

The Risen Lord

Sabbath afternoon, September 21

In the garden, Mary had stood weeping, when Jesus was close beside her. Her eyes were so blinded by tears that she did not discern Him. And the hearts of the disciples were so full of grief that they did not believe the angels' message or the words of Christ Himself.

How many are still doing what these disciples did! How many echo Mary's despairing cry, "They have taken away the Lord, . . . and we know not where they have laid Him"! To how many might the Saviour's words be spoken, "Why weepest thou? whom seekest thou?" He is close beside them, but their tear-blinded eyes do not discern Him. He speaks to them, but they do not understand.

Oh that the bowed head might be lifted, that the eyes might be opened to behold Him, that the ears might listen to His voice! "Go quickly, and tell His disciples that He is risen." Bid them look not to Joseph's new tomb, that was closed with a great stone, and sealed with the Roman seal. Christ is not there. Look not to the empty sepulcher. Mourn not as those who are hopeless and helpless. Jesus lives, and because He lives, we shall live also. From grateful hearts, from lips touched with holy fire, let the glad song ring out, Christ is risen! He lives to make intercession for us. Grasp this hope, and it will hold the soul like a sure, tried anchor. Believe, and thou shalt see the glory of God.—The Desire of Ages, p. 794.

We have a living Saviour. He is not in Joseph's new tomb; He is risen from the dead and has ascended on high as a Substitute and Surety for every believing soul. "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:1). The sinner is justified through the merits of Jesus, and this is God's acknowledgment of the perfection of the ransom paid for man. That Christ was obedient even unto the death of the cross is a pledge of the repenting sinner's acceptance with the Father. Then shall we permit ourselves to have a vacillating experience of doubting and believing, believing and doubting? Jesus is the pledge of our acceptance with God. We stand in favor before God, not because of any merit in ourselves, but because of our faith in "the Lord our righteousness."—Faith and Works, p. 107.

Stormy times are before us. The earth is corrupt, and will increase in corruption. But you may have perfect trust in Christ. Notwithstanding the violence, the crime, the appropriation by men of money to which they have no right, there is a God who is King over the universe. We are His children, not the subjects of capricious fate. We have, yes, you have, as you read the words of encouragement spoken by Christ, the sacred promise that will renew the springs of hope. You may rejoice in a living Saviour. He is our risen Lord. His promises are for all who will receive Him.—This Day With God, p. 91.

Sunday, September 22

Rejoicing in the Resurrection

The women who had been Christ's humble followers while He lived, would not leave Him until they saw Him laid in the tomb and a stone of great weight placed before the door, lest His enemies should seek to obtain His body. But they need not have feared; for I saw that the angelic host watched with untold interest in the resting place of Jesus, earnestly waiting for the command to act their part in liberating the King of glory from His prison house.

Christ's murderers feared that He might yet come to life and escape them. They therefore asked of Pilate a watch to guard the sepulcher until the third day. This was granted, and the stone at the door was sealed, lest His disciples should steal Him away and say that He had risen from the dead.—Early Writings, pp. 180, 181.

As the light of the angels shone around, brighter than the sun, that Roman guard fell as dead men to the ground. One of the angels laid hold of the great stone and rolled it away from the door of the sepulcher and seated himself upon it. The other entered the tomb and unbound the napkin from the head of Jesus. Then the angel from heaven, with a voice that caused the earth to quake, cried out, "Thou Son of God, Thy Father calls Thee! Come forth." Death could hold dominion over Him no longer. Jesus arose from the dead, a triumphant conqueror. In solemn awe the angelic host gazed upon the scene. And as Jesus came forth from the sepulcher, those shining angels prostrated themselves to the earth in worship, and hailed Him with songs of victory and triumph.

Satan's angels had been compelled to flee before the bright, penetrating light of the heavenly angels, and they bitterly complained to their king that their prey had been violently taken from them, and that He whom they so much hated had risen from the dead. . . . As Jesus walked forth from His prison house a majestic conqueror, Satan knew that after a season he must die, and his kingdom pass unto Him whose right it was.—Early Writings, p. 182.

The resurrection of Jesus was a sample of the final resurrection of all who sleep in Him. The risen body of the Saviour, His deportment, the accents of His speech, were all familiar to His followers. In like manner will those who sleep in Jesus rise again. We shall know our friends even as the disciples knew Jesus. Though they may have been deformed, diseased, or disfigured in this mortal life, yet in their resurrected and glorified body their individual identity will be perfectly preserved, and we shall recognize, in the face radiant with the light shining from the face of Jesus, the lineaments of those we love. . . .

Until that triumphant hour, when the last trump shall sound and the vast army shall come forth to eternal victory, every sleeping saint will be kept in safety and will be guarded as a precious jewel, who is known to God by name.—That I May Know Him, p. 362.

Monday, September 23

The Stone Was Rolled Away

The enemies of the disciples could not but be convinced that Christ had risen from the dead. The evidence was too clear to be doubted. Nevertheless, they hardened their hearts, refusing to repent of the terrible deed they had committed in putting Jesus to death. Abundant evidence that the apostles were speaking and acting under divine inspiration had been given the Jewish rulers, but they firmly resisted the message of truth. Christ had not come in the manner that they expected, and though at times they had been convinced that He was the Son of God, yet they had stifled conviction, and crucified Him. In mercy God gave them still further evidence, and now another opportunity was granted them to turn to Him. He sent the disciples to tell them that they had killed the Prince of life, and in this terrible charge He gave them another call to repentance. But feeling secure in their own righteousness, the Jewish teachers refused to admit that the men charging them with crucifying Christ were speaking by the direction of the Holy Spirit.—The Acts of the Apostles, p. 61.

Some [of the Corinthian believers] had gone so far as to deny the doctrine of the resurrection. Paul met this heresy with a very plain testimony regarding the unmistakable evidence of the resurrection of Christ. He declared that Christ, after His death, "rose again the third day according to the Scriptures," after which "He was seen of Cephas, then of the Twelve: after that, He was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that, He was seen of James; then of all the apostles. And last of all He was seen of me also."

With convincing power the apostle set forth the great truth of the resurrection. "If there be no resurrection of the dead," he argued, "then is Christ not risen: and if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. . . . and if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain. . . . But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept."—The Acts of the Apostles, pp. 319, 320.

On whose side are we? The world cast Christ out; the heavens received Him. Man, finite man, rejected the Prince of life; God, our Sovereign Ruler, received Him into the heavens. God has exalted Him. Man crowned Him with a crown of thorns; God has crowned Him with a crown of royal majesty. We must all think candidly. Will you have this man Christ Jesus to rule over you, or will you have Barabbas? The death of Christ brings to the rejecter of His mercy the wrath and judgments of God, unmixed with mercy. This is the wrath of the Lamb. But the death of Christ is hope and eternal life to all who receive Him and believe in Him.—Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers, p. 139.

Tuesday, September 24

The Women at the Tomb

Mary had not [yet] heard the good news. She went to Peter and John with the sorrowful message, "They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulcher, and we know not where they have laid Him." The disciples hurried to the tomb, and found it as Mary had said. They saw the shroud and the napkin, but they did not find their Lord. Yet even here was testimony that He had risen. The graveclothes were not thrown heedlessly aside, but carefully folded, each in a place by itself. John "saw, and believed." He did not yet understand the scripture that Christ must rise from the dead; but he now remembered the Saviour's words foretelling His resurrection.—The Desire of Ages, p. 789.

Mary had been looked upon as a great sinner, but Christ knew the circumstances that had shaped her life. He might have extinguished every spark of hope in her soul, but He did not. It was He who had lifted her from despair and ruin. Seven times she had heard His rebuke of the demons that controlled her heart and mind. She had heard His strong cries to the Father in her behalf. She knew how offensive is sin to His unsullied purity, and in His strength she had overcome.

When to human eyes her case appeared hopeless, Christ saw in Mary capabilities for good. He saw the better traits of her character. The plan of redemption has invested humanity with great possibilities, and in Mary these possibilities were to be realized. Through His grace she became a partaker of the divine nature. The one who had fallen, and whose mind had been a habitation of demons, was brought very near to the Saviour in fellowship and ministry. It was Mary who sat at His feet and learned of Him. It was Mary who poured upon His head the precious anointing oil, and bathed His feet with her tears. Mary stood beside the cross, and followed Him to the sepulcher. Mary was first at the tomb after His resurrection. It was Mary who first proclaimed a risen Saviour.—The Desire of Ages, p. 568.

Christ has given to the church a sacred charge. Every member should be a channel through which God can communicate to the world the treasures of His grace, the unsearchable riches of Christ. There is nothing that the Saviour desires so much as agents who will represent to the world His Spirit and His character. There is nothing that the world needs so much as the manifestation through humanity of the Saviour's love. All heaven is waiting for men and women through whom God can reveal the power of Christianity.

The church is God's agency for the proclamation of truth, empowered by Him to do a special work; and if she is loyal to Him, obedient to all His commandments, there will dwell within her the excellency of divine grace. If she will be true to her allegiance, if she will honor the Lord God of Israel, there is no power that can stand against her.—The Acts of the Apostles, p. 600.

Wednesday, September 25

Appearing to Mary and Others

A light was shining about the tomb, but the body of Jesus was not there. As they [the women] lingered about the place, suddenly they saw that they were not alone. A young man clothed in shining garments was sitting by the tomb. It was the angel who had rolled away the stone. He had taken the guise of humanity that he might not alarm these friends of Jesus. Yet about him the light of the heavenly glory was still shining, and the women were afraid. They turned to flee, but the angel's words stayed their steps. "Fear not ye," he said; "for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here: for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly, and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead." . . .

He is risen, He is risen! The women repeat the words again and again. No need now for the anointing spices. The Saviour is living, and not dead. They remember now that when speaking of His death He said that He would rise again. What a day is this to the world! Quickly the women departed from the sepulcher "with fear and great joy; and did run to bring His disciples word."—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 788, 789.

Christ's first work on earth after His resurrection was to convince His disciples of His undiminished love and tender regard for them. . . . Go tell My brethren, He said, that they meet Me in Galilee. . . .

But even now they did not rejoice. They could not cast off their doubt and perplexity. Even when the women declared that they had seen the Lord, the disciples would not believe. They thought them under an illusion. . . .

Often they repeated the words, "We trusted that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel." . . . They met together in the upper chamber, and closed and fastened the doors, knowing that the fate of their beloved Teacher might at any time be theirs.

And all the time they might have been rejoicing in the knowledge of a risen Saviour. In the garden, Mary had stood weeping, when Jesus was close beside her. Her eyes were so blinded by tears that she did not discern Him. And the hearts of the disciples were so full of grief that they did not believe the angels' message or the words of Christ Himself.—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 793, 794.

Every expression of doubt strengthens unbelief. Every thought and word of hope, courage, light, and love strengthens faith and fortifies the soul to withstand the moral darkness that exists in the world. Those who talk faith will have faith, and those who talk discouragements will have discouragements. By beholding we become changed.—Letter 16, March 24, 1880, to James White.

Thursday, September 26

Go Into All the World

Jesus had several times attempted to open the future to His disciples, but they had not cared to think about what He said. Because of this His death had come to them as a surprise; and afterward, as they reviewed the past and saw the result of their unbelief, they were filled with sorrow. When Christ was crucified, they did not believe that He would rise. He had stated plainly that He was to rise on the third day, but they were perplexed to know what He meant. This lack of comprehension left them at the time of His death in utter hopelessness. They were bitterly disappointed. . . . If they had believed the Saviour's words, how much sorrow they might have been spared!

Crushed by despondency, grief, and despair, the disciples met together in the upper chamber, and closed and fastened the doors. . . . It was here that the Saviour, after His resurrection, appeared to them.—The Acts of the Apostles, pp. 25, 26.

Before ascending to heaven, Christ gave His disciples their commission. . . . You have been witnesses of My life of sacrifice in behalf of the world, He said to them. . . . To you, My disciples, I commit this message of mercy. It is to be given to both Jews and Gentiles—to Israel, first, and then to all nations, tongues, and peoples. All who believe are to be gathered into one church.

The gospel commission is the great missionary charter of Christ's kingdom. The disciples were to work earnestly for souls, giving to all the invitation of mercy.—The Acts of the Apostles, pp. 27, 28.

As the light of the sun is light and life and blessing to all that live, so should Christians, by their good works, by their cheerfulness and courage, be the light of the world. As the light of the sun chases away the shades of night and pours its glories on valleys and hills, so will the Christian reflect the Sun of Righteousness which shines on him.

Before the consistent lives of Christ's true followers, ignorance, superstition, and darkness will pass away, as the sun dispels the gloom of night. In like manner the disciples of Jesus will go into the dark places of the earth, disseminating the light of truth until the pathway of those in darkness shall be illuminated by the light of truth.—This Day With God, p. 92.

With such . . . a glorious hope, such a redemption that Christ has purchased for us by His own blood, shall we hold our peace? Shall we not praise God even with a loud voice, as did the disciples when Jesus rode into Jerusalem? Is not our prospect far more glorious than was theirs? Who dare then forbid us glorifying God, even with a loud voice, when we have such a hope, big with immortality, and full of glory? We have tasted of the powers of the world to come, and long for more. My whole being cries out after the living God, and I shall not be satisfied until I am filled with all His fullness.—Early Writings, p. 110.

Friday, September 27

For Further Reading

Selected Messages, "Look Beyond the Shadows," book 3, pp. 326, 327;
The Desire of Ages, "Go Teach All Nations," pp. 818–828.