

THE POWER OF HIS RESURRECTION.

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BY C. H. SPURGEON,

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“That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection.”-Philippians 3:10.

PAUL, in the verses before the text, had deliberately laid aside his own personal righteousness. “But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law.” It is insinuated in these days that a belief in the righteousness of faith will lead men to care little for good works, that it will act as a sedative to their zeal, and therefore they will exhibit no ardor for holiness. The very reverse is seen in the case of the apostle, and in the case of all who cast aside the righteousness of the law, that they may be clothed with that righteousness “which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.” Paul made a list of his advantages as to confidence in the flesh, and they were very great; but he turned his back upon them all for Christ’s sake; but accepting Christ to be everything to him, did he, therefore, sit down in self-content, and imagine that personal character was nothing? By no manner of means. A noble ambition fired his soul: he longed to know Christ, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; if by any means he might attain unto the resurrection from the dead. He became a holy walker, and a heavenly runner, because of what he saw in Christ Jesus. Be you sure of this, that the less you value your own righteousness, the more will you seek after true holiness; the less you think of your own beauty, the more ardently will you long to become like the Lord Jesus. Those who dream of

being saved by their own good works are usually those who have no good works worth mentioning; while those who sincerely lay aside all hope of salvation by their own merits, are fruitful in every virtue to the praise of God. Nor is this a strange thing; for the less a man thinks of himself, the more he will think of Christ, and the more will he aim at being like him. The less esteem he has of his own past good works, the more earnest will he be to show his gratitude for being saved by grace through the righteousness of Christ. Faith works by love, and purifies the soul, and sets the heart a running after the prize of our high calling in Christ Jesus; hence it is a purifying and active principle, and by no means the inert thing which some suppose it to be.

What, then, was the great object of the apostle's ardor? It was "that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection." Paul already knew the Lord Jesus by faith; he knew so much of him as to be able to teach others. He had looked to Jesus, and known the power of his death; but he now desired that the vision of his faith might become still better known by experience. You may know a man, and have an idea that he is powerful; but to know him and his power over you, is a stage further. You may have read of a man so as to be familiar with his history and his character, and yet you may have no knowledge of him and of his personal influence over yourself. Paul desired intimate acquaintance with the Lord Jesus, personal intercourse with the Lord to such a degree that he should feel his power at every point, and know the effect of all that he had wrought out in his life, death, and resurrection. He knew that Jesus died, and he aspired to rehearse the history in his own soul's story: he would be dead with him to the world. He knew that Jesus was buried, and he would fain be "buried with him in baptism unto death." He knew that Jesus rose, and his longing was to rise with him in newness of life. Yes, he even remembered that his Lord had ascended up on high, and he rejoiced to say, "He hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." His great desire was to have reproduced in himself the life of Jesus, so as to know all about him by being made like him. The best Life of Christ is not by Canon Farrar, or Dr. Geikie: it is written in the experience of the saint by the Holy Ghost.

I want you to observe, at the very outset, that all Paul desired to know was always in connection with our Lord himself. He says, "That I may know HIM, and the power of his resurrection." Jesus first, and then the power of his resurrection. Beware of studying doctrine, precept, or experiences apart

from the Lord Jesus, who is the soul of all. Doctrine without Christ will be nothing better than his empty tomb; doctrine with Christ is a glorious high throne, with the King sitting thereon. Precepts without Christ are impossible commands; but precepts from the lips of Jesus have a quickening effect upon the heart. Without Christ you can do nothing; but, abiding in him, you bring forth much fruit. Always let your preaching and your hearing look towards the personal Savior. This makes all the difference in preaching. Ministers may preach sound doctrine by itself, and be utterly without unction; but those who preach it in connection with the person of the blessed Lord have an anointing which nothing else can give. Christ himself, by the Holy Ghost, is the savor of a true ministry.

This morning we will confine our thoughts to one theme, and unite with the apostle in a strong desire to know our Lord in connection with the power of his resurrection. The resurrection of the Lord Jesus was in itself a marvellous display of power. To raise the dead body of our Lord from the tomb was as great a work as the creation. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, each one wrought this greatest miracle. I need not stay to quote the texts in which the resurrection of our Lord is ascribed, to the Father, who brought again from the dead that great Shepherd of the sheep; nor need I mention Scriptures in which the Lord is said to have been quickened by the Holy Spirit; nor those instances in which that great work is ascribed to the Lord Jesus himself; but assuredly the sacred writings represent the divine Trinity in Unity as gloriously co-operating in the raising again from the dead the person of our Lord Jesus Christ. It was, however, a special instance of our Lord's own power. He said, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." He also said, concerning his life, "I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." I do not know whether I can convey my own thought to you; but what strikes me very forcibly is this-no mere man going to his grave could say, "I have power to take my life again." The departure of life leaves the man necessarily powerless: he cannot restore himself to life. Behold the sacred body of Jesus, embalmed in spices, and wrapped about with linen; it is laid within the sealed and guarded tomb; how can it come forth to life? Yet Jesus said, "I have power to take my life again"; and he proved it true. Strange power! That spirit of his, which had traveled through the underlands, and upwards to the eternal glory, had power to return, and to re-enter that holy thing which had been born of the virgin, and to revivify that flesh which could not see corruption. Behold the dead and buried One

makes himself to live! Herein is a marvellous thing. He was master over death, even when death seemed to have mastered him: he entered the grave as a captive, but left it as a conqueror. He was compassed by the bonds of death, but he could not be holden of them; even in his cerements he came to life; from those wrappings he unbound himself; from the close-fastened tomb he stepped into liberty. If, in the extremity of his weakness, he had the power to rise out of the sepulcher, and come forth in newness of life, what can he not now accomplish?

I do not think, however, that Paul is here thinking so much of the power displayed in the resurrection, as of the power which comes out of it, which may most properly be called, "the power of his resurrection." This the apostle desired to apprehend and to know. This is a very wide subject, and I cannot encompass the whole region; but many things may be said under four heads. The power of our Lord's resurrection is an evidencing power, a justifying power, a life-giving power, and a consoling power.

I. First, the power of our Lord's resurrection is AN EVIDENCING POWER. Here I shall liken it to a seal which is set to a document to make it sure. Our Lord's resurrection from the dead was a proof that he was the Messiah, that he had come upon the Father's business, that he was the Son of God, and that the covenant which Jehovah had made with him was henceforth ratified and established, He was "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." Thus said Paul at Antioch: "The promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." Nobody witnessing our Lord's resurrection could doubt his divine character, and that his mission upon earth was from the eternal God. Well did Peter and John declare that it was the Prince of life that God had raised from the dead. Our Lord had given this for a sign unto the cavilling Pharisees, that as Jonah lay in the deep till the third day, and then came forth, even so would he himself lie in the heart of the earth till the third day, and then arise from the dead. His rising proved that he was sent of God, and that the power of God was with him. Our Lord had entered into a covenant with the Father before all worlds, wherein he had on his part engaged to finish redemption and make atonement for sin. That he had done this was affirmed by his rising again from the dead: the resurrection was the attestation of the Father to the fulfillment on the part of the Second Adam of his portion in the eternal

covenant. His blood is the blood of the everlasting covenant, and his resurrection is the seal of it. "Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father" as the witness of the Eternal God to the glory of the Son.

So much is the resurrection the proof of our Lord's mission, that it falls to the ground without it. If our Lord Jesus had not risen from the dead, our faith in him would have lacked the corner-stone of the foundation on which it rests. Paul writes most positively: "If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain." He declares that the apostles would have been found false witnesses of God, "Because," says he, "we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not." "If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins." The Resurrection of Jesus is the key-stone of the arch of our holy faith. If you take the resurrection away, the whole structure lies in ruins. The death of Christ, albeit that it is the ground of our confidence for the pardon of sin, would not have furnished such a foundation had he not risen from the dead. Were he dead still, his death would have been like the death of any other person, and would have given us no assurance of acceptance. His life, with all the beauty of its holiness, would have been simply a perfect example of conduct, but it could not have become our righteousness if his burial in the tomb of Joseph had been the end of all. It was essential for the confirmation of his life-teaching and his death-suffering, that he should be raised from the dead. If he had not risen, but were still among the dead, you might well tell us that we preach to you a cunningly devised fable. See, then, the power of his resurrection: it proves to a demonstration the faith once delivered to the saints. Supported by infallible proofs, it becomes itself the infallible proof of the authority, power, and glory of Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God.

I beg you further to notice that this proof had such power about it to the minds of the apostles, that they preached with singular boldness. These chosen witnesses had seen the Lord after his resurrection; one of them had put his finger into the print of the nails, and others had eaten and drunk with him: they were sure that they were not deceived. They knew that he was dead, for they had been present at his burial: they knew that he lived again, for they had heard him speak, and had seen him eat a piece of a broiled fish and of an honeycomb. The fact was as clear to them as it was wonderful. Peter and the rest of them without hesitation declared, "This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses." They were sure that they saw the man who died on Calvary alive again, and they could not

but testify what they had heard and seen. The enemies of the faith wondered at the boldness with which these witnesses spake; theirs was the accent of conviction, for they testified what they knew of a surety. They had no suspicion lurking in the background; they were sure that Jesus had risen from the dead, and this unquestionable certainty made them confident that he was indeed the Messiah and the Savior of men. The power of this fact upon those who believe it is great; but upon those who saw it as eye-witnesses it must have been inconceivably mighty. I wonder not that they defied contradiction, persecution, and even death. How could they disbelieve that of which they were so certain? How could they withhold their witness to a fact which was so important to the destiny of their fellow-men? In the apostles and the first disciples we have a cloud of witnesses to a fact more firmly attested than any other recorded in history; and that fact is the witness to the truth of our religion. Honest witnesses, in more than sufficient number, declare that Jesus Christ, who died on Calvary, and was buried in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathaea, did rise again from the dead. In the mouth of many witnesses the fact is established; and this fact established, proves other blessed facts.

If the cloud of witnesses might not seem sufficient in itself, I see that cloud tinged with crimson. Reddened as by the setting sun, the cloud of witnesses in life becomes a cloud of martyrs in death. The disciples were put to cruel deaths asserting still the fact that Jesus had risen from the grave. They and their immediate followers, nothing doubting, "counted not their lives dear to them" that they might witness to this truth. They suffered the loss of all things, were banished, and were accounted the offscouring of all things; but they could not, and would not, contra diet their faith. They were nailed to a cross, or bound to a stake to be burned; but the enthusiasm of their conviction was never shaken. Behold an array of martyrs reaching on through the centuries! Behold how they are all sure of the gospel, because sure of their Lord's endless life! Is not this a grand evidence of "the power of his resurrection"? The Book of Martyrs is a record of that power.

The resurrection of Christ casts a side-light upon the gospel by proving its reality and literalness. There is a tendency in this generation to spirit away the truth, and in the doing thereof to lose both the truth and its spirit. In these evil days fact is turned into myth, and truth into opinion. Our Lord's resurrection is a literal fact: when he rose from the dead he was no spectre, ghost, or apparition; but as he was a real man who died the cruel death of the cross, so he was a real man who rose again from the dead, bearing in

his body the marks of the crucifixion. His appearance to his familiar companions was to them no dream of the night, no fevered imagination of enthusiastic minds: for he took pains to make them sure of his real presence, and that he was really among them in his proper person.

*“A man there was, a real man,
Who once on Calvary died,
That same blest man arose from death:
The mark is in his side!”*

There was as much reality about the rising of our Lord as about his death and burial. There is no fiction here. This literal fact gives reality to all that comes from him and by him. Justification is no mere easing of the conscience, it is a real arraying of the soul in righteousness: adoption into the family of God is no fancy, but brings with it true and proper sonship. The blessings of the gospel are substantial facts, and not mere theological opinions. As the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ from the dead was a plain visible matter of fact, so are the pardon of sin and the salvation of the soul matters of actual experience, and not the creatures of religious imagination.

Brethren, such is the evidencing power of the resurrection of Christ, that when every other argument fails your faith, you may find safe anchorage in this assured fact. The currents of doubt may bear you towards the rocks of mistrust; but when your anchor finds no other hold, it may grip the fact of the resurrection of Christ from the dead. This must be true. The witnesses are too many to have been deceived; and their patient deaths on account of their belief, proved that they were not only honest men, but good men, who valued truth more than life. We know that Jesus rose from the dead; and, whatever else we are forced to question, we have no question on that score. We may be tossed about upon the sea in reference to other statements, but we step to shore again, and find terra firma in this unquestionable, firmly-established truth: “The Lord is risen indeed.” Oh, that any of you who are drifting may be brought to a resting-place by this fact! If you doubt the possibility of your own pardon, this may aid you to believe, for Jesus lives. I read the other day of one who had greatly backslidden, and grievously dishonored his Lord; but he heard a sermon upon the resurrection of Christ from the dead, and it was life to him. Though he had known and believed that truth before, yet he had never realized it vividly. After service he said to the minister, “Is it so, that our Lord Jesus has really risen from the dead, and is yet alive? Then he can

save me.” Just so. A living Christ can say assuredly to you, “Thy sins be forgiven thee.” He is able now to breathe into you the life eternal. The Lord is risen indeed: in this see the evidence of his power to save to the uttermost. From this first solid stone of the resurrection, you may go, step by step, over the stream of doubt, till you land on the other side, fully assured of your salvation in Christ Jesus.

Thus, you see, there is an evidencing power in the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. I pray that you may feel it now. You cannot have too much holy confidence. You cannot be too sure. He that died for you is alive, and is making intercession for sinners. Believe that firmly, and realize it vividly, and then you will be filled with rest of heart, and will be bold to testify in the name of your Lord. The timid by nature will become lion-like in witnessing when the resurrection has borne to them overwhelming evidence of their Redeemer’s mission and power.

II. We will dwell next UPON THE JUSTIFYING POWER OF HIS RESURRECTION, Under the first head I compared the resurrection to a seal; under this second head I must liken it to a note of acquittance, or a receipt. Our Lord’s rising from the dead was a discharge in full, from the High Court of Justice, from all those liabilities which he had undertaken on our behalf.

Observe, first, that our Lord must have fully paid the penalty due to sin. He was discharged because he had satisfied the claim of justice. All that the law could possibly demand was the fulfillment of the sentence, “The soul that sinneth, it shall die.” There is no getting away from that doom: life must be taken for sin committed. Christ Jesus is our substitute and sacrifice. He came into the world to vindicate the law, and he has achieved it by the offering of himself. He has been dead and buried, and he has now risen from the dead because he has endured death to the full, and there remaineth no more to be done. Brethren, consider this, and let your hearts be filled with joy: the penalty which has come upon you through breaches of the law is paid. Yonder is the receipt. Behold the person of your risen Lord! He was your hostage till the law had been honored and divine authority had been vindicated: that being done, an angel was sent from the throne to roll back the stone, and set the hostage free. All who are in him- and all are in him who believe in him-are set free by his being set free from the prison-house of the sepulcher.

*“He bore on the tree the ransom for me,
And now both the sinner and Surety are free”*

Our Lord has blotted out the record which was against us, and that in a most righteous way. Through the work of Jesus, God is just, and the justifier of him that believeth. Jesus died for our sins, but rose again for our justification. As the rising of the sun removes the darkness, so the rising of Christ has removed our sin. The power of the resurrection of Christ is seen in the justifying of every believer; for the justification of the Representative is the virtual justification of all whom he represents.

When our Lord rose from the dead, it was certified that the righteousness, which he came to work out, was finished. For what remained to be done? All was accomplished, and therefore he went up unto his Father’s side. Is he toiling there to finish a half -accomplished enterprise? Nay, “This man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God.” Our righteousness is a finished one, for Jesus quits the place of humiliation, and rises to his reward. He cried upon the cross, “It is finished”! and his word was true. The Father endorsed his claim by raising him from the dead. Put on, therefore, O ye faithful, this matchless robe of perfect righteousness! It is more than royal, it is divine. It is for you that this best robe is provided. Wear it, and be glad. Remember that in Christ Jesus you are justified from all things. You are, in the sight of God, as righteous as if you had kept the law; for your covenant Head has kept it. You are as justified as if you had been obedient unto death; for he has obeyed the law on your behalf. You are this day justified by Christ who is “the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.” Because he is delivered from the tomb, we are delivered from judgment, and are sent forth as justified persons. “Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God.” Oh, that a deep peace, profound as the serenity of God, may fall upon all our hearts as we see Jesus risen from the dead.

His resurrection did not only prove our pardon and our justification, but it proved our full acceptance. “He hath made us accepted in the beloved.” Christ is never separated from his people, and therefore whatever he is, they are in him. He is the head; and as is the head, such are the members. I will suppose that a dead body lies before us. See, the head comes to life; it opens its eyes; it lifts itself; it rises from the ground; it moves to the table. I need not tell you that the arms, the feet, and the whole body must go with the head. It cannot be that there shall be a risen head, and yet the members

of the body shall still be dead. When God accepted Christ my head, he accepted me; when he glorified my head, he made me a partaker of that glory through my Representative. The infinite delight of the Father in his Only-begotten, is an infinite delight in all the members of his mystical body. I pray that you may feel the power of his resurrection in this respect, and become flooded with delight by the conviction that you are accepted, beloved, and delighted in by the Lord God. The resurrection will make your heart dance for joy if you fully see the pardon, justification, and acceptance which it guarantees to you. Oh that the Holy Spirit may now take of the things of Christ's resurrection, and apply them to us with justifying power!

III. Thirdly, let us now notice THE LIFE-GIVING POWER OF THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST.

This will be seen if we perceive that our Lord has life in himself. I showed you this just now, in the fact that he raised himself from the dead. He took up the life which he laid down. He only hath immortality, essential and underived. Remember how he said, "I am the resurrection and the life." Do not say, "I believe in Christ, and desire life." You have it. Christ and life are not two things. He says, "I am the resurrection, and the life." If you have Jesus Christ, you have the resurrection. Oh, that you might now realize what power lies in him who is the resurrection and the life! All the power there is in Christ is there for his people. "It pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell," and "of his fullness have all we received." Christ has a life in himself, and he makes that life to flow into every part of his mystical body, according to his own word, "Because I live, ye shall live also." Triumph, therefore, that you possess as a believer this day that same life which is inherent in the person of your glorious covenant Head.

Moreover, our Lord has power to quicken whom he will. If the Lord Jesus Christ will this morning speak to the most clay-cold heart in this assembly, it will glow with heavenly life. If the salvation of souls depended upon the preacher, nobody would be saved; but when the preacher's Master comes with him, however feeble his utterance, the life flashes forth, and the dead are raised. See how the dry bones come together! Behold how, at the coming of the divine wind, they stand upon their feet an exceeding great army! Our risen Redeemer is the Lord and Giver of life. What joy to Christian workers is found in the life-giving power of the resurrection! The

warrant of Jesus will run through the domain of death and set dead Lazarus free. Where is he this morning? Lord, call him!

This life, whenever it is imparted, is new life. In reading the four evangelists, have you never noticed the difference between Jesus after resurrection and before? A French divine has written a book entitled "The Life of Jesus Christ in Glory." When I bought it, I hardly knew what the subject might be; but I soon perceived that it was the life of Jesus on earth after he was risen from the dead. That was, indeed, a glorious life. He feels no more suffering, weakness, weariness, reproach, or poverty: he is no more caviled at or opposed by men. He is in the world, but he scarcely seems to touch it, and it does not at all touch him. He was of another world, and only a temporary sojourner on this globe, to which he evidently did not belong. When we believe in Jesus, we receive a new life, and rise to a higher state. The spiritual life owes nothing to the natural life: it is from another source, and tends in another direction. The old life bears the image of the first and earthy Adam; the second life bears the image of the second and heavenly Adam. The old life remains, but becomes to us a kind of death: the new life which God gives is the true life, which is part of the new creation, and links us to the heavenly and divine. To this, I say, the old life is greatly opposed; but that evil life gets not the upper hand. Wonderful is the change wrought by the new birth! Faculties that were in you before are purged and elevated; but, at the same time, new spiritual faculties are conferred, and a new heart and a right spirit are put within us. Wonder at this—that the risen Christ is able to give us an entirely new life. May you know, in this respect, the power of his resurrection! May you know the peace, the repose, the power of your risen Lord! May you, like him, be a stranger here, soon expecting to depart unto the Father! Before his death our Lord was straitened, because his work was unaccomplished: after his death he was at ease, because his work was done. Brethren, we may enter into his rest, for we are complete in him! We are working for our Lord, as he was for his Father during the forty days; but yet the righteousness in which we are accepted is finished, and therefore we find rest in him.

Once more, the resurrection of Christ is operating at this present time with a quickening power on all who hear the Word aright. The sun is, to the vegetable world, a great quickener. In this month of April he goes forth with life in his beams, and we see the result. The buds are bursting, the trees are putting on their summer dress, the flowers are smiling, and even the seeds which he buried in the earth are beginning to feel the vivifying

warmth: they see not the lord of day, but they feel his smile. Over what an enormous territory is the returning sun continually operating! How potent are his forces when he crosses the line and lengthens the day! Such is the risen Christ. In the grave he was like the sun in his winter solstice, but he crossed the line in his resurrection; he has brought us all the hopes of Spring, and is bringing us the joys of Summer. He is quickening many at this hour, and will yet quicken myriads. This is the power with which the missionary goes forth to sow; this is the power in which the preacher at home continues to scatter the seed. The risen Christ is the great harvest-producer. By the power of his resurrection men are raised from their death in sin to eternal life.

I said eternal life, for wherever Jesus gives life, it is everlasting life. "Christ being risen from the dead, dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him"; and as we have been raised in the likeness of his resurrection, so are we raised into a life over which death has no more dominion. We shall not die again, but the water which Jesus gives us shall be in us a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

I wish I could venture further to unveil this secret force, and still more fully reveal to you the power of our Lord's resurrection. It is the power of the Holy Ghost; it is the energy upon which you must depend when teaching or preaching; it must all be "according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead." I want you to feel that power to-day. I would have you feel eternal life throbbing in your bosoms, filling you with glory and immortality. Are you feeling cast down? Are your surroundings like those of a charnel-house? When you return will you seem to go home to endure the rottenness and corruption of profanity and lewdness? Your remedy will lie in eternal life flooding you with its torrents, and bearing you above these evil influences. May you not only have life, but have it more abundantly, and so be vigorous enough to throw off the baneful influences of this evil world!

IV. The last point is THE CONSOLING POWER OF THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST.

This consoling power should be felt as to all departed saints. We are often summoned to the house of mourning in this church; for we seldom pass a week without one or two deaths of beloved ones. Here is our comfort—Jesus says, "Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise."

*“As the Lord our Savior rose
So all his followers must.”*

He is the first-fruits from among the dead. The cemeteries are crowded, precious dust is closely heaped together; but as surely as Jesus rose from the tomb of Joseph, all those who are in him shall rise also. Though bodies may be consumed in the fire, or ground to powder, or sucked up by plants, and fed upon by animals, or made to pass through ten thousand changeable processes, yet difficulties there are none where there is a God. He that gave us bodies when we had none, can restore those bodies when they are pulverized and scattered to the four winds. We sorrow not as those that are without hope. We know where the souls of the godly ones are: they are “for ever with the Lord.” We know where their bodies will be when the clarion blast shall wake the dead, and the sepulcher shall give up its spoils. Sweet is the consolation which comes to us from the empty tomb of Jesus. “God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by his own power.”

Here, too, is comfort in our inward deaths. In order that we should know the resurrection of Christ, we must be made conformable unto his death. Have we not to die many deaths? Have you ever felt the sentence of death in yourself that you might not trust in yourself? Have you not seen all your fancied beauty decay, and all your strength wither “like the leaves of the forest when autumn has blown”? Have not all your carnal hopes perished, and all your resolves turned to dust? If any of you are undergoing that process to-day, I hope you will go through with it, till the sword of the Spirit has slain you; for you must die before you can be raised from the dead. If you are undergoing the process of crucifixion with Christ, which means a painful, lingering death within, remember that this is the needful way to resurrection. How can you know your Lord’s resurrection except by knowing his death? You must be buried with him to rise with him. Is not this sweet consolation for a bitter experience?

I think there is here great consolation for those of us who mourn because the cause of Christ seems to be in an evil case. I may say to the enemy, “This is your hour, and the power of darkness.” Alas! I cry with the holy woman, “They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him”! In many a pulpit the precious blood no longer speaks. They have taken the heart out of the doctrine of propitiation, and left us nothing but the name of it. Their false philosophy has overlaid the gospel, and crushed

out its life, so far as they are concerned. They boast that we are powerless: our protest is despised, error shows her brazen forehead, and seizes the strongholds of truth. Yet we despair not; nay, we do not even fear. If the cause of Christ were dead and buried, and the wise men had fixed the stone, and set their seal, and appointed their guards, yet, at the appointed hour, the Lord's truth would rise again. I am not uneasy about ultimate issues. The mischief for the time being grieves me; but the Lord will yet avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him. Jesus must live if they kill him; he must rise if they bury him: herein lieth our consolation.

This truth affords choice consolation to persecuted saints. In Paul's day to be a Christian was a costly matter. Imprisonment was the lightest of their trials: stripes and tortures of every kind were their portion. "Christians to the lions!" was the cry heard in the amphitheatre; and nothing pleased the people better, unless it was to see saints of God smeared with pitch from head to foot, and set on fire. Did they not call themselves the lights of the world? Such were the brutal pleasantries of the Romans. Here was the backbone of saintly comfort—they would rise again and share in the glory of their Lord for ever. Though they might find a living grave between a lion's jaws, they would not be destroyed: even the body would live again, for Jesus lived again, even the Crucified One in whom they trusted.

My brethren, my text is like a honeycomb dripping with honey. It has in it comfort for the ages to come. There will be a living issue for these dead times. Do you see that train steaming along the iron way? See, it plunges into a cavern in yonder hill! You have now lost sight of it. Has it perished? As on an angel's wing, you fly to the top of the hill, and you look down on the other side. There it comes steaming forth again from the tunnel, bearing its living freight to its destined terminus. So, whenever you see the church of God apparently plunging into a cavern of disaster or a grave of defeat, think not that the spirit of the age has swallowed it up. Have faith in God! The truth will be uppermost yet.

*“The might with the right,
And the right with the might shall be:
And, come what there may
To stand in the way,
That day the world shall see.”*

The opposition of men might have proved a dark den in which the cause of God should have been hopelessly buried; but in the resurrection of our

Lord we see a cavern turned into a tunnel, and a way pierced through death itself. "Who art thou, O great mountain?" The Alps are pierced; God's way is made clear; he triumphs over all difficulties. "The glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."

That is my close. I desire that you should feel resurrection power. We have many technical Christians, who know the phrases of godliness, but know not the power of godliness. We have ritualistic Christians, who stickle for the outward, but know not the power. We have many moral religionists, but they also know not the power. We are pestered with conventional, regulation Christians. Oh, yes, no doubt we are Christians; but we are not enthusiasts, fanatics, nor even as this bigot. Such men have a name to live, and are dead. They have a form of godliness, but deny the power of it. I pray you, my hearers, be not content with a truth till you feel the force of it. Do not praise the spiritual food set before you, but eat of it till you know its power to nourish. Do not even talk of Jesus till you know his power to save. God grant that you may know the powers of the world to come, for Jesus' sake! Amen.