see in it a continuation of threatening. I am quite content to accept the united authority of the Authorized and the Revised Versions, and to believe that the mind of the Holy Spirit is fairly expressed in the grand old Bible of our fathers. I regard our text as a promise overflowing with delight.

While it does stand as a rock apart, this gracious word is far from being the only one in the book of the prophet Hosea. In the torrent bed of this prophet's denunciations we find dust of the gold of promise. Hosea, in his style, is jerky and abrupt; he says exactly what you do not think he is going to say. The Holy Spirit, speaking through him, interjects promises in the midst of threats, in wrath remembering mercy. If any should think that this passage is exceptional, let them read the rest of Hosea's prophecy. Let them pause for a minute over the eleventh chapter, resting at the eighth verse, “How shall I give you up, Ephraim? How shall I deliver you, Israel? How shall I make you as Admah? How shall I set you as Zeboim? My heart is turned within Me, My repentings are kindled together. I will not execute the fierceness of my anger, I will not return to destroy Ephraim, for I am God and not man.” Where was ever greater tenderness than this? When you get to the twelfth chapter, at the ninth verse, a still small voice is heard in the midst of the thunder, “I that am the Lord your God from the land of Egypt will yet make you to dwell in tabernacles, as in the days of the solemn feast.” The fourteenth chapter is all of love and mercy, “O Israel, return unto the Lord your God; for you have fallen by your iniquity. Take with you words, and turn to the Lord: say unto Him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously: so will we render the calves of our lips.” Hear the gracious word, verse four—“I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely: for My anger is turned away from him.” So our text, in its Christian interpretation, is not contrary to the general method of this prophecy. To find it here is very surprising, but it is after the manner of the Holy Spirit, when speaking by the prophet Hosea.

Israel was coming to its very worst. The people were to be carried to Babylon, and from there to be scattered to the ends of the earth. Yet the Lord, in His great love, lets them know that this was not to be a final and entire destruction. He would not utterly cast away the people whom He did foreknow, nor allow death to hold them in bondage forever. He would open their graves, and bring them out, and make them to know Jehovah. Therefore, He drops in this word of promise when it was least expected.

I. I shall ask you this morning, first, to CONSIDER THE FACT WHICH IS HERE USED AS A FIGURE. The resurrection of the dead is here employed as a figure of that which the Lord was about to do for His people. At one time salvation from sin is called a creation, and creation is a fact; here it is resurrection from the dead, and that also is sure to be accomplished in due time; we have the first fruits of it already.

Brethren, *there will be a special resurrection for those who are in Christ Jesus.* “There shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust.” But for the members of the body of Christ there is a resurrection from among the dead. These are the many that sleep in the dust of the earth who shall awake to everlasting life (Daniel 12:2). They rise because they are one with Christ in His resurrection. His resurrection is the proof and the guarantee that they also shall rise in the day of His appearing. “If Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness” (Rom

8:10). Their bodies, which were redeemed as truly as their souls, though left during this life under mortgage to nature, so that they suffer pain, and weakness, and ultimate death and decay—but their bodies, I say, being a part of the purchase of the precious blood, shall be raised again from the dead. That which is sown in weakness shall be raised in power; that which is covered with dishonor by the very fact of death and decay shall be raised in splendor, made like unto the glorious body of Christ. This is no poetic fiction, but a literal matter of fact, even as was the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. We hear our Redeemer say, “Your brother shall rise again,” and we accept it literally. Our dear ones whom we have laid in the grave shall come again from the land of the enemy. Concerning ourselves, also, we believe, as we just sang—

*“Sweet truth to me,
I shall arise,
And with these eyes
My Savior see.”*

We accept the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead as the revelation of Christianity. The immortality of the soul was seen before the appearing of our Lord in a dim and cloudy manner, but the resurrection of the dead was not discoverable by the light of nature, and when it was at first preached, men called the preacher a “babbling”; they could not understand that such a thing could be. The philosophy of human nature rejected the resurrection, and rejects it still. Only by the revelation of Christ do we know that the dead shall rise again.

This resurrection is connected with redemption, “I will ransom them from the power of the grave.” A ransom is the paying of a price for something. There was a price paid for us, to deliver us from the death which is the desert of sin. You know who paid it, and how He paid it. Remember how He opened wide His hands, and poured forth more than gold; remember how His side was dug by the spear, that the deep mines of His life-wealth might be emptied out for us. Jesus our Lord has paid the ransom price. Now are we “waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body” (Rom 8:23). Another word is used in the parallel sentence of our text—“I will redeem them from death.” It refers to the redemption of an inheritance by the next-of-kin. “I know that my Redeemer lives” is the ground of Job’s confidence as to his resurrection and justification. My *goel*, next-of-kin, to whom the right of redemption belonged in equity, has stepped in and has fully redeemed both my soul and my body. What a blessed truth is this that the ransom of the body is paid, so that this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality! Though the body remains for a while subject to vanity, yet the term of this subjection will soon run out, the ransom being already paid. Regeneration has liberated the soul, and resurrection will do the like for the body before long. The margin has it, “I will ransom them from the hand of the grave: I will redeem them from death.” O beloved, we come into the grave’s hand, as it were, and firm is the grip of the sepulcher, but our God says, “I will redeem them from the hand of the grave.” The grave holds the bones of the saints as with the grasp of an iron hand, but the redemption of our Lord Jesus will open the giant fist, and set the prisoners free. Glory be to God for the sure hope of resurrection! No mass of stone, or superincumbent clay, shall keep down these bodies of ours when our Savior’s angels shall “their golden trumpets sound.” Beloved, there remains nothing due upon the estate of our bodies for which they can be detained in the dust when the Lord Jesus comes to awaken them from their long sleep. They shall freely rise to be reunited with the disembodied but happy spirits to which they belong. We look for a resurrection from among the dead. “But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that has part in the first resurrection: on such the second death has no power” (Rev 20:5, 6).

This, according to our text, is *worked entirely by divine power*. It must be so, for how could the dead contribute to their own lives? How can bodies which have been dissolved in the sepulcher reconstruct themselves? Here you have in the text the divine personality asserting itself four times—“I will ransom them,” “I will redeem them,” “O death, I will be your plagues,” “O grave, I will be your destruction.” Here we have “I will” four times. Who but He that made can re-make? But all things are possible to the Creator. We have heard many objections raised to the doctrine of the resurrection. Let them object as long as they please. Grant us a God, and nothing is impossible or even difficult. With a God who can work miracles nothing becomes incredible. Whatsoever the eternal God decrees concerning the resurrec-

tion of His elect He will readily accomplish, for He is abundantly sufficient for it. What a triumph will the resurrection be for the Lord God! He has been pleased to give the special honor of it to His own dear Son. By the risen Christ we shall be raised again from the dead. We shall sing hallelujahs to Him that was slain. He by death has destroyed death, and by His resurrection has torn away the gates of the grave. This is our Lord's doings and we adore Him because of it.

Observe, next, that *by the resurrection death itself is transformed, and totally overcome*. He says, "O death, I will be your plagues," as if death were personified, and then itself plagued—its own arrows of pestilence being shot into itself. Beloved, death no longer kills, but rather admits to a larger life; it no more destroys, but rather it perfects—I mean not of itself, but through our Lord Jesus Christ. It is no longer death to die; it is no longer punishment to the believer, but a dismissal from banishment. You that are in your sins will die in your sins, and to you death is death indeed, but to the child of God, death is so altered that he who has the power of death, that is, the devil, is sore vexed. He is plagued by seeing the joy with which the believer dies. It is a grand thing to see a man dying full of life; the river of his mortal life comes to an end, but only by widening into the ocean of the glory-life above. Satan gloated over the mischief which he had worked by death, but lo, it is through death that Jesus has destroyed him, and delivered His people. God makes His dying people to be like the sun, which never seems as large as when it sets. All the glories of midday are eclipsed by the marvels of sunset. Watch the west! See how the clouds are mountains of gold, and soon the skies are seas of fire. All the tapestries of heaven are hung out to welcome the returning hero of the day to its rest beyond the western sea. So does the dying saint light up his dying chamber with heavenly splendor as he sets upon this world to shine in another. Thus the Lord plagues death, leaving the monster powerless to harm or even terrify the believer.

As for the sepulcher, it is destroyed. "O grave, I will be your destruction." No grave shall detain one of the redeemed. The tomb is—

*"No more a morgue, to fence
The relics of lost innocence;
A place of ruin and decay
The imprisoning stone is rolled away."*

The grave is our bedchamber, which our Lord Himself has furnished for us by leaving in it His own grave clothes. It is a retiring-room whose odor is most sweet to love, for—

*"There the dear flesh of Jesus lay,
And left a blessed perfume."*

Death, you are not death! Grave, you are no grave! The names remain, but the nature of the things has altered altogether.

To close this first subject—*this resurrection will abolish death and every possibility of it in the future*. I notice that certain persons, in their anxiety to suck the meaning out of the word "everlasting," so as to avoid everlasting punishment, have questioned the everlasting nature of heaven. They have even gone the length of hinting that they are not quite clear that if believers get to heaven they will always remain there. Yes, and this is what it comes to. Nothing is safe from these revolutionists. They would tear away every covenant blessing from the children of God in their zeal to make the punishment of sin a trifle. To do honor to their own intellect, they would sacrifice the eternal blessedness of the blood-washed! But it is not so. Jesus has said—"Because I live you shall live also." As long as Christ lives we must live; as long as Christ is in heaven we must be with Him where He is, to behold His glory. So long as God is God, His children, partakers of the divine nature, must live forever and be forever blessed. Raised from the dead, and taken up to Christ's right hand, we shall henceforth fear no second death. When sun and moon grow dim with age, and earth's blue skies are rolled up like a worn-out vesture, we shall enjoy an age like the years of God's right hand, like His own eternity. The great I AM shall be the bliss of every soul whom Christ has redeemed from the grave, and this shall know no end.

To this the Lord sets His seal. Do you want to see the red wax and the divine impression on it? Look at the close of the text, "Repentance shall be hid from My eyes." There does Jehovah declare His unalterable will; it must and shall be even so. That His saints shall rise from the dead is the immutable decree of God. In all this let us rejoice. Our future is bright with glory. These things are revealed to faith, but they are not to be seen of the eye, nor even conceived in the heart, nor pictured by the imagination—

*“I know not, oh,
I know not, what joys await us there!
What radiance of glory!
What bliss beyond compare!”*

This much, however, we do know, that there is to be a rising for us, even as our Lord has risen, and we shall be satisfied when we awake in His likeness. Constantly in Scripture is this resurrection used as the figure of God’s delivering and blessing His people, and especially as the figure of regeneration or the giving of a new and spiritual life to those who were by nature dead in trespasses and sins. I intend to use it so in our next line of thought.

II. In the second place, IN THESE WORDS LIE AN ENCOURAGEMENT TO LOOK FOR DELIVERANCE OUT OF GREAT TROUBLES. The encouragement comes in this way; God, who will surely raise His people from the dead by His own power, can and will as surely raise them from every kind of trouble and apparent destruction. If there can be any comparison of ease with omnipotence, it must be easier to raise Job from his dunghill, than to raise Job from his grave. If God, therefore, shall restore us from the sepulcher, He can certainly restore us from sickness, from poverty, from slander, from depression of spirit, from despair. That is clear; who shall doubt it?

God will delight to work the work of our deliverance. If He takes pleasure in raising a dead body, He will assuredly take pleasure in raising from their distresses those in whom He delights. The Lord rejoices in our joy. He does not afflict willingly, but He blesses us joyfully. Therefore, we may rest assured that He will turn again and have compassion, and raise us up from our downcastings.

The ends and designs for which the Lord afflicts them are very gracious, and we may expect that He will end the affliction when those designs are accomplished. When the Lord puts us into the furnace it is to refine us, and as soon as the dross is consumed He will bring forth the pure gold. He puts us under chastisement for our profit, and when that profit is seen, He will break the rod. We may assuredly expect that He who brings up dead bodies from the grave will bring His distressed people up from their troubles, when those troubles have worked their lasting good.

And now, to come to the text, we must traverse the same ground again; *this deliverance comes through redemption*. Beloved, He that redeemed Israel from all iniquity will also redeem Israel from all his troubles. That redemption price of the Lord covers every necessity of His people, and supplies every mercy that they will need between here and heaven. Do not, therefore, doubt or despair, because your troubles seem as if they would slay you, for the Angel who has redeemed your body from death will redeem you from all evil. He that will bring your body from the grave will love you up from the pit of trouble, even when you are ready to perish. Redemption covers all, and secures from every danger. He that died for you, lives for you, and cares for you. You shall be supplied, not only with grace and glory, but with food and raiment. “Your bread shall be given you; your waters shall be sure.” Oh, rest in the Lord; especially confide in the redemption of Jesus. Let the precious blood speak peace to you, for if He has bought your soul, He has bought all that goes with it and all that is needed for this life as well as the next. As well our temporal as our eternal concerns, come under the protection of the blood. The Paschal lamb, whose sprinkled blood shielded the house wherein the Israelite was sheltered, also became to him food for his journey. He who provides heaven will provide all necessaries on the road there.

This deliverance will also be God’s work. I have shown you that it was so in resurrection, concerning which the great “I will” is so prominent in the text. Now, if you are in great trouble, do not run to friends and acquaintances, nor reckon up your own strength, but make direct resort to God, who quickens the dead. He that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus is He that can and will deliver you. He will raise up your mortal body without the help of man or of angel, and He can, apart from created strength, upraise you from your present woe. He is the God of salvation, and unto Him belong the issues from death. His name is Shaddai—God all-sufficient; trust Him fully. When He made the heavens, who was there to help Him? What aid does He need in rescuing His servants? Oh, learn to wait only upon the Lord! Do not think that I am talking mere words. No; trust in God must be real and practical, and it must be simple and unmixed. “My soul, wait you only upon God; for my expectation is from Him.” Oh, how sweet it is to rest on God’s bare arm! Long have I known what it is to trust in God, and at the same time to repose on the help of many friends, but now I know what it is to rest in Him unmoved when forsaken

of many. I cling to that dear arm, and find it all the help I need. And now I will henceforth abide in my confidence in that lone arm, and should deserters all return, and ten thousand friends rally to my side, I will not spare them a particle of my reliance, but still cry, “My soul, wait only upon God.” Behold the great hero of the conflict with the powers of darkness treads the winepress alone, and of the people there is none with Him; let us associate none with Him in our faith. If you rest on God alone, as the rock of your salvation, you need never fear. Often does the Lord afflict us to this end, even as Paul says, “But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raises the dead.”

When the Lord delivers His people, *His work is singularly complete, for He triumphantly turns evil into good.* We shall yet exult over that which now casts us down. That which threatened to kill us shall increase our life, and we shall hear our Lord say to it, “O death, I will be your plagues; O grave, I will be your destruction.” He will turn mourning into dancing, loss into gain, sorrows into joys. He will enrich you by your impoverishment; He will make you strong out of weakness; He will give you health by means of sickness, and fullness by emptying you. Does the adversary threaten to destroy you? You shall be more than a conqueror. Are you led away in bonds? You shall lead your captivity captive. Those who seek your ruin will unconsciously be doing the best thing that could be done for you. Their malice shall bruise your spices, and cause their aroma to flow out. He that by shameful death wins greater glory, shall by your afflictions increase your greatness, and comfort you on every side. The Lord will not only prevent the powers of evil from doing you harm, but He will cause you to damage their empire by your patience. You shall be the plague of Satan and the destroyer of his strongholds. That which seemed to be the death and burial of your hope shall be the overthrow of your fears.

The Lord will do this so completely that *He will make you sing concerning it.* In the book of Hosea the Lord declared a fact in plain language, but when the work was done the Lord by His servant Paul made it into a song for His chosen in that famous chapter of the Corinthians—“O death, where is your sting? O grave, where is your victory?” Let us catch the spirit of this lyric, and translate it thus! “O poverty, where is your penury? O sickness, where is your misery? O weakness, where is your loss? O slander, where is your sting?” We shall before long look back upon all our afflictions with gladness, and bless the Lord for them as for our chief blessings. We may yet feel like that great saint who, when he recovered from sickness, cried, “Take me back to my sick bed again, for there have I enjoyed such fellowship with Christ as I never knew before.” We may yet have to say, as certain saints of the Church of Scotland said, “Oh, that we were meeting among the moors and the hills once more, for never had the bride of Christ such fellowship with the Bridegroom as when she met Him in secret places.” The Lord knows how to lift us high by that which cast us low, and to make psalms for our stringed instruments out of the dirges which drowned our music. The God of the resurrection has delivered, does deliver, and will deliver His people.

III. Time fails me, and therefore I must hurry on, else I had loved to linger and expand. SEE HERE A DECLARATION THAT GOD WILL SAVE HIS CHOSEN FROM THEIR DEATH IN SIN. He that will raise our bodies from the grave will, according to His everlasting covenant, raise His chosen from their death in sin.

This must be so. If the Lord did not raise His people’s souls from their death in sin, a resurrection of their bodies would be a curse rather than a blessing. Resurrection will be no blessing to those who die unregenerate. My hearers, you will all rise from the grave, but I fear that some of you will rise to shame and everlasting contempt. That is an awful passage which I quoted just now from the Book of Daniel; think much of it. Therefore since God will not have His people rise to shame and everlasting contempt He will make their souls to rise first into newness of holy life. This regeneration must come to all of you, if you are to be partakers of the glory of Christ hereafter. You must be quickened, though you were dead in trespasses and sins. That fact suggests a question to each heart—have you received the divine life?

If you are indeed made alive unto God, you will agree with me that *this resurrection comes to us entirely through redemption.* There is no quickening a dead soul, except by the process here described, “I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death.” Did the law of God, when you heard it, ever quicken you? No, it slew you. “When the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.” It made your death more apparent to you, but it brought you no life. Did the eloquence of men,

or human persuasion, ever raise you from spiritual death? You listened to it, and you listened, but you listened in vain. You were moved with human affections, but these human affections passed away, like the morning dew. Beloved, life only came to you when you received Christ Jesus, your Redeemer. Well do I remember when I first looked unto Him, and lived! The life and the look came together. There is no receiving eternal life apart from believing in Him who is the Life. There is no life except by looking unto Jesus. Your uplifted eye must be fixed on the uplifted Savior, crucified as the redemption of His people; life only comes to us through His redeeming death. God Himself only makes us live by Christ Jesus. He is the Life. You cannot yourself create life; nor can you renew it, except by coming to your Lord's dear wounds again. Oh, that we could dwell on Calvary! Oh, that we never turned our eyes away from the cross! Let me be crucified with Christ, so as never to part from perpetual, conscious union with Him. In Him we died unto sin, in Him we were redeemed from death and the curse, and in Him we live forever. Our resurrection from spiritual death is always connected with the precious blood once shed for many, for the remission of sins.

You will follow me in this also; *quicken*ing is always the Lord's work. Here He may repeat the "I will" of the text all the four times. We spoke of resurrection as solely the work of God, so must the implantation of spiritual life be the work of the Spirit of God, and of Him alone. Never let us dream that we can make ourselves alive unto God, or that we can quicken our unconverted friends. You could not make the simplest insect, how could you make a new heart and a right spirit? This is the finger of God; no, this needs the arm of God, as it is written, "to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" The full power of God is needed to beget faith's life within the soul of man.

Further, keep up the parallel between regeneration and resurrection as seen in the text, and notice that *whenever the Lord raises His dear ones from the dead, and makes them live, it is a great plague to death*. He that has the power of death must often be grievously annoyed when he sees a dead sinner begin to live unto God. "I did reckon on him," says he. "I wrapped him up in the cerements of drunkenness, I shut him up in the dark sepulcher of ignorance, and yet he is alive!" "I did reckon on the debauched man," says he, "I saw him rotting in lasciviousness; he was so far gone in lust that he was given over by his friends, but my great enemy Jesus Christ has come here, and made even the corrupt to live!" Again and again the adversary has to feel that Christ is his plague, and that He will be his destruction. When Jesus raises men from the dead, He shows who is Master, and makes the adversary know that his dominion is soon to fall. As in his lifetime on earth the Lord overcame both the devil and death by a word, even so it is now, and His name is thereby greatly glorified.

Those who are made alive, how greatly do they plague the enemy of souls when they begin to talk aloud of free grace and dying love? When black sinners show themselves washed in the blood of the lamb, when lips that used to curse begin to sing hallelujahs, and tongues that talked infidelity begin to proclaim the testimony of the true faith, how the prince of darkness is afflicted! How the sepulchers of sin are destroyed! Right well does the poet say—

*"Satan rages at his loss,
And hates the doctrine of the cross."*

This work once done is an abiding work. I point again to the seal at the bottom of the text. "Repentance shall be hid from My eyes." God resolves that they shall live, for He has redeemed them, and His redemption price is too precious to be wasted. He has ransomed them from the grave, and they shall never return to their grim prison again, they shall live to plague Satan, but they shall not live to be overcome by him. What the Lord has done He will not suffer sin, death and hell to undo. Nothing shall lead Him to repent of His design, or turn from the purpose of His heart. Jesus lifts His hand and says, "I give unto My sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand." Man's work is superficial, and therefore soon disappears. All that nature spins, nature unravels; all that is woven in the loom of human excitement will be rent to pieces by the hand of time and trial, but surely I know that what God does He does forever, and it stands fast without a change. Oh, that He would this morning come and quicken dead souls! Pray, dear people, that it may be so! The Lord will do as He wills. Does He not say, "I will have compassion upon whom I will have compassion"? Oh, that He would have compassion on this great congregation at this moment, and give them life! We heard the cry of human weakness just now when our sister was taken in a fit; I doubt not that our Lord heard it too,

and pitied the bodily infirmity; how much more will He hear the voice of our spiritual need, and have pity upon our death in sin!

IV. What little time you can yet afford me, I will use in stating THAT HERE WE HAVE AN ASSURANCE THAT THE LORD CAN DELIVER FROM ANY OTHER FORM OF DEATH. I ask you now to think of a few matters very briefly.

The Jews; as an organized nationality are dead. They are a people scattered and divided under the whole heaven. Truly might they say as in the prophet Ezekiel, “Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts.” We have no instance in history of a nation dying and coming to life again. Assyria, Babylon, these had their day, and they failed and passed away. Where are they now? Can these empires live again? Persia, Greece, Rome, these vast dominions died morally, and then they ceased to be a living power. Can they ever be restored? Impossible. But because her God lives, Israel can never die. Israel will be a nation yet again, and a glorious one. Restored to her own land, and rejoicing in her own Messiah, who is “the glory of His people Israel,” it shall be seen that the Lord has not cast off His people. It seems impossible. Our missions are, to a large extent, a failure; they become the ridicule of the ungodly because so little success attends them. Yet shall all Israel be saved. Shall not their restoration be as life from the dead? It shall, and because it will be like life from the dead, He that will raise dead bodies will raise poor Israel yet. The seed of faithful Abraham, who believed God that He could raise up Isaac from the dead, shall, be raised out of their low estate. A nation of priests shall they be unto Him who of old made them the keepers of His oracles. O lovers of the seed of Abraham, be comforted concerning them.

In the next place, suppose the *church at large* should decline to a spiritual death—and I am sure it does so just now—what then? The faults which are now so apparent may only be the beginning of worse evils. Brethren are prophesying that the Jesuits will ruin us, and others that Rationalism will eat out the heart of the church. I think both these sets of prophets have a good deal to say for themselves; the signs of the times are much with them. But suppose error should become rampant in all our churches, as it may; suppose those who bear testimony should grow fewer, and their voices should be less and less regarded, as they may be; suppose at last the true church of Christ should scarcely be discoverable, and that men should bury it, and dance a courtly dance upon its grave, and say, “We have done with these believers in atonement. We have done with these troublesome evangelical doctrines.” What then? The truth will rise again. The eternal gospel will burst her sepulcher. “Vain the watch, the stone, the seal.” Let us take comfort in the fact that God, who will raise the dead, will also raise up buried truth, and incarnate it again in a living church, even though the world should exult that both doctrine and church are down among the dead.

Some of you perhaps from the country may happen to belong to *churches* which have come near to death’s door. That which is true of the church at large is true of any individual church. Have faith in God. He can trim the expiring lamp. Even to Laodicea, which He spewed out of His mouth, the Lord came, knocking at the door. They talk about shutting the doors of the chapel. Has it come to that? Prayer meetings, are they given up? Gospel preaching, have you almost forgotten the joyful sound? The Sunday school, has that become a farce? Does everything seem dead? Cry to the living God. Do not say to yourself, “Can these dry bones live?” They can, if the living God intervenes. God, who made Ezekiel see the dry bones stand up as a great army, can make you see it. Be of good confidence. Have hope for Zion, for the Lord will restore her in answer to your cries. Take pleasure in her stones, and favor her dust thereof, for the time to favor her, yes, the set time has come. “When the Lord shall build up Zion He will appear in His glory.”

Suppose I am now speaking to *some child of God*, who says, “I can believe all this, but, alas! I feel dead myself.” We do sometimes faint, and are full of fears, and cry, “Will the Lord cast us off forever? And will He be favorable no more?” We trust we do really love the Lord, but we get very dull at times, and cry out—

*“Dear Lord, and shall we always live
At this poor, dying rate:
Our love so faint, so cold to You,
And Yours to us so great?”*

We feel as if we could not pray; there is no singing in us, and we feel as if we could not feel. At times we are so dull and stupid that we cannot think ourselves to be enlightened of the Lord at all. For my own part, “I am more brutish than any man” at times, in my own esteem. Be our case as it may; let not faith waver because feelings change. When you are down in the dumps, remember that as the Lord will raise your dead body, He can certainly revive your fainting heart. Trust in Him to restore your soul. This very morning, I hope, is ordained to be a resurrection morning to you. Before you leave this house of prayer I hope the silver trumpet of the gospel will be heard like the trumpet of the resurrection, and you will say to yourself, “I will leave my grave, for I live unto God.” By God’s grace, leave the vaults and come into the upper air of trust and thanksgiving. A man, finding himself imbedded in the snow, discovered, to his horror, that he could not move his feet, for they were frozen; nor his hands, for they were stiff with cold. He would have given himself up, therefore, as certainly doomed to die, but he found that he could speak, and here was hope. His tongue was not frozen, so he began to call aloud, and he did not call long before helpers came and dug him out, and thawed him back to life. If you cannot do anything else, my dear friend, do cry aloud. Cry, “O God, help me! Quicken You me, O Lord.”

Do any of you say, “Well, I never get into so sad a state. I am always lively”? I am very glad to hear it, if it is true. But I have heard that the statues in St. Paul’s Cathedral are never afflicted with rheumatism, and the reason is, because they have no life. I am just a little afraid that you also may have no changes and no fears, because you have no spiritual life. God knows whether it is so or not. Look to it. I would sooner have the rheumatism, and be alive, than be without pain, and be a statue. The most painful life is preferable to the stillest death. But O you dying saints of God; you poor, fainting, perishing believers, take hope this morning, for the Holy Spirit will revive you, even as Jesus says, “He that lives and believes in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.”

Lastly, let us have that same hope about *our unconverted friends*. We want to see them born again during this week of special services. Let us begin by knowing what they are, and what their condition is. Do not say, “I hope my boy will be saved, because I do not see much evil in him.” Your boy is as spiritually dead by nature as anybody else’s boy. “That which is born of the flesh is flesh,” and however good your flesh may be, it is only flesh, and only flesh has come of it. I beg you to regard every soul that is not begotten unto God as being dead in sin, else you will not go to the bottom of things, and you will not go the right way to work. Next, go to the Lord and Giver of life, and say, “Lord, I cannot make this dear child live; I cannot bring my unconverted husband to You. I will do all I can by teaching, persuasion and example, but O my Lord, I look to You to give the spark of divine life.” Go to God with your anxiety for dead souls, and cry, “Lord, quicken them!” In dependence upon the Spirit of God, preach the gospel which is the vehicle of divine life, and you shall see them live. Have faith about those who are laid on your heart. God grant your faith a full and speedy reward, for Jesus’ sake! Amen.

PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—PSALM 138; EZEKIEL 37:1-14.

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—911, 843, 841.

Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software.

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