

THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS.

VIII.

THE APOSTOLIC CHURCH—VISIONAL AND APPARITIONAL THEORIES.

IT has been seen that the facts of the historical witness for the Resurrection form a chain of evidence extending from the empty grave on the morning of the third day and the message of the women, through the successive appearances of Jesus in Jerusalem and Galilee, till the day that He was finally "taken up" ¹ into heaven in the view of His disciples. On these facts was based, in the immediate witnesses, the firm conviction, which nothing could shake, that their Lord, who had been crucified, had risen from the dead, and had been exalted to heavenly dominion. Their testimony, held fast to under the severest trial of privation, suffering, and death, was public, and no attempt was ever made, so far as is known, to refute their assertion. The effects of the faith in the first disciples, and in the hearts and lives of their converts, were of a nature to establish that they were the victims of no illusion; that they built on rock, not sand.

For this is the point next to be observed: the historical evidence for the Resurrection of Jesus is not all the evidence. As the Resurrection had its antecedents in the history and claims of Jesus, so it had its *results*. Pentecost is such a result. The Apostolic Church is such a result. The conversion of St. Paul, the Epistles of the New Testament, the Spirit-filled lives of a multitude of believers are such results. The Church founded on the Apostolic witness has endured for nineteen centuries. Christian experience throughout all these ages is a fact

¹ Acts i. 2.

which only a Living Christ can explain or sustain. The Apostle speaks of the "power" of Christ's Resurrection.¹ That which continuously exerts "power" is a demonstrable reality.

There is space only for a glance at one or two of these results in the Apostolic Age.

1. The *Day of Pentecost*, in the Book of Acts, is the *sequel* to the Resurrection and Ascension. "Being, therefore," said St. Peter, "by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He hath poured forth this, which ye do see and hear."² The cavils which have been raised against the general historicity of the first chapters of the Acts, which narrate the outpouring of the Spirit, and the origin of the Church at Jerusalem,³ are met, apart from the note of clear remembrance and full information in the narrative itself, by one single consideration. It is as incredible that the Mother of all the Churches—the undoubted seat of Apostolic residence and activity for many years—should have been unaware of, or have forgotten, the circumstances of its own origin, as that, say, Germany should forget its Reformation by Luther, or America its Declaration of Independence.

2. The crucial fact of *St. Paul's conversion* took place at most five or six years after the Resurrection.⁴ It happened, therefore, when the original witnesses were still alive and located at Jerusalem, and when remembrance had as yet no time to grow obscure, or tradition to become corrupted or perverted. Three years later St. Paul lodged

¹ Phil. iii. 10.

² Acts ii. 33.

³ Even Harnack, who partly shares in the objection, admits that "the instances of alleged incredibility have been much exaggerated by critics" (*Lukas der Arzt*, p. 88).

⁴ The dates range from 31-2 A.D. (Harnack), 33 (Ramsay), 35-6 (Conybeare and Howson, Turner).

for a fortnight with St. Peter¹—chief of the Apostles—at Jerusalem, and there also met James, the Lord's brother. Then, if not before, he must have made himself familiar with the chief details of the Jerusalem tradition regarding Christ's death and Resurrection. Earlier, while yet a persecutor, he had shared in the martyrdom of that precursor of his own, St. Stephen, who, in dying, had the vision of Jesus in heaven waiting to receive his departing spirit.²

No fewer than three times in the Book of Acts the circumstances of St. Paul's vision of Jesus on the way to Damascus are narrated,³ and it can scarcely be doubted by any one who accepts St. Luke's authorship of the Book that the information which these accounts contain was derived originally from St. Paul's own lips.⁴ This, again, alone should suffice to set aside the contradiction which some have imagined between the Apostle's own conception of his conversion and the narratives in Acts, as well as the charge of vital contradictions in the narratives themselves.⁵ As penned by the same writer, in the compass of the same work, the accounts must, in all reason, be supposed to be in harmony with each other to author's own thought, whatever critics may now choose to make of them.

It is not necessary to discuss at length the reality and objectivity of this appearance of the glorified Jesus to Saul the persecutor, when his mad rage against the saints

¹ Gal. i. 18.

² Acts vii. 51-60.

³ Acts. ix. 1-22; xxii. 1-16; xxvi. 1-18.

⁴ The first is St. Luke's narrative; the second is in St. Paul's defence before Lysias, when St. Luke was probably present (a "we" section); the third is in St. Paul's defence before Agrippa, when St. Luke again was probably present.

⁵ Particulars given in one narrative and not in another are not contradictions. The writer being the same, the particulars must in each case have been known to him, though not expressed.

was in full career. The sudden and revolutionary change then wrought, with its lasting moral and spiritual effects, is one which no "kicking against the goads"¹ in Saul's conscience, or "explosion" of the forces of the subliminal consciousness which had been silently gathering to a head, can satisfactorily explain. Objective elements are implied in the great light, "above the brightness of the sun," that suddenly shone around the whole company, causing all, as the longer narrative shows, to fall to the ground, and in the voice which all heard, though Saul alone apprehended its articulate purport.² It is not so clear whether Saul not simply heard the Lord speak,³ but beheld His form in the heavenly glory. That the latter, really, was the case, is suggested by the contrast in the words used of his companions, "hearing the voice, but beholding no man,"⁴ and by the words of St. Paul himself, "Have I not seen Jesus our Lord?"⁵ Most certain it is that St. Paul himself was absolutely convinced, both at the time of the vision and ever after, of the reality of Christ's appearance to him, and of the call he then received to be the Apostle of the Gentiles. Accordingly, he confidently ranks the appearance to himself with those to the other Apostles.⁶ With the outward vision went an inward revelation of God's Son to his soul⁷—outward and inward combining to effect an entire transformation in his conceptions of God, man, Christ, the world: everything.⁸ This was the turning-point in St. Paul's history; a turning-point, also, in the history of Christianity. Before, Christ's enemy, he was now Christ's devoted slave"

¹ Acts xxvi. 14. ² Cf. Acts ix. 3, 7; xxvi. 13, 14.

³ Weizsäcker and Loisy urge that St. Paul only saw a light and heard words.

⁴ Acts ix. 7.

⁵ 1 Cor. ix. 1.

⁶ 1 Cor. xv. 8.

⁷ Gal. i.-xv. 16.

⁸ Cf. 2 Cor. v. 16.

(δοῦλος) and Apostle. The Spirit that thenceforward wrought in him with mightiest results was the surest attestation of the genuineness of his experience.

3. In the prominence naturally given to the testimony of St. Paul, it should not be overlooked how pervasive is the witness of the *entire New Testament* to this same great primary fact of the Lord's Resurrection. It was seen that St. Peter was one of the first to whom Jesus appeared. But St. Peter has left an Epistle (the question of the second Epistle may here be waived), which rings throughout with the joyful hope and confidence begotten by the Resurrection of Jesus from the dead.¹ Jesus appeared to St. James; and St. James has likewise an Epistle which extols Jesus as "the Lord of glory," and looks for His coming as nigh at hand.² St. John also, in Gospel, Epistle, and Apocalypse, presupposes or declares the Resurrection. The hope he holds out to believers is that, when He—Jesus—shall be "manifested," they shall be like Him, for they shall see Him even as He is.³

The historical attestation of the Resurrection in the New Testament has now been examined, and, so far as the inquiry has gone, the Resurrection of Jesus, as the foundation of the faith, hope, and life of the Church, stands fast. But the question will still be pressed—Is there no alternative conclusion? Is it not possible that the facts which appear to render support to the belief in the Resurrection in the Apostolic Age may be explained in another way? It has already been seen that this is the contention of a large class of writers in our own day. It has also been made apparent that there is as yet little approach to agreement among them in the rival theories they advance to supplant the Apostolic belief. The study of these

¹ 1 Pet. i. 3, 21; iii, 21, 22.

² Jas. ii. 1; v. 7-9.

³ John iii. 2.

“modern” theories may, indeed, well be ranked as a supplementary chapter in the exhibition of the positive evidence for the Resurrection. It is in this corroborative light it is proposed here principally to regard them.

The two main pillars of belief in the Resurrection were found to be the empty tomb on the morning of the third day, and the actual appearances of the Risen Lord to His disciples.

1. Some light has already been cast on the various expedients by which it is attempted in the newer theories to get rid of the fact of the *empty tomb*. Either, as by not a few, the story is treated as unhistorical,¹ and round-about attempts are made to explain its origin by inference from the (visionary) appearances to the disciples in Galilee; or, granting a basis of fact in the narratives, it is conjectured that the body of Jesus had been secretly removed from the tomb, and disposed of elsewhere; or, as by Professor Lake, it is supposed that the women made a mistake in the tomb which they visited. These curiosities of theory need not be further dwelt upon. Christian people to whom they are offered may be excused for echoing the lament of Mary Magdalene: “They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him.”² For the critics do not even profess to know where the body of Jesus was put. The disciples, indeed, are now usually exonerated from participation in a deliberate fraud, and speculation varies between Pilate, the Sanhedrim, and Joseph of Arimathæa as persons who may have removed the body. Others, more wisely, leave the matter in the vagueness of ignorance.³ There remains the fact

¹ “An empty grave was never seen by any disciple of Jesus” (A. Meyer, p. 213).

² John xx. 11.

³ Thus Renan; now also Loisy. The latter says: “It appears useless to discuss here the different hypotheses regarding the removal of

which cannot be got over—a fact fatal to all this arbitrary theorizing—that within a few weeks at most of the Crucifixion, at Pentecost and in the days immediately thereafter—the disciples, raised from despair to a joyful confidence which nothing could destroy, were, as already told, boldly and publicly proclaiming in the streets of the very city where Jesus had been crucified that He was risen from the dead ; were maintaining the same testimony before the tribunals ; were stirring the city, and making thousands of converts. Yet not the least attempt was made, either by the rulers or by any one else interested, to stay the movement, and silence the preachers, as might easily have been done, had their testimony been false, by pointing to where the body of Jesus still lay, or by showing how it had come to be removed from the tomb in which it had, after the Crucifixion, to the knowledge of all, been deposited. *Did not* in this case spells *could not*, and the empty tomb remains an unimpeachable witness to the truth of the message that the Lord had risen.

2. If the empty tomb cannot be got rid of, may it not at least be possible to show that *the appearances of Jesus* can be explained on another hypothesis than that of a physical Resurrection—either by subjective hallucinations, which is the older form of the visional theory, or, if that be thought inadequate, by real apparitions of the (spiritually) risen Christ, which is the form of theory now preferred by many ? The aim, in both of these classes of theories, is to relieve the mind from the difficulty of believing in an actual rising of the body from the grave ; in other words, to do away with the physical miracle. Only, while the purely visional theory takes away all

the body [assumed by the critic to be a fact], whether by Joseph of Arimathæa, or by the proprietor of the tomb, or by the orders of the Sanhedrim, or by Mary of Bethany, or by the Apostles there” (*Les Évangiles Synoptiques*, ii. p. 720).

ground for belief in the Resurrection, the other, or apparitional, by substituting a spiritual rising for the corporeal, and allowing real manifestations of the Risen Jesus, proposes in a certain way to conserve that belief. Is this admissible? It is hoped that a brief examination will make clear how far either theory is from furnishing a tenable explanation of the facts it has to deal with.

(1) Attention has to be called, first, to an interesting fact which has already been repeatedly alluded to in the course of these discussions. It is to be noted with regard to most of these modern visional and apparitional theories that, in complete break with tradition, they feel the necessity of *transferring the appearances of Jesus from Jerusalem*, where the earlier of them are related to have happened, *to the more remote region of Galilee*, and so of dissociating them wholly from the message of the women at the tomb.¹ A slight qualification is that some are disposed to see in St. Luke's narrative of the appearance at Emmaus a reminiscence of appearances in the *neighbourhood* of Jerusalem.² But the greater appearances—all those included in the list of St. Paul in 1 Corinthians xv. 3-8—are transported without further ado to Galilee.

The advantage of this change of *locale* for the theory is obvious. It separates the visions from the events of the Easter morning, gives time for visions to develop, transfers them to scenes where memory and imagination may be supposed to be more prepared to work, frees them from the control of the hard realities of the situation. As Strauss puts it: "If the transference of the appearances to Galilee disengages us from the third day as the period of the commencement of them, the longer time

¹ Thus Strauss, Keim, Weizsäcker, Pfeiderer, Harnack, O. Holtzmann, Lake, Loisy, etc.

² Thus A. Meyer (pp. 134, 136); Lake (pp. 218-19).

thus gained makes the reaction in the minds of the disciples more conceivable." ¹

The real course of events after the Crucifixion is alleged to be unmistakably indicated by the statement of the Evangelists: "They [the disciples] all left Him and fled" (whither should they flee but to their old home?), supported as this is by the words of Jesus: "It is written, I will smite the shepherd," etc., which He expressly connects with His going before them into Galilee; ² and again by the fact that St. Mark and St. Matthew point to Galilee as the place of Christ's meeting with His disciples. ³ It is true that St. Luke and St. John—in part also St. Matthew—locate the first appearances in Jerusalem; but this representation, declared to be irreconcilable with the other, is promptly set aside as unhistorical. ⁴ Internal probability is likewise claimed in favour of Galilee. ⁵ To Galilee, therefore, without hesitation, all the leading appearances of Jesus—the appearance to St. Peter, the appearances to the Apostles, to the five hundred, to St. James, etc.—are carried. ⁶

It is not difficult to show that this hypothesis, directly opposed as it is to nine-tenths of the tradition we possess, has no real foothold even in the facts alleged in its support. ⁷ To give it any colour, it is necessary to get behind

¹ *New Life of Jesus*, i. p. 437.

² Matt. xxvi. 31, 32, 56; Mark xiv. 27, 28, 50; John xvi. 32.

³ Matt. xxviii. 7; Mark xvi. 7.

⁴ "This last conception is irreconcilable with the first" (Strauss, i. p. 435). "Now these two representations are irreconcilable" (Weizsäcker, i. p. 2). "This is evidently not genuine but coloured history" (Keim, vi. p. 284).

⁵ Strauss, i. pp. 436-7.

⁶ Keim is emphatic: "These appearances of Jesus took place, according to the plainest evidence, in Galilee, not in Jerusalem" (p. 281). "Nothing can be plainer than that all the appearances are to be located in the mother country of Christianity" (p. 283).

⁷ For a criticism of the theory, cf. Loofs, *Die Auferstehungsberichte*, pp. 18-25. Loofs, however, is himself arbitrary in transferring all the appearances to Jerusalem.

the tradition even in St. Mark, the supposed original, and in St. Matthew, and to reinterpret the *data* in a way fatal to the good sense and veracity of the narratives. There is nothing in St. Matthew, St. Mark, or St. John to countenance the idea that the "scattering" and "fleeing" of the disciples had reference to a flight into Galilee. On the very night of the "fleeing" St. Peter is found in the High Priest's place.¹ The threefold denial into which he was there betrayed does not look like a purpose to go at once into Galilee. St. Matthew and St. Mark, again, who announce that Jesus will go before the disciples into Galilee, as plainly imply that the disciples to whom the message is sent are still in Jerusalem.² St. Matthew himself records an appearance in Jerusalem in which the same direction to go into Galilee is embodied.³ St. John predicts the "scattering,"⁴ yet gives detailed accounts of the meetings in Jerusalem. It is not easy to see, therefore, how Keim can suppose that his words "preserve the reminiscence that they [the disciples] fled towards their home, that is, towards Galilee."⁵ St. Luke knew something of St. Paul's beliefs. He must have known something also of St. Paul's understanding of the locality of the appearances in 1 Corinthians xv. Yet he places the appearance to St. Peter in Jerusalem on the very day of the Resurrection.⁶ And where is there the least evidence that St. Paul, who knew Jerusalem, but never mentions Galilee, intended all the appearances he enumerates to be located in that region?

There *were* Galilean appearances. St. Matthew tells

¹ Matt. xxvi. 58; Mark xiv. 54.

² This is supposed to be an expedient to cover the earlier disgrace of the flight. Cf. Loofs in criticism (p. 20).

³ Matt. xxviii. 9, 10.

⁴ John xvi. 32.

⁵ *Jesus of Nazara*, vi. p. 283.

⁶ Luke xxiv. 34.

of one, St. Mark probably intended to tell of one, St. John tells of one. But how extremely unlikely, assuming that the departure into Galilee was simply a chance scattering, that the eleven Apostles should be found on different occasions convened to receive visions? Or that above five hundred brethren should be brought together in that region, without previous appointment, for a similar purpose? Or that immediately afterwards Apostles and disciples should be found back at Jerusalem, a united body, animated by a common purpose and hope, and ready to testify at all hazards that Jesus had been raised *from the tomb*?

The theory of the transference of the earlier appearances to Galilee being discarded as one which a sound treatment of the sources cannot justify, the way is cleared for a judgment on the *visional* and *apparitional* theories which are put forward to explain the appearances themselves.

(2) The theory of *subjective visions*, or *mental hallucinations*—though its glaring weaknesses have often been exposed, by none more effectively than by Keim himself—is still the favourite with many.¹ Visions, under excitement, or in persons of a high-strung, nervous temperament, especially among ascetics, are an often-recurring phenomenon in religious history.² Visions, too, in an emotional atmosphere, are contagious. Here then, it may be thought, is a principle which can be invoked to

¹ It was the theory of Strauss and Renan, and is favoured by Weizsäcker, Harnack, A. Meyer, O. Holtzmann, Loisy, etc.

² See the long chapter of instances in A. Meyer, *Die Auferstehung Christi*, pp. 217-70. Cf. Keim, iv. pp. 346-8: "Thus, not to speak of the Old and New Testaments with their long lists of examples, Maximilla and the Montanists saw Christ, the Maid of Orleans received the Archangel Michael and SS. Catherine and Margaret, Francis of Assisi saw the Lord as a seraph, and Savonarola looked upon both obscure and clear pictures of the future through the ordinary ministry of angels. In the same way, the eccentric Mohammed, the pious Swedenborg, the illuminated bookseller Nicolai, have had visions," etc. (p. 346).

furnish an easy and natural explanation of the abnormal experiences of the disciples after the Resurrection. From St. Paul's "vision" of Jesus on the way to Damascus, it is argued that the earlier appearances he enumerates must have been visionary also.

The forms which the vision-theory assumes are legion. Renan's is the most naïve, idyllic, and fanciful. Renan has no difficulty with the appearances at Jerusalem. According to him, the minds of the disciples swam in a delicious intoxication almost from the hour of the Crucifixion. "Heroes do not die."¹ Their Master must rise again. It was Mary Magdalene who set the train of visions in motion.² In the garden she believed that she saw and heard Jesus.³ Divine hallucination! Her enthusiasm gave to the world a resuscitated god!⁴ Others at once caught the infection.⁵ The most trifling incidents—"a current of air, a creaking window, a casual murmur"⁶—sufficed to start a vision. St. Peter's vision (which St. Paul misunderstood) was really his glimpse of the white grave-clothes in the tomb.⁷ The disciples at Emmaus, in their rapture, mistook the "pious Jew" who had expounded to them the Scriptures for Jesus. Suddenly he had vanished!⁸ A breath of wind made the disciples in the closed room think they recognized Jesus. "It was impossible to doubt; Jesus was present; He was there, in the assembly."⁹ Visions multiplied on every hand.¹⁰ Sometimes, "during meal time, Jesus was seen

¹ *Les Apôtres*, p. 3.

² "Mary alone loved enough to dispense with nature, and to have revived the phantom of the perfect Master . . . The glory, then, of the Resurrection belongs to Mary Magdalene" (pp. 12, 13).

³ "The vision gently receded, and said to her: 'Touch Me not. Gradually the shadow disappeared'" (p. 11).

⁴ *Vie de Jésus*, p. 434; *Les Apôtres*, p. 13.

⁵ *Les Apôtres*, pp. 16, 17.

⁶ P. 22.

⁷ P. 12.

⁸ Pp. 20-1.

⁹ P. 22.

¹⁰ "Visions were multiplied without number" (p. 25). There is not a word in the narratives to countenance this.

to appear, taking the bread, blessing it, breaking it, and offering it."¹ When the enthusiasm chilled, the disciples revived it by going in a joyous company to Galilee.² There they had new experiences.³ It was all too lovely to last, so by and by the excitement died away, and the visions ceased!⁴

The falsetto note in these descriptions is all too obvious, and sober-minded advocates of the vision hypothesis usually now take another, if hardly more successful, line. Jerusalem, as has been seen, is abandoned as too near the scene of events; the third day also is set aside as affording too little time for the recovery of the disciples from despair. But Galilee, whither the disciples are carried, with its memories and tender associations, revives hope, and brings back the image of the Master. One day, perhaps by the Lake of Galilee (a reminiscence is discerned in St. John xxi.⁵), St. Peter sees a bright light, or something of the kind, and fancies it is Jesus.⁶ By a mysterious telepathy, his experience affects the remaining Apostles, who happen to be gathered together, and they also have visions. The contagion spreads, and on another occasion 500 brethren at once have visions. By and by the visions cease as suddenly as they began. Returning to Jerusalem, the Apostles are met by the women, and for the first time (thus Professor Lake, etc.) hear of the empty tomb. Their faith is confirmed, and the women are established by the visions in their conviction that Jesus is risen.

¹ P. 26.

² "In a melancholy mood, they thought of the lake and of the beautiful mountains where they had received a foretaste of the Kingdom of God. . . . The majority of the disciples then departed, full of joy and hope, perhaps in the company of the caravan, which took back the pilgrims from the Feast of the Passover" (pp. 28, 29).

³ "The visions, at first, on the lake appear to have been pretty frequent" (p. 32). Again quite unhistorical.

⁴ Pp. 45 ff.

⁵ Thus Harnack, Loisy, etc.

⁶ Cf. Weizsäcker, A. Meyer, etc.

It will be seen, to begin with, that to gain for this visional theory any semblance of plausibility, every fact in the Gospel history has to be changed—time, place, nature of the events, mood of the disciples, etc.—while scenes, conditions, and experiences are invented of which the Gospels know nothing. It is not the facts on record that are explained, but a different (imaginary) set of facts altogether. According to the history, the first appearances took place in Jerusalem on the very day of the Resurrection. They took place independently. There was no preparedness to see visions, but, on the contrary, deep depression and rooted incredulity, not removed till Jesus, by sensible tokens, put His corporeal reality beyond doubt. The appearances were not momentary glimpses, but, at least in several of the cases, prolonged interviews. They were not excited by every trifling circumstance, nor ceaselessly multiplied. They numbered only ten altogether, five of them on the first day. The subjects of them were not nervous, hysterical persons, but men of stolid, practical judgment, fishermen, a tax-gatherer like St. Matthew, a matter-of-fact, unideal man like St. Philip, a sceptic like St. Thomas. In no case is there the slightest trace of preparatory excitement. If, when Jesus appeared, the disciples were “affrighted,” it was at the thought that a spirit appeared to them,¹ and this idea (a chance for the vision hypothesis) had to be dispelled before they would believe that it was Jesus. Ordinarily they were calm and collected. It is obvious that for the explanation of *such* appearances a vision theory is useless.

Even on its own ground, however, it must be held that the vision theory breaks down in the most essential points. It is not, for instance, the case that there is any general predisposition to believe in the resurrection of “heroes,”

¹ Luke xxiv. 37-8.

or to affirm that heroes have actually risen. No single example can be produced of belief in the resurrection of an historical personage such as Jesus was: none at least on which anything was ever founded. What *is* found is an unwillingness to believe, or to admit, in certain cases,¹ for a time, that the hero is really dead. The Christian Resurrection is thus a fact without historical analogy. There was, moreover, nothing in the nature of visions, assuming that the disciples had them, to give rise to the idea of a *bodily* Resurrection. "Visions" are phantasmal, and would be construed as "apparitions" of the dead, not as proofs of resurrection.² This is precisely what the Apostles at first did think about the appearances of Jesus. Lastly, as checking a purely visional theory, there is the immovable fact of the empty tomb. It would, indeed, be an extraordinary coincidence if, in the environs of Jerusalem, the tomb of Jesus was found empty, while, without previous knowledge of a Resurrection, the disciples began in Galilee to have visions of a Risen Lord!

Psychologically, no good cause has ever been shown why the disciples should have this marvellous outburst of visionary experience; should have it so early as the third day; should have it simultaneously; should have it within a strictly limited period, after which the visions as suddenly ceased; should never afterwards waver or doubt about it; should be inspired by it for the noblest work ever done on earth.³ If anything is certain historically, it is that the death of their Master plunged the disciples into deepest despondency, that their hearts,

¹ The cases are not numerous; that of Mohammed, which Renan cites, is not really one. Mohammed's death was never really doubted.

² Cf. B. Weiss, *Life of Christ*, iii. p. 390 (E. T.).

³ Keim forcibly urges against the vision-theory the orderly, regular character and early cessation of the appearances (vi. pp. 356-7). Cf. also Beyschlag, *Leben Jesu*, i. pp. 430-50.

always "slow to believe," were sad, and their hopes broken, and that, so far from expecting a Resurrection, they could hardly be persuaded of the fact even after it occurred. Even the words which Jesus had spoken on the subject had not been apprehended in a sense which helped them to believe. The women who visited the tomb had assuredly no expectation of finding the Lord risen. Even had their faith been stronger than it was, that would not have caused the reappearances.

Equally unaccountable on a purely visional theory is the *outcome* of belief in the Resurrection. It was this consideration which weighed most of all with Keim, whose view is thus summed up by Godet: "It would be difficult to understand how, from a society held together by over-excitement, issuing in visions, could have proceeded the Christian Church, with its lucidity of thought and earnestness of moral activity."¹ The visions not only cease, but, as Keim points out, make way for a diametrically opposite mental current. From enthusiastic excitement, the impetus of which would have gone on working, as in Montanism, for a long period, there is a sudden transition to self-possession and clear-mindedness. "If therefore," Keim argues, "there was actually an early, an immediate transition from the visions to a calm self-possession, and to a self-possessed energy, then the visions did not proceed from self-generated visionary over-excitement and fanatical agitation among the multitude."²

(3) Impressed by these difficulties, it is not surprising to find a tendency exhibiting itself among recent writers to concede the inadequacy of a purely subjective account of the appearances to the disciples, and to fall back on a theory of spiritual yet *real* manifestations of the Risen

¹ Godet, *Defence of the Christian Faith*, p. 88.

² Keim, vi. pp. 357-8. Cf. Weiss, *ut supra*, iii. p. 387.

Christ—on what is called above an *apparitional* theory. Keim is not the earliest, but he is one of the best known representatives of this theory,¹ which is now thought by certain “moderns” to receive support from the evidence collected by the Society of Psychological Research on apparitions of the dead, or phantasms of persons at the time of death.² The view is one which commends itself to prominent Ritschlians, e.g., to Johannes Weiss.³ It is put forward as probable by Professor Lake.⁴ Keim thinks that in this way he saves the truth of the Resurrection (“thus, though much has fallen away, the secure faith-fortress of the Resurrection remains”).⁵

Keim’s theory, in brief, is that, while the body of the Crucified Jesus slept on in the tomb in which it had received “honourable burial,”⁶ His spirit manifested itself by supernatural impressions on the minds of the disciples—what he calls “telegrams from heaven”⁷—giving them the assurance that He still lived, and grounding a firm hope of immortality. Keim will not even refuse to those who may require it the belief that the vision took the form of “corporeal appearances.”⁸ The newer theories rely more on the evidence of apparitions to bring the appearances of Jesus within the scope of natural law—the idea of “law” being widened to take in psychical manifestations from the unseen world.⁹ So far from belief in

¹ *Ut supra*, vi. pp. 361–5.

² Cf. Lake, *Resur. of Jesus Christ*, pp 271–6; Myers, *Human Personality*, i. p. 288.

³ *Das Nachfolge Christi*.

⁴ *Ut supra*. ⁵ P. 365.

⁶ P. 271.

⁷ Pp. 364–5.

⁸ Pp. 362.

⁹ Cf. Prof. Lake, in agreement with Dr. Rashdall: “A real though supernormal psychological event, but which involved nothing which can properly be spoken of as a suspension of natural law” (p. 269; cf. p. 277).

immortality being based on the Resurrection, Professor Lake, in a passage earlier quoted, would seem to say that this belief (including the survival of Christ's personality) must remain an hypothesis till experts have sifted the evidence for the alleged psychical manifestations.¹

It is not necessary here to investigate the degree of truth which belongs to the class of phenomena with which psychical research deals, or to discuss the alternative explanations which may be given of such phenomena. There is no call to deny the reality of telepathic communication between living minds, or the possibility of impressions being conveyed from one mind to another in the hour of death. The whole region is obscure, and needs further exploration. What it is necessary to insist upon is that nothing of the kind answers to the proper Scriptural idea of Resurrection, and that it is a mistake, involving a real yielding up of the Christian basis, to rest the proof of Christ's rising from the dead in any degree on *data* so elusive, precarious, and in this connexion so misleading, as those to which attention is here directed. The survival of the soul is not resurrection.² An apparitional theory is not a theory of the Resurrection of Jesus as Apostolic Christianity understood it, but a substitute, which is in principle a negation, of the Apostolic affirmation.

It is speedily apparent, further, that apparitional theories of the Resurrection, quite as much as the visional, break on the character of the facts the theories are intended to explain. The empty tomb, once again, stands as an

¹ "It remains merely an hypothesis until it can be shown that personal life does endure beyond death, is neither extinguished nor suspended, and is capable of manifesting its existence to us . . . but we must wait until the experts have sufficiently sifted the argument for alternative explanations of the phenomena" (p. 245).

² Prof. Lake says: "What we mean by resurrection is not resuscitation of the material body, but the unbroken survival of personal life" (p. 265; cf. p. 275).

insuperable barrier in the way of all such theories. The testimony of the Apostles again stands on record, and cannot be spirited away. The witness of the Apostles was that they had actually seen and conversed with Jesus—not with an apparition or ghost of Jesus, but with the living Christ Himself. It is an acute criticism which the late Professor A. B. Bruce makes on Keim's "telegram" theory when he says: "It is open to the charge that it makes the faith of the disciples rest on a hallucination. Christ sends a series of telegrams from heaven to let His disciples know that all is well. But what does the telegram say in every case? Not merely, 'My Spirit lives with God and cares for you'; but, 'My body is risen from the grave. . . . If the Resurrection be an unreality, if the body that was nailed to the tree never came forth from the tomb, why send messages that were certain to produce an opposite impression?'"¹

After all, on such a theory supernaturalism is not escaped, and most will feel that Keim's spiritualistic hypothesis is a poor exchange for the Apostolic affirmation that Jesus actually burst the bands of death, and came forth living from the tomb on the morning of the third day. Dr. Bruce says of it: "Truly this is a poor foundation to build Christendom upon, 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."² It does not help much to plead that, if apparitions can be proved in the present day, the whole subject is brought within the domain of natural law. The reality of apparitions is never likely to be proved to the general satisfaction of mankind; but, if it were, they would certainly be regarded as facts belonging to a supernatural world, and

¹ *Apologetics*, p. 393.

² *Ibid.*

not as mere phenomena of nature. The root of the whole difficulty, as Professor Lake frankly admits, is the naturalistic assumption that the reanimation of a dead body—even of the body of the Son of God—could not take place.¹ Anything, he says, rather than that.² Hence the need of resorting to the fantastic theories just described, which yet, as seen, have an element of the supernatural inhering in them.

Visional and apparitional theories being parted with, there is only one remaining explanation, viz., *that the Resurrection really took place*. As Beyschlag truly says: "The *faith* of the disciples in the Resurrection of Jesus, which no one denies, cannot have originated, and cannot be explained otherwise than through the fact of the Resurrection, through the fact in its full, objective, supernatural sense, as hitherto understood."³ So long as this is contested the Resurrection remains a problem which rival attempts at explanation only leaves in deeper darkness.

JAMES ORR.

"HAVE THE HEBREWS BEEN NOMADS?"

A REPLY TO PROFESSOR EERDMANS.

IN the EXPOSITOR for August Professor Eerdmans, of Leiden, after stating that "it is generally received that the Israelitic nation is the offspring of Nomad tribes," affirms that "however common this view may be, a careful study of Genesis and of oriental life proves it to be wrong. Scholars have not paid sufficient attention to some texts in Genesis and to the differences between the various kinds of popula-

¹ *Ut supra*, pp. 264-5, 268-9.

² "Such a phenomenon is in itself so improbable that any alternative is preferable to its assertion" (p. 267).

³ *Leben Jesu*, i. p. 440.