

TRINITY NEWS

WEEK 19.
May 07, 2023

A Reading from *The Resurrection of Christ*

by Michael Ramsey

While traditional Christianity insists upon distinguishing the revealed doctrine of resurrection from a philosophical belief in the immortality of the soul, it regards the latter not as untrue and irrelevant so much as incomplete, distressingly dull and missing the gift of the gospel. There are grounds, both philosophical and psychological and religious, for believing that the soul survives death; though the life of a soul without the body is a conception which it is difficult to imagine. It is *incomplete*; because the self is far more than the soul, and the self without bodily expression can hardly be the complete self. It is *dull*; because it implies the prolongation of man's finite existence for everlasting years. In contrast both with the incompleteness and the dullness of the immortality of the soul Christianity teaches a future state (not as of right but as of God's gift) wherein the soul is not unclothed but clothed upon a bodily expression, and wherein the finite human life is raised so as to share, without losing its finiteness, in the infinite life of Christ himself.

The Christian gospel was not first addressed to people who had no belief in a future state. Greeks were familiar with a philosophical doctrine of immortality. Jews believed in the resurrection of the body. Sometimes this was thought of as a resuscitation of human relics and a reconstruction of human existence after the fashion of the present life. Sometimes it was thought of a transformation of dead bodies into an utterly new state of glory and spiritualization. But nowhere, either for Greek or for Jew, was belief in the future life vivid, immediate, central and triumphant. Nowhere did the belief combine a conscious nearness of the world to come with a moral exalting of life in this present world. This was what Christianity brought. Its doctrine was not a flight to another world that left this world behind, nor was it a longing for another world that would come when the history of this world was ended. It was the very certainty of another world, with which the Christians were already linked and into which the life of this world would be raised up.

To page 2

From page 1

For the Christian belief about the future state centered in Jesus Christ. He had been seen and loved in this life; and he had been seen and loved also as one who had conquered death. He had become vividly known as the Lord both of the living and the dead; and the conviction of his people concerning the future life rested upon their conviction about him in whose life they shared. It was an intense and triumphant conviction that where he was there also would his people be. It found utterance in ringing tones: 'He has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.' 'Fear not; I am the first and the last, and the living one; I was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades.' 'Awake, O sleeper, and rise from the dead, and Christ shall shine upon you.'

SAINTS:

Julian of Norwich, 8 May . On this day in the year 1373, when Julian of Norwich was thirty years old and suffering from what was considered to be a terminal illness, she experienced a series of sixteen visions, which revealed aspects of the love of God. Following her recovery, she spent the next twenty years of her life pondering their meaning and recorded her conclusions in what became the first book written by a woman in English, *The Revelations of Divine Love*. At an unknown point in her life, she became an anchoress attached to the Church of St Julian in Norwich. She died around the year 1417.

May 7. Psalm 66.

Response: Be joyful in God, all you lands.

O BE joyful in God, all ye lands; * sing praises unto the honour of his Name; make his praise to be glorious.

2 Say unto God, O how wonderful art thou in thy works! * through the greatness of thy power shall thine enemies bow down unto thee.

Response: Be joyful in God, all you lands.

3 For all the world shall worship thee, * sing of thee, and praise thy Name.

4 O come hither, and behold the works of God; * how wonderful he is in his doing toward the children of men.

Response: Be joyful in God, all you lands.

5 He turned the sea into dry land, * so that they went through the water on foot; there did we rejoice thereof.

6 He ruleth with his power for ever; his eyes behold the nations: * and such as will not believe shall not be able to exalt themselves.

Response: Be joyful in God, all you lands.

7 O praise our God, ye peoples, * and make the voice of his praise to be heard;

8 Who holdeth our soul in life; * and suffereth not our feet to slip.