

ANNOUNCEMENT

OF

Ever Green Cemetery,

GETTYSBURG, PA.

WITH

ADDRESS AT OPENING CEREMONIES

BY

REV. JOHN H. C. DOSH,

AND

DISCOURSE AT LAYING OF CORNER STONE

OF

Gateway and Lodges,

BY

REV. REUBEN HILL, A. M.

PUBLISHED BY

EVER GREEN CEMETERY ASSOCIATION.

1855.



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EVER-GREEN CEMETERY.

ADDRESSES

DELIVERED AT THE

OPENING CEREMONIES

OF

EVER GREEN CEMETERY,

GETTYSBURG, PA., NOVEMBER, 7, 1854.

BY REV. J. H. C. DOSH,
Pastor of Methodist Episcopal Church.

ALSO

A DISCOURSE

Delivered at the Laying of the Corner Stone of Gateway and Lodges
at Cemetery, Sept. 1, 1855.

BY REV. R. HILL, A. M.
Pastor of the Ev. Lutheran St. James' Church.

Published by Ever Green Cemetery Association.

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1855.

ADDRESS

AT THE OPENING CEREMONIES,

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BY REV. J. H. C. DOSH.  
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Ladies and Gentlemen :—In dedicating a spot for the final repose of ourselves, our families, and our friends, we but obey the dictates of our common humanity. “To bury the dead out of their sight,” is the general custom of nations. The most celebrated nations of antiquity buried their dead in cemeteries without the walls of their cities. Here the simple slab, the lofty monument, or the costly and magnificent mausoleum, taught the honors of the deceased, and the devotion of the living. The most ancient, and one of the most interesting instances of the selection of a family burial ground, is the purchase of “the field of Machpelah,” of the sons of Heth, by the patriarch, Abraham. This field had in it a cave, and it was ornamented with trees “in the borders round about.” For this Abraham paid “four hundred shekels of silver, current money with the merchant.” Here he buried his Sarah; and, subsequently, himself, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph were deposited in this cave. This custom ever after prevailed among the Israelites. In the days of our Savior a great extent of ground, a small distance from their cities and villages, was usually allotted to the purpose of burying the dead. Here sepulchres were hewn out of the solid rock, tombs were erected over the graves, or the dead were buried in the caves. To each family was assigned a particular portion or lot, that those who were united in life, might not be separated in death. Modern travellers inform us that these fields for the dead are still in use, and families have their vaults “where the bones of their ancestors have remained undisturbed for many genera-

tions." But our practice is simply to *bury* the dead. We would not idolize the departed, nor would we cling too devotedly to their mortal remains; knowing that these "*vile* bodies shall be changed," and shall come forth from their graves glorious and immortal bodies. But we would mark the *spot* where their ashes lie; and the monuments which affection may erect to their memory shall speak to the living.

Centuries hence, much of the religion of the present age may be learned from the monuments which will whiten this eminence. In the early centuries of the christian church, many of the persecuted followers of Christ at Rome, lived, died, and were buried in her hidden catacombs. Here many of the early martyrs were buried; and here the word "cemetery," signifying a *sleeping place*, was first applied to the tomb. A visit to subterranean Rome will teach us *how* the early christians died. Their belief in the immortality of the human soul, is read in every inscription. The good, in death, but *fall asleep* in Christ—they shall awake again to immortal life. How beautiful is the following inscription, rudely engraved upon a rough tablet: "Gamella sleeps in peace." A devoted husband inscribes upon the tombstone of his consort, "A most loving wife—she sleeps in peace." Fond parents say of their daughter, "Amelia, our sweetest daughter." Upon one of the tombs is engraven, "Primitius—in peace. A most valiant martyr after many torments;" and upon another, "Here lies Gordianus, deputy of Gaul, who was murdered with all his family for their faith. They rest in peace." Another inscription reads, "Petronia, a priest's wife, the type of modesty In this place I lay my bones: spare your tears, dear husband and daughters, and believe that it is forbidden to weep for one who lives in God." Such lessons as these will be taught in this cemetery. Here will lie, side by side, the beloved parents, the twin children, and the devoted wife and fond husband; and from their tombstones after ages may read the faith in which they lived, and the hope in which they died. And thus christians will be taught to

“Weep not for him who dieth,
 For he sleeps and is at rest ;
 And the couch on which he lieth,
 Is the green earth’s quiet breast.”

Another prominent truth will be taught by these monuments. Posterity will here learn our belief in the resurrection of the human body. The hope of a glorious and blissful resurrection to the people of God, will be a leading doctrine of this cemetery. Many of our friends are dead ; and all of us are rapidly approaching

“The undiscovered country from whose bourne
 No traveller returns.”

But the grave’s triumph will be brief. How inspiring the thought that the hour is coming, in the which the sea shall give up its dead, and “all that are in their graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth.” Then corruption shall put on incorruption, and death will be swallowed up in victory. And as cloud shall succeed cloud of the glorified, as they ascend from Europe, Asia, and Africa, the islands of the ocean, and the continent of America, the dead of Ever-Green Cemetery shall awaken unto life, and prepare to ascend to the celestial hills. O what joyous greetings of friends, and what triumphant hallelujahs, as the sanctified throng approach the presence of a smiling and an approving Savior !

“Through heaven with joy their myriads rise,
 And hail their Savior and their King.”

Here, in this beautiful spot, will ultimately be deposited many of our friends, and perhaps a majority of this numerous assembly. It becomes us, therefore, to glance at some of the advantages and pleasures of being buried within this cemetery. How beautiful, how enchanting the scenery by which we are now surrounded ! Could a more lovely spot have been chosen ? With the vast chain of Blue Ridge mountains in the west—an unobstructed horizon in the east—Round Hill and other prominent points in the south—and a beautiful view of Gettysburg under our feet in the north, we have one of the most magnificent landscapes in the world. Here we may come, and the living in after ages resort, not only to study the

monuments of the dead, but from nature to view nature's God.

Another advantage which the cemetery has over the common grave-yard is, that here every man may secure for himself and family, a *permanent* resting place. But few men are so reduced in circumstances, as to be unable to purchase one of these lots. He will then have the satisfaction of owning the earth in which his friends may be deposited. And, being his own property, he can protect, ornament and beautify it and the graves which it may enclose, just as taste and circumstances may demand.

Again, here members of all sects, and inhabitants from every clime may lie. The Jew and the Gentile, the Calvinist and the Arminian, the European and the American, may here rest together as brothers.

"The rich, the poor, the great, the small,
Are levell'd"

to a perfect equality; and, here at least, all doctrinal and national differences must for ever cease.

Another pleasing thought is, that *groups of families* will be deposited here. By *our dead* we will repose until the trump of God shall awake us unto life. And thus it will be with our children for many generations to come. And centuries from now, when this vast field shall be filled with the dead—when our country shall number its inhabitants by the hundreds of millions—our far off descent will resort to this consecrated spot to study their lineage from the tombs of their ancestors.

In conclusion, I would remark, that if Providence were so to order it, your speaker could desire no earthly resting place more pleasant than Ever-Green cemetery. Here he could cheerfully sleep in Christ until the "last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed."—1 Cor. 15: 52.

DISCOURSE

AT THE LAYING OF THE CORNER STONE.

BY REV. R. HILL, A. M.

It has been said that human nature is depraved—that it is corrupt, and lost to purity and virtue—that it is insensible to all that is high and noble and holy. Without controversy, there is much of truth in this assertion. We cannot conceal the facts that demonstrate the theorem of man's apostacy from holiness and God. The past of his experience has a thousand mouths to testify. The page of history presents a chart all blotted with deeds which tell of darkness thick as night within his soul.

But yet, in all the darkness, there are scattered, rays of light. Bright spots there are, upon the blotted surface—lines upon the page that speak of man's nobility. They tell his heaven-born origin. They speak his God-descended lineage. In the every-day concerns of life, where man is compelled to grub this earthly hole, and eke out his daily subsistence by the sweat of his face, he may appear contracted and selfish. Yea, worse than selfish he often does appear. But there are, now and then, circumstances arising, in which all this is laid aside, and selfishness is sacrificed for pure and wide benevolence.

In a neighboring county, at the foot of the Alleghanies, stands a thriving village. As you see the workmen at their business—the smith at his anvil—the carpenter at his plane—the turner at his lathe—the merchant at his desk, you might imagine that the whole soul was engaged in these pursuits. You might suppose that within the rough exterior of the form that stands before the forge, no chords exist, that may easily be touched and vibrate in symphony, with the finer and nobler

emotions of the soul. But see! What causes that commotion? The bells are ringing, and the people running to and fro with hurried steps. The news has come, that in the mountains, far remote from human habitations, bewildered, alone and lost, wanders a hapless human being; a victim alike to the serpent's fang, to hunger's gnawing tooth, and the clutches of the prowling beast of prey. A thrill runs through a thousand hearts. The merchant closes up his store—the noisy lathe is silent—the plane lies motionless, and the anvil rings no longer. But look on yonder eminence! See that multitude of brawny hands and sympathizing hearts. Their worldly gains are all forgotten. They are ready, at any cost of toil, to scour every nook in search of a suffering fellow-mortal. There go the promptings of the human heart, and as they go, they plainly speak of man's nobility.

Years ago, before the iron rib of central Pennsylvania was completed, the connection in the line of travel, was made by the slow pace of the crowded packet-boat. As the cars one morning left the dusky city of the west, there was among the passengers a young man in very feeble health. That canker-worm, consumption, the foe of thousands, was just completing its deadly work upon his vitals. The weather being warm, his presence was offensive to the passengers. Without reflecting, they determined he should not go upon the boat. Acting upon this determination, they despatched a messenger, to say to the Captain of the boat: "Sir, there is a sick man in the cars whose presence is exceedingly offensive to the passengers, and I have come to say to you for them, that if he goes upon the boat not one of us will enter."

"Has the sick man a representative here," was the deliberate and humane reply. The answer was, "He has no representative." Then, said he, I must first see the sick man, before I can decide the question. Leaving his boat, he walked to the cars, and there, in one corner, lying flat upon the floor, he found the wretched invalid—all alone. In gentle and sympathizing tones he addressed him, saying, "Are you the sick man who wishes to go upon the boat?" Raising his languid eyes, he

exclaims, "God bless you for your kindness! I am a poor, wretched, helpless creature. I have been long and far away from my native home. As you see, my days are almost numbered. I have but one desire. I long to return and die in my mother's arms. I have suffered terribly to-day, and these passengers, they are so unkind. Take me, O! for God's sake take me to my mother!" And then that sun-embrowned man raised the wasted form of the invalid in his sinewy arms, and carried it away like a helpless child, and laid it upon a comfortable bed in the boat, saying with emphasis as he did it, "Yes, you shall go to your mother, though not another passenger enter the boat." There was a rich example of man's nobility, as it sprang afresh from the deep fountain of nature.

There is then, with all its imperfections, something still to be admired in the human heart. There is a gem there, though covered up with rubbish, is richly worth the labor of discovery. A chord lies there concealed, which, if touched by the force of peculiar circumstances, will vibrate heavenly music.

Nothing, perhaps, in the whole history of our race, is better adapted to prove and illustrate this truth, than the respect which is always and everywhere manifested for the departed dead. A man usually carries his faults along with him, down into the grave, while his virtues bloom with a beauty, and send forth a fragrance unknown in his living days. No one is too busy to pay his just portion of tribute, when his fellow passes to his resting place. Clean linen wraps the useless clay, and a house, though narrow, yet well adorned, is its protection. A stone, or polished slab, or monumental pile, or perhaps a single cultivated flower, adorns the spot that holds the father, friend or brother. How solemnly we feel, how carefully we walk, where sleep the dead! The heart spontaneous, seems to say—

"Lightly press each grassy mound,
Surely this is hallowed ground."

Whatever may be the motives which prompt men to other actions that are called noble, surely these cannot arise from selfishness. The task is difficult we know, to separate ourselves

from the good that may arise from what we do. But in offices performed for the dead, we cannot seek a recompense. For there is no work nor device, nor is there ability to reward in the cold grave, whither we hasten. Men may be insincere in kindness offered to the living. They may give, to receive as much or twice as much again. But the vile sycophant never crouches by the lifeless clay, nor does the hypocrite seek again the tomb to weep. The heart—it is the heart, gushing freely from the hidden native springs, which prompts to this. It is the heart, that sends the frequent tears when loved ones die. It is the heart that urges the weary footsteps of the mother, so often where the little three-foot mound is marked by fresh unsodded earth. No! selfishness does not build the sepulchre and raise the tomb, and plant the cypress, and water the willow.

Nor is it to religion we are authorized to attribute what we do to render beautiful and attractive the city of the dead.—Christianity does much to ennoble human nature. It aims, indeed, at an entire renovation of that nature. “Ye must be born again,” it says to all the world. It takes the lowest grade of man, and raises him from the deepest depths, to his legitimate position. It makes the filthy clean. It washes from pollution. It makes the scorner wise, and the fool cease his hatred of wisdom. It tames the restless tiger, and calms the lion’s fierce, vindictive spirit. It does all that can be done, to fit the soul for bliss in Paradise.

But other portions of the earth beside Christendom, have had their tombs. Other times than the present era have had their burial places, their cemeteries and their sepulchres. Egypt is proverbial for her idolatry and her superstition. But no less renowned is she for her magnificent tombs. At no time in the history of the world, and in no place on the face of the earth, has more attention been given to the dead, than in ancient Egypt. An art was there practised in preserving the bodies of the departed, which is entirely unknown to us, notwithstanding our advance in every other department of knowledge. If the images of the objects of their worship are a monument

of the superstition and folly of the Egyptians, the discovered tombs and mummies are equally a monument of the deep and generous feelings of their hearts.

Nineveh, and Babylon, and Athens, and Rome, have all, in passing from the stage of action, left monuments which assure posterity that they once existed. Their wars are written in books, or else they are marked in hieroglyphic representations on the crumbling walls of buried palaces. These tell us that in man's heart there are many devices. They tell us of murder, and oppression, and dishonesty, and uncleanness, and idolatry, and every species of wickedness. They say—

“Sound, sound the clarion, fill the fife,
To all the sensual world proclaim,
One crowded hour of glorious life,
Is worth an age without a name.”

But the tombs—they speak a different language! They tell a different tale. They tell of the pure unmingled spring of affection, which is as old in the human heart as death itself in the world—of an affection which “no stain of earth can darken.” They tell how strong are the ties that bind us together, of the unbroken chain which fastens mind to mind, and heart to heart.

Decent and appropriate burial was held in the highest estimation by the chosen people of God. Abraham pleads most pathetically for the cave in the field of Machpelah, that it might be Sarah's tomb. David praises the men, who rescued the bones of their king from the enemy's walls, and placed them in the family vault. Tobit was lauded for going about to bury the bodies of his murdered countrymen, at the peril of his own life. Jeremiah represents it as one of the greatest punishments of the wicked, that their bodies shall go without burial, and be left on a dunghill, or that they shall be buried with the burial of an ass.

Herodotus tells us that in Egypt there was a law which insured burial, even to those who came to their death by accident. It was the duty of the city nearest to which the body was found, to embalm it, and give it appropriate sepulture, at

the public expense. A law of Athens pronounced him an impious wretch, who refused burial to any dead body he might accidentally find. Solon forbade any reflections on the characters of the deceased. "Piety," says Plutarch, "should induce us to reverence the dead; justice should keep us from intermeddling with the affairs of those who no longer exist; and policy should lead us to prevent the perpetuity of enmity." And Demosthenes still further adds, that "not any provocation from the survivors of the family, should urge us to cast reflections on the dead."

Now these facts go to show that burial is a duty and a privilege, held in almost equal respect by men of all times and religions. Hence it cannot be prompted by christianity alone.

Nor can we say that any degree of refinement has given rise to the practice of honoring the departed. For we find it equally prevalent in the city and in the country, among the learned and the unlearned. True, we do not see the same magnificence displayed in the rural districts, as we do in and around the densely populated city. But this fact only shows a difference of circumstances—the want of facilities on the one hand, and does not prove that the heart feels less in one place than in another. The little rosebud, planted by the dutiful hands of a child, upon the neglected mound that marks the resting place of a fond and cherished mother, is as much a proof of genuine affection, as the marble monument that cost its thousands, and rears its head in magnificence towards the heavens. The little, modest, blushing rose, and the gorgeous monument tell the same mournfully pleasant tale. In the same language they speak and say, "there is still something noble in the soul." The two together teach us the truth, that an affection is there, which cannot be removed by any circumstances.

"First shall the heaven's bright lamp forget to shine,
The stars shall from the azured sky decline."

It is there when rocked in the cradle of wealth and prosperity—when carried along on the flowery beds of ease and prosperity; and it is equally there, when tossed upon the boisterous

billows of adversity, or pursued by the effects of the most pinching poverty. The rich and the poor, the rustic and the refined, the learned and the ignorant, all weep alike at the graves of the departed.

Nor can this disposition be attributed to civilization; for decent burial has been practised by the lowest races of men. The poor degraded Hottentot forgets not to bury the dead out of his sight. And the friends and relatives of the deceased, make strenuous efforts, in their rude way, to preserve the body from the ravages of the beasts of prey, which everywhere infest their country. In the South Sea Islands, before christianity was introduced, it is said that much attention was given to the remembrance of the dead. The practice of embalming was common among them, and when they could no longer preserve the body in this way, they burned it, and sacredly kept the ashes. And what can be more touching than the respect offered to the departed among the North American savages? The modes of manifesting this respect are different among the different tribes; and to us, of course, they seem singular and barbarous. But they still show that affection, which is, by nature, common to all hearts. The dead chief is sent off on his journey to the blessed islands, seated on his favorite steed. He is well supplied with all the necessaries for his extended journey. He is furnished with arms and accoutrements to sport among the thousands of game that roam over the beautiful mountains, and rich and fertile valleys of his everlasting home. The testimony, afforded by the many discoveries which have been made, of Indian burial places, shows clearly that they were by no means insensible to the right of sepulture. It proves that, although savage and unrelenting, they also, as well as others, have been endowed by nature, with sensitive hearts.

Now since the offices performed for the dead, cannot be the offspring of hypocrisy, nor of religion, nor of education, nor of refinement, nor of civilization, and since they cannot be traced to any outward circumstances as their cause, we must seek their origin within. Therefore, we are authorized to

conclude, that there is yet something in the heart of man, which, if not perverted by his own evil deeds, is worthy of admiration. Something speaks his high and holy origin; something tells that in the great catastrophe that deprived us of heaven and happiness, and brought upon us "all the ills that flesh is heir to," one excellence was preserved. One gem from out the mighty wreck was rescued.

Do any ask, why then is it not seen alike in all? If respect for the departed is an implantation of nature, why are some not touched when death invades the threshold and the hearth? Why are so many graves neglected? The answer is, that man may smother nature's fire. By neglect and sin, he may put out the light which Satan dared not touch. He may complete the work the powers of darkness so fatally commenced; but were not permitted to carry to perfection.

Nor is it an evidence that the disposition does not exist, when it happens not to be developed. The diamond may lie a thousand years among the filth and rubbish of the earth, unseen and unappreciated, and then a sailor boy may pick it up. The untold wealth of California, but yesterday has burst upon the world; and yet, ages on ages ago, her sands were mingled with gold. The corn may lie in the ground for months, and if the earth lack moisture, it will not germinate. So it is with this excellence of the human heart. Circumstances cannot create it. Nature placed it there. But circumstances aid in its development. Civilization and refinement add new charms to this lovely virtue. And christianity causes it to shine with a lustre unknown in heathen lands. But the providence of God, and that alone, is able to set it forth in its true light. This we cannot feel until we ourselves are made its subjects. We look on, almost unmoved, when others weep around the grave of one they loved. But how differently we feel when death enters our own circle—when by one fell stroke he breaks those tender chords that wind themselves so closely round our hearts. Emotions fill us then, we knew not of before, and resolutions, too, which do us good if executed.

Months ago there was no cemetery here! You were con-

tent to bury the dead of the town and region round it, in clusters detached from one another, without ornament and attractiveness. Ask you what has caused the change?

There was a happy circle. Love, and joy, and peace were there. Around the hearth were seen the prattling child, the doting father, and the mother smiling with unspoken satisfaction. Why should such happiness be blasted? God's ways are not our ways. He claimed his own. Death struck down the full-blown rose, together with the little opening bud. And hence these acres—these ample acres—God's acres! Hence is this city of the dead, which gives so high a praise to the feelings of your hearts! Here then can you lay the relics of your fondest hopes. Here can you raise the monumental pile or place the unpretending tomb. Here you can plant the flower, and adorn the resting place of those you love; the spot perhaps in which you yourselves may lie.

And why should you not? Who feels no interest in an enterprise like this? None but he who has buried nature's gift, and quenched the light of Providence. If the poor degraded Hottentot can spend a single thought on those who have departed, why should not we, who are infinitely above him in knowledge and privileges, spend not only thoughts, but many pious acts, for those we hope to see again? If the benighted savage, wrapped in the gloom of uncertainty, as to a future state, so carefully sends his chief upon his final journey, Oh shame! unblushing shame on christendom, if she neglect the graves of the dead who die in the Lord!

How appropriate then the services and doings of to-day! How well it is that we have met! How suitable that a habitation should be reared, for the residence of him, who, like Adam of old, shall keep, and dress, and adorn the garden of the Lord. In so doing, we obey the dictates of a high and holy principle of our nature, which should be cherished as an emanation of Divinity, as a relic of what we once were, and as an earnest of that, to which, through Christ, we may attain.

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