

THE GLORY OF THE EMPTY TOMB

By

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Author of "The Glory of the Manger" and "The Glory of the Cross"



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To
MARGARET CLARKE ZWEMER
*"Etenim ipsa quoque astitit multis
et mihi ipsi"*—ROMANS 16:2

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The Nicene Creed

I BELIEVE IN ONE GOD the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, And of all things visible and invisible:

AND IN ONE LORD JESUS CHRIST, the only-begotten Son of God; Begotten of his Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, Very God of very God; Begotten, not made; Being of one substance with the Father; By whom all things were made: Who for us men and our salvation came down from heaven, And was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, And was made man: And was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate; He suffered and was buried: And the third day he rose again according to the Scriptures: And ascended into heaven, And sitteth on the right hand of the Father: And he shall come again, with glory, to judge both the quick and the dead; Whose kingdom shall have no end.

AND I BELIEVE IN THE HOLY GHOST, The Lord, and Giver of Life, Who proceedeth from the Father and the Son; Who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified; Who spake by the Prophets: And I believe one Catholic and Apostolic Church: I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins: And I look for the Resurrection of the dead: And the Life of the world to come. Amen.

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THE GLORY OF THE EMPTY TOMB

FOREWORD

THE words of the Apostles' Creed and of the Nicene Creed, that dual heritage of all Christendom, summarize the threefold glory of our blessed Redeemer: "Jesus Christ our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary" (the glory of the Manger); who "suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried" (the glory of the Cross); "the third day he rose again from the dead" (the glory of the Resurrection).

This threefold statement of the Creed expresses the threefold mystery of the Christian faith—the Virgin Birth, the vicarious Atonement, the bodily Resurrection of Jesus Christ, mysteries which have not only awakened awe and adoration on the part of all believers but also opposition and denial on the part of unbelievers.

If we approach the Gospel records in the spirit of Renan, who, in his preface to his *Vie de Jesus*, tells us that "miracles are things that never happen," we will try to find a natural explanation for the birth of Jesus and for the empty tomb. If He was merely a remarkable Jewish teacher of the first century, His death becomes only a tragic martyrdom. But this is not the teaching of the New Testament. In the Manger of Bethlehem the Son of God came to be *of us*; on the Cross He gave Himself *for us*; through the Resurrection He gave Himself *to us*. This is the threefold glory of the Incarnation. "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us."¹ "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree." "And that he rose again on the third day according to the Scriptures."²

The essence of Christianity includes the supernatural birth of Jesus, His death on the Cross, with its supernatural accom-

¹ John 1:4.

² I Peter 2:24; I Cor. 15:4.

paniments and significance, and His glorious Resurrection from the dead. The glory of the Manger is the glory of the Cross, and both are consummated in the glory of the Empty Tomb. In the beautiful words of Paul Feine:

“It has been the belief and the teaching of the Christian Church of all ages and of all Confessions that Jesus, the Son of God, in His sacrificial death on the Cross wrought the reconciliation of men with God and by His Resurrection begot anew those who believe in Him unto a living hope of eternal life. This belief forms the content of the hymns and prayers of Christian devotion through all the centuries. In the proclamation of Jesus, the Divine Saviour, who died for us on the Cross, still lies (even today) the secret of the success of Christian Missions among the heathen. The symbol of this belief greets us in the form of the Cross from the tower of every church, from every Christian gravestone and in the thousands of forms in which the Cross finds employment in daily life; this belief meets us in the gospel of the great Christian festivals and in the two sacraments of the Church.”³

One would not expect reference to the Incarnation, the Atonement, and the Resurrection as the three red-letter days of Christendom in Mohammed's Koran, because he denied the deity of Jesus and His death and resurrection. Yet there is a strange passage in the account of the miraculous birth of Jesus from a virgin, and it comes from the lips of the infant Jesus:

“When Mary, to justify herself, pointed to him and they said, How are we to speak with one who is in the cradle a child? He said, ‘Verily I am a servant of God; He has brought me the Book and He has made me a prophet, and He has made me blessed wherever I be; and He has required of me prayer and almsgiving so long as I live, and piety toward my mother, and has not made me a miserable tyrant: and peace upon me the day I was born, and the day I die and the day I shall be raised up alive.’ That is Jesus the son of Mary—by the word of truth whereon ye do dispute.”⁴

³ *Theologie des Neuen Testaments*, p. 120.

Cf. Benjamin B. Warfield, *Studies in Theology*, pp. 261–297.

⁴ *Surah*, 19:15–34.

The three days mentioned are indeed days of peace in the Gospel record. When Jesus was born the angels sang of peace on earth, and prophecy declared Him the Prince of Peace. In His death we have peace with God through the blood of the Cross (Rom. 5:1; Eph. 2:14). And after His Resurrection it was Christ who gave the disciples the symbol and the seal of His peace (John 20:19–26; Luke 24:36). The basic message of the Incarnation, of the Atonement, and of the Resurrection morning is peace with God. In this threefold sense Jesus Christ is indeed the Prince of Peace from the day He was born, the day He died, and the day He arose from the dead.

While I was a missionary to Moslems in the Near East for forty years, it first occurred to me to write on the threefold glory of the Christian revelation. *The Glory of the Cross* was written in Cairo in 1928, *The Glory of the Manger*, in 1939. And now this volume completes the trilogy as first meditated.

The Glory of the Manger and *The Glory of the Cross* both tell of the humiliation of our Saviour, “who emptied himself and took upon him the form of a servant . . . and became obedient unto death.” *The Glory of the Empty Tomb* is that of the exaltation of the Saviour who arose from the dead and whom “God hath highly exalted, and given a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Phil. 2:9–11).

This is the supreme glory, the glory which Christ had by right before the foundation of the world but which He manifested by His victory over sin and death when He “was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness by the resurrection from the dead” (Rom. 1:4).

This glory of the Resurrection exceeds the glory of the Manger and the glory of the Cross because the first and the second were in order to the last. Only when we know Christ and the power of His Resurrection by experience are our eyes

opened to see the glory of Bethlehem and of Calvary. Moreover, the glory of the Resurrection differs from the glory of the Incarnation and the glory of the Atonement on the Cross. No mortal has shared or can share in the glory of the Manger or of the Cross. But all who believe in Christ will share in the glory of His resurrection. This mystery is explained by Paul in the fifteenth chapter of First Corinthians.

The Easter message includes the whole story of Redemption from the day when

“The Lord God planted a garden
In the first white day of the world,
And set there an angel warden
In a garland of light unfurled;

“So near to the peace of Heaven
That the hawk might nest with the wren:
For there in the cool of the even
God walked with the first of men,”

to that day when He met Mary Magdalene in the other garden, where there was an empty tomb. The symbolism of that Paradise garden stretches from Eden to the Holy City—from Genesis to Revelation. Every Easter morning even Nature itself seems to interpret for us the deep significance of the glory of Christ's victory over death.

Last year the genial Dave Boone wrote in the *New York Sun* just before Easter:

“How anybody can doubt the Resurrection and the eternal life after a trip into the country these days, when every shrub and tree has sprung from stark desolation into life and beauty in the great miracle of spring, is beyond me. I don't think the transition from death to life has ever seemed so amazingly planted by nature in every field and hillside. All outdoors is a church just now, it's a great cathedral such as the hand of man could never design or create. He couldn't even come close. And there's a sermon in every glen, a high mass in every valley and an answer to the doubts of mankind in

every apple orchard, in every cherry tree suddenly flaming into life, and in every flower telling the story of the Resurrection in country garden or tenement flower-pot.”

It is this perpetual parable of the sublime truth of Christ's Resurrection that we find at the Garden Tomb where Mary first heard the message, saw the angels, believed the evidence of Christ's own voice and face and form, and then ran to give witness. Here is Ruskin's interpretation:

“Did you ever hear, not of a Maud, but a Madeline, who went down to her garden in the dawn, and found One waiting at the gate, whom she supposed to be the gardener? Have you not sought Him often; sought Him in vain, all through the night; sought Him in vain at the gate of that old garden where the fiery sword is set? He is never there; but at the gate of *this* garden He is waiting always—waiting to take your hand—ready to go down to see the fruits of the valley, to see whether the vine has flourished, and the pomegranate budded.”⁵

The chapters that follow are studies on the one theme of immortality and resurrection, our glorious hope and the song of our hearts on life's weary pilgrimage. The picture on the jacket is from the painting by the Norwegian artist, *Axel Hjalmar Ender*. It forms the altar-piece of the little wooden church at Molde, Norway and represents Mary, the mother of Jesus, The Magdalene and Salome listening to the angel's message,

HE IS RISEN!

⁵ Ruskin's *Sesame and Lilies*.

I

THE HOPE OF IMMORTALITY

"Our life is closed, our life begins,
The long, long anchorage we leave;
The ship is clear at last, she leaps!
She swiftly courses from the shore,
Joy, shipmates, joy."

—Walt Whitman,
"Joy, Shipmates, Joy!"

THIS question of the ages is put by Job, "If a man die shall he live again?" and he himself gives the answer of an undiscourageable hope in the words that follow, "All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come" (Job 14: 14). The question of life after death is not left unanswered in the Old Testament, as some imagine. In this book we have the glorious words long since appropriated and transfigured by Christian faith in song and music: "I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another" (Job 19: 25-27).

Faith in the immortality of the soul and in a life after death can be traced to the beginning of human history. It is more than traditional; it is a well-nigh universal consciousness among primitive races scattered across the Eastern and Western hemispheres. The evidence of archæology and anthropology is cumulative and convincing. One of the most remarkable facts in the study of religions is the universal belief of mankind in a future state of existence after death. So unques-

tioned and prevalent is this belief, that Sir James Frazer, the great authority on folklore, requires three volumes to collect the evidence of it solely among primitive tribes.¹

James Freeman Clarke says, "With an unknown eternity behind him, man has everywhere believed in a hereafter. No traveller returns from that bourne to tell us anything about it. . . . But notwithstanding this, men have universally believed in another life."² "The belief best established among the aboriginal Americans," said Charlevoix, "is that of the immortality of the soul."

The tombs of ancient Egypt and their "Book of the Dead" bear eloquent witness to this faith in future life, a judgment to come, and rewards and punishment. The ancient tombs of the Etruscans bear beautiful inscriptions that whisper faith in immortality: "While we depart our essence rises." "We rise like a bird and ascend to our ancestors." "The soul rises like fire." And there are pictures of the soul seated on a horse and with a travelling-bag in its hand.³

When one reads all the evidence of belief in future life among primitive races as collected by anthropologists and the spade of the archæologist, it is passing strange that liberal theologians, biased by an evolutionary hypothesis, do not find the idea of immortality in the Old Testament! If Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, did he not even learn of their firm belief in a future life and a judgment to come? Dr. James Orr denies emphatically that the Old Testament has no doctrine of immortality. We quote the words he writes as evidence that the Hebrews, like every other ancient people, believed that the soul survived the body:

"It is said we have no doctrine of Immortality in the Old Testament. But I reply, we *have* immortality at the very commencement—for man, as he came from the hands of his Creator, was made

¹ James George Frazer, *The Belief in Immortality and the Worship of the Dead*. 3 vols., London, 1922.

² *Ten Great Religions*, Vol. II, Chapter XI.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 326.

for immortal life. Man in Eden was immortal. He was intended to live, not to die. Then came sin, and with it death. Adam called his son Seth, and Seth called his son Enoch, which means 'frail, mortal man.' Seth himself died, his son died, his son's son died, and so the line of death goes on. Then comes an interruption, the intervention as it were, of a higher law, a new inbreaking of immortality into a line of death. 'Enoch walked with God, and he was not; for God took him.' Enoch did not die. Every other life in that record ends with the statement, 'and he died'; but Enoch's is given as an exception. He did not die, but God 'took' him, i.e., without death."⁴

And then he sums up the evidence from other parts of the Old Testament, not for life after death only, but *for a whole immortality of body and soul and spirit*—namely, the hope of a resurrection, such as the Pharisees held at the time of Christ.

The burial customs noted in the Pentateuch and the burial rites and graves in every part of the world and from prehistoric ages, tell of this living hope in the heart of man. R. R. Marett uses astonishing words in this connection, in a book which bears the striking title, *Faith, Hope and Charity in Primitive Religion*:

"Thus, then, so far as force of will could do it, Neanderthal man, to whom we grudge the name of *Homo sapiens*, achieved a future life. There can be no question, I think, that the experts are right in attributing to him deliberate burials with due provision for a hereafter. It is even noticeable that funeral custom is already beyond its earliest stage. At La Chapelle-aux-Saints, for instance, not only is the grave neatly dug and food laid by conveniently, but a cave too small for habitation has evidently been selected for a purely sepulchral purpose. If there was a time when the dead man was simply left lying by himself within his own cave-home, or when, perhaps, the dying man was prematurely abandoned, we are well past it."⁵

Not only all primitive religions but all the great ethnic religions have taught belief in a future life.⁶ One can read an

⁴ *The Christian View of God and the World*, pp. 200-211.

⁵ *Faith, Hope and Charity in Primitive Religion*, p. 34.

⁶ *Zwemer, Origin of Religion*, Chapter VIII and Bibliography.

analytical story in great detail of the burial rites in every part of the world which proclaims clearly and loudly down the centuries and across the Seven Seas, There is life beyond the tomb! Effie Bendann and Rosaline Moss tell of these *Death Customs* and of the *Life after Death in Oceania and the Malay Archipelago* (New York, 1930 and Oxford, 1925). Such detailed evidence is more than convincing. It shames those who in Western lands express no desire for personal immortality or for a life after death. For example, in a recent book a Harvard professor writes:

"So far as I can discover from observation on myself, the concept of immortality plays little part in my own thought and has had no appreciable influence on the formation of my character or on my conduct. It is hard for me to understand those to whom it is an obsession."⁷

But no one can read the long, long story of death and sorrow in the annals of the race—written on funeral urns, on tombs, or in strange burial rites, in the worship of ancestors, in the fear of returning spirits, in mutilations for the dead (who are not dead), in mourning as those who have had no certain hope—no one can read this tragic story without realizing that there is a heart-hunger for eternity in every human breast.

The philosophers of the ancient and modern world, with few exceptions, have held the great faith in immortality; Pythagoras, Plato, Socrates, Cicero, and, in modern times, Dante, Descartes, Leibnitz and many others. Goethe once said, "I should be the very last man to be willing to dispense with faith in a future life; nay, I would say that all those are dead even for the present life who do not believe in another."⁸

"The father and mother of all fears is, biologically speaking, the fear of death," says Marett. But primitive man and civilized man have met this fear squarely for thousands of years by an everlasting, innate hope. They will not, they could not

⁷ *The Ingersoll Lectures*, Cambridge, Mass., 1934, p. 3.

⁸ James Freeman Clarke, *Ten Great Religions*, Vol. II, p. 337.

believe that death ends all. Rather, *death began all*. This was the urge to religious rites and ethics.

Our conclusion is, that the palimpsest of a primitive revelation to all mankind included belief in another life and a world-to-come, with rewards for the good and punishments for the evil. All religions teach some sort of heaven and hell. "It is an established fact," says Spiess, "that there is no tribe or people that does not possess the expectation of a future life, and none that places the end and goal of human life here on earth."⁹

Nevertheless, belief in *immortality only* is the highest attainment of paganism. Belief in the Resurrection of Jesus Christ is the A B C of Christianity. The longing of the human heart is satisfied only by the Gospel of the Resurrection. Denial of immortality would sink man to the level of the brute. In Dostoievski's novel, *The Brothers Karamazov*, Ivan says:

"If you were to destroy in mankind the belief in immortality, not only love, but every living force containing the life of the world would at once be dried up. Moreover, nothing then would be immoral. Everything would be lawful, including cannibalism. There is no virtue if there is no immortality."

There is the closest possible connection in the Old Testament between ethics and immortality. The righteous are rewarded, not only in this life but in the life to come. "Let me die the death of the righteous and let my last end be like his," said Balaam—and he was looking into the far horizons of Israel (Num. 23:10). "Light is sown for the righteous and gladness for the upright in heart" (Psa. 97:11). The closing verses of the sixteenth Psalm are a clear testimony to immortality: "Thou wilt show me the path of life; in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore." No one who thought that death was the end of all could write in such fashion. F. W. Boreham gives a happy rendering of

⁹ *Vorstellungen vom Zustände nach dem Tode*, pp. 54–110.

the finale in the tragedy of Job (which Carlyle considered the greatest drama ever written). He says:

"In the first chapter we are told how Job, by one fell stroke of dire calamity, lost all that he had. And then, in the last chapter, we are told that *the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before*. And in each case there is an inventory. Job lost seven thousand sheep; at the end he possesses fourteen thousand—twice as many. He lost three thousand camels; six thousand are at last given him—twice as many. He loses five hundred yoke of oxen; in the last chapter he owns a thousand—twice as many. He loses seven sons and three daughters; in the last chapter seven sons and three daughters are born to him. Why the number of sheep, camels and oxen doubled, whilst the number of sons and daughters remains the same? And since the number of sons and daughters remains the same, how can it be said that he had twice as many as before? The reply is obvious. He had lost his sheep and camels and oxen forever. His sons and daughters who had passed from his sight, together with the sons and daughters around his knees, give him twice as many as he had before."¹⁰

The poet Wordsworth counts likewise in "We Are Seven":

"Sisters and brothers, little maid,
How many may you be?
'How many? Seven in all,' she said
And, wondering, looked at me.

"And where are they? I pray you tell.'
She answered, 'Seven are we;
And two of us at Conway dwell,
And two are gone to sea.

"Two of us in the churchyard lie,
My sister and my brother;
And, in the churchyard cottage, I
Dwell near them with my mother.'

"How many are you, then,' said I,
'If they two are in heaven?'

¹⁰ *Revelation*, March, 1940, p. 107.

The little maiden did reply,
'O master! we are seven.'

" 'But they are dead; those two are dead!
'Their spirits are in heaven!'
'Twas throwing words away; for still
The little maid would have her will,
And said, 'Nay, we are seven!'"

In the Old Testament we have the expression over and over again, "He slept with his fathers." It occurs more than *forty* times. Is there no suggestion in all these many passages (we list only a few)¹¹ that those who died fell asleep to waken again? Is not this the very core of the argument used by our Saviour when answering the Sadducees regarding the resurrection? "*I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob. . . . God is not the God of the dead, but of the living*" (Matt. 22:32).

Nor can we forget that even as we have in the New Testament the resurrection of the daughter of Jairus (Matt. 9:25), of the son of the widow of Nain (Luke 7:15), of Lazarus (John 11:44), of Dorcas (Acts 9:40) and of some of the saints after the Crucifixion (Matt. 27:53)—not to speak of the glorious and altogether different Resurrection of our Saviour from the Garden Tomb—there are three "resurrections" recorded in the Old Testament. Each of them was wrought as a miracle and is so spoken of in the story of the Prophets. There was the son of the widow of Zarephath (I Kings 17:22), the son of the Shunamite (II Kings 4:35), and the corpse that was cast into the tomb of Elijah and also resuscitated (II Kings 13:21).

These miracles, we believe, are recorded not to raise idle discussion or doubts, but to usher in faith. They were, in a sense, previews or rehearsals of *the* Resurrection. To read the Old Testament aright we need the New Testament as interpreter and guide. Our Lord and His apostles found abundant tes-

¹¹ II Sam. 7:12; I Kings 1:21; 2:10; 11:43; 22:50; II Kings 8:24; 14:22 etc. II Kings 16:20; and 15:38, "Slept with his fathers *and was buried*."

timony to immortality and even resurrection in the Scriptures. If *we* are blind we must blame our blindness and not the landscape or the sun.¹² Moreover, there are none so blind as those who *will not see*.

Read, for example, the story of Enoch's translation (Gen. 5:24), of Moses' burial (Deut. 34), of Elijah's fiery chariot that carried him away from this world (II Kings 2:11), of Ezekiel's vision of the resurrection of all Israel (Ezek. 37:1-10), or Daniel's prophecy (12:1-4) of the final resurrection of the righteous and the wicked—and who can doubt that here we have sufficient answer to Job's questionings and the corroboration of Job's faith in his Redeemer?

We may well offer the prayer of John Donne as we read the Old Testament:

"And let Thy patriarchs' desire—
Those great grandfathers of Thy Church, which saw
More in the cloud than we in fire,
Whom nature cleared more, than us grace and law,
And now in heaven still pray that we
May use our new helps right—
Be satisfied, and fructify in me;
Let not my mind be blinder by more light,
Nor faith, by reason added, lose her sight."

John Ruskin's *Complete Works* have nearly 5,000 Bible references (so Sir E. T. Cook tells us), and he knew the Book almost by heart.¹³ In *Modern Painters* (Vol. IV, chapter 20), we have this eloquent description of the death of Moses. One should read it in full to realize what an artist finds in the story. Here is a single paragraph, the closing scene:

¹² As Professor Frank Hildebrandt says in his book (London, 1945), *This is the Message*: "The trouble is that we spend our time on theories about the Word of God while they [Luther and Wesley] are busy listening to the Word itself. Is it not enough to deal with the fish and leave the bones aside? What profit is in the discovery that wood, hay, stubble are intermixed with the gold, silver, precious stones, when we are out to find Christ? Both critics and anti-critics seem to reverse the course of Saul, and lose the Kingdom over their busy search for each other's asses."

¹³ *Life of Ruskin*, Vol. I, p. 355.

"With his unabated strength, Moses with glance undimmed, lies down upon the utmost rocks, with angels waiting near to contend for the spoils of his spirit, and puts off his earthly armour. We do deep reverence to his companion prophet, for whom the chariot of fire came down from heaven; but was his death less noble, whom his Lord Himself buried in the vales of Moab, keeping, in the secrets of the eternal counsels, the knowledge of a sepulchre, from which he was to be called, in the fulness of time, to talk with that Lord, upon Hermon, of the death that He should accomplish at Jerusalem?"

If *we* could only read the Old Testament like that!

Job's great confession, "I know that my redeemer liveth and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God" (19:25, 26), is familiar to all students of the Bible. Modern critics have tried their utmost to take out of this great passage any clear reference to a future resurrection. But they will not succeed so long as it is sung in our hymns, rendered in Handel's Messiah, and finds an echo in all our hearts.

Even those who lack an affirmative Biblical faith in immortality and the resurrection of the body express their wistful longings by metaphors and analogies which betray the fact that deep down in the human heart there is a sense of the immortal and of life beyond. In a recent volume of poems by Ada Jackson, for example, she pictures death as not so dreadful after all; it is only

"The last page scanned, a book laid by:
The quiet closing of a door;
The doffing of a well-worn cloak
Found, on a sudden, old and poor;
The snuffing of a candle flame;
A stirrup-cup drained to the lees;
A tavern bill cast up and paid—
Death is no more than one of these."²

But the very analogies used are eloquent with a faith that

² *Against the Sun*, by Ada Jackson. The Macmillan Co.

triumphs over unbelief. The last page scanned, the whole book of one's life may be read over again. Who can say that memory ends with death? The door closed by death has hinges and so must have Another Room. The outworn cloak cast off is really a promise of being clothed with a better robe, all white and glorious. The candle flame is not necessarily snuffed out but sometimes snuffed to burn more brightly. "The smoking flax-wick he will not quench." If "the soul of man is the candle of the Lord," as the Bible teaches, it is reasonable to believe that when He lights our candle it will, some day, somewhere, "shine more and more unto the perfect day." The stirrup-cup referred to in the poem—an unfortunate symbol for those who take life seriously—is quaffed by the horseman booted and spurred, eager for the long ride. It marks the setting out, not at all the end of his journey. And as for paying the tavern-bill, *that is not death* (although *it* is the wages of sin). The earthly house of this caravansary is not the final resting place; at the end of life's pilgrimage we have "a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

Death is not the end but the beginning of all things; it is the long road that leads to glory and honor, or to everlasting shame and contempt, on the day of the general resurrection. The prophet Daniel strikes a New Testament note:

"And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever" (Dan. 12:2, 3).

II

DENIAL OF RESURRECTION

"The cradle and the tomb; and in between them
 Anguish, and strife, and faith beyond despair.
 A resurrection . . . then the pattern wheels
 Full cycle back, to find a final limit:
 A tomb within the stonier hearts of men."

—V. Sackville-West,
 The London *Times*, December 23, 1944.

IN sharp and painful contrast with these intimations of immortality by poet and seer and Old Testament prophets, and in contradiction to the almost universal belief in a future existence when death slams the door, has been the denial of immortality and resurrection by Sadducees ancient and modern. We read in the Gospel, "The same day came to him the Sadducees, which say that there is no resurrection" (Matt. 22:23); while Luke also refers to this agnostic sect who assert that "there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit: but the Pharisees confess both" (Acts 23:8). This testimony is confirmed by Josephus, the Jewish historian, who certainly was not ignorant concerning the matter.

The leaven of the Sadducees has been at work for many centuries and especially in these latter days. Papini, in the preface to his *Life of Christ*, tells how he was led astray by agnostic Liberalism until converted to a living faith by the evidence of Christ's Resurrection. He describes those who led *him* astray and their successors are not a few:

"Certain of them drew on their boundless imagination to evolve what they considered proof positive of a fantastic theory that the

story of the Gospel is no more than a legend from which we can reconstruct the natural life of Jesus as a man, one-third prophet, one-third necromancer, one-third demagogue, a man who wrought no miracles except the hypnotic cure of some obsessed devotees, who did not die on the Cross but came to Himself in the chill of the sepulchre and reappeared with mysterious airs to delude men into believing that He had risen from the dead."¹

There are many today who deride the Resurrection of Christ and openly delude those who look to them for guidance. Professor C. E. M. Joad of London University tells how World War II brought him to a new belief in God. But the astonishing confession of this spiritual odyssey does not end in full Christian faith. It stops on the negative side of a wistful theism. He writes:

"I am willing, as once I was not, to bank on the religious hypothesis being true, 'this life is not all, and something probably survives the break-up of our bodies.' If not, then the whole universe 'of space and time is a bad joke beyond our understanding, a vulgar laugh braying across the mysteries.'"

Here is a professor who turns his back on the Bible and seeks to find God apart from revelation. Job and his three friends came nearer to solving the problem of God and evil than does Professor Joad.

At the conclusion of his quest, and in his last chapter, the statements regarding Christ and historic Christianity are bitter and deeply painful to those who love the Saviour. Not only does Professor Joad reject the Christian claim that "the Birth, the Resurrection and the Ascension of Christ are unique facts in the history of the world" (p. 284), but holds them temporally and spatially utterly absurd (pp. 294, 295). The vastness of the universe and the immensity of geological time make the whole claim incredible. He says Christian teaching in this respect is, therefore, hopelessly parochial.²

¹ *Life of Christ*, New York, p. 3.

² *God and Evil*, Harper Brothers, New York, 1943.

The terrible tragedy of World War II and the aftermath of its horrors have not always turned men to faith but often to pessimism and despair. The daily press affords many instances of such utter loss of faith, the result of which is moral suicide. Life loses all its meaning if there is no life beyond. Professor Will Durant, the popular historian of philosophy at Columbia University, wrote, *On the Meaning of Life*, and expressed his doubts in these words:

"God, who was once the consolation of our brief life, and our refuge in bereavement and suffering, has apparently vanished from the scene; no telescope, no microscope discovers Him. Life has become in that total perspective, which is philosophy, a fitful pullulation of human insects on the earth, a planetary eczema that may soon be cured; nothing is certain in it except defeat and death—a sleep from which, it seems, there is no awakening. . . . Faith and hope disappear; doubt and despair are the order of the day. . . . It seems impossible any longer to believe in the permanent greatness of man, or to give life a meaning that cannot be annulled by death. We move into an age of spiritual exhaustion and desponding like that which hungered for the birth of Christ."

On February 23, 1942, an Austrian writer, Stefan Zweig, committed suicide. He was not in financial straits or in poor health; he was a well-known author at the top of his profession, established comfortably in Brazil, a country he had learned to love. The reason for his self-destruction was put in these words: "After one's sixtieth year unusual powers are needed to make another wholly new beginning. Those that I possess have been exhausted by long years of hopeless wandering."

When men deny the faith of their fathers and turn their backs on the Bible and its revelation of immortality, they hesitate to answer Job's question, "If a man die shall he live again?" Some say, "Yes"; others, "No"; and a still larger number answer, "Perhaps." Alas, some of this class are inside the Church—Sadducees of the Temple. One of them "examines the traditional form of belief in the life after death to

distinguish between what is essential and what is transitory in the doctrine . . . and how far modern science and philosophy make necessary either the abandonment or modification of the belief."³ He seems to maintain at the close of his discussion that "the historical critical evaluation of the Resurrection narratives in the New Testament does not vitally affect the Christian belief in immortality." Christ's post-Resurrection appearances, if actual, or the empty tomb (to which he makes no reference) are not important, since our faith can "rest secure in a personal spiritual experience of newness of life through Christ."

This is the position of those who maintain that Christianity as a religion of the Spirit is independent of historical facts! But it is a perilous position, like sawing off from the tree the branch on which we are sitting. Arnold Lunn is right when he says that

"the sceptic begins his study of the Gospels by making an act of faith in the impossibility of the supernatural. His verdict on the authorship and dates is an unscientific *deduction* from an unproved and false premise. The Christian conclusion is, on the other hand, a scientific *induction* from the facts. The sceptic begins with dogma, the dogma that miracles do not occur, and adjusts the facts to that dogma. The Christian begins with the facts and ends with the dogmas which are alone consistent with and imposed by the facts. The sceptic begins with a pre-judgment that miracles do not occur. The Christian ends with the post-judgment that miracles have been proved to occur. The conflict is between post-judice and prejudice."⁴

Perhaps the most outspoken objection to faith in Christ's bodily Resurrection is that by Walter Marshall Horton, who confesses, however, that he has been "more recently led to the verge of orthodoxy" from a humanist position. He writes:

"The Resurrection of Christ presents many difficult and almost

³ Frederick C. Grant, *Can We Still Believe in Immortality?* 1944, Louisville.

⁴ *The Third Day*, p. 26.

insoluble problems to the modern mind: confused and self-contradictory accounts of what happened . . . a body materialistic enough to leave an empty tomb and retain the marks of the crucifixion, yet immaterial enough to pass through closed doors and vanish without notice . . . final ascension of this body, through the clouds, in an upward direction, presumably headed for a nonexistent, pre-Copernican heaven! Were we to attempt to grapple with these problems, we should be plunged into a sea of speculative difficulties. At present, our concern is with knowable facts. The knowable fact about the Resurrection of Christ is that His flaming spirit, undismayed by the final disaster which overtook His cause, somehow contrived to leap the gap of death and became incarnate in the discouraged hearts of His followers."

And he goes on to say that it is appropriate to celebrate Easter in springtime, when we witness "the resurrection of vegetation from the death of winter. . . . It marks the assurance that death is as powerless against 'the soul-force' of a personality like Christ's as is the onslaught of winter against the swelling tide of spring."*

But such a dim springtime faith in *immortality* is far from the Christian faith of the Apostle Paul and of those who were eyewitnesses of the *Resurrection*.

An otherwise excellent book, *And the Life Everlasting*, by John Baillie, also concludes by citing a number of great theologians and critics (Ritschl, Barth, Goguel and Henry Sloane Coffin), that "the Resurrection of our Lord was not an event in the physical world as we ordinarily understand it" (p. 175). Even Christ's own prediction of His death and Resurrection as recorded in the earliest (Mark 8:31) gospel record, cannot be taken seriously. "It is difficult to escape the conclusion that *either* the definiteness of the prediction or the unexpectedness of its fulfillment must be exaggerated in our records" (p. 164). Yet there the record stands in *all* the manuscripts and versions and revisions: "And he began to teach them that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders and

* *Theology in Transition*, pp. 161, 162 (Harper's, 1943).

of the chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again." Only a bias against the supernatural of prophecy and a bodily resurrection permits an intelligent reader to suggest that here is exaggeration or error in the record. Was not Jesus Christ a prophet? Do not all of the gospels clearly teach that His Messianic consciousness included the knowledge of His own Cross and Resurrection? Yet such is the incredulity of modern Sadducees. In fact, the expression of faith in what they call "a spiritual resurrection" is irrational. "A spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have," said the Saviour (Luke 24:39). In a forthright defense of the miracle of Christ's Resurrection, Arnold Lunn, a Roman Catholic, rightly says that "Modernism is a parasite which draws whatever vitality it still possesses from the dogmas it denies."*

The pastor of the First Unitarian Church in Chicago has the courage of his incredulity, and therefore advocates radical changes in the usual Christian burial service. He favors cremation before the burial service "with the urn of ashes set upon a table in the chancel." And he concludes his article by saying:

"If there is a definite belief in immortality, surely the funeral is no place for weakness of expression. Let it be well considered, however, that *expressions* of such faith become weak and false motions where it is not truly and genuinely held. Where it is not held, there may still be vigor in voicing the nobility of life, the splendor of existence, faith in the power of the good, and trust in that all-embracing order of all things that is the life of God."†

This is rather feeble compared with the burial service in the Book of Common Prayer or the Lutheran ritual with its Pauline emphasis on the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting. Christ's answer to the Sadducees and Paul's argument

* *The Third Day*, Westminster, Maryland, 1946. This little book is a very able apologetic and meets recent denials.

† *We Commit This Body*, in *The Christian Century*, March 21, 1945.

for faith in the Resurrection are both based upon the Word of God and the power of God. "Ye do err, not knowing the scripture, nor the power of God" (Matt. 22:29). When Jehovah appeared to Moses in the bush He was the God, not of the dead but of the living—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were alive to Him who spoke of them. The miracles of the Old Testament, the burning bush, the translation of Elijah, Ezekiel's vision of the dry bones—all these are mere exegetical puzzles to the Modernist. They strengthen the faith of those who believe God's Word.

At the close of the Jerusalem Missionary Conference in 1928, as we sat together one Sunday afternoon looking down the mountain slope of Olivet over the Garden of Gethsemane and Jerusalem, we realized the glory of the promise, "Blessed are those who have not seen, and yet have believed." Many of us recalled the hymn of faith:

" We did not see Thee lifted high
Amid that wild and savage crew,
Nor heard Thy meek, imploring cry,
' Forgive, they know not what they do ' ;
Yet we believe the deed was done
Which shook the earth, and veiled the sun.

" We stood not by the empty tomb
Where late Thy sacred body lay,
Nor sat within that Upper Room,
Nor met Thee in the open way;
But we believe that angels said,
' Why seek the living with the dead? '

" We did not mark the chosen few,
When Thou didst through the clouds ascend,
First lift to heaven their wondering view
Then to the earth all prostrate bend
Yet we believe that mortal eyes
Beheld that journey to the skies.

" And now that Thou dost reign on high,
And thence Thy waiting people bless,
No ray of glory from the sky
Doth shine upon our wilderness;
But we believe Thy faithful word,
And trust in our redeeming Lord."

III

THE EVIDENCE

"We cannot imagine how, without some such impressive occurrence bringing the appearances of Christ to a decisive end, the disciples could have reached the state of mind in which we find them in the opening of the Acts, in which they are wholly without expectation of any more manifestations of Christ and wholly set on what is promised them—spiritual equipment for a task of unknown magnitude."

—Bishop Gore,
Belief in God, p. 273.

It has been truly said by Principal Marcus Dods, the Scotch theologian of a previous generation, that "the Resurrection of Jesus Christ is not only the most important event in the history of Christianity but also the most important event in the history of the world." The first statement is more obvious than the second until we realize that the greater includes the less. Redemption and life eternal are far more than the slow progress of civilization and the evolution of nations which pass off the scene one after the other.

"The core of universal history is the history of redemption, if it be not its outermost periphery as well. For what is the history of the world but the condemnation of the world by its righteous and faithful Creator, Preserver, and Sovereign, and its reclamation in virtue of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, God's Son, and man's Saviour? If that be so, then the Resurrection of that same Lord and Christ must be the center both of sacred and secular history."¹

¹ Principal H. S. Curr in the *Journal of the Victoria Institute*, Vol. 72, 1940, *Proof of Our Lord's Resurrection*, p. 35.

There is at present a lamentable tendency to confound the facts of history with a theory based on the relativity of those facts and to put such facts as are not acceptable to the modern mind in the category of superhistory and no longer on the plane of reality. In the matter of Christ's Resurrection we seek, above all else, the truth, the naked truth, for our very life depends on it. As G. M. Trevelyan remarks in his *History of England*:

"In the realm of History, the moment we have reason to think that we are being given fiction instead of fact, be the fiction ever so brilliant, our interest collapses like a pricked balloon. To hold our interest you must tell us something we believe to be true about the men who once walked the earth. It is the fact about the past that is poetic; just because it really happened, it gathers round it all the inscrutable mystery of life and death and time. Let the science and research of the historian find the fact, and let his imagination and art make clear its significance."

This failure to distinguish history from fiction is found in most of the novels and so-called "lives" that profess to give the basic facts of the Gospel story in a more imaginative and attractive form; Ernest Renan's *Life of Jesus* is a well-known example. When such writers tell of the Manger or the Cross or the Empty Tomb, they often empty the record of its facts and leave the reader saying, "They have taken away my Lord and I know not where they have laid Him."²

Even *Ben Hur*, *The Brothers*, *The Nazarene*, *The Galilean*, and *The Robe* leave out more than they put in, and so the brilliant and talented artists, authors of these "best sellers," leave the devout reader (who believes the Gospel with all its stupendous miracles and mysteries) dissatisfied. A recent example is *The Human Life of Jesus* (1945) by John Erskine, a distinguished Columbia University professor. The first statement in his Preface admits that "the central doctrine of Christianity is the Incarnation. Jesus is the Son of God who became man."

² The celebrated novel by George Moore, *The Brook Kerith*, is also a sad example of Jesus' life caricatured and His Resurrection denied.

But the human life of Jesus is shorn of its glory by the author's frank statement, "I do not believe that Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead nor that he ever said he did" (p. 132). He makes sport of the miracle at Cana and of the feeding of the thousands on loaves and fishes. The story of the Resurrection is so contradictory in transmission that when the gospels were written "the events of that morning had become legendary and the legend was transmitted with inevitable variations, additions and subtractions" (p. 239). He confesses, or rather concedes, that the soul is immortal and that our loved ones who have died are with us spiritually, "sustaining and inspiring us." "This constant resurrection of the dead is for me a simple fact, part of any human acquaintance with the daily mystery and beauty of life" (p. 239). So the miracle of *the* Resurrection was not an actual fact. It was really only a transformation of the apostles! Like the Transfiguration, it was an hallucination, a day-dream, coming while the sleepy apostles watched Jesus in prayer (p. 180). Such a human life of Jesus is sure to breed doubt and destroy all faith in the Gospel. Such fiction, be it ever so brilliant, "makes our interest collapse like a pricked balloon," as Trevelyan said.

Another example of modern fiction denying the bodily Resurrection of our Lord is *The Galilean*, published at Hollywood and apparently adapted for the screen with all its glamour and exuberance of style.³ In it the Crucifixion is the despairing cry of a broken-hearted man, the last protest of a body racked by pain and agony. The Resurrection is not factual nor actual. The empty tomb was a mistake. "It is only in a delirium of nameless ecstasy that Mary heard Him say, 'Touch me not'" (p. 244). And all this occurred "in the somnolent peace of the garden where only a murmurous breeze raised elfin echoes." What took place on Easter morning? The last lines of the book tell us: "It was that deathless, that divine stream of love which

³*The Galilean: A Life of Jesus*, by Albert de Pina and Stewart P. MacLennan. Hollywood, Cal., 1945.

in Jesus had found its greatest impetus, and that for a measureless instant had touched Mary Magdalene with its ultimate meaning." And as for Pentecost and St. Stephen and St. Paul and all the Epistles, written prior to the synoptic gospels,—not a word. These writers never refer to their sources as authoritative. They mingle fiction with fact.

In both of these recent attempts to portray the human life of Jesus one is astonished that the witness of the Epistles and of the Acts to the life of Jesus Christ, His death, Resurrection, and Ascension, are not referred to by the writers. Yet they must be aware, as everyone is, that the earliest records and portrait of Jesus Christ are in these sources, written before the gospels and also by Christ's contemporaries. Such is the incredulity of modern unbelief.

It may not be easy to weave the statements of Paul in I Corinthians 15:1-8 with those of the four evangelists into one perfect pattern. But the narrative is self-evidencing by its very nature, and so is the agreement of the writers of the four documents on all the main facts, despite minor discrepancies. Their evidence is corroborative and is that of eyewitnesses.

First of all, we note that our Lord's Resurrection took place without any external intervention. "I have power to lay it down and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father" (John 10:18). Christ returned from the realm of death by His own will.

Regarding the main fact of the empty tomb and the bodily reappearances of our Saviour after His Resurrection, Bishop Westcott said that no event in history has better attestation. The overwhelming testimony of the books of the New Testament (twenty-three out of twenty-seven) speak of Christ's Resurrection as a fact of vital importance and as the central theme of apostolic preaching and witness. These books were all written during the lifetime of the Apostle John, who saw with his own eyes the Risen Christ and the empty garden-tomb (John 20:5).

To give all the evidences in the New Testament that relate to the Resurrection would be to quote three-fourths of its contents. The reader will find references to Christ's Resurrection in His own words, before the event and in the earliest of the gospels (Mark 10:34). The same prophetic anticipation and declaration are found in Matthew 12:40, 16:21, 17:23, 20:19; Luke 18:31-34, 9:20-27, and John 14:18, 19. Then we have the Resurrection narrative itself in each of the four gospels.

In the other books of the New Testament the message of the apostles, their joy and confidence, their anchor of hope and their strength for labour and sacrifice, is solely in the Risen Christ. Here are single passages listed from *each* of these books; to read them in sequence is to see the historic account of the gospels as the very warp and woof of all New Testament teaching:

"To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God" (Acts 1:3). "And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead" (Rom. 1:4; I Cor. 15—entire chapter). "Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you" (II Cor. 4:14). "Paul, an apostle, not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead" (Gal. 1:1). "And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places" (Eph. 1:19, 20). "That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death" (Phil. 3:10). "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead" (Col. 2:12). "And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come" (I Thess. 1:10). "And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the

Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels" (II Thess. 1:7). "And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory" (I Tim. 3:16). "Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel" (II Tim. 2:8). "In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began" (Titus 1:2). "Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant. . . ." (Heb. 13:20). "My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, *the Lord of glory*, with respect of persons" (James 2:1). "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (I Peter 1:3). "Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ *hath shewed me*" (II Peter 1:14; cf. John 21:19). "And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming" (I John 2:28). "Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy" (Jude 1:24). "Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and death" (Rev. 1:18).

None of these words could have been written by men who believed that Jesus of Nazareth remained in the tomb as a martyr to truth!

In the second place, we note that the character and the quantity of the evidence for our Lord's Resurrection is as cumulative as it is convincing.

1. The divine nature of Jesus Christ made the Resurrection absolutely necessary. He was the conqueror of death before He died.

2. The work which He came to do demanded it. Because He died and *rose* again that work was completed.

3. Jesus Himself repeatedly predicted it, and in the Old Testament Messianic promises such resurrection was foretold.

4. The empty tomb demonstrated it.

5. The earliest belief of the Church is inexplicable without it. Instead of Christ building that Church on a rock it would have been built on a fable—if Christ had not risen.

6. The many appearances of the Lord as listed by Paul in Corinthians and by the writers of the Gospel emphasized its certainty by many infallible proofs for forty days, and, in one instance, to more than five hundred people at once.

7. The testimony of Paul given thrice in the book of Acts, that he had seen Jesus after His Resurrection and heard His voice. This is the evidence of a former enemy of the faith, given before priests and rulers—as it were under oath—for he was on trial for his life.

8. The unbroken evidence of the Christian Church for nineteen centuries, in creed and ritual and hymnody, in life and martyrdom, is that Christ arose from the dead.

9. The convicting and converting power of the message, “He died and rose again,” is overwhelming in its evidence, even to the unbeliever, *because it is in the lives of those who are Christ’s own.*

10. The experience of every believer is that of Paul “buried with Christ in baptism” and alive in Him because of His glorious Resurrection.

11. The hope in our own resurrection and life everlasting is based on His Resurrection—“Who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light in the Gospel.” That hope lives on in millions of human hearts.

12. The Lord’s Supper, or Eucharist, observed since the night in which Jesus was betrayed and down the ages, in catacombs, churches, cathedrals or wayside chapels, is palpable evidence of the Resurrection fact. It is not and never has been the commemoration of a dead hero but a communion with the Lord of life who died for us on the Cross and rose again.

Here we must add also that all theories for the disappearance of Jesus after the Crucifixion and for the fact of the

empty tomb are not only contradictory but futile and frivolous.

The earliest theory is given in Matthew’s gospel, where it is said the chief priests and elders “gave large money unto the soldiers, saying, Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept. And if this come to the governor’s ears, we will persuade him, and secure you. So they took the money, and did as they were taught” (Matt. 28:12–15). A bit of cross-examination and the piece of bribery and corruption fail to convince any honest man. This theory of a tomb empty by fraud has no adherents today. The hail has swept away this refuge of lies (Isa. 28:17).

Another theory advanced by rationalists and opponents of the Gospel story is that our Lord never died on the Cross. He only swooned and in that condition was laid in the tomb. Then He revived and by some devious method made good His escape and was afterwards seen by His apostles! The wonder is that some “distinguished scholars” (Paulus and Voysey) have thought it worth while to champion this theory, and that the Ahmadiya sect of Moslems have also adopted it. According to this group of Moslem propagandists, Jesus swooned on the Cross, recovered, went to India and died there. They discovered His tomb near Kashmir and have built a whole new cult-religion, with its own Messiah, on this shattered remnant of Western destructive rationalism!

The “swoon theory” is contradicted by every circumstance mentioned in the gospels. Joseph of Arimathea (who laid Christ’s body in his own new sepulchre) and Nicodemus must have known whether He was really dead; otherwise why did Nicodemus bring a hundred weight of spices (John 19:39)? The centurion’s testimony was like that of an officer ordered to execute a criminal and give his report. “He saw that Christ gave up the ghost” (Mark 15:39, 44–45). Add to this the testimony of one of the soldiers who, to make assurance doubly sure, pierced the side of Jesus, following which “forthwith came there out blood and water,” the sign of a ruptured heart (John

19:34). At the grave, sealed by the Roman governor, was a guard of soldiers to watch lest there be an attempt to remove the dead body. The soldiers were so terrified by the reality of the angel vision and the removal of the stone that they fled. *Their* story so impressed, may we not say, convinced, the Jewish authorities that they actually had to bribe Roman soldiers to tell a deliberate lie about the facts (Matt. 28:11-15). And yet, in spite of all this evidence, the swoon theory is still in vogue among rationalists.

The third theory, which seeks to explain the facts by denying them, is that of the vision. Christ did not really arise from the dead. It was real only to those who saw it and believed it, "such stuff as dreams are made on"—a purely subjective experience.

Such a theory does violence to the account of Luke, the physician, who expressly gives evidence that Jesus Christ was more than a phantom: "A spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have." His identity is proved to eye, ear, and touch in the accounts of all the witnesses—and these, Luke tells us, are "*many infallible proofs*."

The modern Jew also denies the Resurrection of our Saviour, although he pays high tribute to Jesus of Nazareth as a great Prophet and Leader, "the very crown of Judaism." For example, Rabbi Joseph Klausner, in a remarkable book translated from the Hebrew and widely circulated, tries to answer two questions.⁴ "How was Christianity separated from Judaism, and why did Judaism not accept the teaching of Paul as it likewise did not accept the teaching of Jesus?" In his attempt to answer these questions the author seeks for natural causes and finds them in the pagan world, the mystery religions, the downfall of Jewish temporal power, the stormy political events of the Roman empire and in Paul's paradoxical genius. Gibbon's reasons for the early spread of Paul's faith appeal to him more strongly than those of Harnack. The supernatural is

⁴ *From Jesus to Paul*, The Macmillan Co., New York, 1944.

eliminated at the outset. The Resurrection story in the gospels originated with Mary Magdalene and other hysterical women (Renan), and the others, including Paul, saw Jesus only in dreams and visions (pp. 264-267; 322-325). The vision on the road to Damascus was an hallucination. The evidence in I Corinthians 15 is passed over in silence. Christianity was founded on a fable. Jesus Christ did not arise from the tomb.

One-half of the book (pp. 303-611) deals with the life, work, and teachings of Paul. Dr. Klausner believes positively that Saul (Paul) met Jesus before the Crucifixion (p. 435), that the cruel death of Christ, and Stephen's martyrdom preyed on his conscience and his peculiar psychological make-up. He sums up the factors that account for the rise and triumph of Christianity as follows:

"Paul came to those yearning for salvation and preached an attenuated Judaism, from which had been taken the sharp edge of the Torah and the difficulties in the observance of the ceremonial laws; and in place of a dying and rising god, such as was common in the various pagan religions of that time, he added to this attenuated Judaism a dying and rising Messiah."⁵

Although Dr. Klausner leans heavily on Liberal interpreters of early Christianity, he states, "If there had been no 'primitive church' in which was born the resurrection story and apparently also the view that the crucified Messiah was the vicariously suffering Messiah (Isaiah 53), then the very foundation stone of Paul's teaching would have been lacking (p. 581)." According to Dr. Klausner, however, the Resurrection was only an hallucination!

Another very subtle version of the vision theory is known as the "objective vision." It is based on the references of Paul to his vision of Christ on the road to Damascus, and asserts that *all* the Resurrection appearances were of the same nature. But according to this school of rationalists, there was no empty

⁵ Dr. J. Gresham Machen, in *The Origin of Paul's Religion*, fully answers this "dying and rising pagan god" theory.

tomb! Jesus died, was buried, and decayed! They explain the empty tomb away by arguing that Mary Magdalene went to the wrong grave in the morning dusk and misled those who came later. But a vision created by lively imagination or blind devotion to the Crucified One does not explain the many appearances that followed (Luke 24:39), or the fact that five hundred brethren must have seen the same "vision" simultaneously (I Cor. 15:6). As Prebendary Row observed: "We are not dealing with the genesis of a ghost story but with the source and origin of a spiritual society which will endure as long as the moon endureth, and longer still."⁶

One of the most interesting circumstantial proofs of the Resurrection is the curious statement in John's gospel (20:7), "And the napkin that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together [Greek, "coiled round and round"] in a place by itself." No one can study the Greek text and fail to see what is implied. The cloth had been folded around Jesus' head in burial as a turban is folded, and it lay by itself in that form when the other linen had been laid aside, just as when they go to sleep Arabs and other Orientals put the turban off without disengaging its folds. Dr. Campbell Morgan first called my attention to this in one of his sermons, and it is also referred to in a note on the article by H. S. Curr from which I have quoted earlier.

Once we have accepted Christ as our Saviour, made the encounter of His absolute demands, and been led captive by His love, we cannot doubt that He died for our sins and rose again. That experience is so vital that it kills all doubts and drives away all scepticism. A soldier, who had gone through the disillusionment and agony of the War just ended, wrote:

"If death ends life, then evil must be good,
Wrong must be right, and beauty ugliness;

⁶ Quoted in *Proofs of Our Lord's Resurrection*, by H. S. Curr in *Journal of the Victoria Institute*, 1943.

God is a Judas who betrays His Son,
And with a kiss damns all the world to hell,—
If Christ rose not again."

We can bear witness, "Christ is risen indeed." He is with us evermore through His word and by His Spirit. None of us pretend to be apostles, none of us witnessed Him in the days of His flesh, but the humblest believer may use the words of Paul, "Christ *in me* the hope of glory." . . . "I knew a man *in Christ*." . . . "To be *with Christ* which is far better." That is the fellowship of His Resurrection.

This sense of the indwelling Spirit of God within us, never letting us be and never letting us go, has been powerfully set forth in the words of James Martineau:

"Whence but from Him, the vision ever haunts us of a purer and more perfect order in our daily life—an order less indulgent to our ease, more faithfully accounting for our time, more fresh from our affections? Who is it that smites us to the heart when the petulant word has escaped the lips or the shameful indulgence degraded our will? It is not *we* that conduct all this sad strife and administer this deep experience. *We* neither fetch our own inspirations nor inflict our own retributions. It is a holier Spirit that broods near us and flings athwart us His shadow or His flash."

When we wrestle in secret prayer, when we witness to His love, when we rest our weary souls on Him alone, then we need no further proof. We stand with doubting Thomas when his doubts were all gone, and cry out, "My Lord and my God —"

But the story of the gospels, in all its fullness and simplicity, is in itself conclusive evidence, as we shall see in the next chapter. Instead of saying "*If Christ be not risen . . .*" we affirm, "*He is risen indeed.*"⁷

⁷ The recent volume by Wilbur M. Smith, *Therefore Stand*, deals most effectively in Chapter VIII with the evidence for Christ's Resurrection (pp. 359-437) and is strongly commended. He has collated much material from many sources.

IV

THE WITNESSES

"St. John, who entered the empty tomb and who was an eye-witness of the appearances of the risen Lord, would, we may be sure, have corrected anything in the Synoptic Gospels which he knew to be false."

—Arnold Lunn,
The Third Day, p. 73

THE first witness was the angel from heaven on the morning of the Resurrection: "He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay." *So the first evidence offered from heaven itself was the empty tomb.* Then Jesus gave infallible proof Himself by His bodily appearances for forty days. Afterwards, in the presence of His disciples, some say five hundred at once, He ascended to heaven. St. Paul makes the Resurrection of Christ the very foundation of the Christian faith. "If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain . . . then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished" (I Cor. 15:17, 18).

But it is not surprising that unbelievers have tried to discredit the records by stumbling over the facts or by alleging contradictions. There is one particular contradiction which is continually brought forward, not only by sceptics but by those who call themselves Christian believers. It is that between the Synoptic Gospels and John. The former, they say, stress Christ's appearances in Galilee, the latter in Jerusalem. It is rather surprising that this alleged discrepancy, of which Strauss the rationalist and Thomas Paine made so much, should in

our day be used seriously by Christian theologians. Yet such is the fact.

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

Strauss wrote (of Mark 16:7), "If they had been given [the message], the disciples would certainly, as in Matthew, have gone to Galilee, and this, in Mark, they are not supposed to have done, as he, with Luke, represents the appearance of the risen Jesus as taking place, not in Galilee, but in Jerusalem and the neighbourhood."

Dr. F. J. Foakes-Jackson writes (*Beginnings of Christianity*):

"But it is definitely implied that they were in Galilee when they first saw the risen Jesus" (Mark 14:28 and 16:7); "Luke and Acts, taken together, give a different account of events, and represent the disciples as staying in Jerusalem after the crucifixion. They cannot both be true, for the disciples cannot have been both in Galilee and at Jerusalem when Peter first saw the risen Lord."

The Rev. P. Gardner Smith, B.D., wrote:

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

Professor F. C. Burkitt wrote:

"The surviving traditions of these appearances of Jesus are confused and contradictory; there can be little doubt that there is an

element of unhistorical legend and even fancy in some of the tales, notably those which are located in Galilee."¹

When, however, we read the story in the fourfold gospel, just as it is recorded consecutively or comparatively, there are few Christians aware of any contradictions. Where formerly Bible students seriously studied the harmony of the Gospels, they now are asked to study their disharmony. Where formerly the fourfold portrait of our Saviour was admired for its manifold revelation of His character and mission, today we are asked to sit in judgment on the artists and express a preference as to which painted the earlier, and which painted from life or from mere hearsay and tradition. So before we try to answer these critics let us look at the records once more, *without coloured spectacles*.

That was the extraordinary experience of L. P. Jacks, the distinguished scholar and editor of *The Hibbert Journal*. He records it in *The Confessions of an Octogenarian* (London, 1942), from which we will quote his own words: "I was well over fifty years of age when I discovered the New Testament." He was a Greek scholar, had taken complete theological courses, and "had read widely in the literature of the Higher Criticism and knew the work of Harnack well." He was also a Unitarian preacher of note. Then there came a time

"when [he says] I resolved to read, without spectacles of one tint or another and not in fragments, the whole New Testament." [The result of this study for some years brought him to a remarkable conclusion:] "The *whole* of the New Testament seemed to me covered, explained and held together by the saying 'If Christ be not risen from the dead, then is our preaching vain.' Christ, the vanquisher of death, the donor of immortality in virtue of His Resurrection, and proved the Son of God by *that*, and by nothing short of that, is the first form in which the Central Figure appears in the New Testament, chronologically earlier than that in the Gospels, not one

¹ *Journal Victoria Institute*, 1943, p. 125, in "Some Events of the Forty Days," by Lt. Col. F. A. Molony.

of which was in *existence* when the Epistles, which show no knowledge of the Gospel story, were written. . . . Eliminate the Resurrection from the dead and you deprive the Gospels, one and all, of their *motif* and unifying purpose. They would then cease to be *Gospels* and become collections of more or less edifying matter for which it would be hard to find a specific name. Lofty ethics? Deeds of beneficence? Noble words and gestures? Yes, of course. But the ethics, deeds, words and gestures of an Immortal. What else would you expect from one who rose from the dead? All is in keeping."²

The New Testament contains the records not only of four well-known witnesses, but also of the fifth, Paul, for he was the earliest to record his witness and the greatest of the apostles in his ministry. You may read those records for yourselves, but read them without coloured spectacles.

Those who find serious discrepancy in these five accounts of the Resurrection state (as we have noted) that according to John 20:26 the apostles remained eight days in Jerusalem, where they met in seclusion for fear of the Jews; while Matthew (28:16) and Mark (16:7) represent the apostles as leaving for Galilee immediately after the Resurrection. This, however, is not a necessary inference, as we are nowhere told exactly when they started for Galilee. A keen student of Scripture has pointed out that if the gathering of the "five hundred brethren at once" to which Paul refers took place in Galilee (I Cor. 15:6), it would have been dangerous to arrange so large a gathering near or in Jerusalem. Christ planned this meeting even before His Crucifixion. Did He not also appoint a time as well as a place? Let us note the words of this writer:

"Now, it would be much more convenient for the apostles, being in Judea, to first warn the friends there, and this fully explains their not starting for Galilee for at least a week. Then they went and proceeded to warn Christ's many friends there. We may suppose that the great meeting did not take place till three or four weeks after the Resurrection. There was ample time out of forty days. We take it that the meeting on the shores of the lake did not take

² *Confessions of an Octogenarian*, pp. 230, 231.

THE RECORD OF THE FIVE WITNESSES

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THE GLORY OF THE EMPTY TOMB

THE WITNESSES

55

Matthew 28

Mark 16

Luke 24

John 20

Paul (in
I Corinthians 15)

In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre.

2 And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it.

3 His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow:

4 And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men.

5 And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified.

6 He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.

7 And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead: and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you.

8 And they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy: and did run to bring his disciples word.

9 And as they went to tell his disciples, behold,

And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him.

2 And very early in the morning, the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun.

3 And they said among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre?

4 And when they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away: for it was very great.

5 And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment: and they were affrighted.

6 And he saith unto them, Be not affrighted: ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: he is risen: he is not here: behold the place where they laid him.

7 But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you.

8 And they went out quickly, and fled from the sepulchre: for they trem-

Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared and certain others with them.

2 And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre.

3 And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus.

4 And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in shining garments:

5 And as they were afraid, and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead?

6 He is not here, but is risen: remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee.

7 Saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.

8 And they remembered his words,

9 And returned from the sepulchre, and told all these things unto the eleven, and to all the rest.

10 It was Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James,

The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre.

2 Then she runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him.

3 Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple, and came to the sepulchre.

4 So they ran both together: and the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulchre.

5 And he stooping down, and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying: yet went he not in.

6 Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie.

7 And the napkin, that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself.

8 Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw, and believed.

9 For as yet they knew

Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand;

2 By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.

3 For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures:

4 And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures:

5 And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve:

6 After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep.

7 After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles.

8 And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.

9 For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.

Matt.

Mark

John

Luke

Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him.

10 Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid: go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me.

11 Now when they were going, behold, some of the watch came into the city, and shewed unto the chief priests all the things that were done.

12 And when they were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave large money unto the soldiers,

13 Saying, Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept.

14 And if this come to the governor's ears, we will persuade him, and secure you.

15 So they took the money, and did as they were taught: and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.

16 Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them.

17 And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted.

18 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

bled and were amazed: neither said they any thing to any man; for they were afraid.

9 Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils.

10 And she went and told them that had been with him, as they mourned and wept.

11 And they, when they had heard that he was alive, and had been seen of her, believed not.

12 After that he appeared in another form unto two of them, as they walked, and went into the country.

13 And they went and told it unto the residue: neither believed they them.

14 Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen.

15 And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.

16 He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

17 And these signs shall follow them that believe: In my name shall they cast

and other women that were with them, which told these things unto the apostles.

11 And their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not.

12 Then arose Peter, and ran unto the sepulchre; and stooping down, he beheld the linen clothes laid by themselves, and departed, wondering in himself at that which was come to pass.

13 And, behold, two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about threescore furlongs.

14 And they talked together of all these things which had happened.

15 And it came to pass, that, while they communed together and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them.

16 But their eyes were holden that they should not know him.

17 And he said unto them, What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad?

18 And the one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering said unto him, Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which

not the Scripture, that he must rise again from the dead.

10 Then the disciples went away again unto their own home.

11 But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping: and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre.

12 And seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain.

13 And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.

14 And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus.

15 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away.

16 Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master.

17 Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my

THE RECORD OF THE FIVE WITNESSES (Cont.)

Matthew 28

Mark 16

Luke 24

John 20

19 ¶ Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:
20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, *even* unto the end of the world. Amen.

out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;

18 They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

19 ¶ So then, after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God.

20 And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen.

are come to pass there in these days?

19 And he said unto them, What things? And they said unto him. Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people:

20 And how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him.

21 But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, to day is the third day since these things were done.

22 Yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulchre:

23 And when they found not his body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that he was alive.

24 And certain of them which were with us went to the sepulchre, and found it even so as the women had said: but him they saw not.

25 Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken:

26 Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?

brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and *to* my God, and your God.

18 Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and *that* he had spoken these things unto her.

19 ¶ Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace *be* unto you.

20 And when he had so said, he shewed unto them *his* hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord.

21 Then said Jesus to them again. Peace *be* unto you: as *my* Father hath sent me, even so send I you.

22 And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost:

Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained.

24 ¶ But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came.

25 The other disciples

Luke 24 (Contd.)

27 And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.

28 And they drew nigh unto the village, whither they went: and he made as though he would have gone further.

29 But they constrained him, saying, Abide with us; for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And he went in to tarry with them.

30 And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them.

31 And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight.

32 And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the Scriptures?

33 And they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them.

34 Saying, the Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon.

35 And they told what things were done in the

way and how he was known of them in breaking of bread.

36 ¶ And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them. Peace *be* unto you,

37 But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit.

38 And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts?

39 Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and

bones, as ye see me have. 40 And when he had thus spoken, he shewed them *his* hands and *his* feet.

41 And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here any meat?

42 And they gave him a piece of broiled fish, and of a honeycomb.

43 And he took it, and did eat before them.

44 And he said unto them, These *are* the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written

in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me.

45 Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures.

46 And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day:

47 And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

48 And ye are witnesses of these things.

John 20 (Contd.)

therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and thrust my

hand into his side, I will not believe.

26 ¶ And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: *then* came Jesus, the doors being shut, and

stood in the midst, and said, Peace *be* unto you.

27 Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it

into my side: and be not faithless, but believing.

28 And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God.

29 Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou

hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed *are* they that have not seen, and yet have believed.

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THE GLORY OF THE EMPTY TOMB

THE WITNESSES

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place till after the meeting with the five hundred, for then the apostles would have no immediate task to carry out, and might well think that they would do well to earn some money by fishing.

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

"It is interesting to note that our opponents have met with so little success in their attempts to find difficulties. They have rather drawn our attention to facts and harmonies which should increase our faith."³

Whatever the exact order of the appearances of our Saviour after His Resurrection, no attentive reader can miss the obvious fact that in the record there is a progressive character in these appearances. The climax comes in John's gospel, at the Sea of Galilee. This is our Lord's native land, and on the shore of the lake where memories clustered and the Twelve had seen Him so often, there He appears at early dawn. He hails them in their boat. He has already prepared a meal on the shore. Then comes the threefold question and Peter's restoration to the perfect love that casts out fear. Could there be a more artless and yet more glorious climax to John's gospel of the Resurrection?

Other so-called discrepancies in the gospels or in accounts of the same event, as of Paul's vision on the road to Damascus, do not seem to give critics half so much trouble as the alleged discrepancies regarding the first Easter Day. It is true that Luke says nothing of the Galilean appearances but describes everything as if it happened in Jerusalem. But, as the Rev. Francis B. Westbrook remarks in a thoughtful article:

"We are not reading well documented, historical treatises, but

³ Lt. Colonel F. A. Molony in *Journal of Victoria Institute*, "Some Events of the Forty Days Following Christ's Resurrection, With Special Reference to the Great Meeting in Galilee."

fragmentary stories, some of them, perhaps, being the fusion of two or three others. Were the whole details given, we might easily see how all the accounts could be harmonized, even if only roughly. If Luke knew of the first message of Jesus to the women, about the promised Galilean appearance, we can only conjecture that he thought it unnecessary to give any explanations."⁴

A perplexing story to critics is that told by Luke the physician, who in his preface proposes to give exact and historical facts (1:1-2). They allege that Luke emphasizes the *material* nature of our Lord's Resurrection body, Christ "eating a piece of broiled fish and honeycomb." Our reply to such criticism may well be in the words of an ancient father, Clement of Alexandria: "He did not eat for the sake of His body, but for their sakes with whom He conversed, to convince them that they were not seeing a ghost." Those who reject the supernatural and consider the miracles of the Bible not as a witness to its truth but as a handicap to modern faith in the Bible will doubtless stumble over Luke's account. But we cannot read the story in any of the four records without facing the fact of a *bodily* Resurrection. "A spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have." "Reach hither thy finger and behold my hands" (Luke 24:39; John 20:27).

Paul certainly speaks of a resurrection of Christ's body, not merely a vision of a spiritual presence. On the road to Damascus he too saw the glorified Jesus Christ, heard His voice, and spoke to Him, and received a reply. "Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?" That was his most powerful apologetic (I Cor. 9:1) for his apostleship and his authority as a witness to the Resurrection. He puts his own encounter with the Risen One in the same category as that of Mary Magdalene or that of Peter and James and John. Either we must reduce them all to mere visions, without objective reality, which is impossible, or we impugn the veracity of those who suffered the loss of all things, nay death itself, in their devotion to Jesus of Nazareth.

⁴ "The Resurrection Narratives," in *The Expository Times*, March, 1940.

Neither alternative is possible. With Paul, we believe that Jesus really died and really rose again. Also that, in the words of Luke, He was seen alive "by many infallible proofs" and witnesses.

The character of the Resurrection body of our Lord may raise problems for those who quibble, and speculate, "How are the dead raised and in what body do they come?" Paul answers their question in his great chapter on the Resurrection (I Cor. 15:35-37). "Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except 'it die. . . . God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him." And then he goes on to speak of "bodies terrestrial and bodies celestial"; of how our bodies, even as the body of our Lord, are "sown in dishonour" but "raised in glory," "sown in weakness" but "raised in power."

We need to use our sober thought and ask ourselves what kind of body was it that Joseph of Arimathea laid in the sepulchre late on that Friday evening—and then ask what kind of body did the disciples see on the first day of the week. Let Giovanni Papini answer the first question in his vivid, realistic, and yet reverent words:

"They lifted from His head the insulting crown of Pilate's legionaries, and plucked out the thorns which had penetrated the skin; they smoothed and arranged the hair clotted with blood; they closed the eyes. . . . Many loving tears fell upon that face in the calm paleness of death. All His body was sullied with sweat, with dust, with blood; bloody serum oozed from the wounds of the hands, of the feet, of the chest. When the washing was finished, the corpse was sprinkled with Nicodemus's spices, without sparing, for they were abundant; even the black wounds left by the nails were filled with spices. The body of Jesus had received nothing but insults and blows. . . ."⁵

And so He was wrapped in fine linen and laid in the rock-hewn tomb, and a great stone was rolled against the aperture, for Jesus was dead. He died in dishonour—"wounded for our

⁵ *Life of Christ*, p. 379.

transgressions, bruised for our iniquities"—bearing the marks of thorns and nails and spear.

But His Resurrection body was altogether different and yet altogether the same. Identity and personality were unaltered; He was known by His voice to Mary, by His gestures to those of Emmaus, by His scars to Thomas and the other ten disciples. For He was raised in glory, a glory that was overpowering to its witnesses. His angel-herald who rolled back the stone and sat upon it "had a countenance like lightning and raiment white as snow" (Matt. 28:3). When Jesus met the women "they held him by the feet and worshipped him" (Matt. 28:9). And why did Jesus say to them, "Be not afraid"? Mark says they left the sepulchre "trembling and amazed." And Luke writes that when Jesus appeared to the eleven "they were terrified and affrighted and supposed they had seen a spirit." John says, "They were glad when they saw the Lord." How explain this paradox of joy and terror?

We can explain it only by remembering how Christ appeared to the three chosen apostles on the Mount of Transfiguration. Was not that a rehearsal or a preview of the Resurrection glory? "He was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light" (Matt. 17:2). And this is repeated in Mark and Luke, while Peter in his epistle (II Peter 1:16-18) refers to it as an eyewitness of His majesty and glory. "And they were afraid." Why?

Or remember how He appeared to Stephen in the hour of his martyrdom, when he cried, "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing at the right hand of God" (Acts 7:56). Why *standing*?

Again, we recall Paul's vision of that Resurrection glory when suddenly at noonday:

"I saw in the way a light from heaven above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me . . . and heard a voice speaking unto me and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And I said,

Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest " (Acts 26:13-16). Not a good Man, but the God-Man.

Most of all, when we read what was seen by John, who leaned on His breast at supper, we can realize the glory of the celestial after Christ arose from the dead:

"I turned to see the voice that spake with me . . . one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire. . . . And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead."

And this Risen Saviour who appeared on Patmos in vision said to John: "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore. Amen " (Rev. 1:3-18).

It is only when we compare Scripture with Scripture and believe the record which God has given us regarding His beloved Son that all our doubts and questionings vanish.

"Low in the grave He lay—
Jesus my Saviour,
Waiting the coming day—
Jesus my Lord.

"Death can not keep his prey—
Jesus my Saviour,
He tore the bars away—
Jesus my Lord.

"Up from the grave He arose
With a mighty triumph o'er His foes,
He arose a Victor from the dark domain—
He arose forever with His saints to reign—
Hallelujah! Christ arose! "

V

A VISION OF ANGELS

"Angel voices, ever singing
Round the throne of light
Angel harps, forever ringing,
Rest not day nor night;
Thousands only live to bless Thee
And confess Thee
Lord of might."

—Francis Pott, 1861.

ON the evening of the day when Jesus arose from the dead, we are told by Luke that two disciples, one of them called Cleopas, were going to a village called Emmaus. Luke is writing history, not fable or legend. He says the village was threescore furlongs from Jerusalem; he gives the exact time, "toward evening " (Luke 24:29), and place. Moreover, many believe that here we have Luke's personal reminiscence and that he was the other disciple (Luke 24:18).

These two disciples, who witnessed the Crucifixion (v. 20), who considered Christ the promised Messiah, and who were expectant that something would happen "on the third day " (v. 21), suddenly encountered a Stranger. In their conversation with this Stranger they said: "Certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulchre; and when they found not his body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that he was alive."

Here is Luke, the good physician, a travelling companion of St. Paul, a good historian (Ramsay) and one who sets forth accurately things surely believed by eyewitnesses (Luke 1:2)

and speaks of "infallible proofs" (Acts 1:3), writing about "a vision of angels." Did he believe it? Were there angels of the Resurrection glory as there were at Bethlehem, according to Luke, and in the Garden of Gethsemane? (Luke 2:13; 22:43).

What sort of physician was Luke—a charlatan, superstitious, easily duped by others? Or was he more like the Arab philosopher-physician Karshish, whose strange epistle regarding the resurrection of Lazarus is described in Robert Browning's poem?

If Luke was truly a learned physician of his day he was not less incredulous than Karshish regarding what took place at the tomb of Lazarus. Greek scholars have detected Luke's medical learning in the vocabulary of his Gospel and the Acts. So we ask again, Was this "vision of angels" an hallucination, as Modernists affirm, or sober objective fact?

In our day the Sadducees are in the saddle, even at Easter-tide. They do not believe in angels or spirit or resurrection or Virgin Birth or miracles. The early chapters of Luke's gospel and the last chapter are a stumbling-block. Much of the story needs to be watered down or explained away. They tell us that a favorite indoor sport among theologians of the Middle Ages was to discuss how many angels could dance on the point of a needle! But students of theology know that this was not the apex of their doctrine of angels; so do lovers of Dante or Milton.

Modern liberals and humanists have forsaken New Testament Christianity with its miracles, and, of course, angels and demons are thrown in the scrap heap. They cannot listen to angelic song nor tell the story of the Virgin Birth or the Resurrection without some apology. It was a little Sadducee who answered the question of her classmate, "Do you believe in Satan?" by saying, "Of course not; like Santa Claus he is just your own father!"

In the last edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica* there are eighteen pages on the art of "Angling," but two learned British

theologians tell us all they know about angels in half a page, with no reference whatever to the New Testament. They say: "It may be conjectured that belief in such beings is an attempt to retain the subordinate gods and spirits of the polytheistic or animistic faith which preceded the development of monotheism." Yaweh had a court of angels like any other Oriental monarch, and the whole of Old Testament teaching came from Persian sources! But how about the New Testament and the belief of our Lord and His apostles? The anti-supernaturalist suggests a ready answer: "The preaching of Jesus even in this matter may be accounted for as either an accommodation to the views of those with whom He was dealing, or more probably as a proof of the limitation of knowledge which was a necessary condition of the Incarnation, for it cannot be contended that as revealer of God and redeemer of men it was imperative that He should either correct or confirm men's beliefs in this respect."¹

It is indeed too true that many Christians have ceased, therefore, to believe in angels. They still paint them on Easter cards, carve them in marble for churches, and allow the choirs and the little children to sing about them. We cannot escape them in the hymnbook and the ancient liturgies, and must make the most or the least of them—so we are told. But if we believe the Bible we *must* believe in angels. They are mentioned in nearly every important book of the Old Testament, namely: Genesis, Exodus, Numbers, Judges, I and II Samuel, I and II Kings, I Chronicles, Psalms, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, Zechariah, and Daniel. They are mentioned in over 113 references or (not counting the references to Cherubim), ninety-eight times. In the New Testament there are even more references to angels; in Matthew (19 times), Mark (5), Luke (24), John (4), Acts (21), Romans, I and II Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Colossians, II Thessalonians, I Timothy, Hebrews, I and II Peter, Jude (32 references in the Epistles), and 75 in the book

¹ *Encyclopedia Britannica*, Vol. VII, p. 284.

of Revelation. What does Modernism do with all these references to angels?

Angels are constantly mentioned in the Scriptures, and by our Lord and His apostles, as actual created beings. From Hebrews 1:6 and other passages it is inferred that they were created before man. They are mortal spirits, intelligent, powerful, and active (Psa. 103:20; I Pet. 1:12; Matt. 26:53). They are innumerable (Heb. 12:22), and their titles indicate different ranks, such as thrones, dominions, and powers. The Archangel is mentioned several times, and is distinguished from Christ (I Thess. 4:16). The Cherubim and Seraphim are specially distinguished and are examples to humanity in their perfect service and ceaseless adoration (Isa. 6). All these angels wait upon God in praise and service, both in heaven and on earth (Heb. 1:14). Is it astonishing that some of this host from heaven should be sent to welcome the Redeemer at Bethlehem and usher in the glory of His Resurrection?

No one can read the gospels attentively and reverently without the conviction that Jesus Christ Himself believed in angels, was conscious of their presence and able to call in their help, and was ministered to by angels at His birth, in the wilderness after His temptation, and in the Garden of Gethsemane. They were present at the empty tomb after His Resurrection, and they stood on Olivet after His ascension. When He comes again, as He Himself told us, it will be in His glory with all His holy angels (Matt. 25:31). He bade us beware of the leaven of the Sadducees, who believed neither in angels nor in a resurrection from the dead.

We were led to these reflections by two recent books on the Biblical doctrine of angels. A German theologian, Erich Schick, wrote on the ministry of angels, *Vom Dienst der Engel*, and a second volume, *Die Botschaft der Engel im Neuen Testament* (Basel 1940). The former treatise is doctrinal, the latter, devotional and practical. Within a compass of 280 pages, the author tells of the angelic appearances in the New

Testament records and gives his interpretation of their manifold messages. He believes the doctrine of angels to be essential to a Christocentric theology and that their *words* are of the greatest concern to those who would know the mystery of their love and devotion to the Redeemer. All the holy angels are Christ's; they will appear with Him at His glorious second advent, even as they ministered to Him in His humiliation. The thirty-five chapters of this devotional study tell of the angelic messages at Christ's birth, of their ministry during His temptation and in the Garden; of the angels of the Resurrection and of those who freed Peter and spoke to Paul. There are chapters on guardian angels, angels as messengers of Satan, on the joy among the angels, and of their obedience to God's will. Needless to say, all this is exegetical as well as practical, and the finest of German hymnody illuminates the exposition. It is a worth-while study, and one that deepens faith in God's Word.

We also have the late Dr. Arno Gaebel's *The Angels of God*. It is a trumpet blast against the rationalistic treatment of what God reveals in the Bible concerning angels and an index to all the Scripture passages pointing out the spiritual values of this doctrine. We commend each of these books as a good prophylactic against the leaven of the Sadducees. If we *must* be unbelievers let us be consistent and revise our hymns, especially the second stanza of George Croly's great hymn, and sing:

There ne'er was dream nor prophet-ecstasy,
Nor sudden rending of the veil of clay,
Nor angel-visitant, nor opening skies.
Oh, take these ancient outworn myths away!

But our chief difficulty is with the Bible itself, which has woven this golden thread through its warp and woof in splendid patterns from Genesis to Revelation. What a dull book it would be if we left out all the angels! Not only the women at the sepulchre, but Hagar, too, in her deep distress saw them and

heard them (Genesis 16:7). They appeared to Abraham again and again. Moses spent forty days in their company, until his face shone. Not only Manoah and Gideon, but Balaam saw and heard angelic messengers (Judges 2:1; 6:11; 13:16). We read that even Balaam's "ass saw the angel of the Lord" and spoke. (When the prophet became stubborn as an ass, the ass became a prophet.)

David, Elijah, Elisha, Ornan, Daniel, Ezekiel, and Zechariah had "vision of angels." Zacharias saw one in the Temple (Luke 1:11-13). They spoke to Joseph in a dream (Matt. 1:20 and 2:13). The Annunciation to Mary was by an angel (Luke 1:28). Why should the same heavenly messenger fail to comfort her and the other women as they stood by the empty tomb? Peter, Philip, Cornelius, Paul, and John on Patmos, all spoke of having seen angels of God as His messengers to them (Acts 5:19; 10:3; 8:26; 27:23, and Revelation, *passim*, seventy-five references).

It is with such a background of glorious appearances and heavenly messages of strength and joy and peace in the Scripture records that we read in Matthew of the angel "with a countenance like lightning and raiment white as snow," and in Mark that he "was clothed in a long white garment," and in Luke of "the shining garments" and the message from heavenly voices: "He is risen, he is not here."

"Angels, roll the rock away!
Death yields up the mighty Prey!
See the Saviour quits the tomb
Glowing with immortal bloom.
Alleluia! Alleluia!
Christ the Lord is risen today."

All of our splendid Easter hymns teem with angels.

But liberal theology has little use for angels, visions, ecstasies, or opening skies. We read:

"That such phenomena had a useful place in what we have called

'the ministry of error,' need not be doubted. They do not verify any one religion. They are cradles for temporary use which the growing child will leave behind him. . . . As already suggested, the general psychology of the Hebrews would provide for the Hebrew mind the idea of extraneous origin for many experiences which we should call normal."²

Such an attitude toward the Scriptures ends in equating the revelations of pseudo-prophets, Mohammed, Buddha, and Joseph Smith, with those of Jesus Christ! Professor Whitehead compares the brooding of "Mohammed in the desert, the meditations of Buddha and of the Solitary Man on the Cross," as illustrating his statement, "Religion is what the individual does with his solitariness."³

"Behind the three great theistic religions," writes Robinson, "there is a prophetic consciousness . . . the *modus operandi* of the conviction is subsidiary to it. The intermediary may be an angel, as for Mohammed and for some of the later prophets of Israel such as of the prophet Ezekiel . . . the troubled dialogues of Jeremiah or the untroubled consciousness of the prophet of Nazareth." These differences, he infers, are secondary and can all be explained by the psychology of prophecy.⁴

The present trend in liberal commentaries and encyclopaedias is to reduce angels, visions, theophanies in the Bible narrative, to mere psychological hallucinations having no objective reality. The angels of the Resurrection morning are reduced to an unknown young man robed in a white garment, perhaps Mark himself, who pointed the women away from the wrong tomb!⁵ In the course of time, this young man became to the hysteric women and the eager apostles "the angel in bright apparel" of Matthew's gospel! Such rationalisation is utterly foreign to the whole spirit of the narrative and rests on anti-super-

² H. Wheeler Robinson, *Redemption and Revelation*, pp. 138, 145.

³ *Religion in the Making*, pp. 16, 19, 20.

⁴ *Redemption and Revelation*, p. 164 and pp. 131-157 *passim*.

⁵ Frank Morison, *Who Moved the Stone?* pp. 254 ff.; Kirsopp Lake, *The Resurrection of Jesus Christ*, pp. 250-253.

naturalistic bias. "The supernatural element is present in all the narratives of these events and cannot be excluded without doing unwarrantable violence to the historical records."⁶ In similar fashion, these critics deal with the angels of the Advent, the angelic deliverances in the Acts, the teaching of Paul in his Epistles regarding angels, and the teaching of Hebrews, and the Revelation given to John.

Edward Langton's recent volume is an excellent study of the New Testament teaching and, at the same time, a reasoned reply to the Modernist position. Every Christian who is convinced that our Lord Jesus really believed in the objective existence and ministrations of angels (and the evidence is overwhelming) has no difficulty in accepting the teaching of His apostles and the Old Testament prophets in this matter. Jesus often speaks of the activity of angels at the end of the world (Mark 13:27; Matt. 25:31; Luke 9:26). He says that angels rejoice over the salvation of sinners (Luke 15:10) and that they carry the righteous at death to Abraham's bosom (Luke 16:22). Their number is indefinitely large (Matt. 26:53). Jesus told Nathanael, "Ye shall see the heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man" (John 1:51). He Himself will come with His holy angels (Matt. 25:31). Angels ministered to Him in the desert and in the Garden.

If John 1:51 refers to the glorious advent of Jesus we should lift up our eyes, expectant and eager. For whatever may have been in George Croly's mind in his day (and in spite of all attempts today to destroy faith in visions, angels, ecstasies, rending skies, and even in the Second Advent), we feel inclined to modify slightly or else omit the second stanza of Croly's hymn.

For these are days when by every effort we must defend the supernatural in the Scriptures. Professor William P. Montague of Columbia University, an outspoken liberal, says, "When

⁶ Edward Langton, *The Angel Teaching of the New Testament*, p. 41.

once the nose of the camel of doubt is permitted to enter the tent of faith there is no assurance as to where the invasion will stop. If any of the miracles of the Bible are rejected, the others will become open to question.⁷ And he welcomes that result; but we do not.

There are many recorded instances of visions and of angels in the history of the Church since the days of the apostles. Raymond Lull's vision of the suffering Saviour and the vision of Joan of Arc cannot be brushed aside, nor, perhaps, the testimony of British soldiers regarding the angels at the battle of Mons in the first World War.

William Blake lived a genuine Christian life in a world of visions from the time when he saw a tree on Peckham Rye "filled with angels, bright angelic wings bespangling every bough like stars." At his brother's death he saw the released spirit ascend through the ceiling, clapping its hands for joy. Sadhu Sundar Singh had ecstasies and visions:

"When I am alone I feel surrounded with a wonderful atmosphere, something speaks to my heart. No words are spoken but I see all pictured. . . . It is a waking not a dream state; I can think on it steadily."⁸

And John Woolman, the Quaker, had outward vision of God as well as "Inner Light."⁹ What a book of religious experience he wrote for us all!

It is not the absence of the angels but our absence of mind that may be the reason for our unbelief and coldness of heart.

"The angels keep their ancient places:
Turn but a stone, and start a wing!
'Tis ye, 'tis your estranged faces,
That miss the many-splendoured thing."

⁷ *Liberal Theology: An Appraisal* (Scribner's, New York, 1942), pp. 155-162 (a series of essays in defence of liberal theology by a dozen representative writers).

⁸ B. H. Streeter and A. J. Appasamy, *The Sadhu*, p. 133.

⁹ In his *Journal IV*, opening section, he tells what he experienced.

All the great poets, beginning with Edmund Spenser and Shakespeare and going to Robert Browning and Tennyson, are on the side of the angels against modern scepticism.¹⁰ So also are the great painters, architects, and musicians. Without "angel-visitant or opening skies" their art would lose its best. And ordinary folk need angels badly; for in the global tragedy of war and deep unrest of soul, if you have faith,

" . . . upon thy so sore loss
Shall shine the traffic of Jacob's ladder,
Pitched between Heaven and Charing Cross."

And as for theophanies, the eloquence of the Old Testament narrative suffices. Destructive criticism may explain away the meaning but it cannot destroy the record, and the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is still our God who revealed Himself not only in theophanies, those mysterious foreshadowings of the Incarnation ("Abraham rejoiced to see my day"); but in the fulness of time in the Son of His love, "in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." The passages regarding the Angel of Jehovah (e.g., Gen. 16:7; 18:1-8) are not solved by any anti-supernatural denials or subterfuges. It is difficult indeed to explain what took place when Moses saw God's glory and talked with Him face to face (Ex. 33:10; Deut. 5:4; Num. 12:7-9, etc.). But we accept the records that it *did* take place. And we also believe what Luke and Matthew tell us of the angels at the empty tomb on Easter morning. Most of all, we believe their witness, "*He is not here: for he is risen, as he said!*"

¹⁰ Spenser wrote of them:

"How oft do they their silver bowers leave,
To come to succour us, that succour want?
How oft do they with golden pinions, cleave
The flitting skys, like flying Pursuivant,
Against foul fiends to aid us militant?
They for us fight, they watch and duely ward
And their bright squadrons round about us plant,
And all for love, and nothing for reward:
O why should heavenly God to men have such regard?"

VI

JOHN'S THREEFOLD WITNESS

"I say, the acknowledgment of God in Christ
Accepted by thy reason, solves for thee
All questions in the earth and out of it."
—Browning, *A Death in the Desert*.

THE self-assertion of Jesus Christ both in the days of His flesh and after His resurrection, as recorded in the New Testament, is one of the strongest proofs of His deity. After the appearance to Saul on the road to Damascus, he appeared to the last of the apostles on the isle of Patmos. John says he heard a voice as of a trumpet behind him; when he turned he saw

"one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; and his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength. And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, *Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death*" (Rev. 1:13-18).

No testimony to the reality and glory of the Resurrection is stronger than that of the Apostle John in his Gospel, in his Epistles and in the Revelation. In the latter the very windows of heaven are open and the reader is swept along in the whirl of

the tremendous vision—the seven trumpets, the seven seals, and the seven vials of the day of doom. In a famous altar-piece by Hans Memling (painted in 1479 for the Hospital of St. John at Bruges) we see on the right wing of the triptych, John the beloved looking up into heaven. “He sees the King of kings, the elders, the lamps of the Apocalypse, the Lamb, the symbols of the Evangelists and death on the pale horse. . . . On the placid surface of the sea the whole vision is reflected and forms a grand and imposing picture.”¹

But no artist can portray the evidence for the Resurrection more vividly and dramatically than does John the Apostle in the simple language of his Gospel. He who fell at Christ’s feet as dead on Patmos leaned on His bosom at the Last Supper. John was not only the last apostolic eyewitness to the Resurrection, in the Apocalypse, but he was the first to believe on that Easter morning. The twentieth chapter of this Gospel of the Resurrection bears all the marks of an eyewitness. Nothing else can account for the little details of hour and place and circumstance. Who but an eyewitness would use words such as these: “The other disciple ran on in front quicker than Peter, and came first to the tomb, and peeping in seeth lying there the linen clothes” (Greek text). Peter was not the first to arrive at the empty tomb nor the first to believe its evidence. John outstripped him in faith. “Peter seeth the linen clothes by themselves and went away to his home wondering at that which was come to pass” (Luke 24:12).² But John grasped the meaning of the evidence “and believed.” He was also the first to recognize our Lord at the lake, and said to Peter, “It is the Lord.” He doubtless helped Peter drag the net to shore and with him counted the catch—one hundred and fifty-three (John 21:4–11). Could anyone but an eyewitness and a fisherman remember and record this detail?

No one can read the record of the Resurrection story in

¹ Jane Stoddard, *The New Testament in Life and Literature*, p. 442.

² William Temple, *Readings in John’s Gospel*, Vol. II, p. 378.

John’s Gospel—that of Mary Magdalene recognizing Christ’s voice, that of the ten disciples when they saw His scars, that of Thomas when invited to handle them, that of the fishermen-disciples gathered around a charcoal fire and fish laid thereon and bread—without recognizing that here John himself bears record and that his record is true. That is why the selfsame John and no other begins his epistle with the words: “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life.” “There is no shred of evidence,” says Arnold Lunn, “to support the theory that the Fourth Gospel is a literary miracle, the work of some unknown genius whom the Modern critics call John the Presbyter. The sole foundation for this desperate hypothesis is unscientific prejudice against the miraculous.”³ The best that can be said for this theory was said by Canon Streeter, but he does not meet the arguments of conservative scholars like Salmon and Sanday. Another writer, Dom Chapman, uses his talent for humor and sarcasm in his book, *John the Presbyter and the Fourth Gospel*: “Shakespeare was not really written by Shakespeare but by another man of the same name!”

Every fresh study on John’s gospel adds its testimony to the conservative view that the Fourth Gospel was written by an eyewitness to the events. Professor F. E. Bruce, in an article on the authorship of John’s gospel, calls attention to a book by Professor A. T. Olmstead of Chicago, an authority on ancient history, *Jesus in the Light of History* (1940). This volume, written from a purely historical standpoint, is remarkable for the high historical value it attaches to the Fourth Gospel. Referring to recent papyrus discoveries, Olmstead said: “The current view that John has little or no historical value is thereby challenged and the doubt of value is transferred to the books which hold this view.” Even in the miracle-stories of this gospel he gives us comments, such as, that the raising of

³ *The Third Day*, p. 56.

Lazarus is told "with all the circumstantial detail of the convinced eyewitness," and that the narrative of the Empty Tomb in John 20 is "told by an undoubted eyewitness—full of life, and lacking any detail to which the sceptic might take justifiable objection." Therefore, we may well apply to the whole gospel the words used by the Evangelist in relation to the death and piercing of Christ: "And he who has seen it has borne witness, and his witness is true, and he knows that he is speaking the truth, that you also may believe."⁴

The determination and cunning with which the contents and authorship of the Fourth Gospel have been attacked by critics is largely due to its clear teaching of Christ's essential deity and its account of the resurrection of Lazarus and of Jesus Christ Himself. They allege that this gospel was written long after the event by a second-century Christian, John the Presbyter, or some unknown disciple; and, beginning with Strauss and the earlier German rationalists, they put its date far into the second century. But Harnack, at one time a most radical critic, later in life created a sensation by informing the astonished world of German scholarship, in the preface to his *Chronologie der Alt-Christlichen Literatur*, that he now accepted the traditional authorship of *all* the New Testament books save the Second Epistle of Peter.⁵ Further evidence for the genuineness and authority of the Gospel of John is its striking unity. Even Strauss remarked that the book was "woven without seam," like the robe of Jesus. Either the Gospel was the work of an eyewitness who, inspired by the Holy Spirit, truthfully recorded Christ's own miracles and words, or this glorious

⁴ Among works dealing with the Fourth Gospel it may be useful to mention some publications of the Inter-Varsity Fellowship: E. K. Simpson, *The Authorship and Authenticity of the Fourth Gospel*; D. M. McIntyre, *Some Notes on the Gospels*, pp. 35-51; and F. E. Bruce, *Are the New Testament Documents Reliable?*

⁵ Arnold Lunn, *The Third Day*, pp. 57 ff. As for the date of the composition of the Fourth Gospel, critics have returned from 160-170 A.D. (Baur), 150 (Zeller), 130 (Keim), to 110-115 (Renan) and 80-110 (Harnack). The discovery of a papyrus codex of portions of John 18, in the John Rylands' Library, puts the date still earlier.

gospel of the grace of God is a piece of fiction—of cunningly devised fables and a record of miracles that never took place. Where Unbelief is blind, Faith can see. We can read the Gospel aright and understand it only when we *believe* in the Son of God, whose glory is revealed in the record. As Origen wrote, "No one can fully understand it who has not, like its author, lain upon the breast of Jesus."

How could another John dare to write a pseudograph? For we note that all of John's writings (and we believe the traditional authorship can be accepted) are permeated with a passion for *truth*. He emphasizes truth as absolutely essential in doctrine and life (I John 1:6, 8; 2:3, 21; 3:18, 19; 4:6). This idea of truth is basic in the Gospel, in the Epistles, and in the Revelation. All of them were written that "ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his name" (John 20:31). The eternal life which was in the Father was manifested in His Son, who is now our Advocate with the Father. He came to take away sin, to destroy the works of the devil, who is a liar. He laid down His life for us, and, therefore, in the power of His Resurrection life we ought to lay down our lives for others. God Himself loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. He is the Saviour of the world. Only he that hath the Son hath everlasting life. Jesus Christ is the true God and eternal life. Such is the plain teaching of the First Epistle. And John the Apostle speaks with such authority that he adds a postscript (II John 1:9): "Watch yourselves. . . . Anyone who is 'advanced' and will not remain by the doctrine of Jesus Christ does not possess God" (Moffatt).

And still more, the often neglected Second Epistle lays strong emphasis on the cruciality of the *Truth*. It is the test of sincerity (v. 3), of orthodoxy (v. 10), of life (v. 4), of final judgment (v. 2), and of Christian fellowship (v. 1). Because of this holy passion for the Truth, John uses the sharp words of the tenth verse, often quoted as proof of his intolerance. But

John remembers that He that liveth and was dead "has eyes like a flame of fire." The Third Epistle is about Gaius, a true Christian, truly beloved, who with his children walks in the Truth and loves the Truth, as does true-hearted Demetrius, so that they are twin disciples of Truth. How could *such* epistles be *pseudographs*, i.e., forgeries?

It is in the gospel, however, that we find the most glorious testimony to Jesus Christ as the giver of life and Himself the Resurrection. Who can read the story of the resurrection of Lazarus in the eleventh chapter without realizing that this forthright narrative demands a decision? If the raising of Lazarus was a fact, then He who raised him was God manifest in the flesh; if this is only embroidered fiction by a second-century writer, then Jesus was (as the Jews stated) a deceiver! Many are the difficulties and objections of unbeliever and agnostic when they try to explain away the narrative. Not so is it for humble believers, including great poets and artists.

The National Gallery in London contains a great painting of the *Raising of Lazarus* by Sebastiano del Piombo. We are told that Lord Tennyson and Darwin, the scientist, often came to see it and considered it a favourite. The picture portrays the scene at its close: "He that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave-clothes; and his face was bound about with a napkin." The miracle is wrought. In the middle of the canvas stands our Saviour uttering these words: "Loose him and let him go." In majestic gesture His right hand points upward. Three bystanders are fulfilling Christ's command. The grave-clothes throw the face of Lazarus in deep shade but his eyes are fixed upon Him who called him forth. At the feet of Jesus is Mary, full of faith and gratitude. It was this painting that inspired Tennyson to write:

"Her eyes are homes of silent prayer,
Nor other thought her mind admits,
But he was dead, and there he sits,
And He that brought him back is there.

"Then one deep love doth supersede
All other, when her ardent gaze
Roves from the living brother's face
And rests upon the Life indeed."

In the biography of his father, Lord Tennyson says that when the poet was visiting the National Gallery with his two boys "he always led the way first to the *Raising of Lazarus* by Sebastiano."⁶ Another poet, Robert Browning, interprets the raising of Lazarus in such a fashion as not only to startle the reader by its approach but to capture his mind by its interpretation. The poem is entitled, "An Epistle Containing the Strange Medical Experience of Karshish the Arab Physician." In his search for learning in the art of healing, this Arab herb-doctor wanders from Jericho to Jerusalem and at Bethany encounters Lazarus:

"And first—the man's own firm conviction rests
That he was dead (in fact they buried him)
—That he was dead and then restored to life
By a Nazarene physician of his tribe."

And then he diagnoses this strange case:

"Whence has the man the balm that brightens all?
This grown man eyes the world now like a child."

But you must read the whole poem, yes, and reread many of its lines to appreciate the insight of Robert Browning and his genius to interpret what Christ did for Lazarus—and can do for us.

"The very God! think, Abib; dost thou think?
So the All-Great were the All-Loving too—
So through the thunder comes a human voice
Saying, O heart I made, a heart beats here."

⁶ Tennyson: *A Memoir*, Vol. I, p. 371.

I have never read any commentary on the eleventh chapter of John that plumbs its depths and lifts one to its sublime heights as does this poem.⁷

"I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believeth thou this? She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world" (John 11:25-28).

Paul begins his Epistle to the Romans with the double assertion of Christ's real humanity and real deity. God's Son, he writes, "was born of the seed of David according to the flesh and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness *by the resurrection from the dead*." His deity was the power for His Resurrection and His Resurrection was the proof of His deity.

"Now Jesus loved Martha and Mary and Lazarus." . . . "Jesus wept"—where is there stronger proof of His humanity! "And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, Father, I thank thee that thou heardest me. . . . And when he had thus spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus come forth. And he that was dead came forth"—where is there any stronger proof of His deity?

In the Revelation Jesus proclaims not only the fact of His own Resurrection, "I am he that liveth, and was dead," but declares that He is Lord of life: "I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death."

There is a striking old Latin couplet on Christ as conqueror of death which Dean Farrar put into English:

*"Mors mortis mortem nisi morte dedisset
Aeternæ vitæ, janua clausa foret."*

"Had not the Death of death to death by death his death-blow given,

Forever closed were the gate, the gate of life and heaven."

⁷ Eugene O'Neill, the dramatist, also attempted to describe the raising of Lazarus in his *Lazarus Laughed*, 1927. But it is only "a static and fulsome defiance of death," as one critic wrote.

Christ is the conqueror of death at the grave of Lazarus and in the glory of His appearances to Mary Magdalene and the disciples, according to John. There are many other references to this victory over death and to the gift of eternal life from Him who was dead and is now alive for evermore. In John's gospel we have them (3:16; 5:24, 29; 6:40-47; 10:10). They include not only the promise of eternal life for the soul but the resurrection of the body at the last day, with immortality and emancipation and recognition. Eternal life in John's gospel is not only endless time, quantitative; but full knowledge of God and likeness to Him, qualitative, (John 17:3 and 17:24). It is life on another plane, a higher, holier, more perfect life, like that of the angels but "children of the Resurrection."

John's symbol is the eagle. He soars higher and has a wider horizon than that of the synoptic gospels. His beginning of the gospel is in eternity and his portraiture of Christ is in the colors and on the canvas of the invisible and imponderable realities.

In his *Readings in John's Gospel*, the late Archbishop Temple says, "Robert Browning's poem, 'A Death in the Desert,' remains the most penetrating interpretation of St. John that exists in the English language."⁸ What did he mean? Only those who have made careful study of this long and difficult poem on the death of the aged apostle in the midmost grotto of a cave, and listened to his conversation with the five companions, will agree with William Temple. We close this chapter with a bare outline of this penetrating interpretation of John's witness to the Risen Christ.

Browning tells of one, Pamphylax of Antioch, who has an ancient parchment giving an account of John's death and his final message to a small group of friends. In the poem they find him faint, and they wet his lips with wine as "he lay bedded on a camel-skin"; and waited for his dying all the while. Xanthus (who was afterward burned at Rome as martyr) said

⁸ Vol. I, p. xvii.

a prayer. A young Bactrian convert and Valens lift the dying apostle.

“ Then the Boy sprang up from his knees and ran
Stung by the splendor of a sudden thought,
And fetched the seventh plate of graven lead
Out of the secret chamber, found a place,
Pressing with finger on the deeper dints,
And spoke, as 'twere his mouth proclaiming first,
' I am the Resurrection and the Life.'
Whereat he opened his eyes wide at once
And sat up of himself, and looked at us . . . ”

After this, all are silent while John speaks of his memories as disciple, of Peter and James, long since dead; of the noble martyrs; most of all of that which “ with his eyes he saw, and handled with his hands, that which was from the first the Word of Life.” He recalls his vision on Patmos isle, with Antichrist already in the world. Then follow inspired passages on God's love in Christ, the victory of faith, the joy of suffering, the fire that burns but does not consume—and much more of the deep thoughts in John's Gospel.

And when his long discourse wearies him . . .

“ Nay, do not give me wine, for I am strong,
But place my gospel where I put my hands.”

And the climax of this dying testament we have put first in this chapter. Although not the final stanza, it is, in my opinion, the finest. The last three lines of the ancient parchment read (after John expired):

“ Believe me, ye will not see him any more . . .
For all was as I say, and now the man
Lies, as he lay once, breast to breast with God.”

VII

THE ASCENSION INTO HEAVEN

“ Hark, those bursts of acclamation!
Hark, those loud triumphant chorals!
Jesus takes the highest station.
O what joy the sight affords;
Crown Him! Crown Him!
King of kings and Lord of lords.”

—Thomas Kelly, 1809.

CHRIST's humiliation and His exaltation is the twofold theme of the New Testament story. The two are brought together by Paul (Phil. 2:6-11):

“ Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

Very early in His ministry, our Saviour spoke of His ascension to heaven, even as He spoke of His death on the Cross and His Resurrection. “ No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven ” (John 3:13; compare John 1:51). The exaltation began on the Resurrection morning and was fully vindicated forty days later before the very eyes of the disciples, when His

own words to Mary Magdalene were fulfilled: "I ascend unto my Father and your Father; and to my God, and your God" (John 20:17).

The account of the ascension is recorded in Mark, Luke, and the Acts. It is an historic fact to these writers of history. It is also alluded to in Old Testament prophecy and proclaimed as an established fact in the Epistles and the book of the Revelation (Ephesians 4:9; Rev. 1:17). Following the Scriptures, Christian art has represented the glory of the Ascension in the presence of angels (Acts 1:10, 11). Tradition tells us that Luke was not only a physician but an artist, and it is his pen that records the vision of angels at the tomb and their presence at Christ's ascension.

Four great artists have painted the scene as it appealed to their imagination; that of Perugino (1446–1523) can be seen at Lyons; that of Tintoretto at Venice, and a celebrated painting by Veronese at Leningrad. Correggio, the name given to Antonio Allegri (1494–1534), an Italian painter, began his famous fresco of the "Ascension of Christ" (on the cupola of the Benedictine Church of San Giovanni in Parma) in 1521 and finished it in 1524. In the Church of the Ascension on Fifth Avenue, New York, there is a more modern but beautiful painting of the Ascension by John La Farge (1887) covering the entire apse dome. It represents the eleven disciples, with Mary, the mother of Jesus, gazing upward at the ascending majestic figure of our Lord, while the two angels in the foreground seem to say, "Why stand ye gazing up? . . . This same Jesus shall so come in like manner . . ." The artist has expressed with marvellous colours the ecumenic faith of the Church in this stupendous miracle—"He ascended into heaven."

Those who deny the bodily Resurrection of Jesus and explain away the empty tomb and the post-Resurrection appearances, naturally have no faith in His Ascension. To them the creeds are empty songs of an ancient credulity.

The Feast of Ascension, forty days after Easter, is mentioned by St. Augustine as having been kept from time immemorial and as probably instituted by the apostles. Chrysostom mentions its celebration in a church outside Antioch, and Socrates (Hist. eccles. vii. 26) records that in the year 390 all the people of Constantinople celebrated it with great pomp.

What the Church down the ages has taught in her ecumenic creeds and catechisms regarding the ascension of Christ and His session on God's right hand until He comes to judge the living and the dead, is known to all. The Scriptural testimony is well summarized by Bishop John Pearson in his *Exposition of the Apostles' Creed*:

"We may conclude, therefore, what every Christian is obliged to confess in those words of our Creed, *He ascended into heaven*; for thereby he is understood to express this much: I am fully persuaded that the only-begotten and eternal Son of God, after He rose from the dead, did with the same soul and body with which He rose, by a true and local translation convey Himself from the earth on which He lived, through all the regions of the air, through all the celestial orbs, until He came into the heaven of heavens, the most glorious presence of the Majesty of God. And thus I believe in Jesus Christ *who ascended into heaven*" (p. 489).

It is this faith tremendous, this acceptance of God's Word at its face value which is ever a stumbling-block to the unbeliever and foolishness to the man of this world. But we cannot escape the plain meaning of Luke (who tells us that he had the facts from eyewitnesses), and who, both in his Gospel and in the book of Acts, describes the startling miracle of Christ's departure from this planet into space. The entrance and the exit of Jesus Christ into and out of human history could not be anything else than miraculous. His birth was not according to the laws of nature. His rising from the grave was against the laws of nature. His ascension, likewise, transcended the laws of gravitation to which we are subject. But He is the Lord of creation. "All things were made by him and without him was not any-

thing made that was made" (John 1:3). "By him were all things created that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible. . . . And he is before all things, and by him all things consist" (Col. 1:16, 17). He created the starry universe and every atom is witness to His eternal power and godhead. Is anything too hard for such a Saviour? Or to a generation that trembles at the smashing of an atom bomb?

In one of our great hymns (which we sing so thoughtlessly) Christ's ascension glory is expressed in two lines:

"Crown Him the Lord of years, the Potentate of time,
Creator of the rolling spheres, ineffably sublime."

Some have stumbled at the simplicity of the ascension, but that too is its glory. He blessed the disciples after giving the great Commission, and then, as they beheld Him, He was taken up and a cloud hid the glory which is referred to in the Old Testament. "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty. . . . The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory" (Psalm 24:7-10). "The chariots of God" [not like the one fiery chariot of Elijah] "are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels: the Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place. Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them" (Psalm 68:17, 18). Both of these passages were interpreted by the Early Church as prophetic of the ascension. There is a third rather obscure passage in which the Jews themselves interpret "the Breaker" as a title of the Messiah. They paraphrase Micah 2:13: "When shall we rejoice? When the captives shall ascend from Hades and Shekinah at the head, as it is written. Their King shall pass before them and the Lord at the head of them."¹

¹ References are given to *Beresith Rabba* on Gen. 44:18 in *Pearson on the Creed*, p. 481. The context of Micah 2:13 is assuredly Messianic.

The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews finds a reference to Christ's ascension and His session at God's right hand in the typology of the Tabernacle (Lev. 16:2). "Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us" (Heb. 9:24).

Thus, regarding the coming event of Christ's ascension, both typology and prophecy cast their shadows before.

Let us now turn to the account in Acts. Nowhere in the Bible is this event described more fully. Jesus met with His disciples (Acts 1:4-8) and gave His command not to depart from Jerusalem until they had received the baptism of the Holy Spirit, after which they were to be witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

"And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."

That these messengers were angels is evident from their sudden appearance, their raiment, and their heavenly message. Christ left the disciples with a great Commission; the angels gave them the great promise of His return.

The cloud (so often connected with theophanies in the Old Testament) divided the Ascension into two stages. As Lange the commentator remarks:

"The gradual elevation of the Lord from the earth, until a cloud came and received Him out of their sight, was visible to the apostles then present. The ascension of the Lord into heaven, the true taking up (*analepsis*) into the heavenly glory, was invisible. This was testified to the disciples by the angels, as also the Lord Himself had foretold it to them before His sufferings (John xiv). Since His resurrection, Jesus, during the forty days, had appeared frequently

to His disciples; but every time He vanished as suddenly, and as unobserved to their senses, as He appeared (Luke xxiv:31). But at this time He granted to His assembled apostles a clear and calm view as He went towards heaven, to give them, as His eyewitnesses, as far as that was possible, absolute certainty that He belongs no more to earth, and dwells no more upon it; but that, after all things were accomplished, He has gone to His Father."

His priestly work on earth was ended. He was now to enter within the veil to intercede, to send the Holy Spirit, and, as Forerunner carrying the affections of all His people, to become the center of the Church triumphant in glory (Heb. 10:11-13).

The mystery of the Ascension must not obscure for us its reality and its deep significance. The broken, bruised body of Jesus disappeared from the tomb. He appeared in His perfect Resurrection body, and "by many infallible proofs" to the eye, the ear, the very touch of His beloved disciples, He was recognized. And then after forty days they themselves saw the incarnate Son of God, whom they knew as the Son of man, ascend to the Father.

John Donne is only one of many who have sought to interpret the Ascension in poetry:

"Salute the last and everlasting day,
Joy at th' uprising of this Sun, and Son,
Ye whose true tears, or tribulation
Have purely wash'd, or burnt your drossy clay.
Behold, the Highest, parting hence away,
Lightens the dark clouds, which He treads upon;
Nor doth He by ascending *show* alone,
But first He, and He first *enters* the way."

And we have a clearer note in Charles Wordsworth's hymn:

"While He raised His hands in blessing,
He was parted from His friends;
While their eager eyes behold Him,
He upon the clouds ascends;

He who walked with God and pleased Him,
Preaching truth and doom to come,
He, our Enoch, is translated,
To His everlasting home."

While Charles Wesley gives his interpretation thus:

"There for Him high triumph waits;
Lift your heads, eternal gates;
He hath conquered death and sin;
Take the King of glory in.
Alleluia!

"Lo! the heaven its Lord receives,
Yet He loves the earth He leaves;
Though returning to His throne,
Still He calls mankind His own.
Alleluia!

"See! He lifts His hands above;
See! He shows the prints of love:
Hark! His gracious lips bestow
Blessings on His Church below.
Alleluia! "

Our creedal statement reads: "He ascended into heaven and *sitteth* on the right hand of God the Father Almighty." But in the Acts we read of His *rising* to welcome the first martyr, Stephen! "He being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God" (Acts 7:55, 56). As Tennyson puts it:

"He heeded not reviling tones,
Nor sold his heart to idle moans,
Though cursed, scorned and bruised with stones.
But looking upward, full of grace,
He prayed, and from a happy place
God's glory smote him on the face."

We read of many others martyred for the Truth who in their final hour saw the glory of their Risen and Ascended Redeemer.

Patrick Hamilton, the first martyr of the Scottish Reformation, was burned to death at St. Andrews in 1528.

"On the scaffold [writes the historian] he turned affectionately to his servant, who had attended him, and taking off his gown, coat, and cap, bade him receive all the worldly goods now left him to bestow, and with them the example of his death. 'What I am about to suffer, my dear friend,' said he, 'appears fearful and bitter to the flesh; but remember, it is the entrance to everlasting life, which none shall possess who deny their Lord.' In the midst of his torments, which, from the awkwardness of the executioner, were protracted and excruciating, he ceased not to exhort those who stood near, exhibiting a meekness and unaffected courage which made a deep impression. Lifting up his eyes to heaven, he exclaimed, 'How long, O Lord, shall darkness cover this kingdom? How long wilt Thou suffer this tyranny of men?' And when death at last came to his relief, he expired with these blessed words on his lips, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.'"²

And Isaac Walton, in his life of John Donne, his friend, goes particularly into every circumstance of the death of this great poet and preacher of the seventeenth century:

"Being speechless, and seeing Heaven by that illumination by which he saw it, he did, as St. Stephen, 'look stedfastly into it, till he saw the Son of man standing at the right hand of God his Father'; and being satisfied with this blessed sight, as his soul ascended, and his last breath departed from him, he closed his own eyes, and then disposed his hands and body into such a posture as required not the least alteration by those that came to shroud him. Thus variable, thus virtuous was the life; thus excellent, thus exemplary the death of this memorable man."³

All those, and they are many, who, down the centuries in the ecstasy of love or in the solemn hour of death, have caught such vision of the Christ, are also witnesses to His Resurrection and Ascension glory.

² Patrick F. Tytler, *History of Scotland*, Vol. V., p. 178.

³ *The Lives of John Donne, Sir Henry Wotton, Richard Hooker and George Herbert*, written by Isaac Walton, London, 1670, p. 100.

VIII

THE GENERAL RESURRECTION

"When we speak of immortality there is one thing we mean and nothing else. We mean that the identical person, *ego ipse*, who lived a self-conscious life here and who died here, will after death continue that self-conscious life with no disruption of memory or violation of identical personality."

A. W. Hewitt, in *Jerusalem the Golden*, p. 50.

It was practical Martha who expressed her faith in a general resurrection as she stood by the grave of Lazarus, dead four days: "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day." But even her robust faith and her bold confession, "I believe thou art the Christ the Son of God," did not still her aching heart or dry her tears. Lazarus was dead, buried according to the simple rites of the Jews, wrapped in linen with spices and laid in a rock-hewn grave. It may also have been a garden spot, as was the case with the grave of Joseph of Arimathea. "In the place where he was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid. . . . There laid they Jesus" (John 19:41).

The Jews were never given to cremation or burning of the dead. Even urn burial, so common among the Greeks and Romans of their day, was not Jewish. There were exceptional instances in the Old Testament, as when the men of Jabesh burned the body of Saul. But Abraham and the patriarchs buried their dead and honoured their graves. The tombs of the kings of Israel were kept in remembrance, and "God's acre" had a place near the synagogue in the days of our Saviour.

In his little book entitled *Urn Burial*, the philosopher-physician, Dr. Thomas Browne (1658), has some wise words regarding the various modes of burial, and stresses the fact of faith in a resurrection as basic to many funeral customs:

“Christian invention hath chiefly driven at rites which speak hopes of another life and hints of a resurrection. They deck their coffins with bays, for that tree seeming dead will restore itself from the root and its dry leaves assume their verdure again.”¹

Orthodox Jews generally believed in a resurrection, based on Old Testament Scripture (Dan. 12:2), and the Talmud later expounded the doctrine. In Isaiah 26:19, we have a wonderful promise of resurrection: “Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy *dew* is as the dews of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead.” The dew in this verse is referred to in the Jerusalem Talmud (*Taanit* 1:63, and in *Berakot* 5:9) as the “Dew of the Resurrection.” Dew and rain are referred to in Hebrew literature as life-giving, as sources of revival and regeneration.

We know also that the doctrine of a general resurrection is plainly taught in the Apocrypha. For example, the orthodox view is upheld in II Esdras 7:32, 33, which reads:

“And the earth shall restore those that are asleep in her, and so shall the dust those that dwell in silence, and the secret places shall deliver those souls that were committed unto them. And the Most High shall appear upon the seat of judgment, and misery shall pass away, and the long suffering shall have an end.”

In II Maccabees 7:9–36, we read the story of seven brothers and their mother who died the death of martyrs for the Jewish religion. One son, as he is about to be tortured and executed, says to the king, “It is good, being put to death by men, to look

¹ *Works of Sir Thomas Browne*, p. 121, *Urn Burial*.

for hope from God to be raised up again by Him: as for thee [the king] thou shalt have no resurrection.”

In the Hebrew Prayer Book the belief in the resurrection of the dead is plainly set forth. In the thirteen “Articles of Faith” by Maimonides the last Article declares: “I firmly believe that there will be a resurrection of the dead at a time which will please the Creator, blessed be His Name, and exalted be the remembrance of Him forever and ever.” In the morning prayer a Jew recites:

“O my God, the soul which Thou gavest me is pure; Thou didst create it, Thou didst form it, Thou didst breathe it into me; and Thou will take it from me, but wilt restore it unto me hereafter. So long as the soul is within me, I will give thanks unto Thee, O Lord my God and God of my fathers, Sovereign of all works, Lord of all souls.”

According to *Pirke Rabbi Eliezer*, chapter 32 and *Sotah* 9:15, the first to be resurrected will be Messiah, then Elijah and the saints who will aid in the general resurrection. To use New Testament phraseology, the Messiah is really, according to Talmudic teaching, “The First Fruits of them that sleep.”²

Only the Sadducees denied the Resurrection, according to the New Testament record. The Christian Church and the Christian message were both based on Christ’s Resurrection. Paul also, in the great chapter to the Corinthians, as we have seen, staked everything on that one fact: “If Christ be not risen, your faith is vain.”

According to the New Testament, Christ’s Resurrection is proof and pledge of the resurrection of all who believe in Him (Matt. 22:29; I Cor. 15; II Tim. 2:18; Phil. 3:21; II Tim. 4:8; John 6:40). These passages and others teach a general resurrection at the last day, when there will be reward for the righteous and punishment for the wicked. Christ Himself in His parables taught the same truth (Matt. 25:31 to end).

² Rev. M. Zeidman, “The Jewish View of the Resurrection,” in *The Evangelical Christian*, April, 1946.

In the chapter that follows, we shall see how the very heart of the apostolic preaching was the death and Resurrection of our Lord and the consequent emphasis on the great day of judgment.

From the very beginning of the Christian Church, the doctrine of the general resurrection was an article in its creed (Acts 17:32). All the early Fathers proclaim this dogma with unanimity and earnestness against the attacks of pagans and scoffers. Tertullian wrote a tract maintaining "that the very same body will be raised that was laid in the grave." Origen was the outstanding exception, as he taught that belief in a bodily resurrection was not essential so long as we maintained the immortality of the soul.³ Jerome, Augustine, Chrysostom, and Gregory the Great maintained substantially the same views as Tertullian, though more careful to clear their teaching of gross and carnal additions. Thomas Aquinas goes into great detail to declare his faith in the real *bodily* Resurrection of our Lord and of ours at the general resurrection.⁴

This patristic faith found its place in the creeds of Christendom, in the catechisms of the Churches, Roman, Greek, and Protestant, as well as in the hymnody of the Eastern and Western Churches. This article of the Apostles' Creed was further emphasized and illuminated in the burial services of Ecumenical Christendom. A Christian funeral is Christian only in proportion as the hope of resurrection and life everlasting finds emphasis. How beautiful and full of New Testament faith are the words of committal in the Book of Common Prayer:

"Unto Almighty God we commend the soul of our brother departed, and we commit his body to the ground; earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust; in sure and certain hope of the Resurrection unto eternal life, through our Lord Jesus Christ; at whose coming in glorious majesty to judge the world, the earth and the sea shall give up their dead; and the corruptible bodies of those who

³ Shedd's *History of Christian Doctrine*, Vol. II, p. 404.

⁴ *Idem*, pp. 405-407.

sleep in him shall be changed, and made like unto his own glorious body; according to the mighty working whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself."

For burial at sea the same office is said with the appropriate change, "We commit his body to the deep in sure and certain hope of the Resurrection through our Lord Jesus Christ, at whose coming . . . the sea shall give up her dead and the corruptible bodies of those who sleep in him shall be changed and made like unto his glorious body . . ."

This consoling faith was also put into song, and from the earliest hymnody to that of our own day we have expression of a lively hope in that glory of Christ's Resurrection which we share. We have it in mediæval hymns such as, "*Dies iræ*" and "Jerusalem the Golden"; especially in the celebrated Easter hymn of the sixth century by Venantius Honorius Fortunatus, translated by John Ellerworth. It begins:

"Welcome, happy morning! age to age shall say,
Hell today is vanquished, heaven is won today.
Lo! the Dead is living, God forever more;
Him their true Creator, all His works adore.

"Come, Thou True and Faithful, now fulfill Thy word,
'Tis Thine own third morning; rise, O buried Lord!
Show Thy face in brightness, bid the nations see;
Bring again our daylight; day returns with Thee."

The author of this hymn, of which we give only the first and last stanzas, was born in Northern Italy A.D. 530 and led a strange, chequered life. Educated at Ravenna, he went on pilgrimage to Tours, a gay troubadour until he became a monk and finally Bishop of Portiers. When we analyze these two stanzas we can not fail to see his firm faith in Jesus Christ as Saviour, Conqueror of death, Creator of the universe, and Light of the soul. Here is testimony to faith in One who died, was buried, rose again, and will raise us at the last.

The final stanzas of "For all the saints who from their labours rest" also tell of the general resurrection:

"But lo! there breaks a yet more glorious day;
The saints triumphant *rise* in bright array;
The King of Glory passes on His way.
Alleluia!

"From earth's wide bounds, from ocean's farthest coast,
Through gates of pearl streams in the countless host,
Singing to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
Alleluia! "

And here is a modern voice in *The British Weekly*:

"I have a rendezvous with death
And those who've passed his portal grim;
They are not dead to me, and how
Can they be dead to God? to Him
Who is the God not of the dead
But of the living and of loss!
Who knows the anguish of the heart
For once His Son died on a cross.

"I have a rendezvous with God
For I would tell Him that I dare
Believe that all things work for good;
That all are safe in His strong care;
That when life's little day is done
I shall not sleep; I shall keep tryst
With Him who conquered death—the Christ! "
—Anon.

And S. Baring-Gould has a great hymn beginning, "On the Resurrection morning, soul and body meet again," which has these beautiful stanzas:

"For a space the tired body
Lies with feet toward the dawn;
Till there breaks the last and brightest
Easter morn.

"But the soul in contemplation
Utters earnest prayer and strong;
Breaking at the resurrection
Into song.

"Soul and body reunited,
Thenceforth nothing shall divide
Waking up in Christ's own likeness,
Satisfied."

And who can forget in this connection the hymn by Katharina Von Schlegel, born in 1697, and the music by Jean Sibelius?

"Be still, my soul! when dearest friends depart,
And all is darkened in the vale of tears,
Then shalt thou better know His love, His heart,
Who comes to soothe thy sorrow and thy fears:

"Be still, my soul! the hour is hastening on
When we shall be forever with the Lord;
When disappointment, grief, and fear are gone,
Sorrow forgot, love's purest joys restored.
Be still, my soul! when change and tears are past,
All safe and blessed we shall meet at last."

In regard to the nature of the resurrection, the old questions which Paul faced at Corinth are still with us, and the pendulum swings between speculative credulity and stark unbelief, to rest in the center of humble faith in the Word of God. "How are the dead raised, and with what body do they come?" And Paul's answer is given in the parable of the seed, sown to die and rise again; in the basic distinction between men and brutes; in the disparity between bodies terrestrial and bodies celestial (I Cor. 15:35-44).

Our speculations will never be satisfied but our faith can rest on what is revealed. "Flesh and blood can not inherit the kingdom of God," as Paul wrote, but he also wrote, "As we

have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly" (15:48-50). Origen, Swedenborg, and many others have tried to answer the same questions that Paul answered but failed to convince unbelief or only increased credulity and speculation. My professor at New Brunswick in 1890, Dr. Samuel Woodbridge, gave us his opinion and it satisfies me still:

"Of all these theories, and others like them, we have only to say that they are *speculations*, some of them nearly allied to the metempsychosis of the ancient religions and philosophies; for a *new* body is not a resurrected body; a stone *converted* into a crystal is the same, but a crystal *substituted* for the stone, is not the same. Nor does *consciousness* of identity prove *bodily* identity, it is the building that is torn down, that God promises to rear again. That He is *able* to do this, to raise if He *sees fit*, every particle of the dead body, no one who admits His *omniscience*, His *omnipresence*, and His *omnipotence*, will deny, nor that He can set aside the actings of natural law, and *guard the atoms* of the dead, if He *sees fit*; in fact, we are shut up to revelation which does not stand by the wisdom of man, nor by probabilities, but by the wisdom and power of God" (Notes in Classroom).

It is wiser to meditate on the glory of the resurrection than to speculate on the manner in which God will accomplish His promise. "I will raise him up at the last day" (John 6:44). "We shall be like him for we shall see him as he is" (I John 3:2). Do *you* believe that?

Resurrection is more than immortality. Paul had a far higher and greater faith than Plato. Nor must it be confounded or compared with the cases of reanimation, resuscitation, or return from the grave recorded in the Old Testament and in the New. Each of these persons experienced one birth and two deaths—the lads raised by Elijah and Elisha, the nobleman's daughter, the son of the widow of Nain, Dorcas and Lazarus—all returned to conscious life, but it was not life eternal, resurrection life. It was symbol and forecast of that

greater reality when death is swallowed up in victory and all the Children of the Resurrection are at home in the Father's house of many mansions.

On his deathbed, in 1572, John Knox, "a little after noon, asked his wife to read the fifteenth chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians and when she did so said, 'Is not that a comfortable chapter?'"⁵ It has been a comforting chapter to all who believe.

I once heard Billy Sunday, the evangelist, preach to a large audience in Pittsburgh on the hope of a glorious resurrection. The unforgettable climax of his dramatic sermon was the contrast drawn between the well-known funeral tribute given by Robert G. Ingersoll at the grave of his own brother, and Paul's funeral address (as Sunday imagined it) over a humble believer in the Corinthian Church—namely, the conclusion of the resurrection chapter! The contrast was startling, convincing, and deeply moving. In the one case "without Christ, without hope, without God in the world"; in the other, "Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."⁶

When the son of the great scientist T. H. Huxley died, Charles Kingsley, frankly and affectionately as an old friend, wrote him a letter on immortality and the consolation of the Gospel. Huxley's reply, given in seven full pages of a recent anthology, is characteristic of the hopelessness of agnosticism and its bitter cynicism. We quote brief paragraphs. The whole letter speaks volumes.⁷

My Dear Kingsley—I cannot sufficiently thank you, both on my wife's account and my own, for your long and frank letter, and for all the hearty sympathy which it exhibits—and Mrs. Kingsley will, I hope, believe that we are no less sensible of her kind thought of

⁵ Jane Stoddart, *New Testament in Life and Literature*, p. 318.

⁶ The address was given May 31, 1879, and is found in collected papers and orations, *Ingersollia*, New York Public Library.

⁷ *The Practical Cogitator or The Thinker's Anthology*, by Charles P. Curtis, Boston, 1945, pp. 513-519.

us. . . . Truth is better than much profit. I have searched over the grounds of my belief, and if wife and child and name and fame were all to be lost to me one after the other, as the penalty, still I will not lie. . . . To begin with the great doctrine you discuss. I neither deny nor affirm the immortality of man. I see no reason for believing in it, but, on the other hand, I have no means of disproving it. . . . You rest in your strong conviction of your personal existence, and in the instinct of the persistence of that existence which is so strong in you as in most men. To me this is as nothing. That my personality is the surest thing I know—may be true. But the attempt to conceive what it is leads me into mere verbal subtleties. I have champed up all that chaff about the ego and the non-ego, about noumena and phenomena, and all the rest of it, too often not to know that in attempting even to think of these questions, the human intellect flounders at once out of its depth. . . . Kicked into the world, a boy without guide or training, or with worse than none, I confess to my shame that few men have drunk deeper of all kinds of sin than I. Happily, my course was arrested in time—before I had earned absolute destruction—and for long years I have been slowly and painfully climbing, with many a fall, towards better things. And when I look back, what do I find to have been the agents of my redemption? The hope of immortality or of future reward? I can honestly say that for these fourteen years such a consideration has not entered my head. . . . ”

How hopeless and even heartless are the words of this great scientist when he stands beside the grave of his boy compared with the lively faith and undiscourageable hope of the poet, John Greenleaf Whittier:

“ Alas for him who never sees
The stars shine through the cypress trees!
Who hopeless lays his dead away
Nor looks to see the breaking day
Across the mournful marbles play.
Who hath not learned in hours of faith
The truth to sense and flesh unknown,
That life is ever Lord of Death,
And love can never lose its own! ”

And Robert Browning believed the Scripture that men would be “ recompensed in the resurrection at the last day ”:

“ All we have willed or hoped or dreamed of good, shall exist;
Not its semblance but itself; no beauty, nor good, nor power
Whose voice has gone forth but each survives for the melodist,
When eternity affirms the conception of an hour.
The high that proved too high, the heroic for earth too hard,
The passion that left the ground to lose itself in the sky,
Are music sent up to God by the lover and the bard;
Enough that He heard it once; we shall hear it by and by.”

This is what we mean when we confess with the whole Church Catholic: “ *I believe in the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting, Amen.* ” And in the pages of the New Testament it means all that and much, much more besides. Belief in the general resurrection strengthens us against fear of death and against immoderate sorrow for the death of believers. The departure of our beloved, because we are “ not ignorant concerning them that have fallen asleep,” makes sorrow joy in the hope of eternal reunion (I Thess. 4:13), and because believers are members of Christ and their bodies temples of the Holy Ghost, they shall surely be raised up at the last day. “ If the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you ” (Rom. 8:11).

IX

THE FIRST DAY OF EVERY WEEK

This day the peace that flows from heaven
Was unto the Apostles given,
When doors were closed at night;

This day the Holy Spirit's flame
Upon the Church's teachers came,
And filled their souls with light.

Still on this day with trumpet sound
The Gospel notes are ringing round,
To call the world to pray.

—Ancient Sabbath Hymn.

THE first Easter was on the first day of the week after the Friday of the Crucifixion and the Sabbath when Jesus' body rested in the tomb. The Early Church soon began to call this first day of the week the Lord's Day (Acts 20:7; I Cor. 16:2; Rev. 1:10). In these two statements of fact we have the twofold problem of why the first day of the week became the Christian sabbath and of when the Resurrection Day began to be a Christian festival. The answer to both questions is that the glory of Christ's Resurrection on the first day of the week was greater than the glory of the Jewish sabbath. The sabbath was indeed instituted by God (Gen. 2:1-3) and was prior to Moses, as may be noted in the story of Noah, in which the entire chronology of the flood is measured by intervals of a week. The first day that dawned fair and beautiful was a seventh day; and the day when the inmates of the ark were permitted

to disembark and when they offered sacrifices was likewise a seventh day. This was the day of Divine favour. It was Jehovah's day *par excellence* and does not have a Babylonian origin. The proof of this statement is given in full by a comparison of the Babylonian calendar and its sacred days (*dies fasti*) with the Jewish law of the sabbath.¹

Jesus Christ hallowed the Jewish sabbath and attended the synagogue as was the custom. But He also broke the traditional Pharisaic sabbath laws and declared that "the sabbath was made for man and not man for the sabbath: therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath" (Mark 2:27, 28).

Although the early converts to Christianity were Jews, yet from the outset they held meetings for worship on the first day of the week, the day on which Christ arose from the dead (Acts 2:1 and probably 20:7). On that day the apostle directed that offerings for charity be taken (I Cor. 16:1-2). This first day of the week began to be called the Lord's day, obviously and only, for the reason that it commemorated the Resurrection. When John writes, "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day" (Rev. 1:10), he could not have referred to the Jewish sabbath or to the prophetic term of the Old Testament, "Day of the Lord," but uses a Greek adjective (*Kyriake*); while in Peter's epistle we have "the day of the Lord," i.e., His Advent for judgment and (II Pet. 3:10) a different word (*Hēmera Kyriou*).

On the *first day* of the week our Lord repeatedly appeared to His disciples (Luke 24:15; John 20:1-20). And since Pentecost occurred fifty days after the second day of unleavened bread (Lev. 23:11, 15), it probably fell on the first day of the week in the year of Christ's crucifixion, and so the Holy Spirit fell on the apostles on the first day of the week (Westminster Bible Dictionary). The Christians at Troas broke bread on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7). All of this, together with Paul's reference in I Corinthians 16:2, have

¹ Article, *Sabbath*, Westminster Dictionary of the Bible.

led the Church from very early times to consider that day as commemorative of the Resurrection, and as the sabbath of the Church, in its observance of worship and consecration. We may almost say of this custom, *Quod semper ubique et ab omnibus*, what has always everywhere and by all Christians been practiced is truly ecumenical. The exceptions by certain Sabbatarian sects only prove the rule. Of the Lord's day Bishop Christopher Wordsworth sang:

"On thee at the Creation
The light first had its birth,
On thee for our salvation
Christ rose from depths of earth.
On thee our Lord victorious
The Spirit sent from heaven,
And thus on thee most glorious
A triple light was given."

And Isaac Watts, in his Sabbath hymn, calls it the day the Lord hath made:

"Today He rose and left the dead,
And Satan's empire fell;
Today the saints His triumphs spread
And all His wonders tell."

And as early as the sixth century John of Damascus writes an Easter hymn to be used every Sunday:

"The day of resurrection!
Earth tell it out abroad,
The Passover of gladness,
The Passover of God.
From death to life eternal,
From this world to the sky,
Our Christ hath brought us over
With hymns of victory."

But the observance of Easter as a church festival does not go back to the Early Church; to the Apostle Paul every day was

Christmas and every day Easter. He held so firmly to the Incarnation and the Resurrection that he lived daily in communion with Christ, "Made of the seed of David according to the flesh; and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead" (Rom. 1:3, 4). The eyewitnesses and their immediate successors did not need church festivals to remind them of facts. They remembered and recorded. They had the martyrs. Today, alas, there are some who celebrate the feast of the Resurrection and crowd the sanctuary, but deny the fact. In the words of the apostle, "they have a form of godliness but deny the power thereof." "On the third day he arose from the dead . . ." reads the solemn litany, but some say from the pulpit, "The ancestral creed should be, as it were, sung rather than said and be supplemented by a cool and sober statement of another creed containing only what we believe to be objectively and existentially true."² To such an extent has Liberalism put on the cloak of Jesuitism and deceived the common people!

Perhaps we may see also, in the long and bitter disputes regarding the *date* of Easter during the early centuries, a proof that when men forsake the substance of a dogma they still dispute its outer form.

At the end of the second century the celebration of Easter (from Eostre, a Teutonic goddess of springtime) as the feast of the Resurrection was general among Christians. It was, and is, the principal feast of the Christian year. Its origin was very early, much earlier than the celebration of Christmas. The connection between the Jewish Passover and Easter is not accidental but real and also ideal. Real, because Christ died for us on the Jewish Passover day; and ideal, because He is the anti-type of the paschal lamb and fulfills the annual sacrifice of Atonement by His death once for all on the cross.

² William P. Montague, "Two Creeds for Every Church," in *Liberal Theology—An Appraisal*, 1942, p. 162.

This connection with the Passover is evident from the fact that ancient Christianity celebrated both the death and rising again of our Saviour on the fourteenth day of the month Nisan. The Gentile converts rejected the Jewish custom. But they could not agree on the date. Those of Asia Minor held that Jesus died on the Passover day, the 14th of Nisan. Western Christians, however, had developed the practice of celebrating the Resurrection on a special feast day, namely, the Sunday following the 15th of Nisan. The Roman bishop, Victor (189–199), attempted to unify the practice and arbitrarily excommunicated the Eastern Church people who refused to follow the Western example. The issue was in controversy until the Council of Nicæa (325) decreed that Easter should be celebrated on the first Sunday following the Spring equinox. The controversy was long and bitter and gave rise to literature as unprofitable as it is diffuse.³

Pagan practices were introduced into Easter celebration from an early period, especially as the pagan festivities of the vernal equinox were celebrated at about the same time of the year. As in the case of Christmas, some of these pagan ceremonies were adopted and “baptised”; others were rejected and condemned.

As late as the fifteenth century it was the custom for the priests of Bavaria to tell humorous stories (*Risus Paschalis*) to their people on the Saturday before Easter as conclusion of the sad period of Lent and to inaugurate Easter joy! This was prohibited in 1670. The use of eggs to celebrate the day began, so some allege, because these were forbidden food in Lent! They were coloured for festivity. The egg was also considered a symbol of hidden life. Easter rabbits were introduced as an old pagan symbol of life and fertility. The use of candles and Easter fire arose also with symbolic reference to Christ's victory over the darkness of the tomb.

³ Cf. *Encyclopedia Britannica* and *Schaff-Hertzog Encyclopedia*, “Easter.” Three volumes by Joseph Schmidt in German, published at Regensburg (1904) and Freiburg (1907) give details of the controversy in Europe and North Africa.

Easter is the festival of light and joy after the forty days of fasting and the dark hours of Good Friday. We read, for example, of a modern candle-lighting service on Easter Eve at Athens. It was the most solemn service of the Greek Church. After prayers, when the midnight hour drew near, the Archbishop and his assistants, as well as the King and Queen, left the church to take their places on a raised platform outside. Thousands of people holding unlighted tapers gathered in expectation around the platform while they softly chanted hymns such as that written by John of Damascus in the eighth century in the old Convent of Mar Saba:

“Now let the heaven be joyful,
Let earth her song begin,
Let the round world keep triumph
And all that is therein.”

Then, just at midnight, the signal sound of a cannon is heard, the Archbishop raises the Cross and exclaims, “*Christos Anesti*,” “Christ is Risen.” This cry is echoed far and wide while the light of a thousand candles lit from hand to hand illumines the landscape. People clasp hands and repeat the cry of Easter, “Christ is Risen.” With such display of light and joy the Greek Church today celebrates the victory of Christ over the powers of darkness.

The paschal fire is traced back to A.D. 600 and has continued to be observed in the Greek churches to our own day. Special liturgies and liturgical dramas also were introduced at an early period. The liturgical colour for vestments was everywhere white, as the sign of joy, light, and purity. Both in the East and the West, churches and altars were adorned with candles, ornaments, and, later, with floral offerings.

Easter symbolism goes back to the catacombs, where they express the Christian hope of resurrection. The affirmation is symbolized in wall paintings, carved wood, or sculptured stone. The bird motif is common, the lion (of Judah) less so. The

peacock was taken from Greek art as symbol of immortality. At St. Stepheno, Bologna, it is found on an altar of the basilican church. The phoenix came into Christian art from Egypt, also as symbol of immortality and resurrection. But most common was the symbol of the fish (ἰχθῦς), found not only in the catacombs but in general use as symbol of the faith. The five letters were the initials of the confession, *Jesus Christ, Son of God and Saviour*. St. Clement of Alexandria (150–220) commends the use of the symbol on seals and rings. When a Christian met a person whose faith was in doubt he simply drew the outline of a fish to learn from the other's reaction whether he too was a member of Christ's church.⁴

A symbolism that across many centuries before Christ found a place in early Christianity is the use of candles. Ancient Hebrew custom required the lighting of a candle on the first, second, eighth, and ninth Passover nights. The Emperor Constantine honored Christianity and his own love of parade by causing tapers to be lit all over the capital city at Easter, as well as in the churches. Pope Zosimus introduced the custom of blessing an enormous candle to represent Christ as the light of the world (417 A.D.). We read that

“the service of the Paschal candle was read from rolls exquisitely written and illuminated. As the priest read from the roll the congregation was able to see the pictures on the outer side. Many rolls, dating back to the tenth and eleventh centuries, are still in existence. These rolls are called *exultets* from the first words of the hymn, ‘Let the angelic host of heaven now rejoice.’”⁵

There is no wealth of ancient Easter music or carols comparable with that of Christmastide. But there were liturgical dramas and miracle plays suited to Easter celebration. By the twelfth century the churches in England, France, and Germany enriched Easter Monday vespers by dramatical presentation of scenes from the Resurrection story in which Mary Magdalene,

⁴ Carl A. Glover, *The Easter Radiance* (Cokesbury Press, 1937), pp. 89–94.

⁵ *Idem*, p. 98.

Thomas, and the two travellers to Emmaus had part. The well-known Oberammergau Passion Play, which has drawn millions of spectators in the three hundred years of its history, is an example of such presentation.

The Coptic Church of Egypt offers a good type of the celebration by the Oriental churches. On Easter morning psalms and hymns of the Resurrection are sung, after which come the censuring of the altar and matin prayers. Then the communion (*Korban*) service for which the priest wears special vestments. The priests and deacons together sing in the old Coptic tongue a hymn of the Resurrection. At this point the cross and a picture of the Resurrection are taken, as a symbol, from a cavity under the altar. Then the audience, led by priests, marches in solemn procession around the church.⁶

To be at Jerusalem during Easter time is an unforgettable experience of the variety and deep sincerity of the services held by the various churches of Christendom. Jerusalem at that time is the Holy City for Jew, Christian, and Moslem. In rapid succession on the calendar come the Passover, the Moslem feast of Nebi Musa (Moses), and the Easter celebration of the Western and Eastern churches. The different services and languages used are an epitome of Church history. Greek, Syriac, Coptic, Armenian, Abyssinian (Geez), Latin, as well as English, German, French, Italian, and Russian, may be heard in rituals, sermons, or song. The ancient liturgies of St. James, St. Basil, St. John Chrysostom, compete with the Latin rite of Rome. The city is overcrowded with pilgrims from every quarter of the globe during Holy Week. The orthodox ceremony of feet-washing takes place in the courtyard of the Holy Sepulchre on Thursdays. At noon, Holy Saturday occurs the celebrated service of the Holy Fire, and at eleven P. M. the Orthodox and other Eastern churches begin an Easter Liturgy which lasts till well after midnight. An elaborate time-table of all the services in Jerusalem during Easter week from Friday

⁶ Butler, *The Ancient Coptic Churches of Egypt*, II:353.

to Sunday, with all the Latin pilgrimages, the Melkite and Anglican services, the liturgies of the Orthodox, Armenian, Syrian and Coptic rites, does not impress one with the unity of Christendom.¹

What conception does the Moslem gain of the reality of our Risen Saviour in this complex of conflicting ceremonies, some of them with puerile superstitions and observances? The Moslem pilgrims crowd through the streets and form processions to the shrine of Moses, *Nebi Musa*; Arabs and Jews visit the tomb of Abraham the friend of God, their common ancestor; while, even throughout Holy Week, one may witness pathetic groups of Jews saying prayers and shedding tears at the Wailing Wall of the ancient temple.

Easter is the great festival of Christianity not only in Jerusalem. Across the seven seas and in every land missionaries have brought the glad tidings, "Christ is risen indeed." On every Sunday evening, but especially on the evening of Easter Day, we may truly sing:

"We thank Thee that Thy Church unsleeping
While earth rolls onward into night,
Through all the world her watch is keeping
And rests not now by day or night.

"As o'er each continent and island
The dawn leads on another day,
The voice of prayer is never silent
Nor dies the strain of praise away."

When John Ellerton wrote these lines (1870) Christian missions had not yet touched every island, and there were vast areas in Africa, Central Asia, and South America without a witness to Christ's Resurrection. But every year the sentiment of the hymn, based on the prophecies of Scripture, is finding larger fulfillment. The story of the Empty Tomb and of the Risen Lord is now read and sung in a thousand languages.

¹ H. C. Luke, *Handbook of Palestine*, 1930, pp. 199-206.

Vast multitudes crowd churches and cathedrals, especially on Easter Sunday. The large Music Hall at Rockefeller Plaza, the great open-air services across our continent in crowded "bowls," stadiums, and Parks—all witness to the fact that Christ is risen. May we not hope and pray that on this "first day of the week," the great feast day of the Church, the Living Christ may, through sermon or song, appear unto thousands, as He did that first day of the week at the sepulchre! And that, with Thomas, they may recognize the scars, and in joyous faith cry, "My Lord and my God."

It is often a disappointment to witness how, in our great city churches, the elaborate music at Easter, the parade of flowers and ostentatious dress, seem to crowd out the message of the day from the pulpit. It began even in the days of the Apostle, as we can read between the lines in his epistles to the Colossians and Galatians. "How turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain." "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ." "If ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances . . . ?" "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God" (Gal. 4:9-11 and Col. 2:16, 17; 2:20; 3:1-3).

It has always been in days of crisis that the true Easter message has sounded from pulpit and choir loft down the ages. A vivid example in our day was Martin Niemoeller's great Easter morning sermon (March 28, 1938) just prior to his long, tortured imprisonment by the Nazis:

"Dear brethren, today we feel something of the harshness and inevitability of this 'Either-Or,' which has been in the world since Easter. The hostility against the preaching of the crucified and risen Saviour has blazed up along the world line, and on every side people try to persuade us that the old world is really wondrous beautiful, that the old world is on the best road to becoming the new world by its own efforts, and that the message of Jesus Christ has, therefore, so far as it deals with the forgiveness of sins, now become superfluous; and a convulsive effort is being made to reclaim Jesus for this side of the old world, and to do away with the uniqueness of His life and death, the mystery of His cross and His resurrection, as a meaningless piece of nonsense. . . .

"Throughout the centuries the risen Christ has gone before His community, and today too He goes before us, His victory will be our victory also. And just as our fathers in the faith believed in Him with that assurance which the risen Christ gave to His disciples, so we too are sure and will continue to proclaim, as a believing and professing community, what makes us glad deep down in our hearts, in the ups and downs amid which we live, in the great world which carries us along with it. I think what makes us glad with a great joy is this: '*The Lord is risen;*' He is really and truly risen!"⁸

⁸ Martin Niemoeller, *God is my Fuehrer*, N. Y., 1941, p. 191.

X

THE POWER OF HIS RESURRECTION

"The apostles testified not only to his preaching and his death, but to his resurrection, for they had seen him and received his spirit. They became new men. A current of divine life seized them, and a new fire was burning in their hearts. Fear, doubt, cowardice—all this was swept away."

—Adolph Harnack, *Mission and Expansion of Christianity*, Vol. I, p. 44.

MANY aspects of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ are emphasized in the New Testament, but two are outstanding. First, the Resurrection is the basic fact of the Christian faith, and, second, it is the basic dynamic for the Christian life. In the fifteenth chapter of First Corinthians we have the inspired demonstration of the *fact*. The last verse of that glorious chapter speaks of resurrection *power* and the victorious life: "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

The entire chapter is not only a close and logical argument for the bodily resurrection of our Lord and for the general resurrection at the last day. It is a powerful presentation of the fact of Christ's Resurrection as the very center and pivot of New Testament Christianity. It is also an answer to the agnostics and Sadducees of Paul's day and of ours, when they ask, "How are the dead raised up?" Yes, it is all this; but it is still more. It is the Hallelujah chorus of the apostle—and his triumphant boast as believer and missionary. It is a page torn from his spiritual diary, wet with tears, and yet full of joy unspeakable.

We must read between the lines and then we see that this great chapter is not a section from a catechism but a very human document divinely inspired. Paul uses the personal pronoun again and again. Recall phrases and words like these: "I am the least of the apostles"—after mentioning Peter and James and all the rest. "I persecuted the church of God." "If Christ hath not been raised our preaching is in vain." . . . "After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain, *but some are fallen asleep.*" Did he think of Stephen and others whom *he* put to sleep by persecution unto death? "If in this life only we have hope." . . . "We stand in jeopardy every hour." . . . "If I fought with the beasts at Ephesus"—whether he refers to a wild mob or a living lion in the arena. "I die daily." And looking at his scars, the marks of the Lord Jesus on his body from scourgings and imprisonment: "this corruptible must put on incorruption" . . . "we shall all be changed"—and how could he help remembering that vision on the road to Damascus and the Face he then saw in which was "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God," brighter than the noonday sun, when he wrote, "Death is swallowed up in victory."

"Over the pale and shimmering land,
Behold!—an utter Light!
Thence the abrupt and cancelled sun
Became a disk of night.

"There, blind with sight and deaf with sound,
At last I saw and heard
In worlds where sights are lost in Sight
And words are lost in Word.

"Others may argue and deny,
Others affirm and prove:
The one sea is immutable
Though tides may mass and move.

"I have been blind and therefore see,
And deaf and therefore hear:
Earth—credible and dim—becomes
Incredible and clear."¹

Or when he writes of "bearing the image of the heavenly," could Paul forget that other face, like an angel, of the martyr Stephen, "whose eagle eye could pierce beyond the grave," and who saw heaven opened and Jesus arising to welcome him?

No, this chapter is not dogma, it is throbbing life; it is not a co-ordinated creedal statement but a battle hymn of victory ending in a shout of triumph.

Because there is no other gospel than the Gospel of the Resurrection; because there is no other Saviour than He who died and rose again; because this present brief life, with all its weal and woe, is as nothing compared with the eternal resurrection glory—"therefore," and then follows his conclusion: "Be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord . . ." Immediately there follow the words, "And now concerning the collection"! Faith produces faithfulness and love ends in sacrifice "upon the first day of the week" (I Cor. 16:2).

The glory of the Resurrection was Paul's dynamic for service and also his daily inspiration. There were, we may believe, three stages in his friendship with Christ Jesus. He refers to them in his Epistle to the Philippians. After recounting the downward steps in Christ's humiliation by the incarnation and atonement through the bitter Cross, followed by His exaltation into glory, he makes this statement, "for whom I have suffered the loss of all things." The sacrificial love (*agapé*) of Christ and that of Paul in His service were of the same spirit. "That I might know him and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his suffering." First, Saul of Tarsus heard of Jesus

¹ *The Road to Damascus*, by E. Merrill Root, in *The Christian Century*, March 21, 1945.

(or, as some believe, actually met Him) and learned of the prophet of Nazareth and His mighty works. But he was not a disciple nor did he believe at first that Jesus was the Messiah. Then came his conversion on the road to Damascus, the power of the resurrected Christ convicting of sin—"Why persecutest thou me?"—and the great commission.

And the third stage in Paul's life was to become an apostle of the Crucified and Risen Lord—to share in "the fellowship of his sufferings," to make up that which was lacking in the sufferings of Christ (Phil. 3:10). Such is his statement, because he was convinced that only by suffering for Christ could he fulfill his apostolic ministry in Christ. And this union with Christ, in death to sin, and in life to righteousness, was Paul's daily dynamic. To him, Jesus "born of the seed of David according to the flesh was declared to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead."

Since Christ is risen from the dead, his conclusion is: "Be ye steadfast and unmoveable." Stand fast as He did. Stand fast on Him as your foundation, in Him as your Saviour. This faith overcomes the world. This faith is the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen. By it Paul saw the invisible realities, heard the inaudible heavenly voices, and laid hold of the intangible and enduring values. The Children of the Resurrection have put to death all doubt and scepticism and unbelief by boldly asserting: "Now is Christ risen. . . . Have I not seen the Lord Jesus Christ?" . . . "He appeared to me also." He was as certain of the fact as was Thomas the night Thomas saw the scars and exclaimed, "My Lord and my God."

Now is Christ risen. Therefore, we must be "always abounding in the work of the Lord." And what was that work? It was His labour of love, His patience of hope. "What doth the Lord require of thee," asks the prophet Micah, "but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" This is the real *Imitation of Christ*, as Thomas à Kempis

teaches us in his classic. Our Lord Jesus was the most just, the most merciful, the most humble of men in the days of His flesh. The tears, the sorrows, the joy, the love, the patience, the sacrifice of our blessed Saviour should be our daily example. "He laid down his life for us and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren."

Peter tells us that Jesus "went about doing good." Do we live like that? Peter learned at the Lake that the proof of love is service. "Feed my sheep; shepherd my lambs." James did not know what pure and undefiled religion was until Christ appeared to him, alive from the tomb! Then he said it was "to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." Who can do even that, save in the power of the risen Saviour? Because he believed this fact, Epaphroditus was "for the work of Christ nigh unto death."

Paul bore the print of the nails and the mark of the spear by his fellowship of suffering. Listen to a page from his diary:

"In labours abundant . . . in prisons, in stripes . . . in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day have I been in the deep . . . in perils . . . in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. . . . Always bearing about in my body the dying of the Lord Jesus."

And Paul draws a third conclusion regarding the power of the Resurrection. It not only undergirds faith and gives strength for the labour of love, but inspires an undiscourageable hope. No Christian can be a pessimist even in the darkest hour, for the dawn of an eternal morning lies just ahead!

The Cross cannot be defeated because it was itself apparent defeat, but actually real triumph. Therefore, it towers over the wrecks of time. As Herbert Yeuell put it:

"No church has ever been established merely on the death of a

martyr, great and sacred as martyrdom is. The law of life is that the martyr is retained as a good and wholesome memory. Christ transcends every dignity of martyrdom. Had He remained in the tomb, He might have been perpetually remembered as the greatest good man of all time, if remembered at all. Napoleon's closest adviser, Talleyrand, remarked to a religious enthusiast who wanted to establish a new religion, that if he could be crucified and dead and then raised from the dead, he doubtless could do it."²

The Garden Tomb was sealed once, never to be sealed again. Christ lives forever in resurrection glory and could, therefore, say before He ascended: "All power is given unto me. . . . Go ye, therefore. . . . Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

The Resurrection gave the Church its great Commission, and all those who have obeyed Christ's command have realized His promise and presence. His power was made perfect in human weakness. That is the story of Paul's life and of his successors down the centuries—Carey, Livingstone, Martyn, Hudson Taylor, and all the others.

It is significant that to Paul the thought of the Resurrection immediately suggests power (Phil. 3:10). The Greek word is allied to our *dynamic*; it is not atomic energy but spiritual effectiveness, spiritual release of God's power. Christ's Resurrection was as silent as the dawn of a spring morning. Such a stupendous event was not accompanied by signs of devastation or violence. Every indication in the records shows that the Resurrection took everyone by surprise. As Alice Meynell tells us:

"Public was death; but Power, but Might,
But Life again, but Victory,
Were hushed within the dead of night,
The shutter'd dark, the secrecy.
And all alone, alone, alone
He rose again behind the stone."³

² In *The Biblical Digest*, March, 1941.

³ Quoted in *The Expository Times*.

Because Jesus Christ was the Son of God, "it was not possible that he should be holden of death." He burst its bonds and by His life released such omnipotence for the Church that the gates of hades can never prevail against her. The power of His Resurrection began at Pentecost and has continued for these nineteen centuries around the world. In the daily experience of every believer we see release of that same Resurrection power. Moment by moment they are kept by Christ's love. And so they sing:

"Never a battle with wrong for the right,
Never a contest that He doth not fight;
Lifting above us His banner so white;
Moment by moment I'm kept in His sight.

"Never a trial that He is not there,
Never a burden that He doth not bear;
Never a sorrow that He doth not share;
Moment by moment I'm under His care.

The glorious company of the apostles and the noble army of martyrs from the days of Stephen to our own day of martyrdoms for Christ, all found their power in the Risen Christ. "I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me." "We are more than conquerors through him that loved us," and by His own death and resurrection has made us partakers of His power and glory.

Dr. John A. Hutton, writing in *The British Weekly* (March 21, 1940), used these words: "Jesus hath abolished death! If this is true, then the whole world must be aware of it. For after all, death is the great ground of fear. Mere enlightenment does nothing to help us, face to face with death. The amenities of civilisation fail us here. . . . Jesus Christ hath abolished death *by dying and rising again*."

XI

THE GOSPEL OF HIS RESURRECTION

“Coming the dead to seek, amazed, they found
 Two shining angels witnessing with joy
 Their Risen Lord. Their rapture knew no bound.
 Back to their brethren in His loved employ
 In haste they ran, the glorious news to spread,
 That Christ indeed had risen from the dead.”

—Lewis H. Court, in *The Christian*, London.

WHEN we read Paul's sermon from the Areopagus at Athens, we sometimes forget that this was only the climax of several days' preaching. He had "reasoned in the synagogue at Athens and in the market-place" with Jews and devout Greeks, Epicurean and Stoic philosophers (Acts 17:16-18). They considered him a setter-forth of strange gods, "because he preached Jesus and the Resurrection." It was *after* this that they dragged him to the Council or Court of Areopagus. He was brought there for inquiry into his teaching, since he was accused of setting forth strange gods. This was a capital offence, and the same charge had been made against Socrates.¹ The great discourse given us by Luke was, therefore, Paul's defence of his preaching "Jesus and the Resurrection." He had no other message. That was the very message, the glorious news which Luke tells us Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women "told the apostles." They had the news from the lips of angels, "Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen" (Luke 24:4-10). The apostles were from the very outset witnesses

¹ *Expositor's Greek Testament*, Vol. II, pp. 366-367.

of Christ's Resurrection. The election of Matthias to complete the number of the apostolic band was to this very end (Acts 1:22). Peter at Pentecost made this the center and climax of his appeal (Acts 2:32-36), "This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. . . ."

Again and again we read the burden of the earliest Christian Gospel. Through Jesus they preach the resurrection from the dead (Acts 4:2). They witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus (4:33). And Paul, in his defense at Jerusalem, standing on the stairs; again before the Council of the Sanhedrin; before Felix, and again before Agrippa, had no other message or plea (Acts 22:7; 23:6; 24:15; 26:23).

In all of Paul's epistles he bears witness to Christ crucified and risen again, as the very sum and substance of his message. The atonement on the Cross and the Resurrection as its seal and glory are never separated. We have it expressed very strongly in his statement in I Corinthians 15:1-5. We follow Moffatt's version, which shows the emphasis of the Greek text:

"Now, brothers, I would have you know the gospel I once preached to you, the gospel you received, the gospel in which you have your footing, the gospel by which you are saved—provided you adhere to my statement of it—unless indeed your faith was all haphazard. First and foremost, I passed on to you what I had myself received, namely, that Christ died for our sins as the scriptures had said, that he was buried, that he rose on the third day as the scriptures had said, and that he was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve; after that, he was seen by over five hundred brothers all at once . . ."

The rest of the chapter revolves in a great ellipse around the two foci, *Christ died for our sins, and Christ arose from the dead for our salvation*. That is the heart of the good tidings. If these two facts are left out, we have no message, no New

Testament, no hope for this world or the next. Evangelism, from Pentecost to the day in which we live, has no message other than that which Paul gave. It is interesting to find in the fourteenth edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica* (Vol. XIX, p. 240) these words of Professor W. W. Sweet of the University of Chicago: "Evangelism stands for a certain interpretation of Christianity emphasizing the objective atonement of Christ, the necessity of new birth or conversion and salvation through faith." That was the message of Peter at Pentecost and of Dwight L. Moody in Chicago. There is no evangel but these historic facts and their tremendous implications and demands.

In the midst of its comments on the news of the day, *The London Times* of April 18, 1946, printed an editorial, "Easter after the War." It said, in part:

"How if a man were to hear again that He who hung on the cross on the first Good Friday was not simply a man but the Son of God in human form? How if he were to hear that with the resurrection of Christ on the first Easter Day the full freedom of the human soul was finally attained, and that to a believer who accepts Good Friday and Easter Day in a spirit of true faith and penitence there is made available a source of spiritual strength which, however often he may fall, will raise him up again and that will, finally in the depths of eternity, bring him to that perfection which was in the beginning designed for him? *That is the core of the Christian faith.*"

At Marissa, Illinois, the local newspaper of similar date (April 19) had a feature article prepared by the Rev. C. C. McNary to show what would have happened if Jerusalem had had a fearless weekly newspaper A.D. 30: On the first page, under a two-column line drawing of Jesus bearing His cross, is the article entitled "Highlights of the Life of Jesus, Accused Nazarene, Who Performed Miracles." The date line of the paper reads, "Jerusalem, Judea, April 19th." In large letters across the page are these headlines: "Galilean Preacher Crucified by Mob; Followers Say: He is Alive Again." Other

front-page headlines are: "Disappearance of Body Shrouded in Mystery; Tomb Stands Empty!"

The Resurrection of our Saviour was indeed such an extraordinary, such a miraculous event that it could not have had other effect on the Roman soldiers, the apostolic band, and the Sanhedrin and the Jews than that delineated in the Gospels and the book of Acts. But the culminating impact of this event was the transformation of the disciples. Peter was transformed by it. Saul the persecutor became Paul the Apostle. James and Stephen died martyrs because they witnessed to it with a boldness born of conviction. It was this message that created the Church and converted the Gentiles, until from Jerusalem to Illyricum, from Antioch to Spain, messengers travelled with the good tidings of their great Commission.

Harnack's testimony to the miracle is as astonishing as it is irrefutable:

"About 50 A.D., Christianity was an ellipse whose foci were Jerusalem and Antioch; fifty years later these foci were Ephesus and Rome. The change implied in this proves the greatness of Paul's work and of the work done by the first Christian missionaries."²

But Paul's dynamic was not in himself; it was in his message, as Harnack indicates. He describes the "Religious Characteristics" of the earliest preaching. It included much else, but its determining factor was "The Risen Jesus is the Messiah." To this they brought witness from the Old Testament (I Thess. 1:9, 10).

"What is certain is that the *one* living God as Creator, Jesus the Saviour, the Resurrection, and ascetic self-control formed the most conspicuous articles of the new propaganda. Along with this, the story of Jesus must have been briefly communicated; the Resurrection was generally defined as the resurrection of the flesh, and self-control primarily identified with sexual purity and then extended to include renunciation of the world."³

² *The Mission and Expansion of Christianity*, Vol. I, p. 83.

³ *Idem*, Vol. I, pp. 91, 92.

"By the Resurrection," Harnack says, "the disciples became new men. A current of divine life seized them and a new fire was burning in their hearts. Fear, doubt, cowardice—all this was swept away."⁴

A careful student of the New Testament realizes that to the disciples Jesus never was a mere memory. He did not belong to the past, for He was a living presence. Even if they had "known him after the flesh, henceforth they knew him so no more." In the words of the Psalmist, they "set the Lord always before them," and He was at their right hand, with them *always* according to His last promise. They could not help preach His resurrection power and glory.

Although the extant writings of the Apostolic Fathers are far inferior to the New Testament Epistles, the heart of their message is the same. Polycarp, who was martyred A. D. 155, and Ignatius and Clement of Rome found their strength and their message in the Risen Christ. Clement writes in his epistle to the Corinthians:

"The apostles have preached to us. . . . Having received their command and being thoroughly assured by the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, and convinced by the Word of God . . . they went abroad publishing that the kingdom of God was at hand."⁵

Ignatius writes:

"To me Jesus Christ is instead of all the corrupted monuments of the world, together with those undefiled monuments, His cross and death and resurrection and the faith which is by Him."⁶

Again in his writings we have the statement, as of a creed:

"Jesus, truly born of the Virgin Mary . . . was truly crucified and dead: both those in heaven and on earth and under the earth being spectators of it. Who was also truly raised from the dead by

⁴ *Idem*, Vol. I, p. 44.

⁵ *First Epistle of St. Clement VII.*

⁶ *To the Philadelphians VIII.*

His Father after the manner as He will raise up us who believe in Him, by Christ Jesus, without whom we have no true life."⁷

Kirsopp-Lake, in his edition of *The Apostolic Fathers*, gives a list of all their quotations from the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. He finds one hundred and four from the Psalms and forty-eight from Genesis; but while many other books of the Old Testament are quoted and most of the New Testament writers, the *most frequent references (forty-five) are from the fifteenth chapter of First Corinthians!*

They witnessed to the great truth of the Resurrection in life and in death, by their martyrdom and in the inscriptions and symbols of the catacombs. The gospel story, written on stones which cry out, is the story of a living hope in the Crucified and Risen Redeemer. The frescoes and inscriptions found in the catacombs of Rome, Syracuse, and Alexandria are the witness of archæology to the New Testament faith of the second and third centuries. There are fascinating books on the testimony of this Christian art and symbolism, but they are neglected by the average reader.

Tertullian and his pupil, Cyprian, represent the apologetic preaching of the Latin Church in North Africa. The former was an ardent defender of the faith. His eloquence was overwhelming, his sarcasm merciless; but his central message was the Risen Christ. He tries to interpret this doctrine to pagan antagonists by showing its reasonableness, as follows:

"Day dies into night, and is buried everywhere in darkness. The glory of the world is obscured in the shadow of death; its entire substance is tarnished with blackness; all things become sordid, silent, stupid; everywhere business ceases, and occupations rest. And so over the loss of the light there is mourning. But yet it again revives, with its own beauty, its own dowry, its own sun, the same as ever, whole and entire, over all the world, slaying its own death, night—opening its own sepulchre, the darkness—coming forth

⁷ *To the Traillians IX.*

⁸ Hugh Thomson Kerr, *Preaching in the Early Church*, p. 77. We owe to this author also the references given regarding Patristic preaching.

the heir to itself, until the night also revives—it, too, accompanied with a retinue of its own. . . . Nothing perishes but with a view to salvation. The whole, therefore, of this revolving order of things bears witness to the resurrection of the dead.”⁹

Gregory Nazianzen and Basil were great preachers and theologians as well as friends. The former built a church in Constantinople which he called the Church of the Resurrection. He was a man of strong passion and eloquence, and when his father died at the age of almost a hundred, he himself delivered the funeral sermon before a large congregation, his mother and Basil being present:

“There is only one life, to behold the Life; there is only one death—sin; for this is the corruption of the soul. But all else, for the sake of which many exert themselves, is a dream which decoys us from the true; it is a treacherous phantom of the soul. When we think so, O my mother, then we shall not boast of life, nor dread death. For whatsoever evil we yet endure, if we press out of it to true life, if we, delivered from every change, from every vortex, from all satiety, from all vassalage to evil, shall there be with eternal, no longer changeable things, as small lights circling around the great.”¹⁰

The greatest preacher of the Greek Orthodox Church was John Chrysostom of “the golden mouth.” First at Antioch and then at Constantinople, he received that immortal title for his eloquence. At first he chose the monastic life for ten years; at the age of forty-one he became Bishop of Antioch. Later he was kidnapped and taken to Constantinople, where for five years he drew great crowds to his preaching. Twice he suffered exile. The second time he was expelled by the synod to the wild region of Mt. Taurus, Asia Minor, where, after three years of suffering and hardship, he died at the age of sixty-two (A.D. 407). One of his greatest sermons (and six hundred have been preserved) is the one preached at Antioch on Easter Day, when news of pardon for those who had destroyed statues

⁹ *On the Resurrection of the Flesh*, Chapter XII.

¹⁰ *Oration*, XVIII.

of the emperor and his wife came from Theodosius. Christianity had won over paganism. It was a time of spiritual revival, and in the joy of the Resurrection festival, Chrysostom exclaimed: “Blessed be God, through whose goodness we celebrate this holy feast with such gladness and rejoicing; He has restored the head to the body, the shepherd to the sheep, the master to his disciples, the high priest to the clergy.”

That his preaching was truly evangelical may be judged from the fact that he has seventy-four homilies on Corinthians, twelve on Colossians, and sixteen on First and Second Thessalonians. His message, too, was that of Christ who died and rose again. His well-known prayer of invocation is used by people of every land in their liturgies:

“Almighty God, unto whom all hearts are open and all desires known and from whom no secrets are hid; cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of Thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love Thee and worthily magnify Thy holy Name through Christ our Lord, Amen.”

It was when he *preached* that his prayer was answered: the secrets of human hearts were laid bare, their desires for peace found rest in Christ, and, cleansed from sin in the blood, they desired to love Him perfectly and to magnify His name. Chrysostom preached as he prayed, and revival followed.

What was the reformation under John Huss in Bohemia (1414), that under Wycliffe in England (1384), or that of Luther and Calvin in central Europe, but a revival of the old Gospel message with its emphasis on Christ's death on the Cross and His Resurrection? The Wesleyan revival in England was a return to the preaching of the Apostolic Church. The same is true of the revivals of religion in America under Whitefield (1738) and Jonathan Edwards (1742), called “The Great Awakening.”

We have attempted to show that the *Kerygma* (proclamation) of the Gospel from Pentecost and down the centuries was

the story of Christ's death and Resurrection. In our own day, Karl Barth, in his exposition of the Epistle to the Romans, called Europe back once again to the Word of God, to the words of ancient creeds, to the hymns of the Church and to the heart of the Gospel.

The true apostolic succession is that of the apostolic message, "We preach Christ and him crucified," Christ raised from the dead and victor over the grave (I Cor. 15).

As Joseph L. Hromadka puts it in his recent study of the present crisis:

"The ancient creeds and dogmatic formulas are signposts pointing in the direction we ought to walk in order to understand the very meaning of the apostolic and prophetic Word. . . . Without the Cross there is no resurrection, but without the resurrection the Cross is a bleak monument of death and despair."¹¹

Perhaps there is no more penetrating study of St. Paul as Christian and missionary than that made by the great German scholar, Dr. Adolph Deissmann. He calls attention to the great number of passages in the epistles in which Christ's death and Resurrection are linked together as of central significance.¹² And he goes on to show that even by the use of the Greek perfect participle instead of the aorist, Paul says, not "He who was crucified," but "He who is the crucified," linking death and glorious resurrection together. The two cannot be isolated but are inseparably connected. "Without the living Christ the cross would be a stumbling-block; the living Christ makes the Cross stand out in brightest morning splendour of Transfiguration glory."¹³

¹¹ *Doom and Resurrection*, pp. 108, 109.

¹² I Cor. 15:14, 17; II Cor. 13:4; Rom. 1:4; 4:25; 5:10; 6:10; 8:34.

¹³ Deissmann, *St. Paul, A Study in Social and Religious History*, p. 173.

XII

THE REWARD OF THE RIGHTEOUS

"In those heavenly constellations,
Lo! What differing glories meet;
Stars of radiance soft and tender,
Stars of full and dazzling splendour,
All in God's own light complete;
Brightest they whose holy feet,
Faithful to His service sweet,
Nearest to their Master trod,
Winning wandering souls to God."

—Frances Ridley Havergal.

SOME day or other the world and all you hold dearest in it will slip through your fingers. Only the good you have done will remain. This cannot pass away. It is treasure laid up in heaven. As Richard Crashaw (1645) put it in his quaint lines:

"All thy good works which went before
And waited for thee at the door,
Shall own thee there: and all in one
Weave a constellation
Of Crowns, with which the King thy Spouse
Shall build up thy triumphant browes."

It was at a feast given to our Saviour that He rebuked social selfishness and at the same time spoke of recompense at the Resurrection:

"When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbours; lest they also bid thee again, and a recompense be made thee. But when thou

makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: and thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just" (Luke 14:12-14).

A story is told in the Syrian "Acts of the Apostle Thomas," that the King of India entrusted him, as saint and carpenter, to build and finish a palace by the next year. But while the king was absent, Thomas went about the villages and cities ministering to the sick and poor from the royal purse. On his return, the king called the apostle saying, "Hast thou built me the palace?" And when the king asked to see it Thomas said, "Thou canst not see it now but when thou hast departed from this world then thou shalt see it and dwell in it."¹

The Resurrection day will be a day of recompense as well as of judgment. In the words of the Preacher, "He that hath pity on the poor lendeth unto the Lord and that which he hath given will he pay him again" (Prov. 19:17). In the Old Testament the recompense to the righteous is frequently promised for this life. The New Testament emphasizes the life to come. Matthew Henry comments on the passage in Luke:

"We may be sure that the charitable will be remembered in the resurrection of the just, for alms are righteousness. But the things of the world are not the best things and, therefore, God does not pay the best men in those things, but they shall in no wise lose their reward."

The parable of the pounds and the parable of the talents (Luke 19; Matt. 25) teach not only that there is to be the reward for faithfulness but that there are degrees of recompense according to faithfulness, at the resurrection of the just. Salvation from sin is only by the grace of God, and grace is unmerited favour. Nevertheless, the Apostle Paul, who emphasizes that we are saved by grace and never on merit of our own,

¹ F. C. Burkitt, *Early Eastern Christianity*, p. 201.

still speaks again and again of reward in heaven. "If a man's work abide he shall receive a reward" (I Cor. 3:14). If we build with gold and silver and precious stones, our very work shall abide, a spiritual heritage. If we use wood, hay, or stubble our work will perish, although we ourselves may be saved as by fire (I Cor. 3:10-15). And Jesus Christ Himself lays emphasis in His teaching on the recompense, reward, honour and glory that shall be given to such as are faithful stewards or martyrs (witnesses) of His gospel. Each of the seven Beatitudes is a promise of reward not only in this life but in the life to come. The closing promise reads: "Rejoice and be exceeding glad for great is your reward in heaven, for so persecuted they the prophets that were before you" (Matt. 5:12). And He speaks of degrees of reward—a prophet's reward, a righteous man's reward and the reward of the humblest disciple. Even a cup of cold water given in Christ's name has eternal recompense (Matt. 10:40-42).

Paul, in his great chapter on the Resurrection, alludes to it by using a beautiful metaphor:

"There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption" (I Cor. 15:40-42).

"One star differeth from another star in glory"—did he remember the promise in Daniel, "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever" (Dan. 12:3)? Paul's epistles are full of stars and music; his imagination was kindled by his dauntless voyages and midnight travel across the Roman empire from Jerusalem to Illyricum. One of the best interpreters of Paul's inner life, Frederic W. H. Myers, writes:

- " Stars in the firmament above him beaming,
Stars in the firmament, alive and free,
Stars, and of stars the innumerable streaming,
Deep in the deeps, a river in the sea;—
- " These as he watched thro' march of their arising,
Many in multitudes and one by one,
Somewhat from God with a superb surprising
Breathed in his eyes the promise of the sun.
- " Not in the west is Thine appearance ended,
Neither from dark shall Thy renewal be.
Lo, for the firmament in spaces splendid
Lighteth her beacon-fires ablaze for Thee;—
- " Holds them and hides them, drowns them and discovers,
Throngs them together, kindles them afar,
Sheweth, O Love, Thy multitude of lovers,
Souls that shall know Thee and the saints that are.
- " Look what a company of constellations!
Say can the sky so many lights contain?
Hath the great earth these endless generations?
Are there so many purified thro' pain? " ²

" Star differeth from star in glory." When God bade Abraham count the stars of the firmament He said, " So shall thy seed be " (Gen. 15:5). The true, spiritual seed of Abraham is countless, diverse and glorious as the stars. Astronomy goes into calculations and lists of constellations; the Bible points to the deeper symbolism in ecstasy of adoration! So does Shakespeare:

- " Sit, Jessica. Look how the floor of heaven
Is thick inlaid with patines of bright gold:
There's not the smallest orb which thou behold'st
But in his motion like an angel sings,
Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubims.
Such harmony is in immortal souls;

² Myers' *St. Paul*, pp. 49, 50.

But whilst this muddy vesture of decay
Doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it." ³

What a harmony of immortal souls in glory will that be when from Abel, the first martyr of the Old Testament, to John on lonely Patmos, with their countless successors, " the glorious company of the Apostles, praise Thee; the goodly fellowship of the Prophets, praise Thee; the noble army of martyrs, praise Thee; the holy church throughout all the world," and down all the ages, praise Thee, Father, Son and Holy Spirit!

Then the great company of the redeemed will each receive recompense according to their works, and shine as the firmament forever, star differing from star in glory. " Then shall the King say to those on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you before the foundation of the world " (Matt. 25:34).

The greatest recompense of the saints in heaven, however, will not be rewards or crowns of glory but their emancipation. Here, in this body pent, we are only prisoners of hope. The day of resurrection will burst our shackles and set us free into a larger, higher, purer life. There is perhaps no better interpretation of this emancipation of the soul than the words of John Donne, foremost preacher of his day, in a remarkable sermon preached on Easter day at St. Paul's in 1624. He speaks of the soul in glory:

" Her measure is enlarged, and filled at once; there she reads without spelling, and knows without thinking, and concludes without arguing; she is at the end of her race, without running; in her triumph, without fighting; in her Haven, without sayling; a freeman, without any prentiship; at full yeares, without any wardship; and a doctor, without any proceeding: She knowes truly, and easily, and immediately, and entirely, and everlastingly; nothing left out at first, nothing worne out at last, that conduces to her happinesse. What a death is this life! what a resurrection is this death! For though this world be a sea, yet (which is most strange) our Harbour is

³ *Merchant of Venice*, Act V: 1.

larger than the sea; Heaven infinitely larger than this world. . . . Surely the number of them, with whom we shall have communion in Heaven, is greater than ever lived at once upon the face of the earth: and of those who lived in our time, how few did we know? And of those whom we did know, how few did we care much for? In Heaven we shall have Communion of Joy and Glory with all, alwaies; *Ubi non intrat inimicus, nec amicus exit*, Where never any man shall come in that loves us not, nor go from us that does.”⁴

“*Joy with all, always*,” that is the fullness of joy at God’s right hand to which the Psalmist refers (Psa. 16:11).

If the joy of the Lord is to be our portion forever, we can find it analyzed and depicted in God’s Word. The Bible is a glad Book; it brings good tidings of great joy. Even mirth has its legitimate place in the Christian life, and perhaps no language has so many terms for joy as the Hebrew, which uses ten different words to describe it. The mountains clap their hands and the forests break forth into singing for the Psalmist. God’s saints are told to shout for joy. Gladness, contentment, cheerfulness, exultation characterize the Hebrew tradition. The temple worship was with music and song. The Psalms abound in hallelujahs, and the prophets of Israel foretold a golden age yet to be. Who can read the glorious promises in Isaiah without realizing that they refer not to a mere national and earthly Zion, but to the Heavenly Jerusalem and the eternal City of God (Isa. 35:51 and 61). Jesus Christ was “a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief,” but the word “joy” was ever on His lips, and He bade His disciples rejoice as at a wedding, “while the bridegroom was with them.” He came in the spirit of the Old Testament prophets and fulfilled their ideal picture. There was joy at His birth and in His presence; joy when He healed the sick and raised the dead. At His Resurrection the disciples returned to Jerusalem with great joy (Luke 24:52), and in John’s Gospel He Himself speaks of His joy

⁴ *Complete Poetry and Selected Prose of John Donne*, New York, 1941, p. 379.

and their joy and eternal joy eight times—and that on the night in which He was betrayed!

There is a short passage in the tenth chapter of Luke’s Gospel telling of the return of the seventy after their successful missionary tour, which speaks of three kinds of joy and which may be analyzed as follows:

v. 17	v. 20	vv. 21-23
THE JOY OF SUCCESS Earth’s Joy,	THE JOY OF PERSONAL SALVATION The Heart’s Joy,	THE JOY OF BRINGING SALVATION TO OTHERS Heavenly Joy,
that is:	that is:	that is:
Joy in the Past The Joy of Power The Joy of Faith The Joy of the Servant The Joy of Doing The Joy Without	Joy in the Present The Joy of Peace The Joy of Hope The Joy of the Disciple The Joy of Being The Joy Within	Joy in the Future The Joy of Knowledge The Joy of Love The Joy of the Master The Joy of Giving The Joy Above

Such analysis indicates how greatly the joy of heaven will excel all the joys of earth. The danger of the first kind of joy is pride and self-congratulation. One may cast out demons and yet be a child of darkness (Matt. 7:22). Those whose work is crowned with success may rejoice only with trembling. How often this joy is ephemeral and disappointing.

The Joy of Salvation is a higher joy. The names written in heaven are recorded, not only in the Book of Life, but on the foundation stones of the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:14). How it must have startled John to see his own name there! This joy no other spirit can share with the human spirit, nor experience; it is the joy of restored communion (I Pet. 1:8; Phil. 4:4; Psa. 63:5, 6).

Yet there is a still higher joy. When all the saints meet in glory, they will share the very joy of the Master, which is supreme. The Greek word used is more emphatic. It is the joy of the angels. Like a vein of gold from the Gospel of John, these verses are found in the bedrock of the Synoptics, a cry of conscious exultation—the joy of coming victory; the

Man of Sorrows who sees by faith of the travail of His soul and is satisfied. "In that same hour he rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth that thou didst hide these things from the wise and understanding and didst reveal them unto babes. . . ."

The Bible also indicates that the recompense of heaven for faithful service is not only the *joy* of the Lord but the *work* of the Lord. "His servants shall serve him"; "Thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will set thee over many things"; "My Father worketh hitherto and I work"—such words of Scripture give, not a static, but a dynamic idea of the future life. They do not picture a stagnant bliss without progress or development. Recompense for those who have "climbed the steep ascent of heaven through peril, toil and pain" is not repose of the eager spirit, but more climbing. There may be many labours of love as well as many mansions in the Father's house, where even the angels, as we gather from the book of Revelation, are ceaselessly active in their appointed tasks (Rev. 4:8-11).

"Surely the life of the future [writes J. M. Shaw] will not be a mere contrast to the best life of earth. Rather will it be, we may well expect, a heightening and transfiguring of the life of the present, a life in which man's whole nature springs into a new vividness of activity, and the energies and powers of this life, set free from the hampering restrictions and limitations of the body of flesh and blood and provided with what Paul calls a 'spiritual' body, i.e., a body which shall be the fit organ and instrument of the spirit under more spiritual conditions, shall win greater heights of achievement than were possible to us here. 'My Father worketh even now,' said Jesus, 'and I work' (John 5:17). And if God and Christ are for ever working, it would seem that those who would increasingly resemble them in spirit and in character must participate in the same life of work and activity."⁵

The occasion when Jesus said, "My Father worketh hitherto

⁵ *Life After Death*, p. 28.

and I work," was when He met the accusation of the Jews that He broke the sabbath in healing the man born blind. His assertion was that the work of God the Father had not come to an end on the seventh day but continued until the present hour. It was characteristic of God to work His work continually. The same thought is expressed by Philo: "God never stops working, for, as it is the property of fire to burn and of snow to be cold, so God's property is to work."⁶

We are reminded of the words, "Blest work, if thou wert curse of God, what must His blessing be?" The command to Adam to till the ground, however, was not a curse but a blessing in disguise. Work is of God, idleness of the devil. There may be idleness in hell but not in heaven.

We are told of the Scots theological Professor Blackie that in his old age, even when on holiday in the Highlands, he filled up much of his time with hard mental work. Unqualified repose depressed him. "My Father worketh hitherto and I work," was a text he often quoted. Would such a disciple be content in a heaven of inactivity? On the contrary he is only an example of the restless longing for larger horizons, greater tasks and more eager desire to work for the Saviour, which we find in so many of the saints.

Paul the aged pressed toward the mark of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. His candle burned brighter until the perfect day. There was no let-up in his apostolic activities. The life of Raymund Lull, the mediæval missionary, affords another example. He writes: "Men are wont to die, O Lord, from old age, the failure of natural warmth and excess of cold; but thus if it be Thy will, Thy servant would not wish to die; he would prefer to die in the glow of love, even as Thou wast willing to die for him." And when he was over eighty, on his way to preach Christ to the Mohammedans of North Africa, he exclaims:

⁶ Quoted in *Expositor's Greek Testament*, Vol. I, p. 238.

"As a hungry man makes despatch and takes large morsels on account of his great hunger, so Thy servant feels a great desire to die that he may glorify Thee. He hurries day and night to complete his work in order that he may give up his blood and his tears to be shed for Thee."⁷

Horatius Bonar put it for himself and for us all in two stanzas of a forgotten hymn:

"Sin worketh, let me work, too;
Sin undoeth, let me do,
Busy as sin my work I'll ply
Till I rest in the rest of eternity.

"Death worketh, let me work, too;
Death undoeth, let me do;
Busy as death my work I'll ply
Till I rest in the rest of eternity."

But would even Bonar or any strenuous Christian ever be happy to stand idle all the days of eternity? No, "his servants shall serve him" for ever and ever, "and his name shall be on their foreheads" and "there shall be no night," for His service is perfect freedom and perfect rest.

⁷ Zwemer's *Raymund Lull*, p. 132.

XIII

THE GLORY THAT EXCELLETH

"God with God dominion sharing,
And Man with man our image bearing,
Gentiles and Jews to him are given:
Praise your Saviour, ransom'd sinners,
Of life, through him, immortal winners;
No longer heirs of earth, but heaven.
O beatific sight,
To view his face in light:
Hallelujah! "

—James Montgomery

THERE is perhaps no word more frequently used in Christian worship and read in the Scriptures, but less understood, than the word *glory*. Whether we begin worship by saying, "Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost," or sing the popular chorus, "That will be glory for me"—what do we really mean? By derivation the Hebrew word for glory, *kabod*, means that which is heavy, that which has weight and, therefore, is important and illustrious. The Greek word in the New Testament is *doxa*, to be well-known or celebrated. We learn from its use rather than from its derivation the actual import and connotation of the word glory as used in the Scriptures. Paul speaks of Christ's glorious body (Phil. 3:21), of His glorious power (Col. 1:11), of His glorious appearing (Titus 2:13). In the Epistle to the Hebrews we read of Jesus "for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man" (Heb. 2:9). And Peter refers to the glory of the risen Saviour

in these words: "God raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory," and "of the sufferings of Christ and the glory which should follow" (I Pet. 1:21 and 11).

In all of these passages there seems to be direct reference to the glory of Christ's Resurrection body—so different from the body of His humiliation in the days of His flesh, for

"The head that once was crowned with thorns
Is crowned with glory now."

Jesus Himself was conscious of a glory that was His before He came to earth and which would be His after His suffering on the Cross. How else can we explain His prayer (John 12:27, 28), "Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again"? Or what can we say of the still stronger assertion in John 13:32, made just before the experience of Gethsemane: "Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him. If God be glorified in him, God shall also glorify him in himself, and shall straightway glorify him"? Who can fathom the infinite depth of such self-assertion! And immediately after *such* words, there shines forth the reality of His humanity enshrined in conscious deity: "Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me: and as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come; so now I say to you . . ."

Once again in His high-priestly prayer our Saviour speaks of the glory of His Resurrection: "Now, O Father, glorify thou me with the glory which I had with thee before the world was" (John 17:5). What did He mean?

In numerous passages of Scripture it is said that God has done certain acts *for His own glory* (Isa. 42), that man should *glorify* God (I Sam. 6:5; I Cor. 6:20; 10:31, etc.). But how can man "glorify" the Supreme Being, who is *absolutely* glorious in holiness and perfection? To this ques-

tion infidels answer that it is absurd to suppose that God is a vain being; that so insignificant a creature as man can bring to God any kind of pleasure or satisfaction; or that God would demand from man a fictitious "glory" which He does not require, and by which He could not feel flattered without exhibiting weakness and, consequently, imperfection. All this argument is based on the misconception of a word. It is the nature of an omniscient and free Being to act in view of a certain aim and motive. But God can have no higher aim, no object more worthy of Himself than to exert His perfections, His power, His wisdom, and especially His benevolence. Hence the creation of beings endowed with sense, intellect and freedom. "God willed," says St. Augustine, "the existence of beings to whom He could manifest His love." In doing this, He also showed forth His glory: and man glorifies God by reciprocating the Divine Love.

We must turn to the Old Testament for glimpses of that glory of the Lord which was fully revealed in the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. The glory of the Lord sometimes denotes the fulness of the majesty of God revealed in the world and made known to men (Num. 14:21, 22; Isa. 6:3; 66:19, etc.) In other places it denotes some outward and visible manifestation of the Divine presence (Ex. 33:17-23; Ezek. 1:28; 9:3; 10:4, 18, 19). And the transcendent effulgence of God's light, visible in some way to Moses and to Ezekiel, is also referred to by Luke as occurring at the Incarnation, "The glory of the Lord shone round about them" (2:9); and at the Transfiguration, "when they were awake they saw his glory, and the two men that stood with him" (9:32). "The fashion of his countenance was altered and his raiment was white and glistening" when the voice from the cloud said, "This is my beloved Son: hear him."

There is also a striking reference in John's Gospel to the Messianic prophecies of Isaiah. He is quoting from the fifty-third chapter and then says abruptly, "*These things said Esaias*

when he saw his glory and spake of him"—and the context plainly indicates that John refers to Jesus Christ. In the margin the reference is to the vision of Isaiah in chapter six:

"I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims: each had six wings; with twain he covered his face and with twain he covered his feet and with twain he did fly. And one cried to another, Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory."

Was this not the same face and form that Stephen saw in the hour of his martyrdom? Was it not the same face that shone brighter than the noonday sun on prostrate Saul, saying, "Why persecutest thou me?" And did not Moses receive the complete answer to his ardent prayer, "Show me thy glory," when with Elijah on Mount Hermon he saw Christ and "talked with him about his exodus which he should accomplish at Jerusalem"?

We can only compare such incomparable manifestations to the *Shekinah*, a word used by the later Jews to denote the cloud of brightness which symbolized the Divine presence, as in Exodus 24:16 and I Kings 8:10. The presence of the *Shekinah* was reckoned as one of the special blessings of Israel (Rom. 9:4); although, according to the rabbis, it was wanting in the Second Temple. According to the Epistle to the Hebrews, Jesus Christ is Himself the *Shekinah*, "the brightness of God's glory and the express image of his person."

The Jewish Targum substitutes the word *Shekinah* for face-of-God and interprets it by the Greek word *doxa*, glory of God, in the Septuagint. Maimonides regarded the *Shekinah* as equivalent to the *Memra* or *Logos* and a distinct entity—a light, intermediary between God and the world. The *Shekinah* is even at times identified with the glory of Jehovah. "The *Shekinah* never came really in touch with the earth nor did

Moses and Elijah ever ascend to highest heaven." It was the *Shekinah* that appeared to Moses in the Bush and rested on the Ark of the Covenant. The Holy Spirit, according to the Talmud, had the form of a dove, and the *Shekinah* had wings. Moses, when he died on Nebo, lay in its pinions. The saints enjoy the light of the *Shekinah* in heaven (Article, *Shekinah*, in the *Jewish Encyclopedia*).

A beautiful story is told in this connection. When the Emperor Hadrian one day said to Rabbi Joshua bin Hananiah, "I desire greatly to see thy God," Joshua requested him to stand facing the brilliant summer sun and said: "Gaze upon it." The emperor said, "I am unable to do so." Then said Joshua, "If thou canst not look upon a creature and a servant of God, how much less mayst thou gaze upon the *Shekinah*." The Jewish idea of the *Shekinah* is not very far distant from the New Testament account of the post-Resurrection appearance of our Lord. "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father full of grace and truth." To Paul, the brightness of that glory exceeded the noonday sun, and he states, "I could not see for the glory of that light."

When we ask ourselves, therefore, what did the guard of soldiers see and hear that first day of the week when they fled in abject fear from the sepulchre? What did the women see? Why did Jesus say to Mary, "Touch me not"? Why did John, who had leaned lovingly on Jesus' bosom, fall at His feet as dead on lonely Patmos? Then the only answer is found in what they saw and the description of God's glory manifested in the Old Testament days to Moses, Isaiah, and Ezekiel. What those saw, although veiled in flesh, these saw. It was after His resurrection that Jesus opened the understanding of His disciples concerning the things "written in the law of Moses and in the prophets and in the psalms concerning himself" (Luke 24:44).

The Apostle Paul compares the glory of Moses' face, when he came down from the mount after tarrying forty days, with the face of Jesus Christ. It is a remarkable passage in every respect and worthy of careful study (II Cor. 3:7 to 4:6). He begins by describing the glory of Moses' countenance when he came down with the tables of stone, a minister of the letter of the law, and had to veil his face from the Israelites. He ends by saying that "if that which was done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious. . . . But we all," because of Christ's Resurrection, "with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." And then, after saying that this Gospel is hid only to those that are lost, he ends with the climax of his argument: "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (II Cor. 4:6).

That was the face which Paul saw on the Damascus Road. That was "the gospel of the Face" made memorable in a famous sermon on this text by Horace Bushnell. "Faces," says he, "are the natural images or exponents of persons, windows in bodies at which we see the souls looking out. Every face accurately represents the man behind it; so that when we get once thoroughly acquainted with him, we can not imagine the possibility that he shall have a face at all different." Then he goes on to show how the Gospel record gives us such a portrait of the face of Jesus Christ as fascinates us but also awes us; a face of wonderful compassion and tenderness but with eyes as a flame of fire against all hypocrisy. Not the face of two persons, a Son of God and a Son of man, but "a solidly concrete, impenetrable, unsolvable person—God's full beauty and love in human type." This is no mere theophany but a face that in the days of His flesh looked and loved and reflected suffering and joy for thirty years and more. "Who of us has not sighed many times for a look upon that face and

the light of the knowledge of the glory of God therein revealed!"¹

All the glorious theophanies of the Old Testament, to Abraham and Hagar, to Moses and Gideon, to Isaiah and Ezekiel, had no glory like that of the Resurrection form and face of our Saviour "in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth" (II Cor. 3:10). Those were vision, this was reality. Those were previews and rehearsals for the Incarnation, this is God manifest in the flesh, seen of angels and glorified by His Resurrection!

"Look, ye saints, the sight is glorious;
See the Man of sorrows now!
From the fight returned victorious
Every knee to Him must bow.
Crown Him! Crown Him!
Crowns become the victor's brow.

"Hark those bursts of acclamation;
Hark those loud triumphant chords!
Jesus takes the highest station,
O what joy the sight affords.
Crown Him! Crown Him!
King of kings and Lord of lords."

So Thomas Kelly described the Resurrection glory in his well-known hymn written more than a century ago—a hymn that links the glory of the Cross with the glory of the Empty Tomb and the glory of the Ascension.

And Paul interprets that last event:

"He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things. And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ" (Eph. 4:10-13).

It is "the glory that excelleth" which the Risen Christ sheds abroad through His Holy Spirit upon the Church. He gives

¹ "The Gospel of the Face" in *Sermons on Living Subjects*, 1872, pp. 73-90.

gifts even to the rebellious, for, in the beautiful words of Shakespeare,

“Glory is like a circle in the water
Which never ceaseth to enlarge itself.”²

The reason the face of Moses shone was because he had tarried on the mount with God. It is well to remember Moses' experiences, for they, as Paul reminds us, are typical for us and for all time. It began with him in a great renunciation and decision. “He esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than all the wisdom of Egypt.” “He chose affliction with the people of God rather than the pleasures of sin for a season.” *Then* his face began to shine. Again, in the desert of Midian, he caught more than a glimpse of the Divine in the commonplace. The Burning Bush was a theophany, which burned in his heart as well as in the desert waste. With good reason the churches of Scotland put that Burning Bush on their crest as Children of the Covenant!

Afterwards Moses tarried on the mount for forty days, and when he came down his face shone more than ever. Yet he was discontented, ever thirsting for a closer vision of God. “Show me thy glory” was the prayer of the man with a face already shining. And we read that when he stood in the cleft of the rock covered by His hand, the Ineffable Glory passed by, and, gazing after its departing splendour, he heard the words: “The Lord merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abundant in loving kindness for thousands, and forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty.” *Then* Moses made haste and bowed down to the earth and worshipped (Ex. 33:18–22).

² *Henry the VIII*, 1:2.

XIV

THE HOLY CITY, THE NEW JERUSALEM

“There is a wondrous city, beautiful, bright and fair;
The throne of God is in it and the Glory of God is there.
And, oh, the joy of knowing, as the Lord's redeemed can know,
While through the tribulations of this earthly life we go,
There shall be no more toiling; there shall be no more care;
There shall be no more burdens, grievous and hard to bear;
There shall be no more crying, hunger, or thirst, or fears;
There shall be no more heartache through the eternal years! ”
—Annie Johnson Flint.

THE glory of Christ's resurrection and our own has for its climax the Holy City, the New Jerusalem. Our Saviour, in the night in which He was betrayed, spoke of “the *place*” He was going to prepare for us and of the Father's house and “the many mansions.” “I will come again,” He said, “and take you unto myself, that where I am there ye may be also.” And in His high-priestly prayer He also refers to the Holy City: “Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory.” The goal of all Resurrection glory, therefore, is fellowship in the Holy City, the New Jerusalem. This was the anticipation of prophet and seer in the Old Testament and of the apostles and martyrs of the New Testament Church.

Felix Adler, the son of a Hebrew rabbi and professor of Social Ethics, voiced the longings of Modern Judaism in the language of a hymn (1878) beginning,

“Hail the glorious golden city
Pictured by the seers of old.”

Its third stanza tells of that home of God's elect:

“ And the work that we have builded,
Oft with bleeding hands and tears,
Oft in error, oft in anguish,
Will not perish with our years:
It will live and shine transfigured
In the final reign of right;
It will pass into the splendors
Of the city of the light.”

According to the Westminster Shorter Catechism (which expresses the faith of the Reformers), “ the souls of believers are at death made perfect in holiness and do immediately pass into glory. Their bodies, being still united to Christ, do rest in their graves until the resurrection.” Such is undoubtedly the teaching of the New Testament. We all recall the promise of our Saviour on the Cross to the dying thief, “ This day shalt thou be with me in paradise.” And Paul's epistles are eloquent with promises of the glory that shall be revealed when we forsake the present tabernacle and inherit a new building, a body which will be like unto His glorious body. “ We shall be like him,” says John, “ for we shall see him as he is.”

Bible teaching about heaven is not so popular as it once was. We have become too earthly-minded. The glory of this material world blinds us to the greater reality and glory of the world to come. It is not necessary always to interpret literally some of the highly symbolical and poetical descriptions of heaven. But the symbolism is as significant as it is magnificent. Such descriptions are intended to kindle our faith, not to satisfy curiosity. And we learn, first of all, that heaven is a place as well as a state, that heaven is fellowship, home, glory, joy, peace, rest, and service. Each of these elements enters into the picture of the Celestial City.

The heaven of glory is the “ third heaven ” of which Paul speaks (II Cor. 12:2). There is, first, the heaven close to us

and visible above us, of birds and clouds and rain and dew; the second heaven is the starry firmament to which the Psalmist and Isaiah refer so frequently: “ When I consider the heavens, the work of thy fingers . . . what is man that thou art mindful of him? ” And Isaiah points to the countless stars of the oriental skies to convince Israel that God has not forgotten one of His children (40:26).

The heaven of clouds and sunsets is beautiful; the starry firmament shines with splendour; but when, with Paul, we are “ caught up into the third heaven,” the heaven which is our final home, our imagination is baffled by its glory and grandeur. Of this abode of the saints we read both in the Old and the New Testament, that “ eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit ” (Isa. 64-4; I Cor. 2:9).

“ I know not, O I know not, what joys await me there,
What radiancy of glory, what bliss beyond compare.”

All the heavenly abodes and delights pictured in the crass eschatology of Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, or Islam are not worthy of record and remembrance beside the description of the Holy City, the heaven of God's elect, as given in the pure pages of Scripture.

First of all, we know that heaven is the dwelling place of God and of Christ Jesus our Saviour. “ Look down from thy holy habitation from heaven and bless thy people,” said Moses (Deut. 26:15). Solomon's great prayer of dedication again and again refers to heaven, God's dwelling place, where He hears our prayers and answers and forgives (I Kings 8:22-53 *passim*). In Job and the Psalms we have frequent references, and Isaiah exclaims, “ Thus saith the Lord, The heaven is my throne and the earth is my footstool; where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest? ” (Isa. 66:1). Christ begins the prayer He taught us with a great

assertion: "Our Father which art in heaven." *Heaven is a place, and God dwells there.* Christ came from thence and went back to prepare a place for us. He will come from heaven again to take us to Himself, wherever that may be.

Heaven is also the abode of angels and the spirits of just men made perfect. It is the future home of the saints. The host of heaven is innumerable (Neh. 9:6). There are the thousands of thousands of ministering angels (Dan. 7:10 and Heb. 12:22). This innumerable company of angels are round about God's throne and the throne of the Lamb (Rev. 5:11; 14:1; 19:6). Cherubim and seraphim bow down before Him who is Creator and Redeemer of the universe. Only the pen of Milton or of Dante or William Blake can begin to describe the splendour and glory of that innumerable host. Angels from the realms of glory sang at the Creation, came to welcome Christ at His birth, and will come as His escort at the second advent (Matt. 25:31). But their home is heaven.

"Remembering Bethlehem, and that glorious night
When ye, who used to soar
Diverse along all space in fiery flight,
Came thronging to adore
Your God new-born, and made a sinner's child;
As if the stars should leave
Their stations in the far ethereal wild,
And round the sun a radiant circle weave."¹

Heaven is the home of the redeemed, their final place of rest and reward and eternal joy. It is especially the rendezvous of little children. He whose lips could not lie said, "of such is the kingdom of heaven"; and He spoke of their angels who "do always behold the face of my Father" (Matt. 18:10).

The mathematical imagination of Anne H. Shepard was too feeble when she wrote her beautiful children's hymn:

"Around the throne of God in heaven
Thousands of children stand,

¹ Keble's *The Christian Year*, p. 219.

Children whose sins are all forgiven,
A holy, happy band. . . ."

Who can number them? Not by thousands but millions upon millions; for "where sin abounded, grace did much more abound," and the children of the non-Christian world, baptized and unbaptized children—the great multitude who die in infancy—to them surely we may apply Christ's words, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven." A great day will dawn also for us when all the little children whom death severed from their parents will be reunited and He will wipe away all tears from our eyes.

John, in his vision on Patmos, describes the inhabitants of the Holy City but he is unable to tell their number. All their individual names are in the Lamb's book of life but we have no data for a census. "After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands" (Rev. 7:9).

Our imagination is stunned when we try to picture the inhabitants of heaven! The elect of all ages past and present; of all peoples, without distinction of color or race; and *all* languages, of which the French Academy has listed 2796; and for whom the Gospel story has already been translated into more than 1040 tongues and dialects—all these will be there. The English language is spoken today by over 270 million people, French by more than sixty million, but Chinese by over four hundred and eighty million! ² There will be no favoured Nordic race nor chosen classical language nor pride of sect in heaven. We may recall John Wesley's beautiful dream when he asked for Wesleyans at the gate of Paradise and found that there were only Christians there! Or the lines of Elizabeth Jocelyn Cleveland on "No Sects in Heaven," with its gentle sarcasm:

² *The World's Almanac*, 1946, p. 581.

"I'm bound for heaven and when I'm there
I shall want my book of Common Prayer.
And though I put on a starry crown
I should feel quite lost without my gown."

The Holy Catholic Church will be truly ecumenical *there*.

Heaven is a place of recognition, of rest, and of service. That we shall know each other is self-evident from the Gospels' description of the Transfiguration, where Moses and Elijah appeared; from Christ's parable of Dives and Lazarus, and from the recognition of Christ by His disciples after His glorious Resurrection. "We shall know each other better," not less, "when the mists have rolled away," and all misunderstanding and ignorance are ended. "His servants shall serve him . . . and *his* name [no other name] shall be on their foreheads" (Rev. 22:3-4). A story is told of a young monk, Thomas à Kempis, who wrote the *Imitation of Christ*, which beautifully illustrates this fact. Once, in a monastery, the Theologian, as he was called, was catechising the younger monks on the book of Revelation. Among other questions, he asked each what promise or saying in the Apocalypse seemed to him the most full of comfort? One would have it, "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes"; another, "There shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain"; another, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit down with me on my throne." He praised them according to their deserts, and then turning to the youngest, who had not yet spoken, "Now, Thomas," he said, "let us hear what you think." The answer was, "His servants shall serve him," and that young monk, Thomas Hammark, is now known all through the Church as Thomas à Kempis.

Perchance, even in heaven the greatest will be he that serveth, for we read that "before the throne of God, they serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them" (Rev. 7:15). *What* that service will be, we know not. But we learn from the Bible

something of the glory and honour conferred on the faithful saints and martyrs. In the letters to the Seven Churches, we have seven windows of promise that give a glimpse of the glory for those who enter the City:

"To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God. . . . He shall not be hurt of the second death. . . . To him will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it. . . . And I will give him the morning star. . . . He shall be clothed in white raiment . . . and I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels. . . . I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name. . . . To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne" (Rev. 2 and 3 *passim*).

Heaven is, moreover, a place of song, gladness, and joy. That distinguishes the new heaven and earth from the old—everything is transcended and transfigured. The ills of time and earth are gone forever. There are no more separations—"no more sea" (Rev. 21:11); no more sorrow, nor crying, nor pain, nor curse, nor night, nor death (Rev. 21:4; 22:3, 5). Death, our last enemy, will be swallowed up in victory (Isa. 25:8; I Cor. 15:54). A deathless, healthful community; all the inhabitants possessing eternal and abundant life. St. Bernardino of Siena, in his exposition of the words, "new heaven and new earth" in the Apocalypse, says that this will not be a fresh creation but that the old will still subsist, though changed for the better, and that all the elements will be so modified as to suit immortal bodies.³

"They sing the new song of Moses and the Lamb." There is

³ A. S. F. Howell, *St. Bernardino of Siena*, p. 315.

music in heaven, heavenly music of harpers on their harps. When Aristotle was asked what he thought of music, the philosopher replied that "Jupiter did neither sing nor play on the harp." (*Jovem neque canere, neque citharum pulsare*). But this is not a Christian conception. Our Saviour is the very center of the heavenly choirs, and He who sang a hymn before His passion (Mark 14:26) will summon us all to the Hallelujah Chorus of the Redeemed.

He also told us that "there is joy in heaven over *one* sinner that repenteth." What an outburst of exultation there will be when *all* the ransomed sinners are gathered home!

We have spoken in an earlier chapter of the rewards of the righteous, but note here that they are said "to enter into the joy of their Lord" (Matt. 25:23). They also inherit a four-fold crown, each of which surely is a source of joy and thanksgiving. The incorruptible crown (I Cor. 9:25), the crown of righteousness (II Tim. 4:8), the crown of life (Jas. 1:2), and the crown of glory (I Pet. 5:4). He who for our sakes wore the crown of thorns is there crowned with glory now. But the crown of Jesus' glory is different. Even the words in Greek express this distinction; *stephanos* is used for the crown of thorns and for the crowns given the redeemed, while *diadema* (diadem) is used of the Redeemer (Rev. 19:12). All our crowns are cast at His feet who is crowned Lord of all with *many* diadems. He is the Bridegroom of His ransomed Church, and as the hymn puts it:

"The Bride eyes not her garment,
But her dear Bridegroom's face:
I will not gaze at glory,
But on my King of grace—
Not at the crown He giveth,
But on His pierced hand:
The Lamb is all the glory
Of Immanuel's land."

Milton describes in *Paradise Lost* (Bk. III) how, when the

Almighty Father accepted the offer of the Divine Son for the redemption of man, the whole angelic host cast down

"Their crowns inwove with amarant and gold;
Immortal amarant, a flower which once
In Paradise, fast by the tree of life
Began to bloom; but soon for man's offense
To heaven removed, where first it grew, there grows,
And flowers aloft, shading the fount of life."

These are the crowns that never fade and which adorn the brows of saints and martyrs in heaven!

The Spanish mystic, St. John of the Cross (1542–1591), tells how the garlands of earth are transformed into the immortal wreaths of heaven. His fancy distinguishes three varieties. The white flowers of the virgins, "each head with its laurel wreath, and all the wreaths one crown for the head of the Bridegroom." Next, he names "the dazzling flowers of the holy doctors," each a circlet of beauty for the head of Christ. And then the crimson thorn-wreaths of the martyrs. All this is his interpretation of the text in Canticles on the daughters of Zion who are bidden to crown the King "with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals, and in the day of the gladness of his heart" (Song of Songs 3:11).

Perhaps the most beautiful interpretation of the glory and joy of heaven to the believer is the lengthy mediæval poem written by Bernard of Clairvaux (1145), found only in part in our hymnals:

"Jerusalem the Golden
With milk and honey blest,
Beneath thy contemplation
Sink heart and voice oppressed."

The whole poem of 3,000 lines is a satire on the vanity of the evil world and a rhapsody of heaven; it was written by Bernard of Clairvaux as a protest against the neighbouring monastery of

Cluny, which had enormous wealth and worldly luxury. He rebuked the other monks for their indulgence, warning them of God's wrath and doom. The following lines from the poem are also in our old hymnals:

“ The world is very evil
The times are waxing late;
Be sober and keep vigil;
The Judge is at the gate.”

Of this period (1135–1153) the Anglo-Saxon Chronicler wrote: “Never was there more misery and never acted heathen worse. . . . The land was all ruined by such deeds and it was openly said, Christ and His saints were asleep.” The voice from the cloister sounded a clarion note in this darkness, calling for repentance and pointing to the glory of the Eternal City, the New Jerusalem, where only the poor and pure in heart find entrance. It has always been in the darkest hour that faith looks upward to “the city that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.”

“Jerusalem the Golden” (read its familiar stanzas again) is a perfect description of the glories of heaven to the believer. It gives highest glory to Christ our Saviour, and in its many stanzas we find the following beautiful names for Him: “Jesus,” “the Gem of Beauty,” “True God and Man,” “the never-failing Garden,” “the ever-golden Ring,” “the Door,” “the Pledge,” “the Husband,” “the Guardian of heaven's Court,” “the Day-Star of Salvation,” “the Porter and the Port.” Such wealth of imagery is only equaled in John Bunyan's final chapters of *Pilgrim's Progress* when in Bedford Jail he too saw the Celestial City:

“The beauty and glory of it was inexpressible. It is the Paradise of God wherein you shall see the Tree of Life and eat of the never-fading fruits thereof; and when you come there you shall have white robes given you and your walk and talk shall be every day with the King, even all the days of Eternity. . . .”

“Now I saw in my dream that these two men went in at the Gate; and, lo, as they entered, they were transfigured and they had raiment put on them that shone like gold. . . . All the bells of the City rang with joy and it was said unto them, Enter ye into the joy of our Lord.”⁴

And the last words of Mr. Standfast (as eloquent as the oft-quoted words of Valiant-for-the-Truth) may well close this chapter on the Holy City:

“I see myself now at the end of my Journey. My toilsome days are ended. I am going now to see that Head that was crowned with thorns and that Face that was spit upon for me. I have formerly lived by hearsay and Faith; but now I go where I shall live by Sight, and shall be with Him in whose company I delight myself. . . . Now, while thus in discourse, his countenance changed, his *strong man* bowed under him; and after he had said, *Take me for I come unto Thee*, he ceased to be seen of them. But glorious it was to see how the open Region was filled with Horses and Chariots, with Trumpeters and Pipers, with Singers and Players on stringed instruments, to welcome the PILGRIMS as they went up, and followed one another in at the Beautiful Gate of the City.”⁵

⁴ *Pilgrim's Progress*, near end of Part One.

⁵ *Idem*, End of Part Two.

XV

THE RETURN OF OUR SAVIOUR

"Saviour, long Thy saints have waited—
 Centuries have passed away
 Since the promise first was given
 Of a glorious Advent day.
 Grey and old the world is growing,
 Loud the scoffer's boast is heard
 But our hearts are peaceful, knowing
 We may rest upon Thy word."

—Mrs. H. G. Guinness.

OUR risen and ascended Lord will return again. Some critics of the Gospel of John allege that it has no clear reference to the second coming of our Saviour, such as we find in the Synoptic Gospels. But this betrays careless reading. In chapter fourteen we read, "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." And in the last chapter we have John's own witness to the words of his Master spoken to Peter about him, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me." And the Beloved Disciple interprets this saying as of Christ's Second Advent (John 14:3; 21:22–23). The return of Jesus Christ from heaven is one of the leading doctrines of the New Testament and one of the glories to be revealed.

All Christians are agreed that belief in the return of our Saviour is of the ecumenical faith. Christ repeatedly and in the most solemn words told us He was coming again. The Acts, the Epistles, and the Apocalypse know no other Saviour than

He who rose from the dead, ascended into glory, and shall come again with the clouds of heaven. All the great church creeds and catechisms have statements regarding Christ's return. It is linked with Bethlehem, Calvary, and the Empty Tomb in the thought of Christendom.

Robert Browning reminds us in his poem, *Christmas Eve*, that Christ "who, very man and very God, trod this earth in weakness shall come again." The Advent and Easter seasons have always a double message. They look backward across the centuries to the coming of the Saviour at Bethlehem and also look forward, according to His own promise, to the day when He shall come again "in a cloud with power and great glory" (Luke 21:27). "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven" (Acts 1:11).

The hymnology of the Church breathes the hope of His return, from Thomas of Celano's Latin hymn written in 1250:

"Day of wrath, oh, day of mourning!
 See fulfilled the prophet's warning,
 Heaven and earth in ashes burning!
 O what fear man's bosom rendeth
 When from heaven the Judge descendeth
 On whose sentence all dependeth ——"

to that of Frances Ridley Havergal (1879):

"Thou art coming, O my King."

Only modern rationalism and unbelief, after denying Christ's Virgin Birth, His bodily Resurrection and ascent into heaven, also mock at the promise of His return, saying, "From the day that the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation." Let them mock! They may well read the whole of Peter's terrible chapter on the day of

doom (written before the discovery of the atomic bomb and almost describing its terrific power).

"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be?" (II Pet. 3:10-12).

All earnest Christians of every school of thought seem agreed that we face today an eschatological crisis. The day of the Lord is at hand. We hear the same note of warning from many voices. Professor D. R. Davies of England concludes his recent book, *Divine Judgment in Human History*, with the words:

"Repent, that must be the burden of the Christian message to this age, which is drinking the bitterest waters of all historical eras. In a day when the judgment of God has melted into burning lava and is pouring through the ruins of man's proudest achievements, let the prophetic trumpet-call of repentance pierce the tormented soul of man, so that men, here and now, may lay hold of the redemption done, once and forever, by God in Christ."

The Christian Century had a remarkable article on "The War and the Second Coming" (Aug. 18, 1943), in which the editor says:

"It is interesting to note the growth during these past years of the new *apocalypticism*. This is found mainly in scholarly circles; premillennialism is a lay theology. But both share the mood which we find beginning with Jewish writings twenty-one centuries ago: a sense of hopelessness as to the achievement of good in history or by human effort, the belief in the existence of powerful forces of evil and their dominance over humanity and the course of events, and the conviction that human hope must rest upon a final, decisive and irresistible act of God."

And Mr. Winston Churchill is quoted as saying: "There never was a time when the hope of immortality and the disdain of earthly power and achievement were more necessary for the safety of the children of men."

The trumpeters of King Shaddai are standing before Ear-gate of Man Soul today. Bunyan says they are called Captain Boanerges, Captain Conviction, Captain Judgment, and Captain Execution. In tones of thunder and in words of winning love they cry: "Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation. Repent and believe the Gospel, for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand."

Paul's missionary message and passion were due to his sense of eternal values through the Resurrection. "Our light afflictions are but for a moment." Soon there will be "the eternal weight of glory." The things that are seen are only temporal. Paul saw the invisible glory of the world to come. He heard the inaudible voices. He laid hold of the intangible realities. His passion for proclaiming the message of redemption was due to his sense of eternal values. He reasoned before Felix of judgment to come, till Felix trembled.

Dr. Deissmann, the great New Testament scholar, said at the Lausanne Conference that

"for the past thirty years the discernment of the eschatological character of the Gospel of Jesus has more and more come to the front in international Christian theology. I regard this as one of the greatest steps forward that theological enquiry has ever achieved. We today must lay the strongest possible stress upon the eschatological character of that Gospel which it is the practical business of the Church to proclaim, namely, that we must daily focus our minds upon the fact that the kingdom of God is near, that God with His unconditional sovereignty comes through judgment and redemption, and that we have to prepare ourselves inwardly for the *Maranatha*, the Lord cometh."

Whether our view of Christ's return to judgment be pre-millennial or postmillennial, these words of the great German

scholar are worthy of meditation. Where men deny the reality of Christ's Resurrection and His ascension, they do not of course believe in His visible and bodily return to this earth. But that is the clear teaching of the New Testament.

In a day when the pillars of Western civilization are crumbling, when the foundations of society seem tottering, and when sword and famine and pestilence walk abroad, we must preach a message that is other-worldly or we have no message at all. Today's evangelism must be "in the midst of time, for eternity, by the strength and under the eye of God." The older generation of evangelists were not ashamed of a gospel that dealt with eternal issues. They preached a message that bridged death and revealed eternal glory, or eternal woe.

Evangelism that preaches Christ's Resurrection and His return goes far beyond social reformation or new-world plans or political blueprints. We can no longer go to the East to share the social and cultural benefits of the West, for the whole so-called Christian culture stands at a period of terrible crisis, every section of it under God's judgment. We are compelled by the present situation "to look for a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness." On the walls of a missionary guest room in Sibolga, Sumatra, I found these words:

"Light of Eternity—light divine,
Into my darkness shine,
That the small may appear small
And the great, greatest of all—
O light of Eternity shine."

In the harbor I could hear the noise of great merchant ships loading tin, tobacco, and oil; imperialism and commercialism dominated, with greed for gain and grasping of earthly treasure. But the Rhenish missionaries saw beyond the visible a greater treasure of God in human hearts, where the Light of Eternity had already dispelled the darkness of sin. "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"

The return of Christ is the living hope for a despairing world. It tells of the dawn of an eternal morning after our night of gloom. As Jesus said to John on lonely Patmos: "Fear not, I am he that liveth and was dead and behold I am alive forever more." Because He lives, we shall live also. The Cross cannot be defeated because its apparent defeat was followed by the victory of Easter morning.

We are not ambassadors for a dead hero, the Man of Galilee, but of Him "who was declared to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead," to whom "all power is given on heaven and on earth." And who is coming again. If we are not ashamed of such a gospel now, He will not be ashamed of us on that day when the secrets of all hearts are revealed and we shall see His face. Then "they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and forever." "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life and some to shame and everlasting contempt."

When the Gospel of the Resurrection lays hold of our minds and hearts, we begin to see the meaning of Barth's penetrating words:

"Eternity is not the prolongation of time. Eternity is the Quite-other, the Unknown, which in Jesus Christ has broken into our world. According to this conception, eternity is, as it were, the hidden, the other side of time. Time is empty, impoverished eternity. Eternity is time that is filled full. There comes a year, there comes an hour when things grow earnest, when some crisis comes. That means eternity is flooding into time, as a mountain freshet after storm floods the dry bed of a stream. Therefore, the fulness of time is the crisis. Christ's return will be the crisis of all human history and its final consummation. Then cometh the end."

This hope of Christ's imminent, personal, visible return is the strongest possible incentive to true Christian living and daily

self-sacrifice for the Kingdom of God. It sounds the note of urgency. As Charles Kingsley wrote:

“The Day of the Lord is at hand, at hand:
The storms roll up the sky;
The nations sleep, starving on heaps of gold;
All dreamers toss and sigh;
The night is darkest before the morn;
When the pain is the sorest, the child is born,
And the Day of the Lord is at hand.”

Those who were filled with the hope of His coming were also on fire for world-wide evangelism. The cloud of witnesses is convincing evidence. Great church theologians, great pioneer missionaries, and ardent evangelists are among them: Dean Alford, Delitsch, Auberlen, Bishop Ellicott, Van Oosterzee, Bengel, Godet, Bonar, Bickersteth, Pentecost, Whittle, Lord Radstock, Hammond, Munhall, George Muller, A. T. Pierson, D. L. Moody, Hudson Taylor, and many others. All of them held the premillennial view and held it soberly—with loins girt and lights burning.

There are different views of the “times and the seasons,” which only the Father can reveal in His own time and way. Our postmillennial brethren do not deny the second advent. Only rationalism and humanism in certain quarters mock at this great and glorious doctrine. Even the amillennial group, including such great evangelicals as Professors Kuyper and Bavinck of the Netherlands, and Drs. Warfield and J. Gresham Machen of Princeton, rejected dispensationalism and the millennium idea, and yet they held just as firmly that Christ will return from heaven to judge the world. The greatest danger is not the difference between these views of the *time* of the Advent, but rationalistic unbelief which denies Christ’s second coming altogether. The fulness of time for the coming of our Saviour was a fulness of preparation, of expectation, and of despair. So doubtless will be the signs of the approaching

end of the age and the second appearing of our Lord from heaven.

Are we all of us ready for His coming? Are we faithful stewards of His blessings? Were men’s hearts ever so expectant of a climax and a crisis in history as now? Was the world ever in greater need of a Deliverer and Judge? Are not the signs of which Jesus spoke in the gospels, and which usher in the day of the Lord, on the front pages of our newspapers? Apart from His coming is there hope for this disillusioned, stricken, war-torn world?

Jesus came; He died on Calvary; He arose from the dead; He ascended into heaven; He is coming again. To accept these statements, which are the shortest summary of the New Testament, with all they imply of faith and hope and love, would fill us with the joy of the early Christian Church and its devotion. Such was the thought of a godly layman, Andrew Allen Clarke, when he wrote:

“Oh, Wondrous Star! Thine own dear people yearn:
Some with a distant hope of earthly good
Which yet may be in store. Some weary, say,
Where is the promise? Some, with anxious ear,
Are hourly listening for the gladsome shout.
For all, we pray, O Lord, that hearts be stirred
To hasten Thine own time. Soon may the night
Be over and Thy waiting, blood-washed Bride
Join with the Spirit in the blissful cry
Come, Lord! Even so, Lord Jesus, quickly come!”

An Ancient Prayer

O THOU who early in the morning didst leave Thy tomb and return again from the dead, Raise me, I pray Thee, daily to walk in newness of life; and save me.

O THOU who didst vouchsafe to taste death for every man, mortify in me my members which are upon the earth, that I, too, may be crucified ~~unto~~ the world, and the world unto me; and save me.

O THOU who hast foretold that Thou wilt return to judgment in an hour that we are not aware of, grant me grace to watch and pray always, that whether Thou shalt come at night, or at the cock-crowing, or at to-morrow's eventide, Thou mayst find me waiting for Thee; and save me. Amen.

—*Private Devotions of*

Bishop Lancelot Andrewes, d. 1626.

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