

The angels implied it when, seated by the sepulchre, they re-assure the sorrowing women,—“Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He is not here, he is risen.”

Jesus said, speaking of himself: “When I am risen I will go before you into Galilee.”

The apostles repeat the phrase: “He rose again the third day.” “God raised Him from the dead.” Let us believe on Him who raised Him up.

Dust, thou shalt return to thy dust! I know thee, thou fearful sentence, thou art nothing new. Ever since the days of the Garden of Eden thou hast struck at our bodies; our souls disown and defy thee! The soul can no more sleep than it can die.

Have you still one lingering doubt? The last sigh of the Saviour will dispel it for you.

“Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.” Death takes his own portion, but the living spirit returns to the land of life. For three days the body shall remain laid in the tomb, treated as a holy thing, but still as a *thing*; it shall be wrapped in a shroud, heaped about with spices; sleep shall weigh the eyelids down, paralyse the limbs, but not the spirit. Death, thou canst not touch *that*! The spirit will patiently await in God’s presence the hour when, returning into the very body it left, it will raise it up on its feet, soar with it to the Father, re-descend to earth, sit down in glory.

This is not yet all! Listen to a decisive sentence of the Saviour—

“I lay down my life to take it up again. I have power both to lay it down, and to take it up.”

Who is this *I*; this victorious *I*, who is it? Who is the one who, being dead, commands life to return? It is the soul; the soul which can neither slumber nor sleep.

Be at ease; we shall sleep as Jesus slept. It is thus that sleep our loved ones. Their bodies, that is to say; never their souls.

This subject is one that must be thoroughly examined. When only indistinctly revealed, it saddens us; placed under a full, strong light, it causes our hearts to dance with joy.

Let us return in thought to days long past, remount the stream of time.

Here we meet with Abraham. In the midst of the terrors of night and darkness,

he has been visited by a vision. The Lord has spoken to him, “Thou shalt be gathered to thy fathers.” Do these words apply to the Patriarch’s earthly remains? will his bones be carried to Padan-Aram, from the land of Canaan to the country whence he originally came? Not so. Abraham having died in a strange country, is buried in the cave of Hebron: there rests his body; his dust will not be mingled with that of the plains of Mesopotamia. It is the soul that is spoken of; the soul is living still; the soul goes whither his fathers have gone.

Again, God meets Isaac in the valleys of Beersheba, and says, “I am the God of Abraham thy father.” To Jacob he says, “I am the God of Isaac.”

To the people of Israel, “I am the God of Jacob.”

Magnificent name!—*His name throughout all ages!* “I AM!”—not *I was*. Jesus declares Him God of the living, not of the dead, not of the sleeping.

David cries aloud, “Thou wilt not leave my soul in Hades.” Prophet, he announces the resurrection of Christ; believe, he expresses the fulness of his own conviction.

And Ecclesiastes responds to him, “Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit unto God who gave it.”

Long before then, the Lord on Sinai came to hold converse with Moses from the midst of ten thousand of his saints, living saints, not sleeping. Long after, the dry bones gathered themselves into battle array at Ezekiel’s voice: but, lo! the *spirit* had not yet returned into them.

Who is that who rises down there on the plains of Endor, in presence of the pale and trembling king? A phantom? No; Samuel himself, the judge of Israel. “Why hast thou disquieted me? To-morrow thou shalt be *with me*, thou and thy sons.”

Who are they who appear on the holy mountain, talking there with the transfigured Jesus? Two of the dead: Elijah, carried up body and soul to heaven; Moses, whose body is still hidden in some mountain-hollow on the other side of Jordan. Do they sleep? Have they slept? No; both have come from the land of life; both will return thither; their faces are lit with celestial glory.

What says Jesus to the little daughter of Jairus? “Maiden, arise!” The stiffened frame lifts itself up; the heart beats, the