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"We are not of the earth, earthy, but gods from heaven, for we have always been in heaven and can never get out of heaven. . . . My democracy is the democracy of divinity, for I recognize each human being as a fellow-god. . . . And, my beloved gods and goddesses, we were all there before the earth and before matter, for we are the creators and the originators and operators of this mental universe."

This is New Thought speaking through one of its prophets in *The Nautilus* of December, 1917. (pp. 23—25.) New Thought does many things. It cures a baby of constipation when you say to it, for three days, "You are no longer constipated — you are a perfect being." (p. 37.) It overcomes appendicitis without recourse to the knife. (p. 38.) By speaking "helpful little phrases" before falling into slumber at night, one devotee has become successful in business. (p. 47.) New Thought is just the thing to help one become a successful poultry-raiser (p. 49), and by "investing in an annual subscription to this unparalleled monthly" (*The Nautilus*), the mind is renewed along the line of St. Paul's counsel to "be transformed by the renewing of mind." (p. 52.) But, above all, it assures its believers of their essential identity with the God-head; not union, but identity. "We are not of the earth, earthy, but gods from heaven." Ralph Waldo Trine, one of its high priests, writes: "Man is god incarnate."

At present there are, if their statistics can be relied upon, about five million gods and goddesses in the world. Of these the greater number are said to live in what has been called the "pay-streak of our civilization," — the band of population stretching along the forty-first degree of latitude. From New York City the cult reports 700,000 adherents, from Pittsburgh 350,000, from

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REV. H. B. HEMMETER, Rochester, N. Y.

IV. "I Am the Resurrection and the Life."

JOHN 11, 25.

The question of a future life is prominent in the minds of the people to-day. The awful mortality of the recent World War, the very natural interest of millions of aching hearts in their ruthlessly slain dear ones, have forced this question into the foreground, and keep it agitated in our newspapers, our magazines, on our picture screens, and most of all in our own hearts.

But how solve the question, the Great Question, as it has been called?

The spiritism of our age is one effort at a solution. Groping in the dark, reaching out into the dark, it produces that which is dark. Listening for voices from the surmised beyond, calling on the departed spirits, consulting the dead, so-called students of psychic science are seeking to delve into the depths of the unseen and to coax messages from the realms of those whom death has stilled. And they tell us of their conviction that there is another life. Dark is their art; especially dark to those of us to whom according to the sacred Book this all is an abomination unto the Lord.

But, how interesting therefore to us should be the words of Jesus: "I *am* the Resurrection and the Life"!

These words Jesus spoke to Martha while He was on His way to Lazarus', her brother's, grave. To illustrate and to illumine them, He raised Lazarus from the dead and returned him to his sisters alive. How glorious! Jesus has the power over death. He can make alive.

A greater emphasis and illustration these words of Jesus, however, were to receive but a few days later. For Jesus was put to death, according to the Scriptures. They crucified Him, and laid Him away in Joseph of Arimathea's tomb. But on the third day, according to His own words to His disciples, the angel in the tomb declared to the affrighted women: "Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth. He is not here; He is risen. Behold the place where they laid Him." Yes, Jesus rose again from the dead and declared Himself the Victor over death and the Lord of Life.

The real emphasis and meaning of this act of Jesus is found in the words of the apostle: "Him God raised up, having loosed the bands of death, since it was impossible that He should be holden of it." For when Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, then death was not changed, death thereafter remained the same that it had been before. It had merely submitted to superior power. But when Jesus rose from the dead, then death itself received a mortal wound. Death had swallowed more than it could hold when it engulfed Jesus. Jesus loosed its bands, ruptured its muscles, forced death to give up its prey; yes, to become the fertile mother of new life. In the death of Jesus, death was swallowed up in victory. And why?

The apostle says: "Since it was impossible that He should be holden of it." It was impossible. Why? Jesus, the Lamb of God, by His suffering and death had taken away the sin of the world. And all the power of death lay embodied in the sin

of the world. Sin being atoned for, the sting of death was taken from it, and death became an empty form, powerless. It could not hold Him who had vanquished sin. It was impossible. Again, why? Because He was the Son of God, God Himself, the Lord of Life. It would have been a contradiction in itself if death, the creature, deriving all its power from the curse of the Creator, had been able to hold God Himself. If death had been able to destroy life, then in that destruction there would have been involved the destruction of all that is, God Himself. "It was impossible that *He* should be holden of it."

In this light Jesus stands before the world and says: "I am the Resurrection and the Life." Jesus, Himself the Lord of Life, has satisfied God's wrath over sin, has taken the sting from death, has rendered death powerless, has transformed it into a sleep from which there is a glorious awaking.

The fact of our text is full of comfort for the dying world; for it impresses the lesson that death does not end all. Temporal death, indeed, even outside of Jesus, is not the end, but rather the emphasized beginning of that eternal punishment which sin and the consequent separation from God inflicts upon rebellious man. But even without the full realization of this terribleness of death, even temporal death is horrible to all. Jesus standing before the world, however, as the Lord of Life and Death, transforms temporal death. The horror of annihilation vanishes, and the constructiveness of sleep spreads its hue all over death. No, death shall not end all! The dead shall rise. Jesus says: "I am the Resurrection and the Life." What a luster this throws over the dying world! How it disperses the gloominess of our cemeteries! In the light of this message the furrows grow mellow, the ground breaks everywhere, in spirit we can see the very dead come forth. Aye, before us is the harvest of which Jesus Himself is the first-fruits!

But mark, He also says that some shall rise "to everlasting torment." Why some? Is it on account of their persons? They are all sinners. Is it on account of the Savior's purpose? He died for all. Why then?

Jesus says: "He that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." Faith is the decisive factor, — faith which looks to Jesus, encloses Him, trusts in Him.

Have you this faith?

Old Job, living in the days of Abraham, had this faith; for he confessed in the face of death: "I know that my Redeemer

liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth; and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God, whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold and not another."

St. Paul had it when he shouted: "Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the Law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

May God grant us that faith through Him that has said: "I am the Resurrection and the Life" — Jesus!

V. "Behold the Lamb of God, which Taketh Away the Sin of the World."

JOHN 1, 29.

The Christian Church confesses Jesus. It takes its name from Him, proclaims Him as its Leader and its Lord.

Not all so-called Christian churches, however, agree in their opinions of Jesus. In fact, there are many opinions abroad concerning Him. As in the days of Jesus, when some said that He was Elias, some that He was that great prophet, and some had no definite opinion at all concerning Him, so even now there are varying notions held of Him, and the question still seems to be: "What think ye of Christ?"

Of prime importance to us in this connection is the testimony of Peter and the statement of Jesus on that memorable occasion when the disciples had informed Jesus of the opinions concerning Him among the people at that time. Jesus then asked them: "And whom say ye that the Son of Man is?" Peter said: "We believe that Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God." Here is a clear testimony to the point. Peter says: "Thou art the Christ." Every Jew could know what that meant. "Christ," that is "Messiah," that is the "Anointed One," the One of whom Moses and the prophets spake from the beginning that through Him salvation was to come, the "blessing" of God upon the families of the earth. Peter says: "Thou art the Christ," that One who by suffering Himself is to heal suffering mankind. And more. Thou art "the Son of the Living God." Thou Jesus of Nazareth, Thou Christ, art that one of whom Isaiah speaks as the "Immanuel," the "God with us," and of whom he says that His name shall be called "the mighty God." Yea, Thou art the divine Savior,

the "Jehoshua," Jehovah's Savior. Surely, this testimony of Peter is clear. And what does Jesus say? Does He command him to be still? Does He call Peter's attention to blasphemy? Does He modify the evident meaning of Peter's words? Not at all. In reply to Peter's words, Jesus says to Peter: "Blessed art thou Simon, bar Jona." In other words, Simon, Son of Jona, you are not deceived; you have an opinion of Me that makes you a blessed man, blessed in the sense that God blesses. And this opinion, which is nothing else than the truth, you have not of yourself, "flesh and blood has not revealed it unto you, but My Father which is in heaven." This opinion is the truth that God only can reveal to the human heart. It is God's own truth.

A similar testimony, of like import and importance, we have in our text. John had baptized Jesus the day before. There at Jordan John had seen Jesus standing in the water, had seen the Holy Spirit descending on Jesus, and had heard the voice of the Father from heaven saying: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Inspired by God, confirmed by the experience just related, John now declares: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

Yes, Jesus is God's own beloved Son. In Jesus, God, offended by the transgression of man, is well pleased. And this Jesus is Jehovah's Savior, who takes away, removes, the sin of the world, thus becoming the Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus. Jesus is God's sacrifice, God's own Lamb for the slaughter, who in the form of man was capable of suffering as all men's substitute, and as God was sufficient to appease the wrath of God because of sin and to render a satisfaction for sin that might avail for all and for all time.

Oh, therefore, "behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

Reconsidering then, we note here:—

Our text presupposes sin. It presupposes the first sin through which sin came into the world. It presupposes that sin, called original sin, which is ours by birth, and which consists in the depravity of our whole human nature, deprived of its original righteousness, inclined toward evil. It presupposes that sin which like a mountain is heaped up upon our race by sinful actions in desires, thoughts, words, and deeds. Yes, it presupposes the sin of the world.

Our text presupposes divine displeasure, God's curse, under which the world lies and suffers and groans and dies; the dis-

pleasure that inflicts as the necessary consequence of sin that separation from light and life and all true happiness under which the world is restless and irresistibly moving on to despair.

Our text presupposes the divine plan of sacrifice. It opens to our eyes the vision of God decreeing to seek and to save deluded and lost mankind, promising the Woman's Seed, Abraham's Seed in whom the families of the earth should be blessed, the Shiloh, man of rest, David's Son and David's Lord, Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace; yes, it opens the eyes to see the great Paschal Lamb prefigured by all the sacrifices from Abel down to the birth of Jesus at Bethlehem, the despised and rejected of men, who was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquity.

Our text declares the divine participation in the person and work of Jesus. It visualizes the words of Jesus to Nicodemus: "*God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son,*" and again to His mother: "Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?"

Our text declares the all-sufficiency of Jesus' sacrifice. Jesus "taketh away" the sin of the world; that word "taketh away" in the original signifies to take hold of and remove. Jesus lifts the world's sin from the world's shoulders, as it were, and removes the heavy load. He "taketh *away*" the sin of the world. His work is sufficient, Jesus is what His name implies, the complete and perfect Savior.

May we, then, hear the cry of Christ's forerunner, John: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." Thus John preached Christ in harmony with the angel's message: "Fear not; for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy; . . . for unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Savior, which is Christ the Lord."

"Whom say ye that Christ is?"

Does some one say that it is all too wonderful and hard to believe? We admit it. Jesus Himself said to Peter: "Flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee." We cannot of our own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, our Lord, or come to Him. However, Jesus shows the way. The Father, which is in heaven, He can reveal it unto us. And He has given us the Word that is Spirit and Truth of which Jesus has said: "Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of Me." Read the Bible: faith "cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God."