

# Theology on the Web.org.uk

*Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible*

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

---

A table of contents for *The Expositor* can be found here:

[https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles\\_expositor-series-1.php](https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_expositor-series-1.php)

## THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS.

### II.

#### ITS NATURE AS MIRACLE.

It is granted on all sides that the Christian Church was founded on, or in connexion with, an energetic preaching of the Lord's Resurrection from the dead. The *fact* may be questioned: the *belief* will be admitted.

"In the faith of the disciples," Baur says, "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."<sup>1</sup>

Strauss speaks of "the crowning miracle of the Resurrection—that touchstone, as I may well call it, not of Lives of Jesus only, but of Christianity itself," and allows that it "touches Christianity to the quick," and is "decisive for the whole view of Christianity."<sup>2</sup>

"The Resurrection," says Wellhausen, "was the foundation of the Christian faith, the heavenly Christ, the living and present head of the disciples."<sup>3</sup>

"For any one who studies the marvellous story of the rise of the Church," writes Dr. Percy Gardner, "it soon becomes clear that that rise was conditioned—perhaps was made possible—by the conviction that the Founder was not born, like other men, of an earthly father, and that His body did not rest like those of other men in the grave. . . ."<sup>4</sup>

"The Resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ," says Canon Henson, "has always been regarded as the corner-stone of the fabric of Christian belief; and it certainly has from the first been offered by the missionaries of Christianity as the

<sup>1</sup> *History of the First Three Centuries* (E. T.) i. p. 42.

<sup>2</sup> *New Life of Jesus*, i. pp. 41, 397.

<sup>3</sup> *Einleitung in die Drei Ersten Evangelien*, p. 96.

<sup>4</sup> *A Historic View of the New Testament*, Lect. v., Sect. 5.

supreme demonstration of the truth which in that capacity they are charged to proclaim.”<sup>1</sup>

“There is no doubt,” affirms Mr. F. C. Burkitt, “that the Church of the Apostles believed in the Resurrection of their Lord.”<sup>2</sup>

All which simply re-echoes what the Apostle Paul states of the general belief of the Church of his time. “For I delivered unto you first of all that which also I 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.”<sup>3</sup>

Here, then, is a conceded point—the *belief of the Apostolic Church in the Resurrection of the Lord*. It is well to begin with this point, and to inquire what the *nature* of the belief of the earliest Church was. Was it belief in visionary or spiritualistic appearances? Belief in the survival of the *soul* of Jesus? Belief that somehow or somewhere Jesus lived with God, while His body saw corruption in the tomb? Or was it belief that Jesus had actually risen in the body from the grave? That He had been truly dead, and was as truly alive again?

If the latter was the case, then beyond all question the belief in the Resurrection of Jesus was belief in a true *miracle*, and there is no getting away from the alternative with which this account of the origin of Christianity confronts us. Strauss states that alternative for us with his usual frankness. “Here then,” he says, “we stand on that decisive point where, in the presence of the accounts of the miraculous Resurrection of Jesus, we either acknowledge the inadmissibility of the natural and historical view of the life of Jesus, and must consequently retract all that precedes, and

<sup>1</sup> *The Value of the Bible and Other Sermons*, p. 201.

<sup>2</sup> *The Gospel History and its Transmission*, p. 74.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 3, 4.

so give up our whole undertaking, or pledge ourselves to make out the possibility of the result of these accounts, i.e., the origin of the belief in the Resurrection of Jesus, without any corresponding miraculous fact.”<sup>1</sup>

Now, that the belief of the Apostles and first disciples was really belief in a *true physical Resurrection*, in other words, a Resurrection of the body of Jesus from the grave, it seems impossible, in face of the evidence, to doubt. Few of the writers above cited *do* doubt it, whatever view they may take of the reality lying behind the belief. We are happily not here dependent on the results of a minute criticism of the Gospels or of other New Testament texts. We are dealing with a belief which interweaves itself, directly or indirectly, with the whole body of teaching in the New Testament. If Harnack makes a distinction between the Easter “message” and the Easter “faith,” it is certain that the first Christians made no such distinction. This admits of ample proof.

Take first the narratives in the Synoptics. There are three of these, in St. Matthew, St. Mark, and St. Luke, and the cardinal feature in each is the empty tomb, and the message to the women and through them to the disciples, that the Lord had risen. “He is not here, He is risen.”<sup>2</sup> The body had left the sepulchre. It is not otherwise in St. John. The Magdalene, and after her Peter and John, whom she brings to the spot, find the tomb empty.<sup>3</sup> It is to be remembered that there are several other miracles of resurrection in the Gospels,<sup>4</sup> and these throw light on what was understood by Resurrection in the case of the Master. They

<sup>1</sup> *Ut supra*, i. p. 397.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. xxviii. 6; Mark xvi. 6; Luke xxiv. 6, 22, 24.

<sup>3</sup> John xx. 2-13.

<sup>4</sup> Matt. ix. 18, 23-25; Mark v. 33-43; Luke vii. 11-15, viii. 49-56; John xi.; cf. Matt. xi. 5, and Christ's repudiation of the Sadducean denial of the resurrection, Matt. xxii. 29-32.

were all bodily resurrections. The professed fear of the authorities that the disciples might steal away the body of Jesus, and say, "He is risen from the dead," points in the same direction.<sup>1</sup>

With this belief in the bodily Resurrection correspond the narratives of the appearance of the Risen One to His disciples. It is not the truth of the narratives that is being discussed at this stage, though indirectly that is involved, but the nature of their testimony to the Apostolic belief, and on this point their witness can leave little doubt upon the mind. The appearances to the women,<sup>2</sup> to the Apostles,<sup>3</sup> to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus,<sup>4</sup> to the disciples in Galilee,<sup>5</sup> all speak to a person who has risen in the body—not to an incorporeal spirit or phantom. The conditions of existence of the body were, indeed, in some respects supernaturally altered,<sup>6</sup> as befitted the new state on which it had entered, and was yet more fully to enter. But it was still a body which could be seen, touched, handled; which evinced its identity with the body that had been crucified, by the print of the nails and the spear-mark in the side.<sup>7</sup> These marks of His passion, it is implied, Jesus bears with Him even in the body of His glory.<sup>8</sup> He walked with His disciples, conversed with them, ate with them: "shewed Himself alive," as Luke says, "after His passion by many proofs."<sup>9</sup> If any tangible evidence could be afforded of the real Resurrection of the Lord from the grave, it was surely furnished in that wonderful period of intercourse with His disciples, prior to the final Ascension to His Father.

What the Gospels attest as the belief of the Apostolic

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xxvii. 64.

<sup>2</sup> Matt, xxviii. 9, 10; John xx. 14-18; cf. Mark xvi. 9.

<sup>3</sup> Luke xxiv. 36-43; John xx. 19-29; cf. Mark xvi. 14.

<sup>4</sup> Luke xxiv. 13-32.

<sup>5</sup> Matt. xxviii. 16 and 17; John xxi.

<sup>6</sup> This is touched on below. <sup>7</sup> Luke xxiv. 39-40; John xx. 24-28.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Rev. v. and vi.

<sup>9</sup> Acts i. 3.

Church on the nature of the Resurrection is amply corroborated by the witness of Paul. It is, indeed, frequently argued that since Paul, in the words, "He appeared (*ᾤφθη*) to me also," puts the appearance of the Lord to himself at his conversion in the same category with the appearances to the disciples after the Resurrection,<sup>1</sup> he must have regarded these as, like his own, visionary.<sup>2</sup> Canon Henson repeats this objection. "The Apostle, in classing his own 'vision' of the risen Saviour on the road to Damascus with the other Christophanies, allows us to conclude that in all the appearances there was nothing of the nature of a resuscitated body, which could be touched, held, handled, and could certify its frankly physical character by eating and drinking."<sup>3</sup> This, however, is to miss the very point of the Apostle's enumeration. Paul's object in his use of "appeared" is not to suggest that the earlier appearances were visionary, but conversely to imply that the appearance vouchsafed to himself on the road to Damascus was as real as those granted to the others. He, too, had veritably "seen Jesus our Lord."<sup>4</sup> That Paul conceived of the Resurrection as an actual reanimation and coming forth of Christ's body from the tomb follows, not only from his introduction of the clause, "and that He was buried,"<sup>5</sup> but from the whole argument of the chapter in Corinthians, and from numerous statements elsewhere in his Epistles.

In 1 Corinthians xv. Paul is rebutting the contention of the adversaries in that Church that there was no resurrection

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 3-9.

<sup>2</sup> Thus, e.g., Weizsäcker (*Apostolic Age*, E. T. i. pp. 8, 9), Pfeiderer (*Christian Origins*, E. T., pp. 136-137, 160-161). Weizsäcker says: "There is absolutely no proof that Paul presupposed a physical Christophany in the case of the older Apostles. Had he done so he could not have put his own experience on a level with theirs. But since he does so we must conclude that he looked upon the visions of his predecessors in the same light as his own."

<sup>3</sup> *Ut supra*, p. 204.

<sup>4</sup> 1 Cor. ix. 1.

<sup>5</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 4.

from the dead for believers, and he does this by appealing to the Resurrection of Christ. The latter fact does not seem to have been disputed. If there is no resurrection from the dead, Paul argues, then Christ has not risen; if Christ has risen, His Resurrection is a pledge of that of His people.<sup>1</sup> It is perfectly certain that the sceptics of Corinth were not denying a merely *spiritual* resurrection; they evidently believed that death was the extinction of the individual life.<sup>2</sup> As little is Paul contending in his reply for a merely spiritual resurrection. He contends for a resurrection of the *body*, though in a transformed and spiritualized condition.<sup>3</sup> Professor Lake will concede as much as this. "There can be clearly no doubt," he says, "that he [Paul] believed in the complete personal identity of that which rose with that which had died and been buried."<sup>4</sup> As respects Christ, "He believed that at the Resurrection of Jesus His body was changed from one of flesh and blood to one which was spiritual, incorruptible, and immortal, in such a way that there was no trace left of the corruptible body of flesh and blood which had been laid in the grave."<sup>5</sup> This, however, need not imply, as Professor Lake supposes it to do,<sup>6</sup> that the transformation was effected all at once, nor exclude such appearances as the Gospels record between the Resurrection and Ascension.

The Apostle's view of the bodily Resurrection of Jesus is unambiguously implied in the various statements of his other Epistles. Thus, in Romans viii. 11 we have the declaration: "But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwelleth in you, He that raised up Christ

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 12-23.    <sup>2</sup> xv. 32.    <sup>3</sup> xv. 33-57.

<sup>4</sup> *Historical Evidence for the Resurrection of Jesus Christ*, p. 20.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* p. 23.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 27 and 35. Canon Henson argues in the *Hibbert Journal*, 1903-4, pp. 476-493, that there is a contradiction between Paul and Luke in their conceptions of Christ's Resurrection body.

Jesus from the dead shall give life also to your mortal bodies through His Spirit that dwelleth in you." Here plainly it is the "mortal body" which is the subject of the quickening. Later, in verse 23 of the same chapter, we have: "Waiting for our adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." In Ephesians i. 19, 20, "the exceeding greatness of [God's] power to usward who believe," is measured by "that working of the strength of His might which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead." In Philippians iii. 10, 11, 21, the hope held out is that the Lord Jesus Christ, awaited from heaven, "shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation that it may be conformed to the body of His glory." The like implication of a bodily Resurrection is found in 1 Thessalonians iv. 13-17, and many more passages.

It seems unnecessary to accumulate evidence to the same effect from the remaining New Testament writings. No one will dispute that this is the conception in Peter's address in Acts ii. 24-32, and the statements in 1 Peter i. 3 and 21, iii. 21, are hardly less explicit. The Apocalypse emphasizes the fact that Jesus is "the firstborn of the dead."<sup>1</sup> "I am the first and the last, and the Living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore."<sup>2</sup> "These things saith the first and the last, who was dead, and lived again."<sup>3</sup>

On a fair view of the evidence, therefore, it seems plain that the belief of the Apostolic Church was belief in a true bodily Resurrection of Jesus Christ, and it is as little open to doubt that, if such an event took place, it was a *miracle*, i.e., a true supernatural intervention of God, in the strictest sense of the word. Whether that of itself suffices to debar the "modern" mind from accepting the Resurrection as an historical fact is matter for discussion, but there should

<sup>1</sup> Rev. i. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Chap. i. 17, 18.

<sup>3</sup> Chap. ii. 8.

be no hesitation in conceding that a question of miracle is involved.

The only possible alternative to this is to assume that Jesus at His burial was *not really dead*—that His supposed death from crucifixion was in reality a “swoon,” and that, having revived in the “cool air” of the tomb, and issued forth, He was believed by His disciples to have been raised from the dead. This naturalistic explanation, although numbering among its supporters no less great a name than Schleiermacher’s,<sup>1</sup> is now hopelessly discredited. It was previously mentioned that Strauss practically gave the swoon theory its death-blow, and little has been heard of it since his time. “It is evident,” Strauss well says, “that this view of the Resurrection of Jesus, apart from the difficulties in which it is involved, does not even solve the problem which is here under consideration—the origin, that is, of the Christian Church by faith in the miraculous Resurrection of a Messiah. It is impossible that a being who had stolen half-dead out of the sepulchre, who crept about weak and ill, wanting medical treatment, who required bandaging, strengthening, and indulgence, and who still at last yielded to His sufferings, could have given to the disciples the impression that He was a Conqueror over death and the grave, the Prince of Life, an impression which lay at the bottom of their future ministry.”<sup>2</sup> The hypothesis, in fact, cannot help passing over into one of fraud, for, while proclaiming Jesus as the Risen Lord, who had ascended to heavenly glory, the Apostles must have known the real state of the

<sup>1</sup> It is doubtful how far Schleiermacher himself remained satisfied with this explanation given in his *Life of Jesus* (posthumously published). In his *Der christliche Glaube* (sect. 99), he takes up a more positive attitude, allowing, if not a direct, still a mediate connexion with the doctrine of Christ’s person, inasmuch as anything that reflects on the Apostles reflects back on Christ who chose them.

<sup>2</sup> *Ut supra*, i. p. 412

case, and have closely kept the secret that their Master was in concealment or had died.

Miracle, therefore, in the Resurrection of Jesus, cannot be escaped from, and it is well that this, the most fundamental objection to belief in the Resurrection, should be grappled with at once. It is, as before said, not the Resurrection alone that is involved in this objection, but the whole picture of Christ in the Gospels. That picture, as critics are coming to admit, is the picture of a supernatural personage throughout.<sup>1</sup> It is at least something to have it recognized that the Resurrection does not stand as an isolated fact, but is congruous with the rest of the Gospel history.

It is, however, precisely this element of the miraculous which, it is boldly declared, the "modern" mind cannot admit. The scientific doctrine of "the uniformity of nature" stands in the way. Nature, it is contended, subsists in an unbroken connexion of causes and effects, determined by immutable laws, and the admission of a breach in this predetermined order, even in a single instance, would be the subversion of the postulate on which the whole of science rests. For the scientific man to admit the possibility of miracles would be to involve himself in intellectual confusion. Apart, therefore, from the difficulty of proof, which, in face of our experience of the regularity of nature, and of the notorious fallibility of human testimony to extraordinary events,<sup>2</sup> is held to present another insuperable obstacle to the acceptance of miracle, the very idea of a miraculous

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Bousset, *Was wissen wir von Jesus?* pp. 54, 57. "Even the oldest Gospel," this writer says, "is written from the standpoint of faith; already for Mark Jesus is not only the Messiah of the Jewish people, but the miraculous eternal son of God, whose glory shone in the world."

<sup>2</sup> Hume's famous argument against miracles turns in substance on the contrast between our unalterable experience of nature and the fallibility of human testimony to wonderful events.

occurrence is thought to be precluded. Even Dr. Sanday writes in his latest work, *The Life of Christ in Recent Research* : “ We are modern men, and we cannot divest ourselves of our modernity. . . . I would not ask any one to divest himself of those ideas which we all naturally bring with us—I mean our ideas as to the uniformity of the ordinary course of nature.”<sup>1</sup> As an illustration from a different quarter, a sentence or two may be quoted from the biographer of St. Francis of Assisi, P. Sabatier, who expresses the feeling entertained by some in as concise a way as any. “ If by miracle,” he says, “ we understand either the suspension or subversion of the laws of nature, or the intervention of the First Cause in certain particular cases, I could not concede it. In this negation physical and logical reasons are secondary ; the true reason—let no one be surprised—is entirely religious ; the miracle is immoral. The equality of all before God is one of the postulates of the religious consciousness, and the miracle, that good pleasure of God, only degrades Him to the level of the capricious tyrants of the earth.”<sup>2</sup>

The application of this axiom to the life of Christ in the Gospels, and specially to such a fact as the Resurrection, naturally lays the history, as we possess it, in ruins.<sup>3</sup> There is no need, really, for investigation of evidence ; the question is decided before the evidence is looked at. Professor Lake quotes from Dr. Rashdall with reference to the reanimation or sudden transformation of a really dead body, in “ violation of the best ascertained laws of physics, chemistry, and physiology ” : “ Were the testimony fifty times stronger than it is, any hypothesis would be more possible than that.”<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> P. 204.

<sup>2</sup> *Life of St. Francis*, p. 433.

<sup>3</sup> Cf., on the other hand, Kaftan's vigorous protest against this modern view of the world in his pamphlet *Jesus und Paulus*, pp. 4, 5, 9, 72. “ I am no lover,” he says, “ of the modern view of the world ; rather I find it astonishing that so many thinking men should be led astray by this bugbear ” (*Popanz*).

<sup>4</sup> *Ut supra*, p. 269.

A word may here be said on the mediating attempts which have frequently been made, and still are made, to bridge the gulf between this modern view of the uniformity of nature and the older conception of the supernatural as direct interference of God with the order of nature, through the hypothesis of "unknown laws." This is what Dr. Sanday in the above-mentioned work calls "making both ends meet,"<sup>1</sup> and it commends itself to him and to others as a possible means of reconciliation between miracle and science. The hypothesis has its legitimate place in a general philosophy of miracles; for it is certainly not an essential part of the Biblical idea of miracle that natural forces should not be utilized. Even assuming that miracle were confined to the wielding, directing, modifying, combining or otherwise using, the forces inherent in nature, it is impossible to say how much, in the hands of an omniscient, omnipotent Being, this might cover. Still, when all this has been admitted, the real difficulty is not removed. There is a class of miracles in the Gospel—the Virgin Birth and the Resurrection may safely be placed among them, though they are not the only examples—which is not amenable to this species of treatment; miracles which, if accepted at all, unquestionably imply direct action of the Creative Cause. We have no reason whatever to believe—the Society of Psychological Research does not help us here—that hitherto unknown laws or secret forces of nature will ever prove adequate to the instantaneous healing of a leper, or the restoring of life to the dead. It is with regard to this class of miracles that the scientist takes up his ground. Assume what you will, he will say, of wonderful and inexplicable facts due to unknown natural causes: what cannot be admitted is the occurrence of events due to direct Divine intervention; what Hume would speak of as the effects of "particular volitions,"<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> P. 203.

<sup>2</sup> *Natural Religion*, Pt. XI.

or Renan, of "private volitions."<sup>1</sup> These, in his judgment, are cases of the interpolation into nature of a force which breaks through, rends, disrupts, the natural sequence, and can hardly be conceived of otherwise than as a disturbance of the total system. It is this objection the believer in the miracle of the Resurrection has to meet.

But can it not be met? It is granted, of course, that there are views of the universe which exclude miracle absolutely. The atheist, the Spinozist, the materialist, the monist like Haeckel, the absolutist, to whom the universe is the logical unfolding of an eternal Idea—all systems, in short, which exclude a Living Personal God as the Author and Upholder of the world—have no alternative but to deny miracle. Miracle on such a conception of the world is rightly called impossible. But that, we must hold, is not the true conception of the relation of God to His world, and the question is not—Is miracle possible on an atheistic, or materialistic, or pantheistic conception of the world? but, Is it possible and credible on a theistic view—on the view of God as at once immanent in the world, yet subsisting in His transcendent and eternally complete life above it—All-Powerful, All-Wise, All-Holy, All-Good? It is here, e.g., that a writer like Professor G. B. Foster, in his *Finality of the Christian Religion*, seems utterly inconsistent with himself in his uncompromising polemic against miracles.<sup>2</sup> He would be consistent if he took up Spinoza's position of the identity of God with nature. But he claims to hold by the Father-God of Jesus Christ, and expressly finds fault with "naturalism" because it denies ends, purposes, ruling ideas,

<sup>1</sup> *Philosophical Dialogues*, E. T., pp. 6 ff. "Two things appear to me quite certain . . . we find no trace of the action of definite beings higher than man, acting, as Malbranche says, by private volitions."

<sup>2</sup> He goes so far as to say that "an intelligent man who now affirms his faith in such stories as actual facts, can hardly know what *intellectual honesty* means" (p. 132).

the providence of a just and holy God. But by what right, on such a basis, is the supernatural ruled out of the history of revelation, and especially out of the history of Christ? Once postulate a God who, as said, has a being above the world as well as in it, a Being of fatherly love, free, self-determined, purposeful, who has moral aims, and overrules causes and events for their realization, and it is hard to see why, for high ends of revelation and redemption, a supernatural economy should not be engrafted on the natural, achieving ends which could not be naturally attained, and why the evidence for such an economy should on *a priori* grounds be ruled out of consideration. To speak of miracle, with P. Sabatier, from the religious point of view, as "immoral," is simply absurd.

On such a genuinely theistic conception of the relation of God to the world and to man, the scientific objection to miracle drawn from "the uniformity of Nature," while plausible as an abstract statement, is seen, on deeper probing, to have really very little force. Professor Huxley and J. S. Mill are probably as good authorities on science as most, and both tell us that there is no scientific impossibility in miracle—it is purely and solely a question of evidence.<sup>1</sup> What, in the first place, is a "law of nature"? Simply our registered observation of the order in which we find causes and effects ordinarily linked together. That they are so linked together no one disputes. To quote Mr. W. C. D. Whetham, in his interesting book on *The Recent Developments of Physical Science*: "Many brave things have been written, and many capital letters expended, in describing the Reign of Law. The laws of Nature, however, when the mode of their discovery is analyzed, are seen to be merely the most convenient way of stating the results of experience in a form

<sup>1</sup> Huxley, *Controverted Questions*, pp. 258, 269; Mill, *Logic*, Bk. III. chap. xxv.

suitable for future reference. . . . We thus look on natural laws merely as convenient shorthand statements of the organized information that at present is at our disposal.”<sup>1</sup> Next, what do we mean by “uniformity” in this connexion? Simply that, given like causes operating under like conditions, like effects will follow. No one denies this either. Every one will concede to Dr. Sanday “the uniformity of the *ordinary* course of nature.” If it were otherwise, we should have no world in which we could live at all. The question is, not, Do natural causes operate uniformly? but, Are natural causes the only causes that exist or operate? For miracle, as has frequently been pointed out, is precisely the assertion of the interposition of a *new* cause; one, besides, which the theist must admit to be a *vera causa*.<sup>2</sup>

Not to dwell unduly on these considerations, it need only further be remarked that it misrepresents the nature of such a miracle as the Resurrection of Christ—or of the Gospel miracles generally—to speak of miracles, with Dr. Rashdall, as “completely isolated exceptions to the laws of nature,”<sup>3</sup> or as arbitrary, capricious breaks in the natural order, “violations” of nature’s laws. Miracles may well be parts of a system, and belong to a higher order of causation—though not necessarily a mechanical one. Professor A. B. Bruce, in this connexion, refers to Bushnell’s view of miracles as “wrought in accordance with a purpose,” what he calls “the law of one’s end,” and to the phrase used by Bishop Butler for the same purpose, “general laws of wisdom.”<sup>4</sup> And is it not the case that, in any worthy theistic view, God must be regarded as Himself the ultimate law of all connexion of phenomena in the universe, and the immanent cause of its changes? This means that a free, holy Will is the

<sup>1</sup> Pp. 31, 37.

<sup>2</sup> Thus J. S. Mill.

<sup>3</sup> See Lake, *ut supra*, p. 268.

<sup>4</sup> *The Miraculous Element in the Gospels*, pp. 65–6; cf. Bushnell, *Nature and the Supernatural*, pp. 264–9; Butler, *Analogy*, Pt. II. chap. iv. sect. 3.

ultimate fact to be reckoned with in the interpretation of nature. The ultimate Cause of things has certainly not so bound Himself by secondary laws that He cannot act at will beyond, or in transcendence of them.<sup>1</sup>

The following may be quoted from Professor A. T. Ormond's *Concepts of Philosophy*, as one of the latest utterances from the side of philosophy. Professor Ormond says: "As to the miracle, in any case where it is real, it is either intended in the divine purpose, or it is not. If not, then it has no religious significance. If, however, it be intended in the divine purpose, it then has a place in the world-scheme which evolution itself is working out. How could a genuine miracle contradict evolution unless we conceive evolution as being absolute? It is not evolution but the form of naturalism we have been criticising, that is inconsistent with any genuine divine happenings."<sup>2</sup>

It is granted, then, that, in the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, we are in presence of a miracle—a miracle, however, congruous with the character, personal dignity, and claims of Him whose triumph over death is asserted—and there is no evading the issue with which this confronts us, of an actual, miraculous economy of revelation in history. This assuredly was no exception—a single hole drilled in the ordinary uniform course of nature, without antecedents in what had gone before, and consequents in what was to follow. It belongs to a divine system in which miracles must be conceived as interwoven from the beginning.

<sup>1</sup> There are at least three cases in which direct creative action seems to be no "violation" of natural order, but rather to be called for in the interests of that order: (a) In the initial act of creation *establishing* the order; (b) in the founding of a *higher* order or kingdom in nature, e.g., at the introduction of life (organic nature), (c) where the exercise of creative energy is *remedial* or redemptive. In this last case the creative act is not disturbance or destruction of nature, but the restoration of an order already disturbed (Christ's Miracles of Healing, etc.).

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 603.

The Resurrection was a demonstration of God's mighty power ("the strength of His might" <sup>1</sup>); but was an act in which the Son Himself shared, re-taking to Himself the life He had voluntarily laid down. It is in the light of this miraculous character of the Resurrection we have to consider the phenomena of the appearances of the risen Lord, which otherwise may seem to present features difficult to reconcile. It is an error of Harnack's to speak of the ordinary conception of the Resurrection as that of "a simple reanimation of His mortal body." <sup>2</sup> No one will think of it in that light who studies the narratives of the Gospels. They show that while Jesus was truly risen in the body, He had entered, even bodily, on a new phase of existence, in which some at least of the ordinary natural limitations of body were transcended. <sup>3</sup> The discussion of these, however, belongs properly to another stage, and may here be deferred. Enough that the central fact be held fast that Jesus truly manifested Himself in the body in which He was crucified as Victor over death.

JAMES ORR.

<sup>1</sup> Eph. i. 19.    <sup>2</sup> *History of Dogma*, E. T. i. pp. 85-6.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. the remarks on this subject in Dr. Forrest's *The Christ of History and Experience*, pp. 146 ff., and in Milligan, *The Resurrection of our Lord*, pp. 12 ff. Dr. Forrest says: "These contradictory aspects, instead of casting a suspicion on the appearances, are of the essence of the problem which they were intended to solve. Christ hovers, as it were, on the border-line of two different worlds, and partakes of the characteristics of both, just because He is revealing the one to the other. . . . During the forty days His body was in a transition state, and had to undergo a further transformation in entering into the spiritual sphere, its true home" (pp. 150, 152). Preludings of these changes are seen in the Transfiguration, the walking on the sea, etc.