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ADDRESS

OF

REV. EDWARD P. HOOKER,

AT THE FUNERAL OF

MISS MARY ANN SWIFT,

DAUGHTER OF HON. SAMUEL SWIFT,

AT MIDDLEBURY, VT., OCTOBER 4, 1870.



MIDDLEBURY:
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MIDDLEBURY, October 7, 1870.

JUDGE SWIFT—*My Dear Sir* :

It is quite impossible for me to reproduce the remarks at the service on Tuesday, precisely as they were made, but it affords me pleasure to write out for your perusal the general line of thought.

May He who came to the home in Bethany, in the time of its darkness, be much with you and give you strength to bear this loss, as he has sustained you under many trials through a long life.

With much respect and sympathy,

I am very truly yours,

EDWARD P. HOOKER.

ADDRESS.

JOHN 11: 11-46.

WE are instructed by this beautiful incident from the life of our Savior,

In what spirit we should come to such a scene as this. In this passage we have the record of the Master's presence at a scene essentially the same as this--the only scene of the kind, fully recorded, in his life. He has come, with the Sisters at Bethany and their friends, to the grave of *their* brother and friend, and of *his own* friend; for Jesus loved Lazarus. The Master entered that mourning circle in a spirit of *sympathy* and *tenderness*. We are told that when he saw the tears of the company, "he groaned in the Spirit, and was troubled." He was so deeply in sympathy with the occasion, that he "wept." "Then said the Jews" (who were no doubt predisposed to judge harshly) "Behold how he loved him."

The Lord is our pattern. We should come to such an occasion as this, in a spirit of tenderness and sympathy.

We are instructed again.

How the Master looks upon *this* scene. He is "the same yesterday, to-day, and forever." He was not thinking alone of that little circle at Bethany. He shed those tears, not alone in sympathy with Mary and Martha. It is pleasant to remember that his

heart was bleeding in sympathy with the entire race into which he had come as a brother. His eye reached along down all the ages. He remembered that each family must pass under just such shadows as were resting upon that circle. His omniscient foresight must have rested upon *this* little gathering. Taking into his thought all these dark scenes and all the graves to which each family must go, generation after generation, no wonder that "he groaned in the spirit," and "wept." The same sympathizing friend is here to-day.

This scene from the life of our Lord instructs us again,

To what truths we should turn, on such an occasion, for comfort and profit. We see what truths he brought to that favorite circle, in their sorrow. Is not the scene recorded, not only that each family of his friends, through all ages, may have the comfort of knowing, that the Master sympathizes with them most tenderly, but also, that their thoughts, by this passage, may be turned to those truths which most cheer and bless in the loss of Christian friends.

When he announced to his disciples, now at a distance from Bethany, that Lazarus was dead, he assured them, that he was glad, for their sakes, that he was not there to prevent the fatal result, to the intent that they might believe. He, no doubt, wished to confirm their confidence in himself by the miracle which he was about to perform. But did he not also wish to strengthen their faith in the great truths of immortality?

So Jesus said to Martha, "Thy brother shall rise again." He wished her, and all those present, to know and feel, that the friend was not *dead*—that though the pallor of death was on his face, and they could no longer hear his voice, and decay had begun its work, still the friend was living and they would see him again. The spirit had but left the frail body, for a time—it would return. "Thy brother shall rise again."

Our friends, "who sleep in Jesus," are not dead. The body dies, but *they* live. This friend, for whom the Master has just called, is not dead. Jesus says to us as he said to that circle at the tomb of Lazarus, "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die."

Though the brow is cold, and the eye lustreless, and the lips speak no more, and the warm grasp of the hand is not for us, and we lay our friends away in the grave and see them no more, for the present, still their spirits live—we shall see them again. Doubt it not, "in our flesh" we shall not only "see God," but those friends who have gone to be with God. These bodies, in some sense the *same*, shall hear the voice of the Son of God and shall come forth. Though we part company for a time, I believe we shall join company again. Christ "has become the first fruits of them that slept." "They also which sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him." The Master gives us the *proof* of this incident that our friends do live and that their *bodies* shall live. It was something that his friends there gathered could appreciate and feel—an unanswerable argument. He seems to say—"You think that Lazarus is dead and that you will not see him again. But he lives, really lives, and I give him back to you." The *race* are prone to feel that death is the end of their companionship. They look upon it with too much gloom. Here is proof that the Christian dead live and that the broken circles of time may be re-united. I call back Lazarus, I give him back to his home. How near the departed spirit must have been! The Master had but to call. Our friends may be nearer than we think. At least, they are within the call of him who is "the resurrection and the life."

I wish to say, my friends, that this is a time, in some sense, for congratulation as well as sympathy. A little more than fifty years ago, a child was born in this house. It was a time of congratula-

tion. Yet I cannot doubt but that the joy was mingled with much anxiety. The parents knew that a *probation* was just begun. Would the little one pass safely through the temptations of childhood and youth? Would she meet the dangers and trials of life in the right spirit? Would she be a friend of God? To-day, this is all decided; the life has been successful; its great end has been attained; its trials have been endured; its labors have all been performed; its sicknesses are now no more; its anxieties are in the past; Christ has been accepted; the tuition of God's providence has been completed; and now the spirit has left *this* home for the mansions that Christ's own hands have prepared for her. It seems to me a kind of graduation day: a birth-day into the immortal life; a day for congratulation. It is a day for congratulation when we look *back* as well as when we look *forward*. I have been gratified to hear of the departed; of her intelligence, refinement and culture; of her devout piety and of her devotion as a daughter. When she was anticipating her change and was evidently nearing it, and could trust her Savior for herself with entire confidence, and desired to die for herself, she still found it painful that her father, who had already parted from so many, should miss her company and care.

It is a comfort to remember what she has been, though the greater her excellence the greater the loss.

Does it not dignify this *home* to our thought, to remember that doors have opened out from it into the unseen, so many times? The departed has gone to the greater number. They have received the care and culture of this home. Their immortal being has commenced here—here received its direction—and now the Master has come for them and taken them, one after another, as we trust, to be with him, "which is far better." How do the passing months bear *us* on toward the day of the Master's coming! As we almost hear

his voice calling this beloved friend away, do we not receive a kindly admonition to be ready also? If prepared, it will be but an exaltation, to be with them and with their and our Lord,

As you commit this body to the grave, to-day, "earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust," may it be in the hope of that re-union. Remember that he who is "the resurrection and the life" will watch over and keep the dust, and that the dead shall "rise again."

HYMNS—Plymouth Collection, 1158. Church Psalmist, 35th Hymn.

NOTE.—The effects of my advanced age rendered me wholly unable to hear any part of the address, as delivered, and Mr. Hooker, at my request, kindly furnished me with a copy, as now published, with the accompanying letter, for my especial use. And afterwards, at my request also, he consented that both should be printed for the gratification of the numerous relatives and friends at home and abroad.

SAMUEL SWIFT.

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