

TEXT-John 10:1-16

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers. This parable spake Jesus unto them: but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them. Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattered the sheep. The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep. I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, even so knoweth I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring. And they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd".

We hear in that warning of our Lord, that there is only one way that will get us to the kingdom of God, and that is through this everlasting door that has been provided, everlasting door of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, any other way those who try to take hold of this kingdom or enter in there, will be regarded as a thief and a robber and God will not allow them to take part therein. Our Lord often spoke when He was on this earth, and He used the word Shepherd, and He used sheep as an example so that we could understand what He was talking about.

We must understand that He used sheep as the example for a very good reason. Sheep are those animals in the world that is one of the only group or flock of animals that will never go feral, they cannot go wild - we never hear of wild sheep. The reason being that they are and have to be tendered for, if they went wild and there was no one to shear them, the heat would kill them, they are a group of animals that follow the leader, and if any of us watch a flock of sheep we will see that when one jumps, they all jump, they are the group of animals that could provide full sustenance to the people. They could provide clothing, they could provide milk, they could provide meat, and they did provide and still provide today, many of the medicines of the world and things used.

We see that they were a precious group. That is why our Lord refers to the Church as the sheep and He the shepherd. We in this land, do not understand fully the meaning of what our Lord was speaking, because on sheep properties they are fenced and all the sheep that are within that property belong to the one owner. If we were to travel to the Middle East we would find no fencing there, we will find all the shepherds working together and all the sheep mingling together and at the end of the day, all of the sheep are brought into a sheepfold to protect them in that evening, and in the morning all the sheep are mixed together. We would think that it would be a very big job to sort them out, but it is very simple.

Each of the shepherds had a different call, some played the flute, some sing, some call their sheep by their name, others used different whistles, and when the shepherds came to all these sheep together and they call their sheep, the sheep sort themselves out and follow that shepherd one by one, until they are all sorted out.

Our Lord is telling us that we live within the world, a world made up of many people but we should not be fearful, we should not be frightened, because the good shepherd knows the sheep and His sheep know His voice and His voice is the Word of God, the word of God that is proclaimed unto us, the kingdom of God that is preached and if we hear this Word of God and we take it to heart, we then will be known by the good shepherd and when He calls us and leads and guides us, and takes us and feeds us, takes us into His care, to water us, and to look after us, we will know who we should follow. The good shepherd will be the only door that will lead us to the kingdom of God. That is why we have the Holy Spirit, God is within us so that we can discern the word of God, so that we can understand so that we can be led, so that we can understand the sacraments, so that we see what they are doing for us, that we are not led away through false doors, for the world is full of false doors. They are known as anti-Christ. Anti in the English language means against, but anti in Hebrew language means instead of, and there are many anti-Christ in the world. Many things drive them to say follow me and I will lead you to your destiny, fortune-tellers, reading the stars, and all of these things, they are anti-Christ. There are anti-Christ coming into the world and saying that we no longer need the sacraments of God, it is sufficient to do this or that and that will lead you into the sheepfold. The false gods are coming into the world and many are following and worshipping these false gods, but we must remain true and firm in our faith, in our belief and in our trust, that we only follow the Word of God. In that we must place our trust, our faith is in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, our belief is in everything that He has established for us and if we trust in His word, and we can be assured that we will be led to the Kingdom of God.

Apostle Cliff Flor
North Queensland.

"For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."

To believe, that Jesus is God's Son and the promised Saviour of the world, is by no means, even among Christians, any more a forgone conclusion. The miracles He performed are meanwhile declined as "miracle-tales".

The faith, which the Apostle John attributes to conquering the world, our text, way surpasses of course the belief of Jesus' historical existence, that He stilled the wind, walked on water, healed the sick and even bought the dead to life again.

The belief which is meant here, begins here, where we get to know ourselves. Man is, because of sin, separated from, his origin, his God: he is severed from God. We are inclined to more or less belittle this fact: "Because we are all sinners, who come short of the glory of God," not alone in this but are found in best company, therefore no need to meditate. God will know to discern between my little debt and someone else's enormous one. Certainly, mercy we all need but in quite different measure." Only then, when we cannot shut our eyes any more to the devastating, deadly consequence of every sin, do we begin to acknowledge our own, personal lost condition.

Our incapability to do anything about this lost state, makes this great need of being delivered from it more distinct. We finally realize what the separation from God really means for us. We begin to suffer under this separation. Like in the parable of the lost son, grows repentance, ripens the decision to turn to the Father for help.

So, we become those who knock, of which Jesus says, that it will be opened to them. The belief is then a finding and obtaining. Reconciliation with God, through unconditional acceptance of His Grace, leads to soul rest. Out of gratitude our love grows to Him and finally deep devotion. He becomes Lord over our life.

Loved ones serve each other with joy, it is no burden. Where a man loves Christ and through Him God, there he finds pleasure in the law of the Lord. Even more: He will have no fear of the commandment, because his love makes him capable to fulfil it without difficulty. Not for nothing Paul says: "Love is the fulfilling of the law" (Ro 13:10).

That such a belief then turns to works, is quite understandable. The love for Christ, the turning to God leads to turning to our fellowman. Who is captured by the gospel can in no wise remain idle. Christ calls those who are in fellowship with Him to duty. To go and bring forth fruit in His commission to us. For a branch, connected to the living vine, it is not a laborious performance, but contrary, a normal manifestation of life.

To experience God in His love and to receive a glimpse of His riches, strengthens our faith. The humbling and at the same time amazing happy acknowledgement, to live by His mercy, in spite of oftentimes appearances of doubts and disobedience outside to be accepted by Him, encourages to hold fast to His Grace.

Finally, out of faith grows the living hope, that God will fully establish His glorious kingdom and His blessing of salvation for man, as promised, in His own time. In this manner, as the love to God grows, the wish also grows, that this might soon come to pass.

Christ has overcome the world and gives everyone, who believes in Him, the chance to be partaker of this same victory.

Late Apostle Wilfred Baron
Germany.

TEXT - Psalm 24.

"The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein. For he hath founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the floods. Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? Or who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation. This is the generation of them that seek him, that seek thy face, O Jacob. Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord of hosts, he is the King of Glory."

When our Lord was on the earth, He said to the people, search the scriptures for in them ye think ye find eternal life, but they are they which do testify of me and ye will not come to me. We must understand at the time our Lord gave this teaching, the only Scriptures that were in existence was what we call the Old Testament today, the New Testament had not yet been born, because the testator had not passed away. He was referring them to the Psalms and to the books of the prophets. We can read in the Scriptures that in the forty days, after He came from the grave, He taught His disciples of the mysteries of the Kingdom of God, He unravelled unto them the meaning of all of the Psalms and all of those things that were in the prophets, and they could not understand these things prior to that, because they were written by the power of God, the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit had not yet come upon them, but when He entered into locked doors and said "Receive ye the Holy Ghost", they, then, during that forty day period, gained an understanding of what the Scriptures were foretelling for the future, for all.

Psalm 24 virtually tells the fullness of His plan, which began with His Father as the Creator, who created all things and everything therein, and He owned everything and He told them of the plan that the creation was made so that he could bring within the world, a generation of people who would look up unto God and be prepared to partake of the highest of heavens at the appropriate time. He spoke to them in that Psalm about the downfall of man, how man had allowed himself to be tempted into sin and as a result of this, there was now division between God and man. "He gave hope in that Psalm, that there would be a day of coming when God's will would be fulfilled and He would once again be able to take mankind and give him the promise that was created for him.

He spoke about a holy city, a holy place, He was not speaking about the city that those people could see at that time, He was giving hope of something for the future - the Kingdom of God. He spoke and told them that the Kingdom of God was being prepared and that they, if they followed and partook of the blessings offered unto them, that they too, could be partakers of this Kingdom of God. We inherit that promise today.

Many Christians in the world today, have lost track of what the object of our faith is, to be part of this Kingdom of God. The Kingdom of God is a period of time on earth where for a thousand years, God's blessings will be given in peace and as partakers of this Kingdom of God, where there will be no death, no sickness, no sorrow, no troubles, no problems in the world, we will be fed by God and we can live with Him in this holy place, at peace where His will can be done, as He showers us with His blessings, and from there we go to eternal life. That is why He gave specific instructions to His Apostles that they had to go forth and preach the Kingdom of God. He came to tell us of the Kingdom of God and we must never lose track of this kingdom. He told us the way to the kingdom, He gave instructions to the gates, to the doors, He said, "Look up O ye gates, look up, O ye everlasting door", which means we must look to the power of God and we must ask ourselves what is this everlasting door.

If we look at the temples of man, they do not last forever, but Christ Himself, taught us of this everlasting door, He said, "I am the door to the sheepfold." He has become the everlasting way through which we can enter into the Kingdom of God, and we must never take that door away. He said that if we wish to understand the way to the Kingdom of God, then we must call and hear His words to the people and He said, O Jacob.

Now we know that in symbol form, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, represent Abraham as the Father, Isaac as the Son that was to be sacrificed, and Jacob as the power of the Holy Spirit. Jacob had twelve sons, representing the twelve fold Apostle ministry, and through the power of the Holy Spirit, would take this Word of God into the world, so that we could understand it. That is why we and all Christians, recite in the Apostle creed, that we believe in the Holy Ghost, the Holy Spirit, we believe in the Universal Apostolic Church, we believe in the communion with saints, we believe in the forgiveness and remission of our sins, we believe in the resurrection to life everlasting. This Holy Spirit tells us to continue to believe that in a troubled world, where we see so many things happening within the world, that are sent to break down this faith and this belief. We have this spirit within us and it will urge us at all times to believe in the Kingdom of God, to believe in God's word and to trust in it and then we can go through life fulfilling those things that the Psalmist said that there would be righteousness come into the world, righteousness through Christ, that would reconcile us to God, that would show us humility to wash our hands, there would be the ability to have a pure heart and then we will say, "Who is this God of glory?"

This God of glory that will come into the world to take all of those who are prepared and be ready and waiting for this great event to take place. We will be able to answer The Lord, "He is The God of glory." Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, we will all witness and see Him coming and He will take us to His Kingdom, He is the promise, He is the Word of God, He is our hope, He is what we yearn and live for, and we have to be careful that we are not side tracked in any way from this.

Apostle Cliff Flor
North Queensland.

TEXT - Psalm 3:5&8.

"I laid me down and slept; I awaked; for the Lord sustained me. Salvation belongeth unto the Lord: Thy blessing is upon thy people."

Again, and again, the holy scriptures do proclaim the mighty deliverance of mankind through God the Almighty. These verses of the Psalmist make it clear what, after hundreds of years, should happen to us also through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

To be man means to experience limitations. Limitations of health, life's strength and time. An old church hymn says: "We are only guests on earth and travel restlessly, with many a hardship, towards the everlasting homeland. The ways are abandoned and of times we are alone. In these grey streets, nobody wants to be with us. Only one gives guidance, that is the loving Christ, He faithfully travels beside us when everyone forgets."

Jesus knows about the troubles of man. So, we are told of many wonderful deliverances. People come in their helplessness to Jesus and He helps beyond our comprehension, when everything seems hopeless.

A few friends undertake a risk, to bring a lame man to Jesus. With difficulty, they make a pathway through the multitude. When they could not enter into the house they climbed, without hesitation, on to the roof, let their friend down through an opening and laid him before the feet of Jesus. The Lord accepted this action as more than caring and love for a friend. He sees therein a trust, that seeks Him as Saviour. Now, Jesus starts with the healing of the sick one, but so profound, that those who surrounded them became speechless. He brings this man's life in order, connecting him with God. He forgives his sins (Luke 5:18-26).

Jesus also knows about our corruption. He therefore does not doctor around our symptoms, but rather goes straight to the root of our sickness: Sin. And who is healed from sin, in him starts a newness of life. And the other things, the stiff limbs, the aches here and there, your restlessness, your worries -they will also be taken: "...take your bed and go home! (Luke 5:24), God speaks this at the latest on that day, on which He calls us into His perfect world.

It is a man of high reputation, who comes running to Jesus and falls before Him to the ground. Jairus, a ruler of the synagogue, was at the end of his strength when he reached Jesus. So dark as now, it had never been in his heart. His daughter can or will not live any more, she fights with her life, death threatens her. There he bursts out: "My daughter, lies at the point of death! Do come quickly to her, lay Your hand on her that she may be healed!" In his desperate need, he was no more the important man who among the crowd of people, he is now only father and one of them. His daughter is important, life-important. Fear surrounds his heart. Jairus sees friends coming towards him, their heads shaking: "No-one can help your daughter any more, it is over!" Jairus is in despair, everything is finished. There, Jesus turns to him and says: "Don't get alarmed! Be not afraid, only believe!" Now starts the healing for both. First for the father and then the oppressed, paralysed and seemingly passed away life at home. Jesus asks then also the mother, who stayed with the daughter and a few of his friends to come into the child's room. "There she lies lifeless" says the mother. But Jesus takes lovingly the hand of the girl: "Damsel, I say unto thee, arise!" And there the daughter arose. She stands on her feet and tries the first steps. She can live again. Her father and mother cannot grasp it. (told freely according to Mark 5: 21-24 and 35-43).

Here are powers, but also nearness and humanity at work, which Jesus as the Son of God can give with authority. All experience the credibility of His redeeming love. It breaks through laws of seemingly unchangeable constraints (death), paralyses, hopelessness's, and injuries of all kind. With Jesus Christ consequently, a new reality of salvation had begun, which took its way - into all depths of humanity.

Apostle Roland Bohm (Since retired)
Germany.

TEXT – Psalm 139: 14 – 18.

I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works, and that my soul knoweth right well. My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them. How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand: when I awake, I am still with thee.”

We see the preciousness of God who knows our being before we were even contemplated to be created. Every limb was written in the book so that it would come forth and have a purpose within our lives, and the thoughts of God which created the blessings within our life cannot be counted, he said, they are as the sands of the sea. Therein is a prophecy that our Lord Himself spoke about. The blessings of God are like the sands of the sea. We see that in the world today so many people are worshipping the blessings of God and seeking those blessings as the sands of the sea which are not stable. There is no stability in that sand as the sea comes in and goes out. It is the same today. We should look beyond those blessings, look beyond that sand and see where they came from, and set out hearts on worshipping and praising He who has granted us those blessings. If we build our life and our future, or attempt to build them on the sands of the sea then we will suffer as our Lord taught while He was on this earth, and He gave us this warning in Matthew Chapter 7 verses 24-29 after He had given His words on how we should live our life. These words were all full of requests. They were advice to us. They were as it were like a catalogue of things we should look at day by day, for they are His words and we should never let them slip, and at the end of that teaching He taught these words, and we find written: *“Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it. And it came to pass, when Jesus ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine: For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.”* We see our Lord made it very clear about these sands. So many blessings the Lord gives us, we should always remember to thank for them, not try to build our life on that sand, but build our life on the rock, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and His Word. No matter what storm will come within our lives those blessings will eventually fail, but if we have built on the rock, the Word of Christ, then we will withstand those storms and be able to receive a greater strength of our inner being. We see we have to be careful that we do not allow our lives to shift, worshipping the blessings of God and not worshipping God the giver of those blessings. In the world today we see that happening. We see so many worshipping the creation and not the Creator. Great sums of money and research is going into trying to save this creation without one thought of asking the Creator to allow His hand to enter over it. We should not fall into the trap of building our lives on the blessings of God. The second great prophecy that was contained in those words was that when the Psalmist said that even when he awakens from his sleep he shall still be with me. We understand that has a two-part meaning, an earthly meaning and a spiritual meaning. The earthly meaning of course is that as we open our eyes in the morning the great blessing of God is still with us and we are still with Him, and we can call on Him to lead us through that day, but it has a greater spiritual meaning for us, and that is that when we close our eyes at the end of this life as it were in a sleep and when we open them we are still with God. He has promised us that He will never leave us or forsake us. That promise was given unto us by Christ on the cross for all Christians, ‘Today thou shalt be with me in Paradise.’ We never lose our place in His Church or in this spiritual building. We are just moved to another place where we can continue to receive these blessings from God that are beyond our understanding.

Apostle Cliff Flor
North Queensland.

TEXT -Ephesians 2:13.

"But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ".

While reading recently in a book written in 1884 the following article appeared, which should be an inspiration to us all to show how the above text can be fulfilled by the Lord and inspire us all to support mission work at all times.

The Article reads -

The greatest of modern hymns had its spiritual birthplace in a barn! About the year 1756, a bright lad of sixteen, the son of Major Toplady, was taken by his widowed mother to visit some relatives in Ireland. During this visit at the hamlet of Codymain, an earnest layman was holding Evangelistic services in a barn, for the benefit of the surrounding peasantry. The young lad, Augustus Montague Toplady, was attracted to the place by curiosity and listened from the hay loft.

The homespun preacher's text that day was, "Ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ." Up to that time the boy had been a stranger to the great salvation, but the plain discourse led him to Jesus. He was converted that day, and the sermon that converted him gave, in the end, to Christendom the matchless hymn, "Rock of Ages."

Truly the faithful servant of God who scatters his seed upon the waters little knows whereunto it may grow, or after how many days he may find it. That plain Irish preacher was setting in tune that day a youthful heart which should yet yield the marching song to millions on their way to glory.

Late Apostle J F Kroner
Holland.

ROCK OF AGES

1. Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee;
Let the water and the blood,
From Thy riven side which flowed.
Be of sin the double cure,
Save me from its guilt and power.
2. Not the labour of my hands,
Can fulfil Thy law's demands;
Could my zeal no respite know,
Could my tears for ever flow,
All for sin could not atone;
Thou must save, and Thou alone
3. Nothing in my hand I bring;
Simply to Thy Cross I cling!
Naked, come to Thee for dress;
Helpless, look to Thee for grace:
Foul, I to the fountain fly;
Wash me, Saviour, or I die.
4. While I draw this fleeting breath,
When mine eyes shall close in death,
When I soar to worlds unknown,
See Thee on Thy Judgement-throne;
Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in thee.

TEXT: Psalm 27: 1-6.

“The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? When the wicked, even mine enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell. Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear: though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident. One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple. For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion; in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock. And now shall mine head be lifted up above mine enemies round about me: therefore will I offer in his tabernacle sacrifices of joy; I will sing. yea, I will sing praises unto the Lord.”

We see therein the Psalmist enumerates the enemies of mankind: the enemies of sin, hell and death; the enemies of the deterioration of this body; and even though they encamp around him and they pull at him each day, yet he has no worries, for he understands that the Lord has set up a temple for him. A tabernacle in those days was a pavilion. A pavilion was attached to the main temple and unto it all the great blessings and riches of the temple were placed at festival time so that everyone could see. It was attached to the temple and today is attached to the living temple of the Church is also a pavilion. This pavilion will allow us to lift our heads above our enemies, for the labour is over, the blessings of God are now sure, for as the Psalmist said our feet are set on a rock and a rock cannot be moved. Our journey is over. The inner person within us, the inner being is now being welcomed into God's care to receive further blessings and the resurrection and the Kingdom of God. We read of this blessing in Revelation 2:7 *“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.”*

We see very clearly that we should at all times move towards remembering the two-part being we have, our natural being which will deteriorate, and our spiritual being that will become stronger and strengthened if we follow the Word of God and His teachings. Our Lord when He was on this earth, He was asked the question by a lawyer who could speak all of God's words at that time - How he could obtain life? Our Lord asked him - What does the law say? He said - The law says that thou shalt love God above all else, and thy neighbour as thyself. Our Lord said to him - Thou hast well said, for if you fulfil that then you will have life. He was speaking about this inward life, this eternal life, this spiritual life. The lawyer then tempted Him and thought he would outsmart Christ, and we still see that today for many in the legal profession for there is always an attempt to belittle those opposite them. He asked him – “Who is thy neighbour?” We know that our Lord gave that wonderful teaching of the Good Samaritan. How a man was taken by thieves and left to lie in the gutter; how the priest went by and walked on the other side; how the Levite went by and did not even look at him; but how the Samaritan who was not recognised under the law, he came and he patched his wounds, he put him in an inn, he gave the innkeeper money and said that if it is not enough when I come again I will pay you. Jesus asked this lawyer a question and the lawyer had no option but to speak the truth. He said to him – “Who do you think of those three was neighbour to that man?” The lawyer said – I suppose, he would not confess: “I suppose he that showed mercy.” Jesus said to the people all around – “Do thou likewise, show mercy and you will receive this eternal life into the future.”

As we move into this year let us not move away from the Word of God, but let us always remember Christ's words were to show mercy to every one we come in contact with.

Apostle Cliff Flor
North Queensland.

TEXT - Hebrews 10:23.*"Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering".*Headlines

"RESURRECTION IMPOSSIBLE -
JESUS CHRIST DIED AND REMAINED IN THE GRAVE".

It is quite conceivable that this statement could cause the reader to be alarmed and unsure. This does not happen without intention. Could this be like a shake up to wake up? Should we not get up and try to work through this above said opinion? To battle we have to prepare ourselves, because our enemy has desired us. Now to the matter. This mentioned thesis is in this or very similar radical form, now quoted by a part of Theologians advocated worldwide. There is also a more subtle kind of word-inversion. And behind many a smooth but also sibyllic speech, hides the same trail of thought. If the resurrection is seen as a "nice story" and therewith sinks to just a pious with-thought, then are all other miracles which the bible reports, proof of the power and divinity of Jesus, or just stories? Should the reader of these obvious but also hidden tendencies, presume them to be only outside of our congregations, he may be mistaken; as painful as this information may be. Friend or foe of the Christian belief, have acknowledged the resurrection of Jesus Christ to be the foundation of the faith. And this in closest connection with the crucifixion. Herein is the indissoluble unity of the faith. The Apostle Paul embraces the centre of the belief in the following words:

"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 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" (1 Cor. 15:14-19).

What conclusion follows this declaration? If Jesus Christ, the Son of God has not come, crucified and raised up on the third day, ascended into heaven to return again, then is the whole person of Jesus Christ, inclusive His declaration, reduced to a disclaiming size. His teaching would lose all authority. Regarding taking notice and heeding His words, would become meaningless and as it pleases mankind. If Christ is not raised from the dead, the Christian belief is become a museum piece, though interesting, but without objective validity or truth. Christianity would be a nice thought, but nothing more, Not worth the excitement.

Here is another advise permitted: Has Jesus Christ, as God's Son not died and risen for us? Who cannot represent Christ and believe in Him, as the scripture delivers to us, has nothing to celebrate what He does not believe in. There produces a question, if it is allowed to have divine worship according to pattern and substance, in which to the minimum reduced, Jesus is preached and sung to.

Another thought may be added: Who denies the resurrection, according to scripture, dies without hope. Because hope can alone be obtained only through Christ. The men who were called first Christians at Antioch, stood the whole world picture on its head. They resorted constantly to the resurrection as foundation for their teaching, their preaching, their life and - this is important - their dying.

Resurrection as consequence to redemption. When God wanted to redeem the world, then with the goal to lead mankind back into the union of God's love. The cross and redemption death, was necessary to atone the old debt and remove it. The resurrection is the completion of redemption; because Jesus Christ has liberated us from sin through His death: through His resurrection, but He has given us the wonderful hope, which we lost through sin.

When Paul preached the Resurrected One, the following happened according to Acts 17:32: *"And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked: and others said, We will hear thee again of this matter. So Paul departed from among them."* Let people mock, like to Noah's time. The preservation of our faith has been laid into the hands of God through Jesus Christ, the high priest's prayer. God strengthen through His Spirit, the belief on our redeemer Jesus Christ. Joy over joy, the Lord is risen! *"With men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible"*. Mark 10:27.

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