

(1.) In regard to the first of these propositions, the resurrection of Christ is the one fact of the apostolic message on which all the other facts are built up. Peter explained the wonders of Pentecost by it: "Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death" (Acts ii, 24). When Peter heals the lame man in the temple, and the people crowd around him and John, wondering at the miracle, he comes back to the resurrection of Christ again: "Ye killed the Prince of life, whom God raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses" (Acts iii, 15).

And he and John are seized then and there by the priests, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, because these officers were grieved that the two apostles "preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead" (Acts iv, 2). And when next John and Peter were asked "by what power or by what name" they had healed the man, their answer was, "Be it known unto you... that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth,... whom God raised from the dead... doth this man stand here before you whole" (Acts iv. 10).

When they had been let go, and returned to their fellow-disciples and had prayed and went on their labors, the fact reported of all the apostles is that "with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus" (Acts iv. 33). And when they were seized again and put into the common prison, and the prison doors were opened by an angel, they went straight to the temple and taught the "words of this life," the life which had come to men through Christ's resurrection (Acts v, 20).

When they were seized a third time, and placed before the council, they gave the same answer as before: "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree" (Acts v, 30). And when Paul was changed from a persecutor to a disciple the change was effected by a demonstration of the resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth, whom he persecuted. Thus we may say that the burden of apostolic preaching was the resurrection of Jesus, and therefore the consecration of the resurrection day to a remembrance of him was most natural and spontaneous.

(The Story of the Christian Church by George R. Crooks, New York: Eaton & Mains, 1897, 70-71)