

Second, Easter is our Immortality Sunday. Why? Because we believe in immortality. We believe that man was made, not for a brief day, but for eternal years. We believe that what we call death is a sleep, or rather is a transition, and that beyond it is life. Winter seems the death of Nature. But after it comes spring, and when spring arrives we see that Nature was not dead, but only sleeping. We think this is a symbol, a prophecy. The new life of the spring typifies—always has typified to man, and doubtless always will—a life for the soul beyond the winter of death.

"Shall the rose bloom anew, and shall man perish?
Shall goodness sleep in the ground,
And the light of wisdom be quenched in the dust?

"Their winter, too, shall pass away;
They also shall live and bloom again;
Beauty shall spring out of ashes, and life out of death."

It is this splendid faith, native to the human soul, that Easter means to us.

Do you say, Why connect Jesus with this faith? Can any one be oblivious of the fact that the most impressive teacher of immortality that the world ever saw was Jesus? No other religious teacher in all the world's history ever did so much to make clear the great thought that our life, our higher life, is one with the life of God,—so that so long as God lives we must live also. We are not simply God's creatures; we are his children,—partakers of his nature, therefore partakers of his eternity. Such is Christ's teaching. Man is deathless because divine. Partaking of the nature of God,—one with the life of God,—how can death touch him?

So then we gladly and gratefully, and I think most fittingly,—associate our Immortality Sunday with Jesus our elder brother, our great and honored teacher, who by his Gospel did so much to bring life and immortality to light,—that is, out into the light—for us and for all men. Not to do this would be most unnatural as well as most ungrateful.