

OUR ASCENDED LORD

NO. 1928

A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, NOVEMBER 7, 1886,
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*“Who has gone into Heaven and is at the right hand of God;
angels and authorities and powers being made subject to Him.”*
1 Peter 3:22.

LAST Lord's Day morning [#1927—*Our Sympathizing High Priest*] we considered the humiliation of our Divine Lord and, I think, if one may speak for the rest, that we consciously and deeply felt how very near He came to us in His suffering condition and how very near He still is to us as truly Man. On that happy occasion we had fellowship with Him of the truest kind. The sympathy of His soul toward us awoke our sympathies towards Him. We felt it exceedingly profitable to sit and weep with Him who not only wept but *bled* for us.

This morning, in considering our Lord's Glorification, I hope we shall feel quite as near to Him as we did on the former occasion, for if He was humiliated for us, He is also exalted for us. If He, Himself, once stooped to come near to us, He now lifts us up from our low estate and brings us near to Himself in His Glory. It is not only that He is partaker of our lowliness, but we are partakers of His exaltation. The fellowship is full and complete, for while He takes upon Himself our fall, we, on the other hand, partake in His rising again! He comes down to us in His Incarnation, but He calls us up to Him in His Ascension. He wears our garb of poverty by bearing our flesh, but He robes us in His splendor as He bears our nature into Heaven. Remember, it is “this same Jesus” whom they saw on earth who also is gone into Heaven and who is to come again a second time. Yes, it is “this same Jesus” and He is no less Man on the Throne of God than He was on the Cross—He is as truly our Brother, now, amid the acclaim of angels as among the weeping women of Jerusalem.

I beseech you, do not let the change of His estate create any distance in *your* hearts, since there is no distance in His heart, but rather ask for Grace that you may rise up unto Him, to joy in His joy and triumph in His triumph! Let us behold our Lord's glories today, not as a blaze of intolerable splendor, driving us back with fear, but as a radiance of peace, drawing us near with hope! Let us go to the land where our greater Joseph is Lord of all! Let us go into His palace, let us sit at His table with Him, there, as He once sat at our table with us here! We went to David in the cave, let us not fear to approach Him now that He is King! Yes, let us rejoice that we share His royalty, for He has made us kings and priests, and we shall reign with Him forever and ever.

The history of our Lord after His death is as simple as it is sublime and I shall not try to set it forth with garnishing of human speech. When a renowned warrior writes home after great victories, his dispatches are short and to the point. The brilliance of the news is sufficient without the light of sparkling sentences. His words are few; he has so much to tell that he does not waste a letter! His achievements are so great that they do not require the aid of poetry or oratory. A dash from the conqueror's pen is enough to set a nation rejoicing. “I came, I saw, I conquered,” is a line which will be quoted to the end of time! Such is the life of our Lord Jesus from the Cross onward. If I seem to preach very plainly and even baldly, this morning, you will understand that my theme forbids the adornments which other subjects invite.

Our Savior died, but He rose again. It is a sort of courtesy to death to speak of the period of our Lord's entombment as three days. The victory of death was so short that Scripture can afford to let it be reckoned in the roughest manner, to give to death the utmost it could claim by the broadest method of reckoning. Give Death his three days—that is the outside of all his victory! Let Death and Hell make the best they can of it—the bruised heel of the Seed of the woman soon ceases to be lame!

When the first day of the week began to dawn, before yet the sun had gleamed through the veil of the olives and lit up the garden of Joseph of Arimathaea, our Lord arose from His slumber and began to disrobe Himself of His grave clothes. In orderly manner He folded them up and divided them with intent of instruction. He left the grave clothes for us, that our last chamber may be fitly furnished when we shall come to lie in it—and then He put the napkin by itself, that our friends may dry their tears thereon when they remember that there is now a glorious hope in death for all who are in Christ! The living Lord waited a while and then the messenger from the courts of Heaven descended to set Him free. The angel touched the stone which shut the mouth of the grave—the stone removed—the Risen One came forth from the dampness of the vault into the freshness of the morning air, frightening the watchmen and causing the solid earth to quake with fear! He was as truly risen as He had been truly dead! He was no apparition or phantom—that body which had most certainly given up the ghost now received life again!

Our Lord tarried here for 40 days—a time sufficient for the establishment of His identity and the production of proof of the fact that He had truly risen. During that 40 days He so showed Himself in different places that the testimony to His Resurrection became most abundant and convincing. He was seen by ones and twos who could the more carefully examine Him because they were alone with Him. He was tested by one who put his finger into the print of the nails and thrust his hand into His side—nothing could be more conclusive than the verdict of that suspicious examiner! He was seen by about 500 brethren at once, that by the eyes of many the fact of His being the once Crucified Jesus might be ascertained beyond all further question. His appearance was not a vision beheld by one or two enthusiasts when alone—He was manifestly set forth among a great company as their Lord and Master who had been cruelly put to death, but had risen from among the dead! Our Savior would not go to Heaven till He had settled the fact of His Resurrection upon a basis which can never be shaken. There is no fact in history, ancient or modern, which is half so well attested as the Resurrection of our Lord from the dead! You shall turn to the pages of the most veracious and sober historians of any age you please, but you will not there find such assured evidence of any event as the Gospels give to us of the rising again of Jesus! Events which we now speak of as indisputable are not so surely true as that Jesus, who was taken down from the Cross and laid in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathaea, did really rise and live again among the sons of men!

He tarried 40 days, not only for the establishment of this great Truth of God, but for the comfort of His disciples. He wiped away the tears which they shed at His death and made them feel that it was no longer a calamity that their Lord had died. He also prepared them for the more enduring grief of His departure—indeed, He so elevated their minds and raised their spirits, that we never hear of their lamenting His Ascension! He made them see that it was expedient that He should go away so that the Comforter might come to them. He also communed with them, gave them of His Spirit and filled them with His peace. He raised them from being common peasants to be the Patriarchs of a new age, the vanguard of the Divine crusaders who would conquer the world for Jesus! They went forth strong in the Lord and in the power of His might because He had spoken to them and they had heard from His own lips the Gospel which they were commissioned to proclaim.

He also stayed long enough to give them directions how to act. In fact, He organized His forces, ordered their line of battle and prepared them for the victory! To all He gave the direction to tarry at Jerusalem till they were endowed with power from on high and, in that command, we have our marching orders for all time. Some of the disciples He had to address individually, for they had special needs. He had to cheer the heart of Magdalene, to overcome the unbelief of Thomas, to give warning and encouragement to Peter and to brace them all for their coming struggle. The Great Shepherd of the sheep could not return unto His rest till He had seen to every sickly sheep and put the whole flock in order. He would not go to His Glory till He could leave all whom the Father gave Him prepared for their future destiny.

Those forty days were soon over. Very remarkable days they were, if you study them—so different from His former life. Nobody molested the Lord. No scribes or Pharisees contradicted Him, no malicious Jews took up stones to stone Him. Those were calm days, days wherein the birds of peace sat on the still waters and not a wave ruffled the calm. I might almost say that those days were the prelude of His Glory, a sort of anticipation of His reign of peace when He shall stand in the latter day upon the earth and wars shall cease unto the end of the earth. When those 40 days were over, the Master went His way. All was done that He had covenanted to perform and He ascended to His reward. Now we have come to our text.

I shall this morning, first of all, *rehearse the circumstances* which are here mentioned in three parts—He has gone into Heaven. He is at the right hand of God. Angels and authorities and powers are made subject to Him. When I have rehearsed these circumstances, I shall then, Beloved, by the help of God’s Spirit, ask you to learn the simple but sublime lessons which these facts are meant to teach us.

I. First, LET US REHEARSE THE CIRCUMSTANCES.

They begin thus—“*Who is gone into Heaven.*” “He is gone”—that sounds rather gloomy. You might touch the mournful string as you hear these words, for if He is gone, we are bereaved, indeed! Yet we dare not raise a monument to Christ as one who is dead! Let us complete the sentence—“*Who is gone into Heaven.*” Now you demand the trumpet, for the words are full of soul-stirring music and create intense delight! Still, there are the words, “He is gone”—He is gone away from you and from me—we cannot embrace His feet, nor wash them, nor lean our head upon His bosom, nor look into His face. We have to sing to our Well-Beloved—

*“Jesus, these eyes have never seen
That radiant form of Yours!
The veil of sense hangs dark between
Your blessed face and mine!”*

We are strangers here because He is not here. He intends us to remove, for He has removed. We are not at home on earth. If He were here, we might think this world could be our abiding place, but it cannot be so now. If He were here, earth would be a kind of Heaven to us, but away from Him it is a place of exile. If we could now run to Him and tell Him our griefs as they arise, they would cease to be griefs, but Jesus does not mean this to be our lot and portion. Our inheritance is not on this side of Jordan. Truly, this world and all the works that are in it, are to be burned up—in token of which He is gone from it. It is vain for us to think that we can make our abode here! We are, ourselves, to go away soon and, therefore, He is gone—

*“When He arose, ascending high
He taught our feet the way.”*

He seems to say, “Upwards, my Brethren, upwards from off this earth! Away from this world to the Glory Land! I am gone and you must be gone. This is not your place of resting, but you must prepare yourselves for a time when it shall be said of each one of you, ‘He is gone.’” Those who linger behind us will see us no more, for we shall be gone into Heaven to be with our Lord in His Kingdom.

I like to remember that our Lord Jesus is gone in the entirety of His Nature. His body is gone. He has not left His flesh in the grave. Jesus has carried with Him His entire Self, His whole Humanity. Therein I rejoice, for He has carried my nature to Heaven with Him! My heart is with Him on His Throne and all my being longs to follow it! Jesus has taken our manhood into Heaven. He is in Heaven, our Adam, the Representative of His people. He has taken us up with Himself, Beloved, even all of us who are in Him. He has gone into Heaven in His true and proper Manhood. In the New Jerusalem He looks like a Lamb that has been slain and still He wears His Priesthood, His Manhood and His sympathetic heart. He who is gone into Heaven is not an imposter, but the real Christ! We shall know Him there if we have known Him here. He on whose head are many crowns, is identical with the Christ whose head was encircled with thorns! Despite the change in His circumstances, there is no change in Him—He is “Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today and forever.” He, His own Self, who bore our sins, is gone up into Heaven!

We have dwelt long enough upon the words, “He is gone.” Now let us consider that He “is gone *into Heaven.*” What does this signify but, first, that He is gone out of the region wherein our senses can perceive Him? Be sure of this, that you will not now see Him, nor touch Him, nor handle Him. He is gone into Heaven—out of reach of our earth-bound senses. It is a vain idea of carnal-minded men that Christ is corporeally in the “sacrament.” He is gone into Heaven! His very flesh and blood cannot be here among us. He is gone up into Heaven and, therefore, He is not where He can be recognized by these bodily senses. Spiritually He is here, according to His promise, “Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world,” but to say that He is here *corporeally* is to deny that He is gone up into Heaven. As Man, as His body was of substance, it is not capable of being in more than one place at a time! You must not transform His *Humanity* into Deity—His Deity is everywhere, but His substantial Humanity can only be in its one proper place—and to suppose it to be everywhere is virtually to deny that it is anywhere! A covert unbelief in the reality of our Lord’s body thus veils itself un-

der the appearance of a *superstitious* faith. Jesus is really and indeed gone into Heaven and, therefore, we see Him not, we hear Him not and our communion with Him is by *faith*—not by the senses.

But then, Beloved, we know that our Lord, as Man, is gone into a greater nearness to God than ever—“He is gone into Heaven” where is the Throne of the Great King. The High Priest, on the Day of Atonement, lifted the mysterious veil which shut in the Holy of Holies. He passed within and the veil fell between him and the people. They could not possibly see him while he was performing his sacred functions. But they knew that he stood before the Throne of God. Though he was not with them, he was with God which was better for them. The High Priest was more useful to them within the veil than outside of it—he was doing for them, out of sight, what he could not accomplish in their view. I delight to think that my Lord is with the Father! Sometimes I cannot get to God—my access seems blocked by my infirmity—but He is always with God to plead for me! Sometimes my intercessions seem to die outside the veil—but His prayers are always within the Holy Place, since He, Himself, is there, presenting His potent pleas directly to the Father and being always accepted by Him! Let us joy and rejoice that our Covenant Head is now in the bosom of the Father, at the Fountainhead of Love and Grace—and that He is there on our behalf.

In going into Heaven there is also this thought, that our Lord is gone, now, into the place of perfect happiness and of complete Glory. We rightly sing—

*“No more the bloody spear,
The Cross and nails no more,
For Hell itself shakes at His name,
And all the heavens adore.”*

No weariness, no mockery, no sinking of heart, no bearing of reproach, no crying, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” He is gone into peace, bliss, honor and renown. “Heaven” is a great word—none of us can understand it—nor shall we approach its meaning till we reach the place. He is where there are pleasures forevermore. The Human soul and body of Jesus are filled with delight! The Man, Christ Jesus, the son of Mary—He that died upon the Cross is now blessed forevermore! The Lord Jesus is filled with ineffable satisfaction which is the reward of His passion and His death. Let us this day be glad and rejoice in Him, for He is gone up into Heaven!

Thinking this over, let us reflect, dear Brothers and Sisters, that nothing could stop His going there. “He is gone up into Heaven, despite all who raged against Him.”

Death could not hold Him. Death bound Him very fast with the strongest cords, but He could not be held by them. This great monster must give up Jesus, even as another monster gave up Jonah, after the third day! Our greater Jonah came up, again, from the depths of the earth. He died and was a captive for our sakes, but His body could not see corruption, nor could His soul abide in the realms of death. He is gone to Heaven, despite the stone, the watch, the seal—despite the clay-cold hand of death.

He is gone into Heaven despite malicious men. Have you ever wondered why they did not attack Him when He had showed Himself openly and had led out His disciples to the Mount of Olives? They paid the soldiers to say that His disciples stole Him away while they slept—why did they not seize Him? Why is Herod so quiet and Caiaphas so still? Scribes and Pharisees, where are they? Are these lions *chained*? Our greater Daniel is in their den, but they do not even roar at Him! It is now or never with them—if they could capture Him, now, and stop His way to His eternal triumph, it would be a great victory! It is the last chance for the overthrow of His power! But truly, against Him did not a dog move his tongue! They were still as a stone while He passed over to take possession of the inheritance!

As death could not hinder Him, so neither could the malice of men detain Him, nor could all the forces of the devil block His way. I see no trace of the arch-enemy after Christ has risen from the dead. O Prince of Darkness, you did meet Him in the wilderness at the beginning—why not close with Him at the end? Why not assail Him by the sea when He stands there with His coals of fire, with fish laid on them, and bread? Prince of Darkness, why did you not hasten up to shoot a last arrow at Him and summon all your bands to waylay Him in mid-air to block His passage to the Golden City? No, the powers of darkness were baffled! In their silence they gnashed their teeth for rage, but they could not even hiss against Him! He had so thoroughly cowed and subdued Satan and all his angels in Gethsemane and on the Cross, that nothing remained but to triumph over them and lead captivity captive! The leaguered hosts of Hell could not summon courage for another encounter—His warfare was accomplished and the road to His Father’s capital lay open before Him! In peaceful triumph He passed beyond the clouds. Troops of angels on the road met with their joyful songs, the

Heir of all things returning to His Home! My heart rejoices as I think that He is gone into Heaven, none disputing His passage.

But I beg you to remember that He is gone up into Heaven *as our Representative*. Jesus does nothing by Himself, now. All His people are with Him. He says, “Behold I and the children which God has given Me.” They are always in union with Him. The Head is never separate from the members—the supposition is ghastly! He is our Forerunner marking the way; our Herald predicting our coming; our Breaker clearing the road. As the great Lord calls them Home, it shall be said of each one of the saints, “who is gone into Heaven.” Jesus is gone there as Pioneer to open the way, as our Friend to prepare a place for us and as the Pledge that all who are in Him shall come to the same happiness! If He had not entered, neither could we, but in His Person God has given to us a token that we, also, shall rise from the dead and shall enter into Heaven! He who is the Surety of the Covenant is our guarantee of entrance into Heaven! This is the best seal that our faith could desire, the Resurrection and Ascension of Christ being practically the resurrection and the home-bringing of all His redeemed! I stop—may the Lord bless this to your souls.

Secondly, we have to look at the next circumstance, *His sitting at the right hand of God*—“who is gone into Heaven, and is at the right hand of God.” Remember that this being at the right hand of God relates to the complex Person of our Lord. It relates to Him not as God, alone, but as God and Man. It is His Manhood that is at the right hand of God. Wonderful conception! The next being to God is Man! Infinite leagues must necessarily lie between the Creator and the created, but between God and man, *in Christ Jesus*, there seems no distance at all—the Man Christ Jesus sits at God’s right hand. Is not this a sublime thought, that man, creature as he is, is now so linked with the Second Person of the Divine Trinity in Unity, that he is so near to God as to be at His right hand? So near, so very near to God—he cannot be nearer! This is a wonderful thing—Jesus sits at the right hand of God as Man—and man is thus brought into a singular nearness to God! As I said before, there is an immeasurable chasm between God and a seraph, and yet man, whom He made a “little lower than the angels,” and who was, consequently, a little further off, is, in the Person of the Son of God, brought so near to God that no being of any kind now intervenes between the Almighty God and man!

What does it mean that Christ sits at the right hand of God? Does it not mean, first, unrivalled honor? To sit at the right hand of God is the highest conceivable glory. The mother of Zebedee’s children asked that her sons might sit, the one on His right hand, and the other on His left, in His Kingdom, but Jesus said it was not His to give. The Father has given the Son to sit in the highest place nearest to His Throne, yes, *on the very Throne of God*, for we read of “the Throne of God and of the Lamb.” Jesus, our Brother, is elevated to the throne of the Most High!

Does not it also signify intense love? When Solomon would describe the love of the king to his bride, he said, “Upon your right hand did stand the queen in gold of Ophir.” The Lord God places the Son of Man in the seat of love, where none may be but the One who is the beloved of the Father. He loves Him with an unutterable, inconceivable love and even thus does He love us in Him! Christ at the right hand of God means all His people at the right hand of God—all the saints are in the place of the nearest and dearest love!

It means, also, communion and counsel. We speak of a person with whom we take advice as “the man of our right hand.” God takes counsel with the Man, Christ Jesus. When you have a friend at court, you hope you will do well, but what a Friend have we in the King’s courts—even He who is The Wonderful, Counselor! He is the King of Glory, the Governor of earth, the Distributor of thrones and crowns, the Man Christ Jesus! Now I know that the decree of God must mean my good, for my Lord sits at the right hand of Him that does decree! Now I understand that the purposes of God must work out the happiness of the chosen, for He who loves them is in union with the Maker of the purpose!

Does it not also signify perfect repose? Jesus is gone up to the right hand of God and sits there. While He was occupied with His holy service, He did not sit down. There were no seats for the priests in the tabernacle—their work was too laborious for sitting down. But Jesus has *forever* taken His seat at the right hand of God, expecting till His enemies are made His footstool! O restful Savior, we, toiling and laboring, come to You and find rest in You—we also sit down longing for and expecting the time when You shall put down all our enemies and we shall tread even Satan under our feet! Even now we sit with You in the heavenlies and enjoy Your peace. So much concerning the seating of our Lord.

The third fact is, *His dominion*—“Angels and authorities and powers being made subject to Him.” Angels are subject to Him upon whom cowards spat—to Him whom they nailed to the Cross—and at whom they wagged their heads! This is one of the wonders of Heaven. Is it possible that the conjecture of the old writers was true, that Satan rebelled

against God because He heard a whisper that a man would one day be Head over all principalities and powers? I do not know, but certainly the angels must often marvel that Gabriel, nor the brightest of the seraphim is next to God—but a Man! Lord, what is man! Man made of the dust of the earth—what is he that he should sit above more spiritual beings, crowned with glory and honor? Yet it is so. God has set the Christ above all angels and principalities and powers. Is not this one of those things which angels desire to look into? Although Lucifer has fallen, there is yet no gap in Heaven. Creatures in part, material, are lifted up to fill the void caused by the great dragon when he drew down with his tail the third part of the stars of Heaven. Men in countless myriads are in Heaven, white-robed, praising God! And one Man is actually on the Throne of God, Vice Regent, Lord over all—having every knee to bow before Him and every tongue to call Him Lord, to the Glory of God the Father!

Oh, think of it! The Man Christ Jesus is Lord of all the shining ones! He can send an angel to comfort you in your grief—“Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?” When you count up the available forces of your Lord, do not forget these invisible armies. Did He not say in the hour of His agony, “Can I not now pray to My Father and He shall presently give Me more than twelve legions of angels”? The air will soon teem with invisible spirits if they are needed for our defense, for our Savior is their Lord! They will count it all joy to do His bidding on our behalf. They are the chariots of God in which He rides to the rescue of His own. The day shall come when all the hosts of Heaven shall come down to earth, attending the Son of Man—then shall they gather out of His Kingdom all things that offend and, at the same time, they shall delight to display their loyalty to Him that once did hang upon the Cross. We rejoice, today, that God has set Him far above all principality, power, might and dominion—and every name that is named!

But I must not forget that He has power over all devils as well. They are fallen angels and Jesus has subdued them once and for all. They cannot tempt His followers without His permission. They cannot put forth their finger to bring any calamity upon a Job unless God wills it. These dogs are muzzled and, therefore, we should not fear them—

*“A faithful God restrains their hands,
And binds them down in iron bands.”*

Jesus is Lord of all!

Whatever else this term “angels and authorities and powers” may comprehend, Christ has under His sway. That is to say, all kings and princes upon earth, all leaders of thought—political or religious—all controllers of human movements are subject to Him. Do not be afraid of this or that form of anarchy—nothing can shake the eternal Throne of the Prince of Peace! Monarchs may die and crumble back to dust and their empires with them, but the Throne of the Son of David shall endure forever and ever! No acts of senators, nor decrees of despots, nor raging of the multitude, nor foaming of rebels, nor deliverances of sages can interfere, in the least degree, with the supreme power of Jesus of Nazareth! His very Cross proclaimed Him King—and King He is! Be cheered by His reign. “Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the Kingdom.” It is surely so, for the Lord has given Jesus the Kingdom and He shall reign forever and ever.

Yes, and all kinds of forces other than human are under subjection to Jesus. The Psalmist, when he measured the domain of man, said—“You made him to have dominion over all the works of Your hands; You have put all things under His feet: all sheep and oxen, yes, and the beasts of the field, the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatever passes through the paths of the seas.” We do not yet see all things put under man, but we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with Glory and honor! All things this day bow before the Lord Jesus, willingly or unwillingly. It matters not what powers, forces and energies may be now developed, or may be yet developed in the ages to come—they are all subject to the Lord Christ! That heel which once was bruised when the serpent wounded it, has crushed the dragon’s head and holds it down upon the earth. Life, death, Hell and worlds unknown lie in subjection to Him that lives and was dead! Oh that my Lord had a servant that could worthily declare His glories! Great princes have their heralds who, with blast of trumpet, proclaim their honors and dignities, but who shall proclaim the glories of the Son of Man who once died for our sins?

Come, let us rejoice together in the victories of our Leader and Lord! I know of no better theme to stir the pulses of my soul with holy exultation than the thought that Jesus is victorious! I have heard of wounded men crushed amid a heap of bleeding bodies lying on the battlefield and awakening all the life that remained in them when they saw the great Na-

oleon come riding over the plain. With their legs gone, they raised themselves upon their arms, once more to salute their captain! Poor souls, to be thus enthusiastic for one who shed their blood like water! Far more wise is our enthusiasm for Him who shed His blood for us! If I knew that I must die in a ditch and be forgotten or slandered and abhorred of men, I would yet rejoice and cry, "Hosanna!" at the prospect of my Lord's sure victory! Yes, I will salute Him now with my most hearty praises and be glad because I know that He is, even now, King of kings and Lord of lords. Hallelujah! He of whom they said, "Crucify Him, crucify Him," is now Head over all! There I leave it. God grant us Grace to rejoice in this story of our Lord!

II. Secondly, and very briefly, LET US LEARN THE LESSONS OF THESE CIRCUMSTANCES.

The first lesson is—*the religion of Christ is true*. Whenever I read modern doubts—and you cannot read long without coming across them—I am glad to get back to facts. If you read a certain set of modern sermons, you will find all the eternal Truths of God denied or maligned. Too many ministers, instead of being servants of Christ, are servants of the devil dressed in the livery of God—may the Lord have mercy upon them! Whenever a doubt is proposed to me, I fall back upon this fact—Jesus did rise from the dead. That is sure. He did also ascend into Heaven, for His disciples saw Him rise. Well, then, I am satisfied to be the least of His disciples and to take His Word and the words of His Inspired Apostles and believe them—even though faith is denounced as ridiculous! "You are left behind in the march of progress. You are poor fools who cannot think for yourselves." I confess that I am such a fool—I believe what God has revealed. I have more confidence in the Revelation of God than in the opinions of men. I know nothing among men except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. For this is the Truth of God! We know it! We have facts at our back. Our doctrine is not sentiment, view and opinion, but fact! "Who has gone into Heaven and is at the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject to Him."

I learn another lesson—that *Christ's cause is safe*. Let not His Church tremble. Let her not think of putting out the hand of unbelief to steady the Ark of the Lord. The history of the Church is to be the history of Christ repeated—she is to be betrayed, she is to be scourged, she is to be falsely accused and spit on—she may have her crucifixion and her death. But she shall rise again! Her Master rose and, like He, she shall rise and receive Glory. You can never kill the Church till you can kill Christ—and you can never defeat her till you defeat the Lord Jesus who already wears the crown of triumph! The grand old cause is safe! The outlook may be dark, just now, and it may be unpopular to follow the Lamb wherever He goes, but the day will come when they who do so shall walk in white, for they are worthy! The wheel will turn and they that are lowest, now, shall soon be highest—they that have been with Him in the dust shall be with Him in His Glory.

Now I can see that *His saints are safe*, for if Jesus has risen and gone into His Glory, then each individual in Him shall be safe, too. Where does your hope lie, Brothers and Sisters? Why, in Christ! Well, then, your hope is always safe, is it not? If you have any hope outside of Him, it may perish, but if your hope is all within Him, your treasure is all within the heavenly casket and it is always secure! Therefore, be glad and rejoice! You, too, may have to cry, "Why have you forsaken me?" You, too, may thirst. You, too, may die. But you shall live again and you shall triumph, for as He is, so are you and *what* Jesus is, that you shall be in Him!

I can also see another lesson here—*this explains the way in which Jesus deals with sinners*. That which took place in His own Person, He makes to be a picture of what takes place in the men whom He saves. If you come to Him, you can only get to know the fullness of His gracious power by being scourged and buffeted with conviction and repentance—and by having self, especially self-righteousness, crucified and slain! You must know the destruction of self, you must see death written upon all carnal hopes and then, out of that death, you shall live again in newness of life and you shall receive honor and glory and immortality! Therefore, dear troubled Heart, if Christ is killing you, be assured He will make you alive, for this is what He says, even He, the mighty God—"I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal." The history of Christ has to be written out again in us! Death to sin and a new life unto righteousness must be ours. That is a lesson worth the learning!

And so I must close with one more division which will have several points in it. I think, Beloved, since Christ has gone into Heaven and sits at the right hand of God, *it shows which way we ought to go*. "I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me." He draws them to the Cross and you may be sure He will draw them to the crown! Do you think He has lost His appeal, now that He sits on the Throne? Not He! He is drawing us up this morning! Let us send all

our thoughts upward—our desires, our rejoicings, our aspirations—let them all climb Jacob’s ladder up to the Lord! Oh that we could at once rise to Him! Stop a while, my Soul! Be patient through your appointed days. Though you can hardly stand delay, yet follow His example, for your Lord, Himself, had to wait. He had His time of waiting and so must you, in order that you may have fellowship with Him in His sufferings. Still feel the drawings. Remember that pretty parable, given by one of our ministers, of the boy’s kite. He made it fly aloft. It rose up so high that he could no longer see it. Still, he said he had a kite and he held fast to it. “Boy, how do you know you have a kite?” “I can feel it pull,” he said.

This morning we feel our Jesus pull. He draws us with a far greater force than a mere string. He is gone into Heaven and He draws us after Him! O Lord, draw us with greater power than ever! “Draw us, we will run after You.” Do we not feel as though we could kneel down and pray over those words of the spouse? Wait a bit and soon you shall climb the shining way to embrace your risen Lord! Yield to His upward drawing! Do not pull away from Him to grasp earth and things that are earthly, but yield to His drawings. As you yield to them, begin to sing—He has conquered! He has conquered! He has conquered! What matters it though my garments are rolled in dust and blood? He has conquered! He has conquered! What does it matter though the arrows fly thick about me, winged by the feathers of death? He has conquered! He has conquered! My Soul, grasp the victory, for there is laid up for you, also, a crown of life that fades not away!

God bless you, Brothers and Sisters, for Jesus’ sake!

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