

# THE TRUE

# MEANING OF EASTER

by Reverend August W. Brustat

NEARLY two thousand years ago, as the rising sun began to paint the Eastern heavens, three women hastened through the Damascus Gate at Jerusalem.

On the way, they passed an elevation of ground upon which three crosses, emptied of their victims, stood silhouetted against the Syrian sky in dark and gruesome outline. Tears of emotion rushed to their eyes. Brushing them aside, they continued on their way with winged footsteps toward a sepulcher in a neighboring garden.

Today, after nearly twenty centuries, that self-same sun in its God-appointed course, again rises in radiant splendor upon our world. But what a marvelous sight we behold! There are not only three timid, anxious women wending their way toward the sepulcher in the garden, but in spirit, thousands upon thousands, yea, millions, from every direction of the compass—North, South, East, and West—from all parts of the world they come.

Nor do they come today with downcast faces and eyes bedewed with sorrow and gloom, but with joyful shouts of Hallelujah's do they today, in spirit, pass on to that sepulcher in the garden of the Arimathean aristocrat.

And why do they come so joyously? Why has Calvary's sorrow suddenly been transformed into the joy of Easter? How have the tears been dried, and why do smiles wreath the faces of the faithful? It is because He, who died for their sins on that first Good Friday rose again from the dead and came forth from the sepulcher—because He, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is *risen* from the dead and is *alive forevermore*.

The miracle of Easter is with us again, and we recognize it as the Queen of all Christian Festivals.

The three women, identified in the Gospel record as Mary Magdalene; Mary, the mother of James; and Salome, approached the sepulcher on that first Easter morning with the intention of embalming

the body of Jesus. Arriving at the sepulcher they noticed, to their amazement, that the huge stone which closed the entrance to the tomb and was sealed by the Imperial Roman Government, had already been moved.

Entering the tomb they were greeted by a white-robed celestial Visitor who announced the joyous Easter tidings: "Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here: for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay." This is the death-defying, life-giving message which is proclaimed throughout Christendom, which dispels from souls the shadows that hover over our confused world and which fills hearts with faith and joy.

THE WORLD TODAY believes in Christ. It believes in Him as an historical fact. It accepts the historical story of the manger and the cross; but for the story of the open and empty tomb, it skeptically raises its eyebrows. The world believes in a *dead* Christ. To the unbelieving world the stone is still sealing the sepulcher.

Many today are so materialistic in their thinking that they reject everything supernatural, and accept only what the physical senses, the eye and the hand can grasp. They believe only what they can see and feel.

They tell us that *science knows—*

that science has analyzed the gray matter of our brains, and found that it is largely phosphorous. Science has analyzed the output of our mind and solemnly pronounced that what we call "thought" is mere atomic friction. A world steeped in the idolatrous worship of the gods of Reason has put a dying man on the scales and found that the soul, which is supposed to leave the body in death weighs nothing, and therefore the world falsely concludes that the soul does not exist.

But the skeptical world forgets that there are such elements of our life as *love* and *hope* and *memory* which cannot be placed in a test tube and chemically analyzed in a laboratory.

And so some vital questions arise which demand an answer: Is our life mere nitrous acid, or, is it the breath of God? Is God fact or fiction? Was Jesus Christ the divine Revealer of the unseen and eternal, or, was He a Dreamer among the shadows, passing with the long procession of shadowy forms into "No Man's Land?" Did He, or did He not, arise from the dead? This is the touchstone by which the great problems of our time and of our world must be solved: *Is Christ dead or alive today?* That is the basic question.

The gods of the Egyptians, Osiris and Amen-Ra, are dead. The gods of the Assyrians and Babylonians, Dagan and Bel-Merodach, are dead. The gods of the Greeks, Zeus

and Apollo; the gods of the Romans, Jupiter and Mars; the gods of the Norse and Teutons, Thor and Wotan—all of them are dead. Not only that, in fact they never lived, they were merely figments of man's imagination.

But what about Christ? He claimed to be the Son of God. He said, "I and my Father are One." When His Roman Judge, Pontius Pilate, asked Him the frank question: "Art thou the King of the Jews?" He answered unhesitatingly: "Thou sayest it." And He rested His claim and title to deity upon the truth of the Resurrection.

His enemies clamored for proof that He was the Messiah, and He answered: "An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas: For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." After that, Jesus promised and predicted His Resurrection from the dead.

**D**ID His enemies forget His words? They certainly did not. They remembered them acutely and vividly. We see them standing before Pilate after Christ's death on that first Good Friday, saying: "Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while He was yet alive, 'After three days I will rise again.' Command therefore

that the sepulcher be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first." And Pilate said: "Ye have a watch: go your way, make it as sure as ye can." And they sealed the stone and set the guard.

But Easter morning saw that tomb empty in spite of all their precautions. "*He is risen as He said.*"

The age-old falsehoods now nearly two thousand years old and all totally discredited are nevertheless still parroted. These are namely, that the disciples stole His body while the guards slept; that the disciples fabricated the story of His resurrection to bolster their own wavering faith; that the disciples, obsessed with the thought of Jesus' return to life, imagined that they saw Him alive; or, that Christ had not actually died on the Cross at all, but only swooned, and that the cool of the grave revived Him.

These blatant falsehoods of unbelief cannot change the historical fact that *Jesus is risen from the dead.*

Certain incontrovertible facts concerning the resurrection of Christ are definitely established. These are:

1. The grave of Christ was unquestionably empty.
2. Christ's body was not removed by His *enemies* or they would cer-

tainly have produced His dead body to disprove the claim of the disciples that He was risen, and thus would have nipped Christianity in the bud.

3. Christ's body was not removed by His *disciples*. Not only did the officially-sealed tomb, guarded by four armed Roman soldiers render that impossible, but the absence of the body from the tomb caused amazement and the deepest sorrow among them.

4. The disciples were only then convinced that He was risen after repeated and infallible proofs.

He appeared to them alive on at least ten separate occasions, once to over 500 witnesses. Twice the Risen Lord appeared *after* His ascension into heaven. He showed himself to Saul (Paul) on the Damascene Highway, changing him from a Jesus-hater to a Jesus-lover, and transforming him from Saul, the persecutor, to Paul, the apostle-missionary. He also showed himself to John the Beloved in exile on the rock-bound, sea-girt Island of Patmos in the Aegean Sea, where John received the apocalyptic visions recorded in the Revelation.

When the Risen Christ on one of the ten appearances before His ascension appeared to seven of His disciples by the beautiful Galilean Sea, He repeated the miracle of the Draught of Fishes, previously performed during His Public Ministry, which identified Him to them beyond peradventure.

5. Those that testified that they saw Him were transformed to lion-hearted men. Before they were convinced of His resurrection, they met in secret behind locked doors for fear of their enemies. After the conviction that He was risen, they willingly risked their lives as proof of the truth of their witness.

6. The disciples were not capable of conscious, deliberate falsehood, and if they had been, they would not have been able so successfully to overcome the prevailing heathenism and turn men to faith in the Risen Christ as the Son of God and the sinner's Saviour.

7. On the belief in the Resurrection of Christ is built the universal observance of Sunday, instead of the Old Testament Sabbath, as the day of worship, as well as the entire foundation of the Christian Church.

No historical fact of the first century that has come down to us in this twentieth century has more corroboration, substantiation, and affirmation than the fact of Christ's resurrection from the dead. That fact is expressly reported over one hundred times in the New Testament and amply confirmed in secular history.

Easter reminds us that Christianity has no tombstones. It has no end. It lifts our hearts and eyes beyond the transient, the mundane, the temporal and the perishable, and its distant vision does not stop short of eternity.

**E**ASTER, with its Risen, Living Lord, assures us of four things. First, we are assured that Christ is, what He claimed to be, God's eternal, only-begotten Son and the sinner's Saviour. Second, we know that God the Father accepted His Son's sacrifice on Calvary's Cross as payment for our debt of sin, and that in Christ we have a full, free and final salvation. Third, Easter assures us that the Bible with its multiplied promises of God's grace, mercy and love, is unalterably and undeniably true. And fourth, we know that because Christ rose from

the dead, we too shall rise bodily on the Last Day and live with Him forevermore.

"He is risen as He said." Therefore believers rejoice and praise God, triumphantly declaring with the Apostle Peter: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away." This is the true meaning of Easter.

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### *La Salle's Prophecy*

Almost the first white man to breathe its invigorating air, Chevalier de la Salle, forsook the future of Chicago. He made this amazing prophecy nearly three hundred years ago.

"This is the lowest point on the divide between the two great valleys of the St. Lawrence and the Mississippi. The boundless regions of the West must send their products to the East through this point. This will be the gate of empire, this the seat of commerce. Everything invites to action. The typical man who will grow up here must be an enterprising man. Each day as he rises he will exclaim, 'I act, I move, I push,' and there will be spread before him a boundless horizon, an illimitable field of activity. A limitless expanse of plain is here—to the east, water, and at all other points, land. If I were to give this place a name I would derive it from the nature of the place and the nature of the man who will occupy this place—I act-'ago'; all around-'circum', therefore 'Circago'."

Many years later "Circago" became slurred into "Chicago."

—E. LOTNEY

# the first VACUUM CLEANER



by Harold Helfer



*It was a crazy idea—but it worked*

IF YOU had been in a certain London restaurant on a particular day in the year 1900, you would have beheld a rather startling sight.

A tall, well-groomed young man suddenly turned at a table and, for apparently no reason whatsoever, began sucking the back of his stuffed, plush chair.

This strange action that he had indulged in was by no means divorced from reason, but was to make him a millionaire and establish him as one of the most appreciated patron saints of housewives the world over.

The young man, Cecil Booth, before stopping at the restaurant had gone to the Empire Music Hall on Leicester Square to witness the exhibition of a new invention. It was a "dust blower" and was supposedly a revolutionary concept for cleaning rugs and carpets. Compressed air came gushing out of the nozzle of a hose and this cleaned the portion of the rug that the nozzle had traversed. There was no doubt about its success. You could see the dust escaping from the rug in fierce billowing little clouds.

Everyone except Cecil Booth appeared to be in considerable awe and duly impressed by this exhibition. Restaurant-bound with three friends, he said: "The trou-