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♪ Easter Morn ♪

CHRIST RAISED FROM THE DEAD,
THE PLEDGE OF OUR RESURRECTION.

That Christ arose from the dead is a fact established by the testimony of more than five hundred witnesses. To question it is to uproot the foundation of the gospel and to invalidate all its claims to truth and veracity. Before his crucifixion he told of his death and of his resurrection, and then after his death he was seen alive in his bodily form by a number of good women and by his disciples. And finally he was seen of a great company of men and women about the time of his ascension. Paul puts these witnesses and their testimony in the strongest possible light in the fifteenth chapter to the Corinthians. He says, "For I delivered unto you first of all how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he arose again the third day according to the Scriptures; and that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve. After that he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain until this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that he was seen of James, then of all the apostles. And last of all he was seen of me also as of one born out of due time." Why the apostle omitted the testimony of the several women in writing to the Corinthians is very easily explained. In that heathen city the women who figured in public were not of the most reputable character, and for this reason, probably, he deemed it best not to introduce the evidence of these good Jewish women, lest it prejudice those people against his account of the resurrection. Had he been writing to the Church in Jerusalem, or in some other Judean city, or town, he would have used the testimony of those good women. But he had testimony enough without that of the women, anyway, and so he confined himself to that of the hundreds of men. Having established the fact of Christ's resurrection by the evidence of this array of witnesses, he proceeds to show the certainty of our resurrection from the dead. The one follows the other as a logical result. "Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is not Christ raised. And if Christ be not raised 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 up Christ 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." This is the apostle's answer to the Agnostics of his day who denied the resurrection of the dead. When the denial is traced out to its conclusion, it upsets the whole truths of the gospel, and leaves us without hope, even of

salvation. But having disposed of this denial of the resurrection, notice the triumphant conclusion following the assumption of the resurrection of Christ: "But now is Christ risen from the dead and become the first fruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." Therefore, the resurrection of Christ is God's guarantee of the general resurrection of the dead. So that on this glad Easter morning we can look into the empty tomb of Christ and then look forward with undoubted assurance to the time when our own graves shall likewise be emptied of our dust and we shall be raised into the resurrection image of Christ our Lord.

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THE CHARACTER OF THE RESURRECTION BODY.

The character of the resurrection body is beyond accurate description, nevertheless Paul gives us some idea of its beauty and completeness. He says: "But some man will say, How are the dead raised up and with what body do they come?" He draws on the analogies of nature with which to answer the first part of the question, but in his reply to the second part he is a little more explicit. He proceeds to draw a contrast between the body in death and the same body after the resurrection: "It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. For this corruptible shall put on incorruption and this mortal shall put on immortality." There will be, therefore, the same difference between the body that goes into the grave at death and the one coming from the dead in the resurrection that there is between corruption and incorruption, between dishonor and glory, between weakness and power, between that which is natural and that which is spiritual, and between mortality and immortality. Then the leading characteristics of the resurrection body will be incorruption, glory, power, spiritual essence and immortality. But whatever may be the glory and the immortality of that body after the process of the resurrection, it will retain its individuality and will be as easily identified as were the bodies of Moses and Elijah on the Mount of Transfiguration.

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THE TRIUMPHS OF THE RESURRECTION.

After the resurrection is accomplished and we are clothed upon with life and immortality, then will be brought to pass the saying that is written, "Death is swallowed up in victory." But this will not take place until after that event has transpired. If we turn to death to-day and say, "O death, where is thy sting?" there are ten thousand voices that respond in tones of anguish and lamentation from the death chambers of the children of men. Throughout the habitations of earth, the sting of death is piercing human consciousness. And if we say

to the grave, "Where is thy victory?" every graveyard, from the rising unto the going down of the sun, and from the rivers to the ends of the earth, will send back the challenge, "Here are the tokens of my victory." But when the voice of the Son of God shall have sounded with authority into the dark caverns of the tombs and called the moulderings bodies of the dead into life, then we can shout into the ears of death and say, "O death, where is thy sting?" But there will be no defiant voice to answer. And looking into the grave we can exclaim, "O grave, where is thy victory?" But the articulate speech of the grave will be silenced forever, and the glinted hilltops of God will never terminate with the triumphal shout, "Thanks be unto God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." Death will have been destroyed and the grave will have disappeared from the record of earth's history, and all hearts will be vocal with eternal praise and triumph. There will be no more sickness; no more sorrow; no more dying, for God will wipe all tears from our eyes, and the Lamb will lead us into fountains of everlasting youth and beauty. "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

THE GENERAL RULES OF THE CHURCH.

In a previous editorial we gave a short history of the origin of the General Rules, and from this on it is our purpose to take a number of them up serially and bring out their meaning as code of Christian morals. These Rules are embraced under three general divisions, and we will begin with the first. Under this head we have several specifications: 1. "The taking of the name of God in vain." In Mr. Wesley's day this was a very common habit, even among a certain class of Church people; and we are sorry to say that this habit has not altogether become obsolete in our own day. There are people, here and there, who are called Methodists, who indulge in this wicked habit. It is expressly forbidden in the word of God, and no man can be guilty of it without compromising his profession of faith and degrading his conscience and character. Even a man may not be fully aware of it, but he has no respect for God and no reverence for his holy name. And when you eliminate the elements of respect and reverence for God from human character, there is not much of value left in it. The man who habitually indulges in the habit, or who does it occasionally without due repentance, has no right to the name of Christian. He is an alien and an outcast; however fond to the contrary his profession of Christ. Profanity and religion do not dwell in the same heart. 2. "The profaning the day of the Lord, either by doing ordinary work therein, or by buying or selling." Any work that secularizes the Sabbath is a profanation of the day of the Lord. We have six days in which to labor and do all our worldly work, and the seventh

day is to be set apart for the worship of God, for the discharge of religious duties, and for the study of the Word of God. Hence, it is a violation of the Sabbath to do any work on that day, or to buy or sell. This is the reason why the Methodist Church is so particular as to this matter, and that is the reason why we insist that the church go to the Lord's Supper in its purity, and not to buy or sell on the Sabbath day. We do not allow any kind of commercial transaction on the Sabbath day, excepting the sale of food for the use of the church, or the sale of books to the church. This is the only kind of rule that can possibly affect a religious society, and we believe in it.

This former conference does no violence upon the part of doing away with the Sabbath, but it does violence to the Sabbath and live in the Sabbath as it was originally intended. In the present conference there is no withdrawal from all business and live and labor and make all kinds of competitions after pleasure and gain. Neither extreme is good, but the middle road is best of character. It takes the spirit of deep meditation and the spirit of rest after the toil that there is in life, and one thoroughly delighted follows up and fulfills service.

When men seek an easier way than following religious they usually point to a festive life that claims to belong to God, and then assert that they are better than some of our Church people. And they vainglily select the poorest specimen of a bad goons character in the whole community to make the comparison. They will point to fifty consecrated and noble people, and one poor, old, broken-down saint in order to get to say, we are better and more truthful and sober than he is. Hence, how perfectly we all ought to live!

