

# Theology on the Web.org.uk

*Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible*

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

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



Buy me a coffee

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



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

---

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

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

*necessary to salvation,*" for those who regard "*salvation*" as a sustained life in Christ.

These two passages of S. John's Gospel seem, therefore, to be related to the institution of the two Sacraments thus—they give an account of preliminary training on Christ's part to secure that when the institution came it should fall on minds ready to receive it, and trained to perceive the cardinal importance and purpose of each. They justify the importance attached to them by the Church on the substantial ground of the mind of Christ. And such a view falls in entirely with the general character of the Fourth Gospel.

H. J. C. KNIGHT.

### THE APPEARANCES OF THE RISEN LORD TO INDIVIDUALS.

ST. MARK XVI. 9.—"Now when He was risen early on the first day of the week, He appeared first to Mary Magdalene."

I COR. XV. 5, 7, 8.—"He appeared to Cephas . . . then He appeared to James . . . and last of all, as unto one born out of due time, He appeared to me also."

IN Paley's *View of the Evidences of Christianity* that acute reasoner institutes a comparison between the evidence for Christianity that is based on miracles and similar evidence which, he says, "our adversaries may bring into comparison with ours." He divides the distinctions between Christian miracles and other alleged evidential miracles into two kinds: those which relate to the proof, and those which relate to the miracles themselves. Speaking of the latter class, Paley lays down, in the first place, that "it is not necessary to admit as a miracle what can be resolved into a false perception; of this nature was the demon of Socrates, the visions of St. Anthony and of many others.

. . . All these may be accounted for by a momentary insanity; for the characteristic symptom of human madness is the rising up in the mind of images not distinguishable by the patient from impressions upon the senses. . . . They are, for the most part, cases of visions or voices; the object is hardly ever touched. . . . They are likewise almost always cases of a solitary witness." So far Paley. Such miracles as these, it is needless to say, can prove nothing except to the percipient, and Paley has no difficulty in showing that the gospel miracles are not of this class. Yet is it not a striking fact that out of the ten or eleven recorded appearances of the risen Lord, no fewer than four should have been, to use Paley's phrase, "cases of a solitary witness," miracles, that is, which an adversary of Christianity might "resolve into a false perception"? It is no doubt true that other self-manifestations of Christ after His resurrection were of a nature to satisfy the most exacting inquirer; but it is tolerably certain that antecedently a Christian believer would have preferred that all the post-resurrection appearances of Christ should have been of this convincing kind, and a Christian apologist might be excused for regarding these four appearances to solitary individuals as possible difficulties and certainly useless as evidence. A more careful consideration, however, may perhaps lead us to the conviction that such a view is based on a misapprehension as to what the evidence for Christianity really is, inasmuch as these four "cases of a solitary witness" have probably brought conviction to more minds even than the manifestations in which the sacred Body was handled, and seen to eat and drink by a number of persons.

First, let us observe that the particular individuals to whom the Lord thus vouchsafed to reveal Himself were themselves examples of four types of sainthood which have built up the Church in all ages—types which often misunderstand and undervalue each other, but which are all necessary to the

completeness of the Church's holiness—Mary, the woman of utter devotion and self-forgetful service; Peter, the practical organizer, with imagination and sympathies, it may be, necessarily and providentially restricted; James, the man of prayer, meditation, and rigid self-discipline, the man of inactive piety, as some might call him; and lastly, Paul, who was something of all three preceding types, but who was besides a man of the world, in the best sense, and one who by his training could bring the gospel message into relation with the best ethical teaching and culture of his day, and who from his broad sympathies could interpret the gospel to men of every class of mind.

In the next place, we note a remarkable circumstance about these appearances, what Paley would call an example of "the candour of the writers of the New Testament," what we might regard as a damaging admission—the fact that so little is told us about them. St. Jerome, indeed, has preserved an interesting story, from the Gospel according to the Hebrews, about the appearance of the Lord to St. James, but beyond the bare fact we read nothing in the canonical Scriptures about the manifestation to him or to St. Peter. "Something sealed the lips of those evangelists." And, moreover, the Lord would seem to have deliberately provided against the possibility of these appearances being used as demonstrative proofs of the reality of His resurrection. Whatever may have been the full meaning of the words "Touch Me not," spoken to Mary, they certainly stand in striking contrast to the invitation, "Handle Me, and see," addressed to the disciples later on. In like manner the highest degree of certainty, as it is commonly understood, was not granted to St. Paul. He saw the Lord. He did not touch Him. Nor was touch necessary. The personal appeal, "Mary," "Saul, Saul," brought home to the minds and souls of those addressed a conviction that nothing else could give. Listen to the immediate response, "Rabboni,"

“Who art Thou, Lord?”—the last lingering trace of scepticism, and the first confession of faith, at a breath. How wonderful is the magic of a personal address! What language can adequately express the emotions that vibrate through our whole being at the sound of our own name, uttered in the great crises of life by one whom the love of years has made part of ourselves! All the past of us that they have known—its weaknesses and follies, its joys and sorrows, its temptations yielded to and resisted—all seems to echo in the intonation with which is sounded our own name, that word in which our personality is expressed and summed up.

But though the revelation of the risen Lord to these four persons is not known to us in its fulness, or at all, yet we may fairly suppose that it was in *every* case a conversion. It was a correction of past faults or misapprehensions, and a consecration for the future service of the Master of the special gifts of each one. The love and devotion of Mary Magdalene, complete though it was in self-surrender, needed elevating and spiritualizing. The dear, dead Body of the revered Teacher was everything to her. She it was that took the lead in the procuring of spices to anoint it. She weeps “because they have taken away my Lord out of the sepulchre, and I know not where they have laid Him.” She pleads with the supposed gardener, “Sir, if thou have borne Him hence, tell me where thou hast laid Him, and I will take Him away.” Words these, indeed, of love that can do all things, but which need correction by a deeper knowledge of who her Lord really is. And so she who comes to tend lovingly a dead body must needs be charged with the duty of proclaiming the Ascension. Again, it is at least conceivable that Peter’s fall arose in part from his practical temperament, as yet undisciplined. It was not cowardice only that caused Peter to deny his Master, but also hopelessness about a lost cause. He was a man

of action. He would do anything—smite with the sword, but it must be, if not for a successful, at least for an active leader. Can we doubt that, in his first meeting with the Conqueror over death, Peter, besides receiving the assurance of full forgiveness, learnt something of the nature of true success? With respect to James, we cannot speak with certainty. St. John, writing of a time in the ministry of Christ not long before the Passion, says, "Even His brethren did not believe on Him." It may be that James had had narrow Essene prejudices against the Messianic ideal as portrayed by our Lord. In any case, it was from the resurrection life that he drew the broader, more kindly, and sympathetic spirit which breathes in his words at the apostolic council. It is unnecessary to enlarge on the corrective and consecrating significance of the manifestation of the Lord to Saul of Tarsus.

We have now seen that in the wisdom of God it was provided that to four distinct types of character the risen Lord specially revealed Himself in a manner that was personal, incommunicable, ineffable, corrective and consecrating. Let us, in the last place, note that these appearances, which apparently could not be verified, were, from the very first, powerful in bringing home conviction to others. When the two disciples returned from Emmaus to Jerusalem, the first words that greeted them were not "We have seen the Lord," but "The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon." And thousands in the apostolic age must have realized for themselves the last beatitude, "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." What numbers must have been converted by the unsupported testimony of St. Paul alone! In some of the Churches the more reflecting of his converts might indeed have had their faith confirmed by the fact that those who opposed his apostolic claims yet were at one with him as to the resurrection of Christ; but if human nature was then what it is now, this

corroboration must have had little practical effect. Beliefs that are held in common by different sections of a religion are held by one section rather in spite of than because of the other's belief in them. And sometimes, when party spirit runs high, the strain becomes too great, and a portion of the original common inheritance is dropped by one section or the other.

What then was it that persuaded these people of the truth of a miracle the evidence for which was not, strictly speaking, satisfactory? It was what we may venture to call an intuitive conviction, based on the realized presence with them and in them of a perfectly new force, "a power of God working unto salvation." St. Paul, and every other preacher of the gospel, came fresh and eager into a worn-out, effete society, came like a life-giving breath of God into a dead world. They came charged, as it were, with a new vitalizing power. Men saw it in their persons; it glowed in their faces; it thrilled their hearers when they spoke.

The man who passes from the dingy and used-up atmosphere of a great city up to the heights where the sun shines and the breezes blow does not need scientific proof that he is now breathing a more wholesome air. He knows it. "When all the sons of God shouted for joy," it was not because they heard God say, "Let there be light," but because "there was light," and because, as they gazed, creative order was visibly taking the place of chaos.

And so, too, when the new creative force came into the world of human society, originating from the resurrection of Christ as its source, diffused by the Pentecostal gifts of the Holy Ghost, those who had the "honest and good heart" to receive it did not need, and did not demand, a judicial investigation to prove that Christ had risen, seeing that they felt by personal experience that they themselves were living members of His body, with His life coursing

through their veins. So it has always been, and always will be. On the one hand, "if they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead." The evidence does not exist, and cannot be produced, that will convince a man against his will; and, on the other hand, those who hear Moses and the prophets, those, that is, who have had awakened in them a sense of sin and feel a need of a Saviour and a Redeemer, do not need overmastering proof that He whom they know to be their Saviour has risen from the dead. They are in a living relation to Him. It would scarcely be going too far to say that the primary object of the resurrection of Christ was not to supply a miraculous proof of the revelation He taught, but rather to be the means of saving the souls of men directly, as being itself the source of the power of the Gospel.

The new life that flowed from the resurrection of Christ is with us here and now; and men are not made Christians or confirmed in their Christianity by evidence legally or scientifically satisfactory, but by contact with the personal life of the Saviour—a contact effected instrumentally in the sacraments, which derive their force from His risen life. But though the seed of Divine life may be sown in a heart unconscious of its reception, yet the sacred germ must be afterwards cultivated and cherished by the conscious action of the receiver of the grace of life. This is the precious and eternal truth of mysticism. Our personal God does deal directly with the personal and individual soul. "Blessed is that soul which hears the Lord speaking within her, and from His mouth receives the word of consolation." This, of course, is evidence only to the man who hears the Divine voice. It will not persuade others. To the individual, however, nothing can speak with a more authoritative voice than his intuitions. Faith, if it desires to justify itself to others, must seek an intellectual basis, and

Christian faith is well able to do this. Yet, if it does not do so, it is not less quick to good, nor less powerful to influence life.

Once more, this personal experience and appropriation of the resurrection life of Christ is, so far as it relates to ourselves, incommunicable and ineffable. If it be true that "the heart knoweth its own bitterness," it is no less true that "a stranger doth not intermeddle with its joy." "For who among men knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of the man which is in him?" Vain is the attempt to translate supreme experiences into words. It is indeed this impossibility to communicate to others, in its fullness, what we feel that makes human life and each new human personality ever fresh and interesting. Much as we may have read about them, the great joys and sorrows of life, natural or spiritual, are when they come as surprising and new to each of us as they were to Adam. Nor is it necessary to the spreading of the faith, or to the building up and strengthening of the faithful, that Christians should even attempt to narrate their experiences. When St. Paul told the Corinthians, "Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men," he was certainly referring, not to the language of the converts about themselves, but to their daily walk and conversation. Analysis of religious emotions is to be declared "secretly among the faithful" rather than "in the congregation." It was not the world in general, but those that fear God, whom the psalmist invited to hearken to what the Lord had done for his soul. The words of religious men are not always fairly estimated by the unconverted. In any case it is not by words that the world is won for Christ, but by the presence in it of lives changed by the power of His resurrection; not always world-famous lives, such as that of Saul the persecutor, Augustine the libertine, Francis the spendthrift, or Newton the slave dealer, but more often the

lives of those who have no scope beyond the daily round and the common task. When men see the impure become chaste, the drunkard temperate, the naturally arrogant humble, the hot-tempered gentle, the dishonest upright, then they marvel and take knowledge of them that they have been with Jesus.

NEWPORT J. D. WHITE.

*SURVEY OF RECENT ENGLISH LITERATURE  
ON THE NEW TESTAMENT.*

INTRODUCTION. — By the issue of a fifth “fasciculus,” Bishop Wordsworth and Mr. White complete the first volume, containing the Gospels, of their standard edition of the Vulgate.<sup>1</sup> The part now issued contains what the editors call an “Epilogue,” which is really an introduction, but an introduction written with the experience and knowledge accumulated in course of editing the work. It deals with the precise object Jerome had in view in preparing the Vulgate, the character of the Greek MSS. he used, the history of the text both written and printed. The editors show that it was not Jerome’s object to write a wholly new translation from the Greek, but rather to compare the various Latin versions already in existence and make such use of them as he considered most consistent with regard to the original. It is obvious, therefore, that with care a critic may ascertain, with the help of the Vulgate, the character of the Greek text which in Jerome’s days was most approved. This line of enquiry is pursued by the present editors with their usual scholarship, acuteness and judgment. Two types of readings were, they find, under Jerome’s eye, the one differing from all MSS. now extant, the other agreeing with the group **BL**. The Latin Vulgate texts, again, they divide into three classes, of which the highest comprises the MSS. which are the most ancient and unadulterated. It is remarkable that although these, as was to be expected, were

<sup>1</sup> *Novum Testamentum Domini Nostri Jesu Christi Latine secundum editionem Sancti Hieronymi recensuit J. Wordsworth, S.T.P., H. J. White, A.M.; Oxonii Typog. Clarendon.*