

God, Who Raised Christ from the Dead – Finger Post No. 19

THAT Christ rose from the dead was the leading feature of the Apostles' preaching. But this brings the question, Who raised Christ from the dead? The New Testament answer was given by Peter when on trial: "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree" (Acts 5:30). "The God of our fathers" is defined as "The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob" (Acts 3:13).

This seems simple and obvious. Difficulty only arises when the distinction between Christ, the Son of God, on the one hand, and "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" on the other, is confused. Yet here also the teaching of the New Testament is clear. "There is one God the Father ... and one Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 8:6). He is "God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 15:6; 2 Cor. 1:3). Here again (as in Eph. 1:3, quoted above) the Revised Version reads, "the God and Father . . .", an expression which says clearly that God is God even to His Son, the "only begotten" (John 1:18). And although Christ is the Son born of the Virgin by the overshadowing power of the Holy Spirit, he is "himself man": "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 2:5).

Only when this distinction between the Father and the Son is grasped can other elements of Scripture teaching be understood. First, that which the Apostle Paul speaks of when he refers to "the working of God's mighty power which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead" (Eph. 1:19-20). Again, Paul says Christ "was crucified through weakness, yet he liveth by the power of God" (2 Cor. 13:4). Such passages clearly describe the action of the Eternal God towards a Son bearing human nature; they are quite incomprehensible if we apply them to the action of one Person of an eternal Trinity towards another co-equal and co-eternal Person.

The second truth which this distinction illuminates is that God, Who raised up the Lord Jesus, "will also raise up us by his own power" (1 Cor. 6:14). In that way Jesus becomes the "first fruits" of a harvest to be reaped from death (1 Cor. 15:20). This again is only intelligible if we have a right grasp of Bible teaching about the Father, and the Son's relation to Him. There was a time when the Son of God was dead, but the Father, who cannot die, lives ever, raised His Son from death to die no more (Deut. 32:40; Rom. 6:9). By the same power, and in the same way, He will raise up those who believe in His Son.

What does the Bible say concerning the Eternal God?

1. That the Creator of heaven and earth is ONE PERSON and not three, the glorious and uncreated Father.

"The Lord our God is ONE Lord" (Deut. 6:4; Mark 12:29). "To us there is but ONE GOD, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him" (1 Cor. 8:6). "ONE GOD and Father of all, who is above all and through all" (Eph. 4:6). "There is no God beside me" (Isa. 45:5). "I am God, and there is NONE ELSE" (Isa. 46:9-10). "Beside me there is no God" (Isa. 44:6). (See also passages quoted above.)

2. That the Creator dwells in heaven -- at some unknown point of measureless immensity -- to which the Lord Jesus ascended forty days after his resurrection.

"O thou that dwellest in the heavens" (Psa. 123:1). "Hear thou IN HEAVEN thy dwelling-place" (1 Kings 8:30). "Our Father who art IN HEAVEN" (Lord's Prayer). "God is in heaven, and thou upon earth" (Ecc. 5:2). "He hath looked down from the height of his sanctuary; from heaven did the Lord behold the

earth" (Psa. 102:19). "Jesus was parted from them, and carried up into heaven" (Luke 24:51). "He was received up into heaven and sat on the right hand of God" (Mark 16:19).

3. That He is light and life incorporate in glorious form, even that which the human form faintly reflects.

"Dwelling, in the light that no man can approach" (1 Tim. 6:16). "He covereth himself with light as with a garment" (Psa. 104 :2). "His glory is above the heavens" (Psa. 113:4). "Men, who are made after the similitude of God" (Jas. 3:9). "The man is the image and glory of God" (1 Cor. 11:7). "The similitude of the Lord shall he (Moses) behold" (Num. 12:9).

4. That though the Creator is thus located in "heaven his dwelling-place", the invisible energy or spirit which flows from Him fills immensity so that God is everywhere present.

"Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?" (Psa. 139:2-12). "Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created" (Psa. 104:30). "Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the Lord. Do not I fill heaven and earth?" (Jer. 23:24). "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good" (Prov. 15:3).

5. That the angels (of like nature with Himself) are the instruments of His wisdom and power, His servants by whom His commands are executed and His designs in heaven and earth performed.

"He maketh. his angels spirits" (Heb. 1:7). "His angels that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word ... ministers of his that do his pleasure" (Psa. 103:20-21). (See also the numerous instances of their appearance.)

The God thus revealed to us in the Bible is a creator, a father, and a person - universal in His presence and power by the spirit, but still a located and glorious Person whom we can contemplate, love, confide in, and adore. Jesus is His Son, begotten by the Spirit, and exalted to the Father's presence as mediator between God and men.