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*SOME EVENTS OF THE FORTY DAYS FOLLOWING  
CHRIST'S RESURRECTION, WITH SPECIAL REFER-  
ENCE TO THE GREAT MEETING IN GALILEE.*

By Lt.-Col. F. A. MOLONY, O.B.E., late R.E.

**S**T. PAUL made the Resurrection of Christ the Test fact of Christianity. It is not surprising that Unbelievers have tried to discredit the records by alleging contradictions. Most of the minor discrepancies, such as those which exist about the visit of the women to the tomb, have been well explained; but there is one particular contradiction which is continually brought forward, not only by Sceptics, but by Christian Believers.\* Yet we hope to show that it can be most satisfactorily explained. It is this. St. John xx, 26, represents the Apostles as remaining eight days in Jerusalem. (For he says "The doors being shut . . ." and the nineteenth verse tells us that this was for fear of the Jews. This would only have been necessary in Judea.) Against this, it is urged that

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\* Tom Paine wrote, "According to Matthew, the eleven were marching to Galilee to meet Jesus in a mountain by His own appointment at the very time when, according to John, they were assembled in another place" ("Age of Reason," Conway edition, page 164).

Strauss wrote (of Mark xvi), 7, "If they had given it (the message), the disciples would certainly, as in Matthew, have gone to Galilee, and this, in Mark, they are not supposed to have done, as he, with Luke, represents the appearance of the risen Jesus as taking place, not in Galilee, but in Jerusalem and the neighbourhood."

The Rev. F. J. Foakes-Jackson, D.D., writes ("Beginnings of Christianity"), "But it is definitely implied that they were in Galilee when they first saw the risen Jesus" (Mark xiv, 28, and xvi, 7); "Luke and Acts, taken together, give a different account of events, and represent the disciples as staying in Jerusalem after the crucifixion. They cannot both be true, for the disciples cannot have been both in Galilee and at Jerusalem when Peter first saw the risen Lord."

The Rev. P. Gardner Smith, B.D., wrote, "Luke xxiv and John xx leave no room for a journey of the disciples to Galilee. . . . It is perfectly obvious that we have in Luke a tradition which, in certain important particulars, is not to be reconciled with that in Mark and Matthew. . . . The appearance in Galilee, which is described in Matthew, and anticipated in Mark, is quite definitely ruled out by Luke."

Prof. F. C. Burkitt was a sincere Christian and a charming friend; but he wrote, "The surviving traditions of these appearances of Jesus are confused and contradictory; there can be little doubt that there is an element of unhistorical legend and even fancy in some of the tales, notably those which are located in Galilee."

St. Matthew (xxviii, 16) and St. Mark (xvi, 7) represent the Apostles as starting at once for Galilee. This, however, is not correct, as we are nowhere told when the Apostles started for Galilee.

Most commentators are agreed that the meeting on the mountain in Galilee is the same as St. Paul refers to (1 Cor. xv, 6) as having been to 500 brethren at once. For it would have been dangerous to arrange for such a great gathering to take place near Jerusalem, whereas the lonely mountain side would be very suitable. Christ attached great importance to this gathering, for He planned it even before His crucifixion (Mark xiv, 28).

We have seen that many have imagined that they find contradictions in connection with this great event, but we claim that all can be reconciled if we make one most reasonable assumption, which is, that when Christ named a place for the great meeting, He also named a convenient date and time. Do we not all do so when we make appointments? If Christ did not, His followers would have had to camp out on the lonely mountain side for days, perhaps weeks.

Now all the five hundred had to be separately and privately warned, and this must have entailed a lot of work. We may suppose that some hundred of them came from Judea,\* and the rest from Galilee.

Now it would be much more convenient for the Apostles, being in Judea, to first warn the friends there, and this fully explains their not starting for Galilee for at least a week. Then they went and proceeded to warn Christ's many friends there. We may suppose that the great meeting did not take place till three or four weeks after the Resurrection. There was ample time out of forty days. We take it that the meeting on the shores of the lake did not take place till after the meeting with the 500. For then the Apostles would have no immediate task to carry out, and might well think that they would do well to earn some money by fishing.

Then they returned to Jerusalem, and were there told to remain until they were endued with power from on high by the coming of God the Holy Spirit (Luke xxiv, 49). We hold that a considerable time elapsed between the forty-eighth and forty-ninth verses of St. Luke's gospel, who found that space on his parch-

\* Martha, Mary and Lazarus, who had so often hospitably entertained Christ, Nicodemus, Joseph of Arimathea, Bartimeus, the man born blind, would surely all be given the opportunity of seeing their beloved Lord once again. And many others.

ment compelled him to choose between relating the story of the walk to Emmaus, and the events in Galilee. He chose the former, as he knew that the latter had been already recorded by St. Matthew and St. Mark. We note, in passing, that the sayings attributed to Christ after His resurrection make a wonderfully complete set: and this is the more remarkable, because they are drawn from all four gospels.

#### SUMMARY.

If we make the very reasonable assumption, which may almost be reckoned a certainty, that Christ named a date and a time, as well as a place, for the great meeting in Galilee, there are no contradictions regarding it. Further, when we consider how much had to be done in arranging for the important event, we claim that there are not even discrepancies. This is very noteworthy, for at least seven passages refer to the gathering, and these appear in five different authors.

It is interesting to note that our opponents have met with so little success in their attempts to find difficulties. They have rather drawn our attention to facts and harmonies which should increase our faith.

We have every reason to believe that Christ, our Saviour, appeared alive after His crucifixion to five hundred brethren at once on that lonely mountain side in Galilee.