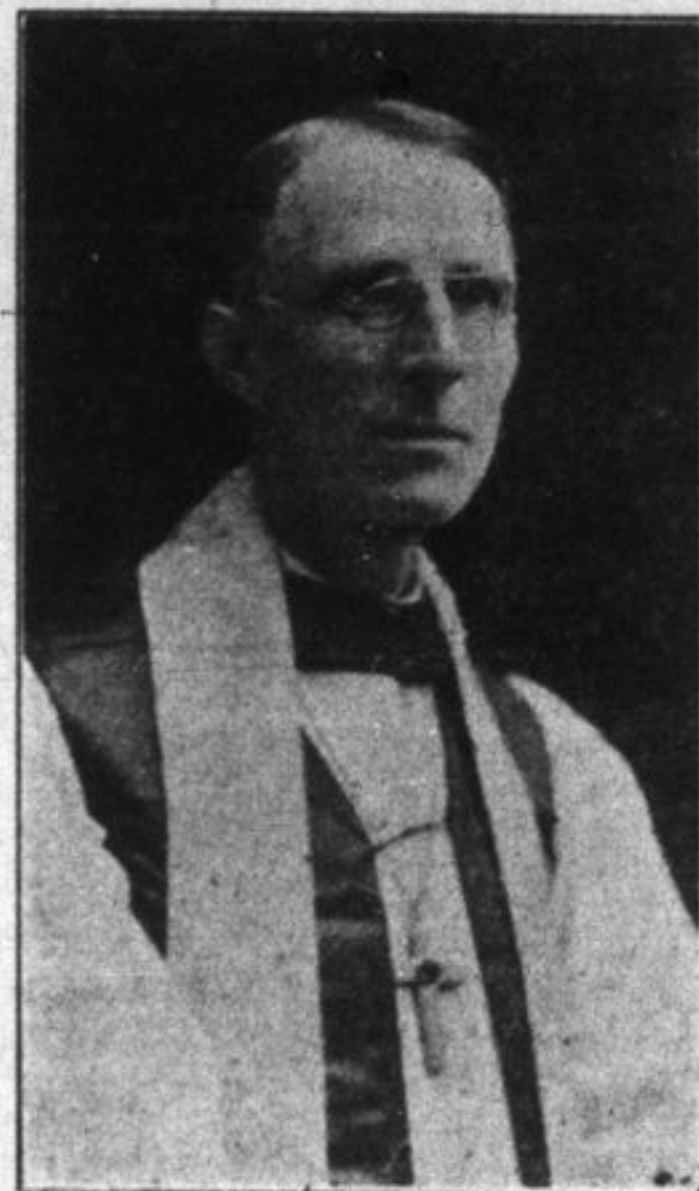


# Festival of Easter—Its Lessons

## Some Timely Messages From Some of Kingston's Leading Churchmen

### "Full of Significance"

His Lordship the Bishop of Kingston.



The yearly commemoration of the great outstanding facts of the Christian Revelation, such as Christmas and Easter, is always full of significance, and never more so than in the present time of warfare and distress of nations. When the Christmas bells rang out reminding us of the Nativity of the Prince of Peace, the far off echo of murderous shot and shell seemed to mock their message. But thoughtful men thanked God and took courage, when they reflected that even in the midst of war's alarms and carnage, the Christmas Festival bore witness to the Divine purpose for the world, delayed and obscured indeed by human imperfection and passion, but remaining the ideal towards which humanity, though with painful slowness, and many a setback, is moving by His will. And so with the great Festival of Easter, the very crown and consummation of the work of the Saviour. It is pre-eminently the commemoration of the victory of life over death, and brings exactly the inspiration which is needed at the present time.

For to many death seems to be, winning the battle. The very flower of the manhood of our race is being cut down in its fullest vigor; Rachel is weeping for her children in countless homes. And then comes to dry the tear and heal the aching heart the message from the All-pitying Father, that His own Son passed first through the gate of death before His glorious Resurrection, just to teach men that life in the end was stronger than death for all who follow Him. The loved ones have indeed passed through the Valley of the Shadow; but through their very death they live, in a life beyond the reach of death waiting to meet their loved ones on the other side. "In the sight of the unwise they seem to die; but they are at peace." In firm faith in the Resurrection message we offer the following thoughts, written some years ago when just such a young life as that which is being mourned for now throughout our Empire was, as it seemed, abruptly ended. They may be some consolation to the bereaved:

Sad hearts and weeping eyes,  
The bruised mind, the aching memory,  
Our portion these; for him the glad surprise  
The Master's face to see.

The broken hopes we sigh,  
The young life ended that had scarce begun;  
But he, in joyful wonder, hears the cry  
"Servant and friend, well done."

Loving and loved, brave and true;  
Too brief his span, yet in Eternity  
Surely the Master still has work to do  
For such pure souls as he.

Pray we his life above  
(Though his dear body rest beneath the sod)  
Bind us with one more golden chain of love  
Closer to Heaven and God.

"Life stronger than death." Thank God that men's thoughts have been forcibly averted, if only for a season, from things temporal. In the face of the tremendous issues that confront us now, how mean and poor and base appears the stark materialism which seemed to be devouring the nation's spiritual vitality, eating away its very soul. Men were beginning, as the old Latin writer says, "propter vitam vivendi perdere causas"—a striking parallel to our Lord's pregnant saying: "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" Spiritual death is far worse, as we see now, than physical death. The former separates us from God; the latter may bring us nearer to Him.

That is the Easter message, brought, not by a dead, but a living Christ, "who (as the majestic stanzas of the venerable creed of Nicaea sets forth in stately periods) for us men and for our salvation, came down from Heaven; and was made man. He suffered and was buried; and the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures." The risen Lord, the guarantee of our own immortality through faith in Him, that is the kernel of the Christian message, binding all who accept it to strive to live the risen life here and now.

"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things that are above."  
"Christ is risen! Alleluia!"

### "A Brighter Day Coming"

By Rev. M. MacGillivray, Chalmers Presbyterian Church.



"Thou sittest on the right hand of God, in the glory of the Father."—Rev. 19:4.  
"And they prostrated themselves, and worshipped God, who was seated upon the throne. Amen," they cried, "Hallelujah."  
This is the thought of St. John: God is seated upon the throne of the Universe, ruling over all. His judgments are just and true; and those who can speak for the saints—the elders, the four creatures, representatives of the redeemed world—unite in saying, "Praise the Lord." This voice of devotion and joy must not now drop into silence that Easter Day is past, but continue singing and ushering in the new heaven and the new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.

"Christ is arisen;  
Death hath He slain,  
Burst ye your prison;  
Burst ye your chain.  
Songs of praise, lead ye,  
Works of love, heed ye,  
Hungry ones, feed ye,  
News of life speed ye,  
Coming joys, plead ye."

The reader is familiar with the drift of this last writing in the Bible. It was a letter of comfort sent round to a suffering and sorrow-stricken people whose pressing anxieties and problems were in danger of making them forget

the Easter gladness they once knew. St. John, their fellow-sufferer, indifferent to his own affliction; felt for them in his heart and thought long about their misfortune, and about the moral order under which it could be possible. And as he pondered the matter, light and comfort came to him and them in the series of visions and exhortations set down in this book.

To all appearances, things looked ill enough; but the Lamb was upon the throne. Out of this pain and turmoil brighter days would come. Only let them front light and duty, endure as good soldiers of Jesus Christ, and take events, terrible as they were, in their true sequence and relation. Here, they saw, too often, a mournful procession from Roman dungeons and Roman scaffolds, and Roman fires passing through death's portals into unmarked and nameless graves. But yonder, it was a procession moving up with jubilant songs to the throne of God and of the Lamb, the blood-stained and sadly scarred vesture of clay exchanged for the robe of light. What a change as they passed from earth to heaven! Here they were cut down by the axe of Nero; burned to illuminate his gardens; torn by wild beasts to make sport for the idle and dissolute; and in other ways trampled down by the pale horse whose rider's name was Death. But drawing aside the veil, and looking up, what wonderful things were happening on the other side. There, the saints were coming out of the great tribulation and stepping into the presence of the King with the shout of victory and the palm of thanksgiving. The "dies irae" had passed and there was a new morning of time and Easter Day was opening out as an Easter Age for the world; and this Easter Age, because the "faithful and true" had borne witness.

History repeats herself. This is a picture of the "new earth," of which St. John speaks elsewhere, wherein shall dwell humanity and justice. And the lesson for every people and for every age is this: Let them dutifully and hopefully and unweariedly working for the best, bear their ills and disappointments, which can last but for a time. A brighter and better day will come, as it has been coming, justice will spread rights will be observed, strife will die down and faith and humanity will be justified of their works. Yet, will every age have its problems and crises, for the world is moving and there is no finality in human affairs. No one can say what enigmas, and what masters to deal with them, the future may hold in waiting. And no one of faith or sense will close the door, or give way to chilling doubt, or throw up his hands in despair. The Lamb is upon the throne. Our questions are not quite such as St. John and his fellow-sufferers had to face and solve as best they could, yet are they bodeful enough. Old institutions and usages are crumbling and must be re-shaped to the new issues. And for that reason, society is in a state of feverish unrest; and in the clash and din of new truths pressing on for a place, and of vital interests in grapple, faith and hope may, for the briefest moment, falter, but only that. Now, as of old, these are but the birththroes of the new life, of the Everlasting Age. These disturbances are not accidental. Sorrow is not accidental. Nor, in the broad sense, are pain and death. These things are working out the will of Him who sitteth upon the throne and doeth all things well. Let Him be adored; the Easter Age is with us.

"The steps of the way I know not,  
But my leader I know full well;  
My hand is in His; I fear not  
In the depths of His peace I dwell.

"He knows where He leads; I know not,  
But I trust in His love each day;  
My heart is His own; I fear not,  
For the way is my Lord's highway."

### "Christ's Teaching About His Death"

Arthur J. Smith, Ensign Salvation Army.



Instead of rehearsing the various theories of the meaning of the Death of Jesus, it is at once simplest and most satisfactory to go direct to the New Testament. And there is the record of the Life of Jesus. It is very evident that the shadow of the cross fell athwart His Path at a very early period. He warned His disciples that the days would come when the Bridegroom would be taken away. His own conception of His work was very different from that entertained by the majority of the people respecting the Messiah. Jesus' own idea corresponded more exactly to that of Isaiah, 53rd chapter. He saw and spoke as if His success could only come through His sufferings. The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected and be killed and after three days rise again.

His death was voluntary. He did not yield to the inevitable. He deliberately chose death. Some have pictured the sort of career He might have chosen. He might have set himself to reform the Jewish religion from within, or to have accepted a kingship over the Jews, or he have built up a new spiritual community independent either of Jewish religion or politics. But He rejected these possible careers. He insisted on dying. He deliberately set His face to the cross. He declared that no man took His Life from Him. The soldiers, who came to arrest Him fell on the ground panic-stricken. He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem, because He believed that His death was necessary to salvation.

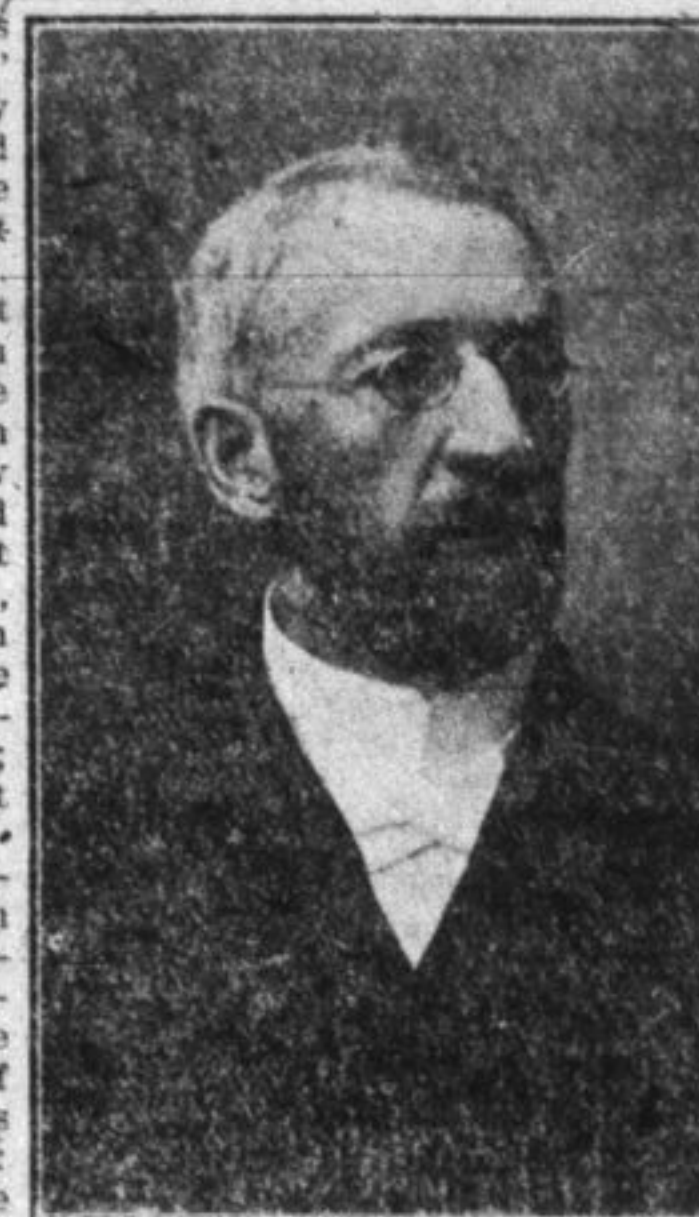
In going forward thus, Christ was conscious that He was fulfilling the Scriptures. "As it is written of Me," was constantly on His lips. Where shall we find the closing scenes of His career more clearly mapped out than in Isaiah, 53rd chapter. It was through vicarious suffering and death He must pay the iniquity of the people was to be made to light upon Him. (R. V.) He bore the sins of many. His soul was made a guilt-offering. (R. V.) He carried out his work, justifying many and making many righteous. Jesus applied all this to Himself. He accepted all the suffering because He believed it to be the will of God for the purpose of saving the world. Jesus said that by His dying He would be able to render the highest and most necessary service to sinners. The Son of Man should give His life a ransom for many. By that word ransom He meant, of course, a means of deliverance, but exactly in what sense the word itself does not convey. But at the farewell supper He taught something more concerning the significance of His death. His blood was to be poured out on behalf of many. That phrase taken in connection with the terrible scene in Gethsemane, which transpired soon after, is important.

The best answer to the question, what is the meaning of the death of Christ, is to be found in the Gospels. There is not too much material, but there is sufficient. The disclosure made by Jesus was gradual, according to the ability of the disciples to receive it. But as a modern Bible scholar has put it, there were amongst others four important lessons given by Jesus on the doctrine of the cross.

- (1) That Jesus suffered for righteousness sake, and herein became an example to all His followers.—Matthew xvi. 21-25.
  - (2) Christ suffered for the unrighteous, giving His life a ransom for the sinful.—Matthew xx. 28.
  - (3) Christ suffered in the spirit of self-sacrificing love, exemplified by Mary.—Matthew xxvi. 5-13.
  - (4) Christ suffered to procure for sinners the forgiveness of sins.—Matthew xxvi. 28-29.
- In the face of this, who can doubt the meaning of His death? And thus the first Easter brought joy to the hearts of His disciples. It was a trial of their faith. He had said he would rise again. Their faith was rewarded. He arose triumphant, victorious of death and the grave. He came and showed Himself to His followers and comforted them.
- There is a real note of victory triumphant about Easter; one that brings gladness to many hearts. The one sad thought this Easter will be so many sorrowing. But the Christ that arose from the dead and now intercedes at the right hand of His Father will see as of old that righteousness will triumph and victory will come through the many noble lives that are being sacrificed in order to have peace among all nations.

### "Truth is on the March"

Rev. Alfred Brown, Sydenham Street Methodist Church.



At the trial of Dreyfus, Zola, the eminent French advocate, said: "Truth is on the march and nothing can stop it." Never did truth appear to be more surely halted, than when Jesus was crucified and buried; but in reality it was never more truly on the march. Everything that was done to stop it, only helped it forward. When darkness overspread the earth, at the sixth hour, it seemed as though truth had suffered a total eclipse; but on the resurrection morning it shone forth with a power and glory that would never grow dim. The truth that Jesus lived and taught had seemed to die with Him, but not more surely did He rise from the dead, than did His every saying find vindication in the fact of the resurrection, and in the results that followed. There is such a vitality in truth that it cannot be destroyed; such an ascendancy that it cannot be kept down; such an energy that it cannot be held back. Overturned plans, defeated purposes, have strewn the pathway over which it has marched in triumph. It has always left an empty sepulchre and discarded graveclothes behind it. The place that was looked upon as the stronghold of unbelief has been tenanted with angels and has echoed with the announcement: "He is not here; for He is risen as He said."

So the story of triumph goes on. On, through the centuries. On, through every moral and spiritual conflict. On, though the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing. On, though the Kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and stretch against His anointed. On, though infidelity builds its ramparts and thunders its out its sword. On, though war rages, exacting its awful toll of human lives, filling the air with groans of suffering and lamentations of sorrow, seeming to put civilization back into the tomb of early barbarism and sealing its entombment with the best blood of the nations. On, on forever. Christianity is triumphant. "She waves her banners, they are of light, they are of love; she names her victories, they are over evil, they are all of peace; she claims her trophies, they are the good of earth, they are saints in Paradise. But she does not rest upon her laurels, she is still advancing over other fields of conquest toward the final fulfilment of her destiny—the evangelization of the world." So it is that Easter finds an ever-increasing multitude to share in faith the resurrection hope, and to repeat the joyous salutation: "The Lord is risen indeed."

### "The Wonder of Easter"

Rev. E. LeRoy Rice, First Congregational Church.



The meaning of Easter may be translated into a single word. All the wonder and the mystery of it finds expression in that word "LIFE". Jesus came to reveal to the world a life that was deathless. Jewish hatred and Roman spears could not destroy it, the cross could not conquer it, the tomb in Joseph's garden could not confine it. His was ageless, deathless life. "He lives," was the message of Easter morn. "He lives," was the message of the angels that stood by the empty tomb. "Jesus lives," was the message that Mary carried to His despondent followers. And this is the message that the Church proclaims to the world on every Easter morn.

It has always seemed to me to be extremely fitting that this Easter festival should come in the springtime. There is a divine fitness and appropriateness in the fact that the Easter message is in harmony with the soul of Spring. "The winter is passed and gone; the flowers appear in the earth, the time of the singing of birds is come." All nature reverberates with the message of life. The name "Easter" has come down to us from the name of the pagan goddess "Estra," who was the goddess of Spring, the goddess of life and fertility. So that the very name "Easter" conveys the message of new life and hope.

Christ came to a world that was dead, a world that was yearning for light and life. "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly," are His words. His own unquenchable, deathless life is the fulfillment of that promise. During those three years of his ministry He gave life to the sick and the dead. He was the source of a strange mysterious life force such as men had never known. His enemies thought to quench that life. They thought it susceptible to death; they rose more potent, more glorious than before. The life that they had thought to quench becomes the very life of those who by faith feed upon Him.

There is an interesting passage in Goethe's "Faust" of where Faust, despondent and dejected, determines to end it all in death. The cup of poison is raised to his lips, when suddenly there rings out the music of the Easter morn:

"The Lord hath arisen,  
Sorrow no longer;  
Temptation hath tried Him,  
But He was the stronger

Happy, happy victory,  
Love, submission, self-denial,  
Marked the strengthening agony,  
Marked the purifying trial.

The grave is no prison;  
The Lord hath arisen."

As Faust listens to the Easter message, a new life enters into his own soul and he pushes aside the poisoned cup. It is ever thus. With each passing year the Easter message brings new hope, and new life into the darkened lives of men. "We lay in dust earth's glory dead, and from the ground there blossoms red, life that shall endless be."

### EASTER AND ITS MESSAGE.

The Whig is glad of the privilege to present herewith the responses, from the various churches of Kingston, of their pastors' conception of the Easter message. The press, ever ready to respond to humanity's call, can carry their words and their admonition into thousands of homes. May these united efforts prove of value in these trying days of national peril.