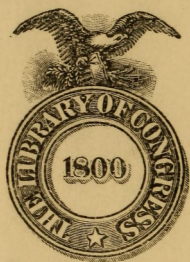


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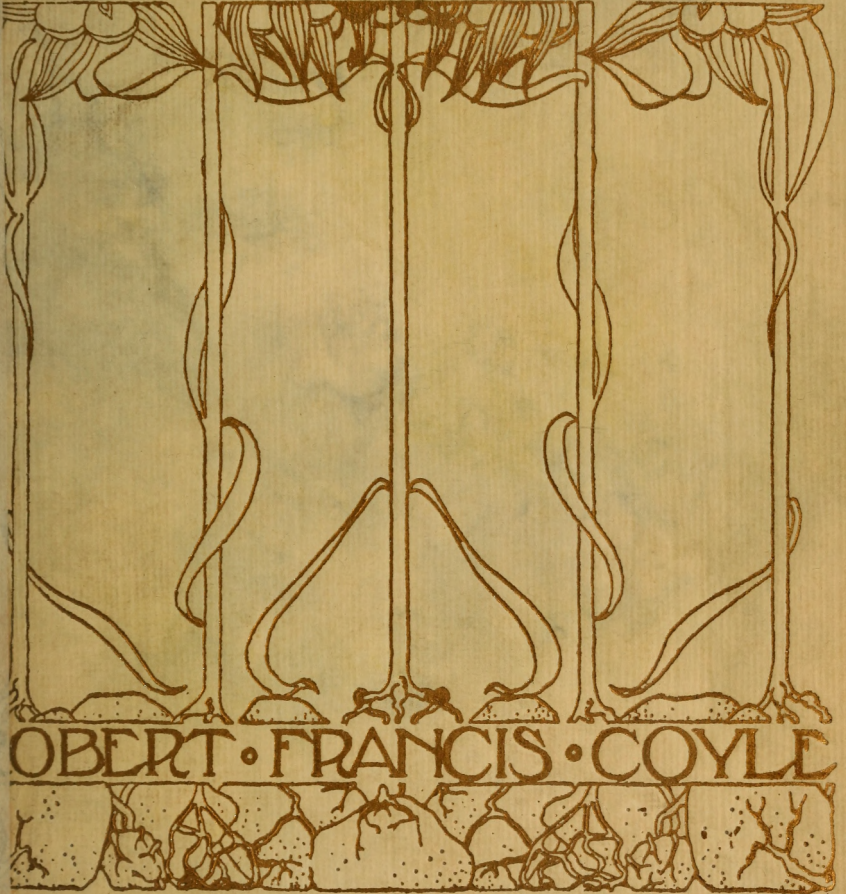
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# ROCKS AND FLOWERS





# Rocks and Flowers

Seven Discourses on the  
Apostles' Creed

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By  
Robert Francis Coyle

“A Creed of Rocks and a Creed of Flowers”

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## The Apostles' Creed

*I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of Heaven and Earth; and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost; born of the Virgin Mary; suffered under Pontius Pilate; was crucified, dead and buried; He descended into Hades; the third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into Heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Holy Catholic Church, the Communion of Saints, the Forgiveness of Sins, the Resurrection of the Body, and the Life Everlasting. Amen.*

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## “God My Rock”

“I Believe in God, the Father Almighty.”

**F**OR sixteen centuries the Apostle's Creed has been appealed to as summarizing in masterly compactness the essential beliefs of all who follow Jesus. This creed has crossed every sea. It has seen empires rise, and flourish, and pass away. Everywhere, in every city of Christendom, and in most of the cities of heathendom, in London, Paris, Rome, St. Petersburg, New York, Denver, and on every Sabbath day, wherever Christians gather for worship, it is recited or chanted. It carries in its bosom the deepest convictions and the most inspiring hopes of hundreds of millions of our race. It is a creed of granite and a creed of glory; a creed of unshakeable solidity and a creed of unrivalled sunshine; a creed of rock, and a creed of flowers.

“I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth.” That is the fountain head. There we begin. There is not a stream of Christianity bearing across any landscape on earth, that does not come ultimately from that source. Four things are affirmed or implied in this article. First, we affirm our belief that God is. This conviction is universal. Atheism is everywhere an exception. It is like a total eclipse of the sun,—something aside from the regular order and exceedingly rare. If anything that has ever been attained by the human mind is reasonable and worthy of absolute and unquestioned credence, it would seem to be the conviction that God is. And how is this conviction driven home and rooted in the hearts of thinking men and women? Why do we believe that there is a God? Is it because the



Bible says so? But where did the Bible get its authority to speak so decidedly on this subject? It would be reasoning in a very vicious and absurd circle to say, "I believe in God because the Bible says there is a God, and I believe in the Bible because it is inspired by God." Argument of that sort would hardly be worthy of little children. Why then do we believe in God? Is our reason hereditary? Do we believe in him because our fathers did, and our grandfathers, and all our forbears for generations back? That is an easy kind of faith, and it may be genuine, but it cannot be very intelligent or very virile or very dynamic. No, if we are well educated; if we are independent thinkers, and not borrowers and imitators; if we are mature in our intellectual processes, we arrive at our conclusions by what is called the scientific method. Here are certain tremendous facts; here is a universe and everywhere upon it are traces of mind; here are the most marvelous adaptations of means to ends; here are the most wonderful contrivances in stars and seas and flowers; here are machines and machineries a thousand times more complicated than any ever devised by man—all of them facts and forever in evidence. Now account for them, and in that accounting we are compelled to believe in God. Our minds can rest nowhere else.

When I was a student in college I was very much interested in an orrery which our professor of astronomy had in his lecture room. It was an ingenious device for showing the movements of the planets of our system in relation to the sun. By turning a single crank moons and stars and satellites were set revolving in their orbits and about their respective centers. If any man had said that that orrery came into existence by chance, that it was not designed and made by some intelligent person, he would have been considered fit for a lunatic asylum. And what shall we say of the real solar system and of count-

less other systems, beyond which are far more complicated systems moving with a precision which no clock work of man can approach? What can we say but that these facts, if they are to have any adequate explanation, make belief in God a necessity.

Suppose you were traveling through a desert land and should suddenly come upon a beautiful garden in the midst of which was a splendid palace. The grounds are laid out with most artistic skill, flowers arranged in attractive designs enchant your eyes, bewitching arbors tempt you to rest, and here and there gorgeous fountains are playing. You observe also that in the palace there is a vast deal of intricate and delicate machinery. Everywhere there are proofs of the presence and the handiwork of some living person. Yet he is invisible. You cannot see him. But notwithstanding you are absolutely sure of his existence. It would insult your intelligence to be told that garden and palace just happened into being and order and beauty. And is there not quite as much reason to argue from the facts of nature to the existence of some personal agent or owner? The scientific method takes the facts of the universe and seeks to account for them, and in so doing is driven by the very necessities of thought to the belief that God is.

There is, of course an occasional mind of the Ingersollian cast that says, "If postulating God accounts for all these wonderful facts, how are you going to account for God? Who made him?" But that does not frighten us. Let the skeptic or the scoffer, or the honest inquirer push the question, let him press it and repeat it and urge it until his head turns white, and when he finds the answer let him come and tell us. Meanwhile we rest in the belief that God is—a belief buttressed and bastioned by all the crowding facts of creation. The human mind must rest somewhere; there must be an ultimate, a final boundary, a ne plus ultra, and this we find in God. In

this first article of our creed we affirm our belief in the personality of God. And what do we mean by that? It is not so easy to make it plain; nevertheless, I shall attempt it. In the ordinary relations of life we know fairly well what the word person signifies. Applied here and there to the members of society it does not seem at all mysterious. In our thought a person is a being that thinks and wills and feels and reasons and loves. We say IT when we refer to a principle, or to an influence, or a force, but always HE or SHE when referring to an intelligence. A principle cannot build a house or rule a city; an influence cannot frame laws and guide nations; a force cannot produce literature, or art, or music, or construct locomotives and steamships. A thousand principles and influences and forces cannot inspire philanthropies, or reforms, or any movement whatever for the uplifting of the world. All these things pour from the hearts of personalities. When, therefore certain teachers deny the personality of God and describe him under the vague indefinite name of principle they are simply blinding themselves and their readers with fog.

It requires a person to build a house, or an observatory, or a clock; can it require less than a person to build a universe? Tell me that God is infinite, tell me that he fills all space, that he is a sea that beats up against every shore, but take away his personality and you leave nothing in him that I can worship and adore. An imemense IT filling all creation, cannot inspire my songs, and thrill my soul. If there is no loving personal heart, the word God can only mock and tantalize us. It is because we believe in his intelligence, his wisdom, his reason, his benevolence, as we see them written everywhere on the works of his hands, that we believe he is a person and sustains individual relations to everyone of us.

In this first article we affirm our belief in his Al-

mightiness. It is the power of God that stays up the universe and keeps all its infinite machinery in motion. Let anyone dip into astronomy for an hour; let him read about the endless sweep of creation; about the millions and millions of stellar worlds that go sailing forever through the ocean of space, thousands of them so immense that this earth is but a speck in comparison, and so remote that all the figures in the arithmetic are exhausted in estimating their distance,—let anyone consider the heavens, and if he believes in a God at all, he will have no difficulty in believing in his power.

To create such a universe as this, to hold it in the hollow of his hand, to keep suns and stars and systems in repair, to steady them in their orbits, to order the procession of the seasons, to sustain all life, to perpetuate the species, to be the fountain of all forces in earth and sea and sky, he must be Almighty. Nothing less will satisfy our thought. It is his power that causes his ideas to materialize, that makes the word become flesh, and gives effectiveness to his love. It is his power that rounds out and completes and gives perfection to all his other attributes. In vain to tell us that he is infinite in justice, in goodness, in wisdom, if he is not also the Almighty. Take away his Omnipotence and all the other qualities of his nature are left like the sails of a ship without wind, like a factory without an engine, like a street car system without a dynamo. But there are people who say that "If God is Almighty, why did he not keep man from falling? If he has all power, why does he allow anybody to perish? Why does he not save the whole race at once, and with one fell stroke annihilate all the forces of evil and blot out sin forever?" It is a sufficient answer to reply that God governs the sun and stars by his power, but he cannot keep the planets in their places by the Ten Commandments. Gravitation is his agent among systems and constellations; but gravitation cannot con-

trol or even touch the mind and conscience of humanity. Man cannot be moved from earth to heaven as a locomotive is moved from Denver to Colorado Springs, placed upon a track and propelled mechanically along; he must be moved by motives, by hopes, by fears, by reason, by fact; and if he resists them all it is because something has gone wrong with him. In the domain of will, in the region of man's free agency, in the realm where character is made there are some things which even God cannot do. You can defy him to his face, you can reject him, you can walk down the eternal years without him. Or you can choose to be his child, choose to take the crown which he offers, choose to register your name in the Lamb's book of life. God's power is never used to destroy any man's freedom. He leaves us to determine our own destiny. But the best part of our subject is to come.

In this first article we affirm our belief in God's fatherhood. This above all others is the one attribute in which he glories. Let me borrow a suggestion or two. If you are an artist and a friend visits you, it is the paintings in your studio that you show him. If you are an author you show him your books. If you are a musician you show him your instruments and your treasures from the old masters. If you are a mining man you show him your rare specimens from Cripple Creek and Goldfield. The things you value most are the things to which you call his attention. When one king, or ruler or prince visits another he is shown the arsenal and the army and the navy, because it is thought desirable to impress him with a sense of power.

But this is where God differs from the princes and monarchs of earth. He has never been eager to display his power. He has left men to find it out through the slow process of the ages. So of his wisdom. Never has he paraded that and made a show of it. Rather he has kept it in the background. Inventions and the exact sci-

ences by which his wisdom is discovered, are comparatively modern. The telescope and microscope and spectroscope belong to recent times. God has been in no hurry to impress men with his power and wisdom and cleverness. But from the very beginning he has been eager to make known his love. He tried to show it in Eden, tried to tell about it through the lips of the old prophets, tried in one last stupendous effort to reveal it on Calvary, and ever since, through a thousand agents and ministries, He has endeavored to get the thought into the hearts of the people that his nature is love. This is what he glories in supremely, and to make it plain, to make it telling, to make it winning and attractive, He calls himself Father.

You find the word in the old Testament again and again and it was constantly on the lips of Jesus. It was He more than any other, who taught our race to say, "Our Father," and it was He who illustrated in his own life what that word means. Seeing him we see the Father! How infinite in patience, in tenderness, in sympathy, in love! I read the story often. I follow the Master. I watch him and listen to him, and am profoundly moved. At every step, in every deed, in every lesson, he is revealing the Father, and such a Father!

You know what the highest and noblest fatherhood is as seen among men, what it does, how it suffers, how it sacrifices, how it forgives. You know how it rejoices in a child's joy and honor, and how it is pierced by a child's pain and disgrace. You know what long journeys it will make and what long vigils it will keep and what toils it will endure to lay up for the children; how it cannot be asked too many favors or entrusted with too many confidences by sons and daughters; how it will put aside the dignity of office, the greatness of exalted position, to romp with the little boy or girl and lovingly enter into their lives; how the strong man, the cultured woman,

stately and stiff and self-poised in general society, in the circle of the home abandon themselves to the little ways of the children and are pleased with their ridiculous pranks. And if love can so transform things in the relation of parent and child, blotting out the distinctions between greatness and littleness, between highness and lowliness, why should it be hard to believe that it does the same between God the Father and man the child?

There are people who say it is beneath the dignity of the infinite God to interest himself in every phase of each individual man's life; that it is too much to suppose that my little ups and downs, my little plans and programs, my little shadows and lights, my toys and trinkets are matters of concern to him. But those who say that forget his Fatherhood. As a Father he counts the hairs of our heads. He puts our tears in his bottle. He is touched by every wave of grief or of gladness that beats up against our lives.

If I had nothing else and could find nothing else Christ's picture of the certain man who had two sons would be enough. You know what you would do if your boy were gambling and drinking and going headlong to the devil. For a while you might be angry, you might think of casting him off, but if you are a true parent, your fatherhood would assert itself and crowd every other feeling aside and you would do anything, sacrifice anything, to redeem your lost boy. If for his sake it were necessary for you to be forbearing, to lie awake nights until your heart was afire with anxiety, that you should be reduced to poverty, mortified in pride, humiliated, crushed to the ground beneath the burden and the shame of your boy's sin, you would willingly submit to it all. And if at last you saw him coming home, returning to purity, to virtue, to manhood, no words could express your joy. He would be glad, but your gladness would exceed; it would swallow him up as a mighty chorus swal-

lows up a single voice. Well, that is the the description which Jesus has given us of God. It is the best earthly fatherhood enlarged into infinity.

"Like as a father," says the Psalmist. "Like as a father," says Jesus, and all the gospel from Bethlehem to Calvary is an attempt to tell us what that 'like' means. How does a father pity his children and yearn after his children Find the answer in the face of that old man seated at the city gate. Yonder over the hill the battle is raging. On the issue of it hangs the old man's crown, perhaps his life. There is panic in the town, there is running to and fro, the people are filled with alarm. Already they see their homes in flames and blood flowing in the streets. In the midst of it all a swift courier is seen coming, then another, and another, and the people flock about to hear the tidings. "All's well!" cries the first. "Victory!" shouts the second. But with biting impatience the old man demands, "Is the young man Absalom safe?" and when the truth is told, he staggers up to his lonely chamber and breaks his heart with weeping and pierces the shadows with his pathetic cry, "O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would God, I had died for thee, o Absalom, my son, my son!"

Alongside of that set the picture of Jesus in the fifteenth of Luke if you want another immortal illustration of how a father pities his children. It is these illustrations added to the lessons of the gospel and incarnated in the life of the Saviour that justify us in saying with confidence and often with rapturous joy, "I believe in God the Father Almighty"—The Father! Whosoever entertains that belief and realizes it as an experience and fills his soul with its intoxication can never yield to despair, and never stay in the valley and never walk in perpetual shadow. He will be the child of hope, the child of the hilltops, the child of sunshine.



## “That Rock Was Christ”

“And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord.”

**T**HIS is the substance of the second article of the Apostles' Creed. As a preliminary it will be proper to say a word about Jesus Christ as an object of study and a quickener of human thought. It is no extravagance to affirm that nothing else has ever done so much to stimulate the human mind. Wise men from the East came to his cradle, and ever since wise men and learned men, have been asking questions about him. He is a perennial subject of inquiry and investigation. The presses of the world never cease to turn out books about him. Of all the literature that flows from the manifold fountains of scholarship and culture, no other holds its own and thrives on criticism and maintains its interest and its power like the literature inspired by Jesus Christ.

In the literary market as in every other market, competition is sharp and fierce; many of its waves are ephemeral and evanescent; they live for a day and an hour and then pass away; but those that have to do with God's only Son our Lord are always in stock and always in demand. Not Oxford, not Cambridge, not Harvard, or Yale, or any other university has ever awakened so much thought or stimulated so much study, or done so much to give vigor and tone and fruitfulness to the intellect of man as the lowly Nazarene who came into a home of poverty and obscurity 1900 years ago. Indeed, these very universities themselves owe their existence to him. They are deposits left upon these shores of time by the ever-deepening, ever-widening river of his influence. Now all this means something, and the profound significance of

it will not be overlooked by reflecting minds. It is a great power center that can transmit its energies to every part of a large city, lighting its streets and propelling its cars; and among men it would be a mighty power center, who could touch and thrill and inspire his own generation and his own country from one end to the other; but what shall we say of Him whose attractive power affected all the centuries that preceded him and whose projective power has acted with tremendous force upon all the centuries since his crucifixion and upon all lands? The answer we shall have to find in the quarter indicated in this second article of our creed. To explain the effect we must study the cause, and looking upon the cause we are taken far beyond the limits of the human,—taken where we must needs feel the movement of the infinite.

Our subject leads us into the region of the supernatural. It is a land whose existence a great many thinkers deny, and a land which a good many more refuse to consider on the ground that it is unknowable. There are large numbers who declare that it is impossible for them, without doing violence to their reason, to believe in the supernatural in the face of the natural law with which they are everywhere encompassed. Turn where they will, and in all the vast creation they see things moving in regular sequence, in undeviating order, no breaks, no leaps, no infractions, and hence, they conclude that the supernatural is only a dream of theology, and has no basis in fact. In some quarters there is such a pronounced aversion to the supernatural that men lose their temper in speaking of it, and have nothing but scorn and ridicule and abuse for those who differ from them.

Much of the confusion, and much of the bitterness, I think, comes from reading into the word supernatural more than belongs to it. Those who object to it most strenuously give it a meaning which it does not contain. They insist that it carries with it a violation of law, an

interference with the machinery and movements of the universe, which reason cannot tolerate. But what right have men to conclude that a thing or an event that is above nature is against nature; that a thing that is beyond our human ken and our human experience must necessarily be a transgression or violation of natural law? The marvels of wireless telegraphy, of the telephone, and the graphophone, were quite beyond our human ken a few years ago. If any man had ventured to predict, when some of us were children, that dispatches would be received in the middle of the Atlantic ocean and daily papers published on shipboard far out at sea; that men would be talking with one another and recognizing each others' voices over a distance of a thousand miles; that singers in New York and London, long after their death, would be entertaining people in social gatherings in every part of the country at the same time, he would have been laughed at or pitied as a man whose balance of mind was gone. But all this has come to pass, not by any violation of law, but by a larger acquaintance with law.

Now if things which would have been considered supernatural or miraculous a generation or so ago are seen to be perfectly natural today, why may not the supernatural events alleged in the Bible, as knowledge increases, be found to be in perfect harmony with some higher laws, of which we are at the present time ignorant? The ken even of the most learned men is exceedingly circumscribed. Their outlook is cut off on every side. Ten thousand things are transpiring in the universe about which they know nothing. Shall little children in the cellar presume to say what shall take place, or how things shall move, in all other rooms of their Father's house? It has always seemed to me absurd to affirm that a thing cannot be just because it happens to be located outside the circle of human experience. You say it is according to all human experience that if I let a stone

slip from my fingers it will fall to the ground. Gravitation, you say, will settle that exactly as it always has in similar cases. But suppose the stone doesn't fall to the ground, suppose I shy it at some sleeper in the gallery, or at some beast by the wayside, suppose it slips from my hand toward the stars, what then? Has any law been violated? Has any natural sequence been broken up? Not at all. There has simply been the intervention of a higher law, and the harmony has gone on without a discord.

What we call miracles or the supernatural, may be as entirely in accord with the order of the universe as the falling of a leaf, or the flying of a bird, or the running of a brook. I believe it is. I believe if we could see from the inside and from God's point of view, we would see that the miracles of the New Testament were perfectly natural events, and that in their performance no law of the Creator was trampled upon. The supernatural is simply the natural doing its work and going on with its operations beyond the reach of our knowledge.

Now with this in mind let us come back to the creed. "Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary." Here we come right up against the supernatural. It is a great mystery, but men who cannot explain the beating of their own hearts, or the assimilation of food and its conversion into bone and blood and brawn, or the production and maintenance of animal heat, or the marvels of eye and ear, or a thousand other things of common life, are acting unreasonably when they demand that all mystery shall be cleared away when we come to religion. Until our knowledge runs away into omniscience and we know even as God knows we shall be encompassed with mystery and filled and surrounded with problems which we cannot solve—problems of the mind, problems of the body, problems of the universe. The Bible is no more a book of mystery than the latest book

of science. All Christian thinkers are candid enough to confess that the Virgin birth of our Lord presents a very serious difficulty. The ordinary laws of generation, as we know them, if the gospel story is true, were partially suspended when Jesus Christ came into the world. From the earliest days of the Christian era until now it has been the unbroken belief of the church that he had no human father, but was "conceived by the Holy Ghost." There are people even among his disciples who are staggered by this item of the creed. They believe it, yet they are troubled with doubt. So far as I am personally concerned, I unhesitatingly accept the historical narrative as we find it in Matthew and Luke. I believe that the Son of Mary was the Son of God; that the divine and human met in her and from that supernatural union came the holy child Jesus. I believe that an extraordinary result must be produced in an extraordinary way, or, in other words, that a transcendent effect must have a transcendent cause; and by thinkers of all schools it is admitted that Jesus was not only extraordinary, but altogether transcendent among men. While a true man, there was something so amazingly different from other men that reason requires us to look for a different origin. The gospel birth stories are certainly consistent with the life that followed.

But for those who stumble over the Virgin birth of our Lord it may be well to point out that such a thing is not by any means impossible or unprecedented in the world of nature. The laws of biology do not preclude such an occurrence as wholly out of the question. Biologists tell us that there are whole orders of creatures which are born from the female alone. The scientific name for this mystery is parthenogenesis, which is simply the Greek word for, born of a Virgin. Birth of this kind is frequent in nature, and Prof. G. J. Romanes, the eminent authority on biological subjects, at a time when

he would have been classed as an agnostic, affirmed that even in the human race such an occurrence "would be by no means out of the range of possibility." This may seem to relieve the question somewhat for certain minds. But for myself the other way of reasoning is most convincing and most satisfying. I look at the character of Jesus, at his stainless integrity, at his pure and holy life, at the claim he made of pre-existence, and I am compelled to believe in his supernatural descent. He declared that he was before Abraham, that he was with the Father before the world was, that he came from the Father, and that he was sinless. If we accept these claims we can easily accept the virgin birth; if we deny them, then we must reconcile in our thinking an absolutely perfect life with assertions which that life must have known to be false. On the whole therefore it is immensely easier, and immensely more reasonable to subscribe to this article of our creed than to reject it.

But now a word or two as to the Incarnation, for this great subject comes prominently to the surface here. By the conception of the Holy Ghost and the Virgin birth the "word was made flesh and dwelt among us." By the Incarnation we mean the coming of the divine into the human, the identification of God with the nature of man, becoming bone of our bone, flesh of our flesh, entering into our life, forever one with us, as the Gulf stream is forever one with the ocean.

"Verily he took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham."

If I cannot explain the mystery of it I can see its necessity and rejoice in the inspiring fact. Abstractions have little or no interest for the great mass of mankind. They are too remote from our prosy life. An occasional philosopher may find pleasure in them, but people in general want something they can appreciate. A God unembodied, existing only within the veil, dwelling within the

shadows, incomprehensible and invisible, can never inspire their worship and kindle their hope. But let the word become flesh, let the Deity in human form live on the earth and walk among men as one of themselves and partake of their infirmities, and drink out of their cup, and offer his bosom to their weary heads, and shed tears when their hearts are breaking with sorrow, and hunger and thirst and suffer as they do, and die upon the cross,—let us have a God of this sort, and our love will go out to him as the flowers fling back their kisses to the sun. The Incarnation is a necessity. We must have images; and Jesus is the express image of God. We must have the concrete, and Jesus is the picture of God thrown upon the screen of the world, a living picture which all can behold and understand. What does it avail to tell us that we have a Father in Heaven if we cannot clasp his feet? What we want is a father on earth and this we have in Jesus Christ.

I see no reason why anyone should be troubled by the mystery of the Incarnation. There is no end of analogies in the life and conduct of men. It is by making the word flesh, by translating ideas into facts, visions into tangible realities, that all civilization and all progress is made possible. Every hospital, every college, every benevolent institution, is a word made flesh. It existed in philanthropic minds and hearts before it took shape in brick and stone. The steamship, the locomotive, the telegraph and the telephone, every invention is a word made flesh. It is an incarnation of that which was first of all only a thought or a conception of the brain. All our liberties, all our free institutions, all reforms that lift the world are the embodiments of ideals originally cherished by an occasional far-seeing noble-hearted man. They are words made flesh. Incarnation is one of the commonest and most necessary facts of life. In our relations to our children and to those whom we love we are

daily translating the word into flesh, giving to the kindly thought, the generous feeling, a tangible and visible form. We do not give our children and our friends a written statement of our regard, or a creed containing our sentiments, but we reveal to them our love by incarnation, by facts that can be seen and handled.

So when we go back to the gospel and read, "The word was made flesh," and when we see that word living among men and blessing them with a thousand ministries we see the mind of God, the love of God, embodied, made concrete, brought where even a child can understand enough of it to fill his soul with song.

But before dismissing the subject let me point out two or three practical lessons, suggested or clearly taught by the incarnation of our Lord. The first is as to the possibilities of our human nature. If God has come into it who can set limits to what it may unfold into and the glory it may yet attain? In the soot and dust and mire of an English manufacturing town John Ruskin saw the materials out of which opals and sapphires and diamonds are made. So by the incarnation, by the coalescing of God and man, by the fusing of the divine and human, the very soot of humanity may become a jewel fit to flash in the diadem of the King of Kings.

I do not know of anything that should beget and keep alive in the breasts of men such a lofty and unconquerable self respect; or that should give such a mighty impulse to every aspiration, and every noble hunger of the human heart. If God has come into our nature, marred and broken as it is by sin, it shows the capacity of that nature, shows that it can embody the eternal, shows that the impure drop may enshrine the sun; and hence it should inspire the weakest and sinfullest with a great hope. If God has come in sin may be crowded out, its tyranny may be thrown off, we may move up and up, taking on more and more of divine fullness until we shall be like him and shall see him as he is.



Then, second, the incarnation shows the infinite interest which God takes in us. What more could he do to manifest his love and grace? In the person of his only Son our Lord He lays aside his glory, empties himself as the apostle says, and becomes a partaker of the life of men and puts his own divine resources at their disposal. All through the centuries preceding his advent we find him making gradual attempts to enter into our humanity. But as another has said, "the entrance was barred by many obstacles, and guarded by the flashing swords of many fiery passions and implacable repugnances." At last, however, through the marvelous patience and long suffering of Our Heavenly Father the door was opened that the King of Glory might come in.

From the very beginning the Old Testament is the history of a process of incarnation; it is the story of a Hope, of a tremendous ideal that is struggling for expression, and finally that Ideal comes to realization in Jesus Christ.

In him God's interest in us blazes out into its supreme revelation; and if God is for us to such an extent as this, that he gladly undergoes all the humiliation of the manger and all the agony and shame of the Cross, who can be against us? To have the burning, loving interest of God at work in our behalf, and bound to bring us off more than conquerors, is a thought that should pull out every stop and turn on the full organ music of our being and make every key ring forth its hallelujahs.



## “The Stone Rolled Away”

“On the third day he rose again from the dead.”

**B**Y nearly all thinkers who have given serious attention to the matter it is admitted that the resurrection of our Lord is the key to the whole Christian position. What Paul saw so clearly and affirmed so emphatically has been apparent ever since and must be as long as men are endowed with the ability to reason. Take away the resurrection and you take the keystone from the arch. Without it the whole structure of Christianity goes to pieces. This is the miracle of miracles “with the truth of which,” as another reminds us, “the writers of the New Testament affirm that Christianity stands or falls.”

One does not need to be a great logician, or a powerful thinker to see the force of these words. If Jesus did not rise again from the dead he was himself either a misguided enthusiast or a deliberate deceiver, for he told his disciples that he would rise again. He spoke of his coming resurrection with as much certainty as of his approaching death. In his wonderful table talk at the Last Supper he comforted his followers with the assurance that after his death He would come again. “After I am risen again,” said he, “I will go before you go into Galilee.” Testimony of this sort from the lips of Jesus is abundant and you can easily see its evidential value. To impeach the veracity of this witness is to fly in the face of his own spotless life and in the face of all history. If he did not say these things about rising again from the dead we cannot believe his disciples, then it follows that men whom we cannot believe, men too false

to be worthy of credence, have delineated the only perfect character the world has ever seen. If on the other hand, Jesus did say these things he must have said the truth for with his character before us it is impossible to believe either that he was deceived or a deceiver. And with the history of the early disciples before us, looking at their sustained heroism, at what they suffered, at their stripes, imprisonments, exiles, tortures, their death itself,—nothing can make us believe that they endured all this in support of a falsehood. The life they lived makes their testimony to the risen Christ unimpeachable. But more of this later. On this whole subject I desire to call attention to two or three arguments which seem to me to be unanswerable. To my own mind they come home with all the force of a demonstration.

I begin with the self-evident truth that every effect must have an adequate cause. Christianity is in the world. No one denies that. It is in every zone and clime of the world. Go into whatever land you choose and you will find this religion there. But Christianity was not always in the world. We turn back on history's page and we reach a day when it was not, except as it had a potential existence in Judaism. Like every other great movement it began to be. Something caused it, and that something must have been equal to all that has followed. A ten-candle power light cannot fling its beams out into all the earth. A Mississippi cannot issue from a small island. For the mighty river you must have the water shed of a mighty continent. A little rose water forced from an atomizer cannot wash down the mountains. The rocks of Hell Gate were not rent in sunder and blown from the pathway of commerce by a child's torpedo. Bars of steel are not twisted and broken by playful zephyrs. The cars of a great city are not propelled by a pocket battery. Judge the cause and measure its power, and its quality, by its effects.

To proceed in this way is scientific. The scientist measures the force of the fire by the heat it radiates; the power of the light by the reach of its rays; the strength of the current by the wheels it turns; the capacity of the engine by the speed of the car. In the world of physics this method of reasoning is simple and it is convincing. Should it be any less in the realm of morals and of spirit? Christianity is an effect. It is a tremendous effect, and for this tremendous effect rational thought is right in postulating a tremendous cause. Here is an echo sounding in Africa, in Asia, in America, in the islands of the sea, an echo from a far-away age, issuing from a cross, from an open grave, and since it sounds so far and sounds so long what must have been the original voice?

Here is a sceptre whose sway is felt and lovingly acknowledged from California to Cathay, from Alaska to Australia, its power growing with the flight of time, a sceptre whose sway began to be felt immediately after the alleged resurrection of Jesus Christ; and if the sceptre is so mighty, what must be the King whose hand holds it? Measure the cause by its effects. Was it a small thing to transform the Cross from an instrument of shame into a symbol of glory? The Romans looked upon the Cross with disdain, they loathed it, and turned from it with horror. The meanest, the vilest citizen of the Empire was considered too good to be crucified. And, yet, within three centuries from the death of Jesus the Cross was emblazoned upon the imperial standards and the legionaries were proud to march under it. The Cross was stamped upon coins. It was painted on shields. It was embroidered in the soldier's uniform. What was it that wrought these remarkable changes? What was it that changed the Sabbath from the seventh to the first day of the week? Whence has come the beneficent power that has dotted the earth with missions, with light centers, with hospitals and colleges and asylums; that has

sent angels of hope and love singing and ministering through the world; that has given visions of a city that hath foundations to those who dwell under lowly roofs; that has wooed wealth from the pockets of the rich, and mites from the pockets of the poor, and caused constantly enlarging streams of benevolence to flow through society; that has caused liberty to stir in human breasts and leap into human institutions and put upon innumerable human lips the song of the free? To produce all these changes and set in motion all these forces, means power, power too enormous for words to describe. These changes are effects; they have been thrown out upon the stage of the world by some force behind. With this in mind consider this proposition, viz., that—

What we call Christianity and all it has brought to mankind of light and hope and inspiration, must have come from one of three causes. In setting these causes before you I am simply going over ground that has often been gone over by others. But if we are to be strong and intelligent in our faith, we cannot refresh our minds with these great arguments too often. The three causes may be stated as follows, and there cannot in the nature of the case be more than three.

First, we may affirm that Christianity proceeded from a clever fraud and that the whole structure rests upon a shrewdly concocted deception.

Second, we may take the position that Christianity issued from a little company of weak and superstitious disciples who were the creatures of fanaticism and credulity. They were honest enough but they were deluded.

Third, we may stand with Paul and say, "Now is Christ risen from the dead," and maintain that all this mighty product called Christianity has come from the power of the resurrected Jesus.

Here then are three explanations offered; and all that has ever been written on this subject gathers about

these three, viz.: deliberate deception, innocent delusion, and the actual rising again of Jesus from the dead.

Will you look at them very candidly and thoughtfully in their order?

We are asked to believe in the first place that the original disciples of Jesus were deceivers; that they were playing a part which they must have known to be false; that they foisted upon the world a stupendous imposture. Now, we are familiar with the old and true saying that water cannot rise above its source. The proverb applies with no less force in the realm of morals. The question of Job is still pertinent, "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean." So also is the question of Jesus: "Do men gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles?" A corrupt fountain cannot send forth a pure stream. Not only must every effect have an adequate cause, but the effect must partake of the quality of the cause.

If these early promulgators of Christianity were deceivers, if they were deliberately imposing upon the people when they went up and down the earth preaching that he had risen from the dead, if they were lying and knew that they were lying, how shall we account for the lofty ethics they taught and the sublime precepts they inculcated? No such morality had ever before been enforced. It was far superior to anything ever heard from the lips of Socrates and Plato. Read it in the last chapters of Romans, read it in the Epistles to the Corinthians and the Galatians and Ephesians. Read it in the Epistles of John and James and Peter, morality that moves on the same plane with the Sermon on the Mount, and far in advance of the best living even of the present time. All this flowing from the hearts and lives of deceivers! Such white light shining through such dirty glass! The thing is preposterous.

Then think of it in another way. They were deceivers. There was falsehood in the very springs of their

being, and yet with this falsehood in their breasts, they went forth to unparalleled sacrifice, and suffering, and persecution, and heroism. Before the alleged resurrection of Jesus, during the last days of the Master's shame and humiliation, and while the shadow of his death was upon them, they were in utter despair. They were weak, they were shrinking and timid; nay, more, they were cowardly. When most of all he needed their presence and sympathy, they were so craven hearted that "they all forsook him and fled," and one of them in coarse and vulgar profanity disavowed all connection with him. A more forlorn, a more crushed and broken company never lived. The radiant and abounding hope they had in their dear Lord gave place to an awful sense of failure and defeat. But now note the change. After that transcendent event of the third day; after they had seen the risen Christ and talked with him; after the repeated conferences and interviews of the forty days, these very men were completely transformed. They were as opposite from what they had been before as noonday is from midnight, as the torrent that challenges the mountain rock is from the shrinking pool in the valley. Now, that he is risen, they lift up their heads, they defy kings and councils, they tremble not at the maledictions of priests and Sanhedrims; they go into prison with singing and are as fearless as lions before the hate of the Jew and the animosity of the Roman. They welcome stripes, they welcome perils and privations, they rejoice in tribulation, they face death in its most awful forms without flinching, and all to show their devotion, their love, to their Lord.

No one denies that this complete revolution in the spirit and temper of the early disciples took place; that this company of despairing fugitives were converted into heroes whom nothing could intimidate, and whose earnestness nothing could resist, and whose unselfish service



of humanity has been the wonder of the ages ever since. Is it possible to believe that such dauntless courage, such divine self-abnegation, such magnificent living and dying, came from deliberate deception? To entertain such a belief would be to turn reason into chaos. No argument can convince us that hypocrisy can flood the world with sincerity, or that cunningly concealed fraud can furnish the materials with which to build the temple of truth, or that false-hearted men can give to the world the spirit of unquenchable reform and undying moral growth. The first supposition then must be ruled out. Whatever the early disciples were who went everywhere preaching the resurrection, they were not deceivers.

We are asked to believe in the second place that they were deluded, honest but weak and credulous souls who were carried away by their own imagination and victimized by their own fancy. According to this theory all that belongs to the resurrection, had its origin in the overwrought mind of Mary Magdalene. She had brooded over the Lord's death until she became hysterical and in her hysteria she thought she saw Jesus in the garden, and made all the rest of the disciples think so, too. Thus from the conjoint hallucination of Mary and the other followers of Jesus, from "their elevation of mental and nervous life," or in simpler words, from their easy going credulity and weak fanaticism came the whole story of the risen Christ and all the tremendous moral effect of it upon the world. Those who accept this theory should never again charge Christians with being over-ready to believe on insufficient evidence. Every effect must have an adequate cause, and to say that this whole movement which we call Christianity came out of hysteria may satisfy a certain class of minds; but it can never satisfy the hard common sense of mankind. Think of the power that overturned the Roman Empire, that compelled the Cae-

sars to lay their homage at the feet of Jesus, that is everywhere undermining the superstitions of the world today, coming from such a source as that! But there are some who say that the delusion of the disciples was of another sort. They declare that Jesus did not actually die on the Cross and that he only seemed to rise from the dead. He simply swooned away from exhaustion, was taken from the Cross alive, restored to consciousness, and in due time declared to be alive again. The artless and unsophisticated disciples believed the latter without giving themselves the trouble to think about the former. It never occurred to them to inquire as to the actuality of their Lord's death; enough for them that he was with them once more. But the absurdity of this position is even greater than the other. I quote a word or two in this connection from Strauss, the well known German rationalist. He says: "It is impossible to believe that a being who had stolen half dead out of the sepulchre, who crept about weak and ill, wanting medical treatment, who required bandaging, strengthening, indulgence, and who still at last yielded to his sufferings, could have given the disciples the impression that he was a conqueror over death and the grave." But that they did have this impression, that it set them on fire with enthusiasm, and sent them out to a world-wide propaganda, is a fact of history which all alike admit. Consider it for a moment: "A poor weak Jesus," as another puts it, "with difficulty holding himself erect, in hiding, disguised, and finally dying—this Jesus an object of faith, or exalted emotion, a risen conqueror and Son of God."

I do not wonder that this theory of apparent death and delusion excites the ridicule of the keenest critics and thinkers on both sides of the sea.

But if the resurrection belief did not come from deliberate fabrication or from deluded fancy, then it must have come from actual fact; and this is our conviction;

it is the steadfast conviction of the Christian Church throughout the world. Accept the fact as the New Testament gives it, and the complete transformation of the disciples is explained; their radiant joy, their life-long enthusiasm, their lion-like courage, their sublime self-sacrifice, are accounted for. Accept the fact as the history relates it and the whole dynamic of early Christianity, and modern Christianity, and all the rising, pulsing, tides of the Christian faith, are made clear to rational thought. Deny the fact and we are driven to all sorts of absurdities and compelled to resort to the wildest of interpretations.

In all this discussion I do not mean to imply that there are no difficulties. God never makes the pathway easy for human thought. The road that leads up to the citadel of truth, has its rocks and its ruts and its steep places. It is not all smooth and level riding. But if there are difficulties on our side, there are far greater difficulties on the other side. I have touched upon two or three of the absurdities to which a denial of the great resurrection fact commits us. There are still others. Suppose Jesus died, but did not rise again, what became of his dead body? If his friends stole it away and kept it and carefully guarded it in some secret place, what inspiration could they get from a dead body to make them so dauntless in courage? What comfort, what hope, what power could they obtain from a dead body? But if it is absurd to believe that his disciples had stolen his body and hidden it away, why did not his enemies produce it and at once and for all put an end to the propaganda of Jesus and the resurrection? One exhibition in the streets of Jerusalem of that mangled form, one public identification, would have strangled the new faith in its cradle. The only reason why they did not do it was because they could not. There was no dead body to produce. Jesus had risen.

That is the stupendous fact and when we recite it in our creed we are not reciting a cunningly devised fable, but one of the best substantiated truths in human history. And now just a final word as to its significance. The resurrection puts the crown of divinity upon our Lord. If he did not rise our Unitarian friends are right. He was only a man—and not a very truthful man, either—certainly not entitled to our worship, for he said repeatedly that he would rise again. He called himself “the resurrection and the life.” On that rock we stand. It is not fog and mist but the indestructible granite of history. It is practical. It strikes home. It admonishes and it warns. The resurrection fact says to us that the cemetery is not our goal, that the grave is only a way station, and that the interests of uncountable years depend upon whether we are heading in the right direction. If we are running into sin and sipping forbidden cups, it says to us, “Pause, consider, you are to live on when all the stars are dead.”

But the sweetest voice that comes to us from the resurrection fact is one of inspiration. It assures us that we have a living Christ, who is with us all the days, a loving helper, and brother and friend. Under the cloud, on the steep hill, in the stress of temptation, down in the dark valley when the heart is breaking,—always he is with us. It tells us that our dead who died in Him are not lost, only gone on around the bend of the road. It tells us that those who have left us and passed through the gateway which we call death are far more alive than we are, far freer, far happier, rejoicing in the conscious presence of their risen Lord. Wonderful is the hope that blossoms out of this article of our creed, “On the third day He rose again from the dead.” It throws its sweetness and fragrance over all our life. It inspires. It refreshes. It lifts up. And not only so, but it begets within us a feeling of awe and solemnity. It sobers and steadies,

for it shows us the majestic proportions, the boundless sweep of our life. Standing on the elevation of the great resurrection fact we see beyond the river, we see the land of Beulah, we see the Delectable Mountains wrapped in the glory of God, and standing there thoughtfully, with vision cast forward, all that belongs to our life takes on the measureless significance of eternity.



## “The Ascension and Judgment”

“He ascended into Heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.”

**I**N these great words our creed reaches its climax. It is a long way from the Virgin birth to the right hand of God the Father Almighty; a long way from the suffering under Pontius Pilate to the supreme judgeship of the Universe. There is nothing higher, nothing more solemn, than the thoughts connected with our Lord's exaltation; and the scriptures link His exaltation to His humiliation, making one the logical basis of the other.

The impression they make upon us is that His going up to the dazzling summit of God's glory turned upon His going down to the lowest depths of earthly abasement. The ladder by which He climbed to the mountain tops of Heaven was planted in the valley of the world's shame and ignominy. Every one who knows his Bible will recall at this point Paul's great passage in his letter to the Philippians, where, speaking of Jesus, he says: “But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross. Wherefore God hath highly exalted him and given him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things in earth and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.” Thus the two things, his humil-

iation and his exaltation are inseparably bound together. The one without the other would have no meaning.

"He ascended into Heaven." The Scriptural account is brief and simple and yet very remarkable. Luke speaks of the ascension twice. First in the gospel that bears his name, where he says: "And he led them out as far as to Bethany, and he lifted up his hands and blessed them, and it came to pass while he blessed them, he was parted from them and carried up into Heaven. And they worshipped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy; and were continually in the temple praising and blessing God." His second reference is in the first chapter of the Acts in which he adds some exceedingly interesting details. Thus: "And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld he was taken up and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward Heaven, as he went up, behold two men stood by him in white apparel, which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven. This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."

The thoughtful reader can hardly fail to see in this story a literary touch that makes it altogether unlikely that this was the work of human invention. It is said that the disciples "returned to Jerusalem with great joy." Their Lord had gone. The clouds had closed about him. The mysterious other world had received him. He whom they loved with all their hearts had vanished into the unknown; they had looked into his face, they had listened to his voice for the last time, they were left alone with his enemies and theirs, and yet they "returned to Jerusalem with great joy." Is that the touch of an inventor or the touch of fact? As we see it in this world, when the loved one goes, when the dear companion disappears over the border, when the great heart to which we have clung blesses us and says farewell, it means pathos, it means



tears, it means sorrow. Whoever comes back from the place of parting where congenial souls are taken from one another for life, with great joy, praising and blessing God?

In what book did you ever read that when some mighty man of God, who had won the affections of thousands, was called away, or some philanthropist whose life had been a benediction to his fellows was summoned into the unseen, or some statesman, in whom his country gloried and on whom it leaned, stepped out of the ranks of the living, the people were glad and exultant and went back to their homes and their tasks with great joy? No, after all such experiences we return to our Jerusalem with eyes that are wet and with hearts that are sad. So that in this literary touch we have the unconscious testimony to the truth of the story.

And there is another equally significant. In the narrative of our Lord's birth we are told that at that great event the music of Heaven broke forth into the Gloria in Excelsis. Where the Lord God stoops to the humiliation of the manger, the angelic hosts are represented as singing, "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, good will toward men." But at the ascension, when he went back to the right hand of the Father Almighty there were no songs heard by men. If there was any music, any jubilation, as I think very likely there was, it was kept for audiences within the veil. Now, if the story of the two events had been of human invention, if men under the spell of some strange delusion or for purposes of their own had tried to forge or fabricate the two narratives of the nativity and the Ascension, our knowledge of literature, and our knowledge of human nature tells us how they would have proceeded. "Over the cradle," as another has said, "there would have been silence, and a sky as hushed as the frozen sea. At the Ascension the air would have quivered with the melody,

and the mountains been shaken by the storm of the triumph." But because the narrative is true, the liturgical instincts of the evangelist are kept in check. The church is supplied with no song for the Ascension tide to form a counterpart to the Gloria in Excelsis. The evangelist who walks with such a firm historical tread through the Gospels and Acts, who gives chronological facts, who observes so carefully in the storm and shipwreck, who preserves and uses documents, has a mind which is desirous of veracity, which respects every attainable accuracy because it is of the noble family of truth.

To the temple which he raises to the truth he will neither prefix a porch of romance, nor append an exit of fiction. Because the narrative is true, all the songs are for the cradle, all the silence is for the return to the throne. Thinking men and women will readily appreciate the force of these words. These literary touches are not accidental. Much less are they the work of intentional deceivers. They are here because we are dealing with fact. "He ascended into Heaven" as quietly as the sun sinks behind the horizon, and with minds illumined to see who he was and what it all meant the disciples "returned to Jerusalem with great joy."

"And sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty." If the language is figurative everybody knows just what it means. Long ago as now and always the right hand is the place of honor. On the right hand side the host or hostess seats the guest to whom it is desired to show special deference and consideration. The prime minister is seated at the right hand of his sovereign or chief. The meaning of the figure as applied to Jesus is not only that he is now in the place of supreme honor, but that he is on the throne of power. That position, that exaltation is the realization of his own words when he said just before he stepped into the chariot of cloud, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth."

And you will notice that both in the Gospel and in the Creed it is in the present tense. "He sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty." That is his place, his attitude, today. And you will not fail to appreciate the calm reserve of power implied in his posture. There is no fear, no worry, no agitation, no feverish haste, but all the quiet tranquillity, all the patient repose, of one who is conscious of infinite resources. "He sitteth." He will bide his time. The eternal can wait. But when at last he rises from his throne to come again, his coming will shake the universe. If only we had the vision of Stephen; if our eyes could penetrate the mists; if we could see the Heavens opened and the Son of Man on the right hand of God, it would reassure us, and thrill us with a triumphant optimism in the face of the aggressive evils of our time. Is Jesus really on the throne of power? Is the sceptre of the world held by the hand that was pierced? Is our beloved Master sitting in the seat of universal dominion? Then we can afford to be patient, and look into the future with the most joyful expectancy. The mystery of iniquity may work, sin may disturb and fill society with vice and ungodliness, moral corruption may run riot, lawlessness may make patriotism weep, and tragedies of wickedness may cause many a good man to hang his head in despair, but all this is only for a while. The power is not there. These are only shadows. These are only the darkness before the sunrise. These are only clouds permitted to blacken the sky for a day. The real power is on the throne and these things will pass. The power of all powers is invested in our Christ, and by and by the earth will be swept clear of sin's shadows and sin's woes as the tempest sweeps the cloud rack from the sky, and lets the sunlight pour itself upon the world. He who sitteth at the right hand of God will do it.

"From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead." Here we pass from the present to the future tense.

The world has doubtless many great events yet to come. There will probably be immense changes in society brought about either by the slow process of evolution or the quicker process of revolution. Thrones will fall. Empires will pass away. Wars will devastate the earth. The drama of the ages will grow more tragic as it moves toward its culmination. Crisis will follow crisis as billow breaks upon the back of billow. There will be repeated mustering of forces, on one side the legions of light, on the other the legions of darkness. New orders will crowd out the old. Life will become more accelerated. Antagonistic principles will grapple more fiercely. And some day in the midst of it all, some day while men are buying and selling, trading and traveling, competing and co-operating, suddenly without a moment's warning, they will hear the seventh trumpet sounding, and, looking up, will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of Heaven with power and great glory. "This same Jesus shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go." No one can misread such words as these. Jesus is coming again. The future holds no other event so stupendous.

While there are differences of interpretation, as to the nature and method and time of his coming, the entire church of Christ believes in his second advent. The early Christians looked for the Lord's return in their own day. The apostles lived and toiled in expectation of his speedy coming. At the end of the first Millennium there were multitudes who were convinced that he was at hand. So it has been from century to century. While it is not given to us to know the times and the seasons, and while Christians reading the same Bible, differ in their views, the profoundly significant thing is that they are all agreed as to the fact. Whether pre-millenarians or post-millenarians, they all believe he is coming again, and with the word of God as their teacher they cannot believe otherwise without rejecting the book altogether, for as to the

stupendous fact it is most explicit. The language of the creed is the crystallized language of the Bible on this subject.

He is coming again, not this time to a manger and a Cross, not to the weakness of human flesh to hunger and thirst and suffer, not as the lowly Nazarene to be spit upon and mocked and despised,—not thus will he come, but in power and great glory. Heaven will give him back, but not as he was given at first. The personality will be the same, there will be the same love on the seat of judgment, love holding the balances of justice. He will still be the Lamb of God, but his mission and the expression of his face will be that of the bench and not of the advocate. "From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead." That means those who are still living on the earth at his return and those who have passed into the unseen.

How much there is in the Bible about a future judgment all readers of the sacred volume know. It declares repeatedly that there will be a final adjudication at a tribunal from which no appeal can be taken. This has been the conviction of thoughtful men of all religions and of all ages. Long before Christianity came into the world the old pagans of Greece and Rome believed in their Nemesis. The thought has always prevailed that somewhere, somehow, sometime, all things and all men will be brought to a final settlement of accounts. Our Bible names the judge, so does our creed. Both point us to the bar of the Son of God who is to come again.

There is a process of judgment going on all the time in this world—a judgment of history we may call it. Under sentence of this judgment Jerusalem fell and great was the fall of it. Under a similar sentence the Empire of Rome came to its hour of doom and went to pieces. The French revolution, the battle of Waterloo, the victory of Sedan, the American civil war, the humiliation of

Spain, and the defeat of Russia, still fresh in memory—all these are judgments of history, and declare that God is on the throne.

“He hath sounded forth the trumpet  
That shall never call retreat,  
He is sifting out the hearts of men  
Before his judgment seat.”

This republic of ours is on trial. The church is on trial. You and I are on trial,—how we get our money, how we accumulate, how we spend, how we treat our neighbors, how we meet our obligations to the state and to the church, how we live and act and think,—all that makes up our life is being sifted out before God’s judgment seat. There is a present testing as well as a final reward.

But the judgment of today is necessarily incomplete. While men get a measure of justice here in these times that are passing, it is at best but partial. Indeed, some seem to escape altogether. They are so agile, so alert, and so clever in crookedness and dishonesty that the law cannot overtake them. Many of the sins of men never come to the surface in this life. They are hushed up or covered up, so skillfully that society knows nothing about them. Hence our reason tells us that the judgment that is going on now is not enough, that there must be a future tribunal where the books will be balanced and every man receive his just recompense of reward or punishment.

It will be a judgment of works. The teachings of the New Testament leave us no room for doubt here. Not by our beliefs, not by our opinions, not by the churches we belong to, and the professions we make, shall we be judged, but by our deeds. Read the words of Jesus on this subject. If we are to have a place on his right hand when he sits upon the throne of his glory it will not be

because we were orthodox and subscribed to every article of the creed. It will not be because we were sound in the faith; but because we were kind, because we were unselfish, because we had hearts that could be touched by the needs of the poor and the sick and the lowly and the suffering, because we gave meat to the hungry, drink to the thirsty, clothing to the naked, sympathy to the imprisoned, welcome to the stranger, cheer to the home-sick and the lonely. Those who served, those who lived their life for others, those who incarnated the spirit of Jesus, those who did not seek to be ministered unto but to minister and were glad to be fountains of helpfulness and hope, to these the Judge will say, "Come ye blessed of my Father." It will be a judgment of works.

The final sentence will not turn upon the social decency, or respectability, or morality of men. There are thousands whose integrity has never been questioned. Their ethical conduct is as perfect as the antique statue of the Apollo Belvidere—and as cold, as bloodless. They never owe a dollar which they do not pay. They never insist upon more than their pound of flesh. They are strictly just. If they get what is nominated in the bond, there is no complaint. In speech they are pure. They abhor smut. They despise slander. They are clean as the ice that is made of artesian water. But there is no summer in their hearts. They have no compassion for the man who is down and no missionary appeal ever finds its way through the thick mail of self-sufficiency in which they are encased. They have no spirit of Jesus toward the fallen and the weak and the castaway. They have a tremendous fund of negative virtues. They have never committed positive and flagrant deeds of sin. They have never given themselves up to courses of evil. But it is the things they have left undone that will condemn them when Christ comes to judge the quick and the dead. It is not enough that the farm should be free from weeds.

It is not enough that the fountain should be clear of artistic defects that offend the eye. It is not enough that the fig tree should be symmetrical and well equipped with leaves. We cannot be satisfied with negations and omissions. If the farm does not bear wheat, and the fountain send forth water, and the fig tree yield figs, they are condemned. So in our human life: it is not enough even to be good. We must be good for something, —for the judgment, let me say again, is to be one of works.

There will be no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, and that for one reason, because no man can be in Christ Jesus without serving, without helping, without doing good in a very warm and tender and practical way, to his needy fellow men. "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in the body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." To that last assize we are on our way. We need have no fear if we have committed our case to the Son of God, and are faithfully endeavoring to reproduce his life. But without him it will be a dreadful thing to stand there. From such an issue we cannot pray too earnestly to be saved.



## “The Holy Ghost”

“I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Holy Catholic Church, the Communion of Saints.”

**W**HILE the word trinity does not appear in the Apostles' Creed, the doctrine to which it points is most conspicuous. We have God the Father Almighty, Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord, and the Holy Ghost, and these three we are taught to believe, are one God. the same in substance, equal in power and glory. Whether we pray or preach or lift our voices in sacred song, and whether we say Father, or Son, or Spirit, our hearts are going out, not to three Gods, but to one. The Son reveals the Father and the Spirit reveals the Son, and in both cases it is the only living and true God that is made manifest.

It is a mystery which I do not pretend to be able to explain. I have never seen or heard anybody, or read of anybody, who could explain it. But God in three persons is not a particle more mysterious than God in one person. The Unitarian has quite as many difficulties to grapple with as the Trinitarian. If we are to stop thinking and to stop believing where we stop understanding, we shall stop at this side of almost everything. We talk of seeing, and hearing, and feeling, and smelling. But no wisdom of science has ever yet got to the bottom of them. What is the relation between the senses and the personality? How is the fragrance of a flower, or the sound of an organ, or the glory of a sunset, or the touch of an object conveyed to the intelligence? Nobody can tell.

We candidly acknowledge the mystery of the Trinity

but in so doing we are only making humble confession of our own intellectual limitations. You and I are trinities. We have bodies, souls, and spirits—three in one. Evrey light is a trinity. It consists of a lamp, a flame, and an illumination—three in one. Every flower is a trinity, the stock, the life, and the efflorescence—three in one. In every thing we do there is a trinity, a purpose, a method, and a power—three in one. No matter what your business, or calling, or profession in life may be, there is always an end in view, a method by which to reach it, and a power or an inspiration to urge you on. There is no end of trinities, so that we need not lack for analogies and illustrations in the great matter before us. When God sent his Son into the world he sent himself. As Phillips Brooks says, his sending was a coming. And when Christ sends the Holy Ghost the same thing is true. Every outpouring of the Spirit is a special manifestation of Christ. When Peter tried to explain to the people the marvels of Pentecost he attributed them to Jesus and said, "He hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear."

"I believe in the Holy Ghost." When we say that we are simply affirming our belief in the one God; and when a man is converted, when he turns about and begins to live toward the skies, it is because of the entrance of God into his life. The Spirit has come into the man, and the whole tone and trend of his being are changed. He has definitely begun to be a man of God and it doth not yet appear what he shall be. It is no easy matter to talk on this subject because to many minds it is exceedingly vague and shadowy and intangible. But whatever we may think of it, we are bound to admit that our Lord and his apostles made a vast deal of it. They considered the Holy Spirit's presence in the church and in Christian work the one thing above all others indispensable; so have all the revivalists of Christian history.

I say to you frankly that I cannot explain the influences of the Spirit. They are past finding out. But so are the movements of the wind. We see its effect, we hear the sound thereof, but cannot tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth. This, however, is no reason why we should balk, or turn to the consideration of something else. I do not know how one man can so speak or sing as to stir to tears, or soothe and quiet the soul, of another. I do not know how strains of music can take hold of a man and lift him up into an atmosphere of hope and joy, or how if they are in the minor key they can depress him until his heart is almost ready to break. I do not know how the rustling of the leaves in November, or the sigh of the pine tree under the touch of the north wind, can fill a man with a feeling of melancholy. I do not know how certain emotions in me can awaken similar emotions in you. What is it that moves us to weep with those who weep and rejoice with those who rejoice? How does a mother pour her affection upon the heart of her child? How is it that some force acting upon us from the outer world, carries us away down into the valley of gloom today, or away up to the hills of light tomorrow?

We cannot tell, we only know these things are so. But if these secret and mysterious forces of nature and life should so affect us, why should it be thought a thing incredible that God should move upon us by his Holy Spirit? I know of nothing more unreasonable than for men who live and move and have their being in mystery to insist upon having all mystery cleared away when they come to religion?

But while I have spoken of the influences of the Spirit let me hasten to say that the Holy Ghost is infinitely more than an influence, or an emanation, or a principle. That this is the thought of far too many is shown by their use of the impersonal pronoun IT in re-

ferring to the Spirit. The Scriptures never speak so. Jesus never speaks so. Both the Bible and the Christ 'make use of the personal pronouns "He," "Him," "Whom," when referring to the Holy Ghost. According to our Lord the Holy Ghost "reproves," "guides," "teaches," "comforts," "leads into all truth," "brings to remembrance," "endues with power." To say these things of an influence or an emanation would be absurd. The words of Jesus leave us no alternative. He certainly teaches us to believe in the proper personality of the Holy Ghost. And not only so, but he teaches us that as a person the Holy Ghost is co-equal with himself. The Spirit comes to take Christ's place, to carry on Christ's work, and it stands to reason that no subordinate could do that. The man who fills Beacher's place or Spurgeon's place must be the equal of these princes among men. No mortal could bend the bow of Ulysses but Ulysses, and when the mighty one leaves us we must have some person of equal genius and calibre and power to step into his shoes. If that be true of men how much more of the Christ of God. He had been preaching as never man had preached. His words had thrilled over the hills of Judah. They called forth the unqualified testimony that "Never man spake like this man." When the day came, therefore, for our Lord to vacate his pulpit who should fill it? What must be the quality, the temper, the capacity of the person sent to stand in the place of Jesus Christ? Could anybody do it who was his inferior? But he declares that even greater things shall be done because of the advent of the Spirit than ever he himself had done; so we can but conclude that the Holy Spirit is not only a person but the equal of God.

A word now as to the sphere of the Spirit's operations. Jesus says, "If I depart, I will send him unto you." Again he says, "He shall abide with you forever." Jesus returns to heaven, the Spirit comes to earth. When

Jesus was here in the flesh the Father said, "This is my beloved Son, hear him." But after his ascension Jesus speaks out of the skies and says, "He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches." The Holy Ghost, then, is here in the world as God's executive. He is here in two senses. First, as the air which is universally diffused; and, second, as water which flows in certain channels, like our streams and rivers. In the first sense he enswathes every life, presses upon every soul, hovers about every religious assembly, and all we have to do is to open and he will come in. In the second sense he has already come in, he has poured himself into the vessel, the life, the church that has made room for him, so that the person or thing thus filled becomes a channel of blessing to others.

I have seen water in the shape of mist hang dense and heavy over hill and plain. Every tree and flower was wrapped in it as a shroud, but its weight was not felt. It did not move the smallest machine, it did not sway a branch, or tip a leaf. And I have seen water in the shape of a stream sweep down the valley, turning mill after mill, causing wheels of industry to spin and bearing many a craft of commerce to the sea, everywhere the very embodiment of life and power. Thus while the mist was as truly water as the stream, it was water without concentration, water without a channel, and therefore, it was weak, inoperative and practically useless. It is a good lesson to take home. The Holy Spirit is here and everywhere. He broods over the world. But he manifests himself in Pentecostal power only when you and I and our churches become definite channels for him to move in.

Jesus said to his disciples, "It is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you, but if I depart I will send him unto you." He disappears in the flesh that he may be present

in the spirit. He removes himself visibly in order that he may be an invisible power in their hearts. When Jesus says, "If I depart I will send him unto you," his sending is also a coming; and hence the inspiring significance of those other words of his, "Lo I am with you always." "I will not leave you comfortless; I will come to you." His sending is a coming. Very soon after his ascension they began to find his assurances made good. In bodily form he was gone, but at Pentecost he came back in the person of his Spirit and stayed with them as a blessed experience and was in their hearts as a tremendous dynamic. It was this Spirit, this unseen presence uniting them so unmistakably with their invisible Lord, linking them so really and so vitally to the power within the veil that led them to say, and has led the Church ever since to say, "I believe in the Holy Ghost."

It was simply an amplification, a fuller statement, of their "I believe in Jesus Christ." This new presence in their life was nothing else than the manifestation of Jesus in their hearts,—a subjective, interior experience that filled them with joy, that set them on fire with enthusiasm and made them irresistible.

But now note the next article of our creed, "I believe in the Holy Catholic Church." The connection with the article on the Holy Ghost is too close to be separated even by a comma. There can be no Holy Catholic Church without the Holy Ghost any more than there can be the living tree without the vitalizing sap, or a piece of hot iron without the infusion of fire. I am not saying that there may not be ecclesiasticism, that there may not be priests and orders and ceremonies and smoking altars, without the Spirit who came on Pentecost; for we have far too much evidence of that in the history of Christendom; but I do say that if this one indispensable presence be lacking there can be no Holy Catholic Church. Every true church is an incarnation of the Holy Ghost, very

much as Jesus was the incarnation of God. I am walking here on Scriptural ground, for the New Testament teaches us that the church is the body of Christ. His life, his blood, his will, his spirit are in it. If not, it is a corpse more or less decorated as the case may be.

"The Church," said the late Dr. Richards of New York, "is nothing else than the united company of all those who are bound to each other by this common experience of the one spirit of fellowship which Christ bestowed upon them all."

When professing Christians stay away from the place of prayer and from the place of public worship; when they forsake the assembling of themselves together; they are making it impossible for the Holy Ghost to do his work, for he comes upon men in companies, upon men banded together with a common desire and a common aim. When the people throng the midweek service, when they come with one accord, with one longing, with one prayer, with the empty vessels turned upward, the spirit of God is always poured out.

The word Catholic is borrowed from the Greek and is the equivalent of the Latin word universal. Too often when we say Catholic the minds of not a few revert to the Church of Rome. But the Papacy has no monopoly of this word. Neither has any other body of Christians, and whenever they arrogate to themselves the exclusive right to the word Catholic they are not revealing their breadth but exhibiting their narrowness. If they claim to be Catholic and at the same time deny fellowship to any who love our Lord Jesus Christ, they are writing themselves down poor blind sectarians.

According to the Westminster Confession of Faith, "The Visible Church——consists of all those throughout the world that profess the true religion together with their children." No matter where he lives, no matter what denominational flag he flies, no matter though

he be Romanist or Protestant, Conformist or Non-Conformist, if he is loyal to Jesus and seeks to do his will and to live his life, he belongs to the Holy Catholic Church.

When we stand in the sanctuary every Lord's day and confess our faith in the Holy Catholic Church, we confess and declare that our denomination is not the Church of Christ, but only a small branch of it; and it would be a very unworthy branch if we were not glad to co-operate with all other followers of Jesus for the conquest of the world. I wish we were more Catholic and more holy. I wish all Christians were. I wish all who name the name of Christ might have a right hand of fellowship and a spirit of fraternizing love for one another.

The next phrase in the Creed helps to light up and explain what I am now saying, "The communion of saints." Without this there can be no Holy Catholic Church, and there can be no communion of saints without the Holy Ghost; and so you see how the three items are bound together. If the saints, the holy ones, the saved ones, redeemed by the same blood, forgiven by the same infinite grace, cannot have communion with one another, it would seem absurd to speak of them as constituting a Holy Catholic Church. There are Christians who imagine that this communion or fellowship is only to be looked for on special sacramental occasions. But that is a very unworthy limitation. We are told that it was Peter and Andrew and James and John who first brought this term into Christian use, and they learned it from their fishing business in which they were partners. The "communion of saints" means the partnership of the saved, a partnership of service, and a partnership of experience. Now let me say again that if any man refuses to come into this partnership; if he holds aloof from the company of the disciples; if he declines or neglects to identify himself with believers as one of them, he has no



right to claim Christ's promise of the Holy Ghost, for that promise was made not to individuals standing alone, but to the disciples in a partnership.

The man who keeps outside the electric system of the city, who does not come into the telephone family and have his name registered, is not going to receive the benefits of the current. It is ready to serve him, ready to bring its power into his life, but he must make the connection. If he stands off by himself the current will flash its messages elsewhere. The illustration is of course defective as every illustration must be, but you see its bearing. The Pentecostal current bears its divine energies into human lives only as they are in communion, in partnership, all with one accord in one place.



## “The Flower of Hope”

“I believe in the Forgiveness of Sins.”

SIN exists. No man in his senses can deny it. It taints every life. Its black waves break over every threshold. Our politics, our courts, our business, our papers, our society, are full of it. In slum and avenue, in homes of poverty and of wealth, in religious temple and hall of justice, in the rush of the city and in the quiet retreat, in short, in all our human relations and experiences, there is nothing so evident and nothing more constant than sin. Go where you will among any people, civilized or barbarous, and whatever else may be lacking you are sure to find sin there. You will see it in their laws, their customs, and their lives. With the orgies of unspeakable vice going on in every city, with the virtue that is everywhere being slain, with the innocent that are everywhere being prayed upon by the lepers of society, with the crimes and frauds and rascalities blazed to the world by the daily press, with the cries that are going up from the wronged and oppressed, and with all the endless tragedies that are weaving their miseries into the web of humanity's life, it is scarcely less than the ravings of insanity to deny that sin is, that it is here, a most palpable and tremendous fact.

The awful thing is not disposed of by soft words. In spite of all verbal juggling, in spite of all tricks of rhetoric, in spite of all attempts to bury it under aliases and dictionary terms, sin exists, and is every hour and everywhere getting in its work. It avails nothing to throw around it the velvet robe of illusion, or to wrap

it in the garb of mortal mind, or to clothe it in all the euphonisms known to speech, for however covered up, its sting comes through without the slightest abatement of its poisonous force. The ugly, the hideous, the deadly thing is not changed or modified or made a particle less destructive, by decorating it with fine phrases. The viper is not made less viperous because Cleopatra takes it to her bosom. It kills the queen as readily as the slave. When one reads a certain current philosophy and its deliverances on this subject, and then looks around him upon the world, he can but wonder at human gullibility. We know what men do. They bite and devour. They slander and slay and cheat and kill. They pierce and cut with instruments sharper than steel. They mock and misrepresent and malign. They wrangle and war and hate. We know what we ourselves do and say and feel. Not one of us has made a straight path for his feet. Not one of us is free from regrets for things done or things left undone, which swarm up out of our past like hornets to sting us. Oh, we are sinners! We know it. We confess it. We are not using stereotyped phrases when we acknowledge our transgressions in the house of God, but expressing the deepest and saddest convictions of our hearts.

And in this we stand with the whole brotherhood of man. Sin is a universal consciousness. Explain it as we may, there is the fact. Wherever you find men, no matter what the color or race or condition, you find them doing penance, or making confession, or seeking to propitiate offended deities, or manifesting in some way or other their sense of unworthiness. They feel that they have done wrong, that they are wrong, and by a thousand altars and sacrifices they are trying to set themselves right.

It is most pathetic and it is profoundly significant.

Man's longing to be forgiven is, I think, the most

moving, the most touching thing, in human history. His temples, his pagodas, his pilgrimages, his shrines, his bleeding victims offered in sacrifice, are evidences enough of what is in his soul. The very word priest and the office for which it stands, point with unmistakable finger to this longing.

No man of sane judgment and balance of mind is satisfied with himself. The inflated egotist or the fool may be, but never the wise man. As he reviews his life, as he lays it alongside his ideal, as he sets it over against the moral law and the holiness of God, he is smitten with a keen sense of condemnation. He has said so much that he ought not to have said, thought so much that he ought not to have thought, desired so much that he ought not to have desired, condemned when he ought to have been charitable, denounced when he ought to have been kind, stirred up strife when he ought to have made peace,—has been so sinful, so un-Christlike, so unloving, that somehow or other he feels that he must get things re-adjusted; that he must have his past reconstructed; that the discordant notes must be struck out of his life if ever he is to have peace. He knows himself to be wrong, to be out of harmony with God, and he longs to be in tune. This, I say is the feeling of every sane, right thinking man.

Moreover every man of this sort knows that he cannot forgive himself. If he is to get over the chasm that separates him from God the plank must be flung across from the other side. Why did not poor, broken-hearted Simon Peter forgive himself when he went out into the night and wept bitterly? Why did not Magdelene forgive herself and set her own life right instead of flinging her wretched womanhood at the Savior's feet? Why did not Lady Macbeth forgive herself and hush her guilty conscience and wash the stains from her bloody hands, and climb back to innocence by a ladder of her own building? Why do not the sinners in the tenderloin district

and the sinners on the avenue, why do not you and I forgive ourselves and straighten out our own record and balance up our own accounts and prepare our own outfit for the society of God? Alas, we cannot. We are all alike helpless here. Our whole humanity is helpless. If it were not there would not be an altar or a sacrifice or a priest in all the world. These facts declare with an emphasis that cannot be mistaken that forgiveness is an importation. It comes over from the coasts of the infinite mercy.

In our relations to one another there is a kind of forgiveness, but it only needs a moment's reflection to show how imperfect and exceedingly limited it is. A thief, for example, may break into my house and steal my goods, and I may forgive him, I may treat him as though the thing had never happened, but that does not make him innocent. That does not take away his guilt. I have not touched the springs of his life. He is just as much a thief as he was before. I may forgive a cutting word, or a sharp blow, but I cannot forgive the motive or the animus out of which they come. A man may cheat me in a business transaction, or he may lie about me and do me immense harm, and I may go to him and say, "My friend, I forgive you." I may be absolutely sincere about it. But that has not settled the case by any means. I have only dealt with the outside of his life. There is an inner region into which I have no power to enter. After I have forgiven the thief, the slanderer, the back-biter, the rogue, the enemy, he has still to be forgiven by Almighty God.

Now it is these things, man's dissatisfaction with his own character, his consciousness of sin, his conviction that he cannot forgive himself, and the superficial, the fragmentary nature of the forgiveness which he exercises toward his fellow men, that lead him to long for the forgiveness of God. Our forgiveness reaches only to

the offense, the crime, the outward act; what we want, what our whole humanity cries our for, is a forgiveness that will cleanse the inner fountain, that will utterly annihilate the nest in which the offense was hatched.

Here, then, we come to consider God's answer to this longing. The longing is universal, it springs eternal in the breast of our race. From every quarter of the globe it smites upon the skies; and are those skies brass? Are they dumb and unresponsive? As to the lower wants of our nature, and as to his lower creatures, God has gracious answers for every desire, or craving, or longing. If the bird, when the cold north wind begins to blow, spreads its wings and flies away in search of a warm summerland, it never fails to find it. The summerland is provided. The instinct that impels the bee to go forth in search of honey for the first time, the fish to seek their spawning places in the cool bright streams of the north, the young eagle to look for the mountain crag, the duckling to find the pond, and the wolf the depths of the forest, is never mocked. God does not implant longings in the birds and beasts without also supplying the means of their gratification. So of men, on the plane of his material wants. God answers his eyes with light, his ears with sound, his lungs with air. We note the same thing when we enter his higher life. If he has a mind, the universe is stocked with objects to gratify his hunger. If he has affection which creeps out like a vine to find something to cling to, God has constituted the family, and established society and surrounded him with persons to love.

Now if God keeps faith with the creatures of field and forest and sea, if he keeps faith with the dumb brute; if he keeps faith with man up to a certain point; if the desires of man's body and the cravings of his mind have been abundantly provided for, can we believe that God has left the deeper and higher, and intenser longings of man's spiritual nature unanswered? It is impossible.

We are certain that He who has been so lavish in anticipating the less important needs and instincts of his inferior creatures and of man, has been even more lavish in his provisions for the moral hunger of those who bear his own image. Man wants forgiveness. The whole earth is full of the pathos of his cry to be freed from transgression and set right with the infinite holiness. It is the most persistent hunger of our race. Every religion is an attestation of it. And if there were no answer; if all idols, and all altars, and all crucifixes, and all houses of prayer have been set up in vain, then life is a riddle indeed, and man is the most deceived, the most defrauded being under the stars.

But thank heaven we are not driven to such a perplexing alternative. Grace and not granite is on the Throne. The sceptre is in the hands of the Eternal Love. The government is on the shoulders of the everlasting Father. He has made provision like the God he is. It has in it all the bigness and all the fullness of His own heart. "Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins." There you have the program of redemption.

And there you see what forgiveness COSTS. Turn the word about if you would get at the pith and marrow of it. It is a giving-for. At the very heart of it there is a cross. No man can forgive in any deep and true sense without suffering crucifixion. There are people who object to what is known as our sacrificial theology. They don't like it and sometimes condemn it in terms that are severe and bitter. It seems to them unreasonable and unworthy of God that forgiveness should be made available for sinners only by the way of Calvary. There are some, indeed, that go so far as to declare, that the sacrifice of the innocent to clear the guilty is fundamentally immoral. Bronson Alcott, the famous teacher of boys, did not think



so. If one of his boys broke a rule and became a transgressor, instead of inflicting the penalty upon the lad, the great school-master took it upon himself. He held out his hand and insisted on taking the blow, or the lash, deserved by the boy. It was the innocent suffering for the guilty and so far as I know no critic ever called it immoral. On the contrary Bronson Alcott's method of discipline was everywhere admired; and it is said that there never was such order as there was in his school.

If our Bible teaches that forgiveness costs blood, so does our human experience. Try it for yourselves and see if it does not slay your pride, and put self upon the rack, and cut to the very quick of your life. Some man in the city has wronged you; he has assailed your integrity; he has sought to tarnish your good name; he has robbed you of that which money can never replace, and done you the greatest injury which one person can do to another. If hate were ever justifiable you would be justified in hating him. Now go to that man, forgive it all, forget it all, hold out the hand of reconciliation, and see if it does not cost blood.

To forgive small offences is hard enough, and far too few ever do it in a genuine way; but to forgive wrongs that are glaring and conspicuous and most damaging is something that cuts to the very core of the heart. It means humiliation, it means agony, and that is just the reason why it is not more common. The easy thing, the natural thing, is to strike back, to resist the injury, and to be vindictive. It takes heroic stuff, it takes Christlike stuff, to go to our enemy and make at-one-ment with him, really forgive him, and restore him to favor. It cannot be done without a GIVING-FOR, without laying ourselves upon the cross and taking a certain amount of the shame and the sorrow of his sin up into our own lives.

But you say, does not parental love forgive a prodigal son without any such cost or suffering? No, it does not,

it cannot. The bad boy comes back from the slime and filth of sin, back from the very gates of hell, back, a shattered and miserable wreck, and is welcomed with boundless joy. There are no words of chiding, no scolding, no reproof, but with a flood of tears father and mother fall upon his neck and kiss him. There is forgiveness, full and absolute, but read the cost of it in that mother's white head and in the great lines of sorrow in that father's face. The forgiven boy does not know, he never can know, the agony they have endured, or the bitterness of the cup they have drunk for him. If they had not suffered; if they had not loved; if their heads had not frosted under the awful chill of their grief, the homecoming would have had nothing in it for him. I am only saying what chimes in with our human experience, when I say that forgiveness anywhere in any of the relations of life, in business, or in society, or in the family, means the laying of our hearts upon the cross.

Now if human love must suffer in forgiving, and if love in human hearts is the same in quality as love in God's heart, why should it seem a thing incredible that God should suffer in forgiving? Is that which is noble and heroic and sublime in an earthly father or mother unworthy of our Father which is in Heaven? The cross is God's heart-break for human sin; it is God giving pardon to the prodigal at the expense of his own infinite shame and humiliation; it is God laying himself down in the dust of the world, as Henry Ward Beecher somewhere puts it, that every poor sinner may walk back to the land of forgiveness over his pierced breast. How any man can find fault with that or be unresponsive to such an appeal, is more than I can understand.

But here we should be careful to get hold of the fact that God's forgiveness of sin does not mean remission of penalty. When through the Crucified sin is pardoned, it involves a change of character, a new spirit, a new life-

purpose, but the harvest of the old sowing still remains. "Whatever a man soweth, that shall he also reap," is a law which is not abrogated by the atonement. The man who gives himself up to appetite and passion and to a life of wicked indulgence for thirty or forty years, and then casts himself upon the mercy of Jesus may indeed be saved; that gospel we love to preach; but while the man has been converted, the effects of his former living are with him still and always will be with him. There is forgiveness at the foot of the cross for every transgression, but the cross will never give back to a man the years he wasted in debauchery.

David was forgiven, but the sword never departed from his house. The child of his guilt died, and across every sunny day there flitted a tormenting shadow. A black and bitter memory continued to haunt him. Magdeline may be forgiven, every stain washed away, but Magdeline can never escape the loss of her early purity. That improvishment goes with her forever. The roue, who is worse and lower down than she, may be forgiven, even he may be made white in the blood of the Lamb, but that whiteness will never make up for his past. He will be a poorer soul, a smaller soul, as long as eternity lasts, because of the sensualities in which he once reveled.

I rejoice in a gospel that can save a dying thief just swinging into the eternal world; that can save the worst wreck that was ever flung upon the rocks of iniquity; but let us not imagine that such a man is freed from the results of a long life of sin and crime. He must take with him the emptiness of the life he has wasted. By the cross we have the forgiveness of sin, but the cross does not let us off from the natural consequences of wrong doing. The man who lives to himself for three score years and ten and then turns unto God in penitence and tears, may be forgiven; the Father will take to his heart the white headed prodigal as gladly as the youthful prodigal, but

the man who returns to God in the sun-setting will always be less, always be smaller, than if he had come in the morning. It is something, indeed it is a great thing, to get inside the gate of salvation at all, just inside, saved so as by fire, but it is an immensely greater thing to be counted worthy by long years of faith and consecrated service, to pass on to the very center of the city of God.

Now perhaps you are saying, or thinking, if forgiveness of sin does not mean remission of penalty, if it does not save us from the consequences of our folly, of what use is it? Why talk so much about pardon and sing so much about it, if it leaves punishment behind? Because forgiveness means at-one-ment, it means reconciliation, it means harmony between God and man, it means an interplay, a reciprocity of love, it means fellowship, it means a peace of soul, because the sting of guilt is gone. I have sometimes illustrated it in this way: A child disobeys his mother. He runs off from the house and gets severely bruised and hurt. Then bleeding and sore he hastens back, or is carried back, and is at once forgiven. The hurt is still there; the smart remains; but is it not infinitely easier to bear it in the mother's arms and in the sunshine of the mother's love than it would be to bear it alone and under the frown of her displeasure? So sin must be punished, but it is one thing to bear its punishment ourselves, to carry it in our lives, to feel its sting in separation from God, and an immensely different thing to bear it under the warmth and tenderness of his sympathy while carried in the arms of his love.

## “The Life Everlasting”

“The Resurrection of the Body and the Life Everlasting.”

N EARLY all men believe in immortality. There are few anywhere that are convinced that death ends the whole story. When Col. Ingersoll's brother was dying, he whispered, "I am better now," and commenting upon it at his funeral the great agnostic said, "Let us believe in spite of doubts and dogmas, of fears and tears, that these dear words are true of all the countless dead." Standing by the open grave of his brother he gave utterance to this, "In the night of death hope sees a star and listening love can hear the rustle of a wing." But while mankind in general believe in immortality, and while the vast majority readily subscribe to the phrase, "the life everlasting," there are multitudes in the church and out of it who doubt or deny the "resurrection of the body." It seems to them a very material doctrine to wrap up with a spiritual life, and they feel that it should be expunged from the Creed altogether.

Now there are two or three things that need to be cleared up in our thinking upon this subject. Go to the gospel narratives of the resurrection and read them once more. Follow the story with critical attention and see how careful it is to affirm not once nor twice, but repeatedly, that Christ's body rose again from the dead. In Jerusalem when he appeared to the eleven on the morning of the third day, and they were affrighted supposing him to be a spirit, he said, "Behold my hands and my feet, for a spirit hath not flesh and blood as ye see me have." There was something about him immensely different from

what they had been accustomed to, and yet there before their eyes was the old familiar figure. Eight days after this, to Thomas the doubter who declared, "Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and thrust my hands into his side, I will not believe," Jesus said, "Reach hither thy finger and behold my hands and reach hither thy hand and thrust it into my side, and be not faithless, but believing." Later, on the shores of Tiberias he emphasized the fact of his bodily resurrection by dining with his disciples on the beach. It is not easy to believe that a spirit can eat bread and fish. For my part I do not see how anyone can deny that Christ rose in the body without denying the Gospels.

Besides it should be remembered that it is manifestly absurd to talk of a spirit resurrection. The very word resurrection implies the raising again of that which was dead, and as the spirit is not subject to death, it is of course a misuse of language to say that the resurrection is spiritual. Jesus said, "All that are in the GRAVES shall hear his voice and come forth," and as the spirit is never put in the grave, it can only refer to the body.

But I thoroughly appreciate the difficulty with which many are troubled here, and I shall try to deal with it candidly and sympathetically. When I say, "I believe in the resurrection of the body," many honest and thoughtful people immediately ask, "Which body? The body a man was born with or the body he died with? The body of his youth, or his maturity, or his age? Which body?" It is a well known fact of science that these bodies of ours are constantly changing. In the particles which compose them, they are entirely different from what they were a few years ago. The material constituents of these bodies will be gone in seven years from now and other material constituents will be in their places. It is as though the house should be wholly rebuilt while the shape remains the same. And yet that

is not a good illustration, for in the case of the body more than the shape remains; the very scars remain. You may be three score years and ten. If so your body has undergone ten complete changes, it has been built over again with new material ten times, but the mark left by a wound received in your childhood is there still.

The truth is we wear certain articles of clothing longer than we wear our bodies. It is something like this: Here is the river flowing by, and it was flowing by a thousand years ago; it will be flowing by at the end of another millennium,—the same river and yet not the same. The drops of water which are in it today, are not the drops which were in it yesterday, and those which it will carry in its bosom tomorrow, will be new and different from any which it ever carried before; but always, year in and year out, the river retains its identity. It is so with our bodies. The stream of material particles flows on; they come and they go; but in spite of all changes our bodies are recognized as the same. You see then, that what we call identity is something entirely independent of sameness of substance. When we say, "I believe in the resurrection of the body," we are not affirming that the new body will be composed of the very dust that was laid away in the grave, but that it will be the same organism, informed by the same vital principle. All that the scriptures teach, all that we avow when we repeat this article, is that we are to have a body after death, and that it will be identical with our present body. Men may raise questions and they may load them down with ridicule. They may ask whether the babe is to rise a babe; whether the tottering old man is to rise with his decrepitude; the cripple with his lameness; the fat man with his obesity; the thin man with his leanness, and by such questions they may imagine that they have shown the Christian belief on this subject to be untenable and absurd. But when they do that they are reading into the Creed and

into the Bible their own foolish and preposterous interpretations.

Here is our position, and it is the position of all who intelligently subscribe to this ancient document which we have been considering. As my body today is identical with the body I had fifty years ago, so my resurrection body will be identical with the body I have now. It is not a question of material particles but a question of organism. The vital principle, the organising principle, which gives me my identity here and preserves it absolutely through all changes, will give me my identity there and preserve it forevermore. Read Pagan literature if you would see what the future meant to the polished old heathen of Greece and Rome. It meant a world of shades, of disembodied spirits, a joyless, miserable existence, from which the unhappy victim longed to escape and return to the realm of earthly life. Without bodies, unclothed, flitting about as mere phantoms. "Thin as the idle breezes and like some dream of the night." As Virgil puts it, they passed their days in a sort of shivering despair.

Higher than this the best thought of paganism could not rise, as to the life beyond. No wonder they shrank from it with fear and felt no inspiration of a lofty hope as they looked over the border. If we may believe their great poets the very anticipation of it chilled them with a sense of dread. It was awful to think of existing without bodies, without shape or form, as insubstantial spectres, or shadows.

How immeasurably grander and more satisfying is the teaching of Christianity. It assures us that there is a "spiritual body" as well as a "natural body," that we shall not be unclothed when we pass within the veil, but "clothed upon;" that when the earthly house of this tabernacle is dissolved, when the material investiture of our present life is stripped away, we shall have a build-



ing of God, an investiture suited to the new environment into which we have been transferred; that the Lord Jesus will "fashion anew the body of our humiliation that it may be conformed to the body of His glory." As human beings we should never forget that we are constituted, not of mind alone, nor of spirit alone, but of body, mind, and spirit. These three make up the man, and if you will read the eighth chapter of Romans, you will see that the body not less than the immaterial part of our nature is included in the redemptive work of the Son of God. "Know ye not that your bodies are temples of the Holy Ghost?" and if at dissolution these temples are taken down, it is only that better ones may be reared for His indwelling. It is our bodies that determine our identity here, that differentiate us, that make us cognizable, and it will be our bodies that will identify us there.

But the bodies of our resurrection life will be glorified bodies. They will be immaterial, and yet not so sublimated and ethereal as not to be substantial entities. They will be without the physical organization of flesh and blood, all mere animal functions will be left behind, they will be free from all disease and waste and decay, they will be incorruptible and immortal, in a word, they will be what the apostle calls spiritual bodies.

These spiritual bodies will be like the body of the risen Christ, superior to material law, living above it, always obedient servants of the spirits they enshrine. When Paul thought of it and spoke of it he said, "Behold, I shew you a mystery." He was modest enough to say that he knew in part, that he saw through a glass darkly, but for him and for us, across the mystery, there falls light enough from the lamp of revealed truth to warrant us in repeating with an accent of hope and of triumph, this article of our Creed. "I believe in the resurrection of the body."

And now the final clause, "The Life Everlasting." To

this summit we have come, and standing there we feel the tonic, the invigoration, of the world beyond. Standing there and looking out over the landscape that stretches away across the divide into the sunrise that makes the horizon radiant with the coming glory, we see the things that are made possible for us and get some glimpses of the grandeur to which we may yet attain. "The Life Everlasting"—it is a great ending to a great Creed. I feel that it were better sung about than spoken about, for on heights like these music is always more at home than speech. The singer can do more for us here than the preacher.

Take the word "life" as it stands alone and put the emphasis there for a moment. It suggests brightness, and hope, and joy, and purity, and strength, and overflowing vigor and health. Simply to exist, to be, to eat and drink, to wake and sleep, to perform certain animal functions, is not to live. To dig and delve, to make bargains and sell goods, to swing like a pendulum from home to office and office to home, to wear out one's years accumulating substance for other people to spend, to drudge and toil and consume one's energies in the monotony of business and of the various professions, is not to live. Much less, is it life to give one's self up to sin, to drink from the cup of iniquity, to wallow in the mire of vice, and to eat the juiceless husks of the swine. The harlot exists, the rouse exists, the bloated debauchee exists, the hard-hearted tight-fisted miser exists, but existence is not life, any more than a decayed and leafless trunk is a living and beautiful tree, or than a bundle of dried up thorns is a bunch of roses. Existence is a dry river bed with banks destitute of verdure, and channels strewn with offal and debris; life is the bounding mountain stream, singing down the valley, rejoicing in the sweet purity that sets the sun and stars as jewels in its breast.

Something infinitely more than mere existence is

meant when we say, "I believe in life." It lifts the thoughts to the high, the holy, the satisfying, up to God himself. Jesus said, "I have come that ye might have life and that ye might have it more abundantly." To see what that means we must look at the Speaker. He did not own a dollar, He did not have a roof to cover Him. The pleasures of the flesh, the pleasures of the table, the pleasures of society were nothing at all to Him. The things for which men struggle and contend and compete, never gave Him a thought. Not that He was an ascetic, or sour anchorite, or dyspeptic solitary, for he often mingled in the social circle and was glad to do what he could to promote innocent social joys. But at the same time His life was not there. He had meat to eat and inspirations to enjoy of a vastly higher sort than these. How full of life He was. He was like a river that is always overflowing its banks. In His breast there was a peace that passed all understanding. In Him was life. Out of every avenue of His nature the life poured. Wherever He went, in whatsoever company He moved, men felt the touch, the thrill, the power of the life that pulsed through Him. And it was powerful, it was resistless, because it was so unselfish, so heavenly, and so constantly played into by the life of God. Now it is the life imparted by Him in which we believe.

And this life is everlasting. "God hath given to us eternal life and this life is in His Son." It is going on now, it will be going on tomorrow and going on forever; going on as the stream goes on gathering breadth and depth and volume as it flows. Beginning here, by the conception of the Holy Ghost, it will be continued without break or interruption, as long as Christ continues. Because He lives we shall live also. Everlasting—there is no coast line to that. No danger of ever running upon the shallows of the other side, for when we have sailed for a million years, we shall only be starting. Everlast-

ing—imagination in her wildest flights can never get beyond its border land. I think of it and am staggered. My brain reels. I am bewildered. I send out my fancy, and send it out as Noah sent the dove from the ark and it comes back exhausted, with wings drooping and weary from the long, long flight, only to say that the life everlasting stretches on and on into the infinite.

And yet if the thought falls faltering on its very threshold there is something wildly intoxicating in the very conception of a life that is to last forever. Nay, not simply to last, but to grow, to unfold, in knowledge, in capacity, in love, and in holy endeavor. Forever moving along a pathway of light; forever expanding in excellence and glory; forever receiving new accessions of power; forever adding to the fullness of manhood. That is what it means. Stars will fall, the suns wax dim, the fashion of the world will pass away, but still, as God's child I shall be climbing. Ages and milleniums, and cycles will come and slip away, but still I shall be climbing, mounting up, passing from summit to summit, in the eternal progress. That is what it means—this life everlasting.

Here we are hurried; the days are too short to carry out our plans and accomplish all we have in mind and to realize all our dreams and desires. There are a thousand things we would like to do, but we lack the time. Some of us would like to give a century or a millenium to the study of astronomy and to finding out the secrets of the stars, but we haven't time. Some of us would like to spend a few hundred years in the study of physical science and in acquainting ourselves with all the manifold laws and forces of nature, but there isn't time. Some of us would like to master all languages, and all literature, and all art, and all mathematics, and all philosophy, but there isn't time. Some of us would like to give ourselves for at least a thousand years to music that we might learn

its possibilities and get nearer to its sources of power, but we haven't time. So of theology. What a world there is there to be explored. So of countless other subjects, if only we were not so pressed for time.

But there will be time enough by and by. The day will come when we shall no longer have to count the hours and watch the clock and the setting sun and hurry home before the shadows fall. We shall not feel that in five years, or ten years, our powers will fail and our work be done; but we shall wake up some morning to the fact that ours is the life everlasting and that before us stretches an eternity of fadeless youth. Then we shall sit down with other ransomed souls like ourselves by the crystal river and talk and plan and think till our hearts are satisfied. Time enough for every study, every journey, every love. Time enough to acquire every accomplishment, to cultivate every friendship, to develop every power, to bring every faculty to perfection. That is what it means—this life everlasting.

“Leisure to fathom the fathomless, leisure to seek and to know

Marvels and secrets and glories eternity only can show;  
Leisure of holiest gladness, leisure of holiest love,  
Leisure to drink from the fountain of infinite peace  
above.”

And now finally let us calm our minds with the assurance that these fundamental positions of our faith will stand. For two milleniums they have resisted every attack and emerged unscathed from every storm of criticism. And history will repeat itself. The assaults now being made upon the Creed in Germany and by an occasional Dr. Crapsey in England and America will go the way of all their predecessors. The shafts of the assailants, whether shot from within or without the camp will

fall splintered and broken to the ground while the fortress of granite will remain. The waves of opposition will beat up against the rock and be flung back in clouds of spray, but the rock will stand, and into the very clouds of spray the sun of God's love will braid rainbows of promise. The Creed will stand because its stones have been cut from the quarry of the Bible, and the Bible will stand because at the very heart of it is the Rock of Ages.

LB JL 71

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