

XXIV.

The Resurrection.

MARCH 22, 1856—EASTER SUNDAY.

“And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace ye are saved); and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness to-ward us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.” — Ephesians ii. 1-10.

IT is written, “Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen;” that is to say, it possesses the double virtue of making the future appear present, and what is unseen visible. Now, if there were a fact in which this double virtue of faith were realised, and as it were incorporated, this fact, by adding to the power of faith the clear evidence of reality, would it not be the very foundation of all our light, and the most solid ground of our hopes? This fact is the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Scriptures begin by showing us the Christian so closely united to his Saviour by faith, that what happens to Him happens to us, and that His history is reproduced internally, but essentially, in every one of His children. If He dies, we die; if He rises again, we rise; if He ascends to heaven, we ascend; and it is thus that we are saved, because by faith we are made one with Christ, who is nowhere to be sought for but in everlasting life and glory, where we also must necessarily seek to be found—we who are made one with Him by faith. But now Jesus Christ, after having lived and died in the sight of men, rises again from the dead in their sight, and shows Himself to them after His resurrection; so that the resurrection of Jesus Christ, which, like the rest of His life, we appropriate to ourselves, becomes a visible event, bringing to light our own resurrection, though it were before invisible. You recollect the heretics of whom St. Paul speaks, who said that the resurrection was already past, considering it as a thing purely spiritual. They are in flagrant opposition to the doctrine of the gospel, which demonstrates the resurrection of our Saviour, and that which we shall enjoy after Him and with Him, as a real, material, corporeal fact—and, in the resurrection of our Saviour, exhibits—as already visible to the eye—our own resurrection. What an immense blessing and privilege for the Christian to be able to contemplate in Jesus Christ, visibly risen, his own resurrection, which seems in-visible, and which in one sense is so, but which becomes visible in his Saviour. It is thus raised above, I do not say the doubts, but even the diffi-

culties of faith itself, and becomes a tangible fact, which we find in Jesus Christ, and apply to ourselves.

And at the same time—(in my state of weakness I can only suggest the ideas)—the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ changes a future event into an event present, and even past. If He were not risen from the dead, we should always contemplate the resurrection as something future, and consequently obscure and imaginary, however certain are the promises of God in themselves. But here God adds to the promise an historical fact. Jesus Christ rose, and was seen after his resurrection; and so our resurrection, closely united to that of the Lord, and depending upon it, becomes an historical fact—an event present—and event past. For this reason, St. Paul says—“We are already risen;” so that, by the resurrection of our Saviour, our salvation, though unseen, becomes visible—though future, it becomes present. What could we desire besides? It is only the Christian who can thus have a firm assurance of his reconciliation with God, and of his everlasting felicity, because the things not seen have passed into the domain of the things that are seen and present, and which he can enjoy by contemplating them, as it were, with his eyes, and laying hold upon them even now. You may also observe, my dear friends, that wherever the resurrection of our Saviour is thrown into the shade, the assurance of salvation is thrown into the shade also. Thus, in the Romish Church, where the attention is constantly drawn towards the death of our Lord Jesus Christ, and not to His resurrection—where the principal and most important ceremony of the Church, the mass, is the celebration of the death of Jesus Christ, there is no assurance of salvation. It is even considered a sort of pride to be sure of one's salvation; and certain passages of Scripture are turned from their natural sense, and made to say that no one ever ought to be assured of his salvation—which amounts to saying that the Christian can never have any sure hope or solid peace. Unfortunately, there are many Protestants who cannot rejoice in the hope of their salvation; and this arises from their not contemplating Jesus Christ risen from the dead, and now living and interceding between God and us, and the inter-course between God and their soul as living—present—historical facts. But the Christian, enlightened upon the resurrection of our Saviour, enjoys the assurance of his salvation. It is as sure for him as it is that Jesus Christ rose again; and to make him doubtful of his hopes for eternity, he must begin by doubting that Jesus Christ rose from the dead. It is for this reason that the day we now celebrate is the greatest day in the Christian year; and the event which we recall to mind is not only AN event of the kingdom of heaven, but THE event of the kingdom of heaven. It was the resurrection of our Saviour that the apostles especially applied themselves to teach.

And for us, my friends, let us lay hold upon this resurrection: let us live with Jesus Christ risen from the dead, and we shall enjoy this precious privilege. But, at the same time, let us not forget at what a price this resurrection was bought, nor the path trodden by Jesus Christ, in order that our hearts may only savour the delight of this assurance, with feelings of profound gratitude and love for Him to whom we owe it. Receive these few words in the love of Christ, as I address them to you. It is all I am capable of saying; but let us all

ADOLPHE MONOD'S FAREWELL TO HIS FRIENDS

endeavour to develop them before Him in the silence of prayer, and in the study of the Word of God, at the feet of Jesus Christ risen, and in the love of Jesus Christ crucified! Amen.