

# CHRIST IS RISEN!

Dr. Talmage's Sermon on the Lesson  
Embossed in Our Saviour's  
Resurrection.

Awaiting the Day When "All Who Are in Their  
Graves Shall Come Forth."

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WASHINGTON, D. C.—The great Christian festival celebrated in all the churches is the theme of Dr. Talmage's discourse: I Corinthians xv, 20, "Now is Christ risen from the dead and become the first fruits of them that slept."

On this glorious Easter morning, amid the music and the flowers, I give you Christian salutation. This morning Russian meeting Russian on the streets of St. Petersburg hail him with the salutation, "Christ is risen from the dead." In some parts of England and Ireland to this very day there is the superstition that on Easter morning the sun dances in the heavens, and will may we forget such a superstition, which illustrates the fact that the natural world seems to sympathize with the spiritual.

Hail, Easter morning! Flowers! Flowers! All of them with a voice of a tongue, all of them full of speech to-day. I bend over one of the lilies, and I hear it say: "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin; yet Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." I bend over a rose, and it seems to whisper, "I am the rose of Sharon. And then I stand and listen. From all sides there comes the chorus of flowers, saying, 'If God so clothed the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall He not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?'"

Flowers! Flowers! Braid them into the bride's hair. Flowers! Flowers! Strew them over the graves of the dead, sweet prophecy of the resurrection. Flowers! Flowers! Twist them into a garland for my Lord Jesus on Easter morning, and "Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be." The women came to the Saviour's tomb, and they dropped spices all around the tomb, and those spices were the seed that began to grow, and from them came all the flowers of this Easter morn. The two angels robed in white took hold of the stone at the Saviour's tomb, and they hurried it with such force down the hill that it crashed in the door of the world's sepulcher, and the stark and the dead must come forth.

I care not how labyrinthine the mausoleum or how cavernous the sarcophagus or how beautifully parterred the family grounds—we want them all broken up by the Lord of the resurrection. They must come out. Father and mother—they must come out; husband and wife—they must come out; brother and sister—they must come out; our darling children—they must come out. The eyes that we closed with such trembling fingers must open again in the radiance of that morn; the arms we folded in dust must join ours in an embrace of reunion; the voice that was hushed in our dwelling must be returned. Oh, how long some of you seem to be waiting for the resurrection! And for these broken hearts to-day I make a soft, cool bandage out of Easter flowers. This morning I find in the risen Christ a prophecy of His own resurrection. My text setting forth the idea that as Christ has risen so His people will rise. He, the first sheaf of the resurrection harvest. He, "the first fruits of them that slept." Before I get through this morning I will walk through all the cemeteries of the dead, through all the country graveyards, where your loved ones are buried, and I will pluck off a flower, and I will drop a sweet promise of the gospel—a rose of hope, a lily of joy on every tomb, the child's tomb, the husband's tomb, the wife's tomb, the father's grave, the mother's grave, and while we celebrate the resurrection of Christ we will at the same time celebrate the resurrection of all the dead.

Christ, the first fruits of them that slept.

If I should come to you and ask you for the names of the great conquerors of the world, you would say Alexander, Caesar, Philip, Napoleon, I. Ah! You are forgetting to mention the name of a greater conqueror than all these—a cruel, a ghastly conqueror. He rode on a black horse across Waterloo and Chalons and Atlanta, the bloody hoofs crushing the hearts of nations. It is the conqueror Death. He carries a black flag, and he takes no prisoners. He digs a trench across the hemispheres and fills it with the carcasses of nations. Fifty times would the world have been depopulated had not God kept making new generations. Fifty times the world would have swung lifeless through the air—no man on the mountain, no man on the sea, an abandoned ship plowing through immensity. Again and again has he done this work with all generations. He is a monarch as well as a conqueror; his palace a sepulcher; his fountains the falling tears of a world. Blessed be God in the light of this Easter morning! I see the prophecy that his scepter shall be broken, and his place shall be demolished. The hour is coming when all who are in their graves shall rise, Jesus, "the first fruits of them that slept."

Now, around this doctrine of the resurrection there are a great many mysteries. You come to me and say, "If the bodies of the dead are to be raised, how is this and how is that?" And you ask me a thousand questions I am incompetent to answer. But there are a great many things you believe that you are not able to explain. You would be a very foolish man to say "I won't believe anything I can't understand." Why putting down one kind of flower seed, comes there up this flower of this color? Why putting up another flower seed, comes there up a flower of this color? One flower white, another flower yellow, another flower crimson. Why the difference when the seeds look to be very much alike—are very much alike? Explain these things; explain that wart on the finger; explain the difference—why the oak leaf is different from the leaf of the hickory. Tell me how the Lord Almighty can turn the chariot of His omnipotence on a wove leaf. You ask me questions about the resurrection I cannot answer. I will ask you a thousand questions about everyday life you cannot answer.

I find my strength in this passage, "All who are in their graves shall come forth." I do not pretend to make the explanation. You go on and say: "Suppose a returned missionary dies in this city. When he was in China, his foot was amputated. He lived years after in England, and there he had an arm amputated. He is buried to-day in yonder cemetery. In the resurrection will the foot come from China, and will the arm come from England and will the different parts of the body be reconstructed in the resurrection? How is that possible?"

You say that "the human body changes every seven years and by seventy years of age a man has had ten bodies." In the resurrection, which will come up? You say: "A man will die and his body crumble into the dust and that dust be taken up into the life of the vegetable. An animal may eat the vegetable. Men eat the animal. In the resurrection that body, distributed in so many directions, how shall it be gathered up?" Have you any more questions of this style to ask? Come and ask them, do not pretend to answer them. I fall back upon the announcement of God's word, "All who are in their graves shall come forth."

You have noticed, I suppose, in reading the story of the resurrection, that almost every account of the Bible gives the idea that the characteristic of that day will be a great sound. I do not know that it will be very loud, but I know that it will be very penetrating. In the mausoleum, where silence has reigned

a thousand years, that voice must penetrate. In the coral cave of the deep that voice must penetrate. Millions of spirits will come through the gates of eternity, and they will come to the tombs of the earth, and they will cry: "Give us back our bodies. We gave them to you in corruption. Surrender them now in incorruption." Hundreds of spirits hovering about the fields of Gettysburg, for there the bodies are buried. A hundred thousand spirits coming to Greenwood, for there the bodies are buried, waiting for the reunion of body and soul.

All along the sea route from New York to Liverpool, at every few miles when a steamer went down, departed spirits coming back, hovering over the wave. There is where the City of Boston perished. Found at last. There is where the President's steamer, the Central American went down. Spirits hovering—hundreds of spirits hovering, waiting for the reunion of body and soul. But on prairie a spirit alights. There is where a traveler died in the snow. Crash goes Westminster Abbey, and the poets and the orators come forth! Wonderful mingling of good and bad. Crash goes the pyramids of Egypt, and the monarchs come forth.

Who can sketch the scene? I suppose that one moment before that general rising there will be an entire silence, as you hear the grinding of a wheel or the clatter of the hoofs of a procession passing into the cemetery. Silence in all the graves of the earth. Silence on the side of the mountain. Silence down in the valleys and far out into the sea. Silence. But in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, as the archangel's trumpet softly rolls, rattling, crashing across the mountains and sea, the earth will give one terrific shudder, and the graves of the sea will heave like the waves of the sea. Oceans and Seas pool and Ocean will stalk forth in the lurid air, and the drowned will come up and wring out their wet locks above the billow and all the land and all the sea become one moving mass of life—all faces, all ages, all conditions gazing in one direction and upon one throne, the throne of resurrection. "All who are in their graves shall come forth."

But you say, "if this doctrine of the resurrection is true, as professed by this Easter morning, can you tell us something about the resurrected body?" I can. There are mysteries about it, but I shall tell you three or four things in regard to the resurrected body that are beyond guessing and beyond mistake.

In the first place, I remark in regard to your resurrected body, it will be a glorious body. The body we have now is a mere skeleton of what it would have been if sin had not marred and defaced it. Take the most exquisite statue that was ever made by an artist and chip it here and chip it there with a chisel and batter and bruise it here and there and then stand it out in the storm for a hundred years, and the beauty would be gone. Well, the human body has been chipped and battered and bruised and damaged with the storms of thousands of years, the physical defects of our generations coming down from generation to generation, we inheriting the infelicities of our ancestors.

But in the morning of the resurrection the body will be adorned and beautified according to the original model. And there is no such difference between a gymnast and an emaciated wretch in a lazaret, as there will be a difference between our bodies as they are now and the resurrected forms. There you will see the perfect eye after the waters of death have washed out the stains of tears and study; there you will see the perfect hand, the knots of toil have been untied from the knuckles; there you will see the form erect and elastic after the burdens have gone off the shoulder—the very life of God in the body. In this sense the most expressive thing is the human face, but that face is veiled with the griefs of a thousand years. But in the resurrection morn that veil will be taken from the face, and the noon-day sun is dull and dim and stupid compared with the outflaming glories of the countenance of the saved. When those faces of the righteous, those resurrected faces, turn toward the gate or look up toward the throne, it will be like the dawning of a new morning on the bosom of everlasting day! O glorious, resurrected body!

But I remark also in regard to that body which you are to get in the resurrection, it will be an immortal body. These bodies are wasting away. Somebody has said that as soon as we begin to live we begin to die. Unless we keep putting the fuel into the furnace the furnace dies out. The blood vessels are canals taking the breath of life to all parts of the system. We must be reconstructed hour by hour by day. Sickness and death are all the time trying to get their pry under the tenement or to push us off the embankment of the grave, but, blessed be God, in the resurrection we will get a body immortal.

Sometimes in this world we feel we would like to have such a body as that. There is so much work to be done for Christ, there are so many tears to be wiped away, there are so many burdens to lift, there is so much to be achieved for Christ, we sometimes wish that from the first of January to the last of December we could toil on without stopping to sleep or to take any recreation or to rest or even to take food—that we could toil right on without stopping a moment in our work of commending Christ and heaven to all the people, but we all get tired. It is characteristic of the human being in this condition, we must get tired. Is it not a glorious thought that we are going to have a body that will never grow weary? O glorious resurrection day! Gladly will I fling aside this poor body of sin and fling it into the tomb at Thy bidding I shall have a body that never wears. That is a splendid resurrection hymn that we have all sung: So Jesus slept, God's dying Son.

Passed through the grave and blessed the bed.  
Rest here, blest saint, till from His throne  
The morning breaks to pierce the shade.  
I heard of a father and son who, among others, were shipwrecked at sea. The father and the son climbed into the rigging. The father held on, but the son after awhile lost his hold on the rigging and was dashed down. The father supposed he had gone hopelessly under the wave. The next day the father was brought ashore from the rigging in an exhausted state and laid on a bed in a fisherman's hut, and after many hours had passed he came to consciousness and saw lying beside him on the same bed his boy.

Oh, my friends, what a glorious thing it will be if we wake up at last to find our loved ones beside us, coming up from the same plot in the graveyard, coming up in the same morning light—the father and son alive forever, all the loved ones alive forever, never more to weep, never more to part, never more to die.

May the God of Peace that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant make you perfect in every good work to do. His will and let the associations of this morning transport our thoughts to the grander assemblage before the throne. The one hundred and forty and four thousand and the great multitude that no man can number, some of our best friends among them, we after awhile to join the multitude. Glorious anticipation! Best are the saints beloved of God!

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My soul anticipates the day,  
Would stretch her wings and soar away  
To aid the song, the palm to bear,  
And bow, the chief of sinners, there.

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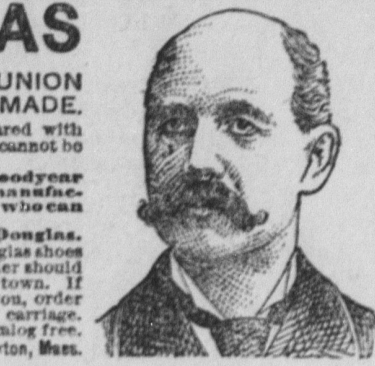
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