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# The evidence for the resurrection of Jesus

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S E N I O R T H E S I S

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"THE EVIDENCE FOR THE RESURRECTION  
OF JESUS"

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August, 1917.

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## B I B L I O G R A P H Y

- James Orr - - - - - The Resurrection of Jesus
- Kirsopp Lake - - - - The Historical Evidence for  
the Resurrection of Jesus Christ
- James Denny- - - - - Jesus and the Gospel
- William Milligan - - -The Resurrection of Our Lord
- William Sanday- - - - "Jesus Christ"-Dictionary of  
the Bible
- Paul W. Schmidel- - - "The Resurrection and Ascen-  
sion Narrative"-Encyclopedia
- Paul Schwartzkopf - -The Prophecies of Jesus Christ
- Bernhard Weiss- - - - The Life of Christ
- Oscar Holz<sup>T</sup>zman<sup>W</sup> - - - - The Life of Jesus
- Albert Schweitzer- - -Quest of the Historical Jesus
- G. Stanley Hall- - - -Jesus Christ in the Light of  
Psychology
- Ernest Renan- - - - - The Life of Jesus
- Borden P. Bowne - - - The Essence of Religion
- Henry C. Sheldon- - - Unbelief in the Nineteenth  
Century
- Wallis Budge - - - - -Osiris and the Egyptian Res-  
urrection

#####

C O N T E N T S

- I.    Introductory Note
- II.   The Statement of the Problem
- III.  Imposition Theory
- IV.   Vision Theory
- V.    Apparition Theory
- VI.   Myth    Theory
- VII.  The Oldest Historical Evidence
- VIII. The Post-Resurrection Appearances in the  
          Gospel Narrative
- IX.   The Evidence Involved in the Transcendent  
          Personality of Jesus
- X.    The Evidence from the Vital Change in the  
          Faith of the Disciples

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THE EVIDENCE FOR THE RESURRECTION  
OF JESUS.

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I

Introductory Note.

A few words are necessary to explain the scope and excuse the limitations of the present thesis. The problem of the resurrection is one of great variety and complexity of aspects. It covers an immense field.

In view of the limited space the writer was well aware of his inadequateness to treat the problem thoroughly, so he decided to concentrate attention mainly on one aspect of the question -- the evidence for the resurrection of Jesus. He was also obliged to deal very briefly with the questions of criticism of the Gospel narrative and accept the main conclusions of Modern scholarship. Similar excuse must be offered for passing over the problem of its nature and its possibility as a miracle. As respects the type of the resurrection body, he felt that the

subject was of such a nature that an attempt to dogmatize upon it would not be fruitful. Therefore no notice has been taken of it here. It was his special desire that the theories which are opposed to the fact of the resurrection should be examined at some length.

The writer is conscious of the inadequacy of the present thesis. He is looking forward to the time when he shall be able to treat the subject more fully.

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## II

### The Statement of the Problems.

The most interesting point in the life of Jesus lies in the fact of its unique relation to life and death. His history does not close with the shadows of Calvary, but reaches out far beyond the grave.

A few weeks after his death, the followers of Jesus suddenly began to proclaim that he was risen from the dead and had ascended into Heaven. They propagated this belief with great success, and since the time the Christian Church was established the belief in the resurrection has been regarded an es-

stantial part of her creed.

It is generally admitted that Christianity was founded on this belief. "It can not be denied", says Professor Hase, "that the early establishment of the Church at Jerusalem was based on the faith in the risen Master". "The resurrection" says Wellhausen, "was the foundation of the Christian faith, the heavenly Christ, the living and present Head of the disciples." "In the faith of the disciples", Baur affirms, "the Resurrection of Jesus Christ came to be regarded as a solid and unquestionable fact. It was in this fact that Christianity acquired a firm basis for its historical development."

It is no exaggeration to say that without this belief the Christian Church had never been instituted. When we consider the beginning of the church as recorded in the book of the Acts of the Apostles we find that a number of Christians were united together by the preaching of the disciples and that the essential element in their preaching was the resurrection of Jesus. "This Jesus did God raise up", says Peter, "whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath

shed forth this, which ye now see and hear." (Act. 2:32-33). Only after the resurrection of Jesus was preached and believed we read for the first time of the "church" (Act. 5:11).

It also stands in a close relation to the fundamental basis of belief in the future life. We may believe in the immortality of the soul without a faith in the resurrection of Jesus. Yet it is true that his resurrection has given vitality to the belief. Since the time of the primitive Church the resurrection has been the pledge and earnest of the life beyond the grave. Upon it St. Paul built the hope of immortality -- "If Christ is preached that he has been raised from the dead", says he, "how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?" It is only through the resurrection of Jesus that the hope of the immortality of the soul can be fully satisfied. Thus from either the historical or practical standpoint the significance of the belief in the resurrection can be hardly exaggerated.

But a question arises as to the nature of the belief in the resurrection as held by the disciples.

Here the opinions of scholars are widely different. The recent tendency is rather unfavorable to the orthodox view that the belief was founded upon ~~the~~ a true miracle. Many changed forms of explanation of this problem are offered by those who deny the fact of the resurrection. Thus the older rationalism hoped to explain it by the hypothesis of the death being only an apparent one. The modern criticism supposes that it is adequately explained by vision theories. Again the recent rational school tries to account for the gospel narrative of the resurrection by finding analogy in the Oriental Myths. Thus the resurrection of Jesus has been a subject of controversy in contemporary thought.

The cause of this changed attitude toward the problem is mainly due to the influence of science on modern thought. The sciences of nature and of society have been developing with irresistible power throughout the whole course of the Nineteenth Century. The principles of these sciences have come to mould in a great degree the religious thought of the men of the age, and their general culture made it exceedingly difficult for them to accept the Miraculous element in the Bible as it stood. Thus the

repugnance to miracle became the marked characteristic of the Modern Criticism of the Gospels. Mr. Arnold declares that the human mind is turning away from miracles. M. Renan affirms that the whole body of modern sciences yield the immense result that there is no such thing as supernatural. It seems as if the miraculous element in the Gospel narratives must be set aside.

Strauss whose name was made famous by the publication of "Leben Jesu" is the most celebrated critic who tried to rationalize the Miraculous narrative in the Gospel. He affirms that "A God who now, and then again at another time works a miracle, who accordingly uses a certain kind of activity at one time and refrains from at another, is a being under subjection to time and consequently no absolute being". With this exclusion of Miracle he starts to relegate the miraculous narratives from the realms of fact to those of legend and poetic imagination. He says: "Orthodox and rationalists alike proceed from the false assumption that we have always in the gospel testimony, sometimes even that of eye-witness, to fact. They are, therefore, reduced to asking themselves what can have been the real and natural which

is here witnessed to in such extraordinary way. We have to realize that the narratives testify sometimes, not to outward facts but to ideas, often most poetical and beautiful ideas, constructions which even eye-witnesses had unconsciously put upon facts, imagination concerning them, reflexions upon them, reflexions and imaginations such as were natural to the time and at the author's level of culture. What we have here is not falsehood, not misrepresentation of the truth. It is a plastic, naive, and at the same time, often most profound apprehension of truth, within the area of religious feeling and poetic insight. It results in narrative, legendary, mythical in nature, illustrative often of spiritual truth in a manner more perfect than any hard, prosaic statement could achieve." By this method Strauss tried to get over the difficulties connected with the Gospel narrative. Later though different in form, similar attempts have been made by the critics to find the reconciliation between miracles and science.

Another cause which has weakened faith in the resurrection is the rise of textual and historical criticism and interpretation. A painfully minute and unsparing inquiry into the texts has been tried

by the Textual Critics. The application of this method to the Gospel narrative seems to make the truth of the resurrection more apparent. A good example of this type of criticism can be seen in Professor Lake's work on the present subject. A more subtle and formidable adversary in recent years is found in Comparative Mythology aided by the brilliant results of exploration in the East during the last half century. It is said to throw much light upon this problem. These ancient mythologies have many analogous <sup>plus</sup> cases with the Gospel narrative. From this side, therefore, attempts have been made to draw a comparison between the resurrection of Jesus and that of the oriental gods. The conclusion thus arrived at is nothing but the denial of the fact of the resurrection. Gunkel, Jensen, and Chyne are the representatives of this type of critics.

These are, at least, the main causes of the changed attitude toward the problem.

We shall now proceed to take a critical survey of these different theories on this question.

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## III

## Imposition Theory.

Among the opposing explanations which have been offered, that which appeals to a sham resurrection hardly deserves serious consideration. Another view prevailed in earlier times and is also favored by several of the modern scholars such as Paul<sup>u</sup>ls, Schli<sup>e</sup>-ermacher. It is that the supposed death of Jesus on the Cross was only an apparent one and that he soon returned to consciousness. In defense of this view we are reminded of the fact that the death by the Crucifixion was a terribly prolonged one, and the sufferers generally had to be exposed to torture more than twelve hours before they expired. We are told that Jesus was spared the breaking of his limbs; the wound by the spear may not have been fatal; that the sponge applied to his lips may have contained a narcotic and that he only fainted when he bowed his head. Thus after he was taken down from the Cross as dead and carried to the sepulchre, the effect might have been produced by the cool air of the rocky tomb as well as by the aromatic spices with which the body was prepared for the burial by the hands of his rich friend. In this way, it is argued, consciousness

might easily have returned. Brehnke and others imagine that Jesus being completely restored lived and worked for a quarter of a century later in obscurity.

To this view it is answered that if this hypothesis be accepted, we could never account for the origin of the belief in the resurrection of Jesus, for we can not suppose that Jesus did not take any heed to correct his disciples' mistake that a divine miracle of most extraordinary nature had been wrought by him. Moreover, the impression which his disciples received from his resurrection was entirely different from what we should expect in the alleged circumstances. We should naturally expect him to be feeble, pallid, and hungered when he appeared to his disciples and the feelings aroused by his appearance would have been those of pity and sympathy. But the resurrection which the Gospel narrative records produced the opposite feelings on the part of the disciples. When their wondering awe and fear was dispersed their hearts were filled with joy, hope and enthusiasm and new conviction and mighty courage took the place of their despondency and despair. Strauss well points out its failure to meet the historical situation when he says: "One who crept forth half dead from the grave and

and crawled about a sickly patient , who had need of medical care, of bandaging , nursing, and strengthening, and who must still in the end succumb to his sufferings could not have made upon the disciples that impression that he was the conquerer of death and the grave and the prince of life, which lay back of their ensuing activity. Such a resurrection would simply have weakened the impression made upon them by his life and death: at most it would have given to it a pathetic cast: by no possibility could it have transformed their sorrow into enthusiasm, their reverence into worship."

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#### IV.

#### Vision Theory.

The inadequacy of the imposition theory leads modern criticism to find another explanation in the vision theory. The older form of this theory is that of subjective<sup>ve</sup> visions. It refers the belief of the disciples to illusions or mental hallucinations. The theory was first elaborately exploited by E. Renan and is favored by O. Holtzman, A. Meyer, Loisy, Ha~~n~~nack, and others.

In order to provide for this theory we are told

that the state of the disciples' minds at that time was one of intense nervous agitation; that the memory of their master was still so fresh and vivid that it made it impossible for them to believe that he was gone. Further<sup>e</sup> in Galilee, whither they retired, its memories and tender associations kindled their passionate love to their master. In addition to these, we are reminded of the well known fact that Jesus foretold to the disciples, even with specification of approximate date, his resurrection. Possibly this prophecy might have come back to their minds to kindle their hope in his resurrection. Thus their mental conditions and circumstances were thought to be sufficient to produce their mental illusions.

As a spark to kindle the flame St. Peter's ecstatic experience by the sea of Galilee was after employed. For instance, Weizäker<sup>u</sup> explains that Peter saw a bright light or something of the kind on the lake and he took it for Jesus. This ecstatic experience began to spread with the rapidity and force of an epidemic. The contagion first caught a group of the disciples who were with him, then five hundred people. On the other hand, Renan finds in the person of Mary Magdalene the first missionary of this wonderful belief. He thinks that

such a woman as Mary who is depicted in the Gospel as formally possessed of seven devils must have had the very disposition which easily yielded to the abnormal and visionary. From this assumption he starts his theory. In the Garden she saw a phantom of Jesus and believed that her beloved master actually appeared and talked with her. Then her enthusiastic announcement spread with rapidity. The <sup>to</sup> disciples first caught the infection, then others also felt the contagion and have seen the visions. Thus in a space of time the unshaking conviction seized the whole numbers of early Christians that Jesus had really risen from the dead.

It will be seen to begin with, that the mental state of the disciples after the death of Jesus ~~is~~ <sup>was</sup> rather unfavorable to the rise of visions. Psychologically speaking the occurrence of visions is possible only when excited expectation of the object is kept in mind. A visionary mind gets what it expects. Therefore, the expectancy of the object is the necessary factor to the rise of visions. But careful inquiry shows that there was no such expectation of the resurrection of Jesus in the minds of the disciples. It is true that Jesus did refer to his resurrection along with the prophecy of his death, but the idea was so foreign to them that they could not understand it.

The age had no familiarity with the idea of the actual and personal resurrection; neither was this thought common to the <sup>disciples</sup> disciples. Attempts have been made to prove that it existed in the contemporary Jewish thought. However, the idea held at the time of Jesus was not that of an immediate resurrection but one of the resurrection at the final judgment. Again we are told that there are vague intimations of this idea in the Old Testament. There are indeed a few passages in the Old Testament which do suggest belief in the resurrection of the individual. For instance, in I Samuel we have an account of the appearance of Samuel who was called back from the dead; and in Hosea , we read "After two days will he revive us up and we shall live before him" (4:2). But as a whole the Old Testament doctrine of the future life is very shadowy as regards the individual. Therefore it does not appear probable that the disciples should get the idea of the resurrection from this source.

From what has been said it is clear that the state of ~~the~~ minds of the disciples was unfavorable to the rise of visions.

In order to give an adequate cause for the rise of visions it seems necessary to provide certain data

to bring forth the change of the state of mind<sup>d</sup> on the part of the disheartened disciples. Their despair and depression must be changed into hope and enthusiasm; because only in such a state of mind may one have visions. To overcome their doleful impression, which was caused by the death of their beloved master, a certain length of time and the distance from the scene of the event must be provided for them. On this account later critics such as Keim, Pleider~~er~~, and Harnack have endeavoured to transfer the appearances of Jesus from Jerusalem to the remote region of Gallilee. Thus we are told that immediately after the arrest of Jesus, the disciples all fled to Gallilee, where surrounded by the memories and recollections of their master a gradual change took place in their minds so that they finally developed into such an excited state that they were liable to perceive visions.

The Gospels, however, afford us the evidence of the appearance of Jesus in Jerusalem on Easter Sunday; and only on the ground of the fact that appearances took place on that day we can account for the origin of tradition that Jesus rose from the dead on the third day, which is a well established fact

among the primitive church; and which probably led even in apostolic times to the observance of the Christian sabbath.

There is a tendency among modern critics to regard the account of the appearance at Jerusalem as unhistorical on the ground that Mark, the earliest narrative, records no appearances whatever. Thus, O. Holtzman starts from the same hypothesis when he draws the following conclusion: "the later stories of the resurrection from Matthew onwards gratify the natural desire of making Jesus appear to his faithful followers in the vicinity of his grave. It is for this reason Luke and John transfer the predicted appearances of Jesus from Galilee to Jerusalem and its neighborhood." As ingenious as the explanation <sup>is</sup> in his conclusion is, nothing but mere assumption based upon an imaginary hypothesis supports it. We have no reason to limit the source of the other evangelists to the Marcan documents only. It is more probable to suppose that they were familiar with some early and trustworthy traditions, from which they drew an account of appearances at Jerusalem. There is every reason to believe that the evangelists could not have been ignorant of a tradition of the appear-

ance which was already so common to the early church as St. Paul testifies at Corinth. It is evident that the appearance at Jerusalem can not be so easily disposed of as some critics *seem to suggest.*

Another objection to the vision theory is that it deprives the disciples of health and sanity and treats them as being <sup>subject to</sup> ~~in~~ nervous disorder. Vision is more or less a pathological phenomenon. Unless one's brain is in abnormal condition he will not be subject to them? It is not easy to suppose that the disciples who in other respects possessed sound and healthy minds could have been subjected to this common and simultaneous illusion.

Finally the vision theory fails to furnish a ground for the rise of belief in the resurrection, for a faith of disciples which brought about such a mighty and substantial result can never be explained by morbid excitement or deception of the senses. It is worth our while in passing to notice Keim's criticism on this point. "It would be difficult to understand how," he says, "from a society held together by excitement, issuing in visions, could have proceeded the Christian Church, with its lucidity of thought and earnestness of moral activity."

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## V

## Apparition Theory.

More respectable than either of these previous attempts to explain the resurrection of Jesus is the apparition theory. It assumes that the visions were not mere hallucinations but behind them was a real presence of Christ as the objective cause. In a world, visions were produced by the divine agency.

This idea already existed from the time of Celsus, but Weisse first propounded it and Keim gave it popularity. From the standpoint of this theory the physical body of Jesus is not needed; it might have decayed in the grave. It is the soul of Jesus which took the form of objectivity in the appearances.

This view seems to have support from recent psychical research. New evidences are accumulated by the Society for Psychical Research in favor of this view. We are reminded of many cases of a Ghost or Spectre of the dead and its actual telepathic communication with living acquaintances. However, the whole region of this field is still more than obscure and little to be trusted. A more strict method of critical testing is needed before we can to any degree rely upon it.

It is true that the theory of apparition has certain advantages in explaining the Gospel narrative of the appearances, such as his passing through the closed door, his sudden vanishing from the sight of the disciples, his appearances now in Jerusalem and now in Gallilee, and his non-recognition by them; on the other hand it has insuperable difficulties connected with it.

First of all the idea of apparition is contradictory to the witness of the disciples. It was not the ghost or soul of Jesus but the real living Jesus whom they beheld, spoke to, and dined with. John and Matthew narrate that Jesus not only showed both his hands and side but also allowed his wounds to be touched by one of his disciples. The theory of mere apparition can never account for these things. Another objection to this theory is the fact of the empty grave. Luke tells us that the women could not find the body in the grave. If there was no resurrection of the body what became of his body? The testimony of the empty grave entirely discredits such a theory.

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## VI

## Myth Theory.

Convinced of the insuperable difficulties connected with the vision and apparition theories a new attempt has been made by the recent radical critics to account for the Gospel narrative of the resurrection by tracing the analogy with the Oriental Myths. These critics contend that the Jewish religion in the time of Christ contained a mythical element which was transported mainly from Babylonian cults; and the stories of the resurrection are but a deduction from contemporary Jewish religion.

We are reminded of the fact that the resurrection myths are found throughout the whole region of the East. They are held by Babylonian, Egyptian, Persian, Syrian, and Greek, and these myths, in their nature, are more or less alike. The origin of these nature-myths is not difficult to trace. In winter nature seems dying. The leaves of the trees fall, the river freezes and the sun recedes. But in spring the world begins to revive, the Earth is clothed in green, nature is reanimated with hope and joy. Now to primitive man the death and resurrection of nature was a

great mystery, and their naive imagination at last led to personify it into a divine being. Thus in Egypt Osiris is the most popular deity and his death and resurrection are celebrated with great joy, preceded by mourning and fasting. In Greece the Nuptials of Adonis and Aphrodite are commemorated with flowers and fruits. Further we are told that these myths of the death and resurrection of gods spread throughout the East, and in Palestine they effectively syncretized into the story of the cross and resurrection through Judaism.

However, this theory stands on a baseless assumption. It is not easy to suppose that these Babylonian myths were current among the contemporary Jews and that it had syncretized into the story of Jesus. Strong evidence is needed to support this stupendous hypothesis. But no adequate proof has ever been presented to convince us of the fact. "The statements of some students of Babylonian religion", says Professor Lake, "seem to be based on slight evidence, and the justice of their exeg<sup>e</sup>sis of the Bible is far from certain."

Moreover these Babylonian nature-myths and the Gospel narrative are not parallel; the latter has a

distinct historical setting. Close examination shows there is an insuperable gulf between these two. The common quality which distinguishes the one from the other may be described as the difference between sanity and morbidity. The resurrection narrative by the evangelists always maintains the atmosphere of health and sanity, while the resurrections given in the Babylonian myths are fantastic and morbid in their nature. After all it is too bold an inference to argue that the evangelists derived their Gospel story of the resurrection from such morbid and unhealthy sources.

We have now covered the field of the theories which oppose the miraculous element in the resurrection of Jesus. The imposition theory we have found to be grossly lacking in that it is unwarranted by the bald facts in the case. Dignified scholarship has long since set this view to one side. In the case of the vision theory we find similar difficulties. This view would rest the vigor of the Christian doctrine of the resurrection of Jesus upon the morbid condition of discouraged men, or perhaps, upon the strange experience of a psychic woman. The dignity and vitality of the resurrection faith stamp this conception as

far wide of the mark. The apparition theory, tho more respectable than the others, still encounters some grave difficulties. A strong case against the same is found in the fact that it is not in keeping with the Gospel record nor justified by any findings in such a research study. The myth theory, the last we considered, is to be objected to on the basis that it is founded on suppositions of a rather questionable type. Having, found the foregoing theories quite inadequate, we now turn our attention to the interpretation for which we are to contend.

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## VII.

### The Oldest Historical Evidence.

It is not a rash assumption to suppose that the testimony of St. Paul at Corinth is our primary and most important evidence on the resurrection of Jesus. The date of this epistle of I Corinthians is not later than the year 55 A.D. Here Paul deliberately presents a list of the appearances to his followers, ending with one to himself. The passage runs as follows:  
 "For I delivered unto you first of all that which I

also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures and that he was buried; and that he hath been raised on the third day according to the scriptures; and that he was seen of Cephas; then of the twelve, after that he was seen of about five-hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain unto now, but some fallen asleep; after that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles; and last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time" (I Cor. 15:3-8).

In the first place Paul says "I delivered that which I also received." The passage clearly indicates that what Paul had taught at Corinth was a common tradition already current at his conversion and he had been taught when he became a Christian.

It is clear from the above that the facts of Jesus' resurrection on the third day and his appearances to his disciples were the essential part of the primitive Christianity.

Here however a <sup>9</sup> question is raised by many critics <sup>as to whether</sup> ~~that~~ Jesus rose from the dead "on the third day according to the scriptures." They urge rather ~~that~~ <sup>20</sup> this "third day" was merely a deduction from the Old Testament and that the author knew no other sources

for dating the resurrection on that day. It is true that we have certain passages in the Old Testament which allude to the third day. However, it is not easy to conclude from these that his knowledge of the resurrection on the third day came from this source. It is more probable to suppose that his conclusions were based upon some early tradition which attached the importance to that day.

Again Modern Criticism often leads to the rash conclusion that Paul was ignorant of the fact of the empty grave, as he makes no mention of the appearance to Mary Magdalene in the list. But the view is untenable, for his statement of the resurrection on the third day points clearly to his knowledge of the fact. The reason for the omission of the appearance to the woman, by Paul, is not hard to find. His purpose was to make the Christians at Corinth convinced of the fact of the resurrection. To meet the case, therefore, it was not necessarily required to give an elaborate list of all persons who under any circumstances had seen Jesus, but the mention of the leading appearances was sufficient. For this reason he may have omitted such an appearance as that to Mary Magdalene or the appearance on the way to Emmaus.

A question has been raised as to the nature of the appearances. What does Paul mean when he used the term *ἑφάνη* (he appeared)? Does he mean by it the bodily resurrection or a mere vision? It is very hard to define its nature, since no direct account is left in his writing. However, we can safely discredit such explanation as reduces it to mere illusion. It is true that the word *ἑφάνη* sometimes is used in the sense of 'visionary'. But it is also used in no sense visionary but in the sense of 'appearing'.

It suggests the idea that something has unexpectedly thrust itself upon sight; and there is no doubt but in the latter sense the word is used here.\* At any rate there is little room to doubt that St. Paul was conscious of the fact of Christ's bodily resurrection and appearances to the disciples.

Therefore the examination of the account given by St. Paul in I Corinthians leads to the conclusion that there existed a common apostolic tradition of the resurrection and appearances of Jesus in the Original Christian Circle; and that he firmly believed Jesus to have appeared to his followers and himself in a way that left little room for doubt as to its fact.

\* "Jesus and the Gospel" p 105.

Along with this testimony of St. Paul another evidence is provided by the same apostle in the first epistle to the Thessalonians. The date of this epistle is about 51 A.D., that is, 22 years after the death of Jesus. Therefore this is the earliest extant New Testament writing. It is not so elaborate a reference to the event as the other, but it presents the fact of the resurrection in a definite way. We find here two out-standing facts -- Jesus was killed, and he rose again from the dead.\* "The assured tone of these passages shows", says Sanday, "not only that the apostle is speaking from the very strongest personal conviction, but that he is confident of carrying his readers with him; we may go further and say that the belief to which he gives this expression was unquestioned, the universal belief of Christians." \*\*

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#### VIII.

#### The Post-resurrection Appearances in the Gospel Narrative.

Modern Criticism of the synoptic gospels has, in recent years, the tendency to adapt the theory

\* I Thes. 2:15; 1:10; 4:14.

\*\* "Outline of the Life of Christ. p 175.

that Mark is the earliest, and that ~~Mathew~~ Mathew and Luke are dependent on it. However, this problem is not yet quite settled. Zahn, the latest and the most exhaustive writer on New Testament Introduction, holds the view that the greater originality is on the side of Mathew and not Mark. On the other hand Wright starts from the hypothesis that the Synoptists were Catechists who represent three cycles of the Oral Gospel. Hence his explanation denies all sorts of dependence of the synoptic gospel writers upon each other. Holzmann admits that "it is still a burning question whether we have the primitive representation and the root of the other synoptic texts in Mathew or in Mark." Therefore we must admit that there is still great diversity of views upon this problem; and that the question itself is not yet settled. But even if the current theory of Marcan hypothesis be accepted, it would not seriously weaken the intrinsic force of the evidence for the resurrection because Mark is not inventing his material but he embodies in his Gospel the common apostolic tradition of his time. \*

Before we proceed to examine the Marcan record of the appearances we must note that Mark's conclud-

\* Orr: "The Resurrection of Jesus" p 62.

ing verses were not a part of the original gospel and its credibility should be questioned. When these verses \* are examined, it can be asserted with confidence that the earlier portion of them corresponds to a summary of the narratives in the gospels of Luke and John and does not appear to be its original conclusion, and its weight as an evidence would amount to very little. Therefore, the question depends rather on the opening verses of Mark's last chapter.

Here we find that Mary Magdalene came to the tomb with the other women to anoint the body of Jesus (16:1) and found an angel at the tomb. (16:5). He told them that Jesus was risen from the dead; and that they should go and announce to his disciples that their master would precede them into Galilee, and that according to his word they would there see him (16:6-7). Mark abruptly ends here and speaks nothing about the past appearances. However, judging from its abrupt ending and the incomplete account of so stupendous a fact we can not doubt that the original Mark ended with an account of the appearances of Jesus to his followers. Perhaps its original conclusion has been lost by some accident. The well accepted hypothesis

\* Mark 16:9-20.

of the Petrine tradition as Mark's source, also favors this view, because that tradition could not have failed to speak of the appearance to Peter himself. It is possible that that was contained in the missing portion.

From the above reason Mark's account is disappointingly meagre and yet we can at least find there the strong proof of the empty grave. This cannot be wholly without weight.

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When we turn to Luke's account, we are afforded fuller information. It provides us an account of the empty grave, and the conduct of the women and the disciples at the grave in detail. Besides these it records three distinct appearances in Jerusalem. The first one is the appearance to the disciples on the way to Emmaus. It occurred late in the afternoon of the Easter Day. The two disciples, one of whom was Cleopas, were journeying to Emmaus, a village about eight miles north-west from Jerusalem which seems to have been their home. Deeply depressed by the sad conversation over late events, they did not at first recognize the traveler who had joined them. They told him how they were disappointed because Jesus had

not proved to be the Redeemer of Israel as they expected. They seemed to have heard of the prediction of his resurrection after three days and also of the women's report of the angel's message by the side of the empty grave. Then the stranger showed from the Old Testament prophecy that the Messiah should enter into glory through suffering. When they arrived at Emmaus Cleopas and his friend asked the stranger to stop with them. At their request he entered their house and they all sat down at the table, and when he broke the bread and gave thanks, their eyes were opened and they recognized Jesus and he immediately disappeared out of their sight.\*

This appearance of Jesus to the Emmaus disciples is peculiar to Luke. No other Gospel records it. From what source he derived this information we are not sure. But judging from the fact that Luke has access to the special sources all through the history of the passion it is possible to suppose that this story came from the same origin. Any way the story is marked with veracity and accuracy. "It carries with it, as great literary critics have pointed out, the deepest inward evidences of its own literal truthfulness, for it so narrates the intercourse of a risen

\*Luke 24:18-32.

God with common placè men as to set natural and supernatural side by side in perfect harmony." \*

Another appearance which is recorded in Luke is to Simon. When the two disciples hastened back to Jerusalem to bring the glad tidings of his resurrection and appearance they found the eleven and the other companions gathered together, who greeted them with the joyful words "the Lord is risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon." (Luke 24:33,34). We have no fuller information concerning the appearance to Peter in the gospels but it is not improbable that this is to be identified with what Paul has testified to in his list of the appearances of Jesus in I Cor. 15.

Yet again Luke alludes to one more appearance. It was to the apostles and other disciples of Jesus. According to it he suddenly appears in the midst of the disciples with the customary greeting of peace. The disciples were terrified at the sight of Jesus, for they supposed this appearance to be a spirit (Luke 24:37). Then Jesus convinces the horror-stricken disciples of his identity by showing them his hand and his side and even eats a piece of boiled fish.

Since the appearance to several women is also

\* Moule: "Meditations for the Church's Year" p 108.

recorded in John the particular element of <sup>t</sup>Mathew is limited to two events, that is the account of the earthquake and the angel (Mat. 28:1-4) and of an appearance to the disciples on a mountain of Galilee (Mat. 28:16-20).

<sup>t</sup>Mathew records the earthquake at his resurrection as in the case of his death. This earthquake, according to him, is caused by the rolling away of the stone by an angel from heaven. When the women approached the sepulchre they found that the stone was already rolled away and the angel was still sitting upon it; the watch~~ers~~ of the grave were greatly terrified at the sight. (Mat. 28:2-6).

There is some mystery hanging over this account. It is strange that the other evangelists are silent on this extraordinary event. Further, the purpose of the earthquake remains unexplained, since the stone was taken away by the angel. The probable view is that this part of the account was a tradition which Mathew found and adapted here in order to set forth the majesty of the event. However, all the narratives are agreed in regard to the removal of the stone and the opening of the grave.

Besides the appearance to the women at the grave the appearance to the disciples on a mountain in Galilee is recorded by Mathew. (Mat. 28:16-20). He states the fact that Jesus had appointed a certain mountain to assemble (Mat. 28:16) and there Jesus appeared to the eleven disciples (Mat. 28:19). It is possible to identify the mountain with that on which Jesus formally delivered his great sermon. The scholars are generally agreed that this was the very event which was reported by St. Paul as occurring before his five hundred followers \* (I Cor. 15:6). If so he appeared not only to the eleven but to almost all the Galilean disciples.

Among four distinct appearances which John records, the account of the first appearance to the disciples in Jerusalem (John 20:19 ff) corresponds to that of Luke 24:36ff which we have already dealt with. Therefore the following three appearances are peculiar to the Johannine source.

The first one he referred to is the appearance to Mary Magdalene. This took place on early easter morn. After Peter and John returned home, Mary still remained weeping by the empty grave. Then Jesus ap-

\* Weiss: "The Life of Christ" p 399.

peared to her. At first she could not recognize him and took him to be a gardener. But when he mentioned her by name, she knew that it was Jesus. She sought to greet him by grasping his hand as usual; but Jesus forbade it with the words: "Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended unto my father," (John 20:17). and told her to go with a message to the disciples.

After an interval of one week Jesus again appeared to his disciples in Jerusalem. On this occasion Thomas was present. It seems that the appearance was to convince Thomas of the fact of his resurrection. He was absent on the former occasion and strongly questioned the fact and demanded certain material tests (20:25). Therefore when Jesus appeared, he offered the doubting Thomas the very proof which he had demanded.

The appearance to the disciples at the sea of Galilee is narrated in the supplement to John's gospel (John 21:1-22). The seven disciples, who meanwhile returned to their work, had spent a whole night in fishing but without success. At dawn they saw Jesus by the beach. At first they failed to recognize him. But when they secured the wonderful draught by casting their net as he directed, they were then

convinced that it was Jesus. When they reached the shore, fishes and bread were prepared by him. Then he put three times the same question, and in turn Peter answered three times his repeated confession of love. After this Jesus gave a prophecy which announced Peter's persecution and moved away from the place bidding him to follow. Peter saw that John was also following them and asked what should become of John. To this Jesus answered "If I will that he tarry till I come." This hypothetical utterance regarding John was understood to mean that this disciple would not die (John 21:23).

This account in the supplement to the fourth Gospel is regarded by some as the lost conclusion to Mark, but without any solid foundation.

There are indeed many difficulties connected with the appearances of Jesus. But two things are forever clear: the fact of the empty grave, and the unmistakable fact of his appearances to his disciples as demonstrative to the senses. These are the two facts which lie behind the early tradition embodied in the gospels. After every thing is said and done, whether one likes it or not, they remain the strong

pillars that buttress the traditional faith in the resurrection of the Christ.

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#### IX.

### The Evidence Involved in the Transcendental Personality of Jesus.

We now turn to the doctrinal significance of the resurrection. Here we also find a strong proof of it. First of all, the resurrection perfectly fits in to the unique personality ascribed to him by the New Testament. We must note that the resurrection of which the Gospel speaks is the resurrection of no ordinary man, but of Jesus, a life so unique in the history of the human race. Is it not a fitting close to have an exceptional goal for the life of one who was so exceptional in personality as well as in vocation?

The modern movement of criticism tries to remove the miraculous elements from Christianity and consequently the divinity of Jesus is then denied. But this attempt is very superfluous. If all miracles were removed from Christianity what would be left? Such an attempt means nothing less than the <sup>a</sup> dissolution of Christianity itself.

"Christianity itself is essentially supernatural in its idea," says Bowne, "and in that sense Miraculous. That is, Christianity affirms an everliving, ever-working God, in whom we live and move and have our being, and who profoundly cares for his children, and is seeking to develop them into his spiritual likeness. In doing this work he maintains the familiar order of nature on which we all depend, He also works through the mind and society through education and history. In addition he has sent prophets and teachers to reveal His will and to guide us into truth. Finally, in the fulness of time He sent his son to make a perfect revelation of the father, and to present the highest assurance of his will and presence, and to furnish the highest inspiration to love and serve Him." \*

If such is really the essence of Christianity and the vocation of Jesus, why should not his resurrection be perfectly harmonious to his career? Is it not fitting that the divine son, after the fulfillment of his mission in revealing his father, should break the bounds of death and return to his father <sup>from</sup> for whom he came?

Again, what could be more fitting than the res-

urrection of Jesus to support confidence in his saving vocation and to kindle an inspiring hope in men in regard to their own heritage of eternal life. If he subjected himself as <sup>the</sup> a prey of <sup>an</sup> ignominious death, how could he save others? Therefore his resurrection is essential to the completion of the work of redemption itself and such was the conviction of the New Testament writers. \*

Thus, the sober conclusion must be that if his transcendental personality is recognized, it is necessary for his career to furnish the great fact of the resurrection.

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#### X.

#### The Evidence from the vital Change in the Faith of the Disciples.

Another line of argument is the vital change in the faith of the disciples caused by the resurrection. The gospels stand as an authority in providing for the disheartened state of the disciples during the intermediate period between the death of their master and the resurrection. It is true that Jesus foretold the raising of the Son of Man from the dead.

\* I Cor. 15:12-23; Phil. 3:10; I Peter 1:3.

But he did not throw out such clear intimations of a resurrection as it would have prevented the disciples from being disheartened and paralyzed by his death. Only by slow degrees did the disciples obtain anything like a spiritual conception of the Messianic Kingdom. In the contemporary Jewish thought there prevailed the idea of a coming Messiah who should restore the old glories of the house of David, but the way in which the Messiah carried out his plan was expected to be one of victory and not of humiliation and death. There is no slight evidence of the existence of the idea of any suffering Messiah in the Jewish thought at the time of Jesus. The disciples also shared the same view in this respect. Consequently to them the death of the Messiah was a dark enigma, and the prediction of the resurrection remained an insoluble question. Only when Jesus rose from the dead did they understand for the first time what he had said to them. When therefore their master took the final step for the way to seeming defeat and death, they were too stricken to sustain any hope in their hearts (Luke 24:21). There is no indication in the gospels that this catastrophe enlightened them to any better understanding of the redemptive work of

Jesus.

But a great change took place in the faith of the disciples. The band of disheartened and fleeing disciples soon became world conquerors. Those who, when Jesus was with them often wavered in their faith, mistook his teaching, misunderstood his mission, and even forsook him when he needed them most,-- after a brief interval boldly began to preach the death of Jesus and his resurrection with unfaltering zeal and courage and build up a new church in faith on his name and extend the glad tiding of the gospel to the gentiles. To what must we look for an explanation of the rise of this victorious confidence and mighty courage if there was no resurrection?

It is quite inadequate to ascribe it to a mere subjective vision, for such triumphant belief of the disciples can not be explained by an appearance which in form and content was nothing but a mere imagination. It is equally idle to reduce it into a "momentary flicker of enthusiasm", for the Christian Church which sprang out of the faith in the resurrection is still the unfailing source of hopes, inspirations and aspirations to humanity. Therefore we have come to the conclusion that the disciple's faith was caused and

sustained by the actual appearance of Christ as victor over death and the grave.

From what we have considered in the foregoing chapters we are provided with at least four lines of strong evidence. We have the testimony of Paul and all the evangelists to the appearance of Christ to the disciples. We have the unanimous testimony of the four evangelists to the fact of the empty grave. We have the consideration that the resurrection is essential to the completion of the redemptive work of Jesus. We have the argument that the vital change in the faith of the disciples only comes from a great and unique event like the resurrection. All these form a solid basis for the faith in the fact of the bodily resurrection of Jesus.

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