

Current Readings.

THE RISEN CHRIST.

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THE apostle Paul, after having borne his witness and recapitulated the testimony about the resurrection of Christ, goes on to show the horrible consequences that must follow if there be no resurrection of the dead, and if Christ be not risen.

Says one, "Christ might rise, and yet not His people." Not so, according to our faith and firm belief. In Adam all have died. There is no separating Adam from his posterity. Now Christ is the second Adam, and all believers are one with Him, and none can separate them from Him. Because He lives they shall live also, and in His eternal life they must forever be partakers.

Paul's next argument is, "If Christ be not risen, *then is our preaching vain.*" If Christ was not raised, the whole company of apostles were false witnesses. He puts himself in with the rest. When a man bears false witness he has a motive for it. What motive had he? You cannot reckon the apostle Paul amongst those readily deceived or among deceivers of others.

Next, "*Your faith is also vain.*" Believer, I speak to you who have experienced a great change of heart through faith in Christ. If He did not literally rise from the dead on the third day, this faith that gives you great comfort, this faith that you believe is leading you home to heaven, must be abandoned as sheer falsehood. Oh, dreadful inference! There come every now and then times of great testing. Have you ever lain, as I have done several times, upon the brink of the grave, and been looking deep into the abyss? Then, unless you have a firm foundation, your hope will shrink away. But the Lord is risen indeed; and, when you are sure of

that, you feel that there is something beneath your feet that does not stir.

Paul says next that if Christ did not rise, "*ye are yet in your sins.*" Can you bear that thought, my beloved in Christ? I think it takes hold upon you, terrifies you, chills your blood. A little while ago you were in your sins; now you believe that He has brought you out of your sins, and has so changed you that sin shall not have dominion over you. If He did not rise again, you are yet in your sins; for then He never made the atonement. If the atonement of Christ for sin had been unsatisfactory, He would have remained in the grave.

Now follows a more terrible consequence, if possible. All the pious dead have perished. "*They also which are fallen asleep in Christ have perished.*" They died, and they told us they were blood-washed and forgiven; but if Christ rose not from the dead, there has no sinner gone to heaven; they have died in a delusion. Believers rise because of their oneness with Christ. If He did not rise they cannot, for they must share with Him.

Once more, "If in this life only we have hope,"—and we certainly have no hope of another apart from Christ,—then "*we are of all men most miserable.*" What, does that mean that Christian men are more miserable than others if they are mistaken? No, it does not mean that; the mistake gives them joy; but take away that comfort, and then they are of all men most miserable, for this reason: they have given up all the joys of the world, they found no comfort in them; but if we consider the mirth of the worldling to be no better than the husks of swine, and there be no