

EASTER



"Alleluja! Christ is Risen"

PHOTO BY ANNE SHRIBER

Easter Recalls the Promise of Eternal Life



Of all the anniversaries which humanity celebrates, Easter is the most significant. Christmas is the joyous celebration of a birth, of the beginning of the most conspicuous and potent life in human history. It relates primarily to a life on earth, to an existence that is comprehensible because it is expressed in the material forms that make it tangible, visible, and easily subject to the human understanding. But the whole purpose of that life related to an existence beyond the material, to another and a different life infinitely more important, and Easter is at once the symbol and the assurance of that larger and greater existence for which man is designed and to which earthly life is but a vestibule.

The event which it commemorates is a resurrection from death so well substantiated by the evidence and so tremendous in its implications, that for nearly 2,000 years it has been by far the most powerful influence in the thought and action of mankind. In that event is the promise, the assurance, the proof, the certainty, of immortality. It has given to human life an immeasurable importance, has extended it from a few hours to an eternity, has lifted it up from the dust and clothed it in the apparel of divinity. "Eternal life! That is the meaning of Easter."

Firm Belief in Immortality.

But in the necessary freedom of human reasoning there are always theories antagonistic to the meaning and significance of Easter as well as direct denial of that conception of deity upon which the Christian and all religions are based, and denial in particular of the historical evidences upon which the Christian world founds its faith. Positive atheism, however, is not, and never has been, a serious menace to human welfare. There is something instinctive in humanity that protects it from such a negation. Nowhere, and at no time since man became conscious of his own ego, has he been without some

consciousness of deity, however vague or distorted it might be. And associated with that there has nearly always been some feeling of hope or belief relating to survival after death that is apparently no less instinctive. The two ideas, the idea of God and the idea of immortality, seem to be set so deeply and firmly within man that intellectual denials can make no serious headway against them.

More dangerous, because more subtle, are those mechanistic theories of human life now unhappily prevalent in many of our higher institutions of learning, which reason the soul out of the body in the name of pseudo-science. When a youth is told with an air of authority that thought is merely a physiological process, that ideas and, of course, ideals, are but the products of the mechanical stimulation of a physical organ, the brain; when he is taught indirectly, if not directly, that there is no such thing as mind or spirit or soul; he is, if he accepts these theories, deprived not only of all religious foundations but of all incentive, other than animal, for living. If man is only a mechanical automaton, as some of our psychologists contend, life indeed is without purpose or without hope, and is not worth living.

Consciousness of Soul.

But such fantastic and depressing theories are contradicted by the individual consciousness of every human being. It is inconceivable that even their creators and distributors actually believe in them. They are in effect the denial of all human experience, the rejection of all knowledge. Those activities of consciousness which have created all that is great and fine and wonderful in science, in art, in literature, in architecture, in mechanics, are but fortuitous reactions to mechanical stimulus in a physical organ! We are all Frankenstein's, soulless beings produced by a soulless nature! And such pernicious absurdities, clothed in scientific terminology to give them an air of profundity, are gravely imparted to youth as learning. No wonder that now and then a youth says to himself "What's the use?" and commits suicide. And if they expressed truth all humanity, indeed, would render commit suicide and put an end to the colossal farce of existence.

But fortunately for mankind it rejects such nonsense in the guise of learning, with proper contempt. It knows that it has a consciousness that is self, an ego, a mind, spirit, a soul. "What makes each one of us be what we are is only the soul," said Plato long ago, and that is the common conviction of humanity. And that soul, however it may be subject to material limitations in a material ex-

"He Is Risen"

"Sweet and clear the birds are singing,
At Easter dawn!
Hark, O hear! the bells are ringing
On Easter morn.
And the song that they sing,
The good news we hear them ring,
Is 'Christ, the Lord, is risen!'"

"Easter buds will soon be flowers,
Fragrant and gay;
Winter's snows give place to showers,
And night to day;
Hope and joy come again!
Life and light forever reign!
Yes! Christ, the Lord, is risen, is risen!"

istence, is not in itself subject to a material death. Together with the consciousness of a soul is the virtually universal and unchangeable conviction that it survives physical dissolution. That is a conviction which springs instinctively from the soul consciousness, which is supported by reason, without which, indeed, life itself is irrational, and the truth of which is demonstrated by the event which Easter commemorates. Consciousness, feeling, reason, fact, all unite to make life after death the only rational, the only supportable, the only satisfactory, solution of the problem of human existence.

Death's Terrors Overcome.

It is only in that faith that human life acquires a meaning and a purpose, it is only in that faith that life is given hope and assurance, and it is only in that faith that death loses its terrors and becomes the instrument of promotion and of triumph. In that faith life is a fruitful progress toward a blessed goal, a preparation for eternity; and he who by that faith and by the character of his life has more than the destiny secure, may contemplate the event of death with unfeigned tranquility, knowing it to be but an incident of an eternal life already won. "So live," says the poet

—that when thy summons comes to join
The innumerable caravan which moves
To that mysterious realm where each shall take
His chamber in the silent halls of death,
Thou go not, like the quarry slave at
dawn,
Scourged to his dungeon, but sustained
And soothed
By an unfaltering trust, approach thy
grave
Like one that wraps the drapery of
his couch
About him, and lies down to pleasant
dreams.

What matters death, indeed, when it is but a sleep from which one wakes to a more abundant life!—St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

The Road to Galilee

Rememberest thou the way
In sandal shoes He came,
Upon that day, that wondrous day
They spoke His holy name?
Hushed were the land and sea
As with an angel's breath—
It was the road to Galilee
That leads from Nazareth.

The path was sore and dried,
The vines had ceased to cling,
And on the dusty roadside cried
A bird with broken wing:
To bloom the dead leaves stirred
Beneath His footstep's pressure,
And from His hand the wounded bird
Flew to its waiting nest.

As on His Way He went,
The folk's last sheep to seek,
He healed the arm in palsy bent,
And kissed the leper's cheek.
And from the city's din,
Stooped from the shadows, crept
The nameless one He cleansed from sin
As at His feet she wept.

With corn was Canaan green,
Yet waited there no bed
For Him, the outcast Nazarene,
On which to lay His head.
The road to Galilee
Must lead Him, wandering still,
Up to the Cross on Calvary
That beckoned from the hill.

Rememberest thou the hill
To which at last He came,
That day of days the world stood still,
No more to be the same?
The grave no more to be
Victor again o'er death—
'Twas on the road to Galilee
That leads from Nazareth.
—John S. McGroarty in Los Angeles Times.

A JOYOUS EASTER



CEREMONIALS OF MAUNDY THURSDAY

Thursday, April 14, is observed by services in the churches in commemoration of the partaking of the Last Supper by Christ and His disciples. Its rightful name, Maundy Thursday, is chiefly derived from the words of the ancient antiphon sung in the churches and starting with "Mandatum novum do vobis." Indeed, the word Mandatum later came to stand for the main ceremony of that day—the washing of the feet of the catechumens.

Of the many queer customs featuring this day in ancient times, perhaps the most important was this washing of the feet. This practice was prevalent in many parts of Europe in the Middle Ages, and there is even mention of its performance in Spain as early as the Fourth century. Gradually, in the monarchical countries, the custom developed into the ceremony of the king's washing the feet of as many poor men as there were years of his age. In England the practice continued in that fashion until the reign of Queen Elizabeth, who directed that the feet of the poor men should first be bathed by her servants, in warm water and sweet herbs. James II was the last English monarch to perform the ceremony, for his successor, William of Orange, instructed his almoners to execute the duty; and the custom was discontinued in that country in the year 1754. However, it was carried on until quite recently in several other European countries, and perhaps even is, in a few, to this day.

In those times there were some other ceremonials connected with the day, one of which was the reconciliation of the penitents—mainly achieved by long periods of prayer. Another was the consecration of the chrism, or baptismal oil. This oil was used abundantly in Easter week, and all that was needed for the Sunday was consecrated on Maundy Thursday, and by the Fifth century it came about that all the chrism likely to be needed during the year was consecrated on this day.

One more ceremony of this eventful Thursday was the celebration of the Eucharist. This was originally taken fasting, but later many began to take it in the evening after meat. By the reissuance of some old laws evening communion was forbidden, but gradually it has crept back into favor.

Apart from these major celebrations there were some minor observances, such as the stripping of the altars after vespers and the silencing of the church bells from Wednesday midnight till matins on Easter day.

Most of these customs associated with Maundy Thursday have fallen into the limbo of oblivion, but the recalling of them serves as a pleasant link with those less sophisticated days.

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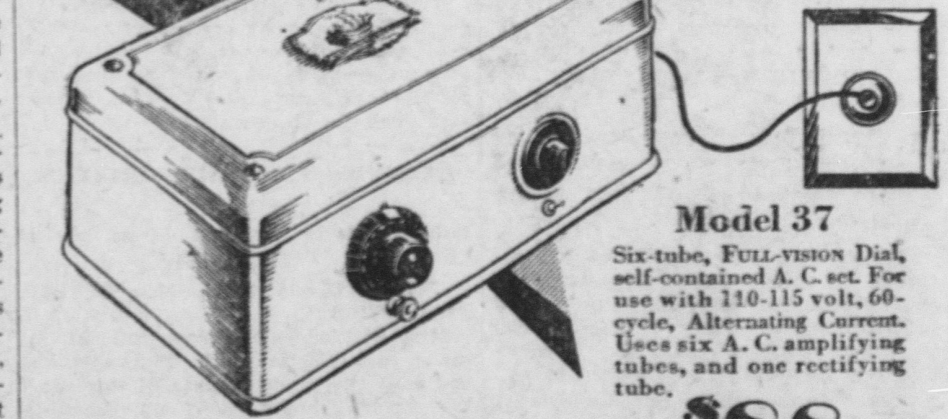
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America's Debt to France

France, which before 1778 had sided the United States both with loans of money and of men, in February of that year openly espoused the cause of America and entered into a treaty of alliance.

Poor Bidding

"Everything she had went at auction."
"Public sale?"
"No, bridge."—Boston Post.

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