

II Cor. 3:17 -- "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is..."

LIBERTY

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Pastor Randy Love

Leonard Dice, Editor

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EASTER — *The Season of Hope*

If Christ Had Not Risen—What?

We shudder at the thought.
Wishful thinking cannot satisfy.
The Bible tells in no uncertain terms, if Christ is not risen:

Then our preaching is vain.

Then your faith also is vain.

Then you are yet in your sins.

Then they are lost who died in Christ.

And then we are found to be false witnesses of God. For we have testified of God that He raised up Christ (I Cor. 15:14-18).

But Christ Is Risen—Now What?

Now we raise the paean of victory:

"O death, where is thy sting?
O grave, where is thy victory?"

The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (I Cor. 15:55-57).

*Ashamed of Jesus! that dear Friend,
On whom my hopes of Heav'n
depend?*

*No! when I blush be this my shame,
That I no more revere His name.*

THREE GARDENS which tell their own stories

(GENESIS 2:8; JOHN 18:1; 19:41)

"And the Lord planted a garden eastward in Eden." I wish I could have seen that garden. Alas, I was born too late! Did it possess long winding paths, and were there enchanting borders of multi-coloured flowers? Were there shady corners where Adam sat listening to the songs of the birds? Were some of the flowering trees aflame with the Creator's art? And did the gentle breezes of evening produce music of exquisite sweetness as they played among the leaves? Yes, I wish I could have seen that garden, for it has been said, "One is nearer to God in a garden than anywhere else on earth." A garden is a mirror reflecting a world. There, we find enemies; there, we find friends. Within the confines of a garden stalks the shadow of death; but in that same shadow may be found promise of glorious resurrection. The gardens of the Bible have a wonderful story to tell.

The Garden of Tragedy . . . death commencing

It was all over, and poor Adam hardly knew where he was or what he was doing. Tears probably blinded his eyes, and a cloud on the sun sent shadows scurrying across the lawn. The time would now come when newly turned earth would announce an addition to the Creator's design. The day would eventually dawn when a grave would be found in God's wonderful world, and for a while the birds would cease to sing. Yes, it was now a certainty that some day human blood would stain the good earth: for Adam had sinned! For ever he would remember the sinister whisper which had said, "Ye shall not surely die." He frowned. Death was an unpleasant word. How could he die, when he had only just commenced to live? He shuddered as another cloud passed across his soul. He had not died physically; but his innocence, his purity, his joy had ceased to exist. Germs had invaded his soul, and the grave which some day would spoil God's countryside would only be the forerunner of myriads more. Evil had lifted an ugly head; storm-clouds loomed on the horizon; and when Adam was required to leave his lovely home, he realized he had lost more than would ever be regained.

The Garden of Testing . . . death challenged

Someone had planted another garden. It was still and serene, for night had covered it with a shadowy mantle. There is reason to believe that the moon shone from the heavens, for men that night were able to see things at which even the angels veiled their faces. The Prince of Heaven, a Knight in the shining armour of purity, had come to challenge the monster which from Eden had stalked through God's great world. Everywhere, a trail of anguish had been left behind this raging enemy. Homes had been plunged into sorrow; hearts had been ruthlessly broken; young lives had been snapped as if they had been but tender twigs, and death had reigned supreme. The monster had been invincible, for its greatest ally, sin, had its fifth column in every challenging heart. Now the tyrant was to meet his match; this was destined to be a night of nights. There is hardly need to repeat what has been told elsewhere (*Bible Pinnacles*, p. 125); it is sufficient to say that although the Lord was hurt in the struggle, He succeeded in giving to His greatest enemy a fatal blow.

The Garden of Triumph . . . death conquered

The golden face of the sun was slowly appearing above the distant horizon; rays of scintillating brilliance were fast dispelling the shadows of the night. The silent garden was waking from sleep. Calm, dignified, radiant, an angel guarded the mouth of the sepulchre. His eyes were pools of happiness; the joy of the eternal shone from his face. When he saw the woman approaching, he smiled; he had great news to announce. "Be not affrighted: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: he is risen; he is not here: behold the place where they laid him. . . ." (Mark 16:6). I should love to have been in that garden. At the appointed time the stone was rolled away, and the King of Glory came forth triumphantly. Death had been vanquished—Eden's monster had been overcome, hope had been born anew. Now, forever God's children would be able to sing, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"

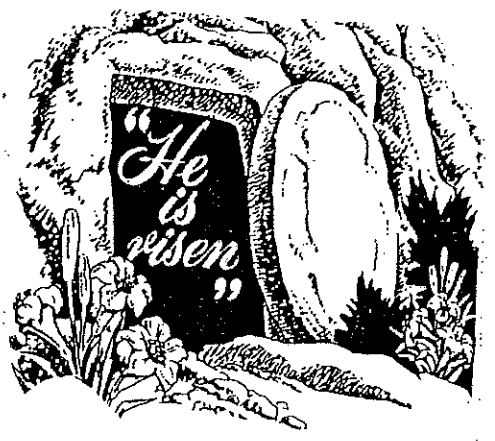
Mary



Beside the empty sepulchre she lingered
With tear-dimmed eyes, and heart with sorrow worn,
Nor heeded One whose Presence in that garden
A radiance shed, surpassing that of morn!

He stood beside her (tho' her eyes were holden)
Then spoke her name, in accents low and sweet;
And at that long-loved voice she turned in rapture,
Beheld her Lord, and worshipped at His feet!

So speak to us, dear Lord, amid earth's shadows,
When doubt and fears oppress the human heart!
And at Thy Voice shal' break the light of morning,
Revealing Thee, a' glorious as Thou art!



AN EMPTY TOMB PROVES CHRISTIANITY.
AN EMPTY CHURCH DENIES IT!

Miscellaneous.

Leonard R. Dice, Editor and Asst. Pastor

*STORIES
*EVENTS
*VIEWS
*NEWS



THE DEATH, BURIAL AND RESURRECTION OF CHRIST

IN HISTORY PAST this is the week that Jesus Christ was crucified and rose again from the dead to live forever. I believe He was crucified on Wednesday, was in the grave three days and nights as the Bible says, and rose again on the 3rd day. People have many questions about all of this, and the Bible has all the answers. Jesus Christ was God's only begotten Son, was born of the Virgin Mary, lived a sinless life and died for the sins of the world. He was God incarnate and willingly came to give His life for our sins. He is the Father, the Sustainer, the Creator and the Judge of all mankind. He is our only hope of salvation and eternal life. Calvary and Easter are just three days apart, but the greatest events that ever happened took place during that week. The question is, "What do you believe?" Your eternal destiny depends on your decision. Listen to what some of His ENEMIES thought:

PILATE - "I find no fault in this man." He then proceeded to turn Christ over to the mob to be crucified. By his own mouth he has condemned himself forever.

JUDAS ISCARIOT - "I have sinned in that I have betrayed innocent blood." He sold Christ for 30 pieces of silver, but in reality he sold himself for 30 pieces of silver.

CENTURION - "Truly, this was the Son of God." He was in charge of the soldiers who crucified Christ. They all believed but it was too late!

Now here are the comments of His FRIENDS:

JOHN THE BAPTIST - "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world."

THOMAS - "My Lord and my God." He earlier doubted but was soon restored.

ETHIOPIAN EUNUCH - "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."

OUR HEAVENLY FATHER - "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

ANGELS - "For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."

APOSTLE PETER - "...we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God."

Here is the testimony of Christ himself - John 10:17-18, "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." Also, in John 20:11, He says, "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth His life for the sheep."