

understand it and know its power unless we have first passed under the shadow of the cross. The knowledge of sin, the confession of sin, the turning from sin to God through Jesus Christ—this alone can prepare us for the right keeping of Easter.

Think what it is that we are about to celebrate. First of all, it is a stupendous fact. Then it is a fact which attests the whole supernatural character of our Lord's manifestation. Again, it is a fact which signifies a completed redemption; and finally it is a pledge of eternal life.

1. It is a fact. It is as well attested as any such fact could be. No one would think of calling in question the evidences in favour of the resurrection of Christ, if it were not that they had a prejudice against the belief. Men who have resolved that no evidence will suffice to prove the reality of a miracle, will, of course, find something to object to in any evidence that can be offered. No one now pretends that the Apostles were insincere, or that they had any doubt of their testimony when they declared that the Lord Jesus had risen from the dead, and that they had seen Him after His resurrection. The theories which have been invented to account for this belief in a thing which never happened, have utterly failed. If He had not risen, what had become of the Sacred Body? If it was in the hands of friends, then they were imposters. If it was in the hands of foes, would they not quickly have produced it and put to silence the bold men who declared that God had raised Him up? We are sure that Christ has risen, and we can, without a moment's hesitation, join in the triumphant exclamation of the Apostle: "Now is Christ risen from the dead."

2. But the resurrection is not merely a fact, it is a fact of the deepest significance in regard to the character of our Lord's work. It stamps it as divine, as supernatural, as a work different in kind from all that had been accomplished or attempted by any man before. All in Christ is superhuman. His character is blameless and supreme in excellence; His teaching is unique, for "never man spoke as this man;" His works are the works of One who can command the elements of nature. But the finishing touch is put to the whole by the great event of the resurrection. He had saved others at the cost of His own life. Must that life be for ever parted with, or has He power to take it again? He had asserted the possession of this power while He was still in life; and now it was to be seen what was the value of such a claim. He rose from the dead, and thus put the seal of omnipotence to all that He had said and done during His earthly life. Men have argued about the miracles of Christ, their reality or the contrary, the evidences by which they are sustained, and the like. But for the resurrection, these arguments might go on for ever. But they cease to be of importance when we stand face to face with this tremendous event. If the resurrection did not take place, no one would come to ask if any of the other alleged miracles were genuine. If this did take place, then there is no ground for questioning the supernatural in the life of Christ. Here is One who is Lord of life and death, who has all power in heaven and in earth.

3. When we turn to another aspect of the subject, namely, its relation to the saving work of our Lord, we see its vast importance and significance. The death of Christ was not merely the death of a martyr; it was the sacrifice of a divinely provided victim who died for the sins of the world. Now the resurrection from the dead declared that the sacrifice was accepted, was effectual, that man was delivered. When the eternal Son undertook the deliverance of man, He entered into the circle of our humanity. He took upon Him human nature with all its responsibilities; and whatsoever He did or suffered was not His own personal doing and suffering only, but that of the whole human race. Thus it is that S. Paul could say that "When One died for all, then all died," all the whole race yielded up their lives to God in Him, their Head. And so likewise; when He rose, all rose with Him and in Him. He "was delivered up for our trespasses, and was raised for our justification." If we take these words in their probable meaning, they tell us that Christ died because we had sinned, and that He rose because we had been justified by His blood.

When, therefore, we contemplate the resurrection of Christ, we can see in it the assurance that death has no more right to us than it had to Him. "The wages of sin is death;" but they have been paid, and sin itself has lost its power.

4. And this leads us to the outcome of the whole, the joyful and blessed hope for the future which is awakened within us by the resurrection. We cannot understand the feeling of those who acquiesce in the thought of annihilation. We believe that man craves for immortality, not for the sake of mere existence, but for the more perfect realization of his own being, for the expansion and harmonizing of his powers and capacities. Yet it must be confessed that he had little solid ground to rest his hopes upon until Jesus Christ brought life and immortality to light. What a change was made by the bursting of the bonds of death! "Because I live, ye shall live also." This is no mere individual work, accomplished by a man on his own account. This is the work of God, of God made man, of the second Adam who is representing the whole family of man, of which He is head. Well may we rejoice and give thanks at this blessed Easter season! It has changed the whole world for us. This earthly scene is not now a mere vale of weeping. It is not a place of eternal parting between the loving and the loved. Those who have gone from us are not dead, they only sleep; and He who rose from His own brief slumber in the grave will speedily come and wake them out of sleep. "Even so, come, Lord Jesus," thou risen and ascended One, come to us and let us again hear those words of comfort, of hope, of promise: "I am the fruit and the last, and the living One; and I was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades."

#### The Blessed Brood.

Gather them close to your loving heart;  
Cradle them close to your breast;  
They will soon enough leave your brooding care,  
Soon enough ascend youth's topmost stair—  
Little ones in the nest.

Fret not that the children's hearts are gay,  
That their restless feet will run;  
There may come a time in the by and by  
When you'll sit in your lonely room and sigh  
For a sound of childish fun;

When you'll long for a repetition sweet,  
That sounded through each room;  
Of "Mother! mother!" the dear love-calls  
That will echo long through the silent halls,  
And add to their stately gloom.

There may come a time when you'll long to hear  
The eager, boyish tread,  
The tuneless whistle, the clear, shrill shout,  
The busy bustle in and out,  
And pattering overhead.

When the boys and girls are all grown up,  
And scattered far and wide,  
Or gone to the undiscovered shore,  
Where youth and age come never more,  
You will miss them from your side.

Then gather them to your loving heart;  
Cradle them on your breast;  
They will soon enough leave your brooding care,  
Soon enough ascend youth's topmost stair—  
Little ones in the nest.

#### Church Attendance.

We knew of a parish once where the attendance at the services was unusually poor, and especially at the Sunday evening service. The rector had done all he could to arouse an interest in the church, but all in vain, till he was ready to give up in despair. A vestry meeting was called to consider the matter. The twelve vestrymen came together to act upon the resignation of the discouraged rector. A lively discussion ensued, at which various reasons were given for the lifeless condition of the parish, and suggestions made for the improvement of church attendance. One thought an elaborate musical programme, a sort of harvest concert, should be gotten up and extensively advertised to attract people to the church, but this even, if desirable, was out of the question, because it involved

the outlay of more money than the financial condition of the parish could assume. Another suggested to the rector the preaching of popular sermons, which means the dishing up of a great deal of worldliness on a religious platter, to which the good rector could not consent, as his duty was to preach the pure gospel of Jesus Christ; besides it would not help the cause of Christ and His Church. Then one of the vestrymen said: "Gentlemen, I think I can solve the whole difficulty. I know I have been amiss in my duty and so have the rest of the vestry. I have dropped in occasionally when convenient. I found that not enough men were in the church to carry around the offertory plates—indeed, I was the only one present on such occasions of the twelve vestrymen. What can we expect of others if the officers of the church neglect their duty to such an extent? Let us resolve to-night, with the help of God, to be present at every service, unless we have an excuse that will justify us before God, and endeavor to bring at least one more person with us. If this meets with your approval, let us ask our rector to withdraw his resignation, at least long enough to give my plan a fair trial." All agreed that it was worth at least a trial, and promised to act upon it at once. The rector withdrew his resignation, and all went home that night with their minds made up that it would not be their fault if the church services were poorly attended. They were faithful to their promise, and next Sunday found the twelve vestrymen and their families with several acquaintances at each service. It is needless to say that the few regular worshippers were quite astonished when they saw these twelve men and their families and others in church for the first time in some years. But it was still more astonishing to this vestry, when, after a few months of perseverance, the worshippers could be numbered by hundreds instead of by tens as before. There was no need of "sacred concert" and "popular sermons" to fill the house of God with worshippers.

This little story has a meal which many of our congregations would do well to take to heart and act upon it.

#### The Cheerful Woman.

The glad-hearted, cheery woman who makes the best of everything is a treasure in any home. She may make mistakes, she may forget, she may spoil a dish in mixing or in baking, but, if, with the mishap, she sends in a gleam of sunshine, a smile, a laugh, or some gay and kindly word, people forget their disappointments and make the best of what they cannot help. And how much better this is than the unvarying precision of one who has no faults and no patience with those who have; who never make mistakes nor make allowances for others who do. Accuracy and precision are excellent; punctuality and promptness are most valuable; but "love is the fulfilling of the law," and Christian charity is greater than faith, hope, faultless housekeeping, or anything else. If you're borne with sunshine in your heart, thank God for it, and let it shine out. But if not, turn your gaze to the Son of Righteousness and catch the brightness that beams from His face.

#### In Perils by his own Countrymen.

A special feature in the narrative of the life-work of the Rev. John G. Paton, missionary to the New Hebrides, recently published, is the example which is presented of heroic endurance and firm trust in God in the midst of extraordinary trials and most imminent dangers.

When he and his wife landed on the island of Tanna, they found themselves in the midst of naked savages and fierce cannibals, and they with difficulty protected themselves from the exorbitant demands and murderous assaults of the degraded and cruel natives. In four months Mrs. Paton died, and she and her babe were laid in the same grave. Fourteen times Mr. Paton was attacked with fever and ague. His enemies, instigated by the heathen priests, grew more violent. Only by the restraining hand of God were they kept from the murder of this lonely man, around whose head their weapons of war were often brandished.

The bitterest ingredient in his cup, however, was the fact that he was often in peril from his

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