

full of joy and hope. What produced this change in the lives of the disciples? It was the fact of the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the grave. The Christian Church had its beginning with the full conviction that Jesus was raised from the dead. Without the firm belief in the resurrection of Christ the history of the Church had been impossible.

The wonderful growth and rapid spread of the Christian Church is also to be observed. The disciples of Jesus were fully convinced that the tremendous fact of His resurrection was the secret of their triumph. They were willing to die for their faith in the midst of persecution and tribulation of the world. Within a period of three hundred years from the time of the death and resurrection of Jesus, Christianity had become the official religion of the Roman empire.

The factual nature of the resurrection of Jesus is stressed in the New Testament. The cardinal fact of the resurrection of Jesus is the unanimous testimony of the Gospels and the Epistles. These sacred writings agree on the great facts of the death of Jesus, His burial, His resurrection from the grave on the third day. In Acts 4:33 we read, "And with great power gave the apostles their witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus." To the apostles the resurrection of Jesus was a stupendous fact which had all the reality of a historical event. Since the apostles recognized and understood the preeminent importance of the resurrection of Jesus as a fact, we are not surprized to see such a fact stressed in the books of the New Testament.

The importance of the resurrection of Jesus as a historical fact has been recognized by scholars in every age of the Christian Church. Let us note a few examples of the modern recognition of the resurrection of Jesus and its importance as a fact of history. In his