

THE
RESURRECTION OF CHRIST

A Series of Discourses

BY
ELIPHALET NOTT, D.D., LL.D.,
LATE PRESIDENT OF UNION COLLEGE.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION AND NOTES
BY
TAYLER LEWIS.

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INTRODUCTORY NOTICE.

THIS publication is intended mainly as a memorial to the numerous alumni of Union College, or to bring vividly before their minds the remembrance of one greatly venerated and beloved. The majority of them, doubtless, yet recall his noble form, and not a few are still living whose memories go back to the days of his prime, when he was regarded as one of the chief pulpit orators of our land.

We think that this latter class will read these sermons with special interest. For them they will revive a fading, yet still precious reminiscence, bringing up a most life-like picture of the man as he once stood before them in the pulpit. It will help them to see again that impressive action, so calm and chastened, yet so powerful; to hear again the tones of that voice, as clear in its solemn whisper as in its loudest utterances. They will read them to greater effect, and with a more equitable criticism, because they can so readily fill up from such remembrance what the mere printed page must fail to convey.

Dr. Nott was pre-eminently an impassioned preacher,—a true *preacher* in distinction from the logical casuist or the methodical didactic lecturer,—a preacher in the old sense of the term, that of *κήρυξ*, *præco*, herald, proclaimer, “the voice of one crying in the wilderness,” or “at the city gates,”—calling aloud to men, demanding their attention to some great fact, and setting it forth in language exuberant and superlative, indeed, yet most natural when regarded as flowing from an over-welling fountain of emotion. Some might charge him with a Ciceronian fulness,

or an unnecessary copiousness of language, or certain modes resembling the heraldic style of solemn repetition; but the serious reader will see how far this is from anything that may be justly described as empty declamation or mere verbosity. Few are the epithets that have not an emphatic and even a suggestive significance. There are some repetitions that may have come from changes made to adapt particular sermons, or parts of them, to other occasions—thus interrupting their continuity, as is adverted to in the notes—but in most cases they are simply a method of deepening the emphasis, by using twice and thrice, in the same connection, the same well-chosen word, instead of weakening the impression by an evident seeking for variety. Especially will those who knew the preacher recognize all these peculiarities as well adapted to that striking effect which was ascribed to Dr. Nott's oratory in the days of his power, or when he everywhere drew crowds to hear him.

More than any other American clergyman did he resemble some of the great French preachers in the days of Louis XIV. He had nothing Edwardian about him; nothing of the Scotch manner, whether as regards its logic or its boisterousness; but in many things, especially in his exclamations, his invocations of the divine name, and his passionate appeals to the hearer, might he be compared to the fervid Massillon. There is no evidence that he had any familiar acquaintance with the preachers referred to, or that he strove to imitate them, either in their excellences or in any mistaken view of their faults. In these respects, both in regard to what is to be commended for its clearness and power, as well as in that for which he may be held liable to criticism, his style of expression and his manner of delivery were all his own. Such, too, was ever the impression made upon the mind and the feeling of the hearer.

As we have already intimated, Dr. Nott's preaching was

not logical, nor even argumentative, in the strict sense of the word. The old "doctrines of grace" were his message, as something to be proclaimed, not to be proved, as some preachers are forever doing. His object was more to impress than to convince; or, rather, to convince by impressing. Hence it is that an important fact, or a striking idea, is held up by him in changing lights. It is the same fact, the same idea, coming over and over again, it may be, yet each time presenting a varied aspect, and thus deepening the effect of the whole picture he aims to set forth. It resembles the impassioned pleading of a lawyer before a jury,—of a deeply-moved advocate losing sight, for a time, of his formal brief, carried away by the emotional rather than the logical connections, and holding up, in varied though striking forms, some great fact, or facts, with which he would impress the tribunal he is addressing. These sermons abound in exclamations. In the delivery, too, there were striking pauses, with new starting-places, as we may call them, in the middle of a sentence (though never letting the old subject drop out of mind), and all so managed that passages, syntactically very long in the writing, had given to them, in this way, the appearance and the force of separate appeals. Dr. Nott wrote his sermons with this his own peculiar mode of delivery in view, and without any thought of publication; knowing that his manner of utterance would supply every seeming defect of the kind, or as they might be regarded in a composition intended solely for the eye. The few changes that have been made by the editor have been mainly designed to remedy this, or, in other words, to preserve the syntactical clearness of the thought, such as the calm reading demands, without losing any of that vivid accompanying emotion which so richly appeared in the oratorical exhibition. It is, in short, simply an effort to bring the reflection of the preacher in the book as near as we can to the exact representation of the preacher in the pulpit.

There are other discourses of Dr. Nott, which, taken separately, might have been thought better adapted to publication. It was also at one time deemed advisable to add the sermon, so admired in its day, on the death of Hamilton. These, however, were selected because they seemed to form a series presenting a degree of unity not elsewhere found. In this way, too, their capability of being brought out as relating to one general subject was an advantage, inasmuch as it furnished a larger title for the book, that might possess a greater interest than the usual uninviting one of "sermons."

Dr. Nott's style of preaching was widely different from that which was most prevalent in his day, and before his day, throughout his native New England. When it is said, however, that he was impressive rather than logical or argumentative, the assertion needs to be qualified. There is, indeed, in these discourses a rich and powerful argument, notwithstanding that the syllogistic, or any formal logical aspect, be almost wholly wanting. It is unanswerable. This may be boldly said in view of a position which has lately been assumed with a confidence that seems to challenge denial. It is frequently asserted that the old reasoning on the Evidences of Christianity, or of such a fact as that of the Resurrection, will no longer answer in view of modern objections. It might have done, they say, fifty years ago, but "the higher criticism" has given a new aspect to the whole matter. Paley and Lardner did very well as against the more shallow infidels of their day, but there has arisen a race of unbelieving Anakim far surpassing Hume and Voltaire. The defender of the Scriptures needs new armor to meet them. German Rationalism has rendered all the old arguments obsolete. This is repeated continually. By sheer reiteration, often without the attempt to give a particle of evidence, the impression is produced, especially on the minds of the young, that there has somehow arisen some new and terrible form of doubt, some

most formidable difficulty unknown to other times, and unassailable by any former arguments. It is an undefined spectre. It is everywhere haunting our modern literature, though taking no precise form. It is the shadowy presence of some new enemy, never clearly seen, but who has rendered unavailing, it is said, all former tactics, whether of assault or defence. In defending Christianity, if it can be defended, we must take a new start, and proceed upon grounds differing altogether from the old.

Now this is all an impudent falsehood. We say it unhesitatingly. There is no new difficulty, or any so surpassing former difficulties as to be entitled to the name. There is no substantial objection to the Gospels, or to the Bible generally, that has not been known to scholarly and thinking men for more than a thousand years. Some aspects of Bible authorship have been changed, some ecclesiastical writings have been pronounced spurious, though very few that had not always been suspected; some new various readings have been discovered, but in no respects, or in the most unessential respects, have they changed the general aspect even of the critical field, much less that great argument, remaining the same from age to age, because built on the unchanging foundations of our deeply-investigated human nature. There is, in short, no vital, no essential difficulty, no one going to the root of the great debate, that was not as familiar to the learned men of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as it is to the best scholars now.

Equally unfounded are the ignorant assertions, so often and so flippantly made, in respect to what science has done or is going to do. Science has done much, undoubtedly, in her own department of inductive discovery; she has detected a great many more shadows than were formerly seen upon the dim rear wall of the earthly cavern to which we are confined. She has bored down a few inches deeper into the cells of matter, and finds it matter still—matter

as resistance, matter and motion—nothing more. Be it coarse or fine, most gross or most ethereal, it is the same thing in its ultimate elements. It is simply site, arrangement, proportion, number,—nothing more. The life-giving Word is not seen; it cannot be seen; it transcends sense; it is unsearchable by experiment; it belongs “to the things *unseen* and eternal.” Science is, indeed, most keen; she penetrates far; she can almost see molecules, it is fancied, though at every step of her sounding it becomes more and more evident that between the last casting of her lead and that other distant shore, where nature and matter begin, there still flows on a silent, undiscovered ocean of the vast unknown. How near that other shore may be, or how far off, this too is a part of the unknown and the unknowable secret that baffles all her efforts. Granting that she has seen *molecules*, or molecules of molecules, or “molecular combinations,” as they have been styled, or anything else to which can be applied this wholly imaginary and artificial nomenclature, yet *atoms* still remain invisible. Those old puzzlers of the earliest as well as of the latest minds do still lie fathoms deep beneath her keenest lens. In other words, those beginnings of organization where life dwelleth, or is supposed to dwell, are as yet immeasurably remote from the most powerful analysis she can employ. Our modern investigations have not reached this organizing energy; they fall short of it by an unknown and unknowable distance; they have therefore furnished no stronger objections to the doctrine of the resurrection of the body than such as were familiar to Celsus, or even to the Corinthian Sophist whom Paul seems to have had in view, and who so confidently asked, “With what body do they come?” In other words, the old difficulty suggested by that evident fact, the constant flow and change of matter, or of *material identity*, before as well as after death, was as clear to the little science of the old infidel as it is to the great science of the new. That sharp alternative issue:

Does the organization come from the life or the life from the organization, whether in the highest or the lowest forms—this sharp alternative, we say, is no nearer being settled now than it was in the days of the ancient hylozoists. The whole question of the resurrection, or the making again to exist what had existed before, is involved in the same science-transcending mystery as the fact of creation, or the making that to be which before had never been at all. It is the same mystery, whether it regards the origin of the material, the origin of the form, or the origin and perpetuity of that which constitutes the hidden principle whether of material or formal identity. We do not say the problem is solved. All that need be contended for is, that it remains just where it was. The modern infidel has here no advantage over the ancient unbeliever. We may safely defy any man to show wherein the position of the argument has, in this respect, undergone any essential change.

Dr. Nott, it is true, does not go at all into these physical matters. The historical argument is the one on which he dwells, and that is the same which has, in substance, been always used in the Church. There is nothing new except in his mode of presenting it, and that consists more in the oratorical earnestness displayed than in any affectation of argumentative order. Reduced, however, to a more logical form, it may be stated in some such way as this:—

First ground: That the disciples and other witnesses of Christ's resurrection should have been imposed upon in regard to a fact, or series of facts, falling so directly under the observation of the senses in their most familiar exercise—is *incredible*.

Second ground: Designed imposture on their part, when considered in connection with their subsequent lives, is—*still more incredible*.

Third ground: The sudden change in the spiritual character and in the corresponding action of the first

preachers of Christianity, demands for its credible cause no less an event, or one no less superhuman and miraculous, than that assigned,—namely, the resurrection of Christ, showing its first effects in a *revivifying* of their souls, and an entire remoulding of their lives.

Fourth ground : The great spiritual miracle of the early and rapid spread of Christianity, or of the *new life*—as truly new as any physical revivification—coming from no previous human development, and continuing, even down to the preacher's time, to *reanimate* and renew the souls of men.

It is the latter aspect which is chiefly dwelt upon in the discourses that follow the first presentation of the argument. There may be in it a neglect of method ; there is some repetition ; but the appeal, as a whole, is clearly and powerfully made. It gives the preacher an opportunity to dwell on the triumphs of the Gospel in his own times, and especially on some revival scenes in the College and elsewhere, that had called out an intense interest. He treats it all as a continuance of the resurrection power. The spiritual miracles attest the great physical miracle of the Saviour's actual rising from the tomb. It was an unbroken effect, commencing with the early morning dawn of Christianity, when, from that sealed sepulchre,

The light broke forth so gloriously,

and continuing ever since to shine, though often obscured by the storm and darkness of human depravity it has had to encounter. "Its outgoing is to the ends of the earth," until "nothing shall be hid from the enlightening beams and the warming heat thereof."

Such is the argument. It is not new, but it is unanswerable. Gibbon has not shaken it. Strauss and Renan—inferior men to Gibbon—have, in no respect, changed its force. The objections are the same. The statements of historical fact by which they are met are the same.

The immutable verities of human nature that give the argument its great power remain the same. They have not been in the least affected by all the show of criticism brought to bear against them.

TAYLER LEWIS.

Union College, Schenectady, Dec. 22, 1871.

THE RESURRECTION.

I.

THE EVANGELICAL TESTIMONY.

Whereof He hath given assurance to all men, in that He hath raised him from the dead. Acts xvii. 31.

Who hath given assurance unto all men? You shall hear: "And the times of this ignorance God winked at, but now commandeth all men, everywhere, to repent." Why now? "Because He hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom He hath ordained." How know we this? He hath given assurance of it. In what manner hath he given assurance? In that He hath raised him from the dead.

To the resurrection of Jesus Christ Paul appeals as furnishing, not presumptive merely, but indubitable evidence of a future judgment. Mark his words: Whereof He hath given assurance. The same appeal may be made in respect to every evangelical doctrine. The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the basis on which Christianity was reared, and on which it rests. This fact disproved, the basis vanishes, and the superstructure, however perfect, sublime, glorious it may be, has nothing to support it. It crumbles into dust. The subversion of this single doctrine subverts Christianity. It clouds our temporal prospects; it extin-

guishes our eternal hopes. There remains no sacrifice for sin, no promise of forgiving mercy to the sinner.

If, then, Christ be not risen, Christians, your faith is vain ; ye are yet in your sins.

If Christ be not risen, then is he not the Messiah foretold by the prophets, and promised to the fathers ; concerning whom it is written that he should die not only, but live and reign forever. David declares this expressly ; so does Isaiah ; so do all the prophets : “Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee ; ask of me and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron ; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel. Be wise now, therefore, O ye kings ; be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the son lest he be angry and ye perish from the way when his wrath is kindled. Blessed are they that put their trust in him. Therefore my heart is glad, my glory rejoiceth, and my flesh shall rest in hope. For thou wilt not leave my soul in Hades ; neither wilt thou suffer thine holy one to see corruption. Thou wilt show me the path of life. In thy presence is fulness of joy, and at thy right hand are pleasures for evermore. The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool. The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent : Thou art a priest forever, after the order of Melchisedec. I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord. Thou hast chastened me sore, but hast not given me over unto death. Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors, that the Lord of glory may come in. Who is the Lord of

glory? The Lord strong and mighty: the Lord mighty in battle. Thou, God, wentest up with a shout, and the Most High with the sound of a trumpet." These are the words of David.

"Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows, yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon *him*, and by his stripes we are healed. The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment, and who shall declare his generation, for he was cut off out of the land of the living. And he made his grave with the wicked and with the rich in his death. Yet he shall prolong his days, he shall see his seed, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied. By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many, for he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong."

Such was the mysterious prediction of the rapt Isaiah, uttered ages before the striking fulfilment made it clear.

Other testimonies might be added, but these are enough. The Messiah of the prophets was both to suffer and to reign. He was to triumph over death, and the heavens were afterwards to receive him back into glory.

If Christ, then, be not *risen*, his credentials are spurious, and his claim to the office of Messiah has

failed. If he has not risen, his gospel is a fiction, remission of sin by his blood, a dream, and eternal life through faith in his name, a fancy. A doctrine so absolutely fundamental, a doctrine, too, on the truth of which we are to stake our souls, and put at hazard our eternal interests, cannot be examined with too strict a scrutiny, or decided with too profound a candor.

In a celebrated discourse, delivered at Athens eighteen hundred years ago, Paul, in the midst of Epicurean and Stoic philosophers, asserted that the man Christ Jesus had risen. He boldly declares it, not with the wavering, hesitating timidity which betrays the perjured witness, but with that frank and fearless confidence which bespeaks conscious rectitude and the full assurance of faith.

But not on the testimony of Paul alone does this singular and important fact depend. There are other and numerous and unimpeachable witnesses; there is a train of well-connected circumstances, corroborating their testimony, and there are other and incontrovertible facts, confirming and establishing this previous fact. The whole forms a mass of evidence that carries the mind with it, and impels belief. No higher evidence can be required; none can be given; because that already given involves our confidence in the divine providence and the divine veracity. I may, therefore, without rashness, venture my soul upon it. If I am deceived *here*, there is nothing in which I am not liable to be deceived. If I am deceived *here*, it is the sanctity of the disciples' lives, the purity of their doctrine, and the splendor of their miracles—miracles wrought in thy name, MIGHTY GOD! which have deceived me.

There are numerous and unimpeachable witnesses to the fact in question.

Hear Matthew :—" In the end of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre. And behold there was a great earthquake : for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled away the stone, and sat upon it. And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men. And they answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye, for I know that ye seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here, for he is risen as he said. Come see the place where the Lord lay. And as they went to tell the disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came, and held him by the feet and worshipped him. Then Jesus said unto them, Be not afraid ; go tell my brethren, that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me. Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, and when they saw him they worshipped him. But some doubted, and Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth."

Hear Mark :—" When Jesus was risen early, the first day of the week, he appeared unto Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils. After that he appeared unto two of them in another form as they walked, and went into the country. Afterwards he appeared unto the eleven, as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their hardness of heart, because they believed not them who had seen him after he had risen."

Hear Luke :—" And Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you,

and they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit. And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled, and why do thoughts arise in your hearts. Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I, myself. Handle me and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have. And when he had thus spoken, he showed them his hands and his feet. And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, he said, Have ye here any meat? And they gave him a piece of broiled fish, and of an honeycomb. And he took it and did eat before them."

Hear John:—"The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene, early, while it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre. Then she runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and said unto them: They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him. Peter, therefore, and that other disciple whom Jesus loved went forth. And the other disciple did outrun Peter. Then cometh Peter, following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie, and the napkin that was about his head not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself. But Mary stood without, at the sepulchre, weeping, and as she wept, she stooped down and looked into the sepulchre. And seeth two angels in white, sitting, one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him. And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it

was Jesus. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weep-est thou? Whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away. Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and said unto him, Rabboni, which is to say, Master. Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not, for I have not yet ascended to my Father, but go to my brethren and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and to your Father, to my God, and to your God. The same day, at evening, when the disciples were assembled, came Jesus, and stood in their midst, and said, Peace be unto you. And when he had so said, he shewed them his hands and his side. And Thomas was not with them. The other disciples said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails; and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe."

"Again the disciples were within, and Thomas with them. Then came Jesus, the door being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you. Then said he unto Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands, and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side, and be no more faithless but believing."

Hear the writer of the Acts of the Apostles—"Jesus showed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of his disciples forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was parted from them, and a cloud received him out of their sight."

Hear Paul—"Christ was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: after that he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once. After that he was seen of James, then of all the Apostles, and last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time."

It is the supplement of the exceedingly brief account given Matthew xxviii. 10, 16. "Then saith Jesus unto them, Fear not, go ye away and tell it to my brethren, that they go into Galilee, for there shall they see me." The appointment was for all the brethren, all who loved him, and had believed on him. The eleven made known the promise and the place of meeting. It was the mountain (see verse 16) "where Jesus had appointed." Tradition says, Mount Tabor. Be this true or not, it was a well-known place, and thither the great multitude flocked to behold him. "Some doubted;" so it is declared, with a candor unknown to other histories, but of the mass it is said, "they saw and worshipped." A part had fallen asleep, but the majority were living in Paul's day.

You have heard these several witnesses. Their testimony is full; it is circumstantial, it is explicit. They tell you that Jesus Christ *was seen* of them *alive*, after that he had risen from the dead. That he *was seen* of them at different times, in different situations, and at different places. A great company of them were assembled at Mount Olivet, when he delivered his parting benediction. There was he separated from them, continuing visible to every eye as he ascended, until a clond received him out of their sight.

What shall we say to these things? The number of witnesses attesting the resurrection of Jesus Christ is sufficient to establish any fact capable of being esta-

blished by testimony. The fact *itself*, however, is too improbable in its nature, and too momentous in its consequences, to be admitted merely on account of the number of witnesses who have attested it, how great soever that number may have been. It were rash to risk our souls on the credibility of numbers. When eternal interests are at stake, a mortal should proceed with caution. It is not possible, as we have said, to institute too severe a scrutiny, or decide with too profound a candor.

On the review of details so singular and so improbable, two suppositions naturally suggest themselves. *These witnesses have been imposed upon, or they are themselves impostors.* Either alternative *established* annuls their testimony. Either alternative *not refuted* leaves the question doubtful. Both, therefore, must be met and dissipated; doubt must be removed, and even suspicion put at rest, before we yield to such details our entire assent.

These witnesses have been imposed upon.

All is not truth that is honestly attested as such. Other men have been mistaken, and why not the disciples? We will attempt to answer this interrogation. But let it be premised that our answer will have respect only to the single fact, the resurrection.

With respect to this *one fact*, we affirm, that they were not mistaken, because it is not possible that they *could* have been. No source of error can be pointed out; none can even be imagined. Shall it be looked for in their passions and prejudices; in their organs of perception, or in their want of understanding; shall we seek it in the nature of the fact, or the circumstances under which they examined it? It may

be sought in each and in all of these, but it will be *found in none*. It is admitted that they were fallible. It is also admitted that among all who are so, passion and prejudice have a wonderful influence, both in facilitating and in obstructing belief. Hence at one time faith is yielded to the slightest *evidence*, at another, it is withheld from the strongest. Apply this to the disciples. They were Jews; they had been educated in the synagogues; they had drunk deep in the prevalent opinion that the Messiah was to be a *temporal* prince, and his kingdom a *temporal* kingdom—an opinion which, counteracted as it was by their Master, still tintured all their conversations, and gave a direction to all their actions. Hence, only the night before the passion, had they not been restrained, they would have erected the standard of empire, and appealed to the sword.

It was the splendor of the Saviour's miracles that first attracted their attention, and that afterwards attached them to his cause. The idea of *teacher* was merged in that of *conqueror*; a conqueror rendered invincible by power miraculous, and who, as they had hitherto believed, was at that time to assume the government, and restore the kingdom to Israel. The event subverted their belief, disappointed their expectation, and dissipated forever their dream of a temporal royalty. When they saw Jesus Christ apprehended without resistance, and led without rescue, like a lamb, defenceless to the slaughter, their confidence was shaken; their fortitude gave way; hope forsook them; abandoning the cause, they left the captain of their salvation to his fate, and fled. It was a moment of utter dereliction. No one ventured to assert his innocence at the bar of Pilate; no one dared to murmur

discontent at the scene on Calvary. And why? Because the same stroke which nailed Christ's *body* to the cross, nailed with it his disciples' *hopes*. All was given up as lost. Timid, palpitating, and despised, they shunned the public eye, and sought safety only in concealment.

The resurrection had indeed been intimated to them, but it had not been understood. Nor was it expected. That he who had just been vanquished by his enemies—he who had thus forfeited their confidence by forfeiting, in their opinion, his claim to the office of Messiah—that he should, after this recent and utter humiliation, suddenly become a victor, not only over those who had conquered him, but also over DEATH, by whom all are conquered, seemed incredible. His triumphant reappearance from the sepulchre was an event which they did not anticipate, and were not prepared to celebrate.

The rumor that he *had* so appeared excited interest; it awakened alarm, but did not restore confidence: it did not acquire belief.

With the most wary caution, each disciple examined for himself; and with a hesitancy bordering rather on skepticism than credulity, they yielded to evidence the most incontrovertible their tardy assent. One of them would not be persuaded until he had put his finger into the prints of the nails, and thrust his hand into his side. They insisted on evidence which would enable them to say, "That which we have heard from the beginning, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the word of Life—that which we have seen declare we unto you."

Be it so, that neither their passions nor their pre-

judices were to the disciples a source of error, but, on the contrary, that both operated against an admission of the resurrection. Be it so, that their late grievous disappointment had taught them caution, and made them tremblingly alive to whatever might possibly again involve them in disgrace, or further compromise their personal safety, still might they have been mistaken, it may be said—neither their organs of perception nor their understanding were infallible.

They were unlearned men, mere fishermen and tent-makers, and therefore incompetent to decide on the case in question.

Fishermen and tent-makers indeed they were, and for the most part unlearned too, but how does that affect their competency? I mean their competency so far as respects the ascertainment of their Master's resurrection. In the prosecution of such an inquest the profoundest erudition would have availed them nothing. There were no probabilities to balance; no contradictory testimony to reconcile; no web of artifice to unravel. No arguments were to be examined; no premises to be consulted; no conclusions to be drawn. A mere fact, and a fact, too, the most obvious, and the least equivocal that can be conceived or imagined, is submitted to the deliberate and repeated examination of their own eyes, their own ears, their own sense of feeling; and having been so submitted, the only thing to be by them decided is, whether such fact did or did not exist. Now, with respect to the existence of this fact, unlettered as the disciples may have been, they were competent to decide—competent, not perhaps to appreciate the incidental evidence; not perhaps to collect and arrange and weigh the concur-

rent testimony of other witnesses ; but competent to determine for themselves, and by the unerring indication of their own senses ; competent to determine, with a certitude that all the counter-suggestions of men and devils could not shake, whether Jesus Christ, having been dead and buried, appeared again alive to them on the earth. Yes, the fact of his reappearance from the sepulchre was, to his disciples, not a matter of opinion, not a matter of persuasion, not even a matter of belief, but of knowledge. They had the means of knowing ; nay, they were under the necessity of knowing. They *must* therefore know, and they *did* know absolutely, and without the possibility of mistake, whether he did so reappear. Yes, *well they knew* whether they heard him speak, saw him move, eat, and drink ; whether they handled him to ascertain that it was not a spectre, and found those very wounds which the nails and spear had imprinted on his body. They knew whether, having been disheartened and dispersed by his death, they rallied around him a second time as their Leader, and continued for forty days to follow his fortunes, to attend upon his ministry, and receive his directions. And, *finally*, they knew whether they accompanied him to Olivet, and there saw him in daylight visibly ascend toward heaven till a cloud received him out of their sight.

These are things which, if indeed they existed, the disciples knew, and could not help knowing. These are things in the ascertainment of which the intuition of sages, nay, the perspicuity of seraphs, could have benefited them nothing. As we have said, therefore, with reference to this one fact—their Master's resurrection—the disciples, unlettered as they may have been, were competent witnesses. Nay, they were the

most competent witnesses. I had almost said the *only* competent ones. For who could tell with the greater certainty whether Jesus Christ had arisen from the dead, his own disciples, or indifferent persons? Those who knew him well and long, or those who knew him not, or knew him but imperfectly?

Other witnesses have been adduced in support of the resurrection. It is sufficient here to give their names and cite their words, though not as witnesses in chief, or as those on whom I place the main reliance. As first in this subordinate class, there may be given the words of a well-known and almost contemporary historian. "At this time there was one Jesus, a *wise* man, if I may call him man; for he did most wonderful works, and was a teacher of those who received the truth with delight. He won many to his persuasion, both of the Jews and Gentiles. This was Christ, and although he was, at the instigation of some of our nation, and by Pilate's sentence, suspended on the cross, yet those who loved him at first did not cease to love him: for he came to life again the third day, and appeared to them."

This testimony of Josephus, the Jewish historian, was claimed and quoted by the fathers; it has been claimed and quoted by the moderns; its genuineness is supported by the strongest evidence, internal and external, but we rely not chiefly upon it here; it is not as primary evidence that we quote it.

Again, the "Acts of Pilate," transmitted to Tiberius Cæsar, detailing the circumstances of the trial, the death, and the resurrection of that just man, concerning whom, at the time of his condemnation, he declared, *I find no fault in him*; these "Acts of Pilate" have been claimed and quoted. Doubts have

indeed been thrown upon its authenticity, but nothing could have been more in harmony with the well-known course of Roman judicial proceedings than such a transmitted report. That no record should have been kept would, on the other hand, seem almost incredible.

Justin Martyr, who lived about a century after the Saviour's death, and who offered to dispute the question of Christianity with the Cynic philosopher, before the Roman Senate, confidently appeals in his apology to the Acts of Pontius Pilate, and even refers the Emperor to them for information relative to the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Fifty years thereafter, Tertullian, a convert from Paganism, and a man learned in the Roman law, makes a like appeal to the testimony of Pilate, and even to the acts of the Senate, predicated on that testimony, and preserved among the public archives.

But neither is this record claimed or quoted as primary or the most satisfying evidence.

I need not lay the stress of the argument upon what Josephus testifies concerning Christ's reappearance. Josephus never saw Jesus Christ. I may say the same of Pilate's or Herod's testimony concerning Christ's reappearance. They saw him only while under arrest, and for a few moments at the judgment-seat. I care not what the Scribes and Pharisees may affirm or deny concerning the reappearance of Jesus Christ—they had seldom seen him, and only on public occasions, and amidst the multitude. Though all these, though the whole Sanhedrim, and only these, were to assert his resurrection, we might doubt. For all these, conscience-smitten as they were, like the murderer of John the Baptist, might mistake another for HIM whom they

had taken, and with wicked hands had crucified and slain.

What they affirm may indeed possibly be true. But I cannot be assured that it is so ; for I cannot confide in their discrimination. Apart from these, there are other and less objectionable witnesses. Why are they withheld ? If I must decide whether Jesus Christ be risen from the dead, and if to decide correctly be of moment, why mock my efforts by presenting the depositions of Herod, or Pilate, or Caiaphas ? These are not the persons that can resolve my doubts and settle my faith. Whether this mysterious personage, coming professedly from the sepulchre, and the rumor of whose reappearance has filled Jernsalem with terror, whether this be in very deed that same Jesus of Nazareth who was crucified ; this is a point on which, before I decide, I want to hear Matthew, and Mark, and Peter, and James. I want to hear the two Marys who met him at the sepulchre. I want to interrogate the beloved John, who has leaned so often on his bosom ; and the cautious, scrutinizing Didymus, who refused belief till he should have examined his side and his hands. Away, therefore, with Herod, and Pilate, and Caiaphas ; away with the Scribes, and Pharisees, and Sanhedrim. Let the *disciples* be brought forward. *They* know, and can tell infallibly whether he, concerning whom I am inquiring, is that same adored Master whom they once owned and honored before his passion, and whom, restored from the tomb, they still own and honor. If *they* believe that Jesus Christ has risen from the dead, *I* believe also : for this is a point in which, though all the world besides should be deceived, it is impossible that they should be. And

yet these witnesses are objected to as incompetent. What, Christ's own disciples? Ah! were the authorities on this question of life and death reversed; did the Scribes and Pharisees and the Sanhedrim appear in favor of, and the disciples, together with the concourse of brethren from Olivet, against the resurrection, which would be deemed the most competent witnesses; which would be believed?

Nay, if in opposition to the Scribes and Pharisees there appeared only one of Christ's disciples, the rest remaining silent, be that one disciple Matthew, or John, or Thomas, or any other of the eleven—I repeat it, if only one of these appeared, and, confronting the crowd of strangers, declared that the person in question was not his Master, but some unknown impostor, whom the brethren owned not and would never own, he would be believed; his single denial of the fact would go further to shake the faith of an inquirer than the denial of the *whole* Jewish nation. Yes, his single denial would weigh against, and it ought to weigh against, all the thousands of Judah and Jerusalem. To say the least, therefore, the disciples were competent witnesses.

Competent indeed they were, it must be admitted, because not ignorance, but idiocy or derangement, could have rendered them otherwise, where common sense and those organs of perception common to the species constitute the only competency. Still, however, though neither their understandings nor their organs were inadequate, a source of error may have existed in the presentation of the case. In other words—

The fact itself may never have come fairly and fully under their examination.

A transient and obscure appearance sometimes deceives the most sagacious. But the appearance in question was neither transient nor obscure. What say the witnesses themselves? After Jesus Christ had arisen from the dead he appeared to them, not when alone and in darkness only, but when assembled and in daylight also. How often he appeared to them they have not told us, and we know not. But they have told us of his appearing to some of them at least twelve different times; twice at or near the sepulchre, again and again to the apostles, and once, on a mountain in Galilee, to about five hundred of the brethren. More than this, that he showed himself to be alive after his passion by many infallible proofs; being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom. That with some of them he travelled; that with others he ate and drank; that to others he exposed the prints the nails had left in his hands, and the wound the spear had inflicted in his side.

Here, then, according to the testimony of the witnesses themselves, there could have been no deception. Their opportunity for examining the fact was the best that can be imagined; the fact itself, the most obvious, and the signs by which its existence was indicated, the least equivocal. There are incidents in this narrative of the Saviour's resurrection and reappearance which, if indeed they took place, as the disciples affirm they did, must have been decisive. They are incidents that carry conviction with them, and preclude alike the possibility of doubt or deception. To talk of stronger evidence, or of better opportunity, is worse than trifling: it is insanity. What stronger evidence, what better opportunity could even the sternest incredulity suggest?

Thomas withstood for a time the testimony of his brethren; but even Thomas, when his revered master presented himself before him, stretching forth his transfixed hands, and throwing back the mantle from his scar-marked side—even Thomas, with all his characteristic scepticism—demanded nothing more decisive.

Placing his finger on the print of the nails, and thrusting his hand into the wound of the spear, in a burst of rapturous confidence he exclaimed, My Lord and my God! From that moment his unbelief vanished; nor was he ever afterwards faithless, but believing.

Was even Thomas imposed upon? The fact, too, did *it* come fairly under his examination? Be it here remembered that the death and burial of Jesus Christ is not disputed. On these points, the executioners, the spectators, the Scribes and Pharisees, the elders, the whole Jewish nation have appeared in evidence. It is his reappearance from the sepulchre alive, and *that* only, which is called in question.

Now, is this a point difficult of ascertainment; or by what abstruse criterion, apart from common observation and unknown to common sense, would objectors wish it to have been ascertained? If travelling on foot from place to place; if conversing on different subjects; if giving salutations of friendship; if accepting acts of homage; in one word, if abiding, and eating, and drinking with his disciples; if these be not infallible proofs of life, what proofs would be infallible? Again, if access to and intercourse with the personage furnishing these proofs, during forty days successively, did not afford a sufficient opportunity for ascertaining whether he was alive or not; is

there any supposable situation within the range of possibility, in which an inquirer could be placed, that would afford such an opportunity? Could Thomas, with the beloved form of his Divine Master full before him, still bearing on his body the obvious and well-known marks of his recent crucifixion, could Thomas have been furnished with any better opportunity or any stronger evidence? No, unless the constitution of nature were changed, the opportunity already furnished was the best, and the evidence the *strongest* that man could have or God could give.

Collect these observations, and see how they bear upon the point in question. Consider the previous opinions and prejudices of the witnesses; consider the qualifications of the witnesses; consider the situation of the witnesses; consider the nature of the fact at issue; the resurrection of their Master, with whom they had been for years previous to his death in habits of the tenderest intimacy, and who afterwards appeared to them again alive, and continued so to appear for forty days, assuming all his former authority, exercising all his former functions, and instructing them in the things pertaining to the kingdom of God, till finally, standing in the midst of them on the mountain top, the heavens, from whence he came, opened and received him back to glory.

Consider these things, and then say whether it is possible for the disciples, entertaining such opinions, swayed by such prejudices, possessed of such faculties, placed in such a situation, and concerning such a fact, whether it is possible for them to have been imposed upon.

Imposition is out of the question. The circumstances of the inquest admit of none; the nature of

the inquest admits of none. It respected an audible, a visible, and a tangible object. An object, too, placed in the light of day, and subjected to the scrutiny of senses long familiarized to it, and perfectly acquainted with its discriminating and distinctive marks. If Jesus Christ did not, after his passion, appear again alive to his disciples, *they knew* that he did not, and the whole story of his resurrection was an abominable and a premeditated lie, of which they were the voluntary and guilty authors.

This alternative, therefore, I consider put at rest. The disciples were *not* imposed upon; if there is imposition, they know it; more than this—they are the authors of it; they are the guilty authors of it, and must be responsible to God and to the universe for all the fatal consequences which may result therefrom to society, to themselves, and to the souls of other men.

II.

DESIGNED IMPOSTURE INCREDIBLE.

Whereof He hath given assurance to all men, in that He hath raised him from the dead. Acts xvii. 31.

IN the preceding discourse we have examined and disproved the possibility of one of the alternatives suggested to invalidate the testimony in favor of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. It may, therefore, be assumed as settled, *that the witnesses were not imposed upon.*

Then, *they are themselves impostors.* This is the other alternative; and if the possibility of this, too, cannot be disproved, then let faith be withheld from them, and infidelity be blameless. But, how can the possibility of this be disproved? I answer:—

The place, the time, the manner in which the resurrection was promulgated; the number of individuals concerned in the promulgation; the system of doctrines and of duties founded on it; the splendid enterprise projected in consequence of it; the heroic constancy with which that enterprise was executed, and the exemplary lives of the witnesses who took the lead in its execution, render imposture improbable; and to crown the argument, the course of action without motive, or rather in opposition to motive, which this supposes is contrary to the nature of man, and therefore impossible.

The place, the time, the manner in which the resurrection was promulgated.

It was not some obscure and remote village in Palestine, but Jerusalem, the capital itself, that was selected as the theatre of this dangerous enterprise;

the very place which had been the theatre of the crucifixion ; the very place that contained the means of detection ; the very place that furnished the motives of detection. There the accusers of Jesus Christ reside ; there his judges reside ; there his executioners reside ; men whose honor is concerned ; men whose passions are excited, and whom every public and every personal consideration must impel to detect and expose an imposture calculated to fix guilt upon their consciences, and cover with eternal infamy their memories.

The time and the manner were as unpropitious as the place. No respite was allowed for suspicion to be laid asleep, or for the ardor of that infuriate multitude, who demanded his crucifixion, to subside.

No secrecy was enjoined ; no concealment was attempted ; no whisper indistinctly circulated. On the contrary, the witnesses enter the city instantly ; they enter it openly, and there publicly and boldly announce *the resurrection of their Master* ; announce that they themselves have seen him ; that he has been seen by others, and by multitudes to whom without fear of contradiction they appeal. When did imposture ever attain its object by such a direct, such an incautions and intrepid march ? Had the resurrection been a falsehood, would the authors of it have chosen such a time, or such a place, or such a manner for palming it upon the world ? Above all, conscious of the falsehood themselves, would they have appealed for its truth to five hundred persons, and thus have put it in the power of their adversaries to confront them with this host of witnesses, who, if Jesus Christ had not risen, and if they had not seen him, must give the lie to the insidious declaration ?

If these witnesses appealed to were indifferent persons, the appeal furnishes the means of complete and unavoidable refutation. If they were not indifferent persons, but accomplices, then another and no less embarrassing difficulty presents itself.

The number of individuals concerned in the promulgation.

The extreme difficulty of imposing upon mankind with respect to facts which have recently taken place, is sufficiently evinced by the numerous and repeated failures that crowd the page of history. Not the deep hypocrisy of Catherine the Great could conceal the circumstances of the death of the Emperor, her husband, much as she desired this; and though a few chosen confidants only were intrusted with the bloody secret. Not the sullen silence of a gloomy superstition could stifle the voice of truth and conceal, even until they were matured into action, those dark designs which, in Britain, were so often entertained during the civil wars. Time draws aside the veil that covers the acts and stratagems of courtiers, and even reveals the half-concealed project which had only been alluded to, or hinted at, in the council chamber.

But a secret, intrusted to more than five hundred individuals; a secret, not the divulging but the keeping of which placed in jeopardy the life of each one to whom it was intrusted—a secret confided, not to courtiers, not to priests trained to reserve, and used in all the arts of duplicity and concealment, but to five hundred plain common men of different and vulgar occupations, associated previously in no common fraternity, held together by no antecedent bond; that a secret so intrusted to such a number of such men

should be kept inviolable; that they should weave so dexterously in concert their web of falsehood, that the sagacity and perseverance of their enemies during eighteen centuries should be baffled in every attempt to unravel it, surpasses credibility.

Amidst his agonies on Calvary, the reputed malefactor had no advocates; not an individual ventured to defend his cause, or to assert his claims. But no sooner is he cold in his sepulchre, than FIVE HUNDRED witnesses, touched by some common impulse, start up and attest his resurrection. The same spirit actuates them all; they move in concert; no inconsistency marks their conduct; no contradiction appears in their narrative. The air, the expression, the parts, the whole bear examination. The unity, the simplicity, the consistency of truth is everywhere maintained. No error betrays the concealed fraud; no clue guides to a detection of the subtle imposture.

Great as their number is, no one ever swerves from his ill-plighted faith. In his most serious moments no one ever relents. In his most careless moments no one ever betrays. Though threatened with death, or tempted by reward, not a symptom of dereliction is ever manifested in public, or a syllable of doubt ever whispered in private, during the entire lives of these adroit impostors.

Was there ever a parallel case? Did such complete, such triumphant success ever before crown such a preposterous undertaking?

But if the number of individuals concerned in the promulgation is incompatible with imposture, still more so is

The system of doctrines and duties founded on it.

No comparison can be instituted between Christianity and the ethical systems on which the ancient philosophers had exhausted their labors. *It* stands amidst them like a pyramid, beside the rush-built edifice which children for their amusement have reared up. The odds is equally apparent, whether respect be had to purity of morals, or sublimity of doctrine.

Here innocence and guilt are immeasurably separated, and the lines of each are drawn with a god-like hand. Here every virtue is ascertained and enforced, every vice stated and condemned. Here no fashionable crimes are licensed, no venial faults tolerated. Here duty and interest are united, and holiness and happiness made inseparable. Here God is honored, man is humbled, the grave illumined, death conquered, hell uncovered, heaven disclosed, and immortality brought to light.

What a grand and awful superstructure to be reared on a foundation so humble, and which, if false, must be pronounced so vile. This matchless and imperishable temple of truth and righteousness, built upon and upheld by fraud and falsehood? Not the everlasting mountains, standing through so many revolutions, with only hay and stubble for their base, would present so egregious, so palpable a contradiction.

Correspondent to the system of doctrines and duties founded upon the resurrection, is

The splendid enterprise projected in consequence of it, and the heroic constancy with which that enterprise was executed.

It was an undertaking embracing as its object nothing less than the instruction of vulgar ignorance,

the humanizing of savage manners, the subduing of ferocious passions, the regeneration of the depraved heart, the sanctification of the guilt-defiled conscience—in a word, the reformation and redemption of a world. What a noble and lofty undertaking for a few fishermen, a collector of customs, and a tent-maker! Especially to be commenced at the moment they were perjuring themselves beside the tomb of their Master, by falsely attesting his resurrection from it.

How marvellous it is that these faithless conspirators, when in the act of attempting to palm upon the world one of the most impudent of falsehoods, should conceive the sublime and *god-like* idea of rearing on that very falsehood the deathless fabric of Christian faith and morals! How marvellous, when in the act of attempting this, that they should have conceived and resolved to execute the daring, the gigantic project of subverting the empire of superstition, of demolishing the temples of idolatry, of arresting the progress of licentiousness, of stemming the torrent of passion, of imposing universal chastity upon the sexes, of restoring perpetual peace among the nations, of eradicating revenge from the heart, of banishing injustice from the earth, and of constraining, by an appeal to the death of Jesus, the millions that inhabit it to renounce their sins, to exemplify in their lives that very candor, integrity, and veracity which they themselves, by the fabrication of their Master's appearance, had just with frontless audacity abandoned and abjured.

Here again the admission of the imposture involves absurdity, contradicts experience, and reverses the natural course of things. Figs spring from thistles, grapes ripen upon thorns, a germ of life shoots forth

from the Bohan Upas of the universe, and fruits of immortal growth hang clustering around the decaying, the wrath-smitten trunk of the tree of *Death*. Or, to speak without a figure, moral causes cease to operate; moral character loses its distinctness; opposite attributes assimilate; the father of lies becomes the patron of truth; the panders of fraud, apostles of righteousness; and from hell itself proceeds a project which angels might be proud to execute, and which heaven would not blush to own.

Ah! ye mysterious promulgators of the new religion, ye magnanimous triflers with the credulity of mankind, how shall I reconcile the mean and guilty falsehood with which you are charged to the grand and glorious enterprise to which it was directed,—*or to the disinterested and heroic constancy with which that enterprise was executed!*—When holding the New Testament in my hand, I behold you compassing the land, traversing the sea, buffeting the storm; unsubdued by hunger, unintimidated by peril, disregarding the dungeon, condemning the scaffold, and intent only on the conversion of sinners, the restoration of a world to righteousness—when I behold these things, I pay, I am compelled to pay, to your memories an instinctive homage.

And can they, the perfection of whose doctrines excites my admiration, the grandeur of whose design awakens my awe, and the manner of whose execution extorts my homage, can they have been impostors?

A marvellous difference exists between these apostolic impostors, if indeed they were such, and those unprincipled pretenders who in later times have corrupted and cursed the world. I have never seen or heard of conspirators like these—conspirators whose

high and ennobling purpose it was to extend the reign of righteousness, and limit and narrow the dominion of sin. Of all supposable projects, this is the last in which men of this sort would nowadays engage.

The disciples, it is affirmed, did not believe that Jesus Christ had risen. Grant it. There are other men in the world and in Christendom who do not believe it.

But what would you think of a conspiracy entered into by these men, after the example of the disciples, for the sole purpose of imposing still more extensively on the world a submission to that faith which they themselves receive not? What would you think if in the prosecution of this conspiracy you should see them deliberately forsaking father and mother, and houses and lands, patiently submitting to every privation, to want, to nakedness, to exile, heroically bracing their bodies to the severities of every climate, and breasting the storms of every ocean, as unmindful of pain as of danger, and intent only on conveying the knowledge of this resurrection fable not only to the capitals of civilization, but to the unlettered tribes that still hunt amidst the forests of the continent, or fish along the shores of the islands of the sea? Or having seen such an enterprise prosecuted in such a manner, and this for many years together, and till most of the original adventurers had become martyrs to the cause; having seen that the residue held on to the persistent purpose with a zeal that no waters could quench, with a constancy that no allurements could shake, and with a fortitude that no terrors could intimidate; how must we estimate the candor of those who should insinuate that these men were not in earnest, that they were, in fact, intentional deceivers who had conceived the wild

idea of imposing upon mankind the belief of the resurrection, when in reality they did not believe a word of it themselves.

And yet the delicate sensibility of some casuists, though it recoils from the suggestion that even a God of mercy might possibly have interposed for the salvation of a lost world, recoils not from the most unmasked and shameless statement of the foregoing monstrous absurdity.

But if the splendid enterprise projected in consequence of the resurrection, and the heroic constancy with which that enterprise was executed, are incompatible with imposture, still more incompatible with it are

The exemplary lives of the witnesses who took the lead in its execution.

It is not on the peculiar character of the apostolic enterprise, and the sublime manner of its execution, that we exclusively rely; though these suggest an argument that never has been and never can be satisfactorily answered. To the insidious imputation of imposture we oppose a uniform course of action, an entire life consecrated to the practice and promotion of virtue, no less than to the establishment and spread of Christianity.

We ask, and let our adversaries answer, how is this to be accounted for?

A solitary vice, it is believed, seldom takes possession of the heart. Especially is it not the nature of falsehood to reign alone. He who can sport with truth without compunction is not usually very scrupulous with respect to the commission of other sins. There is not a more execrable character than that of the wil-

ful, conscious liar. Especially may this be affirmed in respect to serious subjects, where God is appealed to, and perjury implied. It were as rational to look for modesty in a harlot as for the conscientious performance of any relative duty from such a faithless villain.

And yet what relative duty is there that the disciples performed not? The attitude of Evangelist is not the only one in which they appear. But in whatever position they were placed, the expression was the same; in whatever light exhibited, the attributes of goodness only were apparent.

Their characters seem to have been formed after a sublime model, and cast in a diviner mould than those of any other mortals. Their virtues were of a higher order and a holier type. On earth they have had no rivals. Philosophers appear degraded, and sages humbled in their presence. Nor these alone. Even the church cannot boast an individual whose life shrinks not from a comparison with theirs.

The Church of Rome, even in its darkest periods, had its saintly men. The Reformation produced a Luther, a Calvin, a Knox, men of exalted virtues, and whose memories posterity have delighted to honor; but neither Romanism nor Protestantism ever gave the world any characters to be compared with the *disciple John* or the *apostle Paul*. The characters of the reformers were indeed formed upon the same model as those of the Evangelists, but they were characters of a lower grade, of a coarser texture, and of a less celestial aspect. They possessed not, or at least not in the same degree, that simple majesty, that disinterested charity, that unassuming meekness, that uniform heavenly-mindedness which were so conspi-

enous in those favored individuals who were nurtured in the school, surrounded the person, and enjoyed the tutelage of Jesus Christ.

The situation of these men was indeed a commanding one. They stood upon an eminence. Their theatre of action was the high grounds that separate the preceding from the present dispensation. But after all they are distinguished less by the eminence of their situation than of their virtues. Other characters appear beside them like the miniatures of some modern and humble artist beside the full-length portraits of the matchless Raphael.

Said Luther to his friends who endeavored to dissuade him from his dangerous journey: "If there were as many devils at Worms as there are tiles on the houses I would go there." This was indeed a noble utterance. There is, however, something of coarseness in the expression, and perhaps a tincture of pride even in the sentiment. Paul would not have spoken thus. On a like occasion, *thus* he did not speak. There is a far greater majesty as well as a deeper meekness in his words: "And now behold I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there. Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth that in every city bonds and afflictions abide me. But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God."

The difference is here apparent, nor here alone, or between these individuals only. The sternness of Luther, the severity of Calvin, the coarseness of Knox, the wavering of Erasmus, and the timidity of Melancthon appear as blemishes when seen in that pure and

steady and heavenly light which is still reflected from the more faultless and more finished characters of the witnesses in question. Yes, even from behind that galaxy with which the *Reformation* lit up the moral firmament, the Apostles, though more remote, break upon the eye like orbs of vaster magnitude, and more effulgent brightness.

This is not exaggeration. Whoever reads the simple and unadorned record of their lives must admit that it is not. In them dignity and humility were united, valor and forbearance combined. By them envy was repressed, revenge extirpated, and self-denial carried to an extent unknown before. Amiable in their tempers, conciliating in their manners, and possessing a sensibility which was exquisite, they sympathized with every human feeling, where sin and malignant opposition did not forbid its exercise.

Though they themselves were free from the influence of some of the tenderest ties that bind a mortal to the world, they were none the less on that account alive to the joys or griefs of others. After the example of their Master, they were everywhere *sorrow's* consolation. They wept with those that wept; with those who rejoiced, they rejoiced. To superiors they were respectful, to inferiors condescending, to enemies just. They paid tribute to Cæsar; to God they rendered homage. Under injuries they were patient, in affliction they were submissive, in death they were resigned.

Whether such a splendid assemblage of virtues, such a matchless perfection of character, be compatible with an act of the basest fraud, premeditated, persisted in, and never recanted, we may leave for the sagacity of infidels to discover. But if the disciples were impostors,

they are the first, the last, and the only ones who ever have been, or who ever will be, in life, examples of virtue, and in death, martyrs unto righteousness.

These considerations, to say the least, render imposture improbable ; and to crown the argument,

The course of action without motive, or rather in opposition to motive, which this supposes, is contrary to the nature of man, and therefore impossible.

No man was ever an impostor merely for the sake of being one. Deception is not itself an end, but merely a means to an end. He who deceives, deceives for some purpose apart from the act itself. There is always an ulterior object, a concealed motive, which, when disclosed, explains the fictitious part, however sportive, however serious. It is always so. No man ever intentionally plays the hypocrite for nothing. He who deceives, deceives for some purpose apart from the act itself.

How was it with the disciples? They were impostors, it is affirmed. But from what motive? Or had they none? If any, what was it? From whence drawn? Not from this world, surely; not surely from the next.

From the moment of the crucifixion, to human appearance, the cause of Christianity was hopeless. Not the Jews only, but the Greeks and Romans also, nor these alone—the learning, the ignorance, the passions, the prejudices, the official influence, the physical strength of the world were arrayed against it. Its Founder was a tenant of the sepulchre. Its few former professors had abjured it, and on earth there remained not a friend.

Under such circumstances, to recommence the pro-

fession, and become a second time a Christian, was to become the avowed follower of a crucified impostor, and the voluntary partaker of his reproach and obloquy.

Thus to avow themselves Christians was to consign their memories to infamy, and their bodies to crucifixion. Relentless executioners, reeking with the blood of Jesus, compassed his hated followers, ready and anxious to inflict on them a similar vengeance.

This the disciples knew; and knowing this, with fires, and racks, and gibbets displayed before them, and in the avowed expectation of meeting death by those terrific engines, they resolutely resumed their ministry, and entering Jerusalem itself publicly, and in the very presence of His blood-stained murderers, announced their adored Master's triumphant resurrection.

Faith apart, what imaginable motive can be assigned for this conduct? Be their motive what it might, it was not drawn from this world. Was it then from the next? Ah! hearer, it is not from thence that men derive motives to imposture. Futurity suggests many a thought to damp, but none to stimulate the unprincipled adventurer.

Could a Jew, with the Law and the Prophets in his hand, have expected that fraud or perjury would thereafter be rewarded by the God of Israel and of righteousness? Could a Christian have expected this? Above all, could these reputed impostors, preadmonished so often by their Master of that Hell of Retribution which awaited the workers of iniquity, could these men have expected to secure the plaudit in eternity by an act of treachery that must damn their fame, and defile their consciences in time? No; to become

a perjured disciple, the future offered motive no more than the present. The gibbet or the stake in this world, and Hell in the next, were indeed poor encouragement for imposture. And yet, in the present instance, these were the only encouragement. Neither God nor man offered any other.

To the persecuted disciples of a conquered, crucified Christ, there was no motive falsely to assert His resurrection. And yet they did assert this. They persisted in asserting it—persisted, in the face of heaven and earth, and in the presence of the rulers of both, and in defiance of all the torments which the one could threaten, or the other inflict. They were imprisoned, they were beheaded, they were exposed to wild beasts, they were stoned, they were crucified. Still they persisted, and from the cross, or at the stake, or on the scaffold, indeed everywhere alike, till the blow was struck that felled them, they continued to honor Christ, and to repeat, “That he had risen.” Now, if they did not really, and in their souls, believe in his actual resurrection, for what—in the name of God we ask it—for what did they do and suffer this? For what did they resign the comforts of life and encounter the *horrors of death*?

For what? According to the theory of unbelievers, for NOTHING—without any motive at all. Nay; in opposition to all motive, from earth, from heaven, from hell, from time and from eternity, they honored, and they persisted in honoring when *dead*, that very impostor whom, when dying, they had deserted and denied.

Is there a man credulous or mad enough to believe this? credulous or mad enough to believe that the confessor had nothing to console him in his dungeon,

that the martyr had nothing to support him at the stake.

Without faith and without hope, did men forsake father and mother, and houses and lands, and wander in voluntary exile, hated, despised, and persecuted through the earth? Without faith and without hope, did men cheerfully embrace the cross, and triumphantly mount the scaffold? Did they deliberately suffer in their reputation the foulest disgrace, and in their bodies the most excruciating torments, in attestation of that resurrection in which they had no belief?

Supported by nothing, did Paul glory in tribulations? In the chilling influence of unbelief, exhausted by suffering, sinking under the pressure of his persecutors, at such a moment and under such influence, did Stephen look up to heaven in ecstasy and with his last breath exclaim, *Lord Jesus, receive my spirit?*

Would to God I were capable of placing this article before you with its bold and distinctive coloring, and in the strong blaze of its original and unreflected light. Would to God that I were able to tear away that veil which the lapse of eighteen hundred years has drawn over apostolic sufferings! that I were able to show you, in the midst of fire and flames, the dying martyr, attesting the reality of his Saviour's resurrection, supported by this hope alone; would to God that I could show him to you as the amazed spectators saw him, contemning the agonies of death, and stretching forth from amidst the devouring element his quivering half-consumed hands, to seize the crown of righteousness which Jesus Christ presents, and which faith unfolds to his heaven-directed eye! Ah, could I do *this*, I would not ask whether these witnesses, on whose minds

Christ's reappearance had produced such an instantaneous, such an abiding, such a miraculous effect, that they ever afterwards disregarded fame, riches, ease, pain, and death; I would not ask whether they themselves really believed that He had risen from the dead.

You would not ask it. The living spectators who heard the dying disciple, from the cross, from the scaffold, or from amidst the kindling fagots, assert his faith and repeat his testimony, did not ask this.

No! the heart of man revolts from the shocking absurdity of such a question. Martyrdom for false opinions there may be; the Apostle asserts its possibility; the world has had examples of it; but martyrdom in attestation of a fact known to be false, is incredible. It reverses the famous sophism of Hume. No miracle in nature so taxes the human credulity, or demands such an amount of testimony for its belief.

Could you but see, hearer, one such witness (and that there have been *many* is not disputed); could you see but *one* such witness, tearing himself from his friends, tearing himself from the world, and bracing his body to endure the most excruciating torments in attestation of a fact, however you yourself might doubt the reality of that fact, you never would doubt the reality of his belief of it.

This alternative, also, may therefore be considered as put at rest. The disciples *did* themselves believe that Jesus Christ had risen! and because they believed this, *they were not impostors*.

Is there anything further to be urged to invalidate their testimony? It has previously been shown that they were not imposed upon; it has now been shown that they were not impostors. We must, therefore,

deny the connection between cause and effect ; deny the influence of motive, abandon reason, contradict experience, contradict nature, contradict God, or admit that Jesus Christ has indeed risen from the dead.

III.

THE ALLEGED THEFT OF THE SAVIOUR'S BODY.

Whereof he has given assurance to all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead. Acts xvii. 31.

THE two alternatives, suggested to weaken the credibility of the witnesses who attest the resurrection, have in the preceding discourses been met, and, it is believed, have been refuted. Nothing remains to invalidate it. On the contrary,—

There is a train of well-connected circumstances corroborating their testimony; and there are other and incontrovertible facts confirming and establishing this previous fact.

There is a train of well-connected circumstances corroborating their testimony.

What are they? I will mention some of them.

The change of feeling and of action which took place in the disciples; the absence of the body; the account given by the Jews and by the guard of its removal; their conduct on the occasion; the order in which the sepulchre was found, and the effect produced by the reputed felony on its perpetrators.

Each of these has a bearing on the question now at issue. They are all, however, so interwoven that a separate discussion will not be requisite.

There is a marked and obvious difference between the conduct of the disciples after the time in which the resurrection is said to have taken place and their previous conduct. The crucifixion, so precisely calculated to depress, to dishearten, and, by dissolving their only bond of union, utterly to disperse them, seemed to have produced, and to be producing, its legitimate effects until the third day. Hitherto some resemblance may be traced between them and other human beings, when compassed by enemies, when struggling with difficulties, and bent on the prosecution of some momentous and doubtful enterprise. They were anxious; they were wavering; they were timid; they were easily alarmed. When their Master was apprehended, only consternation seized them.

Dismayed, they shunned the public eye. They shrunk from observation. The voice even of a servant-maid awed Peter, before so confident, and who had followed at a distance, into an act of abjuration. Eager to escape by *any* means, he disclaimed all connection with the disciples, and denied with oaths even the knowledge of their Master. Thus, as we have said, the crucifixion seemed to have produced, and to be producing, its legitimate effects until the third day. No longer. It was the crisis of their fate: the point on which their fortunes turned. On that day, *so* memorable in the history of the church and of the world, some great and propitious event must have taken place. There must have been an entire change of circumstances, for an entire change of conduct ensued. A new era commences. Thereafter no one hesitates; no one wavers. All are suddenly reunited, reanimated, and transformed into prodigies of valor. And this little band—the first members of

the Christian church—stand amidst the raging multitude, breast the storm, and meet the wave of persecution, firm as the surge-beaten rocks meet the billows of the ocean that rise and roar and break upon them.

To what is this sudden, this surprising transformation to be attributed? Around whose standard was it that the dispersed and terror-stricken Christians rallied? *Whose* voice of power was it that re-braced the nerves of the palpitating convert, and drew forth the concealed disciple from his hiding-place? Even *Peter* is reclaimed; is re-established in faith and fortitude. Dungeons no longer awe him; death does not intimidate him. He seeks the place of danger; he covets the crown of martyrdom! Yes, even Peter—the timorous Peter, who just now dared not even own his Master, but shrunk from the accusation of a servant-girl, now dares to face his murderers lifting their blood-stained hands to heaven, and appealing to the righteous God in vindication of their act. Yes, even he dares to face these men, and to say to them, “Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles, and wonders, and signs; him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain. This Jesus God hath raised up, whereof we are all witnesses.”

Who can account, on any ordinary principles of action, for this conduct of Peter, or for that of the other disciples? Will those who reproach us with weakness for believing, suggest any plausible apology for unbelief? Will they even furnish a plausible conjecture, the resurrection apart, that will explain these phenomena? That fact admitted, the mystery

vanishes, and the whole after-scene, which was otherwise itself a prodigy, appears congruous and natural.

But the resurrection is a matter of *fact*, WHICH THE SEPULCHRE IS THE PLACE TO INVESTIGATE. An inspection of that will doubtless bring to light some circumstances, either in confirmation or in refutation. Come, then, let us go and see the place where the Lord lay. Behold yonder that host of enemies who three days since were exulting in their triumph over the prostrate Galilean. Let us approach them; let us say to them: "Into your hands was committed, as it was taken from the cross, the lacerated body of *him* whom we supposed to have been the Saviour." Produce that body now, and our inquiries will be answered, the testimony of his disciples falsified, and the tongue of imposture silenced forever.

What say you, ye priests? ye keepers, what is your answer? "The body is missing." The body missing? "Yes, it has eluded our vigilance; it has escaped from our custody; it has fled the sepulchre." It has so! Look, believer, and see. The stone is rolled back, and the vault tenantless! There lie the napkin that was bound about his head, and the linen clothes that enfolded his body; but the body which they enfolded lies not there!

What mean these habiliments which the dead has worn and laid aside—this folded napkin—this deserted cemetery? What mean these things? Do they not intimate, and more than intimate, the verity of what the reclaimed Peter asserts, the reality of what the joy-entranced Mary has seen, and whose bursting heart still swells with emotions too tender for concealment, too strong for utterance?

Perhaps, however, the body has been secretly conveyed away. Let us indulge the supposition for a moment. But by whom? Was it by his enemies? Would they whose malice compassed his death, and whose malice even death itself had not quenched, would they have conspired to re-establish his prediction, and cover his memory with glory? Was it, then, his friends? Ah, had Jesus Christ died in retirement, and surrounded only by his friends, there might have been, if not a motive, at least an opportunity for the execution of such a dark design. In a death so circumstanced, prevention might have been impossible, detection difficult.

But, be it remembered, the death of Jesus Christ was public; his burial conducted in the presence and under the direction of his enemies. The Scribes and Pharisees, the priests, the populace, backed by the authority of Cæsar, and with soldiery at their disposal, were surely competent to protect the sepulchre from the assault of Peter and John, the two Marys, and a few other women, who alone appear to have had fortitude enough even to approach the place where this appalling tragedy was enacted. That they attempted to protect it, that they foresaw the consequences of failure, that they felt the full force of all those motives which urged them to retain in their possession the body of the reputed malefactor until the third day was past, is manifest. They used precaution; they made arrangements; they employed force. Everything that man could do they did to secure the sepulchre. And why did they not secure it? The event shows *why* they did not. Because it imprisoned *Him who is the resurrection and the life*; in whose "hand were the keys of hell and death; who could himself

open, and no one could shut, who could shut, and no one could open."

Was ever sepulchre so secured, so watched, so guarded before? Has the tomb on any other occasion, or to favor any other imposture, surrendered up the dead that were in it? Never; since the first man died this prison has been inviolable. To saints, to sinners, to true men and impostors, egress has been alike denied. No vigilance eludes, no gold bribes its keeper, nor does any violence break its bars. Even the most dreaded tyrants, when Death takes them in arrest, are no longer dreaded. Thereafter no one fears their release, or guards against their reappearance. Though they expire in the midst of courtiers, whose fortunes hang upon their fortunes, who watch the remains of life with all the devotion with which vestals watch the fire upon the altar, who strive to prevent the departing spirit, and would gladly impose upon the world, were it possible, a belief of its return after it was irrevocably gone,—still, none fears their release, no one guards against their reappearance. Suddenly the lacerated slave, set free, walks forth securely and unharmed over the dust of his disdainful master, assured that neither arms nor artifice can rescue the death-enthralled oppressor, or establish on earth his fallen influence.

How then was it practicable in the case before us to do this? What circumstances favored the re-establishment of the Galilean's fallen power? He expired, as you have heard, ignominiously; he expired publicly, he expired surrounded by enemies. They ascertained his death; they controlled his burial. His tomb was hewn from the solid rock—a great stone was rolled to its mouth; that stone was

sealed, and a band of armed soldiers placed before it. And yet, in despite of this stone, this seal, this band of armed soldiers, the pathway from the tomb was forced, and the body it imprisoned had fled ! How ? Through whose agency ? By what means ? No one answers these interrogations. The whole transaction is veiled in mystery. Not even the guard give the least account of it. From a suspicious source, indeed, a report is circulated : That “ while these slept his disciples came and stole away the body.” Is this report plausible ? Has it any internal marks of truth ? Has it any external ? Whatever else may be said to explain the transaction, *this report is a falsehood.*

It is a palpable falsehood. Let us examine it : “ *His disciples came by night and stole him away while we slept.*” Who are they who are bribed to make this pitiful declaration ? You shall hear.

“ Now, the next day that followed the day of preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate, saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again. Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead : so the last error shall be worse than the first. Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch : go your way, and make it as sure as ye can. So they went and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch.”

You perceive who this guard were ; by whom authorized ; by whom selected, and where stationed. You perceive also the agitation the crucifixion occasioned, the anxiety it excited, and the interest which was felt to preserve, until the third day was passed

by, the sepulchre inviolate. And yet inviolate the sepulchre was not preserved. The reason why it was not is not so much as intimated. What say the guards? Precisely what they were bribed to say. "His disciples came by night and stole him away while we slept." I affirm that the guards were bribed to say this, not only because it is so recorded, but because that, and that only, will account for their making the impudent declaration—a declaration which, though it *had* been true, they, without the connivance of the Jews, had never dared to make.

Whoever knows anything of the rigors of military discipline knows that they would not. Then, as now, for the sentinel to slumber at his post was death. And yet these guards slept. More than this, they avow openly that they have done so. Still no murmurs are heard; no inquest is held; no executions issue. The Jews, so anxious to defend the sepulchre, and so resentful to every other being that crossed them in their purpose, to the guard were all conciliation; the guard, whose criminal neglect had occasioned to themselves the most disastrous disappointment. Against this guard they prefer no charges; they indulge no animosity. Both parties are perfectly complacent, and mutually desirous to consign, without inquiry, so much of the transaction as concerned the soldiery to oblivion. Whence this unnatural sympathy between the guard and their distinguished employers? Clamorous on every other article, they maintain on this a studied, sullen silence. Why this preternatural apathy? Why was no examination instituted? why was no development attempted of that mysterious incident which terrifies the priests; which terrifies the elders; which shook Jerusalem to its

centre? The answer is at hand; the Evangelists have furnished it. "Some of the watch came into the city, and showed unto the chief priests all the things that were done." "*And when they* had assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel together, they gave large money unto the soldiers, saying, Say ye, His disciples came and stole him away while we slept. And if this come to the governor's ears, we will persuade him, and secure you. And they took the money and did as they were taught," saying, "His disciples came and stole him away while we slept."

"While we slept;" but did they sleep on such a night as this, and during the performance of such a duty? Did they sleep while guarding the avenues of death, and stationed as they were at the tomb of that DREAD PRETENDER, who had announced beforehand the time that he would rend that tomb, and come forth, *the resurrection and the life*? They did not sleep. Every bosom palpitated, every nerve quivered, and from every eye slumber fled. Whoever slept in Jerusalem that night, this guard did not sleep. Nature teaches that they *could* not: *God* knows they *did* not.

But suppose they had—not one, but all of them. Suppose this whole band of soldiers, leaning on their spears, or reclining on their shields beside or around the sepulchre, tranquil as the tired laborer on his couch, composed themselves to sleep? Could the assault have been made; could the seal have been broken; could that stone so large have been rolled back, and the body, disengaged from the bandages that begirt it, be borne away in triumph without awaking them? Or does (look again into the sepulchre and

tell me), does the linen cloth, wreathed so orderly, and lying on the one side, or the folded napkin, adjusted with so much care, and lying on the other, appear like the hurry and confusion of robbery? No rude hand disengaged that linen cloth from the body it enfolded, or tore away that napkin from the head it bound. Be the truth what it may, they have not told it. This tale of the body being stolen while they slept, and stolen too by the disciples, is a falsehood; a palpable falsehood, and

As useless as it is palpable. I say useless, for it leaves unaccounted for other and more decisive phenomena than that of the mere absence of the body for which it was fabricated to account. Of all possible shifts to get rid of supernatural interference, that of implicating the disciples is the worst. If the stealing of a dead body would of itself give confidence in the resurrection, and re-establish the prostrate influence of a departed chief, of what potentate would the ashes remain undisturbed in its sepulchre? Or what faction would ever be dispirited and dispersed by their leader's death?—a loss which has hitherto been deemed, both by the virtuous and the vile, irreparable. Were this the fact, if the rifling of a tomb would produce such reunion and reanimation, we should see the mausoleums of tyrant kings guarded after their decease as carefully as the prisons they erected were guarded previously, and resurrections would have been as frequent in our world as those falling powers have been which required for their support a factitious influence.

But the rifling of a tomb never did, never could, produce reunion and reanimation. I have heard of followers being kept together and in spirits by the

concealment, never before by the promulgation, of their leader's death.

The subtle Catherine, who wrested from her husband the sceptre of the Russias, reasoned differently. Not content with having announced by a public ukase the emperor's death, and that she might the more effectually break the spirits and disconcert the plans of his adherents, she caused his body to be conveyed to the capitol, and to be uncovered, before its burial, in the midst of them. The event showed with what sagacity she had taken this decisive measure. While there was a possibility that their incarcerated sovereign lived, loyalty gave them confidence. But when they saw his pall, approached his bier, lifted his shroud, and identified his corse, hope forsook them, exertion ceased, and the bond that had united them became instantly and utterly dissolved.

Had the disciples, as the bribed watch falsely testified, stolen the body of their Master, it had been to the priests and elders not a ground of regret, but of exultation. Such an act would have proved as fatal to his claims as it would have been derogatory to the honor of his followers. Had they done this, no after-persecutions, from either Jews or Gentiles, would have been necessary to exterminate the sect. It had perished of necessity. This theft alone must have produced its dissolution. No successors would have perpetuated their infamy; nor would even the record of their folly or their fraud have reached the times in which we live. Ages ago the story would have been forgotten and unknown.

This is not lightly said. Let us assume the fact to which this watch, asleep as they were at the time, are said to testify with so much certitude. Let us follow

out the consequences, and see how the sequel corresponds to the assumption.

Be it so. The sepulchre was violated, and by the disciples. What an egregious error! What a disheartening incident! Can you conceive of anything that could have befallen the already humbled and desponding disciples so calamitous as voluntarily to have stooped to this vile act of imputed degradation! To have stooped, I do not say to *acquire* the *name*, but to *do* the deed, and to feel the shame of having done it; to feel the shame, not of having the world know, but of knowing themselves, that they had stolen, and, to save appearances, been *compelled* to steal, from its abode of death, the already decomposing body of that *boastful deceiver* who had proclaimed himself, and whom they had proclaimed to be, Son of God, the Saviour of the Jews and of the world.

Imagine the disciples, on that ill-boding and dismal night, assembled in some secret and obscure retreat. From this friendless and despised group of beings, imagine a selection made for the performance of the premeditated and degrading act of subterranean rapine. Muffled in darkness, the base adventurers withdraw from their no less base associates; they steal along the by-paths; they skulk behind the monuments; nearer and yet *nearer* they approach in silence. The guards are slumbering at their posts, and they reach the sepulchre undiscovered. They penetrate it; again they emerge, and, like felons, laden with their spoils, they return, bearing the corse of their once adored leader, now *palé*, ghastly, and disfigured with wounds. *This* corse, the trophy of their vile adventure, they expose in the midst of his

assembled and disheartened followers, exclaiming, "We have succeeded, comrades; we have eluded the guard; we have rolled away the stone; we have repossessed ourselves of the body of Christ, our captain. Look! it is he; see where the nails rent his hands, and where the spear pierced his side. Look! it is He. These are the hands that have been wounded; this the side that was pierced; this is Christ, our captain, the same that was crucified, that was buried." You have indeed restored to us his body, but the soul has fled. O Christ! The Jews then have conquered, and thou hast not risen, but art dead. What a comment this on thy high pretensions, thy imperial claim, thy celestial origin! What a lesson to us his followers! He can give us no counsel; he can furnish us with no defence. It behooves us, then, to think of ourselves, and escape, while we can, to some place of safety. Ere this the guard may have awaked; they will discover the outrage that has been committed; they will spread the alarm through an injured and indignant city; its suburbs will be scourged, our retreat will be discovered, and accumulated vengeance will burst upon our heads. Whither shall we fly? Who will pity us? Who will protect us? What will become of us? Ah, thou author of our misery! Alas, our mad credulity! Is this the reward of our faith and our fidelity? Ah, detested impostor, thy folly and thy falsehood has ruined thyself and us!

My God, what a chilling, what a terrific scene! Can a more appalling spectacle be imagined than that of a dead Christ, stolen from his sepulchre, and surrounded by his hopeless, heaven-deserted followers! And was it here, think you; was it here in this cadaverous chamber, while the pains of death com-

passed them about,—when the terrors of crucifixion threatened them,—was it here, in this haunt of sin, of falsehood, of misery, and of putrefaction, that *the transcendent and immortal system of Christian faith and morals was adopted?* Was it here that the proud idea was conceived of subverting the empire of Satan, and converting the world to righteousness? Was it here that the suffering martyr learned to endure pain and contemn death? Was it here that the fervent Evangelist first kindled with the fire of redeeming love, and became inspired with the idea of publishing to all nations its glorious tidings? Was this stolen, mangled, lifeless corpse the only rallying-point of Christians? Was it the sight of this that reclaimed the apostate Peter, that supported the martyr Stephen, that collected, that bound together, that fortified, and filled with the most daring courage, with the most deathless hopes, the whole body of the disciples? Especially was it this that converted the great apostle of the Gentiles? Paul, you know, was an erudite man. He was a Pharisee: he was an inveterate enemy to Christians. Already they had felt his inexorable vengeance. Intent on the extermination of the sect, and swelling with rage, he hastened to Damascus. On his way thither something occurred that produced an entire change in his views and in his conduct—a change that astonished the Jews, that astonished the Christians, that astonished the Pagans. Now, what was it that produced that change? He himself tells us, that it was the sight of that same Jesus who was crucified on Calvary, and whom he himself, in the person of his disciples, had so sorely persecuted. The sight of Jesus Christ! What sight of him? Was it that of the malefactor's

body, deprived of life, covered with wounds, and stolen ingloriously from the rich Arimathean's rock-excavated tomb? Was it the sight of this dishonored body, buried with infamy, and with infamy dug up again, that struck the unrelenting Paul with trembling, made him drop from his hand the accursed commission of his cruelty, and, humbled in dust, exclaim, *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* Was it this that made him forever thereafter glory in the cross, and hail the Galilean who agonized thereon as the promised Messiah, the light and salvation of the world? Was it this that fired his bosom with such dauntless fortitude, and touched his lips with such seraphic eloquence while traversing the great republic, and publishing redeeming love at Jerusalem, at Corinth, at Athens, and at Rome? And finally, was it this, after having borne him triumphantly through the pains and perils of a most disastrous life, that prompted, in the near approach of death, that rapturous exclamation, *I am now ready to be offered up, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have finished my course, I have fought the good fight, I have kept the faith, and there is henceforth laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the righteous Lord will deliver unto me; and not to me only, but to all them that love his appearing.*

If indeed the body of Jesus Christ was stolen from the sepulchre by his disciples, as the watch say, then I affirm that the effects which that theft produced were contrary to nature, and therefore miraculous. For I cannot contemplate those effects without saying, nor without being compelled to say, that in their production there was an interposition of Heaven, and *that this is the finger of God.*

This tale, therefore, of the rifling of the sepulchre, circulated by the watch, and which the Jews repeated and still repeat, is a falsehood as *useless* as it is *palpable*; useless, because it leaves unaccounted for difficulties as insuperable as those which it is fabricated to explain.

To admit its truth, therefore, is merely to displace one miracle by the substitution of another. And the simple and the only question to be decided is, whether we shall believe the former miracle, the resurrection of Jesus Christ, on the highest of all possible evidence, or the latter marvel of incredibility on no evidence at all.

“He was crucified, dead, and buried.” All Jerusalem witnessed this series of events. So far, no transactions were ever more public or more solemnly authenticated. To disbelieve them is to reject all history of the past as utterly worthless. No grave was ever more carefully guarded. If their hopes had not all been crushed, the disciples had indeed a motive for joy in the idea of a risen Saviour; but to have stolen away his dead remains would have been spiritual death to every lingering expectation. That ghastly theft, as it has been fairly pictured to you, no man can believe. What, then, became of the body of the Crucified? The question must remain unanswered, unless we go on to the next article of the early creed: “On the third day he rose from the dead.” No other event could account for the reanimation of the disciples; no other event could give the reason of that new, unworldly light and life which have ever since been streaming forth from that sepulchre to change the whole moral and spiritual aspect of the world.

IV.

THE ATTESTING DESCENT OF THE SPIRIT.

Whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead. Acts xvii. 31.

You have heard *numerous and unimpeachable witnesses attest the resurrection* of Jesus Christ; you have seen that *a train of well-connected circumstances corroborates their testimony*. It only remains to be shown that

There are other and incontrovertible facts confirming and establishing this previous fact.

What other and incontrovertible facts are these, confirming and establishing this previous fact? *The descent of the Spirit—the power of miracles—the spread of Christianity.*

The descent of the Spirit.

Jesus Christ promised that the Spirit should descend upon his disciples after he had arisen. In confirmation of this promise, the Spirit did so descend. What evidence is there of it? A sudden and marvellous change wrought on them. The disciples, destitute originally of all great and shining qualities, distinguished by no peculiar aptitude for acquiring those which they possessed not, and at a time of life, too, when the human character, having attained its

full rigidity, is no longer capable of being re-moulded by ordinary means; *even then, they were suddenly transformed into prodigies of wisdom, of virtue, and of fortitude, both in action and in suffering.*

We have already glanced at their lives. Incomparable men, as we have seen, they indeed were. Such, however, they were not from the beginning. Such they were not even at the time of their Master's death. His resurrection ensued. A sudden transformation took place; a transformation worthy to have been produced by the Holy Ghost, and at the very time of its promised descent.

It entered into the original plan of Jesus Christ, as appears from his own explicit declaration, to suffer, to die, and to rise again. On this foundation was he to rear a kingdom vast in extent and endless in duration; a kingdom new in its origin, in its object, in its laws, and in its administration; a kingdom which would subvert all other kingdoms, and remain itself exclusive and universal.

As the basis of this projected kingdom was to be laid by the death of its Founder, the entire superstructure was to be reared by subordinate agents, and in the absence of the Principal. Whom did he select for the accomplishment of this high purpose? On whose brow did he place the mitre? Into whose hands did he commit the sceptre? Who were appointed to be the heralds of his law and the executors of his government? Were any individuals of original and splendid talents selected? any of great wealth or powerful connections? any profound scholars or sagacious statesmen? The choice was not made of such. On the contrary, the agents appointed to execute were as little and as impotent as the design to be

executed was vast and mighty. In defiance of all the maxims of human prudence, as if to take from unbelief the shadow of an apology, and make it manifest to every eye that God's right hand had done this thing, the wealth, the power, the talents, the learning, the influence of the world were disregarded, and a selection made that promised nothing but defeat and disgrace. Obscure, uneducated, ignoble men were preferred; men ignorant, rash, dull, intractable. Fishermen, tent-makers, toll-gatherers were preferred. Twelve such men, without any previous advantages, and with all the prejudices, passions, and habits peculiar to their stations and callings, were suddenly collected, and invested with authority more absolute and awful than had ever before been committed to mortals. To them were delivered the keys of the kingdom of heaven. Whose soever sins they remitted were to be remitted, whose soever sins they retained were to be retained.

To qualify them for the duties of this fearful office, they were admitted into the family, and taken under the tuition of Jesus Christ. Three years they accompanied him in his travels, saw his miracles, and heard his lectures. But so slow of understanding were they, that, at the end of these three years, they seemed still to be mere fishermen, still incapable, under any culture, of becoming qualified for a holier or higher calling. They neither comprehended his doctrine, nor sympathized with him in his design. His humility offended them. They were scandalized at his cross: they were ignorant of his prerogatives, and unbelieving in respect to the fulfilment of his promises. All the attempts which had been made to enlighten their understandings and elevate their minds

above present and sensible objects seemed to have been abortive. By parables, by similitudes, by familiar conversations, as well as by formal and set discourses, they had been instructed ; but to little purpose.

They entered not into the spirit of these discourses ; they understood not the things that were spoken. They were still, as they ever had been, ignorant and unteachable, slow to understand, as well as to believe, not only what the prophets, but what Christ himself had said. It was on this account that, deploring the state in which he was about to leave them, and grieved at their habitual dulness and intractableness, he addressed to them that pointed and sharp rebuke, *O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you ? How long shall I bear with you ?*

Such were the disciples when Jesus Christ closed by death his ministry. They no more understood his claims, or the nature of his kingdom, than did the Scribes and Pharisees, or the populace who flocked together where he passed, that they might see his miracles, and partake of the *loaves and fishes*. Knowing them to be such, what *could* he expect from them ? How *could* he suppose they would ever be able to administer his government, to expound his laws, or even to answer with wisdom and pertinency the interrogatories addressed to them by magistrates and kings ? He tells *us*, he told *them*, how he expected this. Hear his words. “ If I depart, I will send the Comforter unto you. When He, the spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth. And when they bring you unto the synagogues, and unto magistrates and powers, take no thought beforehand how or what you shall answer ; neither premeditate ; for

the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what you ought to say."

With these prophetic words the event coincided. From the moment of the promised descent of the spirit, these *weak* men, these *illiterate* men, these stupid and *intractable* men *were suddenly endowed with the highest knowledge*. They became instantly wiser than the Jews, wiser than Abraham, wiser than Moses, wiser than Solomon, wiser than the Romans, wiser than the Greeks. They understood the law, they understood the gospel; things past, things future, things invisible, even the hidden mysteries of the kingdom of God, are known to them. They bring forth things new and things old as from an exhaustless treasury. To the pious they are sons of consolation; to the impious, sons of thunder. They confront the Sanhedrim, they encounter the Epicureans, they silence the Stoics. They deliver prophecies, they promulgate laws, they perfect and consummate a system so matchless, so transcendent, as to have become and remain the glory of the Church and the admiration of the world; a system replete with the most exalted and sublime ideas of God, with the most accurate and comprehensive judgments of man; a system containing the most exact and striking presentation of the civic and social relations, together with the rights and obligations springing out of them; a system perfect and finished, in which *nothing* is defective, *nothing* redundant; a system which requires no revision, which admits of no emendation; a system *so* holy, *so* true, *so* universal and unchanging in its principles, as to be, like the laws of nature and of God, suited to all stages of society, to all nations and ages of the world.

The institutions of Solon have become obsolete ; the laws of Lycurgus have perished ; the pandects of Justinian have ceased to be the rule of life ; the great body of the Roman law has been amended and remodelled ; but the gospel remains unchanged. *Now*, as *formerly*, it is most honorable to God, most beneficial to man. The lapse of eighteen centuries has brought to light no blemish or defect ; it still bears the same strong impress of Eternal wisdom and goodness that it did when uttered by the lips and inscribed by the pens of the apostles. Its unrivalled perfection even its enemies acknowledge. Those who deny its inspiration are compelled to concede that there is nowhere else embodied a system of morals so pure, or of doctrines so sublime.

The ancients have furnished no such specimen of virtue or of wisdom ; all that is purest in modern ethics has been derived from it.

The *New Testament* stands confessedly alone pre-eminent ; not only unapproached, but unapproachable. Such a work, at such a time, by such men, unless God had inspired them, is impossible ; its very existence is a monument that, standing like a pyramid among the moral ruins of the world, perpetuates, and must forever perpetuate the evidence of one fact :—*the descent of the Spirit*. Nor is this all. These once ignorant, narrow-minded, and indocile fishermen not only embody this wonderful system of doctrines and duties, but they also publicly and extemporaneously illustrate, explain, defend, and enforce it with a sagacity and facility that amazes. The fact is the more wonderful that they do this with equal ease, perspicuity, fluency, and power in all the known varieties of Eastern languages. Yes, unlettered as they were,

and without any previous study, or previous residence elsewhere than in Palestine, and though not called from their fish-nets till the maturity of manhood, they understand perfectly all the dialects existing in the Roman Empire and beyond it. From the Indus to the Rhone, from the Caspian to the Red Sea, there is not a known tongue in which the Gospel is not proclaimed. "Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judea and Cappadocia, in Pontus and in Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene; and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians, heard them speak, in their own tongues, the wonderful works of God."

However the Apostles may have acquired this unusual knowledge and use of language, the fact that it was so employed is one that it is not easy to call in question. The Gospel was certainly preached, not only at Jerusalem, at Corinth, at Athens, and at Rome, but also in Gaul, in Egypt, in Arabia, in Syria, in India, in Mesopotamia, and elsewhere, during the lives of the Apostles themselves. Monuments of antiquity attest this wondrous fact; churches planted by the Apostles, and remaining to the present day, demonstrate its truth. The Apostles actually preached the Gospel to these different kindreds, tongues, and people. These different kindreds, tongues, and people heard the Gospel preached by them. There is but one alternative. Either the unlettered populace of all these nations understood the native language of the fishermen of Galilee, or the unlettered fishermen of Galilee were in some way enabled to understand the native language of the people to whom they carried the Gospel.

We have missionaries in India, and some have been there for years. It was only after much previous preparation at home that they were sent out to evangelize the heathen. Some of them have not even yet commenced their oral mission. Though impatient of delay, and surrounded by idolaters, they are still silent. Though they profess to be the bearers of salvation, no Hindoo or Burman auditory has been instructed by their epistles, or even heard from their lips the enunciation of *the glad tidings*. Whence this delay? It is inevitable. They are acquiring the language of the natives; nor can they, great as their desire may be, and urgent as the necessity may be, convey one idea of Christ, of faith, of forgiveness, or of heaven, till they shall have made the acquisition. And yet, who ever heard, in the apostolic age, of any school of language but that opened on the day of Pentecost, or of any other teacher of language than the Holy Ghost? On what occasion did Peter, or James, or John suspend their mission, and linger in silence on the borders of idolatrous nations, till they had acquired from the natives the import of their terms, and their tone of utterance? Who of them, or of their unlettered coadjutors, called suddenly to address a world lying in wickedness, ever declined a mission to the east or to the west, to the north or to the south, because the languages of those regions were unknown to them? On the contrary, ever furnished, ever prepared, ever active, they compassed sea and land; nor did the peculiar shibboleth of any nation, however refined, however barbarous, render them inaccessible to the living voice of these primitive Evangelists, these daring and adventurous declaimers against all unrighteousness. Look over the

great map of ancient Christendom ; see what a vast extent of country, and what different tongues and people were scattered through it. This extent of country the disciples traversed, and, without any previously acquired knowledge of the varieties of language which they met with, everywhere alike preached Jesus and the resurrection as they went.

How did they do this ? By hieroglyphics and pantomime ? Was Christianity promulgated in Greece without a knowledge of the Greek, or at Rome without the Latin ? Was it promulgated in Arabia without the Arabic, in Syria without the Syriac, or in the peninsula of India without the ancient Malabar, where eastern as well as western tradition makes it certain that St. Thomas preached, and founded churches ? The contrary supposition has far greater difficulties than the admission of the miraculous gift. The broad fact that churches were founded by them in so many countries, even though the sacred historian had been silent on that article, would demonstrate that, in addition to the profoundest knowledge of ethics, these mysterious fishermen understood and could speak more languages, to say the least, than the most learned among the Greeks and Romans. It was not a common faculty, even regarded as acquired. The admiration expressed for Josephus on account of his good knowledge of Greek shows that this power of speaking foreign tongues was an extraordinary accomplishment in ancient times.

Hindered by their previous occupations, and precluded during half their lives from all the ordinary sources of intellectual improvement, whence did they so suddenly derive this consummate and finished education ? What teacher with such matchless skill

opened to their minds the treasures of celestial wisdom, attuned their organs to the utterance of such divine language, and touched their lips with the fire of such varied and seraphic eloquence? By what miraculous tutelage were they made at once the most enlightened sages; the most consummate orators? Who can account for this? or rather, who cannot account for it? For who can open *that volume* of moral science, of sacred literature, so replete with whatever can enlighten, can exalt and purify the soul—who can behold its venerable authors, with their sandals bound upon their feet, their locks bleached with the dews of every climate, conveying glad tidings and publishing salvation to the Jews, to the Romans, to the Greeks, to the Assyrians, to the Egyptians, to the Arabians, and the Hindoos—standing before tribunals and answering judges and rulers of the earth with a majesty that never sinks, with a composure that is never interrupted, with a wisdom that never errs, with eloquence becoming the ministers of heaven, the accredited ambassadors of God to man; who can do this, I say, and not recall to mind those prophetic words of Christ, which we have before quoted, “If I go away, I will send the comforter unto you. When he, the spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth. And when they bring you before magistrates and powers, take no thought beforehand how or what you shall answer; neither premeditate, for the Holy Ghost will teach you in the same hour what you ought to say.”

But not with knowledge only were they endowed. At the time of the promised descent of the Spirit,

They became suddenly prodigies of virtue, as well as of wisdom.

The transformation which then took place in their moral characters was as sudden, as entire, and as glorious as that which took place in their intellectual condition.

After relinquishing their humble occupations, and during the natural life of their Master, place and power seem to have been their principal objects. They were vain; they were selfish; they were jealous; they were resentful, and covetous of wealth and honor. To whatever concerned the body they were alive. They aspired to the highest seat; they considered nobility to be the chief beatitude, and their heads were filled perpetually with some dream of temporal glory. Their present poverty and dependence were their humiliation. Proud even in anticipation, they jealously weighed their respective claims, and with an evil eye looked forward to the pomp and splendor which they conceived were held in reservation.

Hence their secret rivalries; hence their open and disgraceful wranglings; hence their society in retirement was embittered, and their very journeys filled with strife. After hearing from their Master the most heavenly lessons, and while yet within the reach of his eye and the sound of his voice, they indulged in emulation and quarrelled about pre-eminence. On the part of James and John a request is preferred to Jesus Christ himself that the one might sit on his right hand and the other on his left in that imagined kingdom with which their ambition was inflamed, but which he came not to establish. The other disciples, far from cherishing any ingenuous feelings, and as eager for preferment as the ambitious brothers, *were filled with indignation.*

By example, by admonition, by precept, did their august Teacher endeavor to heal their dissensions and eradicate the unhallowed passions which produced them, but in vain. In vain he expostulated with them; in vain, when they inquired of him concerning precedence in the kingdom of Heaven, did he significantly place a little child in the midst of them, adding, "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter the kingdom of Heaven. Whosoever, therefore, shall humble himself and become as this little child, the same is the greatest in the kingdom of Heaven." In vain did he say to them, "Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them; but it shall not be so among you; but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant. Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."

Even this lesson of heavenly wisdom, enforced by his own divine example, was lost upon them; and, strange as it may seem, their perverseness continued to the end. Take the scene of the last sad night before the passion. Behold them rising from the sacramental table, that altar of peace, where, since that day, so many reconciliations have been effected, so many resentments buried, so many worldly honors abjured, so many malignant passions sacrificed; behold them, I say, rising from that table, and at a time, too, when all the solemn circumstances of the crucifixion were just in prospect, still indulging in the most worldly and selfish feelings. See them going forth on such a night as that without humility, with-

out charity, their souls inflamed with unholy carnal animosities. Even then *there was "strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest."*

Good God! what ministers these to be intrusted with the administration of that future kingdom of peace, of charity, of humility, and self-denial, about to be established on the earth! What but abortion and disgrace could be expected from agents thus selfish and discordant? If the living example of meekness which their Master set before them was unavailing; if his will authoritatively expressed in person was unavailing; if the humbling consideration of his death in prospect was unavailing to quench their ambition and prevent their strife, what but perpetual broils could be expected when these restraints should be taken off and that unhallowed passion, so long partially repressed, should be permitted to break forth in its violence and operate unchecked.

Nor ambition only. Other and marked indications of a carnal temper were apparent. A village of Samaria had refused to treat them with urbanity. Unable to brook the insult, they meditated its destruction. More than this; they had the effrontery to approach that benignant Saviour, who never exhibited himself before them but in the attitude of elemency, and to say to Him, "*Wilt thou that we*"—mark this emphatic word—"Wilt thou that *we command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?*"

Be not deceived. It was no holy impulse of reverential homage for the Son of God; it was no sudden throb of religious horror excited by this first token of rejection that prompted their interrogation. They as little understood the *dignity* of his nature as the *object* of his mission. It was not in the char-

acter of a Saviour from sin that they had enlisted under his banner. It was the ambition of dignitaries, not the ardent love of redeemed sinners, that inflamed them. The vain bauble of a temporal principality was perpetually in prospect. Like the ministers of some petty tyrant, they were filled with strange ideas of personal consequence, and would, had their Master permitted them, have avenged a personal affront by sweeping a whole village filled with human beings from the earth. Hence that pointed and piercing reproof which He addressed to them: "*Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them.*"

Everything bespoke in them a calculating and a carnal policy. When a devout woman, in token of reverence for her Saviour, poured on his head an alabaster box of very precious ointment, these same disciples, who would have destroyed an entire village of Samaria for not receiving them with hospitality, were filled with indignation, and said, in a tone of unbecoming censure, *To what purpose is this waste?* Again their Master rebuked them. He points them, by way of contrast, to the humble penitent, and then adds these memorable words: "*Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her.*"

As if they alone were privileged with unrestrained access to his sacred person, whom they deemed to be the king of the Jews, the approach of others appeared obtrusive and gave them umbrage. Not even believing parents would have gained admittance for the presentation of their infants had not he benignantly

interposed and checked the officious forwardness of his disciples who forbade them.

Even the miraculous powers with which they were on a certain occasion temporarily endowed were considered not so much as gifts for the relief of misery, for the confirmation of faith, and the edification of the Church, as personal badges of official distinction. Hence, when they saw one casting out devils, though in the name of Christ, they looked upon it as an infringement of their prerogative, and, with an air of authority, commanded him to desist.

During that mysterious scene of suffering termed *the agony* they seem to have been almost wholly unmoved. Far from exhibiting any just or generous sympathy with their Master, these disciples slept. Rising from the blood-bedewed earth, he awakes them from their slumbers, he addresses them in words of deepest anguish: "My soul is *exceeding* * sorrowful,

* This is one of those passages in which the reader especially needs the power of Dr. Nott's most impressive delivery, as it is also one which will most vividly recall him to the minds of those who were privileged to hear him in his prime, long years ago. The calm yet impassioned action, the solemn and emphatic pauses, above all, the pleading tones of that voice, so clear in its lowest whispers, furnished an exegesis of this scriptural scene that the utmost efforts of any mere critical explanation must fail to reach. The bare words, however, when carefully studied, are eminently suggestive of all that such a delivery would aim at conveying. Περὶλυπος, a term superlative in force if not in form, *filled with sorrow, all environed with sorrow, drowned in sorrow*, "EXCEEDING SORROWFUL, even unto death." Then, too, that strange and very unusual word, ἀδημονεῖν (Matt. xxvi. 37), rendered "*to be very heavy*," rather, *to be very lonely, desolate*, ἄδημος, away from one's kindred or people—in a strange world, in a strange land, forsaken of God and deserted by men. "*Tarry ye here*." Our English word *tarry* has other senses, which prevent its adequately representing the original in this place: "*Stay here*"—"stay

even unto death; *tarry ye here and watch.*" Again the wondrous, the mysterious cry, Abba, Father! "Abba, Father! Let this cup pass from me." An angel descends to strengthen him, but again the unfeeling disciples slept.

When the guard approached to apprehend him, and while He, with holy resignation and majestic composure, advanced to meet them, his disciples, with presumption as absurd as unbecoming, were determined on resistance. The sword was drawn, and in a spirit that shrank not from the crime of murder, and would have stained the very threshold of the Christian church with human blood. But this show of heroism was as transient as it was unhallowed. Wanting faith and firmness to meet the shock, as the disciples of such a Master ought to meet it, they passed from one extreme of weakness to another. Not daring to do their duty, they basely fled, and sought concealment amid the darkness. Even Peter, at first so forward, shrank from interrogation, and de-

with me; O leave me not; fail not asleep!" The language of the whole passage denotes a strange, inexplicable fear of some awful enemy, some fearful conflict, in which his sore tried human nature, seemingly forsaken by its divine strength, clings to human company and human sympathy. There was a sorrow here, a suffering, an agony beyond all our power of conceiving. That we have not gone beyond the true import of this most mysterious passage is shown by the language, Heb. v. 7: "Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications, *with strong crying and tears* unto Him that was able to save him from death." There must have been something that He beheld in that death far beyond any conceivable agony of human dissolution. We are compelled to think this, or regard Christ as inferior in courage and in endurance to many a heroic martyr among his own followers, sustained, professedly, by the Saviour's strength.—ED.

nied his discipleship—denied it with an oath, with cursing as well as swearing, with anathemas and imprecations, with language as vulgar and cowardly as it was profane.

Indeed, the history of their lives during these three years is a history of follies, of blindness, of blunders, and of unbelief. No traits of peculiar promise were as yet unfolded, no indications of subdued passion or of progressive holiness began to be apparent; nor did anything betoken that they were shortly to become exemplars of righteousness and be qualified to act as reformers of the world.

Far from being distinguished saints, they were not even blameless men. Far from being worthy of the school of Christ, they would have done no honor to that of Plato or of Gamaliel.

But mark the change. After the promised descent of the Spirit, these faithless, forward fishermen became as rich in grace as in knowledge. The enlightening of their understandings and the transformation of their hearts were simultaneous, or rather the latter was the cause of the former. It was more than the light of intellectual day that broke upon their minds so suddenly. They not only recognized in the reputed King of Israel the king of righteousness, but they also, as willing subjects, hailed his reign and bowed to do him homage. As the great outlines of his plan of mercy caught their eyes they saw its vastness, they felt its glory. That bubble of a temporal kingdom which the breath of vanity had blown now burst; and with it every other bubble that floats upon the surface of the world. The charm of robes and diadems has fled. They were cured of contention; strifes about pre-eminence are no longer heard

of. No *other* king but *God* is recognized ; no *crown* but that of martyrdom and immortality.

Pride has been extirpated ; ambition, every carnal passion, has been slain ; worldly motives cease to operate ; a holy tranquillity ensues, and all the endearing charities of a new nature springing up, appear in vigorous exercise. Injuries are forgiven and forgotten. Enemies are kindly entreated and prayed for. The cross, once their shame, has become their glory ; poverty a beatitude. Self-denial is now their habitual life ; even stripes and imprisonment are endured without a murmur.

These very men, who once thought and talked of nothing but preferment, now decline all human homage as an utter profanity. When the people of Lystra, awed by the sight of their miraculous healing power, would have offered sacrifice, they rend their garments, they “run in among the excited multitude” exclaiming, “Sirs, why do ye these things? we also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities, unto the living God, who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all things that are therein.” These very men, who once would have consumed a whole village of Samaritans for offering them a slight affront, now bear every indignity with a meekness that fills us with astonishment. When injury is added to insult, they supplicate that same Jesus to whom they formerly addressed their imprecations, for forgiveness in behalf of those that mock them. These very men, once so carnal and selfish, are now abstracted from the world, intent on heaven, absorbed in God ; unblamable men not only, but of exemplary lives and consummate holiness.

Behold them in their retirement; behold them in their public administrations. Examine the temper of their hearts; examine the conduct of their lives; and, having done so, say whence this peculiarity of character, so faultless, so sublime, so unlike whatever of goodness has elsewhere appeared on the earth. Yes, look upon these rude, carnal, calculating fishermen of Galilee, so suddenly and so gloriously transformed, and say whose impress this new nature bears; *whose image and superscription is this?* The history of the day of Pentecost, and that alone, will answer these interrogations: "And when they were all assembled with one accord, in one place, suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." So says the history; and the heaven-wrought change in the disciples which we have been contemplating is a proof of the truth of it. There are yet other proofs; for henceforth,

They became also prodigies of fortitude, heroes, both in action and in suffering.

You need not be told that they were not so originally, nor even as late as the crucifixion. Though previously near the person, and spectators of the matchless majesty which signalized even the humiliation of the Son of God, no peculiar elevation of mind, no marked decision of character, no daring spirit of enterprise, had as yet begun to show itself. On the contrary, they were pusillanimous, distrustful, irresolute. Nor was it till the spirit of their Master, like the descending mantle of Elijah, fell upon them, that they assumed a bolder tone and appeared in a sublimer attitude. Henceforward they speak, they act,

they suffer, with a magnanimity as novel as it was glorious. Self-aggrandizement is no longer the spring of action. Apart from the interests of the Saviour's kingdom, personal considerations are not so much as taken into computation. Their lives are accounted to be only relatively valuable. Even their individuality seems to have been merged in the interest of that cause with which they have identified themselves, and over which their hearts, in all the fervor of holy affection, appear to be ever expanding. They seem to have lost their personal identity in the old Adam; they are no longer Peter, James, and John, with their individual peculiarities, but *men in Christ*.

The question with them is not now as formerly, What is *our* reward to be? how much shall *we* get? Other motives influence them; other thoughts occupy them; other and higher cares press upon them. Jesus Christ has risen from the dead; they are the witnesses of his resurrection, and they feel responsible to God and to the universe for the promulgation of the fact.

They have ceased to feel like citizens of the earth. Their commission they believe to be from heaven, and they act only in the character of God's ambassadors. Those things which allure other men, allure not them; those things that awe other men, awe not them. They enter the synagogue, they face the tribunal of justice and proclaim Him, whom Pilate condemned, whom the Jews crucified, to be the promised Messiah, made manifest by his rising from the dead.

Their voice fills Jerusalem with terror; Rome hears it and trembles. The authorities of the world attempt to silence them. Superstition frowns, power threatens; bonds and imprisonments are prepared;

but nothing moves them from their purpose. Mild, conciliatory, condescending with respect to whatever was personal, they conceded nothing, they yielded to no circumstances, where official duty was concerned. As men, they arrogated nothing to themselves; as ambassadors of God, they spake only to command. As messengers of Jesus, they were above conciliation, they were beyond control. They owned no other master; they feared no other vengeance but His displeasure. It had been as easy to push the sun from his course as to have turned them from their purpose.

The storm gathers; still undismayed, they preach Christ and him crucified. It breaks upon them; still do they preach Christ. As applied to them, the well-known words of the great Roman poet cease to be hyperbole: "Righteous men, and steady to their aim; no burning rage of clamorous mobs commanding evil, no look of threatening tyrant shakes them from their solid purpose; though the world's orb were broken and dissolved, still undismayed would the ruins strike them."* Or, in the similar language of Scripture, might we say, "Though the earth were removed, and the mountains cast into the midst of the sea, still would they not fear; for the Lord (their risen Saviour) is now their refuge and their strength, their very present help in trouble."

* *Justi et tenaces propositi viri,
Non civium ardor prava jubentium,
Non vultus instantis tyranni
Mente quatit solida.*

* * * * *

*Si fractus illabatur orbis,
Impavidos feriant ruinæ.*

Horat. Carm. III. 3.

Nor were they less bold in action than in utterance. The diminutive project of erecting a little principality, of which Jerusalem was to be the capital, had given place to the grand idea of God's eternal kingdom. Of this kingdom the whole earth, with all its kindred, tongues, and people, is but a province,—at present a rebel province. In the midst of it stands the throne, not of Jehovah but of Satan, and millions do him homage. To recover this kingdom to righteousness and to God is their aim. It is not desirable only, but, in their adventurous and heaven-sustained conception, it is practicable also. Yes, these twelve isolated individuals, without friends, without learning, without influence, without even sword or staff or scrip, and with all the power and malice of men and devils arrayed against them, are sanguine, are confident. Not a doubt lingers about their hearts.

With no armor but their faith, with no resources but their fortitude, with no weapon but the cross, they hasten to the combat. The extended region of fraud, of folly, and superstition lies before them. Jews, Romans, Greeks, Barbarians, nations without number and without end arise in prospect.

These all, all in their opinion, belong to Jesus Christ. They count upon them as though they were already his. As his they claim them; nor do they waver as to the practicability of bringing this mighty host of rebels to subjection.

In sublimity of design, in sublimity of execution, nothing performed by created beings exceeds, nothing equals this. Never before did creatures *so little* undertake so resolutely or execute *so much*.

Nor were they greater in action than in suffering. Opposition to their ministry did not terminate in men-

aces. Unable to seduce or silence, the great powers of the world resolved to crush them. Instruments of death were seized, engines of torture were applied. Their heads were dissevered from their bodies; their joints were dislocated; their muscles were torn asunder; but still their spirit was not broken. The living gathered strength from the victory of the dead. Coadjutors were raised up; a similar impulse and direction was given to other minds.

Had Plato any such disciples? Had Socrates any such disciples? Whence this matchless grandeur of character, so novel, so angelic? It is not surely of earthly origin. None but a God as potent as ours could have raised up such actors or sustained them amid such sufferings.

Behold, hearer, the spirit of a risen Saviour reappearing from the sepulchre in the persons of his followers. This is one fact confirming and establishing the previous fact: *His resurrection.*

V.

THE POWER OF MIRACLES.—THE SPREAD OF CHRISTIANITY.

Whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead. Acts xvii. 31.

WE have already adduced one fact, *the descent of the Spirit*, confirming and establishing the previous fact, *the Resurrection*. *The descent of the Spirit* is not, however, the only fact that deserves to be adduced. Another, and one no less conclusive, presents itself.

THE POWER OF MIRACLES. Whence had the disciples this power? you know whence they profess to have derived it. Announcing the resurrection of their Master, they exhibit at the same time, and in confirmation, their commission from Him to publish the glad tidings, investing them with power “*To heal the sick, to cleanse the leper, to raise the dead, to cast out demons.*”

Under this commission they act, and they are taken at their word. Numerous subjects are presented, and the validity of their commission is confirmed by the issue. For the sick that are brought forward are healed; the deaf hear; the blind see; the dumb speak; the cripple walks; the leper is cleansed; the demoniac is restored to reason, and the dead to life. Other, and yet other objects of misery are presented,

and the presentation is attended with the same effect. Suddenly their fame spreads; the cities they enter are crowded; the paths they travel thronged by impotent people, *and they were healed, every one*. Even garments transmitted from their persons possessed a healing virtue; beds and couches were spread beside their pathways to intercept their very shadow. The mere statement of such a fact, the mere prevalence of such a belief, shows how great the change in the position of these men, how strong the feeling that they carried with them a power from on high.

What shall we say to these things? Did they indeed exist? So say the sacred writings. So say all the converts, all the confessors, all the martyrs; so says the universal church. The millions that embraced Christianity during the lives of the Apostles, though speaking different languages, and living in different hemispheres, all, all with one voice declare miracles to have been among the grounds of their faith, and the means of their conversion.

There is one thing in which the friends and enemies of Christ were, of old, perfectly agreed, namely, that *he and his disciples wrought miracles*. The Jews, who hated them, admitted this. The Romans, who persecuted them, admitted this. Celsus, Porphyry, Hierocles, who attacked the Christian faith, admitted this. Julian, who apostatized from the Christian faith, admitted this. Here then is the universal consent of all antiquity. Jews, Christians, Pagans, Philosophers, Historians, sacred and profane, give a concurrent testimony. There is not one dissenting voice. Not a single denial; not even an intimation that there ever was a denial is to be found on any page of antiquity that has reached our times. On the

contrary, evidence of the miraculous cures recorded in the Acts of the Apostles is furnished and perpetuated in the very attacks of enemies themselves. To this mass of evidence there is nothing to oppose. No fact of the same antiquity is more incontestably authenticated. It is not more evident that Cæsar crossed the Rubicon, or that Pompey was defeated at the battle of Pharsalia, than that Paul and Peter healed the sick, and restored to sight and hearing the blind and the deaf. The evidence can only be evaded by a sophism which coolly assumes that nothing wonderful, or transcending the ordinary experience of the one who chooses to deny it, can possibly be proved by any amount of human testimony.

Whence had the disciples this power? By whom, and why, were the fishermen of Galilee so signalized above all the dwellers upon earth? Two answers, and but two, differing in form, but nearly identical in substance, were given by ancient unbelievers. The one by infidel Jews; the other by infidel Greeks and Romans. The former, amazed at the wonders performed by these men who act professedly under the commission, and speak only in the name of Jesus, affirm, concerning him and them, that they are leagued with devils, and upheld and assisted by Beelzebub, the prince of devils.

The latter, no less amazed at seeing men, despicable in their eyes on account of their country no less than their occupation, exercising powers confessedly supernatural, and speaking with power to the insane, to the palsied, to the living and the dead, affirm that they are not what they seem to be, artless and unlettered, but subtle and skilled magicians, instructed in charms and incantations, able to conjure up de-

parted spirits, and employ the agency of invisible powers. They were arts, they affirmed, learned during Christ's exile in Egypt, and communicated to them for the purpose of upholding and extending His influence.

This is Porphyry's explanation. A similar one is given by Celsus, whom Julian follows. Unable to deny the miracles of the Apostles, and pressed with the difficulty thus presented, they always return the same answer : *These miracles are wrought by magic ; the Apostles were magicians ; Jesus Christ was a magician.*

Miracles are a divine language. To heal the sick, to cleanse the leper, to raise the dead ; this is not the work of demons ; even if they had power over nature, it is not by acts of beneficence that they would manifest it.

Let us leave these dreams of ancient infidel insanity. They come themselves from the world of darkness, from the demon-worshipping and demon-haunted ages. Long since have they ceased to have any weight ; they are only mentioned as evidence that the anti-Christian malignity remains unchanged, however different the forms of ancient and modern attack. It is not necessary to inquire of the sibyl, to consult the oracles of Delphos, to ascertain whence the disciples had this power. Their commission tells us whence it came : "Afterwards he appeared unto the eleven, as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them who had seen him after he had risen. And he said, Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved ; but he that

believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe: In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay their hands on the sick, and they shall recover."

In conformity to this commission they went forth, and these signs did follow them. Yes, even their enemies being judges, these signs followed them.

The Power of Miracles wrought under the commission and in the name of Jesus Christ, is a *second fact* confirming and establishing the previous fact, *His resurrection*. There is yet another.

The Spread of Christianity, by the same agents, and under the same commission.

From the effects produced by the ministry of the Apostles on the bodies, turn your attention to those that were wrought in the souls of men. During the comparatively short period of their earthly labors (and let it be remembered that it was not till the first half of life was past, that they were called from their private and humble occupations), Christianity was spread from India to Ethiopia, from Scythia to Britain. How did they force their way so far? how did they achieve so much? It was by preaching Christ; Christ crucified,—Christ risen from the dead. The cross was their standard; the *resurrection* was their argument. Other than these they had no weapon; this was all their armor; as we have said, neither sword, nor staff, nor scrip were theirs. But Heaven was on their side. Else why this triumph? Surely not from earth were their succors drawn.

Compare them in this respect with the greatest names of antiquity, with Pythagoras, Plato, Socrates,

Zeno, with Epictetus, Seneca, and the boasted Antonines. Learning and eloquence were theirs. They, too, claimed to be teachers of truth, and undertook to enlighten and reform the world. They published systems ; they were the founders of schools ; but what did they effect, though using all the arts of persuasion, all the powers of the most cultivated language, all the subtleties of the keenest logic ? Not one kingdom, not one province, not one town,—no, nor even a village ever embraced their dogmas, or became subject to their laws.

A few men of literature and of leisure read as a pastime the speculations of these admirable philosophers, but the common people knew not, nor even yet do they know, that either Socrates or Plato ever lived.

How different has it been with Christ's apostles ! Their number and their names, their heroic lives, their spiritual conquests, their gospels and their epistles, are familiar to all. Even after eighteen hundred years we may say it is their mind, their thinking, that forms the mind of the age.

The Fishermen of Galilee must have proceeded on sublimer principles, and been upheld by a higher power than the philosophers of Athens. Parting from the sepulchre of their Master, to promulgate His law and attest his resurrection, a mysterious efficiency accompanies them. Neither the singular facts they allege, nor the unearthly doctrines they teach, nor the unworldly restraints they impose, weaken their influence or obstruct their progress. Everywhere, when *they* speak, reason bows to faith, and passion to reason. It is not villages, it is not towns, but States and Empires that are captivated, and

borne away as the trophies of their arms. Farther, and yet farther, they advance into the region of error and delusion, and victory attends them. Opinions change ; habits and manners change ; even the very monuments of superstition melt away before the light and heat that accompany them, like the snow-built fabrics of children before the beams of the meridian sun.

And yet, not a single outward circumstance favored their success. They were poor, illiterate, ignoble. No adventitious trappings of fortune were flung around them, nor in the eye of those carnal men to whom they were addressed had the doctrine they taught anything to recommend them. On the contrary, their preaching crossed all the prejudices of the Jews, all the propensities of the Gentiles ; from both it demanded sacrifices ; on both it imposed restraints. This is not exaggeration. It said to the miser, be charitable ; to the drunkard, be temperate ; to the ambitious, be humble ; to the debauchee, be chaste ; and to the idolater, renounce thine idols, and render a spiritual homage to that God who is a spirit. It made no compromise with passion ; it conceded nothing to frailty. On the contrary, it insisted that self must be denied, the world abjured, the flesh crucified, tribulation suffered, and death endured for Christ's and for righteousness' sake.

These were the only terms of discipleship that the Apostles were allowed to offer, or that they did offer to bigoted and self-righteous Jews, to profane and licentious pagans.

And yet, no sooner did they begin to offer such terms to such men, than a sudden commotion took place. It was as if the archangel's trumpet had sounded among the habitations of the dead. From

their long and death-like slumber thousands awoke to hear and to obey the summons.

The splendor of their conquests, as the greatness of their miracles had done before, amazed and terrified the Jewish priests ; for many of the first trophies were won at Jerusalem, and from among the seed of Abraham.

Yes, even in persecuting Jerusalem, and from among those who cried *crucify him ! crucify him !* numbers, renouncing the tradition of the elders, openly declared for Jesus, and “ sold their possessions, and their goods, and parted them to all men, even as every man had need.”

The Apostles soon passed beyond the limits of Palestine. They penetrated the neighboring provinces ; converts were made in all the cities of Greece ; the resurrection was preached at Athens, the crucifixion was proclaimed in Rome, the capital of the world. The worshippers of Jupiter, of Bacchus, of Mercury, and of Mars listened to them as the disciples of Moses before had done. The same wondrous change took place, the same new appearance of a virtue heretofore almost unknown to the world. In token of their love and sincerity, men presented their goods to feed the poor, and their bodies to be burned.

“ The law had gone forth from Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.” How short the period before the world felt everywhere the heaving of the new power. The pagan priesthood, no less than the Jewish, became amazed and terrified. The oracles were consulted, the idols invoked. The Roman authorities were alarmed, and the whole empire, rising in its strength, attempted to obstruct the progress and stop the march of the new religion.

5 But it attempted this in vain. In such a warfare, not all the decrees the Cæsars published, not all the armies the Cæsars commanded, were competent for the defence of a single province. Many witnesses for the truth were indeed slain. But by an invisible agency their places were supplied, and supplied from the ranks of their adversaries. Not a confessor was imprisoned, not a martyr was burned, but it produced some fresh accession to the Church.

Thus triumph followed triumph till not a province, hardly a town or village were left to the pagan worshippers. Had Julian lived in an after age, he might indeed, in a higher sense, and personating the Divinities he worshipped, have exclaimed, "*vicisti O Gallæe.*" For the prince, the people, the senate, the army were conquered. The banner of the cross waved on the standard of the legions which once fought against it; it was impressed on the tapestry that adorned the walls of the forum; it was engraved on the imperial armor that hung suspended from the ceiling of the capitol. The very machinery of idolatry vanished, and pagan Rome was stricken from the map of the world. Not pagan Rome only. The gods of the East were deserted by their worshippers; and neither Dagon nor Moloch were able to retain their thrones.

Thus extensive and continuous were the effects of the day of Pentecost. Even remote nations were shaken as if by a mighty rushing wind. Everywhere alike, images tottered, shrines were overturned, altars were razed, and temples demolished, or reconsecrated by the introduction of a holier worship.

Who can deny these things? or who can account for them, unless God was with the Apostles? On what hidden principle of human action can these

phenomena be explained? *Whence* came this sudden reanimation, this life of faith? By what unknown influence was the drunkard made temperate, the miser charitable, the debauchee chaste, the proud humble, and the idolater an advocate for the worship of the true God? By what secret powerful charm were so many and such abominable sinners, suddenly withdrawn from their indulgences and defilements, induced to practise all the self-denials and submit to all the restraints of a religious life? By what secret and powerful charm were so many and such relentless enemies made to weep and supplicate for mercy at the feet of that same Jesus of Nazareth whom they before had persecuted?

Had Christ never risen, would it have been so? Would these signs have followed, or these triumphs attended his disciples? Had He remained a tenant of the sepulchre, would their voice have had such a transforming, such a life-communicating influence? The inference is irresistible. The world's life came from that sepulchre, and no one but a *risen* Saviour could have conducted such a stupendous undertaking to such a sublime and glorious result. "This is the Lord's doings, and it is marvellous in our eyes."

Judge of what would have been, from what was. For three successive days Jesus Christ was a tenant of the sepulchre, and Zion sat in mourning. Yes; the faith and the fortitude of the Church lay buried with the body of its Founder. Without a resurrection of the one, there never *could* have been a resurrection of the other. But the one has arisen; a demonstration that the other has arisen also.

VI.

CHRIST RISEN IN THE HISTORY OF THE CHURCH.

Whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.—Acts xvii. 31.

CHRIST said he would found his empire in his death: "*And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.*" And he did so found it. The resurrection was at once the evidence and the era of its commencement. Ever since that first and splendid triumph, though previously poor, houseless, and depressed, his march to empire has been constant and progressive. Eighteen centuries have elapsed, but the impulse given to the infant church on that eventful morning when the Son of Man came forth from the sepulchre, *the resurrection and the life*, has not yet spent its force. Now, as formerly, Zion is enlarging her borders and multiplying her converts. The story of His life, of His death and resurrection, is read in languages more numerous than those that were spoken in the days of the Apostles.

It is not Jews, Greeks, Arabians, and the dwellers in Cappadocia, Pontus, Phrygia, and Pamphylia; it is not the nations that stretch from Turkey to Caledonia, from the Mediterranean to the Polar circle, from Labrador to Mexico, and from Mexico to Cape Horn;

it is not these nations only that have heard respectively, in their own tongues, the wonderful works of God. Already has the apostolic testimony, together with that finished system of duties and doctrines with which it is inseparably connected, been transferred into many languages of distant Asia.

In addition to all the dialects of Christendom, the Bible has been rendered into Arabic, Syriac, Persian, Tamul, Malabar, Hindostanee, Sanscrit, Mahratta, Orissa, Bengalee, and, to add no more, into the Chinese language, spoken in so many provinces and by so many millions.*

Though changed in form, that linguistic power first given on the day of Pentecost is continuing its march through the world. The "tongues of fire" are still spreading their path of light. It is no less the gift of God, as now manifested in the ways of learned study, than in its primitive miraculous impulse. It is from the same heavenly source; the Spirit still gives utterance in the zeal that originated and sustains such a work of Christian philanthropy. Yes, the grand design is formed, it is matured; it is hastening to execution; the preparations are accumulating; the translator's pen is employed; the press has been engaged, and, I had almost said, the type are in the foundry, for transferring that sacred saving book, the Bible, into all the various forms of speech, and among all the posterity of Adam. What other volume has been thus honored, or has the remotest prospect of

* This was uttered more than fifty years ago. It was at the time of the origin of Bible societies, and at the beginning of those great missionary efforts which are now promising such glorious fruit. A great many more languages might now be added to the list.—ED.

ever being so? Whence this distinctive glory that after so many ages rests upon, and consecrates its pages, if it contains not what it professes to contain? Why does this printed record, like the living voice of those who penned it, possess such a controlling and resistless influence? Why do a thousand tributary streams spontaneously flow into the treasury of the sanctuary, for the purpose of multiplying and distributing the copies of this heaven-befriended work? Why vanish in succession all impediments to its distribution? Why sink the mountains, why rise the valleys before it, offering free course to it, and it alone, of all the books on the earth, to the most distant, the most rude, and the most barbarous nations?

Whether God be on the side of Christianity or not, it is manifest that it is destined to become, and that it is becoming, the exclusive and the universal faith. Prophecy apart, it is manifest that it is becoming, and that it will become the universal faith. This the philosopher must acknowledge; to this the statesman cannot shut his eyes; Christianity must conquer; for it possesses within itself a vital principle—a redeeming, a life-communicating influence. Its very contexture is for immortality. Age does not enfeeble it; its vigor increases with its endurance; its momentum is inherent, and ever becomes greater as it advances.

No force obstructs its progress, and “no counsel formed against it prospers.” Other religions, like all the fabrics which mortal man has reared up, rise, decline, disappear. This only, though it decline, revives again. Other religions depend on circumstances, and are supported by extraneous causes. This only upholds itself, and, disclaiming sublunary aid, derives its succor from above.

The Prophet of Arabia made no converts beyond the limits where his sabre reached. At Medina his sepulchre yet stands. Many a pilgrim visits it, and returns as he went, a Mussulman. But he brings from thence no balm to heal the wounded bosom, no hysop to purify the sin-defiled conscience. No celestial fire touches his lips, or warms his heart; nor is any light or heat imparted by him to illumine and warm and soften other hearts.

Mohammedanism derived all its influence from the sword. All its weapons are carnal. It makes no invisible conquests; it possesses no regenerating influence; it is accompanied by no baptism of the spirit; now, as formerly, it is the sabre, not the Koran, that makes converts. That book of wonders is indeed read by multitudes. But with what effect? what have been its triumphs? How many souls has it reclaimed from sin and restored to righteousness? In regard to any spiritual renovation it is, and ever has been, as inane and powerless as the Arabian tales.

Not so the Scriptures—*For the word of God manifests itself to be quick and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the dividing asunder of the soul and spirit, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.* To say nothing of those things of which we have heard, and which our fathers have told us, let us advert to what we ourselves have seen. Who of you are ignorant of the late and mighty effort which has been made to counteract the spirit and subvert the faith? To the age of superstition, which was terminated by the Reformation, ensued the age of infidelity. Long had a spirit of skepticism been maturing its plan and infusing its poison. Hitherto, however, its advances had been cautious, cov-

ered, though constant and systematic. Already resources had been provided ; already learning, and talent and experience had been enlisted, and in the close of the eighteenth century the mask was lifted. By one simultaneous movement a multitude displayed themselves, emboldened by their numbers and exulting in their strength. Never, in the opinion of carnal, calculating men, was success more probable ; never was it more confidently expected. The world wondered at the change which was taking place ; the friends of Zion stood appalled.—It seemed as if the stone was about to be replaced upon the sepulchre, and that tie dissolved that had bound, so long, so many nations to allegiance. Those whom grace prevented not, imagined that it was so. The enemies of the Cross congratulated each other on their anticipated triumph—their only triumph. Then, in that hour of delirious exultation, it was boastfully announced, and believed as confidently as if the annunciation had been oracular : “ *that twenty years would not elapse before every Christian church would be deserted, and the very priesthood itself be dissolved.* ” Appearances favored the fulfilment of this malediction, and the hearts of the faithful might have failed, had they not held in their possession an older and a diviner oracle : *No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper, and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn.*

Thus spake the oracle, and thus the event has been. Those twenty portentous years, which were to terminate the influence of Messiah and wind up the Christian dispensation, have elapsed ; and yet I preach Christ the risen Saviour ; and you hear Christ the risen Saviour preached.

On the east and on the west, on the north and on the south, millions are engaged in the same grace-exalting service.

During these portentous years—this tempest of the passions—the sea has indeed roared, and the waves thereof have been lifted up, but Mount Zion has not been removed. Her temple, her altar, her priesthood, and her worship remain. More than this; during these portentous years, though compassed by so many enemies, and under the pressure of so many adverse circumstances, she has risen in her glory and in her strength: “She looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners.” But that formidable host of assailants who so lately menaced her existence, where are they? Ah me! smitten and dispersed by an invisible hand. To them may be applied the words of the Psalmist: “I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay tree; but he vanished, and lo, he is not; yea, I sought him, but he could not be found.”

Balaam is not the only adversary who has found it impossible to curse those whom God had not cursed. All the wit and raillery, all the sophistry and invective of the moderns, like the swords and fagots of the ancients, have produced no other effect than to establish and extend that faith they were employed to exterminate. During this mighty conflict the Church has stood, and yet stands, and stands firm; her foundation, the apostles and prophets; Jesus Christ, the resurrection and the life, being the chief corner-stone.

The champions of infidelity have been met in every path, as Paul was met on his way to Damascus, and turned from their purpose as he was turned from his.

Our religious assemblies, our solemn feasts, nay, the very ministry is crowded with reclaimed infidels; men who, having renounced their impieties and withdrawn from their associates, have fled to Christ for refuge from the wrath to come; men who now wear His livery, who possess his faith, and cease not to acknowledge that they have been conquered by *Him* whom they once vainly imagined they were about to conquer. Nor have reclaimed infidels been the only triumphs.* We live in a season of great religious power. In families where no private devotions were offered up, in societies where no public worship was maintained, in villages where no churches were erected, where no religious tracts were circulated, and where even the missionary's voice had not been heard, the Word and the Spirit have exerted their influence. Yes, even in such unpropitious situations, touched by an impulse from heaven, the penitent sinner has wept and prayed; that impulse has passed from heart to heart, from family to family, till the very face of society has changed, and a marked and visible reformation taken place. The drunkard has relinquished

* One of the effects of Dr. Nott's early ministry in Albany was said to be the conversion from infidelity of some who stood high in the political world. The allusion is probably to such; the importance of the event, at the moment, giving it a magnified aspect. There follow allusions to revival scenes in which Dr. Nott was earnestly engaged,—some of them among the students of the college. Like other preachers, he was in the habit of accommodating previous discourses to later occasions, with passages interpolated to suit some marked event. There are some things here which seem to have come in in that manner. The first thought was to leave them out. It was supposed, however, that, with this explanation, their being permitted to remain might add to their interest with those who knew the speaker and may have been familiar with the occasions referred to.—ED.

his cups; the miser has abjured his Mammon; the usurer has restored his unlawful gain; the thief has disclosed his concealed goods; and the debauchee has forsaken the company of his Delilah.

You know the inveteracy of infidel principles; you know the obstinacy of guilty habits—an obstinacy so unconquerable by ordinary means, as to justify those strong expressions of the Prophet: "*As soon may the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots, as those accustomed to evil learn to do well.*" And yet those accustomed to do evil have learned to do well. By some invisible influence, a change has been effected in their prevailing tempers, in their moral habits, in their external conduct, as striking, as inexplicable, and as evidently supernatural, as was the effect produced in the physical condition of the blind man whose eyes Jesus opened, or of the lame man who at the command of Peter and John arose, and leaped, and walked. Whatever may be said of the force of truth and the influence of the spirit in former times, the facts now appealed to are not imaginary. Change of inveterate opinion, of deeply-rooted prejudice, "change of heart" and reformation of life, change in the outward and inner being, are constantly produced by some agency that accompanies everywhere this mysterious book, the Bible, and the preaching it inspires. Such changes are as striking as they are numerous. Let the sneering infidel, let the self-righteous formalist account for it as he may; these are miracles *that we have seen*—spiritual miracles, carrying with them their divine evidence, no less convincing than any supernatural change in nature. It is admitted that customs and manners assume varying forms; it is admitted that

one vice may supplant another, that example, or persuasion, or authority may give a new direction to human action, and open new channels for the passions ; but that any of these causes ever changed the predominant temper of man, and implanted in his heart new principles of moral action, may confidently be denied. Under every other culture, and notwithstanding all the alleged amiablenesses of his nature, man remains forever what he forever has been, a sinner,—and everywhere alike he may be thus characterized : God is neither predominant in his affections nor in his thoughts.

No other tutelage effects, or even claims the power of effecting, what the ministry of the Spirit effects,—*conversion*. By conversion I mean not any agitations of body or any perturbations of mind. These may be incidents of conversion, but neither sighs nor tears, no matter how distinctly uttered or profusely shed, form any part of that renovation of heart, or reformation of life, by which a sinner becomes, in the emphatic language of Scripture, *a new creature* ; even as Paul, once so vindictive, and Mary, once so dissolute, became new creatures in Christ Jesus.

I know not what other men think of conversions such as these ; conversions which no human power can either produce or hinder ; conversions which at first accompanied the preaching of the gospel, and that only, and which still accompany it whenever it pleases God, whose power remains the same, to stretch forth his arm and replenish by his grace the vessels predestinated to eternal glory. I know not what other men think of these things, but for myself I believe as firmly, and for the same reason, that an invisible agent operates on the souls of men, as I be-

lieve the wind passes through the forest, when I hear the rustling of its leaves and see its branches shaken.

This is sound philosophy as well as sound theology. Every other theory leaves one event (and certainly the most sublime one which the life of man furnishes, the *conversion of a soul from sin to righteousness*) unaccounted for, or accounted for only by the as-signment of causes that exist not ; or, if they exist, that are utterly inadequate.

To this fact, the renovation of the heart by His spirit, as the abiding evidence of His resurrection, Jesus Christ referred those infidel Jews who demanded of him a sign.

Often did they repeat the demand, but he constantly returned the same answer—always resting his claim upon the sign of the prophet Jonah, warned by whose voice, and by it only, the great, the populous city of Nineveh repented. What a marvellous result ! Lot warned the cities of the plain ; Noah warned the antediluvians—long and often did he warn them ; with as little effect, however, as if he had addressed himself to monuments and prophesied among the tombs. But with all his human weaknesses, the preaching of the prophet sent to the Ninevites was, in this respect, a type of the gospel's power. Behold, a greater than Jonah is here ; declared to be so by the same kind of evidence ; but more abiding and more abundant, by as much as the sign of perpetual conversion, and the conversion not of a town or a province, but of a kingdom, a world, is greater than the sign of conversion at a particular time, and of a single city. Jonah spake, and Nineveh repented. So Christ still speaks to men, and everywhere we hear of men repenting and turning unto God.

Tell me not that the success of which we speak has been fortuitous; that in all this vast, this continuous, this progressive enlargement of the Church, no providence is seen, no present God is manifested. Let us review the plan, and refresh our minds by glancing a second time at its execution.

The son of an obscure carpenter appears in Judea and announces the novel, and, according to human calculation, the absurd project of founding *by his own death*, and on his own resurrection, a mighty and an abiding empire. Attracted by his manner and his miracles, while yet living, multitudes flocked around him. They offer to crown him king, and to place in his hand the sceptre. This offer he rejects; whilst he reveals a method at variance with every human passion, pursuit, and prejudice. He talks to proud men of humility, to ambitious men of self-denial, to self-righteous men of repentance, and to carnal selfish men of spiritual and disinterested enjoyments. He formally announces his death, his burial, adding at the same time that on the third day he shall rise again, and by such resurrection establish his kingdom—a kingdom new in its nature, holy in its laws, universal in its extent, and eternal in its duration. For the administration of this future kingdom, he selects and appoints the officers. Twelve illiterate men, collected from the lowest grades of life, and utterly unqualified to fill a higher station, are called—are ordained to execute a vaster enterprise, and perform more complicated and more arduous duties than ever before fell to the lot of mortal.

This done, the predicted tragedy is consummated. He is arrested and condemned. He dies. By wicked hands is he crucified and slain. The main purpose

here is to set forth the spiritual effects of Christ's resurrection, as they have been and still are manifested in the world. As an introduction, however, to this, or to show more vividly the aspect I would now present, there may be pardoned a brief recapitulation of physical and historical facts, more minutely dwelt upon in previous discourses.

History records that some strange phenomena rendered memorable the hour of the crucifixion,—that the sun was darkened, that the mountains quaked, and that the veil of the Temple was rent asunder. But I pass these things. Enemies, jealous of his power, take possession of his body, and seal and guard his sepulchre. Thus far. A pause ensued. Twice the sun performed its revolution, and all remained tranquil. Nature gave no forebodings of convulsion; no symptom of release appeared. His corse was as motionless, and his sepulchre as silent and as cheerless as other sepulchres. Around it stood the watchmen clad in armor.

The third day dawned at length on the world, when it is reported that an angel descended, and that an earthquake was felt. But I insist not now on these things.

Be the agent whom it may, this is certain; that the guards were dispersed, that the stone was rolled back, and the body rescued. A marvellous incident; and which still remains without a parallel on the page of sepulchral history. But not to the cemetery were the marvellous incidents of that eventful day confined. The influence that reached the sepulchre reached beyond it. Simultaneous with the Master's release was the disciples' reappearance. But they were no longer what they heretofore had been—ob-

scure men, illiterate men, impotent men. A change, sudden and entire, had taken place, and they were henceforth known only as extraordinary personages, endowed with wisdom, gifted with the use of tongues, gifted with the power of miracles.

The potentates of the world combine against them. They, on the other hand, do not even deliberate about the result of such a combination, but hasten to the execution of their appointed office, and begin at once to draw the lines, to organize the departments, and administer the government of that infant kingdom, which already begins to rise and rest on that broad fact, the resurrection.

Their term of action ended, successors imbued with the same spirit rise up and further prosecute their labors. Century after century rolls away; still the work progresses. As the world grows older, the vast design opens, and act following act, the grand drama still continues advancing to its ultimate result. At the distance of eighteen hundred years from the era of the resurrection, and after the amazing progress it has already made, we see Christianity yet progressive.

And seeing this, can it be a question whether its founder and its finisher is a tenant of the sepulchre?

What! the tomb imprison Him, the column of whose glory, broad, and massive, and imperishable, stands founded on the fact of his resurrection from it? Neither to earth nor hell does this proud monument owe its being. From the first, and through all the stages of its progress, men and devils have opposed it. If not by *God's*, by *whose* right hand, then, has it been erected and upheld?

With these facts before me, I would as soon believe that Atlas holds the earth upon his shoulders, or that

Ceres pours the annual harvest from her horn of plenty, as that Peter and James, together with their unlettered coadjutors, reared this fabric and shed upon it this radiance of divinity. I would as soon believe, and it would mark as vigorous and as sane a mind to believe, that the laws of nature were factitious, that suns and stars were made to move and shine by necromancy, and that all material changes were illusions—mere sleight-of-hand, played off to impose upon mankind by some Egyptian juggler, as that the laws of grace were factitious, and that this great moral system, embracing so many ages, combining so many actors, triumphing over so many obstacles, and reaching forward to such sublime results, was a mere imposture, fabricated some eighteen centuries since by a few ignorant, vulgar fishermen of Galilee! Yonder orbs of fire speak not more loudly God's handiwork; nor is that firmament above marked out with bolder lines of his wisdom, or set with brighter constellations of grace and glory.

These two systems bear the same impress; the Book of Nature and of Inspiration are written in the same characters, they speak the same language, they reveal the same Godhead, and it is self-evident that the same eternal wisdom planned and penned them both. If the record of the one is true, so also is the record of the other.

That ruptured monument from which the affrighted guards were driven back imprisons Jesus Christ no longer. He has risen from it. As sure as the sun shines, as sure as the stars twinkle, he has risen; in triumph he has risen; everything proclaims it.

(For if he be not risen, whence now acquires the Bible its energies? Whence gathers the Evangelist

his fires? Let us for a moment admit the contrary. Be it so. The Apostles may have deceived us; the primitive Christians may have deceived us; nay, even the martyrs, who in the midst of fire and flames delivered their testimony, may have lied to us. Still one thing is certain: the God of providence is a God of truth. Whoever else may have lied to us, His distinctive acts deceive us not. We hear Him saying in the administration of His government,—saying from age to age: “The Church is my heritage; I have planted and will defend it. Elsewhere, ye profane, direct your rage; but touch not my anointed, do my people no harm;” “no weapon formed against Zion shall prosper, and every tongue that riseth up in judgment against her I will condemn.” “In vain do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing; in vain do the kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast their cords from us. I who sit in the heavens do laugh; I hold them in derision.” Vain alike are their counsels and their weapons. I have given to my Son “the nations for an inheritance; and he shall inherit them.” Though the voice of prophecy were feebler than it is, the voice of providence could not be mistaken. This perpetual triumph of the Church is “the Lord’s doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes.” “This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.”

To carnal hearts Christianity is as repugnant, to carnal eyes as devoid of glory, as in the ages that are past. Whence then receives it power to support itself against so many and such determined enemies?

By what unknown and heaven-derived charm does it purify the conscience, subdue the heart, bind the passions, renovate the life, reclaim the idolater, purify the adulterer, make penitent the murderer, and subdue the vilest sinner to righteousness and to God?

Whence even *now* that shaking so perceptible among the nations? It comes from heaven. It is the moving of the Holy Ghost. It is the living spirit of a risen Saviour. Such were the ancient tokens of His presence in His Church, and they are still the tokens of it.

Yes, every penitent that weeps, every convert that sings, is an additional subject of Christ's eternal kingdom; more than this,—he is a new witness raised up of God to perpetuate the knowledge and the evidence of the fact *that He has risen*.

“For as the lightning cometh out of the east and shineth to the west, so shall the coming of the Son of Man be,”—and so has been, and still is His coming. Whether kingdoms rise or fall, every change accelerates His progress; all events bend unto His purpose. The whole earth is bowing, or preparing to bow to His authority, and coming under the dominion of His sceptre. Yonder regions of error and delusion belong to Jesus; He is approaching to possess them, and the way is opening for His triumphant entry. The glad tidings have already reached many, and they will soon have reached every nation. Then will the purposes of grace be consummated, and the millennial jubilee begin.

To this momentous result the economy of Providence is evidently tending. Hence that bias of the human mind that begins to lean towards the relief of pagan miseries. Hence that spirit of religious in-

quiry, of action, and of enterprise poured out on the risen and on the rising generation—poured out on our schools, poured out on our colleges.

All the heathen are Christ's heritage. The classic divinities of Greece and Rome have fallen before the Ark of the Covenant; but Juggernaut remains. There are idol gods which are yet to be overthrown, and their dominions added to the empire of the Son of Man. The devotee that plunges into the waters of the Indus is about to be rescued; the flame that flares from the funeral pile on the banks of the Ganges is about to be extinguished; Africa is hastening to be released, Asia to be re-enlightened, and the American savage to be disciplined and baptized. Much has already been done, but more remains to be accomplished. The field of souls is even now white unto the harvest; a harvest plenteous indeed, but the laborers are few. Few, however, they will not always be; for the Lord of the harvest is preparing to send forth a fresh accession of laborers into his field; and he will send them forth, and they shall reap it.

That call is now heard among us.* Its voice has visited our seat of learning. Youth and talents, as well as piety, befit this enterprise of a world's redemption. The conqueror of the tomb in person is making the selection. We see it; nor guile nor force can hinder him. At pleasure he visits the most retired and the most conspicuous walks of life. He approaches the haunts of ignorance, he enters the school of science, and everywhere alike his hallowing influence is felt.

Suddenly all that is gross is purified; all that was

* It is evident that this sermon was preached, or this addition made to it, during a season of revival in the College. See note, p. 101.

profane, consecrated. The alcoves of the Lyceum are resorted to for sublimer inquiries, the groves of the Academy for holier contemplations. The Christian graces adorn with chaster ornaments the vestibule of literature, and sit enthroned on the seat of the pagan muses.

All is changed ; on every side the sign of the prophet Jonah reappears. Not Nineveh was more altered than is that seminary which the spirit of Emmanuel enters. Assemblages of youth whom nothing serious could hitherto affect are awed as by a divine presence. The thoughtless become thoughtful ; the wayward, docile ; the giddy, grave. In the chambers of impiety the sigh of contrition is repeated. From the hall of pleasure the minstrelsy of Zion resounds. And even that profaned chapel, where pains and penalties so long extorted a reluctant and heartless worship, now sends up from redeemed lips the spontaneous hallelujah to the God of mercy.

These are no equivocal phenomena. Such tokens of a present God are not to be mistaken. Now, as formerly, O thou Conqueror of death ! out of the mouths of babes and sucklings hast thou perfected praise.

Redeemer of our souls, arisen from the sepulchre, we know thee by thy deeds of mercy ; we know thee by thy train of glory. Welcome to our schools of learning ; welcome to our halls of science. Here too make thy triumphant entry. Be our abodes thy habitation ; our hearts thy throne.

Hear, O God ! our prayer, and answer us ; and to thy name shall be the glory.

VII.

CHRIST'S RESURRECTION THE CONFIRMATION OF A FUTURE JUDGMENT.

He hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.—Acts xvii. 31.

A FUTURE day of judgment presupposes a future state of being. Here man dies; but since his judge and his day of judgment have been appointed, it is manifest that God purposes that he should live hereafter, that he may be hereafter judged.

The Egyptians, indeed, it is said, held an inquest and passed a sentence over the bodies of their dead.

Funeral ceremonies were awarded to their public benefactors; but to those who had lived ingloriously were denied the honors of sepulture. The prospective view of such a posthumous retribution might have a political effect, but it could exert no truly moral or spiritual influence. Light must fall that sentence that falls on him who neither knows, nor fears, nor suffers, nor enjoys. Thus falls not God's decisive sentence. "He is not the God of the dead, but of the living," and they are living men whom He proposes to arraign before his dread tribunal. It was not intended that all those sinners who inhabit the earth

should with infamy be buried beneath it; but, that all who are in their graves should hear the voice of the Son of God; that all the dead, small and great, should come forth, and stand before the judgment-seat of Christ, to give an account of all the deeds done in the body, whether they be good or whether they be evil. These, *these* were the grand, decisive points to be established. And what so precisely calculated to establish them, and give to the minds of men a strong, a steady, and a fixed conviction of their truth, as the actual raising from the dead of Him whom God had appointed to be their judge?

Notwithstanding that bewildering darkness with which apostasy has overspread our world, concealing God and rendering heaven invisible,—notwithstanding that slumberous influence which has sealed the sinner's eyelids, and touched and paralyzed his moral sensibilities, there has ever been the thought of a judgment to come.

The idea has gleamed through all the religions and mythologies of the world. Notions of a dread futurity, fearfully strong and tenacious, however obscure and indistinct, have been almost if not altogether uniform and universal among mankind. During the darkest times and in the most degraded state, some wavering hopes, some undefined fears have still lingered within the bosom, and alternately dilated and wrung the heart.

Yet nothing certain was known; or if there ever had been such knowledge, still, through the deceitfulness of sin, and during the lapse of ages, it had been lost—yes, so far as human efforts were concerned, lost beyond recovery.

Philosophy examined, and doubted; re-examined,

and still doubted. Again it examined and conjectured, but affirmed nothing. It could never say, "*I know* that my Redeemer liveth;" it could never rise to the assurance, "*I know* in whom I have believed." Even Revelation, though it intimated and suggested, had not as yet clearly and fully established the fact and the manner of future being.

It yet remained for life and immortality to BE BROUGHT TO LIGHT. The pagan world groped in the profoundest darkness, and even those who dwelt in Zion seemed benighted. Yes, even among the Jews there were, at the time of Christ's appearance, not a few who denied that there existed in heaven or in hell either angel or spirit.

So far as concerned the human race, if there were no appearances that absolutely proved this gloomy hypothesis, there were many that seemed to favor it, and none which rendered its falsehood certain and palpable. No attribute of man, how sublime soever, appeared to be imperishable. It was not the organic eye only, but the intellectual also, that grew dim and sometimes even sightless by age.

Man ripened not in knowledge as he ripened in years, nor were gray hairs any certain indication of matured wisdom. On the contrary, reason, and memory, and fancy, and imagination were seen to decay, and sometimes even to disappear, before their possessor reached the sepulchre. Instead of brightening as she approached her native immortality, there was in the soul an evident dimness, an apparent falling off, a kind of approximation towards the extinction of her being, which if it gave not, at least seemed to give, sad presage of approaching and eternal non-existence.

Souls, if indeed souls existed apart from organized

matter, had somehow been ever disappearing, like ephemera that sport away their hour in the sunbeam of the morning and are seen no more. Behind them they left no token of existence, nor did they ever reappear. If indeed they survived elsewhere, no vision reached their residence, no ear caught their accent; nor from thence had they ever sent back to the world they left either messenger or message. It might be, indeed, that they had not perished in the catastrophe of death; or it might be they *had* perished; and if they had not, their being and their state of being were matters of opinion, not of knowledge; of faith, and not of sight.

But if the phenomena of the soul, as observed by the sin-beclouded eye, were equivocal and gloomy, how much more so those of the body!

For soine thousands of years these material fabrics, which from their elevated form and fearful organization might have seemed to have been made for immortality, had been mouldering back to dust. In most cases, even before they had been laid in the sepulchre, grace and beauty, erectness and vigor, all that forms the outward glory of manhood, had forsaken them. Heaps of awful ruins, these wrecks of decayed and decaying bodies had been accumulating, and were on every side accumulated. The process of destruction appeared to be complete and final. No symptom of returning life had thereafter as yet appeared. Dust was committed unto dust, and ashes unto ashes, with the same sad prospect as when the first funeral was attended. Ever since that impressive and appalling solemnity, the night of death had lasted, and the sleep of the sepulchre was yet an iron slumber.

Release had indeed been intimated, it had been

waited for; age after age it had been waited for; but it came not. There is a limit to expectancy; even hope delayed makes the heart sad. It was not in man to contemplate this house of silence—this land of desolation, becoming perpetually still more desolate. It was not in man to contemplate these things without misgivings.

A great while had already intervened since the first man died; a great while yet remained before that general “resurrection at the last day” in which Martha and pious Jews believed before the time of our Saviour. That fearful lapse of ages which indefinitely, if not immeasurably, separated the fulfilment from the prophecy, required to be broken by some significant sign, some intelligible token, some unequivocal pledge, some ascertained fact on which the eye of science as well as of faith could rest.

It had been said that the dead should rise. The saying had been repeated; yet the dead rose not; “neither awoke they out of their sleep,”—a sleep which, notwithstanding all that reason intimated to the contrary, notwithstanding all that revelation foreshadowed to the contrary, threatened to be eternal.

A case was therefore necessary; a real ascertained case, an actual resurrection. It was necessary in order to refute the cavils, to remove the doubts, and put at rest the faith of mankind.

Nor would an actual resurrection, if the case were insulated and individual, settle the general question. Some illustrious personage, some public official character, some known and constituted representative of the species, was required,—some one with reference to whom, and pointing to whose sepulchre the future evangelist could say: “As in Adam all died, so in *this man* shall all be made alive.”

Such a case could be furnished only by Messiah. And by him it *was* furnished. He rose to give the world assurance of a future judgment, by giving them assurance of a future resurrection. It was the grand criterion; for if the dead rise, the hope of the righteous is confirmed, whilst the sinner escapes not, even by death, from either God or existence. Though he might hope to do so, this change would place him again in a condition to be judged for "*sins committed in the body,*" and therefore demanding such a rehabilitation as the most impartial and appropriate theatre for their retribution.

No other resurrection could have given that assurance. It was needful, therefore, that He should rise. He did rise; and, rising, refuted the cavils, removed the doubts, and furnished the evidence for putting the faith of mankind at rest. It is not too much to say that the resurrection of Jesus Christ has given to every individual son of Adam assurance of his own resurrection. For God did in effect raise the whole human race, when, in evidence and in token of that event, He raised that one, and that only individual, by whom in this respect the whole human race was personated.

But to give assurance "that God hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained," it was needful, in another point of view, that he should raise *Him* from the dead.

Existence beyond the grave established, retribution of some sort follows by necessary consequence, and would require no distinct and separate proof.

If God intended to raise the dead, that sin was to be punished would be obvious enough. It was not,

therefore, to authenticate the mere fact of God's displeasure against unrighteousness,—it was not to seal damnation and render hell certain,—it was not to notify to fallen men that the same fate awaited them which had already sunk into perdition fallen angels,—it was not to recall the minds of sinners to some future retribution, according to the letter of that inexorable law which said originally, which still says, and will forever say: *The soul that sinneth it shall die.* No, it was not for this purpose that Jesus Christ rose. For such a retribution no preparation could be made by him who had become a sinner. Not even contrition could avail him; it is not the humbled, but the holy heart that the law approves. No ministry of reconciliation is sent to devils, no voice urges apostate angels to repentance, by either the certainty or the nearness of that fearful condemnation which awaits them. It was not, therefore, as we have already said, to recall the minds of sinners to some future retribution, according to the letter of his inexorable law, that God raised Jesus Christ from the dead; *but it was to give assurance unto all men of a day of judgment of a peculiar kind,—the result of a special appointment,—at which that man whom God hath ordained will preside,—at which the plea of his own vicarious sufferings will be alone available, and at which pardons will be ratified, as well as condemnations pronounced.*

These were the points to be established; and to establish them conclusively and satisfactorily,—in one word, to give assurance to all men that God had appointed a day to judge the world in such a manner, and by such a judge, it was needful that He should raise him, whom he had thus appointed, from the dead.

To give assurance of the one, it was needful that God should do the other. For, without some distinct and positive attestation of the fact that such a day of judgment was appointed, never could it have entered the minds of men or of angels. Nature gave no intimation of it; reason gave none. It was not analogous to any act hitherto recorded in the judicial proceedings of the universe. You might search the records of eternity, and open every fold in the files of the Chancery above, but you would find no case of pardon, nor even the term so much as once inscribed there. The idea of a judgment to come had been in the world; but the mode of proceeding, the appointment of one who had risen from the dead to be the judge, was all unknown and unconceived. It was a novel appointment; it was a mysterious appointment; it was an appointment, therefore, that required confirmation.

On entering our world, Jesus Christ had already announced himself as a Saviour. But to execute this office in behalf of creatures already under condemnation, it was requisite not only that he should sustain the eternal priesthood, but also that he should be invested with judicial powers.

Never was an undertaking so awful or so splendid as that of rescuing from the pollution of sin, from the dominion of death, and from the pains of hell, a race whom that inflexible law which changeth not had already pronounced accursed. Such, however, was the undertaking which Jesus Christ forewarned the world he was about to execute. The miraculous occurrences that marked his progress from Bethlehem to Calvary bespoke his official character. Less than a prophet sent from God, he could not be. More he need not be, if a second promulgation of the law

merely had been his object. But it was not. His mission as Saviour, Healer, Redeemer, was distinct from his judicial. In this aspect of his character, he came neither to adjudge life to the innocent, nor death to the guilty. It was not as judge that he first came to tabernacle in human flesh. His office, then, as he announces it, was "to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that were bound."

His harbinger preceded him, preaching repentance for the remission of sins. He followed in person, speaking the same language, and promising to the vilest sinners, being penitent, pardon here and eternal life hereafter. For this he encouraged mankind to hope, and for the accomplishment of this he pledged his veracity as the Son of God.

But would he redeem the pledge? *could* he redeem it? No panoply as yet had ever been flung around the person of a sinner. Hitherto the law had crushed every being on whom its curse had fallen.

The realms of darkness were already filled with spirits once high in rank and terrible in majesty—now prostrate, imprisoned, and despairing. Ages had since revolved, but revolving ages brought them neither deliverance nor deliverer.

To turn aside the sword of justice from its object was the fearful office which Jesus Christ assumed. It was his voice that held back the arm of vengeance, when He said, "Spare the victim of sin and death; spare *him* from going down into the pit; *I* will be his ransom." Having said this, he offered himself in behalf of sinners, a voluntary sacrifice; as such he was bound, he was slain, he was immolated. The crucifixion and burial of Jesus Christ were in proof that

his proffered act of self-devotion had been consummated. Though not himself a sinner, the penalty of the law had reached him, and he became a tenant of the sepulchre.

But with what effect? Had the sacrifice which he had made been acceptable? Had it been availing, and would the sinner in consequence be released?

Prodigies had indeed signalized his sufferings and rendered memorable his death. They were prodigies, however, if not discouraging, at least of doubtful import. The sun darkened, the rocks rent, the mountains quaking, were not the most intelligible tokens of justice satisfied, of vengeance appeased. Especially may this be said when we think of that solemn silence which ensued, that ominous darkness which settled down and rested on the sepulchre of Him who had become a voluntary subject to death for the redemption of Israel.

The question therefore returns with all its agonizing interest, Has this sacrifice been accepted? Will it be availing? On this point the Church hesitated; faith wavered; hope wavered. The first and the second day elapsed, and no tidings were received from the sepulchre. Still, the great question that involved the destiny of so many millions was not decided. Neither heaven nor earth, however, remained longer in suspense. Suddenly an unknown glory lit up the moral firmament; the night of death and of nature fled together; and as the third day dawned on the world, the ascertained, the *accredited* Messiah came forth from the sepulchre, "the resurrection and the life."

That event broke the agonizing silence which succeeded to the crucifixion, and gave to the world the

desired and the decisive answer. That event was God's official proclamation that the sacrifice on Calvary had been accepted, and would be availing. It was the solemn recognition of Emmanuel in his mediatorial character; it was his solemn ordination to the judicial office. It told mankind, *That mysterious personage whom you saw suspended on the cross, and buried in the sepulchre, is MY SON; He is your Judge; hear ye, and fear ye Him.*

In this significant and unparalleled event there could be no mistake, no misinterpretation. Once the victim of death, he must continue so, or disenthral himself. Nor could he reappear, except as a conqueror. As such he *did* reappear, and the keys of Death and Hell were in his hand.

That God had appointed a day to judge the world by Jesus Christ was not *simply an intimation*; it was not presumptive evidence; but it was, as Paul affirms, a *positive assurance* that God gave when He raised him from the dead. When I see Him, once humbled even unto death, now arrayed in his robe of glory and sitting on his throne of power, I recognize in him *The Son of God; the Judge of Man.*

This event, the resurrection, answers the purpose for which it was intended. It solves my doubts; it removes my difficulties. The mysteries, the obscurities, the improbabilities of the Christian system perplex and embarrass me no longer. Nothing seems incredible when authenticated by that momentous fact, the resurrection of my Saviour. If at any time new objections present themselves, or if my former doubts and difficulties return to bewilder and distress me, one glance toward the sepulchre dispels and dissipates them—from thence a light forever shines. It

is the light that cheers my prospect, that shows me heaven, that shows me immortality. In that light I see the bow of Death unstrung; I see his quiver broken. These trophies attest the fact that Jesus Christ was conqueror. I do not want, I could not have a higher proof that he is competent to be my Saviour, that he is ordained to be my Judge.

On this issue his claim depended. To this, his resurrection, I am taught to look as the ground of my assurance. Had he failed here, had Death remained conqueror, had the grave continued to imprison *Him* as it imprisons other dead, much as I might admire the grandeur of his enterprise, much as I might revere his memory as the Son of Man, I could not honor him, I could not confide in him, as *the Son of God*. No; turning in sadness from his sepulchre, still closed and sealed, I could only say, as his disconsolate disciples said in the hour of their desolation, "Verily, this was he who it was thought should have redeemed Israel."

Had he failed here,—but he has not failed. I know that he has not. I see the seal broken; I see the stone rolled back; I see *Him* risen and victorious; ascending with the spoils of Hell and Death to His native heaven. Before *Him* "the gates are lifted up; the everlasting doors are opened;" he enters; he ascends the throne; he sits down on the right hand of God the Father, and thence shall he come to judge the quick and the dead. Merited distinction—deserved honor. O! that by faith and penitence we may be prepared for that day of trial. Then come, even so come, Lord Jesus!

VIII.

CHRIST RAISED "TO GIVE REPENTANCE."

And the times of this ignorance God winked at ; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent.—Acts xvii. 30.

Why now ? *Because he hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained, whereof he hath given assurance unto all men in that he hath raised him from the dead.*

Since these things are so ; since God has appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained ; and since, as we have seen, He hath given assurance unto all men of that appointment by raising him from the dead, with what infinite propriety does *He now command all men everywhere to repent !*

Independent of such assurance, independent of such a day of judgment, independent of that benignant ordination by which a man was appointed to be the Judge of men—independent of all this, repentance had been the duty of every sinner ; and God might therefore, without any imputation on his justice, have enjoined it upon all. Sin as committed against God is most irrational as well as criminal ; more than this, it is most vile and detestable. For its own sake, therefore, ought it to be renounced ; and not only renounced, it ought to be detested and abhorred. Repentance, though it expiates not sin, befits the sinner ; sins persisted in become more sinful. Impenitence is itself a crime, and renders other crimes more criminal. But if repentance, even during those times of

ignorance, which God winked at, was a duty, how much more so is it now!

God's will, made known as such, whether in nature or in revelation, is law; and every commandment of His, even though enforced by no other consideration, is binding on the conscience. But this commandment, *now* given unto all men, to repent, imposes additional obligation, because it is accompanied by additional motives to obey.

Though annihilation terminated man's being, and oblivion covered his memory and his crimes, it had been base and detestable to sin away even such an ephemeral existence. A day, an hour, misspent, would be inglorious, and cast dishonor on the being who misspent it. If he who persisted in his sins, though ignorant of a future retribution, would be a wretch deserving of condemnation, how much more does he deserve, who knows that a day of judgment is appointed and yet repenteth not. How much more guilty still is he who knows that for that day a plea has been provided through which repentance becomes available, a plea on whose merits not the guiltless only, but the contrite soul will be pronounced just—how much more guilty still, we say, is he who knows all this, and yet repenteth not!

O God! during those days of ignorance of which thou speakest, though even then no justification of sin could be set up, there might have been offered for it some faint show of palliation. But thy revelation of a day of Judgment has taken from the sinner all excuse. What will it avail him, what will it avail me, that crimes are secret? Since, though I could escape the condemnation of man, I *now* know that I cannot escape thy righteous Judgment.

O God! hadst thou in thy wrath forewarned me of a day of vengeance merely; hadst thou drawn aside the veil and shown me the dread tribunal of justice before which fallen angels once had stood, and whence nothing but the thunders of the law are uttered—hadst thou done this, horror-stricken and in despair I might have fled, crying only to rocks and mountains to fall upon me and hide me from a PRESENCE before which it were vain for a sinner to hope to stand. But thy revealed day of Judgment, at which thy Son, my Saviour, is ordained to preside, allures me while it awes. Its terrors are relieved by the beams of grace; its thunder softened by the note of mercy. *Now*, if I repent not, I am utterly irreclaimable and inexcusable; because *now* I know that "there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared." *Now*, if I repent not, thy throne will *be* not only, but will be *seen to be* altogether guiltless; for I refuse even thy proffered clemency, and in despite of thy very grace weave for myself the web of destiny.

What is true of myself is true of all men; for the same day of judgment is appointed for all, and the same assurance of it is given to all. Why should not all then listen and obey? Since this great truth has been revealed, since assurance of it has been given, why are not our sins repented of? Why are not our lives reformed?

Do you disbelieve the fact? I know you do not. Confidently as you may speak to others, that apparent confidence is not truly felt. You dare not, you do not repose yourself upon it. You impose, perhaps, upon the world, but you impose not on God. You impose not on yourselves. You are not at ease in

your infidel security. Apprehensions follow you to your retirements, and everywhere, when alone, your misgiving heart betrays the conscious and the coward sinner. Though you hate the light, you cannot altogether shun its influence; and could you do so, it would not prevent the accomplishment of God's eternal purpose. Even that bewildering and treacherous darkness in which a guilty life enshrouds itself is as transient as it is treacherous and bewildering. The light of that great day, as you approach it, will force itself upon you; through the night of death and the shadows of the sepulchre it will force itself upon you. All believe alike on this article the moment they feel the fatal grasp of the king of terrors. The touch of death is fatal to infidelity. I have seen many a dying sinner, but I have *never* seen a dying infidel; nor will the future pastor who shall stand beside your death-bed, notwithstanding your present scoffings, be enabled to say that he has seen one.

It is time for thee, O sceptic, to renounce thy sins, for thou wilt soon renounce thy doubts. I say *soon*, for thou wilt soon die. Yes, though now "thy breasts be full of milk and thy bones moistened with marrow," thou wilt soon die; thou wilt soon be buried; thou wilt soon be raised and stand before the Judgment-seat of Jesus Christ, and there answer for all the deeds done in the body, whether they be good or whether they be evil. So shall we all. O then let us break off our sins by repentance, and by faith make our peace with God. The duty is universal; the motive is universal; the injunction is universal; for though the times of the world's ignorance God once overlooked, yet now "He commandeth *all men, everywhere*, to repent.

John, who preceded the gospel dispensation, preached to sinners repentance for the remission of sins. Jesus Christ, who introduced the gospel dispensation, preached to sinners repentance for the remission of sins; and so we who follow him, preach to sinners repentance for the remission of sins, enforcing what we preach by the assurance which he has given of his judicial powers, and of His second coming.

Repentance, repentance, wherever there are sinners, is the immediate and universal duty. Repentance, instant repentance; this reason dictates, this God commands. He speaks to all mankind, and let all mankind obey Him. Obey Him, ye who hear me. As you hope to enter heaven, as you dread to be turned into hell, obey him. By the mingled mercies and terrors of the appointed and the approaching day of Judgment, I entreat, I adjure you to obey him. Obey Him *now*, not to-morrow. *Now* is the appointed time. *Now* is the accepted time; *now* repentance, though not meritorious, is availing, and will be followed by salvation.

Whether you will at some future time repent, is not the question. Remorse you cannot escape. By an inviolable law, wailings and lamentations are yours, O sinner. "They are the wages of sin." God has settled that; and you may as well hope to live without life as to sin without sorrow. But salutary, saving repentance has its limits. Even regrets for having sinned may come too late—regrets which, far from conducing to the sinner's forgiveness, only ascertain and proclaim his misery.

I know not why the revolving ages of our eternity receive their type exclusively from that little span of time, those threescore years and ten which have pre

ceded. But so it is ; man's whole immortal being hangs suspended on his first few fleeting moments !

The first is the decisive act. The after-scene is not for further trial ; it consists only in fruition, or in suffering. All this side death is preparation ; all beyond it, retribution. Into these two periods the life of every moral agent is divided. The one is short and mutable ; the other endless and unchanging. *Become* quickly, therefore, what you mean to *be* forever. Neither to the virtuous nor the vile will the trial be perpetual. The one will soon have reached that limit beyond which he can never fall ; the other that beyond which he can never rise.

The day of Judgment will be retributive ; not disciplinary. Lamentations poured forth at the bar and in the presence of the Judge, move not his clemency. It is only previous repentance that will be there available. With reference to the wailings which that solemnity will occasion, and as a premonition to the sinner, those fearful words are recorded : " Because I have called and ye refused, I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded ; but ye have set at naught all my counsel, and would none of my reproof. I also will laugh at your calamity, I will mock when your fear cometh ; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind ; when distress and anguish shall come upon you—then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer ; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me."

Forbearance, so conspicuous in the divine economy, has its limits. That day always approaching at length arrives,—the day when the things which relate to the sinner's peace are forever hidden from his eyes. Now,

God waits to be gracious. "As I live, saith the Lord, I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that he should turn and live. Come then and let us reason together; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. Let then the wicked man forsake his ways, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let them return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy, and to our God, and he will abundantly pardon. Turn ye, turn ye at my reproofs, for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" And why will you die, O sinner? Ye who hear me, why? Why, since Jesus Christ is ordained to judge the world, and since repentance will insure forgiveness, why will you die? Whence this unnatural suicide; this frenzied self-destruction?

If only after having insulted God and debased yourselves; if after having sinned away your term of being on earth, and made yourselves alike unworthy and incapable of heaven; if only after this you could like worms creep back to earth, and repose in eternal non-existence! But no, that cannot be.

There is no rest, however inglorious—there is no refuge, no, not even in death, to wicked men. The vilest earth will not continue to enclose the viler ashes of the unrepentant sinner. No matter how degraded you become; no matter how low you sink your fleshly nature, or how far you debase your reason and your heart, the appointed judgment, "the resurrection of condemnation," still awaits you. Though you turn away from the light, and, shutting your eye on life and heaven, creep like reptiles to your retreat of death, the archangel's trump shall wake you. You may fall from virtue, you may fall from honor, but

you cannot fall from being. The wretch that has lived to sin must live to suffer. So justice dictates ; so God ordains.

If the day of Judgment, of which you are assured, were a day of unmixed justice, on which God came forth out of his place merely to avenge the righteous, to purify the world, and to rid the earth as he before had rid the heavens of rebels, driving the whole race of fallen men as he drove the fallen angels into hell—if such were the day of judgment, a day of indignation without clemency, of retribution without forgiveness (though even then repentance would be your wisdom and your duty), we would not thus urge and press and importune you. But now that the bow of the covenant is displayed from those heavens through which the Son of Man shall come ; now that the judgment-seat itself is radiant alike with the beams of mercy and of justice, meeting and mingling as they stream from it, dispelling the gloom that overhung our world, and lighting up the firmament above with peace and joy,—there is hope that you may yet be induced to turn and flee the wrath to come.

Therefore it is that we entreat you, as we see you advancing to your eternal doom ; therefore it is that we cry after you, and repeat the cry, even till the blow falls, saying ever, “Turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die?”

The thought of judgment would be intolerably terrific, were it not for this idea of mercy mingling with it. It is the superhuman greatness of the Gospel scheme of salvation that proves its divinity. From some primeval source, perhaps the prot-evangel proclaimed in Eden, the idea of a theanthropy, or of some divine *incarnation*, had entered extensively into

the world's mythologies; but forensic *substitution* was a thought unknown. "Eye had never seen, ear had never heard, the heart of man could never have conceived" it. No earthly religion, no superstition, no system of ethics or philosophy could ever have developed it. We may say, too, that the thought of a retributive judgment alone, though filling us with alarm, could never have produced the feeling of penitence. In the resurrection of Jesus this new emotion had its birth. "He was exalted a Prince and a Saviour that he might give repentance." In Him are combined the royal and the priestly, the ruling and the atoning, the judicial and the healing office. Every element of fear is taken away when we are led to see, and with all our souls embrace, this wondrous provision of the divine mercy. Hope and joy take the place of alarm; a sense of safety, of peace, of blessed assurance fills the heart, when in our JUDGE we recognize our SAVIOUR,—when in the triumphant Messiah sitting upon the throne of the universe we behold the *Christus Patiens*, the suffering Christ, the mocked Redeemer, the thorn-crowned King, "the Man of Sorrows" who died upon the cross for our salvation.

IX.

THE UNIVERSAL REIGN OF DEATH.

And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent.—Acts xvii. 30.

By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death reigned over all.—Romans v. 12.

Most emphatically is this duty of repentance now commanded, *because He hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world by that man whom he hath ordained, whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.*

With what conclusiveness repentance is enjoined, how clear the reason given, how strong the motive derived from the assurance of a future judgment, has been already shown. Nor repentance only. Every other command, as well as that coupled with the announcement of a risen Saviour, derives additional force from the assurance that is given of that event. Considerations the most awful and the most tender now impel me to do what he commands, to suffer what he ordains.

In the resurrection of your Saviour, then, behold, O Christian, a new and universal motive both to action and to suffering.

There were of old, and there still are, profane men who say, *Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.*

But since Jesus Christ has risen the believer can never feel this motive, can never speak this language. It may befit the lips of the Epicurean, the Sadducee, the atheist or the deist who believes in no existence

beyond the grave ; but it becomes not him to whom light breaking from the tomb of Christ has opened heaven and immortality and judgment and forgiveness. Henceforth away, unhallowed pleasures ; away, ye scenes of mirth, of lust, of treachery, and blood. All that God abhors will I abhor ; from all that He forbids will I forever flee. The great future opens before me. The present has all its importance from its connection with such an unbounded prospect. I feel "the power of an endless life." I will abstain to-day ; I will deny myself to-day. To-morrow, no less than to-day, is mine ; millions of ages to come are mine ; eternity is mine. I can therefore afford to abstain and deny myself, did not the thought of an eternal being destroy the relish for the pleasure, and sink it into insignificance.

Let the unbelieving sensualist revel away in riot and debauchery his ephemeral existence. I cannot be his associate or his guest. His pleasures are not my pleasures ; his prospects are not my prospects. Ah ! In hell what will it avail me to have eaten and drunken and sinned to-day ! No ; eternity is too long ; God's wrath too dreadful. On the score even of the highest prudence "it is better to suffer with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season." "Light afflictions that endure but for a moment" are not to be put in competition with "an eternal weight of glory." But Christianity imposes no insuperable burdens. I can deny myself. I can restrain and subjugate my passions. I can give up "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life." I can do more than abstain. I can endure hunger and thirst, and cold and nakedness. The primitive Christians endured these ; Christians

of later times, and not far from our own day, have endured these—endured them for Christ's and for righteousness' sake. Ever onward, ever upward, was the motto of these heroic athletes.

'Twas God's all-animating voice
That cheered them from on high.

Through the might of this resurrection power, under the stimulus of this ever "upward calling of God in Christ Jesus," they fought the good fight, they finished their course, and are now in heaven receiving the reward of their labors, and the recompense of their suffering. I say reward, for it is language used in Scripture; but it was obtained by another's merits, and through a strength not their own. It came from the grave of Christ, from the grace of a risen Saviour.

I asked them whence their victory came;
They, with united breath,
Ascribed their conquest to the Lamb,
Their triumph to his death.

And dost thou, vile sensualist, or dost thou, wretched unbeliever, think to allure me from the track which they have marked out—that path the ruggedness of which has been smoothed by the martyrs' feet, though still retaining the sacred impress of the martyrs' blood? No, "thou man of the earth, earthy;" no, thou grovelling sensualist, thou second Esau; keep to thyself thy mess of pottage. I'll not share it with thee; heaven is sold to purchase it, and it is seethed in the blood of the soul. And thou, insulting scoffer, scoff on. I can bear thy taunts. I can brace my nerves against thy jeerings. My pursuits are nobler than thine; my hopes are loftier than

thine. I fear thee not. I fear not man. And why should I, a man, fear one who is nothing more? Human instruments of assault, whether of steel or invective, whether the tongue, the pen, or the sword, are but feeble weapons. At the most they can only kill my body. Neither the poison nor the poniard can reach the soul. Jesus Christ has risen. He is my security; intrenched within this rampart of assurance my soul looks forth in confidence—

Smiles at the drawn dagger, and defies its point.

I can practise self-denial; I can endure the derision of man. I can defy his vengeance. But there is a being whose vengeance I cannot endure, and against whom it were not bravery but frenzy to array myself. His power would crush, his wrath consume. Him first, him last, him supremely, and him exclusively do I fear. "Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker. Let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth; but let not man contend against his creator, or the thing formed say unto him who formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?" At thought of thee, O my God, far from wishing to retain, I abhor my sins. "I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes. Against thee, thee only have I sinned, that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and clear when thou judgest."

Henceforth no trials shall be accounted insuperable, no labors too severe, no self-denial too hard, no sacrifices too great, if so I may meet thine approbation, and through thy mercy escape from the wrath to come.

But there are motives of tender as well as of awful interest, springing out of that assurance which God has given of a future judgment by the resurrection of

the Saviour—motives which address themselves to all the nobler principles, to all the finer feelings of my nature.

It is not fear alone that makes me shun the pleasures and fly the society of wicked men. Existence is dear to me; I desire its continuance; I wish to live forever. I respect even my body,—that body which God made,—so wonderfully and fearfully made. Mysterious product from the dust; it is honorable to him; it is endeared and precious to me. Through its subtile and delicately arranged organs I first received the notices of being, beheld the light, traced out the forms of things, became acquainted with the melody of sounds, heard the voice of prayer, the note of praise, and learned to read the name and acquire some faint idea of the attributes of my Creator. This body I have dwelt in since I began to be. I have fed and clothed it; I have nursed and nurtured it; I strive to prolong its vigor, to prevent its decay, and to perpetuate its being. But this I cannot do. In despite of all my wishes, all my efforts, it wastes, it declines, it tends to dissolution, and it will finally be all dissolved. I feel that it is marked for death, that it is ripening for the sepulchre. I see the uplifted arm of the dread power that will crush my hopes, and turn my body into dust. Yes, I foresee that I must die. I cannot prevent, I cannot delay, this catastrophe. And yet what it is to die, I know not. My view reaches not even to the sepulchre; much less beyond it. I have seen, indeed, a fellow-creature die, and I know enough of death to know that it is dreadful beyond my knowledge, beyond my conception. The shroud, the coffin, the corse, the grave, appall me. A strange and inde-

finable horror seizes my frame; a sudden and convulsive chill passes through my heart at the sight of death, at the thought of dying. Something within me intimates that before me there are dangers. Affrighted, I cling to life, and start backward from that covered gulf, towards whose brink I feel myself impelled by a resistless power.

I am a sinner. Of that I am conscious; nor is it in the power of created beings to rid me of that consciousness. And I fear death the more because I am a sinner. I tremble at the thought of falling into nothing; still more do I tremble at the thought of falling into hell. All that nature has intimated, all that philosophy has conjectured to support my soul against the dread of death is vague, indefinite, uncertain, and unsubstantial. I am distressed, and examine; I re-examine, and am still distressed. Nothing that any human philosophy has offered comes home to my understanding and my heart like that great fact, my Saviour's resurrection.

That speaks a language which I understand; that presents a motive which I feel. The resurrection of the body is not now, as formerly, a matter of opinion. The Lord Jesus Christ has actually risen, and in his rising I see at once the pattern and the pledge of my own and of the resurrection of my species.

I am now sure that the grave will not be to me the bed of death. I shall be raised from thence. I know I shall be raised, because Christ has risen. I know this not only, but I rejoice in it also. I abhor the sepulchre, that house of putrefaction. I desire most ardently to be raised from it. Nor will desire cease, nor the cup of my joy be full, while my body bears that stamp of sin and death upon it. Then only

“shall I be satisfied when I awake in thy likeness.”

And since thou hast given me assurance, O thou dying, thou risen Saviour,—since thou hast given me this assurance,—that I shall awake, I must obey thee ; thy love constrains me. Nothing commanded by such a Master can be deemed oppressive, nor when softened by such kindness, and excited by such hopes, is even my obdurate heart reluctant to comply.

Nor for myself only do I thus feel and reason. I have kindred, I have friends to whom I am attached. But even from that circle, all that is excellent, all that is endearing, has faded or is now fading. I have looked upon the cold clay from which the vital principle had departed. The signs of thought and friendship and virtue still lingered there. Death had not quite effaced them ; but all they signified had fled. I have followed their remains to the sepulchre. There were they covered from my sight, and there, pensive and oppressed, have I lingered ; for within was contained a treasure, marred indeed, but still dear to me. Often in thought do I revisit those chambers where my dead kindred, my dead friends repose. I cleave to the monument that bears their names, and hang over the mound that hides their ashes. To this nature prompts, to this love constrains me.

Let the gross, unfeeling unbeliever bury his dead as he does his cattle ; let a false spiritualism that has no countenance in Scripture treat the body as something beneath its philosophic contemplation ; let the other apparent extreme of a heartless materialism speak with contempt of our mortal remains, as being no more than other earth, ever passing into other forms ; let the vulgar, scoffing infidel characterize them as having no other excellence than to serve as

hidden manure to enrich our fields and gardens. With none of these can I hold sympathy. The philosophic and the vulgar strain are alike odious and repulsive. Something tells me that these remains are precious. I think it is an instinct of my nature. Something seems to tell me that, perishing as they are in themselves, they are still, in some mysterious manner, connected with the *imperishable*, and that their higher identity, their true identity, cannot be lost. They may still be denoted by the names and by the personal pronouns once used in addressing them. They have still a personality, a selfhood, residing in the matter, and continuing beyond the utmost limits of material dissolvability. "The souls of believers pass into glory, but *their bodies, being still united to Christ*, do rest in their graves until the resurrection." So speaks the symbol of our faith, grounded as it is on Scripture. *Their bodies being still united to Christ*. Here is the secret of life, even of the indestructible bodily germ. "Because He lives, they shall live also." There is a sacredness in this natural feeling of which I have spoken, and Revelation most touchingly as well as powerfully confirms it. It is thus that I have learned to respect sepulchral ashes. It comes from the voice of nature, and from the tutelage of faith. I learn its confirmation in the school of Jesus. Hopeful tears befit the mourner. He teaches me this by those he himself mingled with the tears of the weeping sisters at the grave of Lazarus, their brother. But though I may have learned it from faith alone, still it is a lesson I am not willing to unlearn. I would not give away those tears for all the atheist's unbaptized insensibility. I covet not his real or affected stoicism, his brute-like apathy. No, my dead kindred still

remain akin to me. The being even of their bodies has not perished—shall not perish. Neither is it another body, wholly alien to the first familiar organization, that is to be the dwelling-place of their future and more glorious existence. Though “a house not made with hands,” it will not be “an unclothing,” but a “clothing upon.” The link even of the bodily identity, hard as it may be for science and philosophy to trace it, shall not be lost. The Scripture here is as emphatic as it is clear and concise. It is “*this corruptible*,” τὸ φθαρτὸν τοῦτο, that “shall put on incorruption;” it is “*this mortal*,” τὸ θνητὸν τοῦτο, that “shall put on immortality.” Therefore it is that I respect this sleeping dust and ashes, as something connected with a higher life. “*Their bodies, being still united to Christ, do rest in their graves until the resurrection.*” Thus, whilst nature intimates that these human remains are precious, Jesus tells me why it is so. The dying members rest with their dying, risen head. “He is not the God of the dead, but of the living.”

Those ruins shall be built again,
And all that dust shall rise.

Christ says that He will raise it up, and I believe him. I will, therefore, build their monuments. These are more than tokens of affection. They are tokens of faith. They evince that their builder expects a resurrection, and that he buries his dead in confidence of Christ's second coming.

But not my friends only who repose in death are taken into this account, and form an item in this conclusive argument. I have living friends also, friends of whom as yet the destroyer has not robbed me. Could I believe that these would be exempted, broken

as the circle of my companions has become, it would be some relief. But even of this partial, stunted consolation I am deprived. Those who remain, remain on sufferance. Death has already fixed his seal upon them. All, all are marked for the sepulchre; and even while they seem to linger, are tending step by step toward that oblivious region whence they shall not return.

The movement of this living world to death is uniform and universal. Neither talents, nor learning, nor usefulness, nor virtue afford exemption, or even procure a respite. The firmer we cling to life, the more easily we seem to be broken from our hold. There is no anchorage on this side death, no haven where this tempest-driven bark of ours can rest. It is ordained that it should be so, and all attempts to elude or resist are vain. The whole race are given up to death; they are all dead, or dying, or about to die. There are, indeed, dreams of life, but they are only dreams, mere visions of the imagination, fleeting as ideal. The monuments of art, it is true, for a little time remain; but the artificer, where is he? He is as though he had never been; his eye has lost its vision, his fingers their skill. Though constructed of perishable materials, the building outlasts the builder. We may erect, but it is our successors who will inhabit.

The very trees we have set, nay, the very shrubbery we have planted around these halls and along the walks of science will outlive us. These organic products of the soil will grow and flourish, and bud and blossom, when no flower of thought, no bud of fancy, no germ of genius, shall put forth from the cold bosoms of those beings who plucked them from their native bed and set them here.

This chosen spot, these rising grounds, have been our recent theatre of action, and they will, perhaps, for a few days longer be our theatre of action. Here we have exercised our taste, our judgment, our skill. We have planned, and more than this—because God has thus far helped us—we have executed. The hills have been depressed, the valleys raised, the rudeness of nature has disappeared, the regularity of art has succeeded, and everything has changed around us or is changing.

This scene of toil and anxiety ended, will there follow, think you, a scene of rest and enjoyment? There is no rest for man—for man, the victim of pain, of disease, of death—for man, who is doomed to the sepulchre.

There has been a first, but there can be no second Eden on this earth. In this, our beloved literary retreat, we have fled the corruptions and the tumult of the city, but we have not fled the corruption of sin, nor the tumult of the passions. The causes of iniquitude were not peculiar to the site which this institution has heretofore occupied. Even this second location has been made within the precincts of the King of Terrors. Hither our iniquities have followed us, and here our God will surely find us out.

There is, indeed, a pleasure in contemplating this new scenery which has so suddenly displayed itself. It is a pleasure, however, not without alloy. Many a melancholy association dims the prospect and saddens the contemplation. It is grateful to behold the temple of science reared up and the halls of instruction opened. It is grateful to mark the growth and walk beneath the shadow of the fir-tree and the elm which have been planted; but the thought occurs that these

are not the only trees that befit these consecrated classic grounds;—why have the cypress and the yew tree been omitted?

We have our walks for contemplation and for exercise; our Groves of the Academy, and our Vale of Tempe. The line of the Campus has been struck, the parterre laid out, and flowers already bedeck it. But our work is yet unfinished—even the very design is incomplete. One spot remains to be selected and enclosed—a little spot, around which the willow may bend and weep, and where the death-bird may perch and sing her funeral song.

Much as we have designed and executed, we have as yet laid out no burial-ground, we have built no sepulchre. But though we have not, every day's mortality reminds us that these are needful. Death, that frequents the city, frequents also the solitude. He respects not even consecrated grounds, but delights to conceal himself along the walks of the Muses, and to watch unseen in the vestibule of science. No retirement escapes his pestiferous breath; no path his polluting tread; nor is the college any more than the lazarus-house secure from his defiling and destructive entrance.

Here, too, the King of Terrors will take his stand, to disappoint the public expectation, to wring the heart of friendship, and to cut off forever the fond parent's hope. As when an untimely frost passes over the face of nature, so, at his chill presence, wither alike the flowers of intellect and the weeds of ignorance. No station is spared. At his command the master and the pupil descend alike to the sepulchre.

Yet a little while, and this endeared retreat, laid

out with so much taste and adorned with so many and such sudden beauties, will have become a residence for death. That dreaded spoiler is about to enter it, nay, he has already entered it. Twice, though his ambush is concealed, and though his arrow flew in secret, has he given afflictive notice of his entrance. Twice have we heard his victims groan; twice have we seen them fall.* Whom next, or in what quick succession he will dart his arrows, God only knows.

Here, as on every other spot of this accursed and sin-defiled earth, "all flesh is as grass, and all the glory thereof as the flower of the grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth. For death is come up into our windows, and is entered into our palaces, to cut off the children from without, and the young men from the streets. Therefore so teach us, O God, to number our days as to apply our hearts to true wisdom."

* This was doubtless preached during a period of epidemic fever that at one time prevailed in the College; or a previous sermon may have been adapted to the occasion. It must have been at the beginning of the sickness, for more afterwards fell victims to it, whose monuments, referring to the time, are now in the College cemetery. Both of these discourses, the IXth and the Xth, bear evidence of having been preached during the time when Dr. Nott was so ardently engaged in laying out and beautifying the College grounds. See note, p. 101.—ED.

X.

THE GRAVE OF ADAM—THE GRAVE OF CHRIST.

God now commandeth all men everywhere to repent. Acts xvii. 30.

As all who are in Adam die, so all who are in Christ shall be made alive. 1st Corinthians xv. 22.

As the mind runs along the track of future ages, what an oppressive, what a melancholy prospect opens before us! So, too, when from some distant and imaginary point we fancy ourselves looking back upon this scene, how solemn, how afflictive is the anticipated retrospection. All the present population gone; not one remaining who knew, or loves, or thinks of us, or who has ever heard our names. The shrubs we set have died; the trees we planted have mouldered. Every ornament has been effaced. The very dome has fallen in, and the column that supported it lies in ruins—ruins over which the ox browses, the tent is spread, or on which the soldier's foot profanely treads. The things that were have become as though they had never been.

We *have* built, we *can* build, no lasting monument. That surely cannot be for immortality whose foundation is in the dust. After all that we have done, there will shortly remain to us nothing but our sepulchres. Let us leave the dream of sublunary glory then, and hasten to erect them. Since Jesus Christ has risen,

this will no longer be a melancholy service. A beam, an anticipated beam from the resurrection morning softens the visage of death, and chases from the burying-ground its haunting spectres. Now, no chill passes through my bosom ; no horror seizes my frame, when, alone and benighted, my pathway crosses its gloomy bounds.

Now we can draw the line, assign the limits, and even make the subdivisions of our collegiate cemetery with submission, nay, even with complacency. Of all the enclosures on these variegated grounds, this becomes the most endeared and frequented. This is the Christian's vale of Tempe. Its destination consecrates it. At its entrance we put off unhallowed passions. Its solemn ornamentation checks our levity, abates our ardor. Its tranquil, retired avenues afford the calmest, sweetest retreats for contemplation, the holiest walks for Christian friendship.

This is the only retreat where the wicked cease from troubling, and where the weary are at rest. Precious, endeared, chosen spot ! Since Jesus Christ has risen, no verdure so green as thine ; no flowers so lovely. Now thy very cypress and thy yew trees blossom, and from that drooping willow, through which sighs so long had murmured, songs are heard.

Yonder we have taught and toiled ; but when our day of life is ended, here shall we retire. Those other grounds have been our theatre of action ; these shall be our bed of rest. Here in this spot we shall repose until Christ's second coming. Here, beneath this turf, from which the shrubs, the trees, nay, the very monuments have mouldered, he will recognize our sleeping dust. On this spot we shall hear the Archangel's trump, and hence we shall arise to welcome

that decisive, universal summons, "Awake, ye dead, and come to judgment!" For as in Adam all have died, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

Ah, how unlike are the offices performed for us by our first and second representative. How unlike the inheritance they bequeathed—how unlike their very sepulchres!

Let us visit them. It is evening—the sun has set—the hour of contemplation has arrived. A walk to the burying-ground may edify us; to view their monuments may be instructive. Let us visit them. That is the sepulchre of Adam—that of Jesus. And is the sepulchre of Adam here? It is. Draw near, ye orphan children, ye posterity of his—draw near, and contemplate it. See how the moss has grown upon it, and how the death-worm crawls within. There lies the body of thy great progenitor—that body, fashioned by the immediate hand of God himself, now disorganized and decayed; its shroud decayed, its coffin, all, all decayed and mouldered into undistinguishable dust.

Not so the sepulchre of Jesus. Draw near, child of grace, exulting disciple; draw near, and see the place where your Lord once lay. Not moss, but flowers new blown, bedeck the rock of Joseph.

No death-worm crawls within; within there is no food for worms. The soul of Him whom we adore "was not left in Hades, nor did his body see corruption." Behold the linen cloth that girded him; it has not mouldered, nor has the mildew touched the napkin that was bound around his head.

There, in the tomb of Adam, beauty fades, vigor forsakes the arm of flesh, and the life that was, ceases.

Here, in the tomb of Jesus, beauty is restored, the

arm of flesh is restrung, and the life that was not, again returns.

That is an iron sepulchre; its massive covering presses on the bosom, and crushes the victim under it; nor has he opened, nor can he ever open it.

This is already opened; it contains no victim. The dead have left it; left it empty, yet hallowed—destined never more to hold the remains of human mortality.

Around *that* sepulchre Death stalks a conqueror, brandishing his weapons, exulting in his strength, and insultingly trampling on the skulls and bones beneath him.

Around *this* Death is led captive, bound, subdued, and powerless. His shield has been torn away; his bow lies on the earth unstrung; scattered beside it behold his broken and his pointless arrows.

Hark! from the tomb of Adam a melancholy voice comes forth: "Victim of sin and death, thou wert made of dust, and to dust shalt thou return."

From the tomb of Christ a far different voice responds: "Heir of righteousness and life, when thy body shall return unto the dust as it was, thy spirit shall ascend unto God who gave it."

Hark! from the tomb of Adam those words of despair: "By one man sin hath entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death shall pass upon all men, because all have sinned." From its gloomy vault is ever heard the questions which nature cannot answer: "If a man die, shall he live again?" "Can these dry bones revive?"

Again, from the tomb of Christ a voice responds: "Yes, these dry bones can live." "With my body shall they come." "I am the resurrection and the

life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live again.” “Dry up thy tears, redeemed sinner—Adam, thy sire, has not perished; Noah has not perished; the patriarchs and prophets have not perished; nay, ‘blessed are all the dead that die in the Lord; they only rest from their labors, and their works do follow them.’” “In my Father’s house there are still many mansions; if it were not so I would have told you; I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go away, I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also.”

I have visited this sepulchre of Christ before; I have often visited it, and I still love to visit it. It was here that my dread of death abated; it was here that my hope of immortality began. As I find it now, so I have always found it, perfumed with fragrance, and vocal with the song of triumph. Yes, this rock of Joseph has stood for ages, and it still stands, a beacon to the wanderer, and to the mourner an asylum.

The angels who descended have not left it, nor will they leave it, till the redeemed of the Lord are raised. Here they delight to linger; they bedeck this monument; they watch and trim that lamp which hangs suspended at its entrance. To every penitent inquirer they now say, as they said unto the weeping, affrighted Marys: “Fear not ye, for we know that ye seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here, for he has risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.”

These words have lost nothing of their import or of their efficacy. Now, as formerly, it is life, it is immortality which they bring to light. Ah, could we hear them with such hearts as the primitive Christians

heard them. "He is not here; he has risen, as he said." As the angel pronounced these words, radiance fell upon the sepulchre; from within it every spectre fled, and with them that eternal darkness in which they were enveloped. Amazed, the disciples entered to see the place where the Lord had lain, shouting as they entered: Now, O Death, where is thy sting; O grave, where is thy victory! It was finished—the triumph was complete, the sting of sin was plucked, the agony of dying was over. A sudden throb passed throughout the surrounding Golgotha, and from every cleft and cavern where redeemed dust had been deposited was echoed back to the living world the note of victory.

I have visited the sepulchre of Adam, too, before; I have often visited it. But I have always found it as I now find it, cold and comfortless and dreary. Multitudes have entered it, and are still entering it; but there is no egress. Its doors close, but they never open. No angel ever visits it, except the angel of destruction. Its keeper hangs no lamp of radiance at its entrance. This is not his office. It is only to slay the living, and prolong the bondage of the dead, that he has been commissioned. Reason, indeed, holds out her feeble taper to assist my vision. But its beams are few and faint and tremulous, and only render the surrounding darkness on which they fall more visible.

Agonized with doubt, I ask how long? when will release arrive? Or is this bondage final? The dread keeper, frowning on me, answers only by pointing to the bones of Adam. I see them mouldered. Firmer, and yet more firm, the earth settles on the patriarch's bosom, and from the cell of every kindred skeleton throughout this charnel-house a groan is heard.

And yet, in that sepulchre of Adam I have kindred—sisters, once the companions of my youth; a brother, whom these eyes have never seen. There my father lies—my mother—the partner of my earlier years; there sleeps a beloved infant. There too I shall myself be laid, and there around me my remaining children will be gathered. No wonder, therefore, that I wish only to contemplate the tomb of Adam in connection with that of Jesus. The glory that rests upon the one, scatters the clouds and dispels the horrors that gather within and around the other.

The rock of Joseph; be that my hope in death, as it has been my joy in life. Nor my joy only. Affection mingles in the emotions which I feel at the thought of Him whose memory hallows it. “Whom not having seen we love, and whom, though now we see him not, yet believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.”—The resurrection is not the whole of Christ. That makes him known; but it is his perfection that makes him precious. His attributes of wisdom and of justice, no less than his deeds of goodness and of mercy, claim my soul’s admiration, deserve my heart’s most cherished love.

Beside the record of His life, the history of Cyrus, the annals of Cæsar, appear mean—gloriless. His is a heroism that excites my admiration, because it reaches the miseries of my condition. He is my sovereign by choice, as well as by necessity. I feel emulous to be enrolled in his book of life, and to follow in his train of glory. He is ordained my judge, and it is my joy that he is so ordained. I consent, nay, from the bottom of my heart I desire, to be tried

at his judgment-seat. It is my highest hope to be presented among the millions of the saved as a monument of his mercy; nor do I wish to enter heaven in any other way than as a trophy of his grace. To others there may seem to be no comeliness in him that he should be desired; but to the redeemed soul he is "the chief among ten thousand, and the one altogether lovely."

Do you ask, sinner, what Jesus Christ has done for me, that should so much endear him? I answer, he has died for me; while I was yet his enemy he died for me. "Greater love than this hath no man, that a man lay down his life for his friends. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us."

Yes, "in his own blood he has washed us, and made us kings and priests unto God." "Worthy therefore is the Lamb that was slain, and is alive, to receive blessing and honor." And woe unto him who withholds that tribute. *If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema, maranatha.*

Do you ask what Jesus Christ has done for me? He has suffered the penalties of justice; he has quenched the fires of hell in my behalf. He flung his sacred body between me and perdition. And that is now the only panoply that shields me from those flames by which the rebel angels were consumed—the only pledge I hold that they shall not hereafter kindle on me.

Do you still ask what Jesus Christ has done for me?

I answer, he hath disarmed death; he hath hallowed the sepulchre. Death was my great enemy. He was my last enemy. I dreaded death. But Death is

conquered. Jesus Christ hath conquered Death, plucked the wreath of triumph from the grave.

He has conquered death for *me*; mine is the victory. Me hath he released from that dreaded iron bondage. Me hath he released that I might serve him, love him, rejoice in him, praise him evermore.

“ I'll praise him while he lends me breath,
And when my voice is lost in death,
Praise shall employ my nobler powers ;
My days of praise shall ne'er be past,
While life and thought and being last,
Or immortality endures.”

Thus, as we have said, the resurrection of Jesus Christ unfolds a new and universal motive to affection and obedience.

Though he had not risen, a day of retribution might be probable, nay, it might be certain. But even assurance that it was so would bring no joy to me, a sinner. My dread of death would still continue; my fear of hell would still continue; my sorrows for my dead and dying friends would still continue. I should visit their tombs with sadness; I should build my own in agony; and having done so, I must unstring my harp and hang it, like the captive Israelites, upon the willow, to give forth no note of joy till a deliverer came.

But since he has risen, and by rising given me assurance of a day of judgment at which a sinner may be justified, the whole aspect of existence is changed. Now it is my life, my joy, to honor and obey him—to do and to suffer for him.

I love existence; I sigh for immortality; I love my friends, my kindred, my species. For me, for them, none has done so much; none has waked or worked so long as Jesus.

“He’s waked and worked for ages; from the birth
Of nature, to this unbelieving hour.
In this small province of his vast domain
(All Nature bows, while I pronounce his name !)
What has Christ done, and not for this sole end
To rescue souls from death.”

“Talk they of morals? O thou bleeding Love,
Thou Maker of new morals to mankind,
The grand morality is love to Thee.”

An infidel I cannot be, for Jesus Christ has risen.
A traitor I will not be, for Jesus Christ has risen.

Eternal life is dear to me; and dear is He who purchased it. I am a Christian from affection as well as from necessity. I belong to Jesus Christ, because I love him; and love him because he is my Saviour, and because he is essentially and infinitely lovely.

If he would release me I would not be released. If he would absolve me I would not be absolved. If he were to interrogate me, as he interrogated his disciples, “Will ye also go away?” I would reply to him, as they replied, “To whom, Lord, *shall* we go? for Thou hast the words of eternal life”—and were I to go away from Jesus Christ, to whom *should* I go? On what *should* I repose my hopes? Where *should* I find an asylum? Regions of silence and death, of darkness and despair! can ye answer my agonizing inquiry: To whom *can* I go if I go away from Jesus?

No, if Jesus Christ would absolve me, I would not be absolved. I want no other master. I’ll wear no other livery; nor own nor owe allegiance elsewhere. Submission to him is not bondage, it is liberty—liberty high-born and deathless; the liberty of the elect of grace; the liberty of the sons of God.

His is the only praise in which I wish my tongue to be employed; his the only sepulchre in which I wish my body to be laid, and his the only judgment-seat at which I wish my spirit to be judged. From him no motive could induce me to go away. I would not relinquish the love I bear him, I would not relinquish the fealty I owe him, I would not relinquish the heaven he has bequeathed me. I would not, by abjuring Christ, live a sinner's life, however full of earthly joy, to acquire that boasted privilege,—to die a brute.

Let the scoffing infidel, let the mortal atheist, shutting his eye on Christ and heaven, hug his coffin and cling unto his sod. "Let him say unto corruption, Thou art my father, and to the worm, Thou art my sister and my mother." He knows no other origin; he has neither the assurance nor the hope of any other destiny. But Jesus Christ has taught me that "this corruption can put on incorruption,—that this mortal can put on immortality."

Adored be that Saviour who made this sure—and welcome that resurrection morning that shall make it real. Till then, "my flesh shall rest in hope," and my spirit wait in faith "all the days of my appointed time, until my change shall come."

"Now may the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory forever and ever."

AMEN.

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