

Family Department.

EASTER.

(Written for the Church Guardian.)

The Lord is risen! Let heaven and earth unite In the triumphant burst of glorious song. Let saints and men take up the heavenly strain, In sweetly-echoing chorus loud and long.

—GERRIA.

THE DISEMBOodied SPIRIT.

A SERMON,

BY THE REV. W. M. GROTON, Trinity Church, St. Stephen.

"And Jesus said unto him, Verily, I say unto thee, to-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise."—[Luke xxiii. 43.]

This language bears in itself unmistakably the doctrine of a future life. It even goes further than this, for it also apparently declares to us that there is no cessation whatever in the existence of a human soul.

The sudden moment of transformation, my hearers, will thus come to us all. There will be in our case, too, the sudden stopping of the heart; the quick receding of earthly scenes; the insweeping of a deep, deep darkness; then the breaking light; the glory of new scenes; the revelation of Paradise;—all this in one moment, for the soul cannot linger.

It is said that sometimes a single hour will change the tenor of a life; but no hour does this so completely and thoroughly as the hour in which the life here passes out—into the life beyond. I wish to consider this evening the immediate nature of that nobler existence, to which, I trust, many of us are hastening.

the glad word which hailed its advent. Has the mercy of God revealed to us any notion at all of that realm where now they are awaiting us? We will see.

But we should notice at the outset, the deep comfort with which such words as those of our text furnish us, in this age of scientific enquiry and skepticism. Jesus Christ uttered them. We are all under the necessity of being guided more or less by authority.

Who can think, indeed, of His sublime life and His emphatic assertion of another and a higher state, and not deeply distrust any uncertainty which he may have concerning the immortality of a human soul.

I am fully alive to those startling questions which bear so directly on one theme and with which men so often puzzle themselves. It is frequently asked, How can a disembodied spirit act or even exist? Having no physical medium, how can it express its energy?

But now what is the nature of the higher life, that state immediately beyond the grave in which Jesus believed so ardently and into which he would introduce us?

It has ever been the opinion among Christians, that between the death and the resurrection of the body there is an intermediate condition of the soul. No church exists in which this belief, in some form, has not always been the accepted and current doctrine.

the soul which Jesus calls Paradise. It is vain of course to ask where this realm is, or, again, to enquire what is its relation to heaven. It is said of the planet Venus—that it is so buried in sunshine, that no eye can penetrate the dazzling light which enfolds it and note the configurations on its surface.

The soul of man is simply cognizant of its existence; but the perception of man cannot expect to do so much with it as it can with the physical being of the brightest of planets; it cannot expect to give it position. Scripture—one only authority concerning it—describes it as a definite portion of space where the glory of God is especially revealed, where the angels dwell, and where the souls of just men made perfect enter into their rest.

I am fully alive to those startling questions which bear so directly on one theme and with which men so often puzzle themselves. It is frequently asked, How can a disembodied spirit act or even exist? Having no physical medium, how can it express its energy?

There is in existence a curious and laborious document, which was written to prove that a steamship could never cross the Atlantic Ocean. And yet today, steamships make their rapid journeys to and fro, weaving—as it has been finely said—like gigantic shuttles, the web of commerce.

ing that it will be done. Applying then these reflections to the disembodied spirit of man, we of this age may feel here the same timidity or the same confidence. We may express, with much distrust of our opinion, our doubt, concerning the possibility of such an existence, or feel the assurance, that along with so much which has been proved possible, this, too, is possible.

But, a second point: Is it worth our while to attach so great a credit to our speculations and doubts, since Holy Scripture declares the immediate and personal existence of the soul after the death of the body? Strictly to the Christian, I know, does this appeal belong; and should we not be satisfied, my Christian brothers, with the emphatic assertion of the Bible that man never dies?

When you and I die it declares that you, and I still live; that this self, of which the body is but the organ, continues on, and that we pass directly to new conditions of life; then it says no more; it draws the veil; it leaves us in the possession of Christ to fight that battle which must be fought ere further revelations can be made.

Thus, then, may we relate ourselves to the shadows, which sometimes dim the brightness of our belief concerning the future life. With God, nothing is impossible, and one of the most emphatic of Christ's parting words was, "This day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise;" the utterance of Him, in fact, about Whom the revelations of the Bible all circle.

Live not, then, merely for petty, earthly interests. Squander not the wealth of an immortal soul on the lusts of the eye and on the lusts of the flesh. Be governed only by the noblest incentives. Draw your inspiration from the highest source—from the Spirit of God and the life of Jesus Christ.

[We have desired for some time past to print, once a fortnight, a sermon recently preached by one of our own Clergy, and trust that the one published to-day will be followed by short, pointed discourses by others.—Eds. C. G.]

RECIPE FOR MAKING EVERY DAY HAPPY.

When you rise in the morning, form a resolution to make the day a happy one to a fellow creature. It is easily done; a left-off garment to the man who needs it, a kind word to the sorrowful, an encouraging expression to the striving; trifles in themselves light as air will do it, at least for the twenty-four hours; and if

you are young, depend upon it, it will tell when you are old; and if you are old, rest assured it will send you gently and happily down the stream of human time to eternity.

By the most simple arithmetic, look at the result: you send one person, only one, happily through the day,—that is, three hundred and sixty-five in the course of the year; and supposing you live forty years only, after you commence that course of medicine, you have made 14,600 human beings happy, at all events for a time.

Now, worthy reader, is not this simple? It is too short for a sermon, too homely for ethics, and too easily accomplished for you to say, "I would if I could."—Sydney Smith.

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All your money is not spent on yourself; God calls for some it for the poor. Begin when young to be a giver. "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

Births.

- ANCIENT.—On Good Friday morning, at the Rectory, Rawdon, Hants County, the wife of Rev. W. J. Ancient of a son.
- CHRISTIE.—At 9 Wellington Row, on the 20th, the wife of Dr. James Christie of a daughter.

Deaths.

- CHURCHWARD.—Entered into rest on Easter Day, at Mahone Bay, Rachel Otis, beloved wife of the Rev. C. E. Churchward, after a lingering illness, borne with true Christian patience.
- NEERRING.—Entered into rest on Saturday, 9th April, 1881, William, Son of William and Maria Neerring, of Mainadiou Mission, of Louisbourg, C. B., aged 26 years.