

## EASTER SERMON.

(Continued from first page)

scious and why may not death destroy life entirely? And as the individual perishes why may not the race? Other species of animal life have disappeared entirely from this earth and why may not man?

"Are God and nature then at strife, That nature lends such evil dreams? So careful of the type she seems, So careless of the single life."

"That I, considering everywhere Her secret meaning in her deeds And finding that of fifty seeds She often brings but one to bear."

"So careful of the type?" but no. From scarped cliff and quarried stone She cries, "A thousand types are gone I care for nothing, all shall go."

"Thou makest thine appeal to me: I bring to life, I bring to death; The spirit does not mean the breath: I know no more."

One cannot find immortality in nature because one cannot find either God or man there.

We have reviewed the arguments which are advanced in support of immortality and in all fairness must we not admit that they are not a demonstration, but rather an expression of a reasonable faith? They enable us to see the rationality of our faith in the fact that immortality is no mere transitory desire or impulse, but is a fundamentally human desire, as universal as the race, and finding its deepest, clearest, strongest expression, in the men who are noblest and best, our great moral leaders and our purest saints. It is a desire mightiest in the man who realizes the highest moral ideals, a desire which inspires to heroism and self sacrifice and to the attainment of the highest type of character. It is a desire which gives meaning to the sufferings, struggles and moral strivings and imperfections of the present life by articulating them into the life eternal; and it accords with the dignity of man as the goal of creation and gives meaning to the entire processes of nature. But it is not a demonstration, only the expression of a rational faith—a faith that has its force in the conviction that the universe is rational and moral and so constituted as to conserve the aspirations and hopes and wishes of man. But this is only another way in affirming faith in the Christian God, and in his moral government of the universe. So that immortality is in its essence a religious faith which deepens along with the revelation of God in history and in the individual soul.

The real basis of the faith in immortality must be found in the religious revelation. And it is because revelation finds its perfection in Jesus, because he, alone, brings the perfect revelation of God and of the infinite worth of the human soul, that fellowship with him brings the faith in immortality to the height of an absolutely certainty. And it was in relation to Jesus that Thomas came to the truth, and our Lord was very patient with the doubting disciple, although there was in his answer to him a gentle rebuke because he placed the evidence of his own senses above the testimony of his fellow disciples, and higher than the deepest convictions and hopes of his nobler self. Jesus told him that many should come into the blessed faith in his resurrection without the evidence of the senses and intimated that they would show the stronger and purer faith. In what way then does Jesus bring to us the conviction of our immortality and of his victory over death? An examination of the reasons generally given for immortality have shown us that it is a deep conviction of the soul and rests upon faith in a moral God who cares for us and wills our good. And a conviction is a personal value which has its vitality in the quality of the personal life out of which it issues. Any experience or fellowship, therefore, which cultures and develops the spiritual life of the soul and makes it conscious of its worth strengthens thereby its faith in its own immortality. And in the degree that any person can bring us into the presence of God and by a living experience assure us of His infinite goodness and love, he will by that redeeming revelation bring the assurance of our immortality. Jesus is the perfect revelation of God, and that revelation reaches its culmination in his death and resurrection, and so faith in the risen Christ is the absolute assurance of personal immortality to the soul.

And when we recognize that immortality as a religious faith is a personal conviction, we can appreciate its intimate connection with the spiritual life of the individual, with the revelation of God to the soul. We can understand how the people with a vague conception of the spiritual, moral and personal character of God have a correspondingly vague hope of personal immortality. And the individual who rises little above the lower world within him, who lives and moves and has his being in the world of the flesh, has little faith in a future life and con-

ceives of it in a crass form. But as one comes into possession of his inner life through spiritual fellowship does he strengthen the desire for immortality. Love, whether human or divine is a great spiritualizing power and it always cries out for immortality. The man who is separated by death from a life which for fifty years has revealed a spiritual love of stainless purity and devoted self sacrifice will have welling up in his lonely soul a strong desire that love may not end with death and an abiding conviction that the pure spirit which has been to him a revelation of the love and purity of God cannot perish with the material universe.

What such a noble human life and love may accomplish in a degree Jesus does preeminently and perfectly. He lived the eternal life in time, he enjoyed an uninterrupted and perfect fellowship with the Father. His entire soul was filled with the Spirit and love of God. He knew that he was the Son of God, that his fellowship with the Father was eternal—the gift of the Father resting upon God's love for him and that no one could sever it or pluck him out of the Father's hand. And Jesus witnessed that fellowship with the Father to let his disciples share in it. He forgave them their sins which barred such a fellowship, and they, too, possessed the filial spirit and became conscious of the love and presence of the Father. As recipients of the love and fellowship of God they are of infinite value, they are sons of God and members of the Kingdom of God. They share already in eternal life.

But the growth in their religious conceptions did not keep pace with their spiritual development. They poured the vital content of their enriched religious experience into the traditional Messianic conceptions, and the intensity of the new life made the doubt and struggle in the death of Christ all the greater. They are simply filled with despair and they go back to their old tasks to take up the life they left when Jesus called them. The death of Jesus seemed not only to discredit him and his mission but to make their entire religious experience which came through him an illusion and unreality. And, yet, faith does not when God has kindled it in the soul. The new life within them is not dead; they are members of the Kingdom even though their King seems dead. Doubt cannot be permanent in the soul which knows the fellowship of God. Our own lives have experiences akin to that of the disciples. A little babe comes to a Christian mother. In her new love she finds her own true nature. Her life is filled with gratitude and happiness and she loves God with a nobler and purer love. But the child dies, and the mother is plunged into doubt and darkness. She loses her trust in God, she doubts His love, she rebels against His will, she discredits her past experience, and wonders if she ever really was a child of God. She has her struggle; she knows what it is to have her Lord dead in the tomb, but in the end faith gets the victory, and emerges stronger and purer out of the trial of doubt. And so the disciples cannot abide in the darkness of despair. The eternal life which Jesus gave them and that eternal life in Jesus must get the victory over death. And this inner preparation of life is as essential to the Easter faith as is the outer event, the actual appearance of our Lord. And we cannot separate the resurrection from the entire mission and revelation of Jesus. It meant that the eternal life which he possessed and shared with them, that life which had overcome temptation and sin and disease, was now victor over death. It meant that Jesus who lived in full fellowship with God and who was the perfect revelation of God, who revealed to men and realized in himself the highest moral ideal, who died to redeem men in obedience to the will of God and in firm faith in the deliverance of His God, was now alive again and victor of death and the grave. It meant not the severance but the communication of his fellowship with the Father and with his disciples. It meant his exaltation to glory at the right hand of the Father, the establishment of his Kingdom upon earth and his spiritual Lordship over men, the outpouring of his Holy Spirit upon his disciples leading to a richer fellowship and a larger service in his Kingdom.

And the risen life of the risen Christ is the source of the conquering power of Christianity. It is not enough to say that the Easter faith designates the eternal triumph of righteousness and love over sin and hate. In and with what triumph is the perfection of that personality, and his exaltation in holy fellowship at the right hand of the Father, in whom the principle of righteous love found its ideal incarnation. We may talk of the triumph of righteousness and of its eternal victory over sin, but is not all righteousness and all sin as well, just constituent

elements of personal lives. It is the worth of the person which gives worth to righteousness, and the immortality of righteousness must include the immortality of the righteous soul. Jesus identified his own will and purpose with the righteous will of God, and his spiritual worth made him of infinite value to the Father, the object of His infinite love, so that his consecration in death led to his resurrection by the Father and to his exaltation in a renewed and glorified fellowship.

And this resurrection of Jesus is the assurance of our immortality and the guarantee of our everlasting fellowship with the Father. We are not in a position to apply the test of Thomas but we believe in a risen Christ as truly as did the early disciples. "Life is revealed to life; love commends itself to love" and the resurrection begun within us makes the resurrection of the Christ credible. The Christ within us giving us power over sin and redeeming our lives from destruction assures us of his resurrection and of our eternal life. And that faith is confirmed by the onward marching of the Kingdom of God throughout the centuries, grounded in the conviction that Christ has risen from the dead, and manifesting throughout its progress the Divine life of the risen Christ. And this faith never loses its character of personal conviction—a conviction elevated into a certainty as the inner life is spiritualized through the revelation of God in Jesus Christ. Wherever there is a deep abiding conviction of personal immortality—a living conviction which has climbed up into the realm of the certainties by which men live—there is a soul in fellowship with God in Jesus Christ, and the quality of personal life which marks one as the son of God. And that assurance is more certain than the evidence of the senses or the conclusions of reason. "Blessed are they which have not seen and yet have believed."

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## The American Senate.

The American Senate has brought the elective Second Chamber into disrepute. Those who were wont to point the British people to it as an example of what a Second Chamber ought to be have been pretty well silenced by its recent history; and the open agitation for its reform which is constantly heard in the United States.

But it ought to be remembered that it is not properly an elective Second Chamber at all. It is appointed by the "caucus" of the stronger party in the various State Legislatures. The people do not vote for its members, and usually they are thinking little of whom their Legislatures will send to Washington when they are choosing these bodies.

Then a number of other special weaknesses mar the American Senate. It gives the small State a much power as the large commonwealth, and so offers a mighty temptation to the exercise of corrupt influences in these diminutive Legislatures. Then the selection by the party "machine" after and not before it appeals to the people, encourages the "machine" to use its Senatorships as rewards to the wealthy influences which have supplied it with the sinews of war during the campaign. The appointment comes at the best possible time for such a course. The people have voted and turned their attention to other matters; and it will be quite a time before it will be necessary to placate the people again.

An elective Second Chamber would be in a far different position. The people must vote directly for its members. They would have to stand the fire and the test of a popular campaign. They could not be the creatures of the corporations, else they would go down at the polls. They must be big enough to be seen over large areas if the system of election from gigantic constituencies be adopted. It must not be imagined for a moment that the American Senate is the last word in elected Second Chambers.

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(Copy)

Hainesville, N. B., April, 1908. Manufacturers Life Ins. Co.,

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Yours sincerely,  
(Sgd) ANN NASON.



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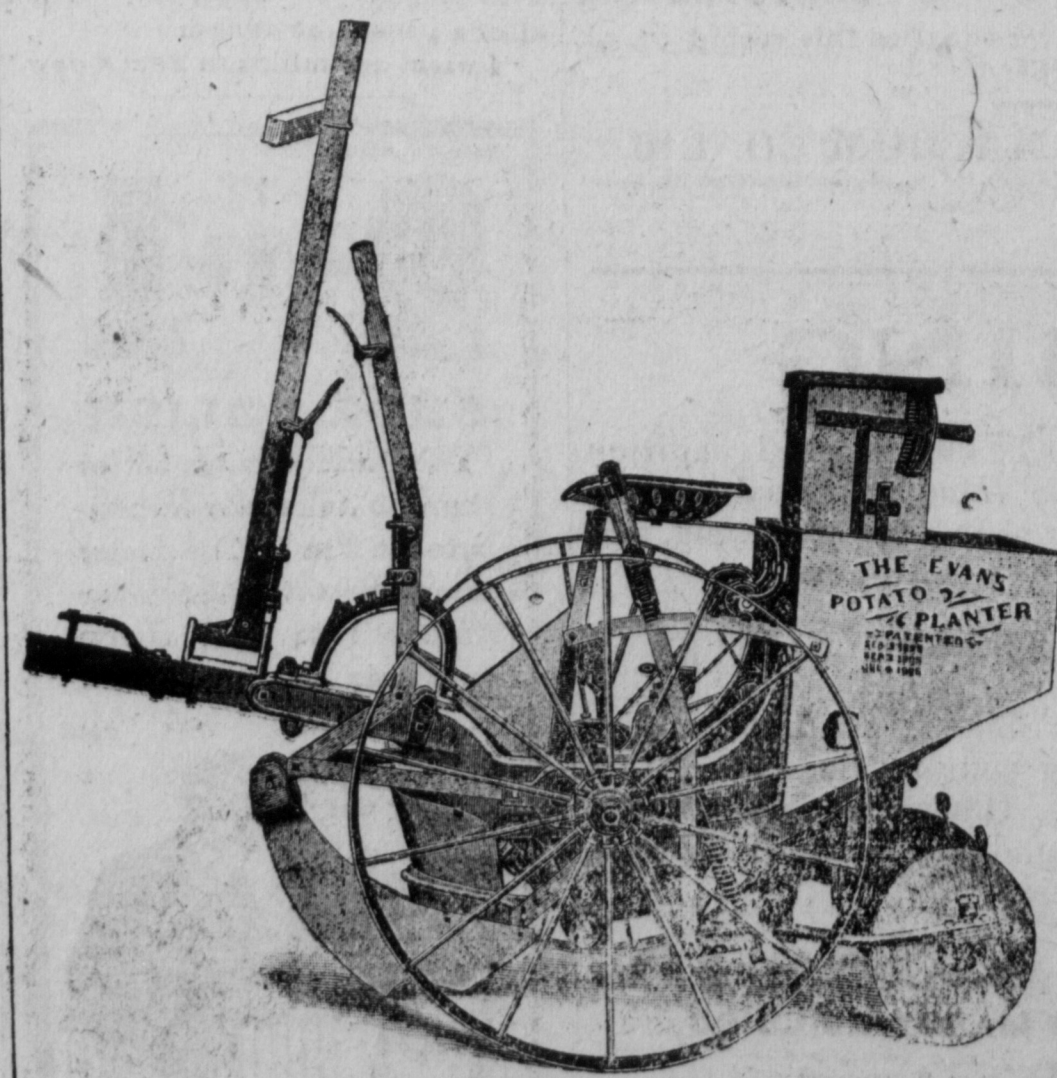
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