

## Doctrine The Resurrection

In *Christianity and History* whose seven chapters were originally delivered as lectures in Cambridge in 1948, Professor Dr. Herbert Butterfield, states clearly and persuasively that Christianity is a historical religion. He demonstrates the truth of the Christian faith and that it alone interprets history. "Christianity," says Butterfield, "is a historical religion in a particularly technical sense that the term possesses-it presents us with religious doctrines which are at the same time historical events or historical interpretations." Our faith is not based on myth. God is the God of history. And history is His story. The Gospel records historic events. The fact of the resurrection, for example, was crucial for the apostle Paul. He wrote, "...if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith" (1 Cor. 15:14). Without the risen Christ, there is no Gospel. The apostles called for our surrender, not to a dead man but to a Man who had risen again. Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, is the focal point of the New Testament and our faith.

One of the finest apologies (defense) for the resurrection is Murray J.Harris's, *From Grave to Glory. Resurrection in the New Testament* published by Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, 493 pp.Softcover. In this scholarly, readable, up-to-date book, Professor Harris expounds the orthodox view of Christ's bodily resurrection. He demonstrates that beyond a shadow of a doubt our Lord's resurrection from the grave is verifiable history. I found his section The Empty Tomb a masterful argument. He shows how both our Lord's friends and His adversaries agreed that his tomb was empty. He notes that many witnesses have attested to the facts of the resurrection. Even the fact that the story of the empty tomb is recorded in all four gospels is an effective apology by itself. He says, "When we remember that countless 'facts' of ancient history rest on the testimony of a single literary witness, this fourfold literary testimony to the emptiness of the tomb becomes a powerful argument. "The earliest Christians could not have continued to preach the resurrection unless the tomb had been empty. If Christ had not risen, the enemies of Jesus could have said, "We know where Jesus was buried, and we have checked-the tomb is still intact," or "Here are witnesses who know the whereabouts of Jesus body." When you visit Jerusalem you won't find a tomb with a body, but an empty grave. Christ has risen! The tomb is empty! Because of this fact we have hope." Death has been swallowed up in victory" (I Cor.15:54).

Johan D. Tangelder