

Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

THE RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD JESUS.

A Sermon

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“Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel.”—2 Timothy ii. 8.

FROM long sickness my mind is scarcely equal to the work before me. Certainly, if I had ever sought after brilliance of thought or language, I should have failed to-day, for I am almost at the lowest stage of incapacity. I have only been comforted in the thought of preaching to you this morning by the reflection that it is the doctrine itself which God blesses, and not the way in which it may be spoken; for if God had made the power to depend upon the speaker and his style, he would have chosen that the resurrection, grandest of all truths, should have been proclaimed by angels rather than by men. Yet he set aside the seraph for the humbler creature. After angels had spoken a word or two to the women their testimony ceased. The most prominent testimony to the resurrection of the Lord was at the first that of holy women, and afterwards that of each one of the guileless men and women who made up the five hundred or more whose privilege it was to have actually seen the risen Saviour, and who therefore could bear witness to what they had seen, though they may have been quite unable to describe with eloquence what they had beheld. Upon our Lord's rising I have nothing to say, and God's ministers have nothing to say, beyond bearing witness to the fact that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead. Put it in poetry, tell it out in sublime Miltonic verse, it will come to no more; tell it out in monosyllables, and write it so that little children may read it in their first spelling-books, and it will come to nothing less. “The Lord is risen indeed” is the sum and substance of our witness when we speak of our risen Redeemer. If we do but know the truth of this resurrection, and feel the power of it, our mode of utterance is of secondary consequence; for the Holy Spirit will bear witness to the truth, and cause it to produce fruit in the minds of our hearers.

Our present text is found in Paul's second letter to Timothy. The venerable minister is anxious about the young man who has preached with remarkable success, and whom he regards in some respects as his successor. The old man is about to put off his tabernacle, and he is

concerned that his son in the gospel, should preach the same truth as his father has preached, and should by no means adulterate the gospel. A tendency showed itself in Timothy's day, and the same tendency exists at this very hour, to try to get away from the simple matters of fact upon which our religion is built, to something more philosophical and hard to be understood. The word which the common people heard gladly is not fine enough for cultured sages, and so they must needs surround it with a mist of human thought and speculation. Three or four plain facts constitute the gospel, even as Paul puts it in the fifteenth chapter of his first Epistle to the Corinthians: "For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures." Upon the incarnation, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus our salvation hinges. He who believes these truths aright hath believed the gospel, and believing the gospel he shall without doubt find eternal salvation therein. But men want novelties; they cannot endure that the trumpet should give forth the same certain sound, they crave some fresh fantasia every day. "*The gospel with variations*" is the music for them. Intellect is progressive, they say; they must, therefore, march ahead of their forefathers. Incarnate Deity, a holy life, an atoning death, and a literal resurrection,—having heard these things now for nearly nineteen centuries they are just a little stale, and the cultivated mind hungers for a change from the old-fashioned manna. Even in Paul's day this tendency was manifest, and so they sought to regard facts as mysteries or parables, and they laboured to find a spiritual meaning in them till they went so far as to deny them as actual facts. Seeking a recondite meaning, they overlooked the fact itself, losing the substance in a foolish preference for the shadow. While God set before them glorious events which fill heaven with amazement they showed their foolish wisdom by accepting the plain historical facts as myths to be interpreted or riddles to be solved. He who believed as a little child was pushed aside as a fool that the disputer and the scribe might come in to mystify simplicity, and hide the light of truth. Hence there had arisen a certain Hymenæus and Philetus, "Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some." Turn to verse seventeen and read for yourselves. They spirited away the resurrection; they made it to mean something very deep and mystical, and in the process they took away the actual resurrection altogether. Among men there is still a craving after new meanings, refinements upon old doctrines, and spiritualizations of literal facts. They tear out the bowels of the truth, and give us the carcase stuffed with hypotheses, speculations, and larger hopes. The golden shields of Solomon are taken away, and shields of brass are hung up in their stead: will they not answer every purpose, and is not the metal more in favour with the age? It may be so, but we never admired Rehoboam, and we are old-fashioned enough to prefer the original shields of gold. The Apostle Paul was very anxious that Timothy at least should stand firm to the old witness, and should understand in their plain meaning his testimonies to the fact that Jesus Christ of the seed of David rose again from the dead.

Within the compass of this verse several facts are recorded: and, first,

there is here the great truth that Jesus, the Son of the Highest, was anointed of God; the apostle calls him "*Jesus Christ*," that is, the anointed one, the Messiah, the sent of God. He calls him also "*Jesus*," which signifies a Saviour, and it is a grand truth that he who was born of Mary, he who was laid in the manger at Bethlehem, he who loved and lived and died for us, is the ordained and anointed Saviour of men. We have not a moment's doubt about the mission, office, and design of our Lord Jesus; in fact, we hang our soul's salvation upon his being anointed of the Lord to be the Saviour of men.

This Jesus Christ was really and truly man; for Paul says he was "*of the seed of David*." True he was divine, and his birth was not after the ordinary manner of men, but still he was in all respects partaker of our human nature, and came of the stock of David. This also we do believe. We are not among those who spiritualize the incarnation, and suppose that God was here as a phantom, or that the whole story is but an instructive legend. Nay, in very flesh and blood did the Son of God abide among men: bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh was he in the days of his sojourn here below. We know and believe that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh. We love the incarnate God, and in him we fix our trust.

It is implied, too, in the text that *Jesus died*; for he could not be raised from the dead if he had not first gone down among the dead, and been one of them. Yes, Jesus died: the crucifixion was no delusion, the piercing of his side with a spear was most clear and evident proof that he was dead: his heart was pierced, and the blood and water flowed therefrom. As a dead man he was taken down from the cross and carried by gentle hands, and laid in Joseph's virgin tomb. I think I see that pale corpse, white as a lily. Mark how it is distained with the blood of his five wounds, which make him red as the rose. See how the holy women tenderly wrap him in fine linen with sweet spices, and leave him to spend his Sabbath all alone in the rock-hewn sepulchre. No man in this world was ever more surely dead than he. "He made his grave with the wicked and with the rich in his death." As dead they laid him in the place of the dead, with napkin and grave-clothes, and habiliments fit for a grave: then they rolled the great stone at the grave's mouth and left him, knowing that he was dead.

Then comes the grand truth, that as soon as ever the third sun commenced his shining circuit *Jesus rose again*. His body had not decayed, for it was not possible for that holy thing to see corruption; but still it had been dead; and by the power of God—by his own power, by the Father's power, by the power of the Spirit—for it is attributed to each of these in turn, before the sun had risen his dead body was quickened. The silent heart began again to beat, and through the stagnant canals of the veins the life-flood began to circulate. The soul of the Redeemer again took possession of the body, and it lived once more. There he was within the sepulchre, as truly living as to all parts of him as he had ever been. He literally and truly, in a material body, came forth from the tomb to live among men till the hour of his ascension into heaven. This is the truth which is still to be taught, refine it who may, spiritualize it who dare. This is the historical fact which the apostles witnessed; this is the truth for which the confessors bled and

died. This is the doctrine which is the key-stone of the arch of Christianity, and they that hold it not have cast aside the essential truth of God. How can they hope for salvation for their souls if they do not believe that "the Lord is risen indeed"?

This morning I wish to do three things. First, let us *consider the bearings of the resurrection of Christ upon other great truths*; secondly, let us *consider the bearings of this fact upon the gospel*, for it has such bearings, according to the text—"Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel"; thirdly, let us *consider its bearings on ourselves*, which are all indicated in the word "Remember."

I. First, then, beloved, as God shall help us, let us CONSIDER THE BEARINGS OF THE FACT THAT JESUS ROSE FROM THE DEAD.

It is clear at the outset that *the resurrection of our Lord was a tangible proof that there is another life*. Have you not quoted a great many times certain lines about "That undiscovered country from whose bourne no traveller returns"? It is not so. There was once a traveller who said that "I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go away I will come again and receive you unto myself; that where I am there ye may be also." He said, "A little time and ye shall see me, and again a little time and ye shall not see me, and because I go to the Father." Do you not remember these words of his? Our divine Lord went to the undiscovered country, and he returned. He said that at the third day he would be back again, and he was true to his word. There is no doubt that there is another state for human life, for Jesus has been in it, and has come back from it. We have no doubt as to a future existence, for Jesus existed after death. We have no doubt as to a paradise of future bliss, for Jesus went to it and returned. Though he has left us again, yet that coming back to tarry with us forty days has given us a sure pledge that he will return a second time when the hour is due, and then will be with us for a thousand years, and reign on earth amongst his ancients gloriously. His return from among the dead is a pledge to us of existence after death, and we rejoice in it.

His resurrection is also a pledge that the body will surely live again and rise to a superior condition; for the body of our blessed Master was no phantom after death any more than before. "Handle me, and see." Oh wondrous proof! He said, "Handle me, and see"; and then to Thomas, "Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side." What deception is possible here? The risen Jesus was no mere spirit. He promptly cried, "A spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have." "Bring me," said he, "something to eat"; and as if to show how real his body was, though he did not need to eat, yet he did eat, and a piece of a broiled fish and of an honeycomb were proofs of the reality of the act. Now, the body of our Lord in its risen state did not exhibit the whole of his glorification; for otherwise we should have seen John falling at his feet as dead, and we should have seen all his disciples overcome with the glory of the vision; but, still, in a great measure, we may call the forty days' sojourn—"The life of Jesus in his glory upon earth." He was no longer despised and rejected of men; but a glory surrounded him. It is evident that the raised body passed from place to place in a single moment, that it appeared and vanished at will, and was superior to the laws of matter.

The risen body was incapable of pain, of hunger, thirst, and weariness during the time in which it remained here below,—fit representative of the bulk of which it was the firstfruits. Of our body also it shall be said ere long, “It was sown in weakness, it is raised in power: it was sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory.” Let us, then, as we think of the risen Christ, rest quite sure of a future life, and quite sure that our body will exist in it in a glorified condition.

I do not know whether you are ever troubled with doubts in connection with the world to come as to whether it can be true that we shall live eternally. Here is the respect which makes death so terrible to doubters; for while they have realized the grave, they have not realized the life beyond it. Now, the best help to that realization is a firm grip of the fact that Jesus died and Jesus rose again. This fact is proved better than any other event in history; the witness to it is far stronger than to anything else that is written either in profane or sacred records. The rising of our Lord Jesus Christ being certain, you may rest assured of the existence of another world. That is the first bearing of this great truth.

Secondly, *Christ's rising from the dead was the seal to all his claims.* It was true, then, that he was sent of God, for God raised him from the dead in confirmation of his mission. He had said himself, “Destroy this body, and in three days I will raise it up.” Lo, there he is: the temple of his body is rebuilt! He had even given this as a sign, that as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so should the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth, and should then come forth to life again. Behold his own appointed sign fulfilled! Before men's eye the seal is manifest! Suppose he had never risen. You and I might have believed in the truth of a certain mission which God had given him; but we could never have believed in the truth of such a commission as he claimed to have received—a commission to be our Redeemer from death and hell. How could he be our ransom from the grave if he had himself remained under the dominion of death?

Dear friends, the rising of Christ from the dead proved that this man was innocent of every sin. He could not be holden by the bands of death, for there was no sin to make those bands fast. Corruption could not touch his pure body, for no original sin had defiled the Holy One. Death could not keep him a continual prisoner, because he had not actually come under sin; and though he took sin of ours, and bore it by imputation, and therefore died, yet he had no fault of his own, and must, therefore, be set free when his imputed load had been removed.

Moreover, Christ's rising from the dead proved his claim to Deity. We are told in another place that he was proved to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead. He raised himself by his own power, and though the Father and the Holy Spirit were co-operative with him, and hence his resurrection is ascribed to them, yet it was because the Father had given him to have life in himself, that therefore he arose from the dead. Oh, risen Saviour, thy rising is the seal of thy work! We can have no doubt about thee now that thou hast left the tomb. Prophet of Nazareth, thou art indeed the Christ of God, for God has loosed the bands of death for thee! Son of David, thou art indeed the elect and precious One, for thou ever livest! Thy resurrection life

has set the sign-manual of heaven to all that thou hast said and done, and for this we bless and magnify thy name.

A third bearing of his resurrection is this, and it is a very grand one,—*The resurrection of our Lord, according to Scripture, was the acceptance of his sacrifice.* By the Lord Jesus Christ rising from the dead evidence was given that he had fully endured the penalty which was due to human guilt. “The soul that sinneth it shall die”—that is the determination of the God of heaven. Jesus stands in the sinner’s stead and dies: and when he has done *that* nothing more can be demanded of him, for he that is dead is free from the law. You take a man who has been guilty of a capital offence: he is condemned to be hanged, he is hanged by the neck till he is dead—what more has the law to do with him? It has done with him, for it has executed its sentence upon him; if he can be brought back to life again he is clear from the law; no writ that runs in Her Majesty’s dominions can touch him—he has suffered the penalty. So when our Lord Jesus rose from the dead, after having died, he had fully paid the penalty that was due to justice for the sin of his people, and his new life was a life clear of penalty, free from liability. You and I are clear from the claims of the law because Jesus stood in our stead, and God will not exact payment both from us and from our Substitute: it were contrary to justice to sue both the Surety and those for whom he stood. And now, joy upon joy! the burden of liability which once did lie upon the Substitute is removed from him also; seeing he has by the suffering of death vindicated justice and made satisfaction to the injured law. Now both the sinner and the Surety are free. This is a great joy, a joy for which to make the golden harps ring out a loftier style of music. He who took our debt has now delivered himself from it by dying on the cross. His new life, now that he has risen from the dead, is a life free from legal claim, and it is the token to us that we whom he represented are free also. Listen! “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again.” It is a knockdown blow to fear when the apostle says that we cannot be condemned because Christ has died in our stead, but he puts a double force into it when he cries, “Yea rather, that is risen again.” If Satan, therefore, shall come to any believer and say, “What about your sin?” tell him Jesus died for it, and your sin is put away. If he come a second time, and say to you, “What about your sin?” answer him, “Jesus lives, and his life is the assurance of our justification; for if our Surety had not paid the debt he would still be under the power of death.” Inasmuch as Jesus has discharged all our liabilities, and left not one farthing due to God’s justice from one of his people, he lives and is clear, and we live in him, and are clear also by virtue of our union with him. Is not this a glorious doctrine, this doctrine of the resurrection, in its bearing upon the justification of the saints? The Lord Jesus gave himself for our sins, but he rose again for our justification.

Bear with me while I notice, next, another bearing of this resurrection of Christ. *It was a guarantee of his people’s resurrection.* There is a great truth that never is to be forgotten, namely, that Christ and his people are one just as Adam and all his seed are one. That which Adam

did he did as a head for a body, and as our Lord Jesus and all believers are one, so that which Jesus did he did as a head for a body. We were crucified together with Christ, we were buried with Christ, and we are risen together with him; yea, he hath raised us up together and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus. He says, "Because I live ye shall live also." If Christ be not raised from the dead your faith is vain, and our preaching is vain, and ye are yet in your sins, and those that have fallen asleep in Christ have perished, and you will perish too; but if Christ has been raised from the dead then all his people must be raised also; it is a matter of gospel necessity. There is no logic more imperative than the argument drawn from union with Christ. God has made the saints one with Christ, and if Christ has risen all the saints must rise too. My soul takes firm hold on this and as she strengthens her grasp she loses all fear of death. Now we bear our dear ones to the cemetery and leave them each one in his narrow cell, calmly bidding him farewell and saying—

"So Jesus slept : God's dying Son
 Pass'd through the grave, and blest the bed ;
 Rest here, dear saint, till from His throne
 The morning break, and pierce the shade."

It is not merely ours to know that our brethren are living in heaven, but also that their mortal parts are in divine custody, securely kept till the appointed hour when the body shall be reanimated, and the perfect man shall enjoy the adoption of God. We are sure that our dead men shall live; together with Christ's dead body they shall rise. No power can hold in durance the redeemed of the Lord. "Let my people go" shall be a command as much obeyed by death as once by the humbled Pharaoh who could not hold a single Israelite in bonds. The day of deliverance cometh on apace.

"Break from His throne, illustrious morn !
 Attend, O earth, His sovereign word ;
 Restore thy trust, a glorious form :
 He must ascend to meet his Lord."

Once more, *our Lord's rising from the dead is a fair picture of the new life which all believers already enjoy.* Beloved, though this body is still subject to bondage like the rest of the visible creation, according to the law stated in Scripture, "the body is dead because of sin," yet "the spirit is life because of righteousness." The regeneration which has taken place in those who believe has changed our spirit, and given to it eternal life, but it has not affected our body further than this, that it has made it to be the temple of the Holy Ghost, and thus it is a holy thing, and cannot be obnoxious to the Lord, or swept away among unholy things; but still the body is subject to pain and weariness, and to the supreme sentence of death. Not so the spirit. There is within us already a part of the resurrection accomplished, since it is written, "And you hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins." You once were like the ungodly, under the law of sin and death, but you have been brought out of the bondage of corruption into the liberty of life and grace; the Lord having wrought in you gloriously, "according to

the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places."

Now, just as Jesus Christ led, after his resurrection, a life very different from that before his death, so you and I are called upon to live a high and noble spiritual and heavenly life, seeing that we have been raised from the dead to die no more. Let us joy and rejoice in this. Let us behave as those who are alive from the dead, the happy children of the resurrection. Do not let us be money-grubbers, or hunters after worldly fame. Let us not set our affections on the foul things of this dead and rotten world, but let our hearts fly upward, like young birds that have broken loose of their shells—upward towards our Lord and the heavenly things upon which he would have us set our minds. Living truth, living work, living faith, these are the things for living men: let us cast off the graveclothes of our former lusts, and wear the garments of light and life. May the Spirit of God help us in further meditating upon these things at home.

II. Now, secondly, LET US CONSIDER THE BEARINGS OF THIS FACT OF THE RESURRECTION UPON THE GOSPEL; for Paul says, "Jesus Christ was raised from the dead *according to my gospel*." I always like to see what way any kind of statement bears on the gospel. I may not have many more opportunities of preaching, and I make up my mind to this one thing, that I will waste no time upon secondary themes, but when I do preach it shall be the gospel, or something very closely bearing upon it. I will endeavour each time to strike under the fifth rib, and never beat the air. Those who have a taste for the superfluities may take their fill of them, it is for me to keep to the great necessary truths by which men's souls are saved. My work is to preach Christ crucified and the gospel, which gives men salvation through faith. I hear every now and then of very taking sermons about some bright new nothing or another. Some preachers remind me of the emperor who had a wonderful skill in carving men's heads upon cherry stones. What a multitude of preachers we have who can make wonderfully fine discourses out of a mere passing thought, of no consequence to anyone. But we want the gospel. We have to live and die, and we must have the gospel. Certain of us may be cold in our graves before many weeks are over, and we cannot afford to toy and trifle: we want to see the bearings of all teachings upon our eternal destinies, and upon the gospel which sheds its light over our future.

The resurrection of Christ is vital, because first it tells us that *the gospel is the gospel of a living Saviour*. We have not to send poor penitents to the crucifix, the dead image of a dead man. We say not, "These be thy gods, O Israel!" We have not to send you to a little baby Christ nursed by a woman. Nothing of the sort. Behold the Lord that liveth and was dead and is alive for evermore, and hath the keys of hell and of death! Behold in him a living and accessible Saviour who out of the glory still cries with loving accents, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." "He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." I say we have a living Saviour, and is not this a glorious feature of the gospel?

Notice next that *we have a powerful Saviour* in connection with the gospel that we preach; for he who had power to raise himself from the dead, has all power now that he is raised. He who in death vanquishes death, can much more conquer by his life. He who being in the grave did, nevertheless, burst all its bonds, can assuredly deliver all his people. He who, coming under the power of the law, did, nevertheless, fulfil the law, and thus set his people free from bondage, must be mighty to save. You need a Saviour strong and mighty, yet you do not want one stronger than he of whom it is written that he rose again from the dead. What a blessed gospel we have to preach,—the gospel of a living Christ who hath himself returned from the dead leading captivity captive.

And now notice, that we have *the gospel of complete justification* to preach to you. We do not come and say, “Brethren, Jesus Christ by his death did something by which men may be saved if they have a mind to be, and diligently carry out their good resolves.” No, no; we say Jesus Christ took the sin of his people upon himself and bore the consequences of it in his own body on the tree, so that he died; and having died, and so paid the penalty, he lives again; and now all for whom he died, all his people whose sins he bore, are free from the guilt of sin. You ask me, “Who are they?” and I reply, as many as believe on him. Whosoever believeth in Jesus Christ is as free from the guilt of sin as Christ is. Our Lord Jesus took the sin of his people, and died in the sinner’s stead, and now being himself set free, all his people are set free in their Representative. This doctrine is worth preaching. One may well rise from his bed to talk about perfect justification through faith in Christ Jesus. One might as well keep asleep as rise to say that Jesus accomplished little or nothing by his passion and his rising. Some seem to dream that Jesus made some little opening by which we have a slight chance of reaching pardon and eternal life, if we are diligent for many years. This is not our gospel. Jesus has saved his people. He has performed the work entrusted to him. He has finished transgression, made an end of sin, and brought in everlasting righteousness, and whosoever believeth in him is not condemned, and never can be.

Once again, the connection of the resurrection and the gospel is this, *it proves the safety of the saints*, for if when Christ rose his people rose also, they rose to a life like that of their Lord, and therefore they can never die. It is written, “Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him,” and it is so with the believer: if you have been dead with Christ and are risen with Christ, death has no more dominion over you; you shall never go back to the beggarly elements of sin, you shall never become what you were before your regeneration. You shall never perish, neither shall any pluck you out of Jesus’ hand. He has put within you a living and incorruptible seed which liveth and abideth for ever. He says himself, “The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of living water springing up unto everlasting life.” Wherefore hold ye fast to this, and let the resurrection of your Lord be the pledge of your own final perseverance.

Brethren, I cannot stop to show you how this resurrection touches the gospel at every point, but Paul is always full of it. More than thirty times Paul talks about the resurrection, and occasionally at great length, giving whole chapters to the glorious theme. The more I think of it

the more I delight to preach Jesus and the resurrection. The glad tidings that Christ has risen is as truly the gospel as the doctrine that he came among men and for men presented his blood as a ransom. If angels sang glory to God in the highest when the Lord was born, I feel impelled to repeat the note now that he is risen from the dead.

III. And so I come to my last head, and to the practical conclusion: **THE BEARING OF THIS RESURRECTION UPON OURSELVES.** Paul expressly bids us "Remember" it. "Why," says one, "we don't forget it." Are you sure you do not? I find myself far too forgetful of divine truths. We ought not to forget, for this first day of the week is consecrated for Sabbath purposes to constrain us to think of the resurrection. On the seventh day men celebrated a finished creation, on the first day we celebrate a finished redemption. Bear it, then, in mind. Now, if you will remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David rose from the dead, what will follow?

First, you will find that *most of your trials will vanish*. Are you tried by your sin? Jesus Christ rose again from the dead for your justification. Does Satan accuse? Jesus rose to be your advocate and intercessor. Do infirmities hinder? The living Christ will show himself strong on your behalf. You have a living Christ, and in him you have all things. Do you dread death? Jesus, in rising again, has vanquished the last enemy. He will come and meet you when it is your turn to pass through the chill stream, and you shall ford it in sweet company. What is your trouble? I care not what it is, for if you will only think of Jesus as living, full of power, full of love, and full of sympathy, having experienced all your trials, even unto death, you will have such a confidence in his tender care and in his boundless ability that you will follow in his footsteps without a question. Remember Jesus, and that he rose again from the dead, and your confidence will rise as on eagles' wings.

Next remember Jesus, for then you will see how your present sufferings are as nothing compared with his sufferings, and you will learn to *expect victory over your sufferings even as he obtained victory*. Kindly look at the chapter, and you will find the apostle there saying in the third verse, "Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ," and further on in the eleventh verse, "It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead in him, we shall also live in him: if we suffer, we shall also reign with him." Now, then, when you are called to suffer, think,—"Jesus suffered, yet Jesus rose again from the dead; he came up out of his baptism of griefs the better and more glorious for it, and so shall I!" Wherefore go you into the furnace at the Lord's bidding, and do not fear that the smell of fire shall pass upon you. Go you even down into the grave, and do not think that the worm shall make an end of you any more than it did of him. Behold in the risen One the type and model of what you are and are to be! Wherefore fear not, for he conquered! Stand not trembling, but march boldly on, for Jesus Christ of the seed of David rose from the dead, and you who are of the seed of the promise shall rise again from all your trials and afflictions, and live a glorious life.

We see here, dear brethren, in being told to remember Jesus that *there is hope even in our hopelessness*. When are things most hopeless in a man? Why, when he is dead. Do you know what it is to come down

to that, so far as your inward weakness is concerned? I do. At times it seems to me that all my joy is buried like a dead thing, and all my present usefulness and all my hope of being useful in the future are coffined and laid underground like a corpse. In the anguish of my spirit, and the desolation of my heart, I could count it better to die than to live. You say it should not be so. I grant you it should not be so, but so it is. Many things happen within the minds of poor mortals which should not happen; if we had more courage and more faith they would not happen. Ay, but when we go down, down, down, is it not a blessed thing that Jesus Christ of the seed of David died, and was raised from the dead? If I sink right down among the dead men yet will I hold to this blessed hope, that as Jesus rose again from the dead, so also shall my joy, my usefulness, my hope, my spirit rise. "Thou, which hast showed us great and sore troubles shalt quicken us again, and bring us up from the lowest depths of the earth." This downcasting and slaying is good for us. We take a deal of killing, and it is by being killed that we live. Many a man will never live till his proud self is slain. O proud Pharisee, if you are to live among those whom God accepts, you will have to come to the slaughter-house and be cut in pieces as well as killed. "This is dreadful work," saith one, "this dividing of joints and marrow, this spiritual dismemberment and destruction." Assuredly it is painful, and yet it were a grievous loss to be denied it. Alas, how many are so good and excellent, and strong and wise, and clever, and all that, that they cannot agree to be saved by grace through faith. If they could be reduced to less than nothing it would be the finest thing that ever happened to them. Remember what Solomon said might be done with the fool, and yet it would not answer—he was to be brayed in a mortar among wheat with a pestle,—pretty hard dealing that, and yet his folly would not depart from him. Not by that process alone, but through some such method, the Holy Spirit brings men away from their folly. Under his killing operations this may be their comfort that, if Jesus Christ rose literally from the dead (not from sickness, but from death), and lives again, even so will his people. Did you ever get, where Bunyan pictures Christian as getting, right under the old dragon's foot? He is very heavy, and presses the very breath out of a fellow when he makes him his footstool. Poor Christian lay there with the dragon's foot on his breast; but he was just able to stretch out his hand and lay hold on his sword, which, by a good providence, lay within his reach. Then he gave Apollyon a deadly thrust, which made him spread his dragon wings and fly away. The poor crushed and broken pilgrim, as he gave the stab to his foe, cried, "Rejoice not over me, O mine enemy; though I fall, yet shall I rise again." Brother, do you the same. You that are near despair, let this be the strength that nerves your arm and steels your heart. "Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to Paul's gospel."

Lastly, this proves *the futility of all opposition to Christ*. The learned are going to destroy the Christian religion. Already, according to their boastings, it has pretty nearly come to an end. The pulpit is effete, it cannot command public attention. We stand up and preach to empty benches! As you see—or do not see. Nothing remains for us but to die decently, so they insinuate. And what then? When our Lord was

dead, when the clay-cold corpse lay, watched by the Roman soldiery, and with a seal upon the enclosing stone, was not the cause in mortal jeopardy? But how fared it? Did it die out? Every disciple that Jesus had made forsook him, and fled, was not Christianity then destroyed? Nay, that very day our Lord won a victory which shook the gates of hell, and caused the universe to stand astonished. Matters are not worse with him at this hour! His affairs are not in a sadder condition to-day than then. Nay, see him to-day and judge. On his head are many crowns, and at his feet the hosts of angels bow! Jesus is the master of legions to-day, while the Cæsars have passed away! Here are his people—needy, obscure, despised, I grant you, still, but assuredly somewhat more numerous than they were when they laid him in the tomb. His cause is not to be crushed, it is for ever rising. Year after year, century after century, bands of true and honest hearts are marching up to the assault of the citadel of Satan. The prince of this world has a stronghold here on earth, and we are to capture it; but as yet we see small progress, for rank after rank the warriors of the Lord have marched to the breach and disappeared beneath the terrible fire of death. All who have gone before seem to have been utterly cut off and destroyed, and still the enemy holds his ramparts against us. Has nothing been done, think you? Has death taken away those martyrs, and confessors, and preachers, and laborious saints, and has nothing been achieved? Truly if Christ were dead I would admit our defeat, for they that are fallen asleep in him would have perished: but as the Christ liveth so the cause liveth, and they that have fallen are not dead: they have vanished from our sight for a little, but if the curtain could be withdrawn every one of them would be seen to stand in his lot unharmed, crowned, victorious! “Who are these arrayed in white robes, and whence came they?” These are they that were defeated! Whence, then, their crowns? These are they that were dishonoured! Whence then their white robes? These are they who clung to a cause which is overthrown. Whence then their long line of victors, for there is not a vanquished man among them all? Let the truth be spoken. Defeat is not the word for the cause of Jesus, the Prince of the house of David. We have always been victorious, brethren; we are victorious now. Follow your Master on your white horses, and be not afraid! I see him in the front with his blood-stained vesture around him, fresh from the wine-press where he has trodden down his foes. You have not to present atoning blood, but only to conquer after your Lord. Put on your white raiment and follow him on your white horses, conquering and to conquer. He is nearer than we think, and the end of all things may be before the next jibe shall have come forth from the mouth of the last new sceptic. Have confidence in the risen One, and live in the power of his resurrection.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Luke xxiv.

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK.”—911, 309, 307.