

Christ identified with Himself, the resurrection and also the life, urging that there was a harmony which was the result of the two combined, that one was imperfect and unsatisfying without the other, and that we could not think of Christ as the giver of either alone. Taking the word resurrection in its widest sense as meaning a mere recovery from the shock of death, a merely renewed existence, it was not such a boon as Christ came to give, or speak of, or reveal. It might be that such a gift, taken by itself, would be a doubtful boon, one that many of earth's tired children might put by. If life after death were but a prolongation of mingled pains and pleasures, joys and sufferings, cares and toil, problems and perplexities of the world, some might prefer the dreamless sleep of an entire forgetfulness—to 'sleep well after life's fitful fever.' But Christ spoke also of life, the life—life in the sense which it invariably bore on His own lips and those of His Apostles—a fuller being, a purer, richer existence, with quickened powers, fuller knowledge, and higher faculties. 'We shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.' Add this, and then the word resurrection had a new meaning and a fresh value. But give this new life in a measure here, in victory over evil, conquest over the lower nature, higher aims, nobler aspirations, more entire correspondence with things that will endure, and take away resurrection, make death the end of all, and 'we are of all men most miserable,' most deluded, at our best and our highest when we are at our weakest and most untrue. We saw then why the two words came in such close union from our Saviour's lips; they were in their right place side by side, and if we dropped one we had no full Easter message in the other. Without Christ we were all the subject of death. Martha might cherish in the mere light of love a vague hope of some resurrection. A solitary thinker might reach out his hands through the darkness towards some faint light. But nature brought no sure Easter promise; philosophy was mute, or divided against itself, or answered only with a 'peradventure.' Without Christ we had no sure and certain hope, and, from year to year, as Easter came round, He told us that He was both the resurrection and the life. This life was something here and now; it was not interrupted by physical death; rather death was the necessary condition to its fuller development. Christ did not teach that death could regenerate, and some germ of eternal life must be planted now if it was to grow here after.

St. Paul's Cathedral on Easter Day was a grand sight, being crowded with worshippers. At the afternoon service the Rev. Canon Liddon preached from Romans, i. 3, 4, 'Concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.' He said that a great festival of the Christian Church like Easter appeared to have one drawback attending it from which days of less importance were comparatively free. It offered us so much to think about that unless we tried to make some one of the lessons which it taught our own it might pass us by without leaving us any the wiser or better for taking part in it. The rays of truth which flashed forth from a fact like the resurrection of our Lord were so many and so bright that if we did not fix our minds upon some one of them and do what we might to understand its importance, we might only be dazzled into bewilderment by the splendid whole, and might carry away with us nothing that afterwards would shape our thoughts or influence our lives. And here St. Paul came to our assistance by suggesting at the beginning of his greatest epistle a point which might well engage our earnest attention, namely, the bearing of the resurrection on the divinity of

our Lord. Among other things the resurrection, he told us, did this—it threw a special light on the higher nature of Jesus Christ. He was declared to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead. We were taught by the Apostle to think of the resurrection not only as the reversal of the humiliations and defeat which preceded it, not only as the certificate of the mission of the greatest teacher of religion to mankind, but as something more—as a declaration, or more precisely, a definition, of what in respect of His superhuman nature Christ our Lord really was and is. The resurrection was not only a wonder—it was an instruction, it was a means of making it plain to all who had eyes to see that He Who rose was much more than the first of prophets or apostles—that He was not less than the only-begotten Son of God, Who had shared God's throne and His nature from all eternity. That which the Apostle's words might first of all suggest to us was the importance of events. He attributed to a single event the power of setting forth a great truth, just as though the event were a book or a speaker. That a strictly supernatural occurrence such as the resurrection would have a special meaning, or several meanings, was surely an obvious supposition; the strange thing would be if such an event could occur without any purpose or meaning at all, and St. Paul told us what in his inspired judgment that meaning was—it was to declare that Jesus Christ was the Son of God. Restoration to life in the case of the widow's son at Nain and Lazarus of Bethany was a signal mark of the Divine favour, but it left them as it found them—members of the human family, and still subject to the law of death. The resurrection of our Lord was a verification of the proof which He had offered to His own claim. Knowing what was involved in the claim to be Messiah, He foretold His resurrection certainly on six, probably on more, occasions, and it was in this fulfilment of His own prediction—a prediction based upon the deeper sense of the ancient Scriptures—that St. Paul recognized a declaration of the Almighty Father on behalf of His well-beloved Son; it was an assertion by the Son of His real relation with the Father; it was a proof that the uncertainties of the future and the laws of the physical world were alike subject to His supreme control; it was an event in the manner of its accomplishment so altogether exceptional and striking, that the Apostles appeal to it as declaratory of our Lord's divinity was, if the expression might be allowed, only natural. The resurrection was the fitting complement to the life and teaching of our Lord. The resurrection had been felt to be the fact which beyond all others proclaimed Christ as the Son of God with power. The resurrection was the burden of all the recorded preaching of the early Church; and at this moment all who thought seriously about the matter knew that the resurrection was the point at which the creed which carried us to the heights of heaven was most securely embedded in the soil of earth. Disproved the resurrection and Christianity would fade away into thin air as a graceful but discredited illusion, but while it lasted it would do its work as at the first. More than any other event it proclaimed Christ to be the Son of God with power in millions of Christian souls. It was said, he knew, that a wonder of this kind, however calculated to impress the mind of bygone generations, was not likely to weigh powerfully with our own, and on the ground that we of to day were less struck by the suspension of natural law than by the unvarying order of nature. Every age, no doubt had its fashions—in the world of thought and literature no less than in the world of manners and dress, and if we surveyed a sufficient range of time we should see that these fashions of thought were, many of them, not less liable to have their day and be discarded than were others. Nor need a man be

a prophet in order to predict that the fashion which professed to attach less importance to a proved fact which suspended natural law, whether by the intervention of a higher law or otherwise, than to the general course and regularity of nature, would not last. Of course, if a man said that no such suspension of natural law, no miracle was possible, the question was a different, and, in a sense, a more important one; but he was thinking of people who said that they denied neither the possibility nor the occurrence of a miracle, and yet pointed with satisfaction to the fashionable temper of the time which did not think highly of the importance of a miracle. Such a fashion would pass, if only because it was out of harmony with the average common sense of human nature. When did a fellow-man arrest our attention? Was it when he was acting as was his wont, or when he was acting in some manner which we did not anticipate? And when the Ruler of the Universe suspended for a moment His wonted rule of working by such a miracle as raising the dead, the importance of His act would not be disposed of by a passing mood of thought, which, fresh from laboratories and observatories, though more of law than of suspension law. No, our Lord's resurrection was an occurrence which would declare to our children, as it had declared to our forefathers, the divine Sonship of Jesus, and it would do this as it had done it hitherto, with power. Referring to the spiritual resurrection of Augustine, the Earl of Rochester, Taxil, and Luttre, the preacher observed that for each of these—the profligate young philosopher, the debauched courtier, the atheistic lecturer, the refined but godless man of letters—God had His purpose and His hour of mercy, and each accepted it. We might see dead souls joined to bodies of great activity and vigour—aye, and to minds of high intelligence and force—but not on that account the less dead. When the old Christians whom Saul of Tarsus had so cruelly wronged beheld his converted life, his clear intelligence, his warm affections, his free and strong will, all placed at the service of the Saviour whom he had persecuted, what did they do? St. Paul himself should answer:—'They glorified God in me.' And when in the Church of our day a soul rose from the death of sin to the life of righteousness, there went forth into hundreds of thousands of consciences around a proclamation of the Divine power of the Son of God. God grant that this Easter the heart of the risen and glorified Jesus might be gladdened by many such a moral resurrection.—*Church Bells.*

#### EASTER JOY.

How true it is, that, wherever we turn, "There is no flock, however watched and tended, but one dead lamb is there; there is no fireside, however defended, but has one vacant chair. The air is full of farewells of the dying and mourning for the dead; Rachel, for her children weeping, will not be comforted." Yes, the great cry which arose throughout the land of Egypt, because "in every house there was one dead," finds its counterpart wherever human homes are sheltered. Not as then in the one loud swelling cry of anguish, but from the humblest hut to the palace of kings, in the deep sorrow that seeks "where it may weep" alone, and goes to the grave "to weep there." What can stop the bitter cry of bereavement and loss, if the grave be our loved ones' last resting place; if their end is simply in the "clouds which each rude foot may spurn forever," or to sink into primeval nothingness? Better, far better than that it were, never to have tasted the joys of life, or to have fondled our loved ones in the home, than to feel, at last, that we have laid them down beneath the earth "in cold forgetfulness to rot," and divorced from them forever.