

Scale How "Meditations."

By C. M. MASON.

Dominus Illuminatio Mea.

SOME NOTES OF THE EASTER DAY "MEDITATIONS," 1921.

What a grand opening to the Collect for Easter Day!—"opened the gate of everlasting life." We rather expect after going through all the hopes of Easter to pass on to something large and great and wonderful, and we find a prayer that any one can use at any time—"Put into our minds good desires." Easter takes away all anxiety, all uneasiness, all self-reproach; we are all taken into the supreme joy of Easter-time. What desires do we ask for? "If ye then be risen with Christ seek those things that are above." Things without shape or substance—the things that influence life—the fruits of the spirit. The note of Easter Day is joy—Resurrection. We say, "I believe in the Resurrection of the Dead." What do we believe? It is part of the creed for which Christians have died, and it means so much that it is difficult to put it into words. We think of the rising of the body and can only understand it by that recognition which is part of our creed. It is a mystery to be believed and adored, and the words come as a trumpet sound. St. Paul helps us: "That which thou sowest is not quickened except it die: and that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain: but God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own

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body." (1 Cor. xv. 36–38.) Think of an ear of corn which is not quickened unless it dies, and remember that the resurrection is more than an event: it is a principle. Again, the resurrection is not a thing of the future, it is *now*. The true message of this great Easter joy is "There is no death"—only our flesh can die.

There is much discussion as to what happens after death.

Our Lord's word is "To-day thou shalt be with me in Paradise," and St. John says, "They shall follow the Lamb." There is no death; in Christ shall all be made alive; but not in the same order, and we may be sure that all who have not feared to die will find their way to Christ. Again, "With what body are the dead raised?" God gives us a body, still a body, still our own body, but in the sense that the corn in the ear after it has died has a resurrection body. I think we are living in wonderful times not only because God is teaching us wonderful lessons, but also because great, happy, spiritual truths are coming to the fore, and some of us believe that we may be allowed to go on with the work we have done. Perhaps it is not only the successors who carry on the work, but the spiritual thought of those who began the work. It is so good to think that any good work we carry on will be carried on. But Spirit is absolutely invisible and inaudible—no sense of ours can apprehend Spirit—it cannot be seen, touched or heard,—we only know that "My Father worketh hitherto and I work."

Our life is infinitely rich and, in the resurrection life, we rise to newness of life. How do we know that we shall go on increasing? There is a something which we are never going to lose. We increase in power, we increase in joy. The resurrection must be so much more full. If we love on earth, enjoy beauty, glory in sweet sounds, heroic deeds, we shall glory, enjoy and love, much more in the life to come.

People wonder whether personality will be preserved. Every seed—*his own body*. Every one has some grains of sweetness that we would not part with for the world. This chapter, Cor. xv., is a difficult one, and there is an easier account in one of the Gospels—a story explanation, as all our Lord's stories are. Let us turn to the raising of Lazarus [p 236]

in St. John xi. In verse 25, we get the most wonderful and gracious words we possess: "I am the Resurrection and the Life." These two things are *in* Christ, these two things *are* Christ, things we cannot show—but they are principles, and we can understand principles. As the water of life finds the dry grain, dry roots, and they spring to life and grow, so Christ is the Life. When we fail, when we are unhappy, when things go wrong, let us not fear, there is always the Resurrection. When our hearts are sick and sad, when we think no one can help: when we think no one can help in the present sorrow of Europe: when we see the image of the earthly in evil action, in evil presence, let us remember there is a resurrection coming, always coming. We may not live to see it, but the peace of God will come.

Let us see how Browning treats the subject of Resurrection in *Easter Day*, and how Tennyson writes of it in *In Memoriam*.

Miss Mason then read from "The Saviour of the World," Book v., *The Raising of Lazarus*.

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As fluttering birds just 'scaped the nest,
Half blinded, baffled, by wide air,
Make tiny flight, then sink to rest
Fall'n in some ditch which chances there;—
E'en so our timid fancies fare
In that vast ocean of deep thought
Thou launchest us upon;—scarce dare
We seize a hope we ne'er had sought,
Or hold secure the bliss that Word to men hath brought!

"I am the light,"—we think we see;
"I am the door,"—we peer within;
"I am the life,"—Lord, ever be
Our life to save from death of sin!
"I am the resurrection,"—win
We, for all our thinking, scarce,
A hint of all enclosed within
The casket of that word; nay, worse,
Vain words of would-be faith, like Martha, we rehearse.

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Postpone we till some far-off day—
That last great day when men shall rise—
Marvel, the Master would display
Constant before our wondering eyes:—

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The life we hold in Him defies
Death's last assault; we go to bed;
In dust awhile our body lies;
Our friends bewail us;—whilst we're led
By our Risen Lord to seats whence Death flies, vanquishéd.

And every day, behold, we fall;
But, lo, that germ of life we hold
May not be weighted by the pall
Of custom, or of death as cold;
We rise, in our Redeemer bold;
Where there is life needs it must rise;
No cœment shall the soul enfold;
The strong truth lifts us to the skies;
Lo, resurrection is—our life in amplest guise.