

## THE POST-RESURRECTION APPEARANCES OF OUR LORD.

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**D**IFFICULTIES have always been felt as to how the appearances of the Risen Lord to His Disciples in Jerusalem narrated by St. Luke and in the Fourth Gospel can be reconciled with the message of the angels recorded in the first two of our Gospels and that of the Lord Himself mentioned in St. Matthew's Gospel, that they were to go into Galilee and would see Him there, and with His actual appearance there which is mentioned in St. Matthew's Gospel. The problem is closely connected with another question, namely, what was the original ending of St. Mark's Gospel, and it was ably discussed by Torkild Skat Røndam, of the University of Copenhagen, in the *Hibbert Journal* in 1905. The problem consists in how to combine and harmonize the different accounts which we possess of these appearances in the last chapters of the Gospels of St. Matthew and St. Luke, the last two chapters of the Fourth Gospel, the first chapter of the Acts, and the fifteenth chapter of St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians, which is the earliest of them all. It will be convenient in this discussion to speak of the author of the first Gospel as St. Matthew, although the Apostle of that name was probably not the actual compiler of it.

In spite of the late Dean Burgon's elaborate attempt to defend as genuine the present close of our second Gospel in *The Last Twelve Verses of S. Mark*, published in 1871, there can be little doubt that these verses are a later addition to the original work, which, as we possess it, ends abruptly with the words *ἐφοβοῦντο γὰρ*,—words that may be rendered in English "for they were afraid that. . .," and that the succeeding verses are the work of a later author. Either the original Gospel was owing to some accident left unfinished, or its concluding portion was very early lost. We shall see grounds for believing that the latter alternative was what actually took place, and that we may with some degree of probability conjecture certain of the contents of the last portion. At any rate we cannot rely on the last twelve verses of the Gospel as throwing any original light on our Lord's post-Resurrection appearances.

We proceed, then, to consider the different authoritative accounts of these appearances. The earliest of them, that of St. Paul, mentions five beside the one to himself long afterwards, and professes to state them in order of time ; namely, (1) to Cephas, (2) to the twelve, meaning of course the eleven apostles, (3) to more than five hundred brethren, (4) to James, and (5) to the apostles. St. Matthew's Gospel records two appearances, first outside Jerusalem to the women on their way from the sepulchre, and secondly to the eleven disciples in Galilee, which is mentioned in such a way as to give the impression that they first saw Him there. St. Luke's Gospel on the other hand mentions three appearances of our Lord in Judæa on the day of His resurrection ; (1) to Simon Peter, (2) to the disciples journeying to Emmaus, and (3) to the apostles and others with them in the late evening. The Fourth Gospel narrates an appearance to Mary Magdalene, two to the disciples, the first at Jerusalem, and the second a week later, and a fourth to seven disciples on the shore of the Lake of Galilee. Lastly in the opening of the Acts St. Luke states that our Lord appeared from time to time to the apostles during a period of forty days, with nothing to suggest that these appearances occurred anywhere except in or near Jerusalem, and with an express declaration that during the last appearance He told them to wait in Jerusalem for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

It is not easy to reconcile these different accounts. At first sight, those in the third and fourth Gospels of our Lord's appearances to St. Peter and the two travellers and the assembled disciples in Judæa on the day of His resurrection appear to be hopelessly at variance not only with the statement in the first Gospel that the eleven went into Galilee to see Him, but also with the message of the angel at the tomb recorded both in that and in St. Mark's Gospel, that He was going before them into Galilee and that they were to see Him there, and with the express command of our Lord Himself added in the first Gospel that they were to go into Galilee to see Him. At first sight ; but a careful examination of them will disclose details which supply hints as to how they may be reconciled. In order to appreciate these details it is necessary to realize the relations which the narratives in the Synoptic Gospels bear to one another. Scholars in the present day are pretty well agreed as to the general character of these relations. We need not at present

consider the narratives in the Fourth Gospel, since the connection between these and those in the other Gospels is a matter of greater doubt and uncertainty. But it is generally agreed that the Gospel of St. Matthew is dependent for the substance of its narrative portion, and especially in its account of the close of our Lord's life, upon that of St. Mark, although it records several additional incidents, which advanced critics are inclined to regard as legendary accretions; and that the Gospel of St. Luke is similarly dependent on the Second Gospel though in a less degree, and with certain marked divergences.

In the case of the visit of the women to the tomb on the Resurrection morning, the records of St. Matthew and St. Mark are practically identical; the only differences being that the former mentions an angel as sending the message to the disciples, and saying with reference to their seeing Christ in Galilee, "Lo I have told you," whereas the latter states that a youth (*νεανίσκος*) sent the message to the disciples "and to Peter" and said that they should see Christ in Galilee, "as *He* said to you," referring of course to the record in both Gospels of the words of our Lord on the way to Gethsemane, "After I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee" (Matt. xxvi. 34; Mark xiv. 28). St. Luke, on the other hand, says nothing about a message to the disciples from the tomb, but says that "two men" whom the women saw there, announced to them the fact of Christ's Resurrection, adding, "Remember how He spake unto you when He was yet in Galilee." We observe that all the three Synoptists record "Galilee" as mentioned in the utterance at the tomb. The discrepancy between the way in which St. Luke and the other two Evangelists introduce it is capable of different explanations, but need here only be noticed as in accord with the fact that the third Evangelist makes no express mention either in his Gospel or in the Acts of any appearances of the Risen Lord elsewhere than in Judæa.

But to return to the first two Gospels. Both narrate that the women at the tomb were charged with a direction to the disciples to go into Galilee to see the Lord. It is important to realize who these disciples were. Not merely the eleven apostles, but all the other disciples of Christ then in Jerusalem, of whom at the Passover time there must have been a considerable number. St. Luke we may notice expressly speaks of the multitude of the disciples who

escorted our Lord in His triumphant entry into Jerusalem (Ch. xix. 27). That some besides the apostles received the news of the Resurrection on the same day, clearly appears from the words of the two disciples on their way to Emmaus, recorded in Luke xxiv. 23, and from the fact that they on the same evening related their own experiences to "the eleven gathered together and them that were there" (ver. 33), all of whom had also heard of the Lord's appearance to St. Peter and afterwards saw Him themselves in their midst. But St. Mark states that the women on receiving the charge fled from the tomb with trembling and amazement, and said nothing to any one "for they were afraid that." "That" what? Here unfortunately St. Mark's Gospel, as it has come down to us, fails us. We can only infer that they were afraid that what they had seen and heard was an illusion, or at any rate that they would not be able to persuade any one else of its reality. But how did St. Mark continue his narrative? It would have been of priceless value to us to know this for certain. As it is we are left to conjecture it from the conclusion of St. Matthew's Gospel, which we may suppose to have followed the earlier work on somewhat of the same lines as its 26th and 27th chapters follow the 14th and 15th chapters of that work. We notice then that St. Matthew proceeds to narrate the appearance of our Lord to the women recorded in Matthew xxviii. 9, 10, when He bade them "Be not afraid; go and tell My brethren that they go into Galilee and there shall they see Me," repeating the injunction delivered at the tomb. We observe that here too the message is to "brethren," the same word used by St. Paul in his mention of the five hundred and more who saw the Risen Lord together, and clearly including a far larger number than merely the apostles. Now are there any grounds for supposing that this narrative of two appearances originally formed part of St. Mark's Gospel? I venture to think the very strongest. If we had St. Matthew's Gospel alone we should fail to understand the relevancy or importance of the appearance. According to St. Matthew the women, having received at the tomb the message to the disciples to go to Galilee for the purpose of seeing the Lord, departed quickly with fear and great joy—their fear being merely solemn awe—and ran to bring the disciples word. Why, then, should the Lord have forestalled His promised appearance in Galilee by appearing to them just outside Jerusalem? and why

should He have said to them "Be not afraid"? But this appearance and exhortation to the women following on St. Mark's description of their state of mind is perfectly intelligible. According to him, so far from their hasting from the tomb with awe and great joy to deliver their message to the disciples, they fled from it with trembling and amazement, with the intention of telling no one what they had seen and heard. They would therefore not have done so, if their experience had not been confirmed. But it was corroborated by the appearance of the Lord Himself, and then all their doubts and fears were removed. St. Matthew's words accordingly refer to their state of mind and conduct after this appearance, and not to their feelings when they first left the tomb. We may therefore reasonably conclude that the appearance was recorded by St. Mark; whose description of the bewilderment of the women as they fled from the tomb would be a natural prelude to it and far more intelligible as leading up to it than the preceding statement in St. Matthew's Gospel. Judging by the analogy of the insertion by St. Matthew of the incidents of Pilate's washing, of Pilate's wife's dream, of the opening of graves at our Lord's death, and of the earthquake and removal of the tomb-stone by the angel, we may infer that the next paragraph in his Gospel about the conduct of the guard had no place in the lost part of the second Gospel; in which, in fact, the placing of a guard over the tomb is not mentioned at all. Then follows, in the first Gospel, the statement that "the eleven disciples went into Galilee into the mountain where Jesus had appointed them." Much, however, must have happened before this; and no mention is made of the way in which the message from the tomb was received by the disciples. But St. Luke says that the words of the women seemed to them as idle talk, and their incredulity is also mentioned in the appendix to the second Gospel which is found in our New Testament. Clearly, therefore, just as an appearance of the Lord Himself was necessary to convince the women and induce them to carry the news of the Resurrection and the summons to Galilee to the disciples, so an appearance of the Lord to some, at any rate, of them was necessary to induce the disciples to accept and obey that summons and take the journey into Galilee. St. Matthew, who does not suggest any doubt on the part of the women about the reality of their vision at the tomb, does not mention any doubt on the part of the disciples about the

truth of the message which they received from the women. But St. Mark, who records the incredulity of the women in the first instance, after narrating the appearance of the Lord which dispelled it, may very probably have gone on to narrate that the disciples were in their turn incredulous and that their doubts were also dispelled by an appearance of the Lord to them in Jerusalem. At any rate, there is a statement in St. Matthew's Gospel, which, according to our extant records, is unexplained, and must refer to something which the records do not contain. It is said that the disciples went into Galilee "unto the mountain where Jesus had appointed them." There is no hint in any of our Gospels of this appointment. But it is most natural to suppose that it was made after His resurrection, and, if so, it was during an appearance to them in or near Jerusalem. This at any rate suggests that such an appearance was recorded in the lost portion of St. Mark's Gospel, and that the appointment of the particular mountain during that appearance was there actually mentioned.

The above considerations afford a satisfactory explanation of how the appearances of our Lord to disciples in Judæa recorded in the third and fourth Gospels are not inconsistent with the express direction which we find in the first two Gospels that they were to go into Galilee and would there see Him. But the two apparently conflicting records can also be reconciled by simply recognizing that the pre-arranged appearance in Galilee was to be to a large multitude of the disciples at once, and that it did not, therefore, preclude previous appearances to individuals or to a limited number of disciples in Judæa. It is true that St. Matthew narrates that the "eleven" disciples—meaning, of course, the apostles—went to the appointed mountain in Galilee; and from his account alone we might conclude that they alone were assembled upon it. But as we have seen, the command to go into Galilee to meet the Risen Lord was certainly not confined to the apostles, and St. Matthew's statement that "some" of those present doubted, is hardly reconcilable with the limitation of the total number to eleven. It is more reasonable to suppose that the appearance on the mountain was the appearance to the five hundred and more simultaneously, which St. Paul mentions (1 Cor. xv. 6). Assuredly that large gathering must have taken place in the open air and must have been specially summoned. The close connection between the first two

Gospels leads us to conclude that St. Matthew derived his account of the appearance on the mountain from the earlier Gospel ; and if we possessed the lost portion of it, we should probably find there an express statement that a far larger number of disciples were present than merely the eleven apostles. We may remark in passing that St. Matthew's parenthetical addition that "some doubted" is not in accordance with the colouring of the rest of his post-Resurrection narrative nor with the general tenor of his Gospel ; and that its insertion is, of itself, further evidence that the narrative in which it occurs was copied from an earlier source.

Having gone thus far, it is but one step further to conclude that our Lord's message on that occasion, recorded in Matthew xxviii. 18-20, was also recorded in the lost portion of St. Mark's Gospel. If this was the case, the authority for the baptismal formula in the name of the Trinity is far earlier than has been generally supposed. The question then arises, did St. Mark's Gospel originally end as abruptly as does that of St. Matthew ? and, if not, how can we account for the unfinished end of the first Gospel ? We can do so in either of two ways consistently with the idea which it is interesting to entertain, that St. Mark's Gospel originally closed with a mention of the return of the Apostles to Judæa, and of the subsequent Ascension in their presence. Dean Armitage Robinson has suggested that the abrupt termination of St. Matthew's Gospel was due to the fact that the recognized limits of a volume had been reached, and that it was practically impossible to add fresh material in excess of them (*The Study of the Gospels*, pp. 33, 45). The tyranny of publishers in restricting the size of the books which authors are permitted to give to the world is not unknown at the present day. Or, we may, with Mr. Røndam, conjecture that the wear and tear of the Marcan MS. which has resulted in our losing the whole of its contents after chapter xvi. 8, had already begun and that the author of the first Gospel did not feel justified or able to add to what he found in the already imperfect original from which he compiled his account. Mr. Røndam conjectures that the words "unto the end of the world" were not in the Marcan narrative, but were added by St. Matthew as a sort of conclusion of his book.

Turning now to the Lucan accounts of the post-Resurrection appearances, we have already seen the relation which they bear

to the narratives of the other Synoptists. St. Luke clearly based his Gospel in part upon that of St. Mark, but not so closely as did St. Matthew. In his preface to it he expressly states that he consulted several authorities in compiling it. As already mentioned, there is a deviation from St. Mark in his account of the visit of the women to the tomb. He states that the message to them was delivered by two heralds of the Resurrection, instead of one, and according to him, it did not include a command to pass on the tidings to the disciples nor any summons to them to meet the Risen Lord in Galilee, although it contained the mention of Galilee with quite a different complexion. He adds, in contrast to St. Mark's account, that the women thereupon remembered our Lord's prediction of His resurrection. We have seen that this was not actually the case until after the Lord's appearance to them. But St. Luke does not record this appearance, and the women's state of mind which he records is that at which they had arrived before they imparted the news to the disciples. These, he adds, received it with absolute incredulity, in which, as already pointed out, we must suppose that he was in agreement with the lost end of St. Mark's Gospel, though St. Matthew does not mention it. At any rate this incredulity furnishes an abundant reason for the subsequent appearances of our Lord Himself on the same day to St. Peter, to the two disciples journeying to Emmaus, and, later, to an assembly of the disciples in a room at Jerusalem, recorded in Luke xxiv.

13-43.

So far then all is tolerably clear. But St. Luke adds :

“ 44. And He said unto them, these are My words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, how that all things must needs be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses and the prophets and the psalms concerning Me. 45. Then opened He their mind that they might understand the Scriptures. 46. And He said unto them, thus it is written that the Christ should suffer and rise again from the dead the third day ; 47. And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name unto all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. 48. Ye are witnesses of these things. 49. And behold I send forth the promise of My Father upon you ; but tarry ye in the city until ye be clothed with power from on high.”

And then the narrative immediately proceeds :—

“ 50. And He led them out until they were over against Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. 51. And



it came to pass, while He blessed them, He parted from them and was carried up into heaven. 52. And they worshipped Him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. 53. And were continually in the temple blessing God."

These last ten verses raise serious difficulties. Read by themselves and according to their natural import, they imply that our Lord gave His whole post-Resurrection instructions to His disciples on the evening of the same day and at once led them forth towards Bethany, and ascended into heaven in their presence. We do not know whether St. Luke when he wrote his Gospel entertained this belief and intended to convey this impression ; or whether the suggestion that the contents of a Gospel were necessarily limited by a regard to size, which, as we saw, has been put forward in the case of the first Gospel, is applicable also to St. Luke's Gospel, and that he was obliged by considerations of length to compress in this way the account of teaching which he knew to have extended over a considerable period, and of an event which occurred at the close of it. But at any rate, in the opening of the Acts, he makes it clear that the Ascension did not take place until forty days after the Resurrection ; and this interval would give ample time for journeys to Galilee and back again to Judæa and for several appearances of the Risen Lord in both regions. It is clear, therefore, that the last four verses of St. Luke's Gospel point to a different appearance than that recorded in the 36th and following verses of the same chapter. And we infer that the words recorded in the 49th verse, which included a command to the disciples to remain in Jerusalem, could not have been spoken during the earlier appearance, since they are inconsistent with their visit to Galilee. They must have been uttered after their return from that visit and just before the Ascension, as recorded in the Acts. Probably therefore the whole, or at any rate the greater part of the teaching mentioned in verses 46-48 was also delivered not actually on the evening of Easter Day but on one or more subsequent occasions.

We come, lastly, to the appearances recorded in the fourth Gospel. At first sight the narrative gives the impression that the Evangelist knew nothing of the visit of a company of women to the tomb and thought that Mary Magdalene went there alone. But we find one word in it which shows that this is a mistake, and which indicates the connection of the story with that contained in the

Synoptic Gospels. We read that Mary Magdalene said to the two disciples to whom she announced her distress : " They have taken away the Lord out of the Sepulchre and *we* know not where they have laid Him " (John xx. 2). She had gone with the others to the tomb ; they had all been dismayed at the sight of the removal of the stone which had closed it ; and she, in her impetuosity, had run back to convey the news of it, without waiting to receive the message of good tidings which was delivered to the others. She was not with them when the Lord appeared to them as recorded by St. Matthew, and, as we have shown reasons to conclude, probably also by St. Mark. But she returned later on to the tomb and was there privileged to have a private vision of Him, of which we are only informed in the fourth Gospel. His appearance to the disciples on the evening of the same day which is there recorded is, of course, the same as that mentioned at the end of St. Luke's Gospel. The appearance a week later, when St. Thomas was present, and the appearance on the shore of the Lake of Galilee, are not specially recorded elsewhere ; but they would be included in the occasional appearances during the great Forty Days, which St. Luke summarizes in Acts i. 3. The fourth Gospel gives us the impression that the appearance when St. Thomas was present occurred in the same place as the appearance a week previously. But the narrative does not expressly state that this was the case, and it may have occurred in Galilee or during the journey of the disciples thither.

We have thus identified four out of the five appearances of the Risen Lord mentioned by St. Paul, in writing to the Corinthians. The first two were to St. Peter and the apostles on Easter Day, the third in all probability to the assembly on the mountain in Galilee, and the fourth to the apostles at the Ascension. If St. Paul knew of the other appearances recorded in the Gospels and alluded to in the Acts, it was beside his purpose to have enumerated them. There is one, however, of which we know nothing, except from his mention of it, namely, that to James—doubtless James the Lord's brother, whom St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Galatians (i. 19), specially mentions as having been seen by him on his first visit to Jerusalem after his conversion. No doubt there were other post-Resurrection appearances of which we have no record whatever. If the Risen Lord appeared to Mary Magdalene and the other

women, and to His brother, we may be sure that He also appeared to His Mother.

The above suggestions so far as they relate to conjectures as to the contents of the lost end of St. Mark's Gospel, and as to the way in which the narratives of the appearances in Jerusalem and in Galilee can be reconciled, are substantially those put forward by Mr. Røndam in his article in the *Hibbert Journal* nineteen years ago. If they are correct, they solve the difficulties and supposed discrepancies involved in the question as to which region was the scene of our Lord's post-Resurrection appearances to the apostles and other disciples. They show the connection between the recorded appearances in both regions and harmonize the closing chapters not only of the Synoptic Gospels, but also of the fourth Gospel. They even point to the possibility, if not the probability, of the formula of Baptism in the Triune Name having possessed originally the authority of St. Mark—a fact which, if it could be established, would be of the very highest theological importance.

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*Follow the Christ*, by E. Vera Pemberton (*Longmans, Green & Co.*, 4s. 6d.), is a book of lessons given to a boys' class of the age of sixteen and contains much that is suggestive. But it is distinctly of the sacerdotal type. Confession is taught and its whole tone gives the impression that its writer is connected with the Anglo-Catholic School. We say this not to disparage what is good in the book—which is well arranged and full of good ideas—but to show that it must be used with discretion.

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The second part of the *Speaker's Bible* devoted to the Gospel according to St. Luke has a pathetic interest, as it exhausts the material collected by the late Dr. Hastings. If the present Editors maintain the standard of the late Prince of Editors they will deserve well of the Church, for Dr. Hastings has gathered the cream of expository preaching on seven of the most important chapters of the Gospel (viii. 18 to xv. 12) into a twelve-and-sixpenny book that is worth more than double its price. No man who desires to learn the best that has been said on a Text can do without this book. Published by the *Speaker's Bible* Office, Aberdeen, it will be a very welcome gift to the Clergy, and what is more important it will, if used with discretion, prove beneficial to the congregations of the men who study its pages. Dr. Hastings had a genius for selecting the best, and the present volume is one of the very best compilations that we owe to him.