

Easter-- New Life and Hope for our World
(Rev. Dr. John Bartol)

“Easter says you can put truth in a grave, but it won’t stay there.” Clarence
W.Hall

Back in the late 15th century explorers from Europe speculated over the possibility of a sea route to India, by way of the southern tip of Africa. All attempts to sail around the Cape had failed. There were violent storms where the Atlantic and Indian Oceans met, calling it the “Cape of Storms.” Many ships were wrecked, and countless lives were lost.

Finally, a Portuguese explorer named Vasco da Gama succeeded. He reached the land of India and sailed home in triumph. Since then it has been impossible to doubt that a way to the Orient does exist. And the very name of that fearful route was changed to the “Cape of Good Hope.”

The mystery of life after death is like that. Before Christ came, the future seemed full of darkness and speculation. People everywhere were asking, does the grave mark the end of hope? This is a question that cannot be ignored because so much depends upon it for time and eternity. In recent years, we have split the atom, sent men to the moon and conquered many scourges of humankind. But we have not overcome the dread of death. One day the bell will toll for each one of us.

But the Christ of Easter changed all that. He alone came back from the grave to tell us the last word need not be death but eternal, abundant life. He who never deceived a single soul spoke these words of assurance almost 2000 years ago, “I am the resurrection and the life ...everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die” (John 11: 25).

There on the cross there was a life and death battle between love and hate, truth and falsehood, God and Satan, heaven and hell. It looked as if Satan was the victor – Christ on the cross, love and truth crucified. But three days later the sun broke upon an empty tomb – truth had triumphed! Christ not only tasted death for us, He conquered death. The tomb is empty, and Christ is alive for evermore. Sin and death have met their master!

Christ through his own death and resurrection has taken the power out of death. Our faith in him takes the fear out of death. Amid the sorrows and uncertainties of life today, the best still awaits those trusting Christ. What an incredible future God has prepared for those who know and love him! But, what sorrow, shame and separation for those who refuse God’s gift of eternal life.

When he was dying, author O Henry requested, “Turn up the light, I don’t want to die in the dark.” With your hand in the nail scarred hand of your living Saviour,

you will never need to go home in the dark and you can say in faith: “Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil; for Thou art with me” (Psalm23:4).