

Theme Classic: The Resurrection of Christ: A Historical Fact (1884)¹



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It is a somewhat difficult matter to distinguish between Christian doctrines and facts. The doctrines of Christianity are doctrines only because they are facts; and the facts of Christianity become its most indispensable doctrines. The Incarnation of the eternal God is necessarily a dogma: no human eye could witness his stooping to man's estate, no human tongue could bear witness to it as a fact. And yet, if it be not a fact, our faith is vain, we are yet in our sins. On the other hand, the Resurrection of Christ is a fact, an external occurrence within the cognizance of men to be established by their testimony. And yet, it is the cardinal doctrine of our system: on it all other doctrines hang.

There have been some, indeed, who have refused to admit the essential importance of this fact to our system; and even so considerable a critic as Keim has announced himself as occupying this standpoint. Strauss saw, however, with more unclouded eye, truly declaring the fact of Christ's resurrection to be "the center of the center, the real heart of Christianity," on which its truth stands or falls. To this, indeed, an older and deeper thinker than Strauss had long ago abundantly witnessed. The modern sceptic does but echo the words of the apostle Paul. Come what may, therefore, modern scepticism must be rid of the resurrection of Christ. It has recognized the necessity and has bent all its energies to the endeavor.

But the early followers of the Savior also themselves recognized the paramount importance of this fact; and the records of Christianity contain a mass of proof for it, of such cogent variety and convincing power, that

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Hume's famous dilemma² recoils on his own head. It is more impossible that the laws of testimony should be so far set aside, that such witness should be mistaken, than that the laws of nature should be so far set aside that a man should rise from the dead. The opponents of revelation themselves being witnesses, the testimony of the historical books of the New Testament if the testimony of eyewitnesses is amply sufficient to establish this, to them, absolutely crushing fact. It is admitted well-nigh universally that the Gospels contain testimony for the resurrection of Christ, which, if it stand, proves that fact; and that if Christ rose from the dead all motive for, and all possibility of, denial of any supernatural fact of Christianity is forever removed.

Of course, it has become necessary, then, for the deniers of a supernatural origin to Christianity to impeach the credibility of these witnesses. It is admitted that if the Gospel account be truly the testimony of eye-witnesses, then Christ did rise from the dead; but it is immediately added that the Gospels are late compositions which first saw the light in the second century—that they represent, not the testimony of eye-witnesses, but the wild dreams of a mythological fancy or the wilder inventions of unscrupulous forgery; and that, therefore, they are unworthy of credit and valueless as witnesses to fact. Thus, it is proclaimed, this alleged occurrence of the rising of Jesus from the dead, is stripped of all the pretended testimony of eye-witnesses; and all discussion of the question whether it be fact or not is forever set aside—the only question remaining being that which concerns itself with the origin and propagation of this fanatical belief.

It is in this position that we find scepticism entrenched—a strong position assuredly and chosen with consummate skill. It is not, however, impregnable. There are at least two courses open to us in attacking it. We may either directly storm the works, or, turning their flank, bring our weapons to bear on them from the rear. The authenticity of our Gospels is denied. We may either prove their authenticity and hence the autoptic character of the testimony they contain; or, we may waive all question of the books attacked, and, using only those which are by the sceptics themselves acknowledged to be genuine, prove from them that the resurrection of Christ actually occurred.³

² *Enquiry Concerning Human Understandings*, sec. 10 (1894, p. 115f.). "No testimony is sufficient to establish a miracle, unless the testimony be of such a kind that its falsehood would be more miraculous than the fact which it endeavors to establish."

³ Still a third method of procedure would be to waive all questions of the authenticity of the Gospels, and examine into the origin and trustworthiness of the triple or double *tradition* embodied in the three Synoptists or any two of them. Satisfactory results may be reached thus.

The first course, as being the most direct, is the one usually adopted. Here the battle is intense; but the issue is not doubtful. Internally, those books evince themselves as genuine. Not only do they proclaim a teaching absolutely original and patently divine, but they have presented a biography to the world such as no man or body of men could have concocted. No mythologists could have invented a divine-human Personality—assigned the exact proportions in which his divinity and humanity should be exhibited in his life, and then dramatized this character through so long a course of teaching and action without a single contradiction or inconsistency. That simple peasants have succeeded in a task wherein a body of philosophers would have assuredly hopelessly failed, can be accounted for only on the hypothesis that they were simply detailing actual facts.

Again, there are numerous evidently undesigned coincidences in minute points to be observed between the book of Acts and those Epistles of Paul acknowledged to be genuine, which prove beyond a peradventure that book to be authentic history. The authenticity of Acts carries that of the Gospel of Luke with it; and the witness of these two establishes the Resurrection.

But, aside from all internal evidence, the external evidence for the authenticity of the New Testament historical books is irrefragable. The immediate successors of the apostles possessed them all and esteemed them as the authoritative documents of their religion. One of the writers of this age (placed by Hilgenfeld in the first century) quotes Matthew as Scripture: another explicitly places Acts among the “Holy Books,” a collection containing on common terms the Old Testament and at least a large part of the New: all quote these historical books with respect and reverence. There is on external, historical grounds no room left for denying the genuineness of the Gospels and Acts; and hence, no room left for denying the fact of the Resurrection. The result of a half-century’s conflict on this line of attack has resulted in the triumphant vindication of the credibility of the Christian records.

We do not propose, however, to fight this battle over again at this time. The second of the courses above pointed out has been less commonly adopted, but leads to equally satisfactory results. To exhibit this is our present object. The most extreme schools of scepticism admit that the book of Revelation is by St. John; and that Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, and Galatians are genuine letters of St. Paul.⁴ Most leaders

⁴ Such individual extremists as Bruno Bauer, Pierson, and Loman need not be here taken into account.

of anti-Christian thought admit other epistles also; but we wish to confine ourselves to the narrowest ground. Our present task, then, is, waiving all reference to disputed books, to show that the testimony of these confessedly genuine writings of the apostles is enough to establish the fact of the Resurrection. We are even willing to assume narrower ground. The Revelation is admitted to be written by an eye-witness of the death of Christ and the subsequent transactions; and the Book of Revelation testifies to Christ's resurrection. In it he is described as One who was dead and yet came to life (2:8), and as the first-begotten of the dead (1:5). Here, then, is one admitted to have been an eye-witness testifying of the Resurrection. For the sake of simplifying our argument, however, we will omit the testimony of Revelation and ask only what witness the four acknowledged Epistles of Paul—Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, and Galatians bear to the fact that Christ rose from the dead.

It is plain on the very first glance into these Epistles that they have a great deal to say about this Resurrection. Our task is to draw out the evidential value of their references.

We would note, then, in the first place, that *Paul claims to be himself an eye-witness of a risen Christ*. After stating as a fact that Christ rose from the dead and enumerating his various appearances to his followers, he adds: "And last of all, as unto one born out of due time, he appeared to me also" (1 Cor 15:8). And again, he bases his apostleship on this sight, saying (1 Cor 9:1), "Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord?" His "sight" of the Lord Jesus was, therefore of such a kind that it constituted a call to the apostleship. It was not, then, a simple sight of Jesus before his crucifixion: as is also proved from the fact that it was after all the appearances which he vouchsafed after his resurrection to his other followers, that Paul saw him (1 Cor 15:8). It remains true, then, that Paul claims to be an eye-witness of the fact that Christ had risen. It will not do to say that Paul claims only to have had a "theophany" as it were—a "sight" of Christ's *spirit* living, which would not imply the resurrection of his body. As Beyschlag has long ago pointed out, the whole argument in 1 Cor 15 being meant to prove the bodily resurrection of believers from the resurrection of Christ, necessitates the sense that Paul, like the other witnesses there adduced, saw Christ in the body. Nor is it difficult to determine *when* Paul claims to have seen Christ: it is admitted by all that it was this "sight" that produced his conversion and called him to the apostleship. According to Gal 1:19 both calls were simultaneous.

Tracing his conversion thus to, and basing his apostleship on, the resurrection of Christ, it is not strange that Paul has not been able to keep his Epistles from bristling with marks of his intense conviction of the fact of the Resurrection. Compare, e.g., Romans 1:4; 4:24, 25; 5:10; 6:4, 5, 8,

9, 10, 11, 13; 7:4; 8:11, 34; 10:7, 9; 14:9. We cannot, therefore, without stultification deny that Paul was thoroughly convinced that he had seen the risen Jesus; and the sceptics themselves feel forced to admit this fact.

What, then, shall we do with this claim of Paul to be an eye-witness? Shall we declare his "sight" to have been no true sight, but a deceiving vision? Paul certainly thought it bodily and a sight. But we are told that Paul was given to seeing visions—that he was in fact of that enthusiastic spiritual temperament—like Francis of Assisi for instance—which fails to distinguish between vivid subjective ideas and external facts. But, while it must be admitted that Paul did see visions, all sober criticism must wholly deny that he was a visionary. Waiving the fact that even Paul's visions were externally communicated to him and not the projections of a diseased imagination, as well as all general discussion of the elements of Paul's character, this visionary hypothesis is shattered on the simple fact that Paul knew the difference between this "sight" of Jesus and his visions, and draws the distinction sharply between them. This "sight" was, as he himself tells us, the *last of all*; and the only vision which on our opponents' principles can be attributed to him, that recorded in 2 Cor 12 is described by Paul in such a manner as to draw the contrast very strongly between his confidence in this "sight" and his uncertainty as to what had happened to him then. Of course, no appeal can be properly made to the "false" history of the Acts; but, if attempted, it is sufficient to say that according to Acts Paul saw Jesus after this sight of 1 Cor 15; but that this was in a trance (Acts 22:18ff.), and in spite of it the sight of 1 Cor 15 was the "last" time Jesus was seen. In other words, Paul once more draws a strict distinction between his "visions" and this "sight."

It is instructive to note the methods by which it is attempted to make this visionary hypothesis more credible. A graphic picture is drawn by Baur, Strauss, and Renan, of the physical and psychological condition of St. Paul. He had been touched by the steadfastness of the Christians; he was deeply moved by the grandeur of Stephen's death; had begun to doubt within himself whether the resurrection of Christ had not really occurred; and, sick in body and distracted in mind, smitten by the sun or the lightning of some sudden storm, was prostrated on his way to Damascus and saw in his delirium his awful self-imagined vision. It would be easy to show that the important points of this picture are contradicted by Paul himself: he knows nothing of distraction of mind or of opening doubts before the coming of the catastrophe (cf. Gal 1:13ff.). It would be easy, again, to show that, brilliant as it is, this picture fails to account for the facts, notably for the immense moral change (recognized by Paul himself) by which he was transformed from the most bloodthirsty of fanatics to the tenderest of saints. But, it will be sufficient

for our present purpose to note only that all that renders it plausible is its connection with certain facts recorded only in that “unbelievable” history, the Acts. We find ourselves, then, in this dilemma: if Acts be no true history, then these facts cannot be so used; if Acts be true history, then Paul’s conversion occurred quite otherwise; and again, if Acts be true, then so is Luke’s Gospel; and Acts and Luke are enough to authenticate the resurrection of Christ. In either case, our cause is won.

In regard to this whole visionary scheme we have one further remark to make: it is to be noted that even were it much more plausible than it is, it still would not be worth further consideration. For, Paul believed in the fact of the resurrection of Christ not only because *he* had seen the Lord, *but also* on the testimony of *others*. For, we would note in the second place that *Paul introduces us to other eye-witnesses of the resurrection of Christ*. He founded his gospel on this fact; and in Gal 2:6ff. he tells us his gospel was the same as was preached by Peter, James, and John. Peter, James, and John, then, believed with the same intensity that Christ rose from the dead. We have already seen that this testimony as to John at least, is supported by what he himself has written in the Apocalypse. In consistency with the inference, again, Paul explicitly declares in 1 Cor 15:3ff., that the risen Christ was seen not only by himself but by Cephas, James, and indeed all the apostles; and that, more than once. Even more: he states that he was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, the most of whom were still living when Paul wrote this letter, and whose witness-bearing he invokes. Here, Paul brings before us a cloud of witnesses.

In respect to them the following facts are worth pointing out. These witnesses were numerous; there were at least five hundred of them. They were not a mere unknown mob: we know somewhat of several of them and know them as practical men. The most of them were still living when Paul wrote, and he could appeal to them to bear testimony to the Corinthians. The result of all of which is that this notice in 1 Cor *is equivalent to their individual testimony*. Paul is admitted to be a sober and trustworthy writer; this Epistle is admitted to be genuinely his; and he here in a contemporary document challenges an appeal to living eye-witnesses. He could not have made this confident appeal had not these men really professed, soberly and earnestly, to have seen the risen Christ. We have, then, not only Paul claiming to be an eye-witness of the Resurrection; but a large number of men, over two hundred and fifty of whom were known to be still living when he wrote. We have to account not for the claim of one man that he had seen Jesus alive after he had died, but for the same claim put in by a multitude. Will any arguing that Paul sometimes saw visions serve our purpose here? And there is still another point which is worth remarking. The witnesses here appealed to are the original disciples and apostles of our Lord. From this, two facts

follow: the one, the *original disciples* believed they had seen the risen Lord; and the other, they claimed to have seen him on *the third day* after his burial (1 Cor 15:4). This, according to Paul, is certain fact.

Then note once more, in the third place, that this testimony (as already pointed out) was not only absolutely convincing to the Apostle Paul, but it was so also to the whole body of Christians. Not only did Paul base the truth of all Christianity on the truth of this testimony, and found his conversion on it; but so did all Christians. He could count on all his readers being just as firmly persuaded of this fact as he was. To the Corinthians, Galatians, Romans—this is *the* dogma of Christianity. When Paul wishes to prove his apostleship to the Corinthians or Galatians he is not afraid to base it on the therefore admitted fact of the resurrection of Christ (1 Cor 11:1; Gal 1:1): when he wishes to make our justification seem sure to the Romans, he appeals to Christ's resurrection in its proof (Rom 6:24, 25). These are but specimens of his practice. Both purposed and incidental allusions are made to the Resurrection through all four of these Epistles of such character as to prove that it was felt by Paul that he could count on it above all other facts as the starting-point of Christianity in the minds of his readers. Whether he is writing to Corinthians, Galatians, or Romans, this is alike true. Now, consider the force of this. In some of these churches, it is to be remembered, there were dissensions, divisions, parties arrayed in bitter hostility against one another, parties with contumely denying the apostleship, or discarding the leadership of Paul. Yet all these parties believe in the resurrection of Christ: Paul can appeal to all alike to accept a doctrine based on that. It is to his bitterest opponents that he will prove his apostleship by claiming to have seen the risen Lord. It is plain, then, that the resurrection of Christ was in Paul's day deemed a primordial, universal, and essential doctrine of Christianity.

Again, some of Paul's readers were far removed from credulous simplicity. There was a party in the Corinthian Church, for instance, who, with all the instincts of modern philosophical criticism, claimed the right to try at the bar of reason the doctrines submitted to their acceptance. They could not accept such an absurdity as the resurrection of the bodies of those who slept in the Lord: "If the dead be raised, With what body do they come?" was but one of their argumentative queries. The same class of difficulties in regard to the resurrection of men, as would in modern times start up in the minds of scientific inquirers, was evidently before their minds. Yet they believed firmly in the resurrection of Christ. When Paul wishes to argue with them in regard to *our* resurrection, he bases his argument on the therefore common ground of the resurrection of Christ. It is plain, then, that unthinking credulity will not account for the universal acceptance of this doctrine: men able and

more than willing to apply critical tests to evidence were firm believers in it.

And still again, one of these letters is addressed to a church with which Paul had no personal connection. It was not founded by him; it had never been visited by him; it had not before been addressed by him. There were those in it who were opposed to his dearest teachings: there were those in it who had been humble followers of Christ while he was still raging against his Church. Yet, they all believed as firmly as he did in the resurrection of Christ. He could prove his doctrines to them best by basing on this common faith. It is plain, then, that this doctrine was not of late growth in the Church; nor had its origin from Paul. It had always been the universal belief in the Church: men did not believe it because Paul preached it only, but they and Paul alike believed it from the convincing character of the evidence. When had a belief, thus universally accepted as a part of aboriginal Christianity in A.D. 58, had an opportunity to mythically grow into being? And, if it grew, what of the testimony of those over two hundred and fifty still living eye-witnesses to the fact?

Here we may fitly pause to gather up results. It seems indisputably evident from these four Epistles of Paul: *First*, That the resurrection of Christ was universally believed in the Christian Church when these Epistles were written: whatever party lines there were, however near they came, yet did they not cut through this dogma. *Second*, That the original followers of Christ, including his apostles, claimed to be eye-witnesses of the fact of his resurrection; and, therefore, from the beginning (third day) the whole Church had been convinced of its truth. Over two hundred and fifty of these eye-witnesses were living when Paul wrote. *Third*, That the Church believed universally that it owed its life, as it certainly owed its continued existence and growth, to its firm belief in this dogma. What has to be accounted for, then, is: 1. Not the belief of one man that he had seen the Lord, but of something over five hundred. 2. Not the conviction of a party, and that after some time, that the Lord had risen, but the universal and immediate belief of the whole Church. 3. The effect of this faith in absolutely changing the characters and filling with enthusiasm its first possessors. And 4. Their power in propagating their faith, in building up on this strange dogma a large and fast-growing communion, all devoted to it as the first and ground element of their faith.

There are only three theories which can be possibly stated to account for these facts. Either, the original disciples of Christ were deceivers and deliberately concocted the story of the Resurrection; or, they were woefully deluded; or the Resurrection was a fact.

I. The first of these theories, old as it is (Matt 28:11ff.), is now admitted on all sides to be ridiculous. Strauss and Volkmar, for example, both scorn it as an impossible explanation. We may, therefore, pass it over in few words. The dead body of Christ lying in his grave ready to be produced by the Jews at any moment, of itself destroys this theory. For we must remember that the belief in the Resurrection dates from the third day. Or, if the body no longer lay in the grave, where was it? It must have been either removed by their enemies, in which case it would have been produced in disproof of the Resurrection; or stolen by the disciples themselves. We are shut up to these two hypotheses, for the only possible third one (that the body had never been buried but thrown upon the dunghill) is out of the question, eye-witnesses expressly witnessing, according to Paul, that it was *buried* (1 Cor 15:4 f.). No one will so stultify himself in this age as to seriously contend that the disciples stole the body. Not only is it certain that they could not possibly have summoned courage to make the attempt; but the very idea of Christianity owing its life to such an act is worse than absurd. Imagine, if one can, this band of disheartened disciples assembled and coolly plotting to conquer the world to themselves by proclaiming what must have been seen to be the absurd promise of everlasting life through One who had himself died—had died and had *not* risen again. Imagine them not expecting a resurrection nor dreaming of its possibility, determining to steal the body of their dead Lord, pretend that he had risen, and, then, to found on their falsehood a system of the most marvelous truth—on this act of rapine a system of the most perfect morals. Imagine the body stolen and brought into their midst—who can think they could be stirred up to noble endeavor by the sight? “Can a more appalling spectacle be imagined,” exclaims Dr. Nott, “than that of a dead Christ stolen from his sepulcher and surrounded by his hopeless, heaven-deserted followers? And was it here, think you, in this cadaverous chamber . . . in this haunt of sin, of falsehood, of misery, and of putrefaction, that the transcendent and immortal system of Christian faith and morals was adopted? Was this stolen, mangled, lifeless corpse the only rallying point of Christians? Was it the sight of this that . . . fortified, and filled with the most daring courage, the most deathless hopes, the whole body of the disciples?” Well have our opponents declared this supposition absurd. Christ rose from the dead, or else his disciples were a body of woefully deluded men.

II. Then, will this second theory meet the case? Is the admitted fact that Christ’s earliest followers were all convinced that he rose from the dead, adequately explained by the supposition that they were the victims of a delusion? We must remember that the testimony of eye-witnesses declares that Christ rose on the third day; and that we have thus to

account for immediate faith. But, then, there is the dead body of Jesus lying in the grave! How could the whole body of those men be so deceived in so momentous a matter with the means of testing its truth ready at their hand? Hence, it is commonly admitted that the grave was now empty. Strauss alone resorts to the sorry hypothesis that the appearances of the risen Christ were all in Galilee, and that before the forty days which intervened before the disciples returned to Jerusalem had passed, the site of the grave (or dunghill) had been wholly forgotten by friend and foe alike. But, there is that unimpeachable testimony of eye-witnesses that the appearances began on the third day; and the equally assured fact (Rom 6:4; 1 Cor 15:4), that the body was not thrown on a dunghill but that there was a veritable grave. So that the empty grave stares us still in the face. If Christ did not rise, how came the grave empty? Here is the crowning difficulty which all the ingenuity of the whole modern critical school has not been able to lay aside. Was it emptied by Christ's own followers? That would have been imposture, and the sceptics scorn such a resort: moreover, the hypothesis that the apostles were impostors has been laid aside already (in the preceding paragraph). Was it, then, emptied by his enemies? How soon would the body have been produced, then, to confront and confound the so rapidly growing heresy! Or, if this were not possible, how soon would overwhelming proof of the removal of the body have been brought forward! Then, how was that grave emptied? Shall we say that Jesus was not really dead, and reviving from the swoon, himself crept from the tomb? This was the hypothesis of Schleiermacher. But not only is it in direct contradiction with the eye-witness testimony (1 Cor 15:3; 2 Cor 5:15; Rom 16:9, *et saepe* [and frequently]), which is explicit that Christ died; but it has been felt by all the leaders of sceptical thought to be inadequate as an explanation. Strauss has himself executed justice on it. It not only casts a stigma on the moral character of our Lord; but it is itself laden with absurdity. "It would have been impossible thus to mistake a wounded man, dying from exhaustion, for the Messiah of Jewish expectations, or then to magnify this into a resurrection from the dead." A dying man in hiding, the center of Christianity's life! This fill with enthusiasm and death-defying courage the founders of the Church! Besides all which, the hypothesis makes the apostles either knaves or fools, neither of which, as the sceptics admit, is possible truth. Hence, they themselves unite with us in rejecting as wholly absurd this dream of Schleiermacher. Once more, then, how can we account for the empty grave? We hazard nothing in asserting that this one fact is destructive to all the theories of Christ's resurrection which have been started in the nervous effort to be rid of its reality. That empty grave is alone enough to found all Christianity upon.

But, suppose for a moment, we assume the impossible, and allow to Strauss that the site of the grave was already lost. What then? The disciples were still convinced that Christ had risen. How shall we account for this invincible conviction? The only possible resort is to the worn-out vision-hypothesis. Renan draws a beautiful picture of Mary Magdalene in her love and grief fancying she saw her longed-for Lord; and a not so beautiful one of the abject and idiotic credulity of the disciples who believed her, and then, because they believed her, fancied they had seen him themselves. But will all this fine picturing of what might have been, stand the test of facts? That grave stares us in the face again: if the body was still in it, there was no place left for visions of it as living and out of it; if not in it, how came it out?

But laying aside this final argument as premised, even then the theory cannot stand. 1. There was no expectation of a resurrection, and hence no ground for visions. So far we can go here. Could we appeal to the Gospels we could go farther and show that the disciples had lost all heart and “so far was their imagination from creating the sensible presence of Jesus, that at the first they did not recognize him.” Renan gains all the facts on which he founds his theory from the Gospels: let him be refuted from the same records. How could Mary Magdalene’s own mind have created the vision of Jesus when she did not recognize him as Jesus when he appeared? 2. There was no time for belief in the Resurrection to mythically grow. That well-established third day meets us here. And within forty days the whole Christian community, over five hundred in number, not only firmly believed in the Resurrection, but believed, each man of them, that he had himself seen the Lord. We must account for this. 3. These five hundred are too many visionaries to create. Was all Palestine inhabited by Francises of Assisi? What might be plausibly urged of Paul or Mary loses all plausibility when urged of all their contemporaries. And thus we cannot but conclude that all attempts to explain the belief of the early followers of Christ in his resurrection as a delusion, utterly fail. If it was not founded on fraud or delusion, then, was it not on fact? There seems no other alternative: eye-witnesses in abundance witness to the fact; if they were neither deceivers nor deceived, then Christ did rise from the dead.

We must not imagine, however, that this is all the proof we have of that great fact. We have been only very inadequately working one single vein. There is another very convincing course of argumentation which might be based on the *results* of the resurrection of Christ—in transforming those who believed in it—in founding a Church. And, then, there is that other form of argument already pointed out which consists in the not very difficult task of vindicating the authority of our Gospels and Acts, or of the account included in them. Taking all lines of proof

together, it is by no means extravagant to assert that no fact in the history of the world is so well authenticated as the fact of Christ's resurrection. And that established, all Christianity is established too. Its supernatural element is vindicated: its supernatural origin evinced. Then, our faith is not in vain, and we are not still in our sins. Then, the world has been redeemed unto our God, and all flesh can see his salvation. Then, the All-Wise is the All-Loving, too, and has vindicated his love forever. Then, the supreme song of heaven may be fitly repeated on earth: "Worthy is the Lamb that hath been slain to receive the power, and riches, and wisdom, and might, and honor, and glory, and blessing." Then, we can know that nothing can separate us from his love—that even death has failed in the attempt; and that it is thus given to mortals to utter in triumph the immortal cry, "Death is swallowed up in victory!"