

THE AWAKENING OF LAZARUS.

– MARCH 3, JOHN 11:30-45. –

Golden Text – "I am the resurrection and the life." – Verse 25.

IN this lesson is brought before us the glorious doctrine of the resurrection – a doctrine which finds no place in any religious system except Christianity, nor in any religious standards of authority save the Bible. While the doctrine of redemption is the central doctrine of the Christian system, the doctrine of the resurrection is the end of our faith, our glorious hope through Christ. Eliminate this doctrine from the Bible, and the Apostle tells us our faith is vain. – 1 Cor. 15:14.

And yet, strange to say, Christians in general have almost lost sight of this doctrine, as the natural consequence of several popular errors. As the Prophet Isaiah (28:15) expresses it, they have made a covenant with death, and with the grave they are at agreement. Instead of regarding death as the Word of God presents it – as the "enemy" of our race, "the wages of sin," they have come to regard it as "the angel God hath sent to carry mortals home," and as a step in a process of evolution to higher conditions. With the idea that the destinies of both the good and the evil are fixed and entered upon unalterably and everlastingly at the moment of death, they have no use for a resurrection, even though they know that the Scriptures teach it and even though a majority of them profess to believe it.

But what saith the Scriptures? Hear the Prophet Isaiah (28:18): "Your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with [*sheol*] the grave shall not stand;...the hail [hard, forcible truth] shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters [of prevailing truth] shall overflow the hiding place [of error]." Even so shall it be in this harvest time of judgment upon "Christendom."

The awakening of Lazarus from the "sleep" of death was but a foreshadowing of the power and purpose of God for the liberating of all the prisoners of Sin and Death in his own appointed time, through Christ and his Kingdom.

When Jesus wept at the tomb of Lazarus it was in sympathy, not only with his bereaved friends, but also with the many similar scenes of sorrow which must thus afflict mankind before the dawning of the then far distant glorious day of resurrection.

For a fuller exposition of the Bible's teaching concerning Resurrection – "the first resurrection," the general resurrection, the character and the object of each, see our issues of April 1 and Oct. 15, 1893.
