

present itself to his senses. The imagination for the moment is so energetic as to impose upon the senses an impression that corresponds to that, whatever it be, which creates an emotion within the soul. Nay more, the New Testament itself speaks of inward revelations sometimes during sleep, sometimes during the waking hours, as was that rapture, of which St. Paul wrote, into "the third heaven, whether in the body I cannot tell, or whether out of the body I cannot tell—God knoweth."

But the accounts of the appearances of our risen Lord do not at all admit of either of these explanations. If He had been seen only for a passing moment only by one or two individuals separately, only in one set of circumstances, under one set of conditions again and again repeated, then there would have been room for the suspicion of a morbid hallucination, or at least of an inward vision. But what is the real state of the case? The risen One was seen five times on the day that He was raised from the dead; He was seen a week after; He was seen more than a month after that; and frequently, on many occasions, during the interval; He was seen by women alone, by men alone, by parties of two and three, by disciples assembled in conclave, by multitudes of more than five hundred at a time; He was seen in a garden, in a public roadway, in an upper chamber, on a mountain, in Galilee, on the shore of the lake, in the village where His friends dwelt. He taught as before His death, He instructed, He encouraged, He reproved, He blessed, He uttered prolonged discourses which were remembered, which were reported, He explained passages of Scripture, He revealed great doctrines, He gave emphatic commands, He made large and new promises, He communicated ministerial powers, and they who pressed around Him knew that His risen body was no phantom form. For He ate and drank before them just as in the days of yore, and they could, if they would, have pressed their very fingers into the fresh wounds in His hands and feet and side. In short He left on a group of minds, most unlike each other, one profound ineffaceable impression, that they had seen and lived with One Who had died indeed and had risen again, and this fact was in itself and in its import so precious, so pregnant with meaning and with blessing to the human race, that it threw in their minds all other facts into relative insignificance; it was worth living for, it was worth dying for. "That which we have seen and heard, that which our hands have handled, that declare we unto you." This was their concurrent testimony, and their testimony can only be set aside if the ordinary laws of evidence are set aside by which we judge of the worth of other facts and experiences. It can only be set aside by some *a priori* doctrine which tells us, on abstract metaphysical grounds, what is deemed to be possible to be, or possible to be believed, and so decides that a miracle is not possible. Surely, my brethren, our common sense might tell us to judge what may be by what has been proved to be, rather than to disbelieve what has been proved to be in deference to some abstract theory of what may or may not be. The actual, after all, is a safer criterion of the possible than the possible of the actual. "I might disbelieve the resurrection," said a shrewd man of our day—certainly with no very ecclesiastical, I fear with no perhaps very religious, bias—"I might disbelieve the resurrection, if without it I could possibly explain the existence of the Christian Church." Yes, if Christ did not rise, the existence of the Christian Church is unaccountable. The hopeless discredit and failure attaching to the crucifixion, if the crucified One did, indeed, rot in his grave, would have made it impossible, I do not say to set about the conversion of the world, but to interest any sensible person in the streets of Jerusalem. As it was, when men looked on

that well remembered tomb in the little suburban garden close to the hill of execution outside the city gate, they knew that it was empty, and Christians wrote over the entrance those words of the angel: "Come, see the place where the Lord lay; He is not here, He is risen."

Certainly no human eye witnessed the tremendous scene itself—the flush of warm life passing suddenly over the cold and pallid frame, the opening eyelids, the reanimated cheek, the raised arm, the sudden resistless vitality of every limb, the flash of life which, as the earthquake rumbled beneath, and before the stone had yet been rolled away, burst utterly and for ever the fetters of death, and sprang forth into freedom and into victory. Certainly none saw how more literary than ever before in human history the Lord then waked as one out of sleep; but that some such scene must have taken place is certain from the well attested appearances of our risen Lord. And no spot is so precious to faith as this, where experience is not faith's rival, but her servant, and where faith plants her feet with triumphant certainty on the soil of earth that she may forthwith mount as with an eagle's wings to the heights of Heaven.

"Come see the place where the Lord lay." No other place is in an equal degree a stimulant to Christian endeavour. Not the mountain of the Beatitudes—though the words uttered upon it must still stir human souls to their depths—not Capernaum—though no other town has witnessed so many works of the Divine mercy—not even Calvary—though, as the scene of the highest revelation of Divine love on earth, Calvary stands alone—more than these does the place where the Lord lay provoke Christian endeavour—endeavour directed to personal and social improvement, endeavour which would promote the glory of God and the highest good of man. And why? Because of all effective endeavour, Hope must be a main ingredient, and Hope nowhere learns so successfully to resist the pressure of the shock of disappointment, and to reach forward with confidence into the unexplored future, as at the very tomb of Jesus. Had He been crucified without rising from the dead, Hope, in the eventual triumph of truth and goodness, must perforce have died away from the hearts of men. But, as it is, the resurrection is a warrant that, if the heaviness of spiritual discouragement should endure for a night, the joy of spiritual success, patiently awaited, cometh in the morning. So it is with those who, while endeavouring to live the new life of Christ, are fighting hard and battling against untoward circumstances, against strange insurgent passions, against deeply rooted, and, perhaps, very evil habits, against some fatal weakness or warp of the will. Fail they must, if they essay to fight that battle in their own strength, but they can do all things through Christ Who strengtheneth them, and the Christ who strengtheneth them is not only Christ the Teacher, Christ the Example, Christ the perfect Sacrifice, He is also the risen Christ, risen for their justification, and to this end making them a free present of His resurrection strength. As such a soul, in moments of deep discouragement, comes in thought to see the place where the Lord lay once, to where He lies no more, it learns to understand its share in His great victory, and to expect with confidence that He will take it out of the horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and will set its feet on the rock, and will order its goings.

And so, too, in enterprises undertaken for the good of others, enterprises which seem to be stricken with the note of failure, which fail over and over again, which we are tempted to give up as a bad business. Do not give up that enterprise, be it what it may, if you can dare to offer it, if you have offered it, to God, as intended to promote His glory and the good of your fellow men. Do not give it up. There

was darkness over the whole world on the day of Calvary, darkness which little portended, though it necessarily preceded, the brightness of the resurrection morning. Your enterprise will have its Easter, if you will only have the patience and the grace to wait. Look, look at the empty tomb of Jesus for the secret of its triumph.

* * * * *

Let us Christians endeavour, (my brethren,) at this bright and glorious festival, to renew our faith and life at the empty tomb of our Divine Lord. Eighteen centuries have not made His death and resurrection less to the world than they were, nor did the world ever need to know their true value and import more than it does now. The wants of the living, the precious memory and love of the dead, the hope of a purer, stronger life here, the hope of a brighter life hereafter, alike draw our thoughts to that blessed spot where the First Begotten of the dead won His great victory.

May He of His grace and mercy bless whatever of clearer faith or of nobler purpose this Easter may have brought to any of us, and so lead us onwards and upwards to Himself, "Who liveth and was dead, and behold He is alive for evermore, and He hath the keys of Hell and of death."

THE RESURRECTION.

"Through the grave and gate of death, to a joyful Resurrection"—so the Prayer Book puts it. As there is no resurrection-life without death, so there is no resurrection of the "new man," the spiritual nature, except by the death of the "old man," the old nature. If we can say, "KNOWING THIS, that our old man is crucified with Christ," then we can joyfully "reckon ourselves alive unto God," through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Yes, for "He hath put all things under His feet"—even the tyrant self, by whom we have been so long held in bondage. Begin to reckon that dead, Christian, although you may still be conscious of its uprisings. If, by your full and free consent, self has been handed over to Jesus that He might judge it, and deliver you from it, your part is to leave it with Him, and rise, by faith, into His glorious resurrection-life. It is your part to see yourself seated with Him in heavenly places, "far above all principality and power and dominion"—far above the "dominion" of self. Your deliverance is already accomplished, although perhaps not yet made manifest to you. But rejoice! "Delight thyself in the Lord, and He shall give thee the desire of thine heart!" Christ is *your* Conqueror over self and sin! Rejoice evermore!—*The Visitor* N. Y.

RESURRECTION.

On the Resurrection morning,
Soul and body meet again;
No more sorrow, no more weeping,
No more pain!

Here awhile they must be parted,
And the flesh its Sabbath keep;
Waiting in a holy stillness,
Wrapt in sleep.

For a space the tired body
Lies with feet toward the dawn,
Till there breaks the last and brightest
Easter morn.

But the soul in contemplation
Utters earnest prayer and strong;
Breaking at the Resurrection
Into song!

Soul and body reunited,
Thenceforth nothing shall divide;
Waking up in Christ's own likeness
Satisfied!

O the beauty, O the gladness
Of that Resurrection day!
Which shall not through endless ages
Pass away!