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## EVIDENCE OF THE RESURRECTION OF THE LORD.

*(Concluded.)*

Friend and foe alike had been advised of the events which had transpired at Joseph of Arimathea's tomb. We have seen how the news stirred the malignant enemies of Christ and made them reckless and desperate. Also the small circle of the followers of Jesus must have been profoundly moved. An episode related by Luke affords a glimpse of the excitement which had seized the disciples. It may have been past the noon hour of this eventful day when two of the disciples started for a village in the neighborhood called Emmaus. Their conversation as they were walking betrayed agitation. They spoke of the report which the women had brought, and which had been verified by Peter and John, but do not mention the fact that the Lord had appeared to Mary Magdalene and later to her companions. What happened on the way and as they turned in at Emmaus is well known. They speed back to the city with the great news that they have been privileged to see the Lord and to converse with Him. That had been the third manifestation. On entering the place where the eleven and others were gathered, they are met with the report that the Lord had meanwhile appeared also to Simon. This is the only statement which Scripture makes of the fourth appearance, if it is the fourth; for it may have occurred immediately after Peter's visit at the grave, when Cleopas and his companion were just about to start for Emmaus. Cleopas relates not only the fact of the Lord's

appearance, but also the manner in which they had become assured that it was He, viz., by His discourse and His action at the table when He broke the bread, *i. e.*, when He reverently said grace as had been customary with Him in the days when they had been traveling with Him. While they were still relating their experience, Jesus suddenly has entered and greets them: "Peace be unto you!" Their first thought was that they were seeing a ghost. But He assures them, and invites them to certify to their own senses of sight and touch, that He is the bodily though glorified Christ. And when they still hesitated to credit their own vision, He condescends to take food before their eyes. Then followed a long peroration in which Christ convincingly showed that if He had not risen, there would be greater cause for wonder. That was the fifth manifestation, and that closed the events of the first Easter day.

The sixth appearance for the benefit of doubting Thomas, a week later, the seventh at Lake Tiberias to seven of the disciples, the eighth which had been previously announced on a mountain in Galilee, the ninth to James, which is merely mentioned in 1 Cor. 15, 7, the tenth on Mount Olive at the Lord's ascension—all these served to deepen the conviction which the disciples had received of the actual return to life of Jesus. An eleventh appearance of the Lord in His celestial body was later vouchsafed the apostle Paul near Damascus.

True, the accounts of the four evangelists which together make up the story of the resurrection, present some difficulties as regards details, and the harmonizing of these details has taxed the skill of interpreters not a little. But it is a very narrow mind which views divergent reports of an event as contradictory, and for that reason proposes that the event itself should be pronounced unreal. The government archives at Washington to-day contain accounts of battles fought during the late war between the States which are conflicting, and which to this day have not been reduced to absolute harmony. No one has undertaken on that account to deny the fact of those battles having been fought. In the same manner, from the

varying reports which we possess of the manner of the resurrection of the Lord, the fact of the resurrection stands out, silent and large. One witness has told this, the other that particular episode, but without the fact itself these details would have no base to rest upon. There is such a thing as cumulative evidence, and it is gathered by faithfully and painstakingly studying the very discrepancies of the depositions of witnesses.

Denying the fact of the Lord's resurrection is, accordingly, an undertaking which entails a great deal of labor and promises little success. Let us see briefly in what way this attempt has been made in recent years. The forces hostile to Christianity at first seemed to have agreed to explain the resurrection as a reawakening from a very deep coma or lethargy. Some have even grown romantic in their description. The body of Christ had been subjected to intense nervous suffering; at length the system collapsed. Christ became unconscious. Animation had ceased to such an extent that He was pronounced dead. A seeming corpse, He was taken from the cross and removed to a secluded spot in Joseph's garden, and laid away. The perfect quiet of the tomb and the cool temperature, together with the aroma of strong spices had a most salutary soothing effect on the nerves. The tension gradually relaxed, and vitality reappeared. Finally, Christ left the tomb, the frightened guards fled spreading a false report to cover their cowardice, and His disciples received the reawakened Lord as resurrected. This version used to be applauded in lecture halls and taverns as a marvelous piece of ingenuity. The medical science was appealed to and gave it sanction. The learned M. D.'s said: "It is likely it was so; why should it not be so? Of course, it was so!" *Quod erat demonstrandum*. And men marveled at the *Fortschritt der Wissenschaft*. But when the specious theory was tested as to its reasonableness, when it came to be investigated systematically and measured against the accounts of the resurrection, it was found to be an explanation that does not explain. In the first place, there was the test which had been applied in a rude manner by the soldier's lance to prove the Lord's

death. These soldiers also knew that physical state which medical science has denominated syncope. They knew that crucified malefactors sometimes swooned upon the cross. Hence the crurifragium, which was applied in such cases to prevent the burying of a person alive. In the case of Jesus even the soldier considered the crurifragium unnecessary, but—to quote Canon Farrar—“as the lives of the soldiers would have had to answer for any irregularity, one of them, in order to make death certain, drove the broad head of his hasta into His side. The wound, as it was meant to do, pierced the region of the heart, and ‘forthwith,’ says St. John, with an emphatic appeal to the truthfulness of his eyewitness (an appeal which would be singularly and impossibly blasphemous if the narrative were the forgery which so much elaborate modern criticism has wholly failed to prove that it is), ‘forthwith came there out blood and water.’ Whether the water was due to some abnormal pathological conditions caused by the dreadful complication of the Savior’s sufferings—or whether John rather means that the pericardium had been rent by the spear-point, and that those who took down the body observed some drops of its serum mingled with the blood—in either case that lance thrust was sufficient to hush all the heretical assertions that Jesus had only *seemed* to die; and as it assured the soldiers, so should it assure all who have doubted, that He, who on the third day rose again, had in truth been crucified, dead, and buried, and that His soul had passed into the unseen world.” (*Life of Christ*, p. 664 f.) In a footnote, which shows how earnestly and thoroughly this syncope-theory of skeptics has been investigated, Dr. Farrar says: “The early fathers all appeal to this fact (of the spear thrust) in refutation of the Docetae. As the effusion of lymph and blood after a *post mortem* incision, though rare, is asserted by some physicians not to be unknown, there seems to be no need to regard the fact as miraculous. Opinions are divided as to whether the water was merely the lymph of the pericardium, or the decomposed crasamentum and serum of extravasated blood. That the cir-

cumstance is not impossible . . . may be regarded as proved by the letters of Sir J. Simpson and other eminent physicians to Dr. Hanna (*Last Day of Our Lord's Passion*, pp. 333—343), as well as by the book of Dr. Stroud, *On the Physical Cause of the Death of Christ.*" (Ibid., p. 665.)

Besides the investigation of enemies as to the reality of the death of Christ, there is the one by His friends who handled the corpse for several hours and detected no sign of life. But suppose we should admit the theory of syncope, for the sake of the argument, what follows? Of course, this follows, that sooner or later Christ must have really died. For our skeptics deny the ascension just as well as the resurrection. What became of Him after He had left the grave? How were His disciples able to uphold the claim that He had risen, which they knew to be false? These questions point out difficulties so great that we do not wonder that the advocates of the syncope theory have with more or less grace withdrawn their theory. Says Dr. Uhlhorn:

"One solution is regarded generally as a failure; yea, although it was widely received formerly and counted among its advocates men like Schleiermacher, it is now covered with contempt and scorn everywhere. I refer to the opinion that all that is real in the resurrection of Jesus is His reawaking from syncope. It is claimed that He was not actually dead, but had sunk into a deep and deathlike sleep, out of which He was awakened by the cool atmosphere of the tomb and the timely aid of concealed friends (whom the old school of rationalists love to introduce at the critical moment in order to give a natural explanation to an apparent miracle!). Having been thus revived, Jesus showed Himself to His disciples. No elaborate argument is required to show that this view is untenable. It disregards fully certified facts, not only the fact of His death, which rationalists have questioned only in order that they might make their explanation of His resurrection an easier task, but also the manifestations of the Risen Lord which have been recorded. It is altogether insufficient

to explain the origin of faith in His resurrection. Strauss speaks to the point when he says: 'A being that has just crawled out of the grave, half-dead, groping about sick, in need of medical treatment, of surgical attention, of restoratives,—such a person could not possibly have impressed the disciples as a conqueror of death and the grave, as the Prince of Life, as which they represented Him later in their public deliverances. Such a person could not possibly have changed their despondency into enthusiasm.' As I have stated, this view has become obsolete. I should hardly have mentioned it, if it were not in our interest to show by its means what is the usual fate of such theories. In their day they are lauded as truly scientific and as the only tenable views, and after a few decades they are mentioned with a pitying smile as antiquarian rarities." (*Auferstehungsgesch.*, p. 186 f.)

Strauss, accordingly, proceeded to disprove the reality of the Lord's resurrection by a different theory, and was ably seconded by another skeptic, Holsten. This theory we may name the vision-theory. It amounts to this: Christ did not really rise; nor did the disciples behold a real though glorified being, but they really and truly believed they had seen Him; for their overwrought nerves had conjured up His image before them. They beheld Him with the eye of the mind, and not being in a condition to critically examine their own state of mind, they were quite honest in declaring as a fact what had really been an optical illusion. This theory was popularized later by a Frenchman, Renan, who calls Mary Magdalene "the visionary woman who presented the world with a risen God." Renan's remarks are mere shallow vaporings dazzling and deceiving only by the brilliant style in which they are expressed. Renan earned a great deal of French applause, but his effort soon effervesced like the wine of his country. But the ponderous and scientific reasoning of the Germans threatened to outlive the ephemeral idea of the Frenchman. For a while the vision-theory began to look like something formidable.

Let us look at it. How do visions originate, and what is

a vision? It is agreed by all who are able to express a professional opinion on the matter that visions, hallucinations, are an indication of disturbances of the mind and are superinduced and intensified by secondary causes of a physical nature. The visionary has had his mind engrossed with a certain idea; his mental activity has become centered upon it to such an extent that he becomes separated from the world of real life. He wanders off from himself. He is absorbed in the pursuit of the one idea. He lives only in it and for it. His nerves are being subjected to great tension; his mental excitement quickens pulsation; his circulation becomes accelerated. Heart and brain become affected, and the nerves, already irritated, are put under still greater pressure. At length there rises before the mind's eye the image of what the mind had been occupied with. The thoughts have assumed shape. The physical eye beholds and the physical ear hears what before had been visible and audible only to the soul. Such is a vision.

Now, there are two features connected with the phenomena of visions which are fatal to the vision-theory of our Lord's resurrection. In the first place, a vision is not the presentation of something new, it is not a creation by the mind of something which had not existed before, but it is merely a vivid representation of what was *in* the mind, the reproduction of the mind's thoughts. The visionary must have believed, must have believed ardently and enthusiastically, what he sees, some time before he sees it. Skeptics, people who weigh coolly, who are hostilely inclined toward an idea, have no vision of that idea incorporated to them. In the second place, the visionary state, unless it runs into confirmed insanity, is followed by a reaction. The return to normal conditions is like the awakening out of a very vivid dream. The phantasmagoria vanishes as soon as the world of matter and of fact asserts its power again upon the senses.

Now apply these truths to the apostles' belief that they had seen the Risen Lord. Was it possible, were the conditions such that their minds, after they had returned from Calvary,

constantly revolved around this single idea that Jesus must rise? Did they, from Friday evening until Sunday dawn, work themselves up to a frenzy of expectation of His return from the grave? If so, on what did they base that expectation? On His own prophecy? Why, they had so utterly lost sight of it that the risen Christ had to chide them quite severely for having forgotten it. No, their mental state was the very reverse of hopeful expectancy; it was blank despair; they were sadly, stupidly mourning a lost cause. And when the first news reached them of the resurrection that had actually taken place it was met with extreme skepticism. They regarded it as "idle tales," Luke 24, 11. Yea, when the Risen Lord bodily stood before them, they eyed Him with critical glances; they thought of ghosts and specters, but never of a being actually risen from the grave. Every predisposition for a vision is utterly wanting in these men.

And then consider the number of people to whom the Risen Lord appeared. On three occasions there was only one, at another time there were two, at another more than three, on another occasion seven, on two occasions more than eleven; on two other there was a multitude of men and women who saw Him and heard Him speak. No doubt, like in any great crowd of men there was also in these people the usual difference of temperament. Some may have been very impressible, easily excited, but there were also calm, slow, coolly observing natures present. Consider furthermore that these appearances were not the work of a few moments, or of five, ten, fifteen minutes, but they extended, at least on a number of occasions, through several hours, perhaps at the meeting in Galilee they took in the greater part of a day. Is it reasonable to suppose that the nervous tension which is always a requisite, should support a vision extended through such an unheard-of space of time? Consider, in the third place, that the localities at which these visions occurred were always different, except in two instances. They occurred in the open and indoors, on mountains and on the shore of a lake, yea, on a country road during a journey.



Some time elapsed between each vision. The scenery, the environments in which they occurred were constantly changing. The parties who received the visions had even returned to their ordinary occupation and were engaged in fishing. I ask again, Is it reasonable to suppose that five hundred men and women of various dispositions were for forty consecutive days walking about from Jerusalem to Lake Tiberias and back again, were eating, drinking, conversing, plying their trade, retiring at night and rising in the morning—all in a trance? Or that they were, within those forty days, passing from one trance into another, with a few lucid intervals? If anyone can believe this theory, he should not find it very difficult to accept the resurrection itself.

Uhlhorn has examined the vision-theory closely, and has observed how the advocates of the theory have shifted their ground during the discussion. They seem to have felt that the time which intervened between the burial and the resurrection of the Lord is too brief to justify the assumption of conditions favorable to the full development of a vision. Accordingly, they applied their theory first to Paul, the last person to whom Christ manifested Himself. From Paul they worked backward to the earlier disciples. But even in Paul's case the theory failed. "Nobody who compares without bias Paul's own reports of his visions of the Lord, can fail to observe the most important point, viz., that Paul speaks in an altogether different strain of the Christophany which he beheld near Damascus from that in which he relates his later visions. It is plain that he speaks of the latter with great reluctance; it is only under constraint of his opponents that he alludes to them. They represent a portion of his hidden life which he is loath to unveil. However, of the former he speaks quite frankly; he appeals to it on several occasions, and no doubt, the story of this Christophany was part of his public teaching. Moreover, whenever Paul recounts his later visions, he plainly describes his physical condition at the time as one of raptur e, ecstasy. Whether he was in the body or out of the

body, he cannot tell. No such remark occurs in his accounts of the manifestation of the Risen Lord. There he states simply: 'He was seen by me;' 'I have seen the Lord.' Add to this that Paul describes his experience near Damascus as an extraordinary occurrence which was never repeated in later years either to himself or to others; for we must remember that in his enumeration of Christophanies he mentions the one vouchsafed to himself as the last one, notwithstanding he had seen and spoken with the Lord on later occasions; and that he bases his authority as an apostle on this Christophany, while visions were granted also to people who were not apostles,—and you will not be able to escape the impression that Paul distinguishes consciously between his later visions and the Christophany. I am not jumping at the conclusion that, because Paul did not regard the Christophany granted him as a vision, therefore it cannot have been a vision. Such a conclusion could, indeed, be met by saying that visionaries never are conscious that what they behold has no corresponding existence in objective reality, on the contrary, since the vision impresses them altogether as an objective reality, they cannot but regard it as such. I draw only this conclusion, and I believe that I am justified in doing so, viz., that Paul has received a different impression of either event, and that his physical status must also have been different on either occasion. And I hold that this observation is anything but favorable,—not to use a stronger expression,—to the assumption of a vision." (*Auferstehungsgesch.*, p. 191 f.)

"In the case of Paul the historian had at his disposal a considerable time which he might fill out with accounts of internal struggles that ultimately conjured up the vision, but in the case of the early disciples he is given only three days. In less than three days, in little more than twice twenty-four hours, from Friday evening to Sunday, the vast change must have been accomplished from the deepest grief of utter hopelessness to plenary, joyous, vision-producing faith, from that state which is indicated in the remark: 'We trusted, that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel' to that other state which

is expressed in the words: 'The Lord is risen indeed!' Strauss has felt that this would be utterly impossible. Accordingly, he endeavors by all means to gain time in which to account for this change. He pretends that the disciples, without having seen the Lord, had fled to Galilee, and that while they were there, the change took place gradually. Holsten has openly confessed that this assumption of Strauss is injudicious. The original records of the resurrection contain in very decided terms as an integral part of the account this fact, that it occurred 'on the third day.' If the earliest manifestations of the Lord occurred at a much later date, how could the disciples have hit upon the third day as the day of the Lord's resurrection? The manifestations of the Lord must have commenced on the third day; that is a historical fact. To question this fact would be an arbitrary proceeding." (Ibid., p. 201.) "I wish to lay special stress on the Christophany granted to the five hundred brethren. You will remember that certain physical and psychical conditions are prerequisites for engendering a vision. . . . Is it safe to assume that these conditions are found to exist in more than five hundred persons, and that at the same time? For Paul states distinctly 'that He was seen of above five hundred brethren *at once*.' . . . Ponder what it means (to assume the above conditions in all these persons), and you will concede that it is not possible. Accordingly, Strauss at this point abandons the vision-theory and speaks only of a delusion practiced upon the excited imagination of the disciples. He relates, by way of illustration, that in the days when Duke Ulrich of Wuerttemberg was driven from his country by the Suabian League, people in many places pretended that they had seen him and even that they had lodged him in disguise at their houses. Similar delusions, he claims, occurred in this instance." (Ibid., p. 205.)

However, the vision-theory has overlooked one fact, which Uhlhorn also mentions, but which was urged with great force a long time ago by a Christian apologist of England, and which beautifully settles the entire vision-theory on the horns of a dilemma.

Dr. Paley says: "The only points which can enter into our consideration are, whether the apostles knowingly published a falsehood, or whether they were themselves deceived; whether either of these suppositions be possible. The first, I think, is pretty generally given up. The nature of the undertaking, and of the men; the extreme unlikelihood that such men should engage in such a manner as a *scheme*; their personal toils, and dangers, and sufferings, in the cause; their appropriation of their whole time to the object; the warm and seemingly unaffected zeal and earnestness with which they profess their sincerity, exempt their memory from the suspicion of imposture. The solution more deserving of notice is that which would resolve the conduct of the apostles into *enthusiasm*, which would class the evidence of Christ's resurrection with the numerous stories that are extant of the apparitions of dead men. There are circumstances in the narrative, as it is preserved in our histories, which destroy this comparison entirely. It was not one person, but many, who saw Him; they saw Him not only separately, but together; not only by night, but by day; not at a distance, but near; not once, but several times; they not only saw Him, but touched Him, conversed with Him, ate with Him, examined His person to satisfy their doubts. These particulars are decisive: but they stand, I do admit, upon the credit of our records. I would answer, therefore, the insinuation of enthusiasm, by a circumstance which arises out of the nature of the thing, and the reality of which must be confessed by all who allow, what I believe is not denied, that the resurrection of Christ, whether true or false, was asserted by His disciples from the beginning; and that circumstance is, *the non-production of the dead body*. It is related in the history, what indeed the story of the resurrection necessarily implies, that the corpse was missing out of the sepulcher: it is related also, in the history, that the Jews reported that the followers of Christ had stolen it away. And this account, though loaded with great improbabilities, such as the situation of the disciples, their fears for their own safety at the time,

the unlikelihood of their expecting to succeed, the difficulty of actual success,<sup>1)</sup> and the inevitable consequence of detection and failure, was, nevertheless, the most credible account that could be given of the matter. But it proceeds entirely upon the supposition of fraud, as all the old objections did. What account can be given of the *body*, upon the supposition of enthusiasm? It is impossible our Lord's followers could believe that He was risen from the dead, if His corpse was lying before them. No enthusiasm ever reached to such a pitch of extravagance as that: a spirit may be an illusion; a body is a real thing, an object of sense, in which there can be no mistake. All accounts of specters leave the body in the grave. And, although the body of Christ might be removed by *fraud*, and for the purposes of fraud, yet without any such intention, and by sincere but deluded men (which is the representation of the apostolic character we are now examining), no such attempt could be made. The presence and the absence of the dead body are alike inconsistent with the hypothesis of enthusiasm; for, if present, it must have cured their enthusiasm at once; if absent, fraud, not enthusiasm, must have carried it away." (*Evidences of Christianity*, p. 302 ff.)<sup>2)</sup>

1) "Especially at the full moon, the city full of people, many probably passing the whole night, as Jesus and His disciples had done, in the open air, the sepulcher so near the city as to be now enclosed within the walls." (*Priestley on the Resurr.*, p. 24.)

2) The ancient falsehood that the body of Christ was removed secretly by designing persons is still abroad. While these lectures were being delivered during the Easter season, 1906, the leading morning daily of this city was publishing seriatim in its Sunday edition Guy Thorne's novel, "When it was dark." The leading idea of this piece of modern fiction seems to have been dramatized and staged at Paris, however, *leaving out the author's motif and denouement*. We gather this from the Paris letter of "Jessica Sykes" to the *London Saturday Review*, which was copied in the Sunday edition of one of our morning dailies while this article was going through the press. The letter is dated London, April 27, this year, and bears the title "Eastertide in Paris, 1907." The time referred to in the following clipping is Good Friday evening: — "In the evening I went to the Odeon Theater, which was, through the instrumentality of M. Briand when Minister of Public Instruction, turned into a national theater on the same lines as the Theatre Franais (with a large Government subsidy),

In conclusion, we may exhibit, as the last evidence of our Lord's resurrection, a matter which I propose to name: *the power of conscience*, of the conscience of people living at the time when our Lord rose. Conscience then, as it always has, exerted itself in two ways, by accusing and by excusing, by crushing the sinner with that awful force, the consciousness of guilt, and by supporting an upright person in a struggle for a cause which he knows to be right beyond contradiction. I introduce, in the first place, the evil conscience.

The chief priests and Pharisees are standing once more before Pilate after that eventful Friday. "Sir," they say, "we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again." Let us note incidentally that these Jews publicly attest the death of Christ, when they say: "While He was yet alive." They were not troubled about His having been actually put to death, but what troubled them was the fear that He might not remain dead. The word of

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for the ostensible purpose of producing plays that would elevate and instruct the people. The theater was packed from floor to ceiling, and the audience included a very considerable number of children. The advertised performance was an ancient and very beautiful 'mystery' of the Fifteenth Century, describing the 'Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ.' But before playing the 'mystery,' a drama entitled 'Joseph of Arimathaea' was produced. This drama, in three acts, admirably staged and admirably acted, was nothing more or less than an elaborate denial of the resurrection, giving as an explanation that Joseph of Arimathaea, fearing that the Jewish leaders might profane the body of Christ, stole it away from the tomb on the Sabbath day following the crucifixion and buried it in his own secret cellar. The holy women and the apostles, finding the tomb empty, believe their Lord has risen. Joseph of Arimathaea leaves them in this pious delusion, and so the Christian faith and the legend of the resurrection is started. 'Follies of women, ignorance of peasants,' is Joseph of Arimathaea's judgment on the subject. Following this blasphemous production came the 'mystery,' also played to perfection, but played with the intention to show that the religious history therein described was purely a myth, founded upon the incidents given in the previous play. The audience never murmured at any of the sentiments conveyed in either play, and applauded the sacred character and his disciples alike. I do not believe in any other country in Europe or America such a performance would have been tolerated for a moment, and I think the actors would have been roughly handled."

Jesus haunted them. Their memory was better than the disciples'. They had not been able to rid themselves of the recollection of those memorable words which Jesus three years ago had spoken in their city: "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up!" They had heard of His great sermon at Capernaum, of His declaration at Lazarus' tomb, that He was the resurrection and the life. They remembered that He had referred them to Jonas' being three days in the belly of a fish, and had predicted that He would likewise be three days in the bowels of the earth. Nor had they forgotten that confident assertion of Christ: "No man taketh my life from me; I lay it down of myself; I have power to lay it down and to take it again." Yes, numerous had been the predictions which this Christ had made of His resurrection, so numerous that we cannot so much wonder at their recalling the fact as at His disciples forgetting it.

Diplomatic Pilate grants the request: he had given the body to Jesus' friends, he turns over the sepulcher to Jesus' enemies, thus serving both sides. However, he takes care not to identify himself too openly with the fears of the Jews. He directs them to make choice of as many guards as they deemed necessary from the guard at the citadel of Antonia. "Ye have a watch: go your way," he says, and adds the remark: "Make it as sure as ye can." There is something of the spirit of banter in this remark. This pagan cynic views with contempt the frantic efforts to prevent the rising of a dead man. Others, however, take a different view of this remark: they point out that by this time Pilate, no doubt, had received the report of the centurion on Golgotha, and was impressed with the awe-inspiring circumstances of Christ's death. In that case, his remark would express his personal fear.

In spite of all precautions taken, Christ rose. We have heard to what extreme measure the Jewish council had recourse in order to overcome the effect of the news of His resurrection. We have seen that the story which they invented bore collusion on its face. We have also investigated the possibility of a grave-

robbery perpetrated by the disciples, and have found that it does not exist. But one point should still be exhibited with regard to this suborned testimony: this testimony of the soldiers publicly charged the disciples with criminal conduct. The way was thereby opened up to the Council to institute legal proceedings against the disciples who had been charged with a grave misdemeanor. And their authority to try them on this charge was undisputed. They had at their disposal the entire power of the Roman State for the discovery of the criminals, and they were not without sufficient means to inflict condign punishment on the guilty. Now, why did they not arrest and prosecute the disciples? We know that they were ready to coerce them a few weeks later, and that they did not hesitate to employ most rigorous measures to suppress their preaching. How can their inactivity, their supineness be explained in the hour when prompt action would at once have quelled the rising report, when the disciples themselves were still wavering, and the prospect of being harshly dealt with might have completely cowed them into submission? Behold here the power of conscience! These men knew that they had no case against Christ. They were not sure of the bribed guards. They dreaded a clashing of testimony. They trembled at the thought that the disciples, if placed on the witness stand, might offer testimony so incontrovertible that no ingenuity would be able to overthrow it. Yea, was it not possible that this Risen Lord, whose body was missing from the sealed tomb, might that moment be abroad, might enter the very hall of justice, and might strike terror and dismay into His accusers as He had done to His captors at Gethsemane with His majestic: "I am he"? This is what paralyzed these crafty men. All that they wished to obtain was a ruse to tide them over a momentary difficulty. A lie would answer that purpose, and so they spread the lie, and hid behind it, until the lie, too, was torn from them. Says Horne in his *Introduction*: "Why did not the sanhedrim have recourse to the methods ordinarily employed to discover criminals? They



were very ready, by menaces, torments, and persecutions, to oblige the apostles *not* to preach in the name of Jésus Christ; but they never accused them (*i. e.*, they never accused them to their face) of having stolen the body of their Master while the watch slept. On that investigation they durst not enter because they well knew what the soldiers had told them, and it was that very thing which made them so apprehensive. If there had been any suspicion that His disciples were in possession of the dead body, these rulers, for their own credit, would have imprisoned them, and used means to recover it, which would have quashed the report of the resurrection for ever." (I, 109 a.)

However, someone might feel inclined to explain the inactivity of the Jewish council by their momentary consternation which prevented them from considering the matter coolly and from taking calm steps to recover both the body and the robbers of the body. They simply may not have thought of it. Let us assume that this was the case. But their consternation cannot have lasted longer than a day or two. Men, especially crafty men, have been known to rally much sooner from a moral blow. But weeks passed, and no action was taken. Many disciples went from Jerusalem to Galilee to meet Christ, returned, and saw Him ascend from Mount Olive. Still no action was taken. Another ten days passed, and still the Jewish council maintained a discreet silence. The great Jewish festival of Pentecost arrived. We know what happened to stir the representatives of the civilized earth, and how in one day three thousand persons joined the society of the disciples. Still no action on the part of the sanhedrim. Now Peter and John begin to preach the Risen Christ in the very halls of the Jewish sanctuary. Yes, now there is action, and now observe the actors.

"In the fourth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles we are informed that the sanhedrim caused the apostles to be brought before them for preaching, in the name of Christ, the doctrines

of Christianity, and for affirming that Christ was risen from the dead. Had they believed that the apostles had stolen away the body of Christ, they would now certainly have charged them with this gross fraud, this direct rebellion against the Roman and Jewish governments, and unless they could have cleared themselves of the crime, would have punished them for it with, at least, due severity. Such punishment would not only have been just, but it had now become necessary for the sanhedrim to inflict it, in order to save their own reputation. They had originated the story, and were now under the strongest inducements to support it. Yet they did not even mention the subject, but contented themselves with commanding them to preach no more in the name of Christ.

“In the following chapter we are told that the whole body of the apostles was brought before them again, for continuing to preach, in opposition to this command. On this occasion, also, they maintained a profound silence concerning the theft which they had originally attributed to the apostles, but charged them with disobedience to their former injunctions. In this charge are contained the following remarkable words: Did we not straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name? and behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man’s blood upon us. (Acts 5, 28.)” (Horne, *Introd.* I, 109.)

This is a peculiar expression, “to bring a man’s blood upon someone.” It is a phrase of frequent occurrence in Scripture, and has a definite meaning. “In fifteen different instances<sup>3)</sup> in which we find it used it has but a single meaning, viz., to bring the guilt of contributing to the death of a person, or the guilt of murder upon another person.” (Horne, l. c.)

“When it is said, ‘His blood shall be upon his own head,’ it is clearly intended that the guilt of his death shall be upon himself. When, therefore, the sanhedrim accuse the apostles

3) Lev. 20, 9. 11. 13. 16. 27; Deut. 19, 10; 22, 8; 2 Sam. 1, 16; 16, 8; 1 Kings 2, 37; Jer. 51, 35; Ezek. 18, 13; 33, 5; Matt. 23, 35; Acts 18, 6.

of attempting to bring the blood of Christ upon *them*, they accuse them of an intention to bring upon them the guilt of shedding His blood: this being the only meaning of such phraseology in the Scriptures.

“Should any doubt remain in the mind of any man concerning this interpretation, it may be settled, beyond all question, by recurring to the following passage. In Matt. 27, 24. 25 we are told that when Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing towards releasing Christ, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person; see ye to it: and that then all the people answered, and said, His blood be on us, and on our children. The meaning of the phraseology in this passage cannot be mistaken; and it is altogether probable that the declaration of the sanhedrim being made so soon after this imprecation to the apostles, so deeply interested in the subject, and on an occasion which so naturally called it up to view, the sanhedrim referred to it directly.

“But if Christ was not raised from the dead, He was a false prophet, an impostor, and, of course, a blasphemer; because He asserted Himself to be the Messiah, the Son of God. Such a blasphemer the Law condemned to death. The sanhedrim were the very persons to whom the business of trying and condemning Him was committed by that Law, and whose duty it was to accomplish His death. If, therefore, His body was not raised from the dead, there was no guilt in shedding His blood, but the mere performance of a plain duty. His blood, that is, the guilt of shedding it, could not possibly rest on the sanhedrim; nor, to use their language, be brought upon them by the apostles, nor by any others. All this the sanhedrim perfectly knew; and, therefore, had they not believed Him to have risen from the dead, they never could have used this phraseology.

“It is further to be observed that on both these occasions the apostles boldly declared to the sanhedrim, in the most explicit terms, that Christ was raised from the dead. Yet the

sanhedrim not only did not charge them with the crime of having stolen His body, but did not contradict, nor even comment on, the declaration. This could not possibly have happened through inattention. Both the sanhedrim and the apostles completely knew that the resurrection of Christ was the point on which His cause, and their opposition to it, entirely turned. It was the great and serious controversy between the contending parties; and yet, though directly asserted to their faces by the apostles, the sanhedrim did not even utter a syllable on the subject. Had they believed their own story, they would either have punished the apostles with death as rebels against the Jewish and Roman governments, or else they would have confined them as lunatics." (Horne, l. c.)

It was their evil consciences that had sealed their lips to the former charge. These men felt that an almighty power had taken them in their craftiness, and Gamaliel's speech at one of their sessions shows that they had ceased to believe in their own cause.

And now we turn for a few moments to the other actors in this event, the holy apostles, and consider the proof which a good conscience has offered for our Lord's resurrection. When these men parted after the angels' communication on Mount Olive, their hearts were firm in the belief that they were chosen to be the bearers of great and good tidings to the world. Luke relates that during the forty days' sojourn Christ had revealed Himself to them "by many infallible proofs." The proofs were not only infallible in themselves, but they had also rendered the expositors of these proofs convinced and thereby convincing.

"If Jesus Christ did not rise from the dead, it is impossible to account for the striking contrast between the pusillanimous conduct of the prejudiced apostles during their Master's life and the fearlessly courageous conduct of the same apostles after His resurrection.

"During the life of Christ we see them limited in their conceptions; confounded by whatever was spiritual and sub-

line in their Master's doctrine; prepossessed by the idea which then prevailed among the Jewish people, that the Law of Moses and the temple at Jerusalem were to subsist forever; full of prejudices concerning the nature of Messiah's kingdom; disputing for the chief place in it, at the very time when Jesus Christ was discoursing to them concerning His death as an obstacle to His reign and an indelible opprobrium. If the apostles had always retained the character which they exhibit in the Gospels, it cannot be doubted but that Christianity would have been buried in the tomb of its Founder.

“But let us prosecute our inquiries, and study the Acts of the Apostles. The narrative commences where the evangelical history terminates, viz., *after* the death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ. There we behold the apostles endued with the profoundest knowledge of the Gospel, emancipated from all their obstinate prejudices, notwithstanding these were founded on national self-love, on religious zeal, and on the dazzling prospects which they had conceived for themselves. They have forever renounced all their gross ideas of earthly elevation; and it is evident that they fully understood that the kingdom which they were commissioned to establish was a spiritual kingdom,—that the Jewish nation were no longer the peculiarly favored people of God,—that the Levitical worship was about to cease,—that the religion which they preached was to be common to *all* nations,—and that they considered their Master's death in its true point of view, as the best means of proving the truth of His divine mission, as the foundation of the covenant of grace, the most powerful motive to holiness, and His resurrection as the pledge of our resurrection.

“*During* the life of Christ we see them in a state of uncertainty, incessantly asking for new proofs, exciting impatience by the nature of their questions, and deserving their Master's reproach of being persons ‘of little faith.’ Only fifty days *after* His death we see them decided, convinced, persuaded, speaking with that noble firmness which is inspired by a thor-

ough conviction and knowledge of the truth, delivering the doctrine which they taught as certain and indubitable, as resting upon facts which all their senses had witnessed. No more fluctuation — no more doubt — no more uncertainty. We know is their expression ‘That which *we* have seen with our eyes, which *we* have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of Life . . . declare we unto you,’ 1 John 1, 1. 3; and they announce it with a tone of authority which well became the ambassadors of heaven, but which was ill suited to persons in their condition and of their education.

“*Before* their Master’s death we see them cowardly, trembling, timid in the extreme, feeble sheep, who were scattered the moment their Shepherd was smitten. *After* that event they became altogether new men: firm, courageous, and intrepid; they astonished Judea, Greece, and Asia Minor by their doctrine, and by their eloquence. They spoke before the people; they spoke before the tribunals of justice and also to kings, with singular boldness and freedom. They confounded the wisdom of the Areopagus; they made a proconsul tremble on his throne; and they extorted from a king, before whom they were accused, a public acknowledgment of their innocence. That very apostle who had been so intimidated by the voice of a female servant that he denied his Master, a few days after His death, when they were summoned before the very same magistrates who had caused Him to be crucified, dared to reproach them to their face with having put to death ‘the Holy One and the Just, the Prince of Life.’ The menaces of their judges dismayed them not. ‘Whether it be right in the sight of God,’ they said, ‘to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye, for we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard,’ Acts 4, 19. 20. They braved the hatred, and they triumphed over all the power of the synagogue. Unappalled by torments, they rejoiced to be deemed worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus. Labors most abundant, perilous journeys, pains both in body and in mind, renunciation of all property, resignation to every evil, nay, even the

sacrifice of their lives—they accounted nothing hard or difficult. And (which is most astonishing of all) this courage was not a sudden burst of transient enthusiasm: it never relaxed for an instant, notwithstanding the numerous and diversified trials to which they were exposed: on the contrary, it was manifested for many years, and finally was crowned by a violent death.

“If from their public conduct as related in the Acts of the Apostles, we turn to the epistles or letters written by these men after their Master’s resurrection, we shall find their whole souls laid open. What noble and elevated sentiments do we read in them! What courage, yet what resignation! What holy joy amid the dangers which menaced them, and the evils that befell them! What profoundness in their doctrine! What sublime and affecting instructions! What tender solicitude for the rising churches! What ardent charity for all men,—yea, even for their persecutors!

“How was so sudden and so marvelous a change wrought in the apostles? Is it possible to conceive such striking differences in the same individuals? They were less than men, they became more than heroes. But the notion that the Gospel is the invention of man assigns no cause for this strange revolution, which, however, may be readily comprehended and accounted for, if Jesus be the Messiah, and if, according to His promise, He poured down upon them the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

“In short, the conclusion resulting from the striking contrast in the conduct of the apostles, *before* and *after* their Master’s death, is so convincing and persuasive, that, even if the apostles had not informed us that they had received extraordinary gifts, it is impossible to conceive how any other means can or could be imagined which can account for that astonishing difference.” (Horne, l. c., p. 113.)

“Providence continued Jerusalem forty years after the resurrection of Christ, that all the Jews in the then known world might examine the evidence concerning it, and obtain

authentic proof of the truth of Christianity. The apostles, we repeat, maintained the resurrection of Jesus Christ before Jews and pagans, before philosophers and rabbis, before courtiers, before lawyers, before people who were expert in examining and cross-examining witnesses, in order to lead them into self-contradiction. Had the apostles borne their testimony in consequence of a preconcerted plot between themselves, is it not morally certain, that as they were examined before such different and capable men, some one would have discovered the pretended fraud?

“If the apostles had first published this resurrection several years after the time which they assigned for it, unbelief might have availed itself of the delay. But only three days after the crucifixion of Christ they declared that He was risen again, and they recchoed their testimony in a singular manner at the feast of Pentecost, when Jerusalem expected the spread of the report and endeavored to prevent it, while the eyes of their enemies were yet sparkling with rage and madness, and while Calvary was yet dyed with the blood they had shed there. Do impostors take such measures? Would they not have waited till the fury of the Jews had been appeased; till the judges and public officers had been changed; and till the people had been less attentive to their depositions?

“Had they published this event in distant countries beyond mountains and seas, it might have been supposed that distance of place rendering it extremely difficult for their hearers to obtain exact information had facilitated the establishment of the error. But the apostles preached in Jerusalem, in the synagogues, in the pretorium: they unfolded and displayed the banners of their Master’s cross, and set up tokens of His victory, in the very spot on which the infamous instrument of His sufferings had been set up.

“It was not to acquire fame, riches, glory, or profit:— by no means. On the contrary, they exposed themselves to sufferings and death, and proclaimed the truth from a conviction of its importance and certainty.” (Horne, l. c., p. 113.)



“Everywhere they were hated, calumniated, despised, hunted from city to city, cast into prison, scourged, stoned, and crucified. And for what were all these excruciating sufferings endured? Gain, honor, and pleasure are the only gods to which impostors bow. But of these the apostles acquired, and plainly labored to acquire, neither. What, then, was the end for which they suffered? Let the infidel answer this question. As they gained nothing, and lost everything, in the present world, so it is certain that they must expect to gain nothing, and suffer everything, in the world to come. That the Old Testament was the Word of God, they certainly believed without a single doubt. But in this book *lying* is exhibited as a supreme object of the divine abhorrence, and the scriptural threatenings. From the invention and propagation of this falsehood, therefore, they could expect nothing hereafter but the severest effusions of the anger of God. — For what, then, was all this loss, danger, and suffering incurred? For the privilege of telling an extravagant and incredible story to mankind, and of founding upon it a series of exhortations to repentance, faith, and holiness; to the renunciation of sin, and the universal exercise of piety, justice, truth, and kindness; to the practice of all that conduct which common sense has ever pronounced to be the duty, honor, and happiness of man; and the avoidance of all that which it has ever declared to be his guilt, debasement, and misery? Such an end was never even wished, much less seriously proposed by an impostor. At the same time, they lived as no impostors ever lived, and were able to say to their converts, with a full assurance of finding a cordial belief of the declaration, ‘Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily, and justly, and unblamably we behaved ourselves among you that believe.’ That this was their true character is certain from the concurrent testimony of all antiquity. Had they not nobly recorded their own faults, there is not the least reason to believe that a single stain would have ever rested upon their character. If, then, the apostles invented this story, they invented it without the remotest hope or prospect of making it

believed, a thing which was never done by an impostor; propagated it without any interest, without any hope of gain, honor, power, or pleasure, the only objects by which impostors were ever allured; and with losses and sufferings which no impostor ever voluntarily underwent: proposed as their only end, or at least the only end which has ever been discovered to mankind, an object which no impostor ever pursued or even wished; and during their whole progress through life, lived so as no impostor ever lived; and so as to be the most perfect contrast ever exhibited by men, to the whole character of imposition." (Dwight, *Syst. of Theol.* II, 529; cited by Horne.)

I close with the words of Saurin:

"Collect all these proofs together, consider them in one point of view, and see how many extravagant suppositions must be advanced, if the resurrection of our Savior be denied. It must be supposed that guards who had been particularly cautioned by their officers sat down to sleep; and that, nevertheless, they deserved credit when they said that the body of Jesus was stolen. It must be supposed that men who had been imposed on in the most odious and cruel manner in the world hazarded their dearest enjoyments for the glory of an impostor. It must be supposed that ignorant and illiterate men, who had neither reputation, fortune, nor eloquence, possessed the art of fascinating the eyes of all the Church. It must be supposed that five hundred persons were all deprived of their senses at a time, or that they were all deceived in the plainest matters of fact; or that this multitude of false witnesses had found out the secret of never contradicting themselves or one another, and of being always uniform in their testimony. It must be supposed that the most expert courts of judicature could not find out a shadow of contradiction in a palpable imposture. It must be supposed that the apostles, sensible men in other cases, chose precisely those places and those times which were most unfavorable to their views. It must be supposed that millions madly suffered imprisonments, tortures, and crucifixion to spread an illusion. It must be supposed

that ten thousand miracles were wrought in favor of falsehood, or all these facts must be denied. And then it must be supposed that the apostles were idiots, that the enemies of Christianity were idiots, and that all the primitive Christians were idiots." (*Sermons* II, 221; cited by Horne.)

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