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The Crucifixion

This painting, in the Vatican, by Niccolo Alunno, in its ornate carved framing is typical of that period of painting when naturalism was avoided. The ministering angels are quite visible, the sorrowing women bear a great resemblance to certain well-known women of that day, and several sturdy saints are in attendance.

Blessing and Hope in the Savior's Words

SOMETHING happened on the first Easter morning that brought joy and courage to the followers of Jesus Christ, and that strengthened them for the mission which was theirs—and is ours. In one of his great discourses, He said to His disciples: "Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to take it again." He did take it again. Immediately following the words just quoted is this: "There was a division therefore again among the Jews for these sayings. And many of them said, He hath a devil and is mad; why hear ye Him?" The old divisions still persist. But also there are many represented by those who said: "These are not the words of him that hath a devil. Can a devil open the eyes of the blind?" To all, to those who would like to believe as well as to those who believe Easter ought to be an inspiration. For it set in motion forces that have for 20 centuries been working for the uplifting, blessing and comforting of sinful and sorrowing men, and has cheered them with the thought and assurance of a life that can know only one death, and that is the death unto sin. The empty tomb proved little to those who saw it—they thought only that the body had been removed. What overwhelmed them with joy, and gave to them a courage that nothing could daunt, was their meeting with their Lord and Leader, this together with the words that He spoke to them. They knew that He was "alive forevermore," that He had won the victory, and that He would be with them to the end of the world. So they went everywhere, "preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ." They were, and still are witnesses to what they had seen and heard, witnesses to the great truth that life is stronger than death, and may be death's conqueror. Yet there are many Christians who get little help or comfort from the great Easter truth, who, as the saying is, "accept" it, but do not really believe it—have no conviction of it.

Promise of Resurrection.

And that is a great pity, for it involves a serious loss of power, and practically an entire loss of hope. St. Peter said to those to whom he wrote, as he says to us: "I will endeavor that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance. For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming to our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His Majesty. . . . We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the daystar arise in your hearts." To believe in all this, it must be said by way of qualification, in order merely that one may get comfort out of it, would be most cowardly, for the question still is, is it true?

St. Paul's Prayer.

Moreover, there is much in Christianity that it is anything but comfortable to believe—self-sacrifice and self-renunciation, for instance. But an event which has had such a marvelous influence on the course of human affairs, that adds dignity to humanity, that glorifies the humblest life, that strengthens the weak, inspires the despairing, comforts the bereaved, that brings to the fallen the hope and assurance of pardon, and that unites man to God, the human to the divine life, is something which honest and thoughtful men must think about and very seriously. To think of these things lightly or not at all, to endeavor to put them out of one's mind is a great mistake, to use a very mild term. They have been the theme of poets, saints and sages of all nations and all religions. If one can only hope, that is something. But what is needed is the power of faith, the power of conviction. This can be had only as the result of contact with the risen life. St. Paul understood this, and so he prayed: "That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus."—Indianapolis News.

Consider the Lilies

Consider the lilies, how they spread
Their simple beauty o'er the sod,
Content to droop the white-belled head
In modest friendship with a clod.
Yon neighbor rose is fair of face,
Bright clad in colors of the morn,
Yet blooms too conscious of her grace
And guards that splendor with a thorn.

Consider the lilies, how they wait
With patient hope the life of spring,
Nor do aught that heaven soon or late

Their dewy nourishment will bring.
Nay, pass them not as lifeless stems
Not more than weeds a foot has trod—
Better than precious graven gems
They make a sermon for Lord God.

Consider the lilies. Weak and slow
Thy step lags in the market place;
Thy virtue starves while follies go
Acclaimed as princes of the race.
Truth, Justice, Honor, all seem rid
By Mammon in a sordid mart;
Consider the lilies; God has hid
In them a balsam for thy heart.

—Arthur M. Harris.

THE man or woman who has stood beside the profound mystery of dissolution, who has sensed in the innermost soul the irrevocability of mortal limitations, that man and that woman know that for the loneliness of life and for the bitterness of death the Resurrection is then lying cup of consolation which, beckon them to drink and prepare me that the gate for them, in the morning, may open, too, to everlasting life. Death is translated to mean slumber, and separation is repose.

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