

PETER'S VISION OF THE RISEN CHRIST

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TH**ERE** is no room for dogmatizing about the nature of the experience of Simon Peter when he saw Jesus alive again and became persuaded that he had risen from the dead. We may not hope to attain ultimate finality in the interpretation. But there is no reason why the study may not be kept within the limits of a strictly empirical method, and that is the best instrument, even with all of its well recognized inadequacies, that science has yet been able to devise. The explanations of the visions of the early disciples that have been suggested in the past may be stated under three heads: the objective manifestation to the physical senses of men who were still living a normal physical life of a living spiritual being that had survived the death of the physical body; the so-called telegram from heaven, suggested by Keim;¹ and the subjective vision, which is really a visual hallucination, in which the object is real to the seer but has no objective reality.

I

The traditional interpretation from the beginning has held that Jesus survived the grave as a spiritual being and made himself known to the disciples on various occasions; and in recent times this theory has been supported by some who do not hold the usual traditional view of the Bible, but claim

¹ *Jesus of Nazara* (1888), vol. vi, p. 364.

to be empirical scientists, who undertake to demonstrate the theory by the séances of spirit mediums.² But no one can make the assumption which has underlain the traditional view, that departed spirits have objective ontological existence and are able to make themselves known to living persons, or that one has done that in the past, and make claim to an empirical method, for that method does not start with such assumptions.

This does not deny the right of faith to believe the traditional assumption but simply that science has a right to make it. And those who have attempted to prove their case by recourse to the séance have not yet succeeded. This is, no doubt, a legitimate field for investigation and the scientist should explore it, but no finality has been reached thus far, at least none that has been accepted by the recognized psychologists.³ Lake allows for the possibility that this type of investigation may take the study of the resurrection in the future into a new field or place it upon a different plane.⁴ But thus far it is pointed out that the phenomena of spiritism have explanation according to the recognized principles of psychology; the communications from the dead may be due to the reawakening of communications that have taken place before death and have lain dormant in the subconscious phase of personality.⁵ This is in harmony with the neutral theory of the subconscious.

Moreover, the entire assumption on which the conception of communication with the dead rests is the primitive idea of human nature, when it was thought that personality was of more than one distinct part; that the soul lived in the body as a dwelling place until death, and then continued its life in other places; that the soul's life was by no means

² F. W. H. Meyers, *Human Personality and its Survival beyond the Grave*; Lodge, *Hibbert Journal*, April 1908; Hoffmann, *Das Geheimnis der Auferstehung Christi* (1925).

³ George A. Coe, *The Psychology of Religion*, 1918, p. 292.

⁴ Lake, *The Historical Evidence for the Resurrection of Christ*, 1907, p. 285.

⁵ Coe, *op. cit.* p. 202; Lake, *op. cit.* pp. 253 ff.

conditioned by that of the body, but lived independently in and of itself. So since the soul continued to live after the death of the body it was believed that it could make communications to other souls still living in bodies. But modern psychology has discarded this old view of human nature. It sees personality as a unit. There are no compartments that exist separately in and of themselves. It simply recognizes different phases of personality and of consciousness. There may be more to personality than this, but empirical psychology has not discovered it. And until that discovery takes place the idea of a continued existence of the soul after death, while by no means disproven to faith, can be no more than an assumption, and, therefore, may not be used as a premise for the empirical explanation of historical phenomena. So either on the traditional basis or on that of the modern scientific investigator of the basis of spirit phenomena, the theory of the objective revelation of the departed spirit of Jesus to his disciples cannot be accepted as the basis for the explanation of the vision of Peter and of his companions.

II

And the same conclusion must be reached in the case of the "telegram from heaven," suggested by Keim. It has exactly the same psychological difficulties as the objective appearance theory. There have been no scientific proofs of such a possibility as spirits sending telegrams from heaven back to their friends on earth; and the modern language in which it is clothed suggests that, likely, the ancients could not have conceived of such a theory before the invention of the electrical devices for sending messages by wireless. There was no such way of thinking in that ancient world. Rather, the disciples believed that Jesus came to them personally and delivered the messages face to face, so that he was present to their physical senses. And Keim's suggestion is not free from difficulties on other grounds. It really means that there was no appearance of Jesus at all, that the disciples did not see him, but that Jesus created for them, the false impression

that he was present with them although he was in reality not there. This suggestion of Keim's has not met with a warm response even from the conservative side because of this very difficulty. Bruce calls it "a bastard supernaturalism as objectionable to unbelievers as the true supernaturalism of the Catholic creed, and having the additional drawback that it offers to faith asking for bread a stone."⁶

III

The only theory that is thus left as a scientific explanation of the vision of Peter and the others is that they were in some way subjective productions of consciousness. The visions really occurred and were very real to the disciples, and psychology would not deny the possibility even that they were produced by the presence of Jesus in objective ontological reality, after his survival from the grave, but it holds, simply, that the visions may be explained according to well known laws which do not require an objective presence to account for a subjective experience. The subjective experience may be produced by a subjective stimulus and, in spite of that, have all the reality for the seer of phenomena produced by an external stimulus.⁷ A vision of this nature is the product of the psychical condition of the seer. A high tension of mental excitement and emotion lead him into an experience in which he becomes aware in his consciousness of something as present which in fact has no objective existence before him at the time of the vision. Moreover, the materials of which the vision is composed were previously in his mind and have engaged its activities. Under the influence of the proper stimuli, then, as soon as the psychical condition necessary is attained, a vision which has no objective reality is just as capable of explanation by psychological laws as are the normal visions and sensations produced by objective reality, which are due to the functioning of the bodily senses while under no

⁶ Bruce, *Apologetics* (1892), p. 393.

⁷ Schmiedel, *Ency. Bib.* col. 4078. But note my own estimate of the limitation of the present scientific method at the close of this research.

abnormal nervous or emotional strain. Therefore, to explain the vision of Peter on this basis it must be shown that there were previously in his mind the materials out of which the vision was constructed, and that his psychical condition was such as to make the vision possible.

IV

In the first place, the gospels furnish us quite a clear outline of the character of Peter and give a record of his connection with Jesus from the very beginning of the ministry to the end. There is no reason to doubt that we have a reasonably trustworthy picture of him. Peter was the first disciple of Jesus. He was called from his nets by the sea of Galilee. He was the leader of that intimate group of disciples which Jesus gathered to himself during his lifetime. He shared all the great experiences in the life of Jesus, the preaching of the kingdom which was just at hand, the ecstatic experience of the transfiguration, the casting out of demons, the healings, the arrest, the trial and death. Not only was he present through all these unusual experiences as the most intimate friend of Jesus, but in the greatest crisis of all he denied his relationship with Jesus. He was of an emotional temperament. He was very impressionable, responsive and subject to the domination of highly wrought nervous complexes. He was the first to affirm his devotion until death, possibly the first to flee, but, at the same time he was very tender-hearted, and wept for his weakness; he was the first to regain his courage after the ordeal was over and revived the courage of his brethren. He was a man of high spiritual idealism and devotional loyalty, but, also, would yield easily to fear in the presence of physical danger. Peter's weakness is evident, also, from the statement of Paul in Galatians 2 11-14, where Paul rebukes him for his lack of courage in compromising his convictions. Not only in the life of Jesus but in the early years after the resurrection, Peter was the leader in the ecstatic experiences in the life of the church. He was the spokesman at Pentecost, he was connected with the stories in Acts in which the holy Spirit worked with power, sending death, or

healing the sick, just as Jesus had done in the earlier days. Now, it is not necessary to accept the actual historicity of the details of all these records here; but the very fact of the existence of the records and of Peter's connection with them is significant as to his ecstatic nature.

So with the type of man in mind that Peter was, we are able to picture the tremendous emotional strain under which he must have labored after he had denied his master through fear, and, yet, was driven to deepest penitence by his intense devotion and fundamental uprightness, when he realized that the master whose intimate fellowship he had enjoyed all these years as his closest friend, had gone to the cross alone. He had upon his sensitive spirit the weight of his own failure in loyalty to his master in his time of greatest need; at the same time, he had the reproof of his master's courage under trial: and, last of all, the terrible tragedy of the cross clung in his mind with increasing pathos. The weight of it all drove his fevered consciousness to the verge of insanity itself, into that uncertain borderland of irresponsibility and irrationality, where the normal controls of conscious action dissolve and are supplanted by those primal forces which break forth in chaos out of the confusion of a deranged and disorganized personality. He could not shake off the feeling of reproach and self-condemnation that settled over him at the cross. But the days of the feast were over at last, and he set his face again toward the Galilean home where Jesus had called him from his nets in days gone by to become a fisher of men. Now he went back to those nets again.⁸

V

But what materials could Peter have had in his mind, out of which a vision of Jesus alive again could have been

⁸ Mark 16:7 indicates that Peter's vision was in Galilee; the Johanne appendix and the gospel of Peter (xiv: 60, M. R. James, pp. 90 ff.) indicate that Peter was back with his nets again when the vision occurred. Gardner-Smith, *The Narratives of the Resurrection* (1926), pp. 140-170, has a good discussion of the point involved here.

constructed? We must not think here in terms of the highly developed doctrine of the resurrection held by the later church, as shown in the gospels, or even in Paul, when we think of Peter's vision. It is not a cult-lord that he sees, nor a potential apocalyptic Messiah seated at God's right hand, but simply the spirit of his departed friend, whom he had left to die alone on the cross just a few days before in Jerusalem. The vision showed him that Jesus was still alive. It is impossible, of course, for us to know exactly what was in Peter's mind in the way of materials out of which a vision could have been constructed, but we know that he did have the vision; and it is legitimate to infer from the vision the nature of the materials which had produced it. Moreover, we must think of Peter as a man who lived in the environment of the first century A. D., and who would, naturally, therefore, hold the ideas about spirits which prevailed in his world at the time. The time is past when one can think of the Jewish mind in the first century as isolated from the conceptions that circulated freely throughout the Hellenistic world. We may feel certain that Jews of the period held much the same ideas of spirits as did their contemporaries of other religions.⁹ Whatever was true of the beliefs of peoples in general on this question would be true of the Jews also at the time of Jesus.

The ancient Hebrews believed in a spiritual being which animated the body;¹⁰ that at death it departed from the body and joined the other departed spirits;¹¹ and that it was possible for departed spirits to communicate with the living.¹² The Jews held the same ideas of demon possession and exorcism that prevailed at the time, not only in the Old Testament period as is shown by the rigorous condemnation of

⁹ Cf. Zaugg, *A Study of the Spirit-Phenomena in the NT*, 1917, p. 23, "It is clear that in many ways the ancient Hebrews had the same ideas of spirits and the same psychology as the other ancient peoples." He shows that this is true also of the later times.

¹⁰ Gen. 27.

¹¹ Gen. 49 *et al.*

¹² 1 Sam. 28 *et al.*

exorcism found there, but also in the Hellenistic period.¹³ The gospels furnish evidence in abundance of exorcism and demon possession similar to that in such a treatise as *The Life of Apollonius of Tyana*.¹⁴ But what were some of the conceptions in that ancient world about the activities of souls of the dead?

VI

In the first place, it was recognized that departed spirits did reappear and make communications to the living. The prophet Samuel was called from his grave for a conference with King Saul.¹⁵ Herodotus wrote of the Nasamones in Libya that "their practice of divination is to go to the tombs of their ancestors, where after making prayers they lie down to sleep, and take whatever dreams come to them for oracles."¹⁶ Origen gave both his own view and that of Plato, showing how the beliefs survived, when he wrote, "as even Plato says in his treatise on the soul that shadowy phantoms of persons already dead have appeared to some around their sepulchres. Now the phantoms which exist about the soul of the dead are produced by some substance and this substance is in the soul, which exists apart in a body said to be of splendid appearance."¹⁷ And the popular belief in the possibility of the return of the soul is shown by Origen again when he said of Thomas, "That individual had, indeed, expressed his disbelief in the statement of the woman who said that she had seen him, not because he thought it impossible that the soul of a dead man could be seen; but he did not yet consider the report to be true that he had been raised in a body, which was the antitype of the former."¹⁸

¹³ Tobit 8 2 ff.; Josephus, *Ant.* viii: 2, 5; cf. Strack-Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum N. T.*, Vol. I, pp. 2, 9, 300; Vol. II, pp. 71, 526, 760, 891; Bousset, *Die Religion des Judentums etc.* (1906), pp. 381-394.

¹⁴ Cf. iii, 56; iv, 20; v, 25; vi 26-27.

¹⁵ 1 Sam. 28 8-18.

¹⁶ iv, 172.

¹⁷ *Ad Celsum* ii, 60.

¹⁸ *Ad Celsum* ii, 61.

In another passage Origen continues, "Seeking God, then, in this way, we have no need to visit the oracles of Trophonius, of Amphiaraus, and of Mopsus, to which Celsus would send us, assuring us that we would there 'see the gods in human form, appearing to us with all distinctness, and without illusion.' For we know that these are demons, feeding on the blood, and smoke, and odor of victims."¹⁹ And again, Origen testifies to the belief in appearances held by the Greeks, "Now, that miraculous appearances have sometimes been witnessed by human beings, is related by the Greeks . . . by those who have given every evidence of being genuine philosophers, and of having related with perfect truth what had happened to them."²⁰

Testimony to the same phenomena is given by Tertullian, "But we are met with the objection that in visions of the night dead persons are not infrequently seen, and that for a set purpose. For instance, the Nasamones consult private oracles by frequent and lengthened visits to the sepulchres of their relatives, as one may find in Heraclides, or Nymphodorus, or Herodotus; and the Celts, for the same purpose, stay away all night at the tombs of their brave chieftains, as Nicander affirms . . . the power of God has, no doubt, sometimes recalled men's souls to their bodies, as a proof of his own transcendent rights . . ."²¹

The demons that afflicted men were often thought of as being the spirits of the dead; to the demons in the New Testament was attributed a roving disposition just as was the case in Hellenistic thought in general, and when they sought by spasms for new houses and dwelling places the desire was explained as due to their having been despoiled of their rightful place in a human body through death.²² Lucian has many of his characters speak of spirit appearances by day and night and say that almost no one lives who has not seen them.²³

¹⁹ *ibid.* vii, 36.

²⁰ *ibid.* v, 57.

²¹ *de anima*, 57.

²² Baldensperger, *Urchristliche Apologie*, 1909, p. 12.

²³ *Philopseudes*, 17, 27, 30, 31; cf. Tertullian, *de anima*, 57.

He has them refer to demons, phantoms, and the souls of the dead, who flit about over the earth, of departed souls who can work on living beings just as do demons, and who can appear to the living uncalled and can become evil spirits to do living persons harm.²⁴ In the great magical papyrus of Wessely there is a statement about a demon which flits about.²⁵

In the second place, the passages show not only that the ancient world believed in the reappearance of departed souls to living men, but that appearances were most likely to take place soon after the death of the departed. This is shown by the customs of praying and sleeping near the graves and by the ancient festivals for the dead, which were prominent especially in the old Roman religion.

VII

In the third place, souls of men who had met violent death were thought to have the habit of reappearing. Thus we have the statement of Josephus, placed in the mouth of Titus to his soldiers, "For who is there who does not know that those souls of virtuous men which are severed from their fleshly bodies in battles by the sword, are received by the ether, that purest of elements, and placed among the stars; that they may become good demons and propitious heroes, and show themselves as such to their posterity afterwards?"²⁶ Tertullian states, "They also say that those souls which are taken away by a premature death wander about hither and thither until they have completed the residue of the years which they would have lived through, had it not been for their untimely fate . . . Hence those souls must be accounted as passing an exile in Hades, which people are apt to regard as carried off by violence, especially by cruel tortures, such as those of the cross, and the axe, and the sword, and the

²⁴ *ibid.* 13, 29, 30, etc.

²⁵ Baldensperger, *op. cit.* 12.

²⁶ *Wars*, vi, 1, 5.

lion . . . In this way, . . . by magic the Aori Biaeothanati (violently slain) are actually invoked . . ."²⁷

Lucian quotes a Pythagorean maxim, "A spirit only walks if its owner met with a violent end, if he was strangled, for instance, or beheaded, or crucified, and not if he died a natural death."²⁸ This evidence from Josephus, Tertullian and Lucian shows how prevalent these conceptions were in their day. A similar idea of the reappearance of a righteous man who had been slain by violence, even in the New Testament itself, is the suspicion attributed to Herod and to the people that John the Baptist had risen from the dead, and in the identification of Jesus with one of the prophets who would thus have risen up again from the dead.²⁹

VIII

In the fourth place, men of great importance and of outstanding personality were said frequently to reappear after death. A famous example is Romulus. Florus, the Roman historian, mentions the belief on the part of some that he had been torn to pieces by the senate, but that a tempest arose and an eclipse of the Sun occurred, which indicated that an *apotheosis* had taken place; that Julius Proculus affirmed soon afterward that he had seen Romulus in a more majestic form than he had ever had; and that Romulus commanded them to accept him as divine, saying that among the gods in heaven he was called Quirinus. Thus Rome should become the mistress of the nations.³⁰ It was believed that the poet Aristeas returned after his death and was seen by various persons at different times during a period of years and wrote poetry during the time; and numerous Greeks and Romans claimed to have seen the risen Aesculapius.³¹ Dion Cassius relates, "A spirit declaring that he was the famous

²⁷ *de anima* 56-57.

²⁸ *Philop.* 29.

²⁹ Matthew 14 2; 16 11.

³⁰ *Roman History*, I, 1; Tertullian, *Apol.* 21.

³¹ Herodotus, iv, 14, 15; Origen, *ad Celsum* iii, 24-26.

Alexander of Macedon, wearing his apparel and all his apparatus, started from the regions near the Ister . . . It traveled through Thrace and Asia, revelling in company with four hundred male attendants, who were equipped with thyrsi and fawn skins, and did no harm. The fact was admitted by all those who lived in Thrace at the time that lodgings and all provisions for it were provided at public expense. And no one dared to oppose it, either by word or by deed—no governor, no soldier, no procurator, no heads of provinces—but proceeding as if in a daylight procession prescribed by proclamation, to the confines of Bithynia. Leaving that point, it approached the Chalcedonian land, and there, after performing some sacred rite by night, and burying a wooden horse, it vanished.³²

Now thus far, in regard to the vision material that was available for Peter's mind, (although it is not assumed that he knew all the instances cited here, but rather that the ideas behind such stories were general property), the belief has been shown that men possessed souls which left their bodies at death and lived on; that these souls reappeared to the living at times; that they were especially likely to reappear soon after death, often near the graves, though not by any means always there; especially, that innocent men who had been violently slain were accustomed to return; and, more especially still, that the souls of great personalities, such as poets, generals, statesmen, great physicians and healers, great teachers and prophets, were believed to return.

IX

To this material, which was certainly available for Peter, must be added a consideration of the personality of Jesus and what the disciples thought of him. It is evident to the most casual student of the gospels and of early Christianity that Jesus was, to say the least, a great Jewish teacher. The liberal Jews of our own day are glad to admit this. He

³² Dion Cassius, lxxix, 16.

drew about himself some very intimate friends with whom he lived in the closest companionship. He was a miracle worker, exorcist and healer, and was conscious of the endowment of the spirit of God. His temperament was ecstatic and apocalyptic. He was concerned with the religious attitudes and relationships of life; and he saw the spiritual values rather than the ceremonial in the religious practices which he advocated and the law prescribed. It is well recognized that he was a preacher of repentance; that the old order was at an end and that the kingdom of God was ready to be ushered in by the appearance of the Messiah on the clouds of heaven. That much at least is certain. What he taught about himself is difficult to know, since it is next to impossible to distinguish between his own teaching about himself and what his disciples thought about him later on and projected back into his own teaching. It is not desirable here to present the problem in detail, since too much space would be required.³³ But it may be pointed out that the statements of the gospels that he claimed to be the Messiah have great difficulties, since it could scarcely be maintained that he claimed to be a Davidic Messiah and would deliver his nation by the sword; and it is difficult to see how he could have thought of himself as an apocalyptic Messiah, since in all the conceptions of that rôle found in Jewish literature, from which Jesus naturally would have taken the pattern for his own thinking on the question, there was no program outlined which allowed for a previous life in the flesh on earth before the revelation of the Messiah on the clouds from heaven. Nor is there any evidence of a conception which made room for the cross before the revelation from heaven. So it is difficult to see how Jesus could have conceived of himself in this rôle.

And it is just as difficult to conceive of Jesus predicting his death and resurrection on the third day or after three

³³ Cf. the question in Case, *Jesus, a New Biography*, (1927), pp. 326-387. Also, in E. F. Scott, *The Kingdom and the Messiah*, (1911), pp. 209-244.

days and nights, or that he predicted his resurrection at all. It is quite conceivable, however, that he did foresee his death when he was near the end. But even if Jesus did predict his death and resurrection on the third day, it is evident that the disciples did not understand it, from the apologetic statements of the evangelists, who always explain that when the predictions were made the disciples did not understand, and that Jesus charged them not to tell anyone. This is clearly evidence that the evangelists felt obliged to explain to the readers of their books why no one knew of the predictions until after the event. And to accept the predictions as authentic would make the whole experience of the disciples at the cross a mere farce. If the disciples expected Jesus to rise on the third day, why were they so terrified by the tragedy? And why did they give up their hopes? And, again, assuming the prophecies genuine, how did Jesus foresee that his resurrection would take place on the third day? Or that the first vision experience would happen on that day? The alternative is to explain the predictions as the work of the disciples in their reflection upon the events after they had passed by; and to assign them to that period when they began to search the scriptures to give validity to their religious experiences.³⁴

On the other hand, that the movement with which Jesus was identified was messianic is certain. This was true also of the movement begun by John the Baptist. They were both preaching about the messianic kingdom which was just at the door, and were urging the people to get themselves ready for it by repentance. Some thought that John was the Messiah. It is likely that Herod put him to death because of rumors to this effect. And Jesus had begun his work in connection with John. It is clear that the personality and preaching and work of Jesus caused many to wonder whether he might not be the Messiah. Some thought from the nature of his work and preaching that he was a re-embodiment of

³⁴ It is impossible here to enter into the problems of the three days motive and of the origin of the observance of Sunday as the resurrection day.

Elijah, or Elisha, for it was expected that Elijah would return before the day of the kingdom and the Messiah.³⁵ Others thought even that he was John the Baptist who had come to life.³⁶ And it seems to be certain that at times the disciples believed that he was the Messiah. His word attracted such attention that the Roman authorities crucified him on the charge that he was king of the Jews. No doubt they saw that a strong messianic movement had developed or was developing, or they would not have executed Jesus. It is certain that the disciples were familiar with the popular thinking about Jesus as Messiah, and they knew the charge upon which he was put to death. So whether Jesus made messianic claims for himself or not, these thoughts are another element of the influence of the personality of Jesus which entered into the materials in the mind of Peter out of which his vision was made.

In the mind of Peter, then, there was the belief that man has a soul which leaves his body at death, that souls often return after death, that this is true especially in the cases of innocent men violently slain, and in particular was this the case with great personages, in Judea, such as Elijah and Elisha and John the Baptist; there was in his mind the fact that in the case of Jesus all of these conditions were fulfilled; there was also the belief on the part of many that Jesus was the Messiah and his execution on that charge; and, finally, in the mind of Peter was the memory of all the personal associations which he had enjoyed with Jesus, the tragedy of the cross and the emptiness in his life, from which his beloved master had been violently torn away.

X

It is in place here to observe that many visions have a very definite functional value. There are, of course, visions which derange the personality and drive the seer into ab-

³⁵ Matthew 16 1c.

³⁶ Matthew 14 2; 16 1a.

normal states, which produce delirium and insanity; there are those, moreover, which arise out of a pathological consciousness and continue the process of psychic disorganization; but there are others which have a healing and restorative function for the person who has been disorganized and torn from his moorings and lead the seer out of the derangement back to the calm and poise of a wholesome psychic life. Such a vision always supplies a need; it renders the help which is needed and at the time when it is needed.³⁷ All of the citations given above are evidence of this very fact. When Paul reached the limits of Asia a vision led him on to Europe.³⁸ When the relatives of the dead worshiped at the graves they got their communications. When the disciple of Apollonius of Tyana was meditating about his departed master a remarkable vision occurred in which the master returned to him.³⁹ The vision is always a product of a particular situation which has caused the need for it to arise, and not vice versa. The visions which came to the patients in the temples of Aesculapius brought instructions for the cure of the disease.⁴⁰ And they often assumed very elaborate forms in which the sick would see the divine messengers who came to perform the act of healing.⁴¹

³⁷ Stafford, *The Function of Divine Manifestations in NT Times*, (1919), p. 109.

³⁸ Acts 18 a.

³⁹ *Life*, 8, 31.

⁴⁰ Cf. *CIG*, no. 5960, 15 ff., of 138 A. D. "To Valerius Aper, a blind soldier, the god revealed that he should go and take blood of a white cock, together with honey, and rub them into an eye-salve and anoint his eyes three days. And he received his sight, and came and gave thanks publicly to the god."

⁴¹ Cf. Grenfell and Hunt, *Ox. Papy.* xi, pp. 230 ff., 2nd century A. D. "When I, too, afterwards was suddenly seized by pain in my right side, I quickly hastened to the helper of the human race, and he being again disposed to pity listened to me, and displayed still more effectively his peculiar clemency which as I am intending to mount his terrible powers I will substantiate—It was night when every living creature was asleep except those in pain, but divinity showed itself more effectively. A violent fever burned me, and I was convulsed with loss of breath and coughing, owing to the pain proceeding from my side.

When Peter returned to Galilee what was the greatest need of his life? What was the greatest yearning of his soul? Was it not some message that would lift him out of the gloom that had fallen over his spirit from the shadow of the cross? Would not a message from his master out of the realm of the dead supply this need? It must have been in such a mood that Peter went back to the familiar scenes where he had been with Jesus—far away from the distractions of the feast and of the mob that had slain his Lord, where he had been too dazed to realize fully just what had happened—to his home by the sea.⁴²

Heavy in the head with my troubles, I was lapsing half-conscious into sleep and my mother, as a mother would for her child (and she is by nature very affectionate) being extremely grieved at my agonies, was sitting without enjoying even a brief period of slumber, when suddenly she perceived—it was not dream or sleep, for her eyes were open immovably, though not seeing clearly for a divine and terrifying vision came to her, easily preventing her from observing the god himself or his servants, whichever it was. In any case there was some one whose height was more than human clothed in shining raiment and carrying in his left hand a book, who after merely regarding me two or three times from head to foot disappeared. When she had recovered herself she tried still trembling to wake me, and, finding that the fever had left me and that much sweat was pouring off me, did reverence to the manifestation of the god, and wiped me and made me more collected. When I spoke with her she wished to declare the virtue of the god, but I, anticipating her, told her all myself; for everything that she saw in visions appeared to me also in dreams. After these pains in my side had ceased and the god had given me another assuaging cure I proclaimed his benefits . . ." For a very instructive discussion of healings in the Hellenistic world, cf. S. J. Case, *The Journal of Religion*, Vol. iii, No. 3, May, 1923.

⁴² With all of the materials in hand, however, out of which the vision arose, in spite of our desire to penetrate the last element of mystery that surrounds that radical experience out of which the Christian church has arisen, the *emergence* of the vision itself eludes the grasp of the analytical processes of our empirical method. The vision cannot be explained completely at the present status of scientific investigation in these fields. It is not enough just to have pointed out the available material—in the way of certain beliefs, ecstatic personalities and situations involving unusual emotional strain—out of which a vision might have arisen. We know only that when these factors are present visions often

And when Peter cast his nets into the sea once more, he heard the voice of Jesus calling him from the shore; just as he had done in days gone by, he recognized the familiar form there again through the mists of dawn; his heart glowed within him as there came to him the certainty that his Master was not dead, but alive again, and that he had heard him speak as of old.⁴³ This time it was a message to gather together again the little flock that had been scattered by the persecution incident to the crucifixion of Jesus at the feast in Jerusalem.

The experience was as objective and real to Peter as was the appearance of Apollonius to the young man who had waited so long for a word from the life beyond to assure him that his master was yet alive; it was as real as the visions which came to those who lay upon their beds of affliction in the temples of Aesculapius and brought their

occur. The vision was in itself a new phenomenon of the emotional life and was not merely a mechanical combination of those various elements, which our analysis has shown to have been at hand. The empirical method at the present time is really unable to do more than to present a descriptive analysis and cannot yet reach the final goal of complete explanation. It is not necessary to resort to the supernatural; such a procedure would not help matters in the least. Any explanation must keep within the limits of the laws of psychic phenomena that have been explored. The present attempt has been kept within the limits of a monistic world-view and of the empirical method. But after the scientific method has reached its limit there still remain questions that have not been answered—that is true whether the problem of investigation be in the field of material or psychic phenomena—and the veil of mystery is not completely lifted. That is not to place the vision of Peter in a class by itself; for it is true of the most familiar objects all about us. The philosopher has not yet given a complete definition of reality; matter has not been completely explored by the processes of the physical laboratory; the psychologist has not yet solved the riddle of consciousness; nor has the biologist been able entirely to comprehend the mutations through which life moves forward.

⁴³ Mark's narrative of Jesus' walking on the sea in the fourth watch of the night (8 45-52) may be a survival of the first, or of a subsequent, vision of the risen Jesus, that has been projected backward into his lifetime. It points also to Galilee as the place where the visions occurred, and possibly to the fishermen at their nets.

messages of healing; and it was just as real to Peter as the visions of the Master's face and person which he had been used to seeing during the lifetime of Jesus. The distinction between a vision that is produced by the reaction of the physical eyes to rays of light reflected from external objects and one that is entirely the product of subjective processes, which produce a visual hallucination, does not exist for the seer. They are both equally real to him. Peter saw Jesus just as he was used to seeing him in the past. The vision was completely satisfying. It was the response to every craving of his soul. Coming as a true expression of his entire emotional life it was full and adequate; every feature of the need in Peter's soul found its counterpart in the vision which he saw. It was the functional value which gave the vision its complete validity. It gave the satisfaction needed. That it gave Peter a new grip on life and filled him with such faith that he revived the faith of his brethren, is a fact of history. That we can partly analyse the experience by no means impairs its function or detracts from its reality or its value. The experience was of such a quality that Peter became the one who had the right to stand at the gate of the kingdom of heaven with its keys in his hands; and to him was given the power to bind and loose as he was directed by the spirit of Jesus. This position of honor and power in the early church is most certain evidence of the fact that *ἠγέρθη ὁ κύριος καὶ ᾤφθη Σίμωνι* (Luke 24 34).