

The Resurrection of Christ

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It has been my practice for many years past to contribute a short Easter article, and generally I have sought to make such a spiritual help rather than an appeal to the doctrinal aspect of the subject. Having, however, had an interesting communication from a young man some several weeks ago, and to whom as yet I have not been able to make response owing to lack of opportunity to put my notes in shape, I have felt that possibly I might help others as well as him. It is well for us all to review the *foundations* of our faith, and to realize that while the appeal is to our highest God-given emotions, it is also based on *facts* that will bear investigation, satisfying the intellect as well as the heart, for after all these two conditions enter into every human problem and are inseparably linked together.

Our correspondent says, "If you want to put your finger on vital religious questions of the day why not use your energy in proving the divinity of the Bible? People are interested in that. They are interested, too, in knowing whether Christ was actually raised from the dead. Preachers now preach from the pulpit that there was no physical resurrection." He then mentions several other points which ministers today are publicly denying with reference to Bible stated facts. Further he makes the remark, "Your article on the Trinity was good, well reasoned, logical, and conclusive. I believe you would be just as capable on these other points, and they would be of more general interest."

There is probably no historical fact more fully attested than the resurrection of Jesus the Christ. Let us note some of the outstanding features.

1. That the Gospels were written by disciples of Christ is fully and frankly admitted. The same tests which are applied to other literature to confirm their genuineness hold good here.

2. They were, therefore, written within living memory of the events.

3. Anyone reading the narratives with unbiased mind will admit that they were written by men who themselves believed in the events recorded, and so simple and straight-forward are their statements, and so interwoven with proved secular history amazingly accurate in detail, any thought of fraud is completely out of the question.

4. The character of the witnesses, as in all such instances, is always of importance, as the sincerity and truthfulness of their witness is to a large extent measured thereby.

5. As Paul (one of the witnesses) testified before Agrippa, "These things were not done in a corner." They were known to all, and so were the witnesses. Peter and eleven disciples of Christ boldly testified before thousands on the very streets of Jerusalem, where events were fresh in the minds of those who heard them and knew them to be followers of the crucified Christ, having followed Him throughout the length and breadth of Palestine.

6. If fraud occurred it could not be detected, for in the testimony of these men the *resurrection* of Christ from the dead is placed on a parallel footing with the *crucifixion*, clearly showing that they believed one as fully as they believed the other. So convincing was their testimony that three thousand believed and were baptized the same day.

7. Peter brings forward a masterly argument. Its logic was irresistible. Two tombs were well known to exist in Jerusalem—the one the tomb of David, the other the tomb of Christ. That David was dead and buried none could deny, for the tomb (and possibly his embalmed remains) were eloquent witness. The tomb of Christ which had been sealed by Roman authority, as was known to all who dwelt in Jerusalem, was a standing witness that Christ had risen, for the seals were broken and the tomb was empty.



8. Churches sprang up everywhere based on the one fact of the resurrection of Christ, *and there is no explanation of the existence of these churches apart from the resurrection.*

9. No one can read the Acts of the Apostles and the epistles of Paul without realizing that the resurrection of Christ was the basis on which the whole truth of Christianity rested. Some twenty-five times is the definite statement made that "God raised Christ from the dead."

10. It is widely believed that Christ was only seen by His immediate disciples after His resurrection. Even were that the case the testimony of twelve men could not be lightly set aside. Paul, who was known to both Jews and Romans as boasting to be a citizen of no mean repute, both as a Jew and a Roman citizen definitely states in his epistle to the Corinthians that Christ had been seen by Peter, by the twelve, and on another occasion by five hundred others, most of whom were living at the time of his writing.

11. So certain was Paul of the resurrection of Christ, and so certain was he that those to whom he wrote knew it as undisputed fact, he puts in clear contrast the hopeless condition of the churches, and indeed of all men, had not Christ been raised from the dead, and boldly declares that in such case they as Christians were sacrificing their lives in vain, and were "of all men most miserable."

12. Paul makes the significant statement that he and others would be found to be "false witnesses of God" that He raised up Christ, if it could be proved that Christ had not been raised from the dead.

How can men holding the terribly responsible position of ministers of the Bible, with such testimony in their hands, deny the physical resurrection of Jesus Christ and still remain in the church? We leave the question unanswered, for they themselves will have to give the answer.

