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THE
RISEN ONE

LONDON AND LEAMINGTON
ADDRESSES

No. I

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LONDON
S. W. PARTRIDGE PATERNOSTER ROW.

PRICE ONE PENNY.

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DUBLIN STEAM PRINTING CO., MIDDLE ABBEY STREET.



THE RISEN ONE.

JOHN XX.

WE have here a first sight of the Lord as He appeared on the morning from the dead—that resurrection-morn. You may remember, beloved, that Paul said, “If Christ be not risen ye are yet in your sins”—implying plainly, that if the blessed Lord be, indeed, risen, we who believe are not in our sins—that we have been raised out of sin; “the Lord laid on Him”—on Jesus—“the iniquity of us all;” He died once in the end of the ages, to *put away* sin by the sacrifice of Himself; and when the anxious heart can get a sight of this truth, oh! what rest and peace it gives! My sins *were* on Him when He hung upon the tree, but they were *not* on Him when He rose from the tomb; my sins *were* on Him when He passed through death, but He was freed from them when He appeared in resurrection; and now,

“My soul *looks back* to see
The burden Thou didst bear,
When hanging on the cursed tree,
And knows her guilt was there.”

Ah! beloved, have you for yourself, each one, looked upon that scene? Have *you* seen *your own* guilt and burden there? Can you, as you sit here, in the calm quiet of this happy scene—can you gaze on One who, having your sins laid on Him, bore them all completely away, having exhausted their utmost penalty, and who is now for ever before God on your behalf? Truly, if Christ be *not* risen, ye are yet in your sins; but “He is risen,” and therefore we are not in our sins. When Christ appears the second time, it will not be to atone for sin, but “*without sin.*” He has already appeared *once*, “to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself;” and now the sin is for ever gone—gone from the sin-bearer, and gone from God’s book, and, moreover, gone from God’s memory; for He says, “I will not *remember* thy sins.” Beloved, what could you want more than this? Surely this must give every burdened, aching heart, rest. Did you want *more* than this, God would have provided it; but *less* would not have met the circumstances of the case. And oh! if you have never seen this glorious truth before, may you see it now. Look on that sin-bearer, on whom the Lord laid your iniquity. And now, seeing your burden once gone from the cross, it is gone from your heart; and such was God’s amazing love to us, that in dealing thus with our sin, “it

pleased the Lord to bruise Him." He was wounded for our transgressions.

Will you remark upon this first verse, that it was "very early" that the Lord rose; early, even while it was yet dark, was Mary Magdalene at that sepulchre, and even then she found it empty—already the blessed Lord was gone; He had said, after *three* days I will rise again, and so, scarcely had the third dawned, before He rose. One loves to think of it—how little of that *third* day did He pass in the grave; He had said He would rise the *third* day, but how very early upon that third day did He rise. He did not wait for noon—no, nor yet for daybreak, for Mary was at the sepulchre before break of day—before then He had left the tomb, as if the Father were in haste to raise His Son—as if He would release Him the first moment that He had fulfilled His mission. Like Abraham, who was glad to unbind the cords and raise his Isaac from the altar, so was the Father glad to proclaim redemption accomplished by so early releasing His own beloved Son from the fetters of the tomb.

And why was the Father so desirous to raise His Son? Because, beloved, His resurrection was according to the glory of the Father, who, in wondrous love and grace, had thus dealt with sin in His death; moreover it was according to His eternal equity and righteousness that, having fulfilled com-

pletely the eternal covenant, Jesus should be liberated; also it was in keeping with divine justice that, having paid the debt, the surety should be acquitted; the whole matter settled, the Father rejoiced to raise His Son, and neither death nor the grave could retain Him. And, moreover, by resurrection he was declared to be Son of God with power. He had stood amid the raging storm upon that Galilean lake, and had controlled the fury of its billows; the sea became as adamant beneath His feet. Ah! yes, He could stand amid the scene of corruption at that grave, and bid it restore its prey. Although throughout His public life gleams of glory shone from Him, yet it was not in *this* way that He was declared to be the Son of God with power. I know that at His baptism He was divinely owned by the Father: "This is my beloved Son." I know that when upon the mount of transfiguration the same voice from the excellent glory pronounced the like Divine utterance; but *this* was not the grand and public acknowledgement by which the Father testified to the perfectness and completeness of the work which he had resigned His Son to accomplish on our behalf; no, he was "declared to be the Son of God with power, by *the Resurrection from the dead.*" Death had stopped the way between the sinner and glory, but the Lord had gone down into death—had passed right through death up into the glory.

leaving an open path behind. But had He been a mere man—had He failed to accomplish the work He came to do—if He had not made atonement—had not put away sin; had he been a deceiver or an impostor, as His enemies said He was, death would have retained Him still, and God would not have raised Him. But, by raising Him from the dead, He declared Him to be His Son.

And what was the end of all this? Not merely salvation from hell—not merely justification, but something far higher than this—“He died, the just for the unjust.” And what for? He died “to *bring us to God.*” What a wondrous thought! God wanted us—wanted us to be for ever in His presence—to reflect throughout eternity His own glory; and so, *because* God wanted us, but death stood in the way, the Lord died “to bring us to God;” and death having taken place, God raised Him after three days; and now, if you can see Him going down into that death, and rising from it—if you know, indeed, that God has raised Him, you must see that the question of sin is eternally settled. “Where are my sins now?” asks the believer; why, they are just where the Lord Himself left them—down, deep down in that death—cast, as it were, into the depths of the sea. Ah! how different is all this to pondering over sin in your own wretched hearts; how peaceful is it to take a

look right out at the cross *there*—to see sin made an end of in—THE DEATH OF CHRIST.

But the narrative goes on to say: "Then she runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid Him." She went and told her grief to the disciples. There is something very lovely in this picture of Mary going out before break of day, looking for an object that she so loved; and then not finding Him, going, and unburthening her sorrow to hearts that she knew would respond and sympathize. She did not go and tell the Jews or the world of her disappointment; little knew or cared they about the Person so precious to Mary; oh, no! but she went to Peter and John. And so, when you are in distress and anxiety about your soul, to whom do you confide the grief? Surely not to a person of the world, who is a stranger to the Lord Jesus, but to one whose heart has a chord which you know will vibrate to that name which has become so sweet in your ear—to one who has a personal acquaintance with Him whom you are so anxiously seeking. Is it not so, beloved?

"Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple, and came to the sepulchre. So they ran both together; but the other disciple did outrun Peter,

and came first to the sepulchre. And he stooping down, and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying; yet went he not in. Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie." You see, beloved, although John was first at the tomb, he did not go in, he only *looked* in; but as soon as Peter arrived, he immediately went into the sepulchre. It just shows how a poor backslider may yet have a heart for the Lord—how one who has grievously departed from Him may yet have affections for Him. There may be some such in this place to-night—some poor backsliding one, who is saying,

"Where is the blessedness I knew,
When first I saw the Lord?
Where is the soul-refreshing view
Of Jesus and His Word?"

Is the silent cry of your desolate heart, "I want Jesus, Jesus, Jesus?" You have lost your former peace and joy; you have got out of communion; and you are not happy; you cannot live without the Lord; you want to be received again into His love—to be brought once more into fulness of fellowship. Well, beloved, look at Peter, and take courage. Peter, you know, only three days before, had been lying, and swearing, that he did not know his Master: . . . yet here he is hastening to His empty tomb! yes, and it was no imposture on his part;

he was no hypocrite, or he would not have rushed into that tomb. Ah! there were still affections in Peter's heart; he still longed, longed, longed after his Lord. So, beloved, with you: you who are longing for Jesus; you who are sighing—"Where is that joy and peace which once I possessed?" The language of your heart is, "Come, Lord, and occupy, yea, *fill* my affections." This was the spirit of Peter. Peter was a grievous backslider, but he was not an apostate. The difference between an apostate and a backslider is this: the latter has gone back to the world for a time, whilst the former has never been truly brought out of it. And how does the Lord deal with the poor backslider, who has consciously gone away from Him? Ah! beloved, He does this: He *restoreth* him; He will never let him wander beyond the reach of His arm. "My sheep," He says, "shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand." No: they cannot perish; they are His hand—members of His body, of His flesh and of his bones.

"And the napkin that was about His head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped in a place by itself." I would suggest a thought for your consideration on the napkin which was around His sacred head; it was not lying, you remark, with the other garments, but *wrapped together and laid aside* in a place by itself. It may speak to us of

the fact that the Head is now in resurrection—*His* own resurrection is completely finished. Hence the napkin is *folded together*, and laid aside; whilst the linen clothes of His sacred body were still lying about. We are not told that *they* were *wrapped together*. It may at least suggest that the members of His body are not yet raised; but by and bye they will be raised, and, with their risen Head, made to share with Him all His glory. Then the linen clothes may be *folded with* the napkin which was about the head. Did you ever think of it, beloved? Paul shows us how this will be. The Lord Himself will descend from heaven, as said by Paul in Thessalonians. And having descended, the dead in Christ will be raised first; then we who are alive will be changed; then both the raised and the changed will be caught up *together* to meet the Lord in the air. So that they who now sleep in Him will not be one moment in the glory before us. The graves of Martha and Mary, of the daughter of Jairus, and others, still retain their precious dust, and will retain, until our own graves deliver up theirs. So that they, with Mary Magdalene, or John, or Peter, will not be glorified before other saints of later years. No; they are in Paradise before us, where, indeed, their spirits are now waiting for the glory; as Rutherford sings—

“Twixt me and resurrection,
But Paradise doth stand.”

Death brings us into Paradise, but there not as a permanent home—only to wait for the enrobing morning, when, as Paul says, we who are sufferers together, and heirs together with Him, shall be glorified *together*. Not one member glorified before another, not even the Head before the members. Neither one or the other can be glorified until the whole Body is perfect—complete. Oh! beloved, it is for this that we are waiting, and it is for this that He too is waiting; waiting for that break of day which shall know no evening; waiting for that glorious hour when all the members will be caught up into the radiant air. This is our hope, for which we earnestly long, for which we desire that many suns may not set before it brings us face to face with *Him*. There is but one reason why we would have Him tarry, and that is, that those who yet are strangers to Him may be “brought in.” Oh! how blessed a thing it is to get a comprehensive view of this truth! How wondrous a thing, looking back with the eye of faith to the first Advent, and forward with glorious hope to the other, that your soul can say,

“I do believe, I *will* believe,
That Jesus died for me;”

and can rejoice in the hope of this glory. Paul shows you, in Colossians iii. 1, beloved, that when the Lord comes *you* will come with Him.

You will remember that this truth was suggested by what Peter saw when he looked into the sepulchre—by those linen clothes separated from the napkin. By-and-by all that belong to Him will be manifested ; we shall be *like* Him, for we shall see Him as He is. Well, when Peter had gone in, then John went in. See how the one encouraged the other. And so it is, one brings another to the Lord, and the second brings a third, and so the work spreads. The two disciples looked into and entered that empty tomb, and believed. Believed what? That He was risen? Oh! no, indeed, for the next verse tells us that "*they knew not the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead.*" They only believed that the Lord's body was not there—that indeed the sepulchre was empty! They were slow of heart to believe what the Lord has so often and so plainly told them. . . . And we meet with ignorant ones still; but we ought to put up with their dulness, and to be patient and forbearing. Look at these disciples; the very thing (that Christ's tomb was *empty*) which should have given them greatest joy proved to them the source of deepest sorrow. Mark, beloved, the difference between these Galilean disciples and those at Bethany. Not one of the circle at Bethany was at the tomb on that resurrection morning. *They* did not go to look for a dead Jesus; they were

better instructed; they *knew* that He would rise. How different was it with Mary Magdalene, and Peter, and John. There they were, sorrowing beside His empty sepulchre, grieving that He was not there! You see, beloved, they knew nothing of resurrection. Instead of being all gloom, they should have been all gladness. Thus is it with many now who have been saved, yet do not know the greatness or completeness of their salvation.

“Then the disciples went away again to their own home.” The *disciples* went, but not Mary. Oh! there was immense love in Mary’s heart. It was *love* that held her to that spot. She was sad, lonely, desolate, for *Him*. Surely such love was precious to Him, as we shall see. But though there was love in Mary, she wanted intelligence. Yet who does not delight in that immense love! I incline to think that I would rather have the love of a Mary Magdalene than all the intelligence of some others. Her heart was freighted with the precious love of Him who is the Chief among ten thousand. But, beloved, better still is it to have the love of a Mary Magdalene united with the intelligence of a Mary of Bethany, or of a Lazarus, who himself has been raised from the dead.

But, to pass on with the narrative. These disciples saw and believed—believed that the sepulchre was *empty*—that was all, for they knew not the

Scripture. How much better would it have been if they had been in all *His* thought—if they had understood *His* purpose of love. They would then have clapped their hands with joy, and exclaimed, “The Lord is not here, for He is risen!” But instead of this, “Mary stood without at the sepulchre *weeping!* and as she wept, she stooped and looked into the sepulchre.” Oh! have you ever seen a mother repair to the spot where she has laid one who had been her earthly joy, the light of her home circle. Imagine a bereaved one saying to a friend, “Will you go with me into the room? Ever since we closed those eyes, I have never been able to go.” And so they went. There was a melancholy satisfaction in entering the room where the loved form had lain. So was it with Mary, and John, and Peter—they looked into the tomb where *He* had lain. You remember how, after He had ascended to the right hand of the Father, the little band of disciples still stood gazing, gazing up at that very spot in the sky, as if they loathed to let the eye off it, where they had taken the last glimpse of Him. Well, beloved, after those two disciples had gone home, Mary lingered. It was like an “after-meeting.” She loved to stand and gaze upon a spot where an object so infinitely precious had been.

By and bye Jesus Himself drew near (though Mary recognised Him not), and tenderly inquired,

“Woman, why weepest thou?” I would like to tell you a happy thought in my soul about this. Do you know why Jesus was standing by His open sepulchre? Why did He repair to a spot where He had no occasion to stand? It was surely the yearning, the longing of that *one* heart which brought Him there. He came there to meet and comfort that loving but bereaved spirit. And are there any here saying, “Of all things in the world, what I want is Jesus?” Are there any here longing “to see Jesus?” Is there but one such heart here to-night? Ah! dear soul, such longings as thine are sure to bring Him to the very spot where thou hast come to find Him. He cannot deny Himself. He Himself gave thee those longings. He who fills the mighty bed of Ganges or Mississippi will fill your affections with Himself, for He who planted the deep longing desires in your soul, has an ocean-fulness from which to supply them. Ere long, that cry of yours, “Jesus, Jesus, Jesus,” will bring that very Jesus to your soul, and you will see Him whom your soul desireth.

“Ah!” thought Mary, “if I could but recover, or gaze upon, His body once more!” Little did she imagine how soon her utmost hopes would be exceeded. Jesus saith unto her, “woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou?” Why should He thus ask, seeing that He knew perfectly the

cause of her sorrow? Had not He Himself created it in her? but then *He likes to be told*; yes, beloved, and He wants to be told of *your* sorrow, though well He knows it; for the devil did not set you thirsting for Him—it is the very last thing the devil would set you longing for; and your own natural heart never yet produced a holy aspiration; it is the Lord Himself who has done it. He knows your dread of sin and death; He knows your dark foreboding of an endless eternity; how it casts its shadow over your soul; He knows the ten, twenty, or thirty years you have been longing for peace and joy. He knows you, a poor backslider, it may be, saying, “these years, alas, I have been longing for Jesus to visit my soul as in former days; I thought I had Him, but now, I fear, all I have had has been truth without Christ.” Well, beloved, my blessed Master can now manifest Himself to you; He can now draw near, and bind the tendrils of your heart’s affections around His own adorable self; He has been making your spirit bleed, that He might free you from its evil, and once again have you to Himself.

See what Mary answered: “Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him and I will take him away.” Oh! that little word “*Him*,” she thought all must know *Him* who was *everything* to her. She had been *dead to the*

angels, even, in her longing for *Him*; and she thought there was surely no need to translate that "*Him*." Oh! how Jesus was feasted now! what a cup of joy was this for His lip! it was, beloved, for this He was crucified, laid down in that tomb, then rose, and went back to the glory above, that He might have such joy, that He might bring home the sinner to His Father's house rejoicing. He said to Mary, "*Mary*," the tones of that love-breathing voice telling her own name awoke, in a moment, the consciousness of *His* presence; in the twinkling of an eye she was down at His feet, about to embrace them. Oh! beloved, if He were here now would we not also fall at His feet in joyous adoration?

But "touch me not," said the blessed Lord, "you need not hold me; I am not going to leave you immediately; I shall remain down here for forty days to prove the fact of my resurrection—to assure you of the *finished* work for which I came forth." "Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended to my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God." Blessed word! *my* Father, *your* Father.

Mark, beloved, what *He* gets and what *we* get by Redemption. He gets God as His God, and we get His Father as our Father. He gets God as His God; as the eternal Word, He had been with God from before all ages: but His relationship

as man with God was something quite different—it was the result of *incarnation*; and if He had not become man and associated Himself with us, He never would have had God as His God. He Himself had always a glory—His own primal glory as God. He had it, yea, before a sun or star had broken on the bosom of immensity, or ever, at creation, the morning stars sang together, or the sons of God shouted for joy.

By His death, along with resurrection, He finds glory; He gives that glory to us. *He* gets God as His God, and *we* find a Father in God. He gets and we get. Oh! beloved, mark the wondrous steps in this pathway of Divine, ineffable love; and mark what we get by each. We get God as *Father*. His Father is our *Father*. By *incarnation* we get God manifest in the flesh; in those wondrous three and thirty years before death we get our Divine model, not, as so many falsely teach, salvation. If, by His *life*, I am redeemed, then He need not have died. Ah! no, beloved, we do not get life by *His* life; for, on the ground simply of His life, He never could, as man, have gone back to the Father. Salvation is on the ground of *atonement only*; “without shedding of blood there is no remission.”

Well, by His *life* we get a perfect example as to our walk here. But by His *death* we get *atonement*. There, at the cross, I see what God is—what God

demands; Christ dying on the tree, drinking to the lowest dregs my cup of hell; and now I see that I have no cup of hell to drink, it is all gone, and nothing left for the believing sinner but overflowing grace and love. And now I can sing, as did Rutherford—

“I stand upon *His* merit,
I know *no* safer stand;
Not e’en where glory dwelleth,
In Immanuel’s land.”

And then, by His resurrection, we get into a new life. We were dead with Him, buried with Him, and are raised with Him; by resurrection we are taken out of death, saved from wrath and hell; and yet there is something else which we get the moment we become risen with Christ: we get *strangership*, *pilgrimage*. Resurrection lifts from the tomb of corruption, but it leaves us still upon this earth; it does not of itself put us into heaven. We get pilgrimage here below. Ah! and that is also what the Lord got. When I look at Him standing by that tomb, I feel that He was, indeed, a stranger—a pilgrim in this world. He did not go back to Jerusalem and claim an earthly home. Oh! no; He, at that open tomb, was surely a pilgrim; and if we know resurrection, this is what we, too, have got by it; we do not get into heaven by resurrection—it is *ascension* which puts us there. As He

has gone back, having done *all* that our lost, guilty condition demanded—as He has gone in, yonder, the righteous, accepted one, in all the Divine energy of accomplished redemption—as He has taken the blood in with Him, and laid it down ever to speak on our behalf, so now *we* have liberty, boldness to enter in; we go in along with Him into the holiest of all, that is into heaven itself; we get into heaven on the ground of His own ascension in righteousness.

What more do we get by all this wondrous transaction? Why, *glory*. When He comes again in His glory, then shall we come with Him, sharers with Him of that glory. But we must be gathered first. We cannot come *with* Him until we are gathered *to* Him; and gathered to Him where He now is. For this He is coming for us, as He said, I will come again and take you unto myself. Hence the early saints were taught to look for Him. Says Paul to his Thessalonian converts, “Ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven.” Mark those three little words—*to—from—for*; they turned to God *from* idols; not like some of you, who are only half turned towards God—only the profile towards Him—an eye to Christ, and an eye to your idols at the same time. . . . But these believers had completely turned their *backs* upon their idols! they had turned to serve the living and true God;

and what else? "To WAIT—to wait for His Son from heaven." This, beloved, is our position too; we also wait for the Lord from heaven; and then, when He comes, He and we shall be glorified together; the whole body—Head with the members—will share the same glory. This will be the last link in this wondrous chain of colossal grandeur; and He who holds that chain in His hand will surely work out each successive link; and the time is rapidly hastening on, when all the members will stand in that last link in the glory, and look back to that first link as it lies amid the secrets of the Divine purposes, and raise the ascription of praise, "To Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever." Oh! hasten that time, beloved; speed the happy moment, that glorious morning for which we are waiting; it is in your power to hasten it, as we shall see.

Then the Lord said to Mary, "I am not yet ascended to my Father; *but go to my brethren*, and say to them, I ascend to my Father and your Father; and to my God and your God." This was the first time that He had called those disciples "brethren." Resurrection gives us this. "Go tell my brethren." Yes, beloved: we were children; He had called us servants; but now, after resurrection, He calls us

"brethren." He tells us that the very same love which hitherto the Father had given to Him who was His only Son, He now lavishes upon us who are His brethren—"that the love wherewith Thou hast loved me may be in them." So one are we with Him, beloved, that we share the love which, as Son, He enjoys with His Father. Oh! how blessed; recognised as *His* brethren. Yes, and He is not ashamed to call us brethren, seeing we are made partakers of the Divine nature, and are invested, from Him, with all those wondrous resources of holiness and righteousness which were from all eternity in God Himself.

But now the Lord enjoins Mary to go and publish His resurrection. Mary, you see, was the first evangelist to tell of a risen Jesus. Some people think it doubtful whether women ought to preach, and would fain close their lips. It depends on what is meant by preaching. It will be impossible to close lips if the Lord opens them; and when He opens them, who am *I* to forbid? And so Mary goes right out from His presence—the true place of commission—carrying His own message, "The Lord is risen!" Was there ever such a sermon as that which Mary preached? The Lord is risen! She went away saying, "He is *alive*! not dead, not a corpse in the tomb of Joseph." How wonderful! He is Lord—Lord of Life! How she

would spell it out, as it were, to her own soul as she flew along to tell it to others; "resurrection! life! He *has* died! I will doubt no more, sorrow no more. Let me tell it, *The Lord is risen!*" What a world of truth, beloved, is that one word. It included all the mighty thought of God from eternity—God in man on the other side of death; man in incorruption, and beyond the reach ever again of sin or dying—man redeemed—fit for the Eternal presence and joy of God. Said the Lord, "Tell them I am risen!" and shortly after He ratifies her message by His own presence. Oh! beloved, think of it. "*He is risen; He is risen.*" May God give you, each one, to know this truth, especially you who are anxious about salvation, and see how it for ever settles the question of sin, over which you have so long been brooding, saying, "Oh! my sins, my sins." In resurrection-life, "self and sin no more are known:" God Himself made an end of both in the cross, and brings you, complete, into His presence. Do not forget the distinction between atonement and forgiveness: the one is a finished work, never to be touched again; forgiveness may be often repeated.

All my sins were laid upon Thee,
All my guilt was on Thee laid;
And the blood of Thine atonement
All my utmost debt hath paid.

The debt is cancelled, because *paid*; sin is blotted out, because atoned for; and now sins are gone—gone—gone. And did we not know it, as we *do*, for an *absolute certainty* because God says it, we could never preach thus to you; and if God had not told us so here, we could not ask you to believe it. But here, in this book, is God's own declaration, that "Christ hath appeared once in the end of the world, TO PUT AWAY SIN BY THE SACRIFICE OF HIMSELF." Stand still, beloved people, and see, this very hour, the salvation of God.

But now we reach another blessed truth. We find that on that very day at evening, when those disciples were assembled, then "came Jesus, and stood in the midst." Ah! there were but ten disciples there that night, for Thomas was not there: and see how much he lost by being away. Well, beloved, there were but ten there, and they were a sad ten indeed—a faithless band. But what does the Lord do? what did He say? Did He say, "Before I can have any communion with you, I must have an understanding, an explanation as to your late conduct?" Does He tell them, "I am come to judge you?" For Peter had denied Him, and the rest had all forsaken Him, and forsaken Him when He most needed them. Did He now absolve connection with them? Oh! no, no, no. His first word indeed, might have been, "Shame be unto you;"

but no, it was, "*Peace* be unto you." And the first thing that He will say to you will be "*Peace*." Oh! what a picture we have here. The Lord stands in their midst, and sadly as they had deserted Him, the only word with which He meets them is, "*Peace*." And so will it be by and bye, when He gets you all in the air—when He raises you from all your bitter controversies and divisions—it will be only—"Peace." "*Peace*." What grace! what love!

And now, the Lord "*breathed*" on them—so *near* were they! and said: "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." How else could it be if *He* breathed on them. for He was *filled with the Spirit*. He added: "whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained." Some stumble at this passage; but the Lord still invests His people with the happy privilege of pronouncing as to sins: if there be a soul here believing in Jesus, with confidence I can say to such an one, "*Thy sins are forgiven*." Here, in the Word, beloved people, you have complete absolution—not a human, not a priestly, not an angelic, but a *Divine* absolution; and I declare it to you to-night—"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, *and thou shalt be saved*." And I also declare to you, that if you believe *not*, you will be damned. Yes, whatever else you may do—teach in the Sunday-school, visit the poor, talk like an angel—if

you do not *believe in the Lord Jesus Christ*, and take the benefit of His atoning sacrifice, you will be damned—damned. Do not deceive yourselves, beloved—“He that *believeth not* shall be damned.”

The profession you make may be most plausible; the outward appearance may be fair; but if there be not in your heart faith in the Lord Jesus—if you be not one with *Him*—it will all be as nothing: it is hypocrisy, and will not stand the test, or bear the light of eternity, which will shortly meet you at your coming, gleaming across your whole life, and exposing it to the most open scrutiny. There can be no deception *then*; the mask will be stripped from the face *then*, and all the horrible deformity and corruption manifested *then*; and there and then—down in hell, amid the fearful moans and groans of the damned—*there* you will know the value of the blood which you have trampled under foot; your vain lament will be—“The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and I am not saved.” When the Gospel is preached, it binds a tremendous responsibility upon each one who hears it; to each one it will prove a savour of life unto life, or a savour of death unto death, according as it is received or rejected.

I am reminded of a dear child who heard a sermon upon the words, “Now is the accepted time.” She went home much impressed, and under

deep conviction that she should no longer be undecided; and so she said to her mother, "Mamma, I have heard a solemn sermon to-day about 'Now is the accepted time.' Mamma, I think I ought not to keep away from Jesus any longer." And what did that parent reply? "My child, I have heard *that* ever since I can remember; there is plenty of time yet." At night, before getting into her couch, the little one wrote in a book; thoughts like these were passing in her mind—"I have been hearing such a solemn sermon to-night, I feel afraid of staying away from Jesus longer; but Mamma says I need not be unhappy, that there is plenty of time yet; I think I will wait twelve months, and then become a child of God." The writing ends for a little, as if she had gone again to her couch, but unable to sleep, she makes this second entry: "I could not keep from Jesus so long as a whole year; I think I can only wait a month; yes, I can wait only one month." Again there is a break in the little diary, as if the dear child had once more turned into her couch; but there is one more note: "I cannot wait a month; one more week." And so the child concludes. The family assembled as usual the next morning, but the child was missing; the servant was sent to ascertain the cause, and there, in that room, was the solemn record, but the dear child lay in her couch—*dead*.

Oh, ye mothers! have you, any of you, a child in hell? and is that child there through your neglect, or through your unfaithfulness? Oh, ye fathers! have you sons now amongst the lost in the regions of despair, brought there through *your* evil example and *your* pernicious counsel? Oh, think of it! They have gone where a ray of hope can never cheer: their torments can never be mitigated; they are eternal. What a sad reflection must now be yours, that if you had trained these children to know the Lord, you could inscribe upon their tombstone, "Here lies one who has fallen asleep in Jesus." Ah, beloved! *procrastination*—how dreadful! Not that there is ever a time when the Gospel is proclaimed, that you are not tremendously responsible. But to put it off and off, how melancholy, and in the issue how fatal! O sinner! sinner! why not to-night? Oh, if I could, I would take you in my arms, and then lay you in *His* arms, and ask Him *now* to seal you as His own; do not say, "to-morrow," but "now," believe *now—now*.

But look once more at this blessed portraiture of Jesus, Jesus; for, oh! it is all *Him—Him—Him*—brought out here. "And after eight days again His disciples were within, and Thomas with them; then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you. Then saith He to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger,

and behold my hand; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side; and be not faithless, but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto Him, My Lord and my God." This is the first time in the Bible that we find Jesus addressed as "*God*." Peter, indeed, had confessed, "Thou art the Christ, the *Son* of the living God;" but here Thomas calls Him "*God*." I have often wondered why Thomas called Him *God*. The other disciples, probably, had said to him, "Thomas, you little know what you lost. We have seen the Lord; He has been with us to-night." But Thomas declared that *except* he should see in His hands the print of the nails, and the print of the spear in His side, he would not believe. But on this night Thomas was with them: he would not be away again; and by-and-bye the Lord appears amongst them, and again says, "Peace be unto you." Then He turns to Thomas, and says, "Thomas, reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side; and be not faithless, but believing." Thomas was amazed at this. "Only *God*," thought he, "could have known all that has been going on in my heart." Ah! he had a consciousness that that eye and that heart which had seen and known all that passed that Lord's Day evening, must have been the eye and heart of the Lord, whom he now knew to be

God. Hence he exclaims, "My Lord and my God." And when we, beloved, meet Him in yonder glory, and gaze upon Him eye to eye, and face to face—when we see Him with the glory streaming through those perforated feet and hands—will not our joyous exclamation resemble that of Thomas, "My Lord and my God?"

And now mark these next words—"Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." Precious declaration! We can thank God for that which gave occasion for it; see, too, beloved believers, how descriptive it is of our condition now: "Blessed are *they that have not seen.*" We have never yet seen Him; but I would as soon disbelieve my own existence, or that of any star yonder, or of this earth, as I would disbelieve the being of the blessed Lord. He *was* rejected, disowned; He *is* enthroned in the glory yonder. Do you ask me how I know it? Simply because of His own word that when He should be there, He would send down the Holy Ghost to dwell in His people here; and every joy in God, every longing for Christ, speaks of His presence in my soul, and is a precious testimony to the truth of Him who is now *above*. These aspirations—proofs of the Spirit here, and of the presence of Christ there—remind one of the bells upon the robe the High Priest wore when he entered the holy place

on the great day of atonement. If Aaron seemed to tarry long, the people, anxiously awaiting his return, would begin to tremble lest, for some sin, their representative should have perished; and they would begin to inquire, "Why is Aaron so long in coming out?" And then, perhaps, one more thoughtful or anxious than the others would say, "I will go near and listen—put my ear down near to the holy place." And as he listened, he heard the sweet chiming of those bells upon that priestly robe, which waved to and fro before the Lord, and returned to tell the joyful news. Oh, beloved! all those longings to inherit, those deep desires for perfect holiness—all those yearnings to see the King in His beauty—are a sweet assurance that the Holy Ghost is in you, and that He, the Lord, is now in the presence of God. And therefore may we *believe*. And, beloved, it is more blessed for us who have not seen Him, yet have BELIEVED; if we own Him now in the hour of His rejection, we shall share His glory. If we suffer with Him, we shall reign with Him.

And now, finally, mark what John says of all these things: "These are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing, ye might have life through His name." Oh, sinner! are you listening to these words? "These are written, that ye might believe and that believing, ye might"—what?

“*Have doubts?*” No, indeed. “*Might hope?*” or have trembling apprehensions? Nothing of the sort. “And that believing, *ye might have life.*” Ye might have life. How simple that is, beloved, is it not? And that is the Gospel; and there is nothing more in order to salvation. And if you are not satisfied, or want anything more, you will go away unsaved. And saved or lost you must be. And not to be *saved*, how sad! Oh, dear souls, you *would* be saved. But you think you will begin with repentance and conviction first. But it is *dead* souls that the Lord saves: you must be satisfied to be saved to be quickened in your present *dead* state. You hear people talk as if self-righteous people could not be saved. Why, every sinner is *self-righteous*, until he sees Christ; but when he believes in Christ dead and risen, he becomes the righteousness of God in Him. Every sinner is utterly dead, utterly corrupt, till the Lord speaks the life-giving word, “Come forth;” and then at the cross he sees sin is gone. “There is *life* for a *look* at the Crucified One.” But do not misunderstand me. I do not say that you will have no repentance. The longer you live, the deeper will be your sense of sin; but if you are looking for conviction before you come to the Lord, you may wait till it is too late. If the dying thief had waited for anything, he would never have been saved. How

did he get peace? Just by believing the word of Jesus. And how do we know that we are saved? Only in the same way—by believing the testimony, and not by foraging in our own heart for assurance. No; you will never find it there. Look at that poor bankrupt; his friend has become surety for him. How does he get assurance? Does he seek for it by examining his own resources? Oh! no, indeed; he will never find it there: he looks at his surety, and in him he sees his complete justification. And, beloved, *there—there—Him*, risen from the dead, is your Surety; there is the One who has completely paid all. Oh! look—look—look at *Him*—forget all else but Him; and as you look, just now you may enter into rest. Oh! may God quicken the dead souls here to see and to know the *Risen One*.

And now remember, beloved children of God, that God has formed for us this special relationship with His Son that we are in all the rights of His risen life. United to Him we have His life. Having died for us He has a right to us. As having put away sin the sting of death is gone. The Jordan in which He stood has been dried up, and we are now on the heavenly side of *death*.

And united to Him we are supposed to have put off all that belonged to the old life which was brought to an end at the cross—the body of the

sins of the flesh. What a life should be ours! the living out, in fact, of the life which is in the Risen One. And how blessed and holy; for we are *where* He is, and *as* He is before God—accepted, righteous, sanctified, free. It was for this that God quickened you together with Him, *having* forgiven you all trespasses. Christ died that it might be so. Our place of highest height finds its root in His own deep, eternal love. We are raised with Him, not that He may ever again condemn, but that He may glorify us with Himself—the Risen, and Ascended One.

Oh, sweet relief from sin and woe,
My risen Lord, in heaven, to know!
No more as bowed in death for me;
No more His soul's deep agony:
Th' ascended One has entered there,
And as He is, His members are.

Oh, glorious place! oh, sweet abode!
Where dwells for me the Christ of God.
I gaze on *Thee*, Thou blessed Lamb;
God's righteousness, in *Thee*. I am!
To know *Thy* place, and there to be—
Thy joy—*Thy* love—'tis heaven to me.

What matchless height! To gaze within
Thy loving heart—its thought of me;
For there eternal I have been
Loved and redeemed beyond degree;
But, oh! as only "through a glass,"
"Darkly," I see the glory pass.

But I am my Beloved's own,
Accepted through *His blood* alone ;
Secure, I'm sheltering at His side,
Which riven was when once He died.
'Tis *all of God*: *He* made me meet,
Which makes *His* presence feel so sweet.

And now I'm looking for that day
When death itself shall die away—
When I no more shall wander here,
But in His glory bright appear ;
Where *like* Him all His saints will be,
And *with* Him through eternity.

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