**THE EXPOSITION OF HOLY SCRIPTURE BY ALEXANDER MACLAREN**

**ACTS-070. THE MAN WHO IS JUDGE by ALEXANDER MACLAREN**

*"... He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead."*

*Acts 17:31*

**I. The Resurrection of Jesus gives assurance of judgment.**

**(a)** Christ's Resurrection is the pledge of ours.

The belief in a future life, as entertained by Paul's hearers on Mars Hill, was shadowy and dashed with much unbelief. Disembodied spirits wandered ghostlike and spectral in a shadowy underworld.

The belief in the Resurrection of Jesus converts the Greek peradventure into a fact. It gives that belief solidity and makes it easier to grasp firmly. Unless the thought of a future life is completed by the belief that it is a corporeal life, it will never have definiteness and reality enough to sustain itself as a counterpoise to the weight of things seen.

**(b)** Resurrection implies judgment.

A future bodily life affirms individual identity as persisting beyond the accident of death, and can only be conceived of as a state in which the earthly life is fully developed in its individual results. The dead, who are raised, are raised that they may receive the things done in the body, according to that they have done, whether it be good or bad. Historically, the two thoughts have always gone together; and as has been the clearness with which a resurrection has been held as certain, so has been the force with which the anticipation of judgment to come has impinged on conscience.

Jesus is, even in this respect, our Example, for the glory to which He was raised and in which He reigns now is the issue of His earthly life; and in His Resurrection and Ascension we have the historical fact which certifies to all men that a life of self-sacrifice here will assuredly flower into a life of glory there, Ours the Cross, the grave, the skies.

**II. The Resurrection of Jesus gives the assurance that He is Judge.**

The bare fact that He is risen does not carry that assurance; we have to take into account that He has risen--after such a life.

His Resurrection was God's setting the seal of His approval and acceptance on Christ's work; His endorsement of Christ's claims to special relations with Him; His affirmation of Christ's sinlessness. Jesus had declared that He did always the things that pleased the Father; had claimed to be the pure and perfect realisation of the divine ideal of manhood; had presented Himself as the legitimate object of utter devotion and of religious trust, love, and obedience, and as the only way to God. Men said that He was a blasphemer; God said, and said most emphatically, by raising Him from the dead: This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

With such a sequel--Christ being raised from the dead, dieth no more, and that fact sets Him apart from others who, according to Scripture, have been raised. His resurrection is, if we may use such a figure, a point; His Ascension and Session at the right hand of God are the line into which the point is prolonged. And from both the point and the line come the assurance that He is the Judge.

**III. The risen Jesus is Judge because He is Man.**

That seems a paradox. It is a commonplace that we are incompetent to judge another, for human eyes cannot read the secrets of a human heart, and we can only surmise, not know, each other's motives, which are the all-important part of our deeds. But when we rightly understand Christ's human nature, we understand how fitted He is to be our Judge, and how blessed it is to think of Him as such. Paul tells the Athenians with deep significance that He who is to be their and the world's Judge is the Man. He sums up human nature in Himself, He is the ideal and the real Man.

And further, Paul tells his hearers that God judges through Him, and does so in righteousness. He is fitted to be our Judge, because He perfectly and completely bears our nature, knows by experience all its weaknesses and windings, as from the inside, so to speak, and is wondrous kind with the kindness which fellow-feeling enkindles. He knows us with the knowledge of a God; He knows us with the sympathy of a brother.

The Man who has died for all men thereby becomes the Judge of all. Even in this life, Jesus and His Cross judge us. Our disposition towards Him is the test of our whole character. By their attitude to Him, the thoughts of many hearts are revealed. What think ye of Christ? is the question, the answer to which determines our fate, because it reveals our inmost selves and their capacities for receiving blessing or harm from God and His mercy. Jesus Himself has taught us that in that day the condition of entrance into the Kingdom is doing the will of My Father which is in heaven. He has also taught us that this is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent. Faith in Jesus as our Saviour is the root from which will grow the good tree which will bring forth good fruit, bearing which our love will be made perfect, that we may have boldness before Him in the day of judgment.