

FEATURES OF THIS WEEK'S ISSUE

Leader—Easter Thoughts, p. 29. Notes—"Carmina Non Prins Audita"; "A Book on Queen Bess," p. 30. Topics—Back to the Fold; "The Gloomy Dean"; Mussolini Abol; German High Church Movement; Dancing, pp. 18-19. Complete Story, p. 11; The Church in the Middle Ages, p. 15. Roman Letter, p. 21; Our Church or many Churches, p. 23; Bishop Whyte in Invercargill, p. 25; Exit and Entrance, p. 33.

MESSAGE OF POPE LEO XIII. TO THE N.Z. TABLET.

Pergant Directores et Scriptores New Zealand Tablet, Apostolica Benedictione confortati, Religionis et Justitiae causam promovere per vias Veritatis et Pacis.
Die 4 Aprilis, 1900. LEO XIII., P.M.

TRANSLATION.—Fortified by the Apostolic Blessing, let the Directors and Writers of the New Zealand Tablet continue to promote the cause of Religion and Justice by the ways of Truth and Peace.
April 4, 1900. LEO XIII., Pope.



THURSDAY, APRIL 24, 1924.

EASTER THOUGHTS



FAMILIARITY blunts our perceptions. The most wonderful things arouse no astonishment when they are known to us from childhood. The fickle mind of man is attracted by what is novel rather than by what is momentous. Hence, even the passages of the New Testament which record the precise prophecies uttered by Our Lord concerning His Death and Resurrection fail to make a vivid impression on average Christians. We do not think in our hearts, and, because of our neglect to do so we have no real apprehension of the greatest and most fundamental of the mysteries of our religion. Yet the world has no account of anything more marvellous than the circumstances with which this mystery is surrounded. Christ, in the fulness of His life on earth, told the Jews that He would die and that He would rise again after three days. And He fulfilled this prophecy to the letter. He died on the cross like a malefactor, His glory seemingly obscured by the ignominy and loneliness of His sufferings. For a little while even the disciples lost heart, and the enemies of the Saviour were loud in their rejoicing and in their mockery. Of what value are all His miracles now? Where are all His grandiloquent promises? Why did He not come down from the cross if He was God, as He boasted that He was? But the hour of the powers of darkness was brief. His Resurrection confounded them; restored the courage of His followers; placed beyond reasonable doubt for all time the truth of His Divinity. It established for ever the glory of the cross, justified the faith of the Christians of all ages, proved the divine origin of the Church which He founded.

His object in the miracle of the Resurrection was to prove clearly that He was the Son of God by giving even to the Pharisees "the sign of Jonas the Prophet." Not only did He predict it Himself but it was foretold by the prophets of the Old Testament with wonderful clearness and detail, century after century, to the Jewish people. If they had not been blinded by prejudice they would have expected it; and even had it come to pass unexpectedly the evidence for it was so convincing that it left nothing to be desired by even the most incredulous. Every means was taken to verify His death. His tomb was guarded by

soldiers placed there to keep watch lest the Apostles should come and carry the Body away in order to pretend that He had arisen according to His promise; Magdalene, the holy women, the disciples on the way to Emmaus, the Apostles on several occasions during forty days, the doubts of Thomas, all bear irrefragable testimony to the reality of the miracle which is the foundation of our faith. All this body of contemporary proof has been sifted and examined by unbelievers down through the ages, but it has been only confirmed and more clearly established by every fresh ray of light thrown upon it. If there is no more wonderful miracle in all the history of God's dealing with men, there is also none established by plainer proofs and by more luminous evidence. "Unless Christ rose again our faith is vain," says St. Paul. But because He did rise again we know that our faith is reasonable; for we know that for Him who died and was buried only to come forth from the tomb on the third day, in fulfilment of His word, nothing is impossible. Hence, His Gospel is true, and His religion, and His Church. His death proved that He was man as well as God—the Man-God whom we confide and trust in, who loves us and invites our love, who foresees all our wants, who gives us the remedy for all our troubles. His Resurrection proves that He is true God, in whom lies the pledge and security of our own resurrection and of our immortality when, through His grace, we shall rise at the last day to partake of His glory for eternity.

As Christians we are convinced of the importance of the Resurrection. We consider the evidence and assent to it as reasonable persons must. But it is not enough to say that we believe, not enough to agree that infidelity is unreasonable. We render the homage of our minds to God and we make professions of faith in Him; but without a change of heart all that will not save us. Christ died and arose again to make us die with Him to sin in order to rise to a new life. This interior rebirth, this spiritual regeneration, this resurrection to the life of grace is necessary if we are to have our share in the precious fruits of His Passion and in the salutary effects of His Resurrection. The miracle was wrought for us all; and we must learn from it to remake our lives and to work out our own regeneration on the model shown us by the Saviour. His goodness, His holiness, His wisdom must be the lamps of our lives; rising out of our dead selves we must strive to imitate Him from afar, in all sincerity and in all earnestness; leaving behind the tomb of our bad habits we must follow upwards the path of virtue, animated by vivid faith and supported by His grace which is ours if we pray for it. We need no fresh miracles, no extraordinary aids, no special interventions of Providence: the grace is ours if we are but faithful to it. For us all, as for a perverse generation two thousand years ago, the sign of Jonas is enough. It rests with ourselves to learn from the Death and Resurrection of Our Lord to die to sin and to rise to justice by living a new life worthy of the price that was paid for our redemption. This mystery, so full of love and so rich in hope, will teach us how to live if we meditate on it seriously. Our lives are but as passing shadows. We may have to suffer; we may know but little comfort on earth; the world may have its triumphs in which we have no share. Even if our existence here be a living death its end will be soon. Three days in the grave or three decades—what does it matter? At the longest we shall shortly pass away from it all, and the more we have suffered and been humiliated for Christ's sake, the greater will be our glory when we rise with Him.

For the motives of a man's actions, hear his friend; for their prudence and propriety, his enemy.

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