THE RESURRECTION

Fact or Fiction?

William Thompson

THE MOST IMPORTANT EVENT IN HISTORY

No event in all history has greater importance than the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, and there is none the truth of which matters so much. For if the story of the Resurrection is a myth, there is no compelling reason to suppose that Jesus of Nazareth was more than a great ethical teacher and prophet such as Socrates or Buddha or Mahomet. He was no more the Son of God than they were the Sons of God and the message He gave was a purely human one—a good one, perhaps, but still a message from a mortal man. But if He rose from the dead, here is the mystery of all time, because we know that no dead person can ever come back to life. If this Man did what no living being can ever do, or can ever hope to do, then we know that He must also be God— the Master of Life and Death. This Man W*ho* once lived in an obscure province of the Roman Empire must be the One Who made Man in His own image. In the words of the immortal hymn, this must be He Who built the starry skies".

If the Resurrection were to be abandoned no Gospel would remain. That Christ was risen was the message that the believers of the New Testament period were concerned to make known. This was their Good News. They never for a moment imagined that there could be a Gospel apart from the Resurrection. It was truly an amazing message that the Apostles released upon the world.

If the message was true, if Jesus of Nazareth did rise again from the dead, then we are face to face with surely the greatest historical fact in human history. For no other historical personage has such a claim ever been made. It is a thing which simply does not happen. If it did happen, then this Man was a partaker in Godhead in a sense different to any other man. He was in fact, as he claimed to be, the Son of God. He was God.

It follows, therefore, that the historical authenticity or not of the Resurrection is the most momentous problem in all history.

HAS SCIENCE DISPROVED MIRACLES?

The evidence for the Resurrection is exceedingly strong and it may be wondered at why so many people doubt and even dispute it, not even troubling to examine the evidence. Part of the explanation would appear to be that many people have a vague notion that modern science has disproved the possibility of miracles. They feel that miracles have never happened and can never happen.

Most sceptics claim that it is their scientific outlook which causes them to reject the Resurrection out of hand. Their attitude is, however, anything but scientific. In any case, there is a whole field of experience which cannot be verified by what is commonly described as scientific method.

Very many of us are unnecessarily overawed by the smattering of scientific learning which we happen to possess. We tend to come to the Resurrection narratives prejudiced by our superficial knowledge of physics towards a disbelief in the possibility of Christ's Resurrection. But those of us who learn the actual findings of the foremost physicists of the present day cease to be so confident; we discover that there is an enormous range of phenomena for which physical science is unable to offer the sketchiest explanation.

It is quite untrue to say that modem science has disproved the possibility of miracles. The most scientists would say is that they have never met a proven miracle. But no one can assert that because an event has never yet come within his or her personal experience, it is therefore beyond the bounds of reason.

It is well for us to remember that science describes what happens, rarely does it explain why it happens.

The true scientific method is to approach any given problem with a completely open mind, examining all the relevant evidence and all the possible objections and then reaching whatever conclusions may be clearly indicated.

This is the legal method; this is the only logical way. In a court of law, the innocence or guilt of a prisoner is not judged in advance; all the evidence in his favour and all the evidence which tells against him is scrupulously examined, then a verdict is reached.

In like manner, all the evidence in favour of miracles should be examined and all possible objections should be

minutely considered.

Evidence may be direct or indirect.

I can quite easily prove that a stone falls to the ground if left unsupported. All I need do is to take a stone and let it fall. I can prove that bacteria exist but that is slightly more difficult to prove for I must have a microscope. I can only indirectly prove that there is such a country as Australia; I have never been there but the testimony of people now living is so exhaustive and conclusive that it would be the height of insanity to doubt the existence of Australia. Yet I accept this fact on other people's authority—I do not really know it myself.

With any fact of history, the evidence must necessarily be still more indirect—all that can be done is to show that there is a convergence of historical probabilities which places the historicity of the event beyond all reasonable doubt.

We intend to show that the historical evidence for the Resurrection is overwhelming, far stronger than the evidence for many other events of history which everyone unhesitatingly accepts as true.

The truth or falsity of an historical event can only be ascertained by collecting all the evidence, analysing it, weighing it, pondering upon it and finally deciding upon balance of probability whether it happened or not.

There cannot be absolute certainty about any event in the past. We say we know that George III became King of England in 1760 but there is no person alive who was living then to verify it. It is an historical fact but a fact dependent on the credibility of historical witnesses. So many witnesses in so many different places attest to the fact of George III becoming king in 1760 and there are so many corroborative details, that to question it would be downright stupid.

We shall make an impartial investigation of the Resurrection in the same way. We will examine all the available evidence in the way a court of law would do.

ARE THE GOSPELS HISTORY OR LEGEND?

We must start by asking ourselves if the documents which relate the story of the Resurrection are reliable. Were they written by eye-witnesses? Are they really contemporary history, written by the four Evangelists? Or have we been fooled, are they simply pious legends?

In a world where there is much doubt and uncertainty, where contradictory accounts are published even about present-day events, the answer is simple. There is not a shadow of doubt that four Gospels were circulating in the infant Church during the lifetime of Christians who had known the Apostles.

But can we be sure that they were not tampered with? Can we be sure the miracle stories were not added later?

Let us examine briefly a bit, a little bit of the evidence. A book could be filled with all the available evidence. As, for instance, the Gospel of St. John. The beloved Disciple lived to an extreme old age and shortly before his death, he wrote the last of the Gospels. About this time, he taught a young man who later became Bishop of Smyrna. This man, Polycarp, later to obtain a martyr's crown, taught in turn a young man eventually to become Bishop of Lyons. Irenaeus of Lyons in his Epistle to Florinus tells us that Polycarp frequently spoke to him about what St. John and other disciples had told him about Our Lord and "all he said was in strict agreement with the Scriptures." He quotes frequently from the four Gospels.

Writers who wrote still earlier quoting the Gospels include Papias and Justin Martyr. The latter wrote a summary of St. John's Gospel full of quotations from that Gospel.

But the most treasured manuscript is the priceless fragment of part of St. John's Gospel. This, the earliest of them all, is amongst the papyri in the John Rylands Library at Manchester.

We even have non-Christians mentioning the Resurrection. Josephus, the great Jewish historian, born within ten years of the Crucifixion has this to say: "About this time lived Jesus, a man full of wisdom, if one may call him a man. He was a doer of incredible things . . . . He was the Christ. On the accusation of the leading men of our people, Pilate condemned him to death on the cross. Nevertheless, those who had previously loved him, still remained faithful to him. For on the third day he again appeared to them living, just as, in addition to a thousand other wonderful things, prophets sent by God had foretold. And at the present day the race of those who call themselves Christians after him has not ceased." *(Jewish Antiquities.* Chapter XVIII).

STRONG EVIDENCE

The first thing we find out is the startling fact that the evidence *is* all from one side. The Christians gave all the evidence in favour of the Resurrection, their opponents give no evidence to disprove it.

The next thing we find out is that the historical evidence for the Resurrection is exceedingly strong—--far stronger than most people, believers and unbelievers alike, are aware. Indeed, the evidence is so overwhelming as to leave no reasonable doubt that Jesus of Nazareth, after He had been put to death by crucifixion, was raised from the dead and was seen alive by his disciples during the following forty days; and that this Resurrection meant more than the survival of His spirit, since it involved the raising of His body in such a way that His grave was left empty.

That the grave was really empty on the Sunday morning is beyond any reasonable question. Right from the beginning the emptiness of the grave was taken for granted by friend and foe alike, The Jews never denied that the tomb was vacant. The only explanation they could offer was that the disciples had stolen the body out of the tomb.

Try to imagine the scene. Only a short distance from where His dead body had been laid to rest, the Christians were proclaiming the astounding message that He had risen. If the body lay in the tomb, all the High Priest and the Sanhedrin needed to do was to throw the grave open to inspection so that anyone could see the body for himself.

The Jewish authorities were desperate for a solution. Their explanation that the disciples came by night and stole the body is really absurd. What were the guards doing? If they were awake, they could have stopped anyone taking the body away. If they were asleep, how could they know what happened to the body or who took it away? But who ever heard of soldiers on important guard duty, deciding to while the time away by sleeping? What happens to anyone rash enough to do so? There is no sign or suggestion anywhere that disciplinary action was taken against the guards.

THE EMPTY TOMB

In any case, there cannot be the slightest doubt that the grave was empty on the Sunday morning. What, then, happened to the body?

There can only be two explanations. The first is that Christ rose again from the dead and the second is that, somewhere or other, there was deliberate fraud. Absurd as we have shown the theory to be, let us examine the possibility that the disciples stole the body and pretended that their Master had risen from the dead.

We must ask ourselves first, what benefit would they have derived from such a deceit?

If they had invented the story of their Lord's Resurrection, their reward was a lifetime of almost untold suffering, being excommunicated, ostracised and cut off from friends and relations. They knew that imprisonment and death awaited them and yet they launched their crusade in the very city where their master had been slain and only a few hundred yards from where His dead body had been laid to rest.

What a change had come over the Apostles in a few weeks time! When we read about them in the Gospels, Christ seems to have picked some very poor individuals as His followers. They fled at the approach of danger; their conduct in Gethsemane can only be called base and cowardly. Good Friday left them brokenhearted and in despair. He whom they had believed to be the Messiah was dead; the glorious adventure in which they had engaged with Him had come to a bitter, ignominious end; and so they skulked behind closed doors "for fear of the Jews."

THE APOSTLES PREACHED THE RISEN LORD

Seven weeks later we find that they are scarcely recognizable as the same persons. Their despair and disappointment have given way to exultation, and soon they are in the busy streets of Jerusalem, the very stronghold of their enemies, fearlessly announcing that Christ is risen and that He is Lord.

There can be no argument about the message preached by the Apostles. They did not put Christianity forward as a code of ethics or a philosophy; they put it before the world as a supernatural religion, the story of a Man Who had died for the sins of the world and had miraculously risen again, and Who was both God and Man.

The earliest Christian document, which proves this, is St. Paul's 1st Epistle to the Corinthians. This Epistle is undoubtedly a genuine letter written by St. Paul to the converts at Corinth. It was written about A.D. *55*, approximately ten years before St. Mark wrote his Gospel, the oldest of all the four Gospels. At first, the Apostles and other preachers relied solely on oral tradition as to the facts of the Lord's life and death and as to His sayings.

So the famous fifteenth chapter of St. Paul's 1st Epistle to the Corinthians affords us priceless testimony as to the belief of the early Church concerning the Resurrection: "Brethren, I make known unto you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you have received, and wherein you stand; by which also you are saved if you hold fast after what manner I preached unto you, unless you have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all, which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and the He rose again the third day, according to the scriptures; and that He was seen by Cephas, and after that by the eleven. Then He was seen by more than five hundred brethren at once, of whom many remain until this present, and some are fallen asleep. After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles. And last of all He was seen also by me, as one born out of due time."

So far the evidence has shown us two definite facts. The first is that the tomb was certainly empty on that first Easter Sunday morning and the second is that the Apostles were convinced that their Master had risen from the dead.

DID THE APOSTLES IMAGINE IT ALL?

Critics have not been wanting to suggest that the appearances of the Risen Christ were subjective hallucinations which tradition has elaborated into walks and talks and meals and messages.

There are no scientific grounds for assuming that collective hallucination ever takes place and even individual hallucination only occurs when an event is expected. But the disciples were not expecting the Resurrection; far from it. The crucifixion had left them utterly defeated, broken-hearted, crushed in spirit and quite without hope. He, round whom they had woven such dreams had been executed in a shameful manner, and their hopes were shattered. They were timid, broken men, whose only hope was to save their own skins. Far from expecting to see their Master, they were only too sure that they had seen the last of Him. When the women came with their story that Jesus was alive, they would not believe them. And one of them, at least, was disposed to be sceptical even after the Risen Christ had shown Himself.

Though He had foretold his Resurrection to His disciples, it seems quite certain that they did not understand Him. They refused to take Him seriously when He spoke of His approaching death, and if they were slow and unwilling to understand, how could they possibly grasp His teaching concerning the Resurrection which was to follow? When we read the Gospels it is quite clear that though Our Lord told them of what was ahead, when the blow fell and the Crucifixion came, it took them unawares and left them shattered.

The disciples as pictured in the Gospels are not the type of men likely to fall a prey to visions. The women could be regarded as possible victims of hallucination but the men, a slow-moving unimaginative lot, are not at all likely to become subjects of hysteria and fanciful flights of imagination. When we come to read the Gospel accounts carefully, we find that the Appearances would be a rather odd kind of "hallucination" for the vision breaks bread, eats a bit of broiled fish and distributes the remains amongst them.

And he who attributes the transformation of the disciples to collective hallucination has still to explain the empty tomb. What happened to the body if the Christian explanation is not true? Was it removed to another grave? In that case, would it not have become a shrine, to which His followers would have repaired to give Him homage?

Even if someone did remove the body, what about the Appearances to the disciples? And not only to the disciples but to five hundred at once. Did the five hundred, presumably men, women and children, all suffer from the same hallucination?

DID JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA REMOVE THE BODY?

It has been suggested by non-Christian critics that Joseph of Arimathaea removed the body. It is, however, difficult to see what motive he could have had. He could, it is true, have come to the tomb in the early hours of the morning and buried the body in another tomb of his own choice.

But is it conceivable that when the disciples were preaching the story of the Resurrection he would have kept quiet? A word from him would have exploded the whole story. He was a member of the Sanhedrin and if he never became a Christian he had no motive for keeping silent. If he later became a Christian he knew that the story of the Resurrection was false arid he was a pious Jew, extremely unlikely to lend himself to blasphemy. Even supposing he died

immediately after removing the body, which would be a remarkable coincidence, he could not have moved the stone alone; he must have had helpers. Surely one or more of the helpers would have come forward. The Sanhedrin would have been delighted with such information and would have paid the informant well.

DID CHRIST ONLY FAINT ON THE CROSS?

Another alternative explanation put forward *by* rationalists is that Christ did not really die on the Cross but only fainted; and that, reviving in the cool of the tomb, He made His escape and inspired his disciples with the belief that He had risen from the dead.

This theory is of such extreme improbability that it is hardly worth a moment's consideration. When He was taken down from the Cross, those supervising His execution were convinced that the job was done; and if they, whose duty it was to know, were satisfied that He was dead, it is hardly likely that they were mistaken.

However, supposing that for the sake of argument we concede that Our Lord may merely have been in a swoon when placed in the tomb, consider what difficulties there are in finding any reasonable explanation.

How did He escape from the tomb so carefully guarded by soldiers? Where did He get clothes from? Who rolled the stone away?

The theory that He did not really die on the Cross involves an appalling degree of fraud, much worse than the fraudulent removal of the body. All the Apostles must have been in the deception. It is interesting to remind ourselves here of a tremendous objection that the Apostles were guilty of fraud: would they have been willing to face persecution and death for a story which they knew to be false. Tradition says that all the Apostles, except St. John, perished by unnatural deaths. Death came to them in strange and horrible ways, devised for slaves and inferiors in a cruel age. We are inclined to think that they were not as other men; we shrink from pain and death, while they did not feel pain, neither did they fear death.

We only need to read St. Mark's Gospel; he makes it quite clear that the disciples were anything but heroes. Only a conviction, overwhelming in force, a certainty that Christ had risen from the dead, could have transformed them from timid men "all who forsook Him and fled" into supermen who invaded Jerusalem, the intellectual centre of Judea, who pitted their faith against the cleverest brains of the day in the face of every hindrance and bitter opposition. They were not brilliant men, they were not very well-educated; they were men from the humblest walks of life, yet they carried all before them. In twenty years time they were threatening the very peace of the Roman Empire.

But at what a cost!

Persecution and martyrdom in the most fearful way.

Knowing this, as they must have done, why should they have formed a conspiracy to impose on the world a new religion in which they themselves did not believe? Is it conceivable that they would have persisted to the end in maintaining an elaborate conspiracy of falsehood? Surely one or other would have broken away from such a foolish and such a pointless conspiracy? It is incredible to suppose that, sooner or later, the real facts would not have leaked out.

What of the difficulties of the situation? Our Lord, weak and in need of attention must have been conveyed somewhere where He could not be recognized while the Apostles brazenly preached the Resurrection.

Then He too, must have been a party to the fraud. Now, not even the most violent atheist would maintain that Christ was a common trickster.

But the suggestion that He did not really die on the Cross was given its death-blow more than a century ago by Strauss, one of the keenest critics of Christianity.

He says: "It is impossible to believe that a man who had crept, half-dead, out of the grave, weak and ill, needing medical attention, bandaging and indulgence, and who must finally have yielded to his sufferings, could have produced on the mind of his disciples that he had triumphed over death and the grave, the Prince of Life, and yet it was this impression which was the basis of their future ministry. Such a resuscitation could only have weakened the impression which he made on them in life and in death, and could not possibly have transformed their sorrow into enthusiasm, or their reverence into worship."

There is not a shadow of a doubt that Jesus was really dead when taken down from the Cross.

DID SOMEONE ELSE REMOVE THE BODY?

Sundry other suggestions have been advanced to try to find a materialistic explanation of the strange events of that first Easter Day.

Could anyone else have removed the body from the tomb? There were the Roman authorities; could Pilate have moved the body?

But what possible motive could he have had? His interest was to preserve the Pax Romana, none too easy a task with such a proud and turbulent people as the Jews. He had crucified Christ because it was the easiest way to avoid trouble with the Jews. Would he have antagonised them by moving the body and afterwards keeping silent? Then, too, others must have known the truth, is it conceivable that they would all have kept quiet? And how did the disciples and the five hundred imagine they had seen and heard the Risen Lord?

As for the Jewish authorities; they could easily have moved the body because they were annoyed with Joseph of Arimathaea for giving it honourable burial. They could have had it thrown into a common grave. They could have easily done all this, and then what would they have done when the disciples started to preach the Resurrection?

They would not have needed to produce a body which could have been recognized as that of Jesus; all that would have been necessary would have been for them to produce mouldering remains of any sort from the tomb. Then the new doctrine would have been blown sky high. They did no such thing; and this is only explicable on the assumption that the tomb was empty and too many people in Jerusalem knew it was empty.

We have examined some of the available evidence and we have come to see that there is no other explanation save the Christian one of miracle.

CONVERSION OF ST. PAUL

Even so, we have not yet examined all the evidence.

About four years after the Crucifixion, a young Jew, hating the Christian faith with every fibre of his being, and attacking its adherents with the utmost vigour, turned completely round and ended up being its most fearless and most renowned advocate. His intellectual attainments have made him one of the greatest personalities of all time, as friend and foe alike have repeatedly testified. He was a Rabbi and a Pharisee, the chief persecutor of the new sect and he was the last man in the world to become a Christian.

But Saul, for such was his name, did become a Christian. The change of front was so remarkable that it astonished everyone. No one can ever really know what happened on the Damascus road. He certainly had a vision of the Risen Christ. This seems to have been somewhat different in some respects from the earlier Resurrection appearances; but Saul had not the slightest doubt that it was real, and so he adds it to the list of Resurrection appearances in the 1st Epistle to the Corinthians.

It is safe to say that at the date of his conversion, when he saw the vision of Christ, he knew the best of the official case against the Christians; be would be acquainted with all the facts known to the Jewish authorities, and would know welt all the “natural” explanations of the Resurrection. He would certainly have been impressed and would probably have been shaken by the fortitude with which St. Stephen had met his death.

Even so, all his background, all his training as an exceptionally ardent Pharisee were such as to set him into violent opposition to any possibility of the Christians being right. The suggestion, even while he lived, that Christ was divine, would have filled Saul with intense repugnance; but the making of such a suggestion after the Crucifixion must have filled him with a horror so great that it is not to be wondered at that he rounded in violent hatred upon those whom he regarded as blasphemous heretics.

He was no unthinking, unquestioning, credulous individual but by common consent one of the greatest intellects of all time. His was a mind accustomed to assessing evidence and subjecting facts to searching scrutiny. He was a man equally capable of discussing Greek philosophical terms in Athens as of bandying Old Testament texts in the synagogues of Asia Minor.

He was the last man in the world to turn Christian.

He set out on his journey to Damascus, resolved to exterminate this new sect of Christianity; he arrived in Damascus convinced that Jesus had risen. He did not merely think he had been wrong; he became utterly convinced of

the truth of the Resurrection. He was now as much for Christ as he had previously been against Him. Everything about him at Damascus goes to show that here was a man convinced beyond any possibility of doubt.

His conversion was not only thorough and complete; it was to be lifelong. It led him to ridicule, hatred, persecution, stonings, floggings, imprisonment and shipwreck and, finally, it led him to an inglorious death.

Nothing could turn him away from his new faith and it is impossible to find any natural explanation for such a lifetime's practical devotion.

Had there been any weak points in the disciples' account of the Resurrection, here was the man to find them.

There was a considerable interval between his conversion and what he considered his call to spread the faith far and wide to all and sundry in the Roman world, an interval of self-communion and instruction. He announced his conversion at once but did not follow it up for some time. The evidence goes to show that he utilized this period to examine the Christian proofs of the Resurrection.

He mentions an appearance to St. Peter and another one to St James, an appearance which is nowhere else mentioned but the fact of which he must have got from the Apostle himself. He did not start his missionary teaching until he had seen St. Peter, one of the most vital witnesses on the question of the Resurrection. The proof that these two disciples alone could give was sufficient for him long after the excitement of his conversion had worn off. Being the man he was, too, we can be certain that he would have questioned very closely as many as he could of the five hundred. That he made himself known to most of the five hundred is indicated by his reference to them in the 1st Epistle to the Corinthians: "Then He was seen by more than five hundred brethren at once, of whom many remain until this present, and some are fallen asleep."

He must have been acquainted with them to know that some were still living but also that some of them had died.

Critics have tried to make much of his silence about the women's visit to the tomb. St. Paul was a strict Jew, writing not only to Greeks but also to his brethren. In Israel nineteen hundred years ago a woman could not give testimony on oath—what she said was not evidence. The Gospels mention the woman's visit to the tomb because it happened; they simply wrote a factual account, but no Jew would have dreamed of bringing female testimony forward as evidence.

Two points should be borne in mind. The first is that St. Paul is not giving an exhaustive account of what happened on Easter Day, nor all the appearances of the Risen Christ, just as the Gospels in their turn, did not give a complete account. The second is that St. Paul is not writing to prove the Resurrection to his readers; he is simply giving them a brief reminder of facts which they, as well as he, know full well.

There is no reason to treat the fifteenth chapter of the 1st Epistle to the Corinthians as an example of what St. Paul would have said if he had been writing to plead the truth of the Resurrection. This apparent difficulty, the supposed discrepancies between the Gospel and St. Paul's Epistle, is no reason for dismissing the Resurrection story.

Indeed, the real difficulty is finding a natural explanation for the transformation which took place in St. Paul's life; the difficulty, not to say impossibility, of finding a natural explanation for what must surely be a supernatural event.

WEEKLY TESTIMONY AS TO TRUTH OF RESURRECTION

There is an extraordinary fact which occurs once every week. It has been said that man can get used to almost anything. It is certain that we never notice what a remarkable thing we do every Sunday. We obey the Ten Commandments or, at least, we try to do. Almighty God ordered mankind to rest on the seventh day of the week and we know that the Jews faithfully observed the Sabbath.

Then a most remarkable thing happened. A very small group of men, the Apostles, took it on themselves to make the Sabbath an ordinary day and substituted in its place, the first day of the week. We in the twentieth century rarely realise, that, to the orthodox Jew of the first century, this must have appeared as an act of hideous blasphemy. These few men amended one of the Commandments of God and Christians have followed their example down the ages.

The earliest Christians were Jews, and converted Jews continued to form a large proportion of the Christian Church throughout the first century. Only some very extraordinary consideration could have caused them to tamper with one of the Ten Commandments; what could that be other than the conviction that it was on the first day of the week that the Lord had risen from the dead?

The event was so decisive and sure that it displaced even the Sabbath. Every Sunday that comes round is a new argument for the Resurrection.

PROBLEM OF RISEN BODY

Though what has been said in these pages is adequate to show that Our Lord's Resurrection is sober historical fact, it would be quite untrue to say that no problems remain in connection with the Appearances. One great difficulty is the nature of the risen body of Christ. It must be confessed that a full explanation would appear to be beyond our finite human minds. But there are some things which must be said.

One is that the historical truth of the Resurrection is not affected in the slightest by our inability to understand every problem connected with it. My inability to understand how the egg changes into the chicken does not alter anything; the egg hatches out even if I do not believe that it will do so.

Another thing which must be said is that our Risen Lord was different in some ways to the Christ before the Crucifixion; yet He was not a spirit. The true explanation must take account of the fact that the Risen Lord displayed physical attributes; He could see and be seen, He could eat and He could talk, yet, at the same time, He could appear and disappear at will. Perhaps we can do no better in attempting to describe Our Lord's risen body than to speak of it as a "glorified" body.

It was still Christ but it was not simply His physical body restored to the old life. Neither was it a disembodied spirit—the body that had laid in the tomb was taken up into this Risen Lord—but a wonderful change had taken place so that now **it** was suited to the conditions of a higher life as our flesh-and-blood body is suited to this one.

The resurrection of the individual Christian too, will have both continuity and difference, as St. Paul points out. For us, too, the resurrection will be the resurrection of the body—not in the sense that the identical particles of our present body will form part of our "glorified" body, but in the sense that we shall not be pure spirit and that there will he preserved all the essential physical features of our present earthly bodies.

How the Resurrection took place we do not know and certainly this side of the grave, we shall never be able to know. We do not know how it was that Jesus sometimes appeared as flesh and sometimes as spirit.

All attempts at a complete explanation of the "mode" of the Resurrection are interesting. But they are not vital. The important thing, the one thing which is sufficient is that He rose from the dead in a manner which showed His power over life and death, a manner which demonstrates His victory over the grave, a victory which we, too, will eventually share with Him.

THE RESURRECTION IS HISTORICAL FACT

We have attempted to show how evidence piling upon evidence makes it unreasonable to doubt that Jesus rose from the dead. We sum up by emphasizing the impossibility of finding any other explanation of the Resurrection story.

It is for the sceptic to make good his claim; it is for the unbeliever to justify his contention that the Resurrection never took place.

But there is no satisfactory explanation except the Christian one of miracle.

There is only one explanation which fits the facts—the explanation given by St. Peter when he says: "This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we are all witnesses."

Nihil Obstat:
JOSEPH P. NEWTH, C.C.

Imprimi Potest:
✠ IOANNES CAROLUS,
Archiep. Dublinen.,
Hiberniae Primas.

Dublini:die 30 Oct. anno 1958.

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