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THE GREATEST MIRACLE IN HUMAN HISTORY

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"He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures" (I. Cor. 15:4).

Our subject is "The Greatest Miracle in Human History." Luke, in ch. 24:6 says, "He is not here but is risen."

There are many theories of the resurrection of Christ, the theory of theft and falsehood, the theory that Christ never died and that after a short lapse of consciousness He revived and lived long enough to be seen of some; the vision theory, the dream theory, and other similar theories. Time forbids our discussion of these theories. We launch at once into the glorious fact of the resurrection of Christ.

Blackstone, one of the world's greatest legal authorities, says that the resurrection of Jesus Christ is the best established fact of history. That is saying something worth while. One of the needs of the hour is a little more common honesty when facing great facts of history and Scripture.

"Fact!" "Jesus cried out with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost." When they came to Jesus and saw that He was dead already, they brake not his legs. He was buried. The tomb was guarded and sealed (Matt. 27:65-66), "guarded to keep the disciples honest, and sealed to keep the guard honest" (Binney). The three great positive essentials of the Gospel are: "Christ died for our sins." He was buried, and rose again the third day." That record is plain. "The resurrection of Christ," says one, "is the corner stone of Christian doctrine. It is also the Gibraltar of Christian Evidence, and the Waterloo of infidelity and rationalism."

The Proofs of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ are many:

All nature today proclaims a resurrection. In winter all is dead. The music of the birds ceases, no hum of insect is heard from the earth; all is silent. But how different when spring dawns. Life appears everywhere in place of death; a resurrection of nature. "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die," said Christ, "it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." First death, then life, then fruit.

The next proof is the empty tomb. "He is not here, He is risen." An empty tomb! Christ is not there. He is alive.

Another proof is the fact that the napkin from the head of the dead body is placed carefully "in place by itself" (John 20:7). Rogues and robbers would not take time to do this. But the Prince of Life had no need to fear; no need to hurry. "I have power," He said when speaking of His life, "I have power to lay it down, and have power to

take it again." What are stones and Roman soldiers to Jesus Christ? Who rolled the stone away? Who placed the napkin? Let the enemies of this glorious truth of the resurrection of Jesus Christ answer.

The Christian Sabbath is another proof; for it dates back to the glorious event, and commemorates it. It was great to speak a world from naught; but greater to redeem. The Christian Sabbath says, "Christ is risen indeed."

The existence of Christianity is also a proof of a risen Lord. The religion of Christ could not have lived a month without a living Christ. Christianity, then, proclaims the fact of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

It is recorded that the fact of the resurrection of Jesus Christ had such a profound impression on the early followers of Christ that their usual daily greeting was, "The Lord is risen indeed," using as we do our "Good morning."

The Necessity of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ is Clearly Revealed in the N. T.

"If there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen; and if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain; yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that He raised Christ up from the dead; whom He raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: and if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain, ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept."

In these passages of Scripture the Apostle Paul argues the necessity and importance of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The whole redemptive plan would have utterly perished had Christ not risen from the dead; but, thank God, He did rise.

"Up from the grave He arose
With a mighty triumph o'er His foes.
He arose! Christ arose!"

The Blessings of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ are Many.

The resurrection is the foundation of our faith: "If Christ be not raised our faith is vain." This we have already seen.

The resurrection of Christ stands for our justification: "He died for our sins and rose for our justification." They go together in Scripture. We are justified by faith in the risen Christ.

The resurrection of Christ assures us of a Mediator in the presence of God: "He maketh intercession for the transgressors," also for His people, for it reads: "Now to appear in the presence of God for us." Christ as the

great High Priest passed through the veil of His Flesh rose again, ascended, and went into the presence of God for us. He appears there as the merit of His own Blood. The innocent victim that stood at Pilate's bar unjustly raised and unrightfully condemned is our great all-skillful Pleader in the royal court above; not so much how He pleads as the fact that He does plead, and that we may Praise the Lord. It may be that "in the internal communion of the Godhead the violent desires of each Divine Person are intuitively known to each, but are not expressed in prayer." I do not know, but I know He pleads.

The resurrection of Christ means our holiness: "If we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection." Death with Him means life with Him. The likeness of His death should mean the likeness of His resurrection life.

Christ appears in heaven as Jehovah Incarnate. He is known by the heavenly hosts as the one who was before the world. His Godhead is known. They know He came to earth to redeem man; now He is in heaven with the marks of humanity, with the same human body, but glorified, of course. His two-fold nature connects Him alike with God and humanity. When Aaron appeared to minister before Jehovah, he bore the names of the twelve tribes. There were two sets: one over his heart, the seat of affection; the other over his shoulder, the emblem of power. The God-man has the two natures, Divine and human. He has infinite love in His heart, and Almighty power in His arm to save.

Christ appears in heaven as a sacrificial Victim. The Jewish high priest on the great day of atonement entered the holy place of blood, and made an atonement for himself, his household, and all the congregation of Israel. Christ appears in the holy of holies as our great High Priest with a nature which was wounded as a sin offering. By these wounds He convinced His disciples that it was He Himself and not a ghost (John 20:27). Those sacred scars—"those dear tokens of His passion"—they speak!

The risen Christ in the presence of God says, "I have conquered, therefore forgive and sanctify." Glory be to God!

"Arise, my soul arise; shake off thy guilty fear;

The bleeding sacrifice in my behalf appears;
Before the throne my surety stands,
My name is written on His hands.

"He ever lives above, for me to intercede;
His all redeeming love, His precious blood
to plead;

His blood atoned for all our race,
And sprinkles now the throne of grace.

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