

## Messenger and Visitor

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### Christ is Risen.

The name *Hebrew* is of heathen origin but that which Easter signifies is distinctly Christian. The doctrine of the Resurrection is a Christian doctrine, and its enunciation is to be sought not in the Old Testament Scriptures but in the New. There were indeed foreglimmerings of the light which in the fulness of time was to rise so gloriously upon the world, but the church of the older period had at best entered the twilight of the coming day and for the most part its light as to the hereafter was only "the cold light of stars." The Hebrews of the Old Testament times had indeed an unshakable belief in God. When they fell away from Jehovah, it was not to fall into atheism but to go after other supposed deities whose worship, for one reason or another, seemed to them for the time being more attractive. Even the writer of the book of Ecclesiastes—with all his pessimism and materialism—holds unwaveringly to the being of God and His presence in human affairs. But the Hebrews conceived of God as interested in men in this world. For what might lie beyond the present the veil for them was not lifted. It was for this life that their faith laid hold on God. The 48th Psalm grandly expresses the firm confidence of the devout Hebrew in Jehovah, and it ends with the triumphant note: "For this God is our God for ever and ever. He will be our guide even unto death." "Even unto death" the ancient Hebrew knew and trusted God. But death was the dropping of a curtain, and beyond that for him there was night, or at best the glimmering of a light so far withdrawn as to elude any clear apprehension of either philosophy or faith.

But in the New Testament there is neither night nor some faint fore-glimmering of dawn, but glorious sunrise, for He who says, "I am the Resurrection and the Life," brings life and immortality to light through the gospel. "Even unto death" becomes a discarded wineskin that cannot hold the new wine of Christianity. Death no longer bounds the believer's horizon, nor puts a period to his fellowship with God. The fetters of brass are broken, the prisoners are led forth out of their prison-house, and they who through fear of death were all their lives subject to bondage, send forth the challenge of faith in a risen Redeemer, in the triumphant cry, "O Death, where is thy victory! O Death, where is thy sting!"

Anyone who attentively studies the beginnings of Christianity cannot fail to see how intimately and vitally it is connected with the doctrine of the Resurrection. Belief in the resurrection of their Lord and the resurrection of believers through faith in His name dominated and inspired the lives and preaching of the Apostles and those who labored with them in the gospel. The Resurrection of Jesus was a fact fundamental and transcendent in all their preaching. It was to them God's witness to the Divine Sonship of Jesus, the assurance that to their Master all power in heaven and earth had been given. It constituted their commission and their inspiration to go forth in the face of all opposing forces, human or satanic, to preach to the world the Gospel of Salvation through the risen Christ. Their faith in Him who was "declared to be the Son of God with power by His Resurrection from the dead," the endowment with the Divine Spirit, which had come to them as the promise and bestowment of the risen Lord, their assurance of immortality in His name for themselves and all believers, fitted these men to be the immortal pioneers in a ministry, the blessing and glory of which they could themselves

but dimly comprehend. It was their sense of victory in the risen Jesus, their consciousness of fellowship in the Holy Spirit with the Lord of Life and the Conqueror of Death, that inspired them to preach the Gospel of Christ in the face of the world's bigotry and hate and scorn, and enabled them with joyous spirits to accept the world's reward of martyrdom.

Unbelief has always denied the Resurrection, and to-day the world's opposition to this cardinal doctrine of the Christian faith is not less but perhaps more strenuous than it has been in any other age. Doubtless the growing acceptance by the world's scholarship of the doctrine of evolution has had much to do in inducing a habit of mind which rejects as absurd all claims on behalf of the supernatural. Even of those who still desire to be called Christian many hesitate to declare their belief in the resurrection of Jesus. But nothing is clearer from the testimony of the Gospels and the book of the Acts than that the Apostles thoroughly believed in the resurrection of their Lord, and, as we have seen, their life and ministry are not to be accounted for apart from that belief. Nothing is more clear than that Paul had evidence, both in the testimony of others and in his own experience, which convinced him beyond the shadow of a doubt that Christ was risen from the dead. Moreover, taking a wide view of things, Christianity considered as an effect demands the resurrection as a cause. It is impossible to believe that the church was, as a recent writer puts it, "founded upon mist." In view of what Christianity has been and is, in view of the transforming power it has exerted upon the world, in view of the purity and nobility of character begotten of its spirit, the saintly lives and heroic achievements which adorn its annals, in view of the immeasurable superiority of the Christian religion as it stands before the world to-day—in its spirit, its doctrine and its whole manifestation—to any religion that is or has been, in view of these facts we ask, is it possible to believe that Christianity was founded upon a delusion, and that its first Apostles and preachers were led, through myths or misconceptions, to set forth as the risen and triumphant Son of God and the world's Redeemer, a man whose spirit had, like other men's, passed through the gates of death into the dim unseen, and whose body like other men's had seen corruption?

No, it was only because they were so fully assured of the Resurrection of their Lord and their real spiritual fellowship with the risen Christ that the Apostles were able to preach to the world a gospel so charged with the gladness of redemption, so mighty in its assurance of victory over death. It is because they knew, and their successors have assuredly believed, that Jesus Christ is risen from the dead, that the Gospel of faith and hope has triumphed over the sinful and sordid natures of men. Destroy or weaken faith in that doctrine, and by so much the testimony of the church is weakened, and the preaching of the Gospel robbed of its power. Strengthen in men belief in the Resurrection, and by so much are their souls enlarged and strengthened for all that is noble and heroic in doing and suffering. For they whose faith has laid hold upon a crucified and risen Saviour have found deliverance from all their fears.

### Editorial Notes.

—Alluding to the fact of Victoria University having recently conferred upon Dr. Alexander Maclaren the degree of Litt. D., the British Weekly says: "The honor is in the strictest sense richly deserved. As the Principal of Owens College remarked when Dr. Maclaren attained his jubilee, the great preacher is a master of style. He has never turned his energy away from the work of preaching and exposition. If he had there is no doubt he would have taken a foremost place as a man of letters."

—It is not easy for us in this country of magnificent areas and sparse population to conceive of conditions as they exist in some of the densely populated regions of the eastern world. The density of population in some parts of China is illustrated by the following quotation from Dr. Condit's very interesting book entitled "The Chinamen as We See Him." Speaking of a region lying on the Sun Di River in the Province of Canton, Dr. Condit says: "My assistant pastor whose home is in a village near the great market town of Chick Hom, says that at night when it is still, he can stand and calling with a loud voice be heard in twenty villages, no one of which contains fewer than a thousand people. Dr. Henry tells of a famous hill near

Chick Hom from whose top can be seen three hundred and fifty villages averaging not fewer than two thousand each. This is but one flash-light picture, showing how innumerable the people are."

—It is not surprising if the situation in China and the best methods of dealing with the Chinese is better understood in Japan than in the nations of the West. It is said by those who assume to have knowledge of affairs in the Orient that the Chinese Government is leaning upon Japan and that the Chinese people are looking favorably upon an alliance with that country. The Japanese are reported to be going into Peking in considerable numbers and to be gaining a foothold there that the people of no other country could expect to obtain. A large Japanese school has been established there, whose ten instructors are supported entirely by the Japanese Government or by a Japanese society, and not by the Chinese; they are really missionaries of Japanese influence. The Japanese also have a police training school in Peking. It is said that these movements have the support of Prince Ching.

—Our correspondent 'John Blunt,' in another column replies to some strictures upon the pulpit offered by 'Excelsior' in a recent issue of this paper. No doubt Br. 'Blunt's' pew is very advantageously situated, so that he is not in the way of hearing anything from the pulpit while his sense of propriety would deprecate or condemn, and we hope that our readers generally have little fault to find with their ministers in this respect. At the same time, we fear that there may be some ground for 'Excelsior's' criticisms. Occasionally, it must be confessed, one hears exclamations in the pulpit which are an offence not only to good taste but to reverence. Such criticism does not of course apply to plainness of speech in presenting the truth, but to the use of epithets and exclamations in the pulpit, which the minister would not use out of the pulpit and which he would be shocked to hear used by others.

—We were honored the other day with a call from a lady whose work on behalf of our Foreign Mission cause deserves most honorable mention. Our friend, Mrs. Hartley, of Florenceville, has cultivated a natural taste for curious and beautiful objects, and for some years past has given up a part of her house to accommodate a collection of curios which have come into her hands either through the kindness of friends or by purchase. Visitors who desire to inspect this very interesting collection are charged a small fee, and the money thus received is devoted to the mission cause. From year to year the collection has grown, until it has become one of very considerable interest and value, including many curios from India, received through the missionaries or others, stuffed birds and animals of foreign origin and many other rare and beautiful things. Judicious purchases, made from time to time, also add to the attractiveness of the collection. This work has been to Mrs. Hartley a source of great enjoyment and also of culture both of mind and heart. It is a labor of love in the truest sense, for it is a means of given practical expression to our sister's deep interest in those who are perishing. With the money thus obtained two school buildings have been erected in India and one school is being maintained at an expense of \$35 per annum. So good a work deserves not only commendation but practical encouragement. It may be that some readers of the MESSENGER AND VISITOR have in their possession beautiful or curious articles which they would be willing to donate to enrich Mrs. Hartley's collection, and thus aid in an excellent work.

—According to the New York Independent, what may be an event of much significance occurred in connection with the meeting of a Mission Conference of the Orthodox church of Russia at Orel last autumn. The reference is to an address in favor of religious liberty by Mr. Stachowitz, the Marshal of the nobility in the government of Orel, who is described as a Russian of the Russians. This was altogether a new and remarkable note in the councils of these Conferences which have had for their principal purpose the devising of ways and means to spread the influence of the church and to extend its power over the "Rascals" or Sects. They have voiced the complaints of the missionaries and their prayers that the State would take more rigid steps against the dissenters. Mr. Stachowitz, the Independent says, "declared that in antagonizing religious liberty, the Russian church authorities had been building its structure in forgetfulness of the corner-stone. It should be the privilege of everybody to decide upon his religious convictions and everybody should have the privilege of severing his connection with the State church if he so desired, and the State should not any longer punish such a step. The address has been widely discussed by the Russian press and as a rule not criticised so severely as could have been expected. Bishop Nicanor, of Moscow, has entered the arena against the bold speaker, but has attempted rather to explain away the examples of religious intolerance that had been cited against the present methods, and does not try to overthrow the principle. The secular papers do not seem to know exactly what to say, and it is suspected that the speaker did not utter his sentiments without the knowledge of his political superiors. At any rate these latter have so far been silent in the controversy."