

RESURRECTION WITH CHRIST

NO. 805

A SERMON
DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, APRIL 12, 1868,
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*“But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, has quickened us together with Christ, (by grace you are saved).”
Ephesians 2:4-5.*

THERE have been conferences of late of all sorts of people upon all kinds of subjects, but what a remarkable thing a conference would be if it were possible of persons who have been raised from the dead! If you could somehow or other get together the daughter of the Shunammite, the daughter of Jairus, the son of the widow at the gates of Nain, Lazarus, and Eutychus, what strange communing they might have with one another! what singular inquiries they might make, and what remarkable disclosures might they present to us. The thing is not possible, and yet a better and more remarkable assembly may be readily gathered on the same conditions, and more important information may be obtained from the confessions of its members.

This morning we have a conference of that very character gathered in this house, for many of us were dead in trespasses and sins, even as others, but we hope that through the divine energy we have been quickened from that spiritual death and are now living to praise God. It will be well for us to talk together, to review the past, to rejoice in the present, to look forward to the future. “You has he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins,” and as you sit together, an assembly of men and women possessed of resurrection life, you are a more notable conclave than if merely your bodies and not your spirits had been quickened.

The first part of this morning's discourse will be occupied with *a solemnity in which we shall take you into the charnel house*, secondly, we shall spend awhile in *reviewing a miracle*, and *we shall observe dead men living*, we shall then turn aside to observe *a sympathy* indicated in the text, and we shall close with a song, for the text reads somewhat like music—it is full of thankfulness, and thankfulness is the essence of true song, it is full of holy and adoring wonder, it is evermore true poetry even though expressed in prose.

I. Celebrate first a great SOLEMNITY and descend into the charnel house of our poor humanity.

According to the teaching of sacred Scripture, men are dead, spiritually dead. Certain vain men would make it out that men are only a little disordered and bruised by the fall, wounded in a few delicate members, but not mortally injured. However, the Word of God is very express upon the matter, and declares our race to be not wounded, not hurt merely, but slain outright, and left as dead in trespasses and sin. There are those who fancy that fallen human nature is only in a sort of syncope or fainting fit, and only needs a process of reviving to set it right. You have only, by education and by other manipulations, to set its life-floods in motion, and to excite within it some degree of action, and then life will speedily be developed. There is much good in every man, they say, and you have only to bring it out by training and example.

This fiction is exactly opposite to the teaching of sacred Scripture. Within these truthful pages we read of no fainting fit, no temporary paralysis, but death is the name for nature's condition, and quickening is its great necessity. Man is not partly dead, like the half-drowned mariner, in whom some spark of life may yet remain, if it is but fondly tendered, and wisely nurtured. There is not a spark of spiritual life left in man—manhood is to all spiritual things an absolute corpse. “In the day you eat thereof you shall surely die,” said God to our first parents, and die they did—a spiritual death, and all

their children alike by nature lie in this spiritual death. It is not a sham death, or a metaphorical one, but a real, absolute, spiritual death.

Yet it will be said, "Are they not alive?" Truly so, but not spiritually. There are grades of life. You come first upon the vegetable life, but the vegetable is a dead thing as to the vitality of the animal. Above the animal life rises the mental life, a vastly superior life, the creature, which is only an animal, is dead to either the joys or the sorrows of mental life. Then, high above the mental, as much as the mental is above the animal, rises what Scripture calls the spiritual life—the life in Christ Jesus. All men have more or less of the mental life, and it is well that they should cultivate it—get as much as they can of it, that they should put it to the best uses, and make it subserve the highest ends.

Man, even looked upon as merely living mentally, is not to be despised or trifled with, but still the mental life cannot of itself rise to the spiritual life, it cannot penetrate beyond that mystical wall which separates forever the mere life of mind from the life of that new principle, the Spirit, which is the offspring of God, and is the living and incorruptible which He casts into the soul. If you could conceive a man in all respects like yourselves with this one difference, that his soul had died out of him, that he only possessed his animal faculties, and had no intellectual faculties, so that he could breathe and walk, sleep, and eat, and drink, and make a noise, but all mental power was gone, you would then speak of him as being entirely dead to mental pursuits. He might be a most vigorous and well-developed animal, but his manhood would be dead. It would be of no use explaining a proposition to him, or working out a problem on the black board for his instruction, or offering him even the simplest school book, for if he had no mind to receive, how could you impart?

Now, spiritually, this is the condition of every unregenerate man. It is of no use whatever, apart from the Spirit of God, to hope to make the man understand spiritual things, for they are spiritually discerned, says the apostle. The carnal mind cannot understand the things which are of God—when best trained it has no glimmering of the inward sense of spiritual things, it stumbles over the letter and loses the real meaning, not from want of mental capacity, but from the absence of spiritual life. O sons of men, if you would know God, "You must be born again." "Except a man be born again, he *cannot* see the kingdom of God," he cannot understand it, he cannot know it. The carnal man cannot understand the things which are of God, which are eternal and invisible, any more than an ox can understand astronomy, or a fish can admire the classics. Not in a moral sense, nor a mental sense, but in a spiritual sense, poor humanity is dead, and so the Word of God again and again most positively describes it.

Step with me, then, into the sepulcher house, and what do you observe of yonder bodies which are slumbering there? They are quite unconscious. Whatever goes on around them, neither occasions them joy nor causes them grief. The dead in their graves may be marched over by triumphant armies, but they shout not with them who triumph. Or, friends they have left behind may sit there, and water the grass upon the green mound with their tears, but no sigh responsive sigh comes from the gloomy cavern of the tomb. It is thus with men spiritually dead, they are unaffected by spiritual things. A dying Savior, whose groans might move the very adamant, and make the rocks dissolve, they can hear of all unmoved. Even the all-present Spirit is undiscerned by them, and His power unrecognized. Angels, holy men, godly exercises, devout aspirations, all these are beyond and above their world.

The pangs of hell do not alarm them, and the joys of heaven do not entice them, they hear after a sort, mentally, but the spirit-ear is fast shut up, and they do not hear. They are unconscious of all things which are of a spiritual character, eyes they have, but they see not, and ears, but they hear not. You can interest them in the facts of geology, or the discoveries of art, but you cannot win their hearts to spiritual emotions and pursuits, because they are as unaware of their meaning as an oyster or whelk is unacquainted with the disestablishment of the Irish church. Carnal men blunder over the first words of spiritual knowledge as Nicodemus did who, when he was told that he must be born again, began to inquire, "How can a man be born again when he is old?" or, like the woman of Samaria, who, when she was told of living water, could not understand the spiritual truth, and exclaimed in wonder, "You have

nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then have you that living water?" Men are spiritually unconscious of spiritual truth, and so far dead to it.

Observe that corpse, you may strike it, you may bruise it, but it will not cry out, you may pile burdens upon it, but it is not weary, you may shut it up in darkness, but it feels not the gloom. So the unconverted man is laden with the load of his sin, but he is not weary of it, he is shut up in the prison of God's justice, but he pants not for liberty, he is under the curse of God, as it is written, "Cursed is every one that continues not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them," but that curse causes no commotion in his spirit because he is dead. Well may some of you be peaceful, because you are not aware of the terrors which surround you. A man totally deaf is not startled by thunder claps, if totally blind, he is not alarmed by the flashing of the lightning, he fears not the tempest which he does not discern.

Even thus is it with you who are at ease in your sins, you cannot discern the danger of your sin, you do not perceive the terror that rises out of it, else let me tell you there were no sleep to those wanton eyes, no rest to those giddy spirits, you would cry out in grief the very moment you received life, nor would you rest till delivered from those evils which now ensure for you a sure damnation. Oh! were you but alive, you would never be quiet till you were saved from the wrath to come. Man remains unconscious of spiritual things, and unmoved by them because, in a spiritual sense, he is dead.

Invite yonder corpse to assist you in the most necessary works of philanthropy. The pestilence is abroad, ask the buried one to kneel with you and invoke the power of heaven to recall the direful messenger, or, if he prefers it, ask him to assist you in purifying the air and attending to sanitary arrangements. You ask in vain, however needful or simple the act he cannot help you in it. And in spiritual things, it is even so with the graceless. The carnal man can put himself into the posture of prayer, but he cannot pray, he can open his mouth and make sweet sounds in earth-born music, but to true praise he is an utter stranger. Even repentance, that soft and gentle grace which ought to be natural to the sinful, is quite beyond his reach. How shall he repent of a sin the weight of which he cannot feel? How shall he pray for a blessing the value of which he has no power to perceive? How shall he praise a God in whom he feels no interest, and in whose existence he takes no delight? I say that to all spiritual things the man is quite as unable as the dead are unable to the natural works and services of daily life.

"And yet," says one, "we heard you last Lord's-day tell these dead people to repent and be converted." I know you did, and you shall hear me yet again do the like. But why speak I to the dead thus, and tell them to perform actions which they cannot do? Because my Master bids me, and as I obey my Master's errand, a power goes forth with the word spoken, and the dead start in their sleep, and they wake through the quickening power of the Holy Spirit, and they who naturally cannot repent and believe, *do* repent and believe in Jesus, and escape from their former sins and live, yet, believe me, it is no power of theirs which makes them thus awake from their death-sleep, and no power of mine which arrests the guilty, slumbering conscience—it is a power divine which God has yoked with the word which He has given forth when it is fully and faithfully preached.

Therefore have we exercised ourselves in our daily calling of bidding dead men live, because life comes at the divine bidding. But dead they are, most thoroughly so, and the longer we live the more we feel it to be so, and the more closely we review our own condition before conversion, and the more studiously we look into our own condition even now, the more fully do we know that man is dead in sin, and life is a gift, a gift from heaven, a gift of undeserved love and sovereign grace, so that the living must every one of them praise God and not themselves.

One of the saddest reflections about poor dead human nature is what it will be. Death in itself, though a solemn matter, is not so dreadful as that which comes of it. Many a time when that dear corpse has first been forsaken of the soul, those who have lost a dear one have been fain to imprint that cold brow with kisses still. The countenance has looked even more lovely than in life, and when friends have taken the last glimpse, there has been nothing revolting, but much that was attractive. Our dead ones have smiled like sleeping angels, even when we were about to commit them to the grave.

Ah! but we cannot shake from us a wretched sense of what is sure to be revealed before long. It is only a matter of time, and corruption must set in, and it must bring with it its daughter putridity, and by and by, the whole must be so noxious that if you had kept it above ground so long, you would vehemently cry with Abraham, "Bury my dead out of my sight!" for the natural and inevitable result of death is corruption.

So it is with us all. Some are manifestly corrupt, ah, how soon! while yet they are youths we see them plunging into infamous vice. They are corrupt in the tongue with lying words and lascivious speaking, they are corrupt in the eye with wanton glances, corrupt certainly at heart, and then corrupt thoroughly in life. There are many about us in the streets every day the stink of whose corruption compels us to put them out of society, for we are very decent, even those who are dead themselves are very scrupulous not to associate with those who are too far gone in corruption. The dead bury their dead and roll the stone and put away the debauched and dissolute. We do not ask the rotten sinners into our households, because they might corrupt us too fast, and we flatter ourselves that we are so much superior, whereas they are only a stage or two ahead in a race which all unregenerate men are running.

This corruption, though not developed in all to the same extent visibly, will be plain enough at the last in another world. When God finds us dead, He will cast us out where the worm dies not, and the fire is not quenched. What will be the development of an unregenerate character in hell I cannot tell, but I am certain it will be something which my imagination dares not now attempt to depict, for all the restraints of this life which have kept men decent and moral will be gone when they come into the next world of sin, and as heaven is to be the perfection of the saint's holiness, so hell will be the perfection of the sinner's loathsomeness, and there will he discover, and others will discover, what sin is when it comes to its worst.

"When lust has conceived, it brings forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, brings forth death," and this, dear hearer, do we solemnly remind you will be *your* portion forever and ever, unless God is pleased to quicken you. Unless you be made to live together with Christ you will be in this world dead, perhaps in this world corrupt, but certainly so in the next world, where all the dreadful influences of sin will be developed and discovered to the very full, and you shall be cast away from the presence of God and the glory of His power.

There can be no death in heaven, neither can corruption inherit incorruption, and if you have not been renewed in the spirit of your mind, within those pearly gates you can never have your portion, and where the light of heaven shines in perpetual noonday your lot can never be cast. Weigh these thoughts, I pray you, if they are not according to this Book reject them, but as they most certainly are, refuse them at your own peril, but rather let them take possession of your careful spirit, and lead you to seek and find eternal life in Christ Jesus the Lord.

II. We now change the subject for something more pleasant, and observe A MIRACLE, or dead men made alive.

The great objective of the Gospel of Christ is to create men anew in Christ Jesus. It aims at resurrection and accomplishes it. The Gospel did not come into this world merely to restrain the passions or educate the principles of men, but to infuse into them a new life which, as fallen men, they did not possess.

I saw yesterday what seemed to me, a picture of those preachers whose sole end and aim is the moralizing of their hearers, but who have not learned the need of supernatural life. Not very far from the shore were a dozen or more boats at sea dragging for two dead bodies. They were using their lines and grappling irons, and what with hard rowing and industrious sailing, were doing their best most commendably to fish up the lost ones from the pitiless sea. I do not know if they were successful, but if so, what further could they do with them but decently commit them to their mother earth? The process of education and everything else, apart from the Holy Spirit, is a dragging for dead men, to lay them out decently, side by side, in the order and decency of death, but nothing more can man do for man.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ has a far other and higher task, it does not deny the value of the moralist's efforts, or decry the results of education, but it asks what more can you do, and the response is, "Nothing." There it bids the bearers of the bier stand away and make room for Jesus, at whose voice the dead arise. The preacher of the Gospel cannot be satisfied with what is done in drawing men out of the sea of outward sin, he longs to see the lost life restored, he desires to have breathed into them a new and superior life to what they have possessed before.

Go your way, education, do your best, you are useful in your sphere, go your way, teacher of morality, do your best, you too are useful in your own manner, but if it comes to what man really needs for eternity, you all put together, are little worth—the Gospel, and the Gospel alone, answers men's requirements, man must be regenerated, quickened, made anew, have fresh breath from heaven breathed into him, or the work of saving him is not begun. The text tells us that God has done this for His people, for those who trust in Him. Let us observe the dry bones as they stir and stand before the Lord, and observing, let us praise the Lord, that according to His great love wherewith He loved us, He has quickened us together with Christ.

In this idea of quickening, there is a *mystery*. What is that invisible something which quickens a man? Who can unveil the secret? Who can track life to its hidden fountain? Brother, you are a living child of God, what made you live? You know that it was by the power of the Holy Spirit. In the language of the text, you trace it to God, you believe your new life to be of divine implantation. You are a believer in the supernatural, you believe that God has visited you as He has not visited other men and has breathed into you life. You believe rightly, but you cannot explain it. We know not of the wind, whence it comes or where it goes, so is everyone that is born of the Spirit. He that should sit down deliberately and attempt to explain regeneration, and the source of it, might sit there till he grew into a marble statue before he would accomplish the task. The Holy Spirit enters into us, and we who were dead before to spiritual things, begin to live by His power and indwelling. He is the great worker, but how the Holy Spirit works is a secret that must be reserved for God Himself. We need not wish to understand the mode, it is enough for us if we partake of the result.

It is a great mystery then, but while it is a mystery, it is a great *reality*. We know and do testify, and we have a right to be believed, for we trust we have not forfeited our characters, we know and do testify that we are now possessors of a life which we knew nothing of some years ago, that we have come to exist in a new world, and that the appearance of all things outside of us is totally changed from what it used to be. "Old things have passed away, behold all things are become new."

I bear witness that I am this day the subject of sorrows which were no sorrows to me before I knew the Lord, and that I am uplifted with joys which I should have laughed at the very thought of if anyone had whispered the name of them in my ears before the life divine had quickened me. This is the witness of hundreds of us, and although others disbelieve us, they have no right to deny our consciousness because they have not partaken of the like. If they have never tried it, what should they know about it?

If there should be an assembly of blind men, and one of them should have his eyes opened, and begin to talk of what he saw, I can imagine the blind ones all saying, "What a fool that man is! There are no such things." "Here I have lived in this world seventy years," says one, "and I never saw that thing which he calls a color, and I do not believe in his absurd nonsense about scarlet and violet, and black and white, it is all foolery together." Another wiseacre declares, "I have been up and down the world, and all over it for forty years, and I declare I never had the remotest conception of blue or green, nor had my father before me. He was a right good soul, and always stood up for the grand old darkness. Give me," said he, "a good stick and a sensible dog, and all your nonsensical notions about stars, and suns, and moons, I leave to fools who like them." The blind man has not come into the world of light and color, and the unregenerate man has not come into that world of spirit, and hence neither of them is capable of judging correctly.

I sat one day, at a public dinner, opposite a gentleman of the gourmet species, who seemed a man of vast erudition as to wines and spirits, and all the viands of the table, he judged and criticized at such a

rate that I thought he ought to have been employed by our provision merchants as taster in general. He had finely developed lips, and he smacked them frequently. His palate was in a fine critical condition. He was also as proficient in the quantity as in the quality and disposed of meats and drinks in a most wholesale manner. His retreating forehead, empurpled nose, and protruding lips, made him, while eating at least, more like an animal than a man. At last, hearing a little conversation around him upon religious matters, he opened his small eyes and his great mouth, and delivered himself of this sage utterance, "I have lived sixty years in this world, and I never felt or believed in anything spiritual in all my life." The speech was a needless diversion of his energies from the roast duck. We did not want him to tell us that. I, for one, was quite clear about it before he spoke. If the cat under the table had suddenly jumped on a chair and said the same thing, I should have attached as much importance to the utterance of the one as to the declaration of the other, and so, by one sin in one man and another in another man, they betray their spiritual death.

Until a man has received the divine life, his remarks thereon, even if he be an archbishop, go for nothing. He knows nothing about it according to his own testimony, then why should he go on to try to beat down with sneers and sarcasms those who solemnly avow that they have such a life, and that this life has become real to them, so real that the mental life is made to sink into a subordinate condition compared with the spiritual life which reigns within the soul?

This life brings with it the *exercise of renewed faculties*. The man who begins to live unto God has powers now which he never had before, the power to really pray, the power to heartily praise, the power to actually commune with God, the power to see God, to talk with God, the power to receive tidings from the invisible world, and the power to send messages up through the veil which hides the unseen up to the very throne of God. Now the man instead of saying, "Is there a God?" feels that there is not a place where God is not, sees God in everything, hears Him in the wind, discerns Him in every creature that surrounds him. Now the man, instead of dreading God, and taking himself to some outward form, ceremony, or other outward way of pushing God further off, puts away his ceremonies, casts away the beggarly elements which once might have pleased him, and draws near to his God in spirit, and speaks with him. "Father," says he, and God owns the kindred. I wish we all possessed this life, and I pray if we have it not, that God may send it to us, for if we have it not the testimony of the Word is that we are dead when most we seem to be alive.

I shall not, however, keep you longer upon this quickening, except to say that you may easily image to yourself the inward experience of a man who receives new life from the dead. You may conceive it by the following picture. Suppose a man to have been dead, and to have been buried like others in some great necropolis, some city of the dead, in the catacombs. An angel visits him, and by mercy's touch he lives. Now, can you conceive that man's first emotion when he begins to breathe? There he is in the coffin—he feels stifled, pent up. He had been there twenty years, but he never felt inconvenienced until now. He was easy enough, in his narrow cell, if ease can be where life is not. The moment he lives he feels a horrible sense of suffocation, life will not endure to be so hideously compressed, and he begins to struggle for release. He lifts with all his might that dreadful coffin lid! What a relief when the decaying plank yields to his pressure!

So the ungodly man is content enough in his sin, his Sabbath-breaking, his covetousness, his worldliness, but the moment God quickens him his sin is as a sepulcher to the living, he feels unutterably wretched, he is not in a congenial position, and he struggles to escape. Often at the first effort the great black lid of blasphemy flies off, never to be replaced. Satan thought it was screwed down fast enough, and so it was for a dead man, but life makes short work of it, and many other iniquities follow. But to return to our resurrection in the vault, the man gasps a minute, and feels refreshed with such air as the catacomb affords him, but soon he has a sense of clammy damp about him and feels faint and ready to expire.

So the renewed man at first feels little but his inability, and groans after power, he cries, "I want to repent, I want to believe in Jesus, I want to be saved." Poor wretch! He never felt that before—of course

he did not—he was dead, now he is alive, and hence he longs for the tokens, signs, fruits, and refreshments of life. Do you not see our poor friend who has newly risen? He has slipped down from that niche in the wall, where they laid him, and finding himself in a dark vault, he rubs his eyes to know whether he really is alive, or whether it is all a dream, it is such a new thing, and as by the little glimmering of light that comes in, he detects hundreds of others lying in the last sleep, and he says to himself, “Great God! what a horrible place for a living man to be in! Can I be alive?” He begins to wander about, searching for a door by which he may escape. He loathes those winding-sheets in which they wrapped him, he begins stripping them off, they are damp and mildewed, they do not suit a living man. Anon, he cries out, perhaps there is some passerby who may hear him, and he may be delivered from his confinement.

So a man who has been renewed by grace, when he partly discovers where he is, cries out, “This is no place for me.” That giddy ballroom—why, it was well enough for one who knew no better. That ale-bench was suitable for an unregenerate soul—but what can an heir of heaven do in such places? Lord, deliver me. Give me light and liberty. Bring my soul out of prison, that I may live and praise Your name. The man pines for liberty, and if, at last, he stumbles to the door of the vault and reaches the open air, I think he drinks deep draughts of the blessed oxygen! How glad he is to look upon the green fields, and the fresh flowers.

You do not imagine that he will wish to return to the vaults again, he will utterly forsake those gloomy abodes, he shudders at the remembrance of the past, and would not for all the world undergo again what he has once passed through, he is tenderly affected at every remembrance of the past, and is especially fearful lest there should be others like himself newly quickened, who may need a brother’s hand to set them at liberty, he loathes the place where once he slept so quietly. So the converted man dreads the thought of going back to the joys which once so thoroughly fascinated him. “No,” says he, “they are no joys to me. They were joys well enough for my old state of existence, but now, having entered into a new life, a new world, they are no more joys to me than the spade and shroud are joys to a living man, and I can only think of them with grief, and of my deliverance with gratitude.

III. I must pass on very briefly to the third point. The text indicates a SYMPATHY, “He has quickened us *together with Christ.*”

What does that mean? It means that the life which lives in a saved man is the same life which dwells in Christ. To put it simply—when Elisha had been buried for some years, we read that they threw a man who was dead into the tomb where the bones of Elisha were, and no sooner did the corpse touch the prophet’s bones than it lived at once. Yonder is the cross of Christ, and no sooner does the soul touch the crucified Savior than it lives at once, for the Father has given to Him to have life in Himself, and life to communicate to others. Whosoever trusts Christ has touched Him, and by touching Him he has received the virtue of eternal life, to trust in the Savior of the world is to be quickened through Him.

We are quickened together with Christ in three senses, first, *representatively*. Christ represents us before the eternal throne, He is the second Adam to His people. So long as the first Adam lived the race lived, and so long as the second Adam lives the race represented by Him lives before God. Christ is accepted, believers are accepted, Christ is justified, the saints are justified, Christ lives, and the saints enjoy a life which is hid with Christ in God.

Next we live *by union* with Christ. As long as the head is alive the members have life. Unless a member can be severed from the head, and the body maimed, it must live so long as there is life in the head. So long as Jesus lives, every soul that is vitally united to Him, and is a member of His body, lives according to our Lord’s own word, “Because I live you shall live also.” Poor Martha was much surprised that Christ should raise her brother from the dead, but He said, as if to surprise her still more, “Whosoever lives and believes in me shall never die. Believe you this?” This is one of the things we are to believe, that when we have received the Spiritual life, it is in union with the life of Christ, and consequently can never die, because Christ lives, our life must abide in us forever.

Then we also live together with Christ as to *likeness*. We are quickened together with Christ, that is, in the same manner. Now, Christ's quickening was in this wise. He was dead through the law, but the law has no more dominion over Him now that He lives again. So you, Christian, you are cursed by the old law of Sinai, but it has no power to curse you now, for you are risen in Christ. You are not under the law, its terrors and threatenings have nothing to do with you. Of our Lord it is written, "In that he lives," it is said, "he lives unto God." Christ's life is a life unto God. Such is yours. You are not henceforth to live unto the flesh to mind the things of it, but God who gave you life is to be the great object of your life, *in* Him you live, and *for* Him you live.

Moreover, it is said, "Christ being raised from the dead dies no more; death has no more dominion over him." In that same way the Christian lives, he shall never go back to his spiritual death—having once received divine life, he shall never lose it. God plays not fast and loose with His chosen, He does not save today, and damn tomorrow. He does not quicken us with the inward life, and then leave us to perish, grace is a living, incorruptible seed, which lives and abides forever. "The water that I shall give him," says Jesus, "shall be in him a well of water springing up unto everlasting life." Glory be to God, then, you who live by faith in Christ live an immortal life, a life dedicated to God, a life of deliverance from the bondage of the law, rejoice in it, and give your God all the praise!

IV. And this brings us to the last word, which was A SONG.

We have not time to sing it, we will just write the score before your eyes, and ask you to sing it at your leisure, your hearts making melody to God. Brethren and sisters, if you have indeed been thus made alive as others are not, you have first of all, in the language of the text, to praise *the great love* of God, great beyond all precedent. It was love which made Him breathe into Adam the breath of life, and make poor clay to walk and speak, but it is far greater love which makes Him now after the fall has defiled us, renew us with a second and yet higher life. He might have made new creatures by millions out of nothing. He had but to speak, and angels would have thronged the air, or, beings like ourselves, only pure and unfallen, would have been multiplied by myriads upon the greensward.

If He had left us to sink to hell as fallen angels had done before us, who could have impugned His justice? But His great love would not let Him leave His elect to perish. He loved His people, and therefore He would cause them to be born again. His great love wherewith He loved us, defied death, and hell, and sin. Dwell on the theme you who have partaken of this love! He loved *us*, the most unworthy, who had no right to such love, there was nothing in us to love, and yet He loved us, loved us when we were dead. Here His great love seems to swell and rise to mountainous dimensions, love to miserable sinners, love to loathsome sinners, love to the dead and to the corrupt. Oh, heights and depths of sovereign grace, where are the notes which can sufficiently sound forth your praise? Sing, O you redeemed, of His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins.

And cease not you to praise God, as you think of the riches of His mercy, for we are told that He is rich in mercy, rich in His nature as to mercy, rich in His covenant as to treasured mercy, rich in the person of His dear Son as to purchased mercy, rich in providential mercy, but richest of all in the mercy which saves the soul. Friends, explore the mines of JEHOVAH'S wealth if you can. Take the key and open the granaries of your God and see the stores of love which He has laid up for you. Strike your sweetest notes to the praise of God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He has loved us.

And let the last note and the highest and the loudest of your song be that with which the text concludes, "By grace are you saved." O never stammer there, brethren and sisters, whatever you do, hold or do not hold, never be slow to say this, "If saved at all, I am saved by grace, grace in contradistinction to human merit, for I have no merit, grace in contradistinction to my own free will, for my own free will would have led me further and further from God. Preventing grace brought me near to Him."

Do bless and magnify the grace of God, and as you owe all to it cry, "Perish each thought of pride," consecrate yourself entirely to the God to whom you owe everything. Desire to help to spread the savor of that grace which has brought such good things to you, and vow in the name of the quickening Spirit,

that He who has made you live by faith shall, from this day till you enter into heaven, have the best of your thoughts, and your words, and your actions, for you are not your own, you have been quickened from the dead, and you must live in newness of life.

The Lord bless you, dear friends, if you have never spiritually lived, may He give you grace to believe in Jesus this morning, and then you are alive from the dead, and if you are alive already, may He quicken you yet more and more by His eternal Spirit, till He brings you to the land of the living on the other side of the Jordan. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—EPHESIANS 2.

Taken from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.