

Reflections

APRIL 2022

And So We Shall Rise



In April 1945, near the end of World War II, C.S. Lewis preached a sermon titled “The Grand Miracle”, which was later published as an essay. An excerpt from the end of the essay follows.

But here is something quite different. Here is something telling me — well, what? Telling me that I must never, like the Stoics, say that death does not matter. Nothing is less Christian than that. Death which made Life Himself shed tears at the grave of Lazarus, and shed tears of blood in Gethsemane. This is an appalling horror; a stinking indignity. (You remember Thomas Browne’s splendid remark: ‘I am not so much afraid of death, as ashamed of it.’) And yet, somehow or other, infinitely good. Christianity does not simply affirm or simply deny the horror of death; it tells me something quite new about it. Again, it does not, like Nietzsche, simply confirm my desire to be stronger, or cleverer than other people. On the other hand, it does not allow me to say, ‘Oh, Lord, won’t there be a day when everyone will be as good as everyone else?’ In the same way, about vicariousness. It will not, in any way, allow me to be an exploiter, to act as a parasite on other people; yet it will not

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allow me any dream of living on my own. It will teach me to accept with glad humility the enormous sacrifice that others make for me, as well as to make sacrifices for others.



That is why I think this Grand Miracle is the missing chapter in this novel, the chapter on which the whole plot turns; that is why I believe that God really has dived down into the bottom of creation, and has come up bringing the whole redeemed Nature on His shoulder. The miracles that have already happened are, of course, as Scripture so often says, the first fruits of that cosmic summer which is presently coming on. Christ has risen, and so we shall rise. St. Peter for a few seconds walked on the water; and the day will come when there will be a re-made universe, infinitely obedient to the will of glorified and obedient men, when we can do all things, when we shall be those gods that we are described as being in Scripture.

To be sure, it feels wintry enough still: but often in the very early spring it feels like that. Two thousand years are only a day or two by this scale. A man really ought to say, ‘The Resurrection happened two thousand years ago’ in the same spirit in which he says, ‘I saw a crocus yesterday.’ Because we know what is coming behind the crocus. The spring comes slowly down this way; but the great thing is that the corner has been

turned. There is, of course, this difference, that in the natural spring the crocus cannot choose whether it will respond or not. We can. We have the power either of withstanding the spring, and sinking back into the cosmic winter, or of going on into those ‘high mid-summer poms’ in which our leader, the Son of man, already dwells, and to which He is calling us. It remains with us to follow or not, to die in this winter, or to go on into that spring and that summer.¹

As we meditate on the events of Holy Week and Easter, let us be thankful that “Christ has risen, and so we shall rise.”



*“If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you,
he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life
to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.”*

ROMANS 8:11 (ESV)

¹ C.S. Lewis, “The Grand Miracle” in *God in the Dock* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998, pp. 86-88 (one paragraph divided, footnotes omitted)).

