

and told them that, if he was not to try the culprit, they must be content with such a punishment as the law permitted them to inflict. He seems to have known something of Jesus. "He knew that for envy they had delivered Him." The triumphal procession of Sunday was sure to be reported to him; and the neglect of Jesus to make use of that demonstration for any political end may have convinced him that He was politically harmless. His wife's dream implied that Jesus had been the subject of conversation in the palace; and perhaps the polite man of the world and his lady had felt the ennui of their visit to Jerusalem relieved by the story of the young peasant enthusiast who was bearding the fanatic priests.

178. Forced against their hopes to bring forward formal charges, the Jewish authorities poured out a volley of accusations, out of which these three clearly emerged—that He had perverted the nation, that He forbade to pay the Roman tribute, and that He set Himself up as a king. In the Sanhedrim they had condemned Him for blasphemy; but such a charge would have been treated by Pilate, as they well knew, in the same way as it was afterwards treated by the Roman governor Gallio, when preferred against Paul by the Jews of Corinth. They had therefore to invent new charges, which might represent Jesus as formidable to the government. It is humiliating to think that, in doing so, they resorted not only to gross hypocrisy, but even to deliberate falsehood; for how else can we characterize the second charge, when we remember the answer He gave to their question on the same subject on the previous Tuesday?

179. Pilate understood their pretended zeal for the Roman authority. He knew the value of this vehement anxiety that Rome's tribute should be paid. Rising from his seat to escape the fanatical cries of the mob, he took Jesus inside the palace to examine Him. It was a solemn moment for himself, though he knew it not. What a

terrible fate it was which brought him to this spot at this time! There were hundreds of Roman officials scattered over the empire, conducting their lives on the same principles as his was guided by; why did it fall to him to bring them to bear on this case? He had no idea of the issues he was deciding. The culprit may have seemed to him a little more interesting and perplexing than others; but He was only one of hundreds constantly passing through his hands. It could not occur to him that, though he appeared to be the judge, yet both he and the system he represented were on their trial before One whose perfection judged and exposed every man and every system which approached Him. He questioned Him in regard to the accusations brought against Him, asking especially if He pretended to be a king. Jesus replied that He made no such claim in the political sense, but only in a spiritual sense, as King of the Truth. This reply would have arrested any of the nobler spirits of heathendom, who spent their lives in the search for truth, and was perhaps framed in order to find out whether there was any response in Pilate's mind to such a suggestion. But he had no such cravings and dismissed it with a laugh. However, he was convinced that, as he had supposed, there lurked nothing of the demagogue or Messianic revolutionist behind this pure, peaceful, and melancholy face; and, returning to the tribunal, he announced to His accusers that he had acquitted Him.

180. The announcement was received with shrieks of disappointed rage and the loud reiteration of the charges against Him. It was a thoroughly Jewish spectacle. Many a time had this fanatical mob overcome the wishes and decisions of their foreign masters by the sheer force of clamor and pertinacity. Pilate ought at once to have released and protected Him. But he was a true son of the system in which he had been brought up—the statecraft of compromise and manoeuvre. Amidst the cries with



which they assailed his ears he was glad to hear one which offered him an excuse for getting rid of the whole business. They were shouting that Jesus had excited the populace "throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee unto this place." It occurred to him that Herod, the ruler of Galilee, was in town, and that he might get rid of the troublesome affair by handing it over to him; for it was a common procedure in Roman law to transfer a culprit from the tribunal of the territory in which he was arrested to that of the territory in which he was domiciled. Accordingly, he sent Him away in the hands of his bodyguard, and accompanied by His indefatigable accusers, to the palace of Herod.

181. They found this princeling, who had come to Jerusalem to attend the feast, in the midst of his petty court of flatterers and boon companions, and surrounded by the bodyguard which he maintained in imitation of his foreign masters. He was delighted to see Jesus, whose fame had so long been ringing through the territory over which he ruled. He was a typical Oriental prince, who had only one thought in life—his own pleasure and amusement. He came up to the Passover merely for the sake of the excitement. The appearance of Jesus seemed to promise a new sensation, of which he and his court were often sorely in want; for he hoped to see Him work a miracle. He was a man utterly incapable of taking a serious view of anything, and even overlooked the business about which the Jews were so eager, for he began to pour out a flood of rambling questions and remarks, without pausing for any reply. At last, however, he exhausted himself, and waited for the response of Jesus. But he waited in vain, for Jesus did not vouchsafe him one word of any kind. Herod had forgotten the murder of the Baptist, every impression being written as if on water in his characterless mind; but Jesus had not forgotten it. He felt that Herod should have been ashamed to look the

Baptist's friend in the face; He would not stoop even to speak to a man who could treat Him as a mere wonder-worker, who might purchase his judge's favor by exhibiting his skill; He looked with sad shame on one who had abused himself till there was no conscience or manliness left in him. But Herod was utterly incapable of feeling the annihilating force of such silent disdain. He and his men of war set Jesus at naught, and, throwing over His shoulders a white robe, in imitation of that worn at Rome by candidates who were canvassing for office, to indicate that He was a candidate for the Jewish throne, but one so ridiculous that it would be useless to treat Him with anything but contempt, sent Him back to Pilate. In this guise Jesus retraced His weary steps to the tribunal of the Roman.

182. Then ensued a course of procedure on the part of Pilate by which he made himself an image of the time-server, to be exhibited to the centuries in the light falling on him from Christ. It was evidently his duty, when Jesus returned from Herod, to pronounce at once the sentence of acquittal. But, instead of doing so, he resorted to expediency, and, being hurried on from one false step to another, was finally hurled down the slope of complete treachery to principle. He proposed to the Jews that, as both he and Herod had found Him innocent, he should scourge and then release Him; the scourging being a sop to their rage, and the release a tribute to justice.

183. The carrying out of this monstrous proposal was, however, interrupted by an incident which seemed to offer to Pilate once more a way of escape from his difficulty. It was the custom of the Roman governor on the Passover-morning to release to the people any single prisoner they might desire. It was a privilege highly prized by the populace of Jerusalem, for there were always in jail plenty of prisoners who, by rebellion against the detested foreign yoke, had made themselves the heroes of the multitude.



At this stage of the trial of Jesus, the mob of the city, pouring from street and alley in the excited Oriental fashion, came streaming up the avenue to the front of the palace, shouting for this annual gift. The cry was for once welcome to Pilate, for he saw in it a loophole of escape from his disagreeable position. It turned out, however, to be a noose through which he was slipping his neck. He offered the life of Jesus to the mob. For a moment they hesitated. But they had a favorite of their own, a noted leader of revolt against the Roman domination; and besides, voices instantly began to whisper busily in their ears, putting every art of persuasion into exercise in order to induce them not to accept Jesus. The Sanhedrists, in spite of the zeal they had manifested the hour before for law and order, did not scruple thus to take the side of the champion of sedition; and they succeeded only too well in poisoning the minds of the populace, who began to shout for their own hero, Barabbas. "What, then, shall I do with Jesus?" asked Pilate, expecting them to answer, "Give us Him too." But he was mistaken; the authorities had done their work successfully; the cry came from ten thousand throats, "Let Him be crucified!" Like priests, like people; it was the ratification by the nation of the decision of its heads. Pilate, completely baffled, angrily asked, "Why, what evil hath He done?" But he had put the decision into their power; they were now thoroughly fanaticized, and yelled forth, "Away with Him; crucify Him, crucify Him!"

184. Pilate did not yet mean to sacrifice justice utterly. He had still a move in reserve; but in the meantime he sent away Jesus to be scourged—the usual preliminary to crucifixion. The soldiers took Him to a room in their barracks, and feasted their cruel instincts on His sufferings. We will not describe the shame and pain of this revolting punishment. What must it have been to Him, with His honor and love for human nature, to be handled by those

coarse men, and to look so closely at human nature's uttermost brutality! The soldiers enjoyed their work and heaped insult upon cruelty. When the scourging was over, they set Him down on a seat, and, fetching an old cast-off cloak, flung it, in derisive imitation of the royal purple, on His shoulders; they thrust a reed into His hands for a scepter; they stripped some thorn-twigs from a neighboring bush, and, twining them into the rough semblance of a crown, crushed down their rending spikes upon His brow. Then, passing in front of Him, each of them in turn bent the knee, while, at the same time, he spat in His face, and plucking the reed from His hand, smote Him with it over the head and face.

185. At last, having glutted their cruelty, they led Him back to the tribunal, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. The crowds raised shouts of mad laughter at the soldiers' joke; and, with a sneer on his face, Pilate thrust Him forward, so as to meet the gaze of all, and cried, "Behold the man!" He meant that surely there was no use of doing any more to Him; He was not worth their while; could one so broken and wretched do any harm? How little he understood his own words! That "Ecce Homo" of his sounds over the world and draws the eyes of all generations to that marred visage. And lo, as we look, the shame is gone; it has lifted off Him and fallen on Pilate himself, on the soldiery, the priests, and the mob. His outflashing glory has scorched away every speck of disgrace, and tipped the crown of thorns with a hundred points of flaming brightness. But just as little did Pilate understand the temper of the people he ruled, when he supposed that the sight of the misery and helplessness of Jesus would satisfy their thirst for vengeance. Their objection to Him all along had been that one so poor and unambitious should claim to be their Messiah; and the sight of Him now, scourged and scorned by the alien soldiery, yet still claiming to be their King, raised their



hate to madness, so that they cried louder than ever, "Crucify Him, crucify Him."

186. Now at last, too, they gave vent to the real charge against Him, which had all along been burning at the bottom of their hearts, and which they could no longer suppress: "We have a law," they cried, "and by that law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God." But these words struck a chord in Pilate's mind which they had not thought of. In the ancient traditions of his native land there were many legends of sons of the gods, who in the days of old had walked the earth in humble guise, so that they were indistinguishable from common men. It was dangerous to meet them, for an injury done them might bring down on the offender the wrath of the gods, their sires. Faith in these antique myths had long died out, because no men were seen on earth so different from their neighbors as to require such an explanation. But in Jesus Pilate had discerned an inexplicable something which affected him with a vague terror. And now the words of the mob, "He made Himself the Son of God," came like a flash of lightning. They brought back out of the recesses of his memory the old, forgotten stories of his childhood, and revived the heathen terror, which forms the theme of some of the greatest Greek dramas, of committing unawares a crime which might evoke the dire vengeance of Heaven. Might not Jesus be the Son of the Hebrew Jehovah—so his heathen mind reasoned—as Castor and Pollux were the sons of Jupiter? He hastily took Him inside the palace again, and, looking at Him with new awe and curiosity, asked, "Whence art Thou?" But Jesus answered him not one word. Pilate had not listened to Him when He wished to explain everything to him; he had outraged his own sense of justice by scourging Him; and if a man turns his back on Christ when He speaks, the hour will come when he will ask and receive no answer. The proud governor

was both surprised and irritated, and demanded, "Speakest Thou not to me? Knowest Thou not that I have power to crucify Thee, and have power to release Thee?" to which Jesus answered with the indescribable dignity of which the brutal shame of His torture had in no way robbed Him, "Thou couldst have no power at all against Me, except it were given thee from above."

187. Pilate had boasted of his power to do what he chose with the prisoner; but he was in reality very weak. He came forth from his private interview determined at once to release Him. The Jews saw it in his face; and it made them bring out their last weapon, which they had all along been keeping in reserve: they threatened to complain against him to the emperor. This was the meaning of the cry with which they interrupted his first words, "If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend." This had been in both their minds and his all through the trial. It was this which made him so irresolute. There was nothing a Roman governor dreaded so much as a complaint against him sent by his subjects to the emperor. At this time it was specially perilous; for the imperial throne was occupied by a morbid and suspicious tyrant, who delighted in disgracing his own servants, and would kindle in a moment at the whisper of any of his subordinates favoring a pretender to royal power. Pilate knew too well that his administration could not bear inspection, for it had been cruel and corrupt in the extreme. Nothing is able so peremptorily to forbid a man to do the good he would do as the evil of his past life. This was the blast of temptation which finally swept Pilate off his feet, just when he had made up his mind to obey his conscience. He was no hero, who would obey his convictions at any cost. He was a thorough man of the world, and saw at once that he must surrender Jesus to their will.

188. However, he was full not only of rage at being so completely foiled, but also of an overpowering religious



dread. Calling for water, he washed his hands in the presence of the multitude, and cried, "I am innocent of the blood of this just Person." He washed his hands when he should have exerted them. Blood is not so easily washed off. But the mob, now completely triumphant, derided his scruples, rending the air with the cry, "His blood be upon us and on our children!"

189. Pilate felt the insult keenly, and, turning on them in his anger, determined that he, too, should have his triumph. Thrusting Jesus forward more prominently into view, he began to mock them by pretending to regard Him as really their king, and asking, "Shall I crucify your king?" It was now their turn to feel the sting of mockery; and they cried out, "We have no king but Cæsar." What a confession from Jewish lips! It was the surrender of the freedom and the history of the nation. Pilate took them at their word, and forthwith handed Jesus over to be crucified.

190. **The Crucifixion.**—They had succeeded in wresting their victim from Pilate's unwilling hands, "and they took Jesus and led Him away." At length they were able to gratify their hatred to the uttermost, and they hurried Him off to the place of execution with every demonstration of inhuman triumph. The actual executioners were the soldiers of the governor's guard; but in moral significance the deed belonged entirely to the Jewish authorities. They could not leave it in charge of the minions of the law to whom it belonged, but with undignified eagerness headed the procession themselves, in order to feast their vindictiveness on the sight of His sufferings.

191. It must by this time have been about ten o'clock in the morning. The crowd at the palace had been gradually swelling. As the fatal procession, headed by the Sanhedrists, passed on through the streets, it attracted great multitudes. It happened to be a Passover holiday,

so that there were thousands of idlers, prepared for any excitement. All those especially who had been inoculated with the fanaticism of the authorities poured forth to witness the execution. It was, therefore, through the midst of myriads of cruel and unsympathizing onlookers that Jesus went to His death.

192. The spot where He suffered can not now be identified. It was outside the gates of the city, and was doubtless the common place of execution. It is usually called Mount Calvary, but there is nothing in the Gospels to justify such a name, nor does there seem to be any hill in the neighborhood on which it could have taken place. The name Golgotha, "place of a skull," may signify a skull-like knoll, but more probably refers to the ghastly relics of the tragedies happening there that might be lying about. It was probably a wide, open space, in which a multitude of spectators might assemble; and it appears to have been on the side of a much frequented thoroughfare, for, besides the stationary spectators, there were others passing to and fro who joined in mocking the Sufferer.

193. Crucifixion was an unspeakably horrible death. As Cicero, who was well acquainted with it, says, it was the most cruel and shameful of all punishments. "Let it never," he adds, "come near the body of a Roman citizen; nay, not even near his thoughts, or eyes, or ears." It was reserved for slaves and revolutionaries whose end was meant to be marked with special infamy. Nothing could be more unnatural and revolting than to suspend a living man in such a position. The idea of it seems to have been suggested by the practice of nailing up vermin in a kind of revengeful merriment on some exposed place. Had the end come with the first strokes in the wounds, it would still have been an awful death; but the victim usually lingered two or three days, with the burning pain of the nails in his hands and feet, the torture of overcharged veins, and, worst of all, his intolerable thirst, constantly



increasing. It was impossible to help moving the body so as to get relief from each new attitude of pain; yet every movement brought new and excruciating agony.

194. But we gladly turn away from the awful sight, to think how by His strength of soul, His resignation, and His love, Jesus triumphed over the shame, the cruelty, and horror of it; and how, as the sunset with its crimson glory makes even the putrid pool burn like a shield of gold and drenches with brilliance the vilest object held up against its beams, He converted the symbol of slavery and wickedness into a symbol for whatever is most pure and glorious in the world. The head hung free in crucifixion, so that He was able not only to see what was going on beneath Him, but also to speak. He uttered seven sentences at intervals, which have been preserved to us. They are seven windows by which we can still look into His very mind and heart, and learn the impressions made on Him by what was happening. They show that He retained unimpaired the serenity and majesty which had characterized Him throughout His trial and exhibited in their fullest exercise all the qualities which had already made His character illustrious. He triumphed over His sufferings not by the cold severity of a Stoic, but by self-forgetting love. When He was fainting beneath the burden of the cross in the Via Dolorosa, He forgot His fatigue in His anxiety for the daughters of Jerusalem and their children. When they were nailing Him to the tree, He was absorbed in a prayer for His murderers. He quenched the pain of the first hours of crucifixion by His interest in the penitent thief and His care to provide a new home for His mother. He never was more completely Himself—the absolutely unselfish Worker for others.

195. It was, indeed, only through His love that He could be deeply wounded. His physical sufferings, though intense and prolonged, were not greater than have been borne by many other sufferers, unless the exquisiteness of His bodily

organism may have heightened them to a degree which to other men is inconceivable. He did not linger more than five hours—a space of time so much briefer than usual, that the soldiers, who were about to break His legs, were surprised to find Him already dead. His worst sufferings were those of the mind. He whose very life was love, who thirsted for love as the hart pants for the water-brooks, was encircled with a sea of hatred and of dark, bitter, hellish passion, that surged round Him and flung up its waves about His cross. His soul was spotlessly pure; holiness was its very life; but sin pressed itself against it, endeavoring to force upon it its loathsome contact, from which it shrank through every fiber. The members of the Sanhedrim took the lead in venting on Him every possible expression of contempt and malicious hate, and the populace faithfully followed their example. These were the men He had loved and still loved with an unquenchable passion; and they insulted, crushed, and trampled on His love. Through their lips the Evil One reiterated again and again the temptation by which He had been all His life assaulted, to save Himself and win the faith of the nation by some display of supernatural power made for His own advantage. That seething mass of human beings, whose faces, distorted with passion, glared upon Him, was an epitome of the wickedness of the human race. His eyes had to look down on it, and its coarseness, its sadness, its dishonor of God, its exhibition of the shame of human nature were like a sheaf of spears gathered in His breast.

196. There was a still more mysterious woe. Not only did the world's sin thus press itself on His loving and holy soul in those near Him; it came from afar—from the past, the distant, and the future—and met on Him. He was bearing the sin of the world; and the consuming fire of God's nature, which is the reverse side of the light of His holiness and love, flamed forth against Him, to scorch



it away. So it pleased the Lord to put Him to grief, when He who knew no sin was made sin for us.

197. These were the sufferings which made the cross appalling. After some two hours, He withdrew Himself completely from the outer world and turned His face towards the eternal world. At the same time a strange darkness overspread the land, and Jerusalem trembled beneath a cloud whose murky shadows looked like a gathering doom. Golgotha was well-nigh deserted. He hung long silent amidst the darkness without and the darkness within, till at length, out of the depths of an anguish which human thought will never fathom, there issued the cry, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" It was the moment when the soul of the Sufferer touched the very bottom of His misery.

198. But the darkness passed from the landscape and the sun shone forth again. The spirit of Christ, too, emerged from its eclipse. With the strength of victory won in the final struggle, He cried, "It is finished!" and then, with perfect serenity, breathed out His life on a verse of a favorite psalm: "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit."

199. **The Resurrection and Ascension.**—There never was an enterprise in the world which seemed more completely at an end than did that of Jesus on the last Old Testament Sabbath. Christianity died with Christ, and was laid with Him in the sepulcher. It is true that when, looking back at this distance, we see the stone rolled to the mouth of the tomb, we experience little emotion; for we are in the secret of Providence and know what is going to happen. But, when He was buried, there was not a single human being that believed He would ever rise again before the day of the world's doom.

200. The Jewish authorities were thoroughly satisfied of this. Death ends all controversies, and it had settled the

one between Him and them triumphantly in their favor. He had put Himself forward as their Messiah, but had scarcely any of the marks which they looked for in one with such claims. He had never received any important national recognition. His followers were few and unimportant. His career had been short. He was in the grave. Nothing more was to be thought of Him.

201. The breakdown of the disciples had been complete. When He was arrested, "they all forsook Him and fled." Peter, indeed, followed Him to the high priest's palace, but only to fall more ignominiously than the rest. John followed even to Golgotha, and may have hoped against hope that at the very last moment, He would descend from the cross to ascend the Messianic throne. But even the last moment went by with nothing done. What remained for them but to return to their homes and their fishing as disappointed men, who would be twitted during the rest of their lives with the folly of following a pretender, and asked where the thrones were on which He had promised to seat them?

202. Jesus had, indeed, foretold His sufferings, death, and resurrection. But they never understood these sayings; they forgot them or gave them an allegorical turn; and, when He was actually dead, these yielded them no comfort whatever. The women came to the sepulcher on the first Christian Sabbath, not to see it empty, but to embalm His body for its long sleep. Mary ran to tell the disciples, not that He was risen, but that the body had been taken away and laid she knew not where. When the women told the other disciples how He had met them, "their words seemed to them as idle tales and they believed them not." Peter and John, as John himself informs us, "knew not the Scripture, that He should rise from the dead." Could anything be more pathetic than the words of the two travelers to Emmaus, "We trusted that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel"? When the



disciples were met together, "they mourned and wept." There never were men more utterly disappointed and dispirited.

203. But we can now be glad that they were so sad. They doubted that we might believe. For how is it to be accounted for, that in a few days afterwards these very men were full of confidence and joy, their faith in Jesus had revived, and the enterprise of Christianity was again in motion with a far vaster vitality than it had ever before possessed? They say the reason of this was that Jesus had risen, and they had seen Him. They tell us about their visits to the empty tomb, and how He appeared to Mary Magdalene, to the other women, to Peter, to the two on the way to Emmaus, to ten of them at once, to eleven of them at once, to James, to the five hundred, and so forth. Are these stories credible? They might not be, if they stood alone. But the alleged resurrection of Christ was accompanied by the indisputable resurrection of Christianity. And how is the latter to be accounted for except by the former? It might, indeed, be said that Jesus had filled their minds with imperial dreams, which He failed to realize; and that, having once caught sight of so magnificent a career, they were unable to return to their fishing-nets, and so invented this story, in order to carry on the scheme on their own account. Or it might be said that they only fancied they saw what they tell about the Risen One. But the remarkable thing is that, when they resumed their faith in Him, they were found to be no longer pursuing worldly ends, but intensely spiritual ones; they were no longer expecting thrones, but persecution and death; yet they addressed themselves to their new work with a breadth of intelligence, an ardor of devotion, and a faith in results which they had never shown before. As Christ rose from the dead in a transfigured body, so did Christianity. It had put off its carnality. What effected this change? They say it was the resurrection and the sight

of the risen Christ. But their testimony is not the proof that He rose. The incontestable proof is the change itself—the fact that suddenly they had become courageous, hopeful, believing, wise, possessed with noble and reasonable views of the world's future, and equipped with resources sufficient to found the Church, convert the world, and establish Christianity in its purity among men. Between the last Old Testament Sabbath and the time, a few weeks afterwards, when this stupendous change had undeniably taken place, some event must have intervened which can be regarded as a sufficient cause for so great an effect. The resurrection alone answers the exigencies of the problem, and is therefore proved by a demonstration far more cogent than perhaps any testimony could be. It is a happy thing that this event is capable of such a proof; for, if Christ be not risen, our faith is vain; but if He be risen, then the whole of His miraculous life becomes credible, for this was the greatest of all the miracles; His divine mission is demonstrated, for it must have been God who raised Him up; and the most assuring glance which history affords is given into the realities of the eternal world.

204. The risen Christ lingered on earth long enough fully to satisfy His adherents of the truth of His resurrection. They were not easily convinced. The apostles treated the reports of the holy women with scornful incredulity; Thomas doubted the testimony of the other apostles; and some of the five hundred to whom He appeared on a Galilean mountain doubted their own eyesight, and only believed when they heard His voice. The loving patience with which He treated these doubters showed that, though His bodily appearance was somewhat changed, He was still the same in heart as ever. This was pathetically shown too by the places which He visited in His glorified form. They were the old haunts where He had prayed and preached, labored and suffered—the Galilean moun-



tain, the well-beloved lake, the Mount of Olives, the village of Bethany, and, above all, Jerusalem, the fatal city which had murdered her own Son, but which He could not cease to love.

205. Yet there were obvious indications that He belonged no more to this lower world. There was a new reserve about His risen humanity. He forbade Mary to touch Him, when she would have kissed His feet. He appeared in the midst of His own with mysterious suddenness, and just as suddenly vanished out of sight. He was only now and then in their company, no longer according them the constant and familiar intercourse of former days. At length, at the end of forty days, when the purpose for which He had lingered on earth was fully accomplished and the apostles were ready in the power of their new joy to bear to all nations the tidings of His life and work, His glorified humanity was received up into that world to which it rightfully belonged.

## CONCLUSION

206. No life ends even for this world when the body by which it has for a little been made visible disappears from the face of the earth. It enters into the stream of the ever-swelling life of mankind, and continues to act there with its whole force for evermore. Indeed, the true magnitude of a human being can often only be measured by what this after-life shows him to have been. So it was with Christ. The modest narrative of the Gospels scarcely prepares us for the outburst of creative force which issued from His life when it appeared to have ended. His influence on the modern world is the evidence of how great He was; for there must have been in the cause as much as there is in the effect. It has overspread the life of man and caused it to blossom with the vigor of a spiritual spring. It has absorbed into itself all other influences, as a mighty river, pouring along the center of a continent, receives tributaries from a hundred hills. And its quality has been even more exceptional than its quantity.

207. But the most important evidence of what He was, is to be found neither in the general history of modern civilization nor in the public history of the visible Church, but in the experiences of the succession of genuine believers, who with linked hands stretch back to touch Him through the Christian generations. The experience of myriads of souls, redeemed by Him from themselves and from the world, proves that history was cut in twain by the appearance of a Regenerator, who was not a mere link in the chain of common men, but One whom the race could not from its own resources have produced—the perfect Type,