

The Wesleyan.

Longworth I. [Signature]

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EASTER HYMN.

BY PETRUS VENERABILIS, ABBOT OF
CLUGNY, A.D., 109-1156.

Broken is death's portal;
Hail the victory,
For the king immortal
Stronger is than he.
Now the tyrant cruel
From the throne is torn,
By the mighty duel
Round the cross furled.

Down the darkness dreary
Streams the light of day,
Like a morning cheery,
Driving night away.
For our God and maker,
Pitying our pain,
Comes to be the breaker
Of our iron chain.

We in sin were lying,
Helpless under doom,
Given up to dying,
Captives to the tomb;
Then in mercy tender
Came Immanuel down,
Laying by His splendour,
Putting off His crown.

And our nature mortal
Did the King put on,
Standing in the portal,
O true champion;
Dead the foe lies under
His triumphant feet,
O the joy and wonder!
Singing with praises sweet!

A MEDITATION FOR EASTER SUNDAY.

"And He laid His right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last. I am He that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death."—Revelation 1, 17, 18.

There is only one subject for this day. Upon this morning when the grave was broken and Jesus Christ arose, His resurrection, with all that it means for us, must claim our thoughts. Easter is remarkable for this, that it seems to take the most stupendous thoughts, and through the personality of Jesus bring them to men's apprehension and affection. The very children have taken these stupendous thoughts into their simple minds. They have been made real to us through the personal experience of Christ whom we love, and they have been translated by our own instincts and the prophecies of our own needs. It is to those who have gone up the path to the empty tomb, full of love for Jesus, that the great truth of His resurrection has been shown, and their own trust longings have been made beautiful and clear. Just as these flowers have taken the infinite and mysterious forces of Nature, and put them into these clear shapes of visible beauty, so Easter, the flower of the year, takes the immeasurable truths of life and immortality, and holds them to us in a beauty that we can all see and love.

Let us try to see something of the meaning of that sublime self-description of the risen Christ. First, "I am He that liveth;" He whose life is the Life complete in itself and including all other lives within itself. If anything has come to make us feel that a fragmentary thing our human life is, there is no greater knowledge for us to win than that the life of one who loves us as Christ loves us is an eternal life, with the continuance and unchangeableness of eternity. There is a large, long life that is not transitory. When we know that then, just as the leaves, coming and going, growing and drooping, find their reason and consistency in the long, unchanging life of the tree on which they grow, so our lives find their place in this long, unchanging life of Christ, and lose the vexation of their own ever-shifting pasts and futures in the perpetual present of His being.

See what a wonderful thing comes next, "I am He that liveth, and was dead." Remember the eternally-living, the very life of all lives. And yet in that life of lives death has come as an episode, an incident. It did not lose His being, but was only an experience which that being underwent. That spiritual existence which had been going on for ever, now came and submitted itself to that which men had always submitted to. It was an experience of all His creation, but He had never felt it. To His humanity it seemed terrible; Getsemane bears witness how terrible. But He passed into it from love to us. And as He came out from it He declared its nature. "It is an experience of life, not an end of life. Life goes on through it, and comes out unharmed. Look at Me: 'I am He that liveth and was dead!'" He that was dead, at once death changes from the terrible

end of life into a most mysterious but no longer terrible experience of life. He that is "alive for evermore." Not merely is there a future beyond the grave, but it is inhabited by One who speaks to us; who went there by the way that we must go; who sees us and can help us as we make our way along, and will receive us when we come there. "I have the keys of hell and death."

It is because He died that He holds the keys of death. Can we not understand that? Do we not know how any soul that has passed through a great experience holds the keys of that experience, so that as he sees another coming fearfully up to it, just as ignorantly and fearfully as he came, he can run up to this new comer and open the door for him, show him on what side this experience is best entered, lead him through the dark passages of it, and at last bring him out into the splendour of the light beyond? Suppose you had had some great sorrow in your life. You look and lo! another light and careless heart comes singing up the road by which you came. You know where the road leads to, but he has not yet caught sight of the trial which blocks it. Suddenly he comes in sight of it, and starts back. "Father save me from it!" you hear him cry. If you are wise and willing, you go down to meet him, and hold out before him the key of your experience. "Let me show you," you say, "not because I am any better and wiser than you are, but because the Father led me there first. Let me show you the way into, the way through, and the way out of this sorrow which you cannot escape. Into it by perfect submission, through it with implicit obedience, out of it with purified passions and entire love." He sees the key in your hand. He sees the experience in your face, and so he trusts you.

There are no nobler lives on earth than those of men and women who have passed through many experiences, and now go about holding their keys, some golden and some iron, and finding their joy in opening the gates of these experiences to younger souls, and sending them into them full of intelligence and hope and trust. This is what Jesus does for us by His resurrection. Having the keys of death and hell, He comes to us as we are drawing near to death, and He opens the doors on both sides of it, and lets us look through it, and shows immortality. Not merely He lives for ever, but so shall we; for us, too, death shall be not an end but an experience; and beyond it, for us, just as for Him, stretches immortality. Because He lives we shall live also.—*Philips Brooks.*

THE CONFLICTS OF LIFE.

God knew the difficulties of duty from the beginning. Did difficulty justify a succeeding from duty, God would have qualified his commands. When, amid thunders and lightning, he delivered on the mount trembled, the command, "Thou shalt have none other gods than Me," did he not see that lion's den, and hear that sad decree? Did he not cast his eyes to the plains of Durah? Did he not see that golden image rising threescore cubits? Did he not see that gathering host of captains, judges, treasures counselors, sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces, meeting for the dedication of the image? Did he not see those three Hebrews, and that furious monarch, and that furnace heated with seven-fold flame to the temperature of a tyrant's wrath? And yet he did not qualify the high command.

When Jesus, rising from the tomb, paused on his ascent to heaven, and gave his great commission, "Go ye," etc., did he not know that Peter would die? That Paul would be beheaded? That emperor after emperor would kindle his fires and lead his Christian victims to the flames, or feel them to the beasts? Did he not well know that rivers of blood would flow over his sanctuary, and that every age to the millennium would witness its persecutions? Who says that difficulty should arrest us in the work of evangelizing the world? and yet there may be duties as clear as that.

I would not encourage rash enterprises, I would not set will in the place of conscience, or desire in the room of reason.—I would take into consideration opposing tendencies and probable results in forming my views of duty. But there may be duties as clearly marked out by the Divine providence

as by the Divine word. Reason, guided by the light of revelation, may satisfy us of duty as clearly as if God were to speak audibly from heaven.

I have pointed out the path to success,—I can not leave you without directing attention to the motives which should influence you in determining your pursuit. I can not imagine that any of you think so useally of your souls as to enter upon life with the question, What shall we eat? or what shall we drink? or wherewithal shall we be clothed? This would be to regard yourselves as mere brutes. Some may ask, What will be most congenial to my taste, or is most favourable to improvement, or renown, or power, or wealth? I know not how to express my profound contempt for worldly honor, but it comes too late even for the sepulchre. Milton deserved a temple, but scarce received a tomb. But honor—what is it? A name upon the scroll, and which Time, with one dash of his sponge, shall soon wipe out. Crucify soul and body for the world, and she may mock you in your expiring agonies; and you will offer incense at her shrine, and seek her favor? Lether honours be sought when her heart is purified. Who would seek the applause of hell? Why, then, seek the honors of a world kindred to it? You are dying, immortal men. What will a world's applause be to you in your last agonies? in the resurrection morning? in the eternal world?—There are unfading laurels, there are eternal histories; but not on earth. In what terms shall I express the fathomless degradation of that man who merely heaps up the glittering dust of the mine—who prostitutes energies that might bless a world to the accumulation of dollars and cents? He sinks to the level of the ants a soul that might rank among the angels. I am soon to die. I tell you—remember what I say—that there is no service that is not infinitely beneath your immortal powers but the service of the living God; there is no honey worthy to be sought but that which comes from heaven; there is no object sufficiently great to develop the energies that slumber in your bosom, except that for which the Almighty designed you.

I want to see you men: I want to see you mighty men. Pain would I have you move through earth with a tempest's force; but better harden into marble upon those seats, than move with any other object than the good of man—the glory of God.

Pleasure and glory pursue those who least seek them. Serve God with a pure heart, and happiness and honor shall follow you. / Paut you for a foe? You shall have one. There is an enemy to all your species, who hangs the world in black, and fills it with mourning, lamentation, and woe, and plunges his hatchet in unnumbered souls, and kindles around them eternal burnings. Enter the field against him.

At the close of the first Panic war, as Hamilear, about to cross his army into Spain, stood upon the shores of Carthage, he was reflecting upon the triumphs of the Romans, the rivals of his country. He thought of Sicily yielded by a premature despair, of Sardinia intercepted by fraud, of stipends maliciously imposed, and above all, of the laurels won from his native shores, and his great spirit was stirred within him. In the midst of his meditations, his little son, nine years old, approached him, and, fawning in a childish manner, entreated his father to lead him with the troops into Spain. The great parent breathed upon the martial spirit of his son, and leading him to the altar, bade him touch the sacrifices, and then swear that when he became a man, he would be the enemy of Rome. That son was Hannibal. Ye sons of Christendom, come to the altar of our God, touch the sacrifices of our Jesus and swear eternal hostility to Satan.

Do we ask for exemplars? I point you to Daniel, to Paul, to Luther. Others have provoked the acclamations of earth—they have called forth the shouts of heaven.—Do you demand a magnificent object? The world is before you. Balboa, the discoverer of the South Sea in crossing the isthmus which separates the Atlantic from the Pacific, ascended a mountain, from which he beheld the unknown ocean rolling in all its majesty. Overwhelmed by the sight, he fell upon his knees to thank God for conducting him to so important a discovery. When he reached the margin of the sea, he plunged up to his middle in the waves, and

with sword and buckler, took possession of it in the name of his sovereign, Ferdinand of Spain. Lay the map of the world before you, plant your foot on Asiatic highlands, or some lofty peak on the Andes. Survey continents and seas, and islands, in darkness and captivity, and fall down to thank God that you stand on an eminence from which you see this great sight; then rising in the majesty of faith, and girding on sword and buckler advance to the conquest of the nations in the name of Zion's King. There are enervated slumbering in the smallest bosom among you sufficient to shake the world.

CHARITY IN THE EARLY CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

"Behold Christ himself," says Cyprian, "in your captive brethren, and redeem us from death. Snatch from the hands of the barbarians him who has snatched us from death. Snatch from the hands of the barbarians him who has snatched us from the grasp of the demon, and purchase with money the liberations of him who purchased us with his blood." To such appeals no Christian could continue insensible. The heroism of charity was sometimes carried so far that freemen offered themselves to serve instead of the captives. Such was the fervor of the love of the brethren; but charity must not confine itself within these limits, it must embrace all mankind, and seek the good of every fellow-creature. Thus when cruel epidemics ravaged Carthage and Alexandria, the Christians were ever foremost at the bedside of the dying, never asking whether those whom they thus tended had not been among their persecutors. While terror reigned in the desolated villages, as their inhabitants were stricken down in multitudes, and the unburied dead were spreading death in the air, the proscribed Christians were the only helpers. "If we show kindness only to our own," says Cyprian to his brethren, "we shall be no better than the pagans and the publicans. We, as Christians, are called to return good for evil, and to pray for those who persecute us. Since we are the children of God, let us be like him in compassion." The Christians of Alexandria showed themselves no less devoted during the plague which broke out in the city. Many of them paid with their lives for the courage with which they braved the epidemic by the bedside of their worst enemies. When charity has reached this height of self-abnegation, so that it can rise above all private enmities and national distinctions, it is truly a reflection of the divine and perfect love. It embraces in its pity all who are embraced by the infinite compassion, and it is truly human, because truly divine. The old selfish, exclusive principle is utterly subdued. When Cyprian contrasted the parsimony of the Church with the largeness of the world to its prince, who had shed no blood for his subjects, nor won heaven for them, he used a rhetorical license to move the Christian to greater liberality; but he knew that the so-called sacrifices of the pagan world were made to its own evil passions, and cost it very little, and he could not deny that in that city of Carthage, where his noble example had been so eagerly followed, charity had appeared as a heavenly vision upon an accursed earth.

PRAYER AND KNEELING.

Rev. C. H. Spurgeon says, in a sermon preached by him recently: "Constantine saw on the coins of other Emperors their image was in an erect posture. Instead therefore he ordered that his image should be struck kneeling, for, said he, that is the way in which I have triumphed." Thus Spurgeon adds "we shall never triumph till our image is struck kneeling. The reason why we have been defeated and why our banners trail in the dust is because we have not prayed. Wake up, wake up ye people of Israel! be astonished ye careless ones: ye who have neglected prayer. Ye sinners that are in Zion and have been at ease—Wake up yourselves; wrestle and strive with God and the blessing shall come." To this we add the words of the Psalmist, "O come let us bow down, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker." And would also remind God's people that Daniel, Ezra, Solomon, Peter, Stephen and Paul kneeled when they prayed; and so did the great Teacher and Exemplar, Jesus Christ, God says, "Every knee shall bow to me."

Be not disheartened because the eye of the world is constantly and earnestly fixed upon you, to detect your errors and to rejoice in your halting. But regard this state of things, trying as it may be, as one of the safeguards which a Kind Father has placed around you, to keep alive in your own bosoms an antagonistic spirit of watchfulness, and to prevent those very mistakes and transgressions which your enemies eagerly anticipate.

If diamonds are polished only by their own dust, why should you complain that God is tempering you by such throes and lacerations and wastings of life as are necessary.

Mr. Edron—Some of your readers think the discussion on "Invitations" sufficiently prolonged. Indeed we have had so much of it for the past three or four weeks that one almost begins to think the subject ought to be of prime importance. Whatever importance may be attached to the subject itself its discussion under present circumstances is of doubtful value. There are other matters which call for grave consideration, not only at the hands of the Nova Scotia Conference but by all the Conferences of the East.

We have reached nearly the close of our sixth year since the formation of the Methodist Church of Canada. We are accustomed to review and form our reviews to plan and work for the future. What will be the findings of a review of our position as a church in the provinces as compared with our position in 1874. To many the season of change from the old days and ways to the new way fraught with promise and hope. Those who were our leaders and advisers in 1873 and 74 promised great things from the consolidation of the Methodism of the Dominion. The idea then ruled that everything necessary to rapid development would be found in the new arrangement, and that the united weight and influence of the church would, nay must ensure success in all directions. What has been the result. Let the following facts and figures testify.

The E. B. A. Conference entered the compact with a membership, including those on trial, of 20,950. Four years later, in 1878, the returns of the three Eastern Conferences show an aggregate membership of 25,797. The increment in the several Conferences was, Nova Scotia 1890; N. B., and P. E. I., 866; Newfoundland, 2391. For such a result, as it gives indication of spiritual success we devoutly thank God who has always given us the earlier and the latter rain. To a superficial observer the proximate causes of this comparatively large aggregate increase in the rank and file of the church, might seem to be found in the impetus given by the union, and the consequent enlarged sympathies of the workers in the cause. It cannot however be said that any considerable part of this addition in results direct or indirect of our new associations. Other and more remote forces had been in operation. The effort made by the E. B. A. Conference to extend the work of God within its own bounds, had led to a larger increase of the staff of ministers in the three or four years prior to 1874. We have the result of their work in the following years. If then, the coalition has been of little, if any advantage to us as increasing our spiritual power and success, we may surely expect to find great financial advance as the direct outcome of the influence and example of Wesleyan Methodism. Here facts and figures tell a sorry tale.

The E. B. A. Conference collected for Home and Foreign Missions, in the year ending June, 1874, \$21,730. In the same field, the year closing June, 1879, yielded \$19,928. This gives a decrease of \$1,802. The only section of the work, East or West, which shows any increase is Nova Scotia, which advanced its contributions \$634. When the membership is compared with the missionary receipts, it will be seen that fully one-sixth of the members of our church did not give one cent for missionary work in 1879, and that the average contribution per member fell from \$1.04 in 1874, to 77 cents in 1879.

Some might be ready to say that this large falling off in missionary receipts is due to the increased expenditure required and made upon the circuits. I have not the figures necessary to a complete and exhausted examination and comparison. I have, however, the accounts of forty missions for 1874, and actual comparison with the reports for the same fields for 1879, shows an aggregate increase in monies raised for ministerial salary of \$700. Leaving your readers to draw their own inferences,

I remain yours, &c.,

J. G. A.

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