

R E S U R R E C T I O N

I DO NOT KNOW OF A MORE CRUSHING INDICTMENT THAN THE PRONOUNCEMENT MADE BY ST. PETER, ON PENTECOST DAY, IN THE OPEN MARKET OF JERUSALEM, WHILE ADDRESSING A CROWD OF MORE THAN THREE THOUSAND JEWS. "MEN OF ISRAEL", PETER SAID, "LISTEN TO THIS. JESUS OF NAZARETH WAS A MAN DULY ACCREDITED TO YOU, FROM GOD: SUCH WERE THE MIRACLES AND WONDERS AND SIGNS, WHICH GOD DID THROUGH HIM, IN YOUR MIDST, AS YOU YOURSELVES WELL KNOW. THIS MAN YOU HAVE PUT TO DEATH; BY GOD'S FIXED DESIGN AND FOREKNOWLEDGE, HE WAS BETRAYED TO YOU, AND YOU, THROUGH THE HANDS OF SINFUL MEN, HAVE CRUELLY MURDERED HIM. BUT GOD RAISED HIM UP AGAIN, RELEASING HIM FROM THE PANGS OF DEATH; IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE THAT DEATH SHOULD HAVE THE MASTERY OVER HIM... GOD, THEN, HAS RAISED UP THIS MAN, JESUS, FROM THE DEAD: WE ARE ALL WITNESSES OF IT.. LET IT BE KNOWN, THEN, BEYOND DOUBT, TO ALL THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL THAT GOD HAS MADE HIM MASTER AND CHRIST, THIS JESUS WHOM YOU CRUCIFIED." THE GREAT TRUTH THAT THE ENTIRE CHRISTIAN FAITH IS BASED ON THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST WAS STRESSED BOTH BY ST. PETER AND BY THE APOSTLE OF THE GENTILES, FOR "IF CHRIST BE NOT ^{IS} R~~ISEN~~ AGAIN, THEN IS OUR PREACHING VAIN, AND YOUR FAITH IS ALSO VAIN."

TRULY THIS IS SO. IF CHRIST DID NOT RISE AGAIN, OF WHAT VALUE IS IT TO ME, A TWENTIETH CENTURY CHRISTIAN, THAT ONCE, 1900 YEARS AGO, THERE LIVED A VERY GOOD, VERY WISE, VERY KINDLY MAN, WHO HEALED THE SICK AND FOSTERED BROTHERLY LOVE AMONG MEN? OF WHAT VALUE IS ALL THIS TO ME, IF HE TOO DIED, WAS BURIED AND HAS MOLDERED IN THE GRAVE? FINIS - PERHAPS I WOULD ENTERTAIN GREATER ADMIRATION FOR HIM THAN FOR PLATO AND ARISTO^{tle}~~le~~ BUT TO LOVE, TO ADORE HIM, TO CLEAVE TO HIS COMMANDMENTS AND COUNSELS, EVEN AT THE PRICE OF A SELF-SACRIFICING LIFE! WHO BINDS HIS LIFE TO A MOLDERING CORPSE? THIS WOULD BE THE CASE, IF CHRIST DID NOT RISE AGAIN: BUT, IF UPON HIS IDEAL CHARACTER