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BIBLIOTHECA SACRA

AND

THEOLOGICAL REVIEW.

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Whatever declaration there may be, which, if *literally* interpreted, would give an absurd, contradictory, inept, unmeaning, frigid sense, it is plainly to be *tropically* interpreted. And on this same ground do the Romanists, the Greek church, and the Lutherans stand, in all cases where their prejudices are not concerned in respect to some favourite doctrine which they have adopted. But why should others be compelled to exempt such cases from the common laws of interpretation?

We have now brought to a conclusion our historical investigations in regard to the doctrine of the eucharist. But by far the most important part of our labour remains to be accomplished, viz. our *exegetical inquiries* respecting the true and scriptural meaning of the Saviour's words, at the original institution of the Lord's Supper.

ARTICLE VII.

HISTORICAL AND CRITICAL INQUIRY RESPECTING THE ASCENSION OF CHRIST.

By Gottfried Kinkel of the University of Bonn. Translated from the German by B. B. Edwards, Professor in the Theol. Seminary, Andover.

[The following essay relates to a subject of deep interest, and which is not unattended with serious difficulty. The different accounts of the Evangelists are said by neologists to involve irreconcilable contradictions. The reader will be pleased with the spirit of the writer of the ensuing observations, and with the light which he casts upon many passages of the Word of God, though he should not feel at liberty to accord with all which is advanced. The author is a *privatim docens* in the evangelical faculty at Bonn. The article may be found in the "Theologische Studien u. Kritiken," edited by Drs. Ullmann and Umbreit of Heidelberg, Vol. XIV. 1841. It is introduced by the following note from Dr. Nitzsch, the well-known theologian of Bonn. "The ensuing investigation, on account of the striking nature of its results, will certainly experience opposition from the two parties that occupy the hostile positions of our times; still it is conducted in a theological spirit and contains many observations on the meaning of the biblical narratives which must win the respect of the dissentient, and tend

to advance the general object. For this reason, and since the esteemed author is able in every respect to answer for himself, I have not hesitated to recommend the publication of the essay."—TR.]

ACCORDING to the narratives in the gospels and apostolical testimony in the epistles, there stands at the end of the life of Jesus a fact, which all the witnesses report substantially alike, though with different phraseology and under different images. Christ himself, in the discourses related by John, represents it in the most spiritual manner, 'as going home to the Father,' yet, also, as an actual ascending to Him.¹ According to Luke, Christ "was carried up," "taken up," taken away from the disciples, and carried before their eyes into heaven.² Similar language the church has adopted in her Confessions, adding the words of Mark, or of his continuator, "that Christ sits on the right hand of God."³ This last expression, may have as its basis, in addition to the emblematical language of the Old Testament, the vision of Stephen, who, when dying, saw the Son of Man "standing on the right hand of God,"⁴ In all these expressions, we are taught one thing, namely, the life of Christ, ending in a wonderful manner as it was begun, did not waste away in the weakness of old age; but in the highest beauty of youth, as the ideal image of perfect humanity, standing as the second Adam in the full vigor of his unfolded powers, he is freed from all liability to earthly change; he is a glorified body; no longer held by the leaden laws of matter he comes into personal union with God, and through him mankind recover their dominion over the creation which had been lost. This fact is in all respects of the highest importance. As there is in the mode of Christ's *death* an aesthetic interest, (for would not Christian feeling turn shuddering away from the sight of sundered limbs, bones dashed in pieces, the fearful mutilation of a body which had belonged to the fairest of the children of men,) so likewise, the *ascension* has an aesthetic value. Christ's body mouldering in the grave, or he himself after the resurrection, sickening and growing old in a nature become unnecessary;—both suggest images which are not repulsive to us, simply because we know to the contrary from our childhood. Man is on the earth only in order either to become purified himself, or to perform some

¹ John 20 : 17.

² ἀνεβήκετο Luke 24 : 51, ἐπήρθη Acts 1 : 9, ἀναληφθεὶς Acts 1 : 11.

³ Mark 16 : 19.

⁴ Acts 7 : 56.

great work; the former has no application to the Holy One of God; the latter he accomplished when he rose from the dead and established his kingdom. Doubt of this fact must consequently be out of the question, since criticism can find no termination of the life of the Author of religion more befitting his elevated nature than this. Besides, the humiliation of the Logos presupposes the necessity of the glory that followed. There was need that Christ should be justified by God, in opposition to the sentence of condemnation passed on him by the world; he deserved to be glorified by God, because he himself, throughout his life, and especially at his death, had glorified the Father.¹ The exaltation of Christ thus becomes a restoration and a balm to Christian feeling, broken and bleeding by the sins of the world which were borne on the cross. Not less important is it to keep in view the historical importance of the fact. It was this fact, particularly, which enabled the disciples to spread the gospel. It was not without design that that summary with which Mark ends,—the going forth of the disciples to preach,—is so closely joined with Christ's exaltation to glory,² and Christ himself when he consoled his sorrowing disciples with the promise that they should enter on a course active labor in behalf of his cause, before reminding them of the coöperation of the Spirit, stated the fact very distinctly, that believers themselves should perform greater works than the Lord, *because* he was going to the Father.³ This would be a natural result, for when our Lord, as a controlling spirit, no longer restrained the individual energies of the disciples, these energies attained their maturity. Christ is justified before their eyes; he is the Lord who overrules all things to their good; they triumph over the world, since they are conscious of triumph by faith in his exaltation. Even the Spirit can operate only as he bears witness of Him who is glorified. Hence we must consider that feeling of great joy, which Luke ascribes to the disciples on account of the ascension,⁴ as an historical fact, since without it, and consequently without the ascension, the problem of the world's conversion is not solved. Moreover, the ascension was handled in the time of the Apostles as a doctrinal point and useful for its practical results,—a proof how valuable it is to the Christian life. Most important in this connection are the considerations presented by Paul, that our Life (principle of life) is in heaven, from whence we look for Christ, and that we should seek those things

¹ John 17 : 4, 5.² Mark 16 : 19, 20.³ John 14 : 12.⁴ Luke 24 : 52, *μετὰ χαρῆς μεγάλης*

which are above where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God,¹ for in this is shown the practical value of the fact for all times. The fellowship of love attained by sharing in suffering with the Lord, continues to exist in the form of an earnest longing for Him who is glorified; it frees the soul from sensual desire, and draws it upward to an abiding union with the Beloved, when the earthly material is laid aside by death. The consolation afforded by the ascension of Christ is this;—the ascension must stand in the same relation to the departure of the faithful into the presence of God, that the resurrection of the members does to that of the Head. But not the soul merely shares in it; the risen, glorified body of believers is also sealed. This, for the most part, seems to be abandoned, because a local confinement of the soul cannot be thought of in connection with the presence of God; because no place of abode for the body can be conceived where man is nearer to God than he is in any other place; and because a material body remains as an inconceivable object, even when considered as glorified, and released from its earthly bonds. How this contrariety to mechanical laws is removed by the ascension is not, indeed, level to our comprehension, but it is promised as future. The doubt in respect to the possibility is removed by fact. Christ lives in a human body, and still is removed from the earth. What is true of the first fruits, is a guaranty for the harvest. In this respect, the Church has rightfully celebrated the feast of the ascension, as well as that of the resurrection of Christ.

We accordingly recognize the fact of the ascension as a positive demand both of Christian feeling and of history; we see, further, that it is indispensable to the formation of a complete system of Christian doctrine in respect to the subjects of *soterology* and *anthropology*, so that in this way its truth is already demonstrated. Indeed, such a demand seems to be wholly superfluous, because there is the explicit testimony of the evangelists and the apostles. To reinvestigate this testimony and to give a believing assent to it, appears to be the only problem relating to this subject with which the church is concerned. With such a design, the following essay is planned. Yet here, on the ground of comparative interpretation, one will be more fully justified in entertaining doubts from the fact, which we must presuppose as the first point of this inquiry, viz. "That the notices which the New Testament furnish on the ascension of Christ, in respect to the time, place and circumstances, are wholly inconsistent with each other."

¹ Phil.

It is proper to allow the first place to the Gospels and the Acts of the apostles; since only these writings narrate an historical fact in an historical manner. It is easier to consider them together, from the fact, that the first evangelist makes no mention whatever of the ascension. John (whom we suppose to have been the only eye-witness among the evangelists) omits allusion to the subject, at least at the end of his gospel, it being the twentieth or twenty-first chapter, where he introduces Jesus to us, appearing for the last time on earth to his disciples. But criticism is here justified if it at once assumes as its first difficulty the fact that these principal witnesses are here silent. In respect to John, indeed, the solution is not so hard. He takes up that only in relation to Christ which is morally significant; Christ's miracles ever serve only as a link to his discourses; these discourses point upward, from the visible miracle to that great spiritual wonder of God, that he sent his Son clothed in flesh. The ascension may here be compared with the sacraments. John does not relate the fact of their introduction, but he gives the words of Jesus, from which their symbolical character is manifest; instead of the supper, the discourse relates to the partaking his flesh and blood; instead of baptism, regeneration by water and spirit is mentioned. One would likewise be led to think that the external fact of the ascension would be passed over by John, since Jesus had spoken in various forms of its moral value, in what he had said, in respect to going home to the Father. Finally, one might appeal to the fact, that the Lord at least predicted his ascension to Mary Magdalene, John 20: 17. Since John always proceeds on the ground of making a selection of his materials, being by no means inclined to furnish a complete account of the earthly life of Jesus, it follows that his omitting to notice the wonderful end of the life of Jesus, gives us as little ground to doubt of the fact, as a like omission in the history of the childhood of Jesus would lead to doubt in that case; although a termination of the life of Jesus without the ascension (in case this was an historical fact), appears at least not exactly artist-like, since the mind of the reader remains unsatisfied.

But the case is different in Matthew. He has manifestly the design of giving a full narration, of rounding off, as it were, the life of Jesus; and as he has revealed to us the mystery of a virgin bearing a son, it would be inferred, that he would accompany Jesus even to the limit of his earthly life. Here comes in an important circumstance. The last words of Jesus, according to Matthew, are such that they clearly appear as the conclusion of the

Messianic labors. This theocratic king already has power in heaven and on earth; only that all may acknowledge it he sends out his messengers to bring them into subjection. The concluding promise, "I am with you always, even to the end of the world," could have been spoken only at the moment of separation, when such a consoling promise was needful, in order to mitigate the momentary pain of that separation. The farewell, and of course the ascension, occurred at the end of this discourse. That Matthew does not state the manner in which the ascension followed, can be explained in part, indeed, from the rhetorical nature of the composition; he would close with a sublime word; yet it seems impossible that a fact so slightly noticed should be the same with that glorious ascension as Luke has described it to us in the Acts. But the discrepancy in regard to place is still greater. According to Luke, the ascension took place not far from Jerusalem; according to Matthew, on a mountain in Galilee, where, as it seems, the Lord had assembled his disciples for a last interview. Consequently the two testimonies threaten to contradict each other; both of which have equally decided claims to credibility, the first on account of its near, though indefinable connexion with the original Aramaean text of an apostle;¹ and the other, viz. the Acts of the Apostles, by the copiousness of its delineation and its various scenery.

In Mark the life of Jesus is also continued up to an appearance of Jesus after his resurrection. Here, however, it is remarkable that two places are mentioned. According to ch. 16: 7 the disciples were to proceed to Galilee; and this is accompanied with the promise from the angel that there they would see Him. Thus far the author agrees with Matthew. Then at the conclusion of 16: 9, he follows in the footsteps of Luke, narrates with the greatest brevity the appearance to Mary Magdalene, which is more exactly given by John, then the vision at Emmaus, concluding ('afterward,' *ὕστερον*) by relating an appearance to the Eleven. The spread of the gospel is then mentioned, together with the assurance in respect to the miraculous powers with which these heralds were entrusted, both for their own preservation and the deliverance of others. From this statement of the words of Christ, the term *ὕστερον* means nothing more than this, viz. that all the dis-

¹ The author here refers to a theory, maintained by many, that the Gospel of Matthew was originally written in Hebrew or Aramaean. See Guerike, *Einleitung in N. Test.* p. 235.—TR.

courses, after the resurrection of Christ, were designed to explain the things concerning the kingdom of God, Acts 1: 3. Yet the fact, that the Lord upbraided the unbelief of the disciples, because that they even did not believe those who had seen Him, shows clearly the time of this appearance. Eight days after the resurrection, only Thomas of the Eleven continued to doubt; it is therefore obvious, that we have here the discourse on the evening of the resurrection, to which John and Luke also allude. Here it is remarkable, that of a manifestation in Galilee, previously mentioned in verse 7th, nothing further is said; yet the short notice of the ascension is appended so closely to this conversation, that the supposition is not without foundation, that the ascension took place immediately, and consequently that the visit in Galilee (in case one happened at all) occurred subsequent to it.

If we now take an unprejudiced view of Luke, we shall find the same representation in his gospel, 24: 36—53; and this specially leads us not to reject the account in Mark, as that of a later epitomizer. Here also, the last conversation of Christ relates to the conversion of the world; it is peculiar to Luke that Christ shows, from the Scriptures, that his death is necessary. But it can scarcely be denied that the conversation was in the form of a continued discourse, from the moment when Jesus came to his disciples with friendly salutations, up to v. 50, when with them he left the city. The chronologizing Luke makes no mention, at least, that the latter part of the conversation belonged to a later vision. But now this conversation occurred on the evening of the resurrection; while the disciples, who had been to Emmaus, were still speaking, Jesus stands in the chamber, v. 24, 36. At the conclusion of this conversation, the ascension takes place, and manifestly on the evening of the resurrection. Since now Mark here confirms Luke, the supposition, which is almost universal, that Luke gives in the Acts only a more exact and full history of this same ascension, does not exactly abide the test of comparative criticism. It has been said that Luke hastens to the conclusion in the gospel, that here he makes an epitome, which he will enlarge in the Acts. But the age was not of that scribbling and over-active character, that an evangelist was compelled to hasten on in order to engage in another employment; especially one would not do this, who took the pains with his book, which Luke's preface implies that he did. And certainly in the last discourses and narrations of his gospel, there is no rapidity; a richness only is apparent. It is not to be forgotten that both books

were written by one man, so that at the end of the first, Luke might reserve his materials for the following book. But that the design of the narrative of the ascension in the Acts is to give something essentially new, follows, in our estimation, as clear as day, from the first verses of the book. According to the method practised by the Greeks, "This narrative," he says, "I have brought down to the day, when Jesus, having given commandment to his disciples, was received up." Then are added, "to whom he presented himself alive," etc. v. 4. Does this continuation, expressed by *καί*, resemble a mere repetition of the narrative? Or is there not rather an actual progress in the historical account? In addition to this difference of time, two other reasons appear, which show that the ascension recorded in the Acts cannot be identical with that mentioned in Luke's gospel. The place and the attendant circumstances are different. According to the gospel, Christ ascends at Bethany; according to the Acts, the disciples return from the Mount of Olives,—two localities near together, but not the same.¹ Again, after the ascension, the disciples, according to the Gospel, assemble in the temple; according to the Acts, they remain awhile in an 'upper room' (*ὑπερφῶν*), which indicates a private house. This difference Strauss has detected, and made use of in his way. "At first," Strauss remarks, "nothing wrong could be discovered in permitting the disciples, after their return from the ascension of Jesus, to hold their devout meetings in their national sanctuary; but soon this appears too Jewish, and they must at last repair to a private *ὑπερφῶν*; the Christian place of meeting must be distinct from the Jewish temple." The reflection here supposed to be indulged by Luke, is shown to be false from the fact, that in the same Acts of the Apostles, the temple bears its part as the place of worship for those baptized by the Holy Spirit. At the ninth hour (and this is expressly mentioned as the hour of prayer) the leading apostles, Peter and John, enter the temple, Acts 3: 1. There Paul himself prays with feelings so spiritual, that he fell into a trance, 22: 17; and on a later occasion, he fulfilled a vow in the temple, 21: 26. But still more decisive in respect to the entire church is the passage Acts 5: 12. After the communication of the Spirit, which united the company together in the closest bonds, "they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch." We may thus see how frivolously this critic at times indulges in conjectures.

¹ Yet Bethany was situated on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives. One road from the village to Jeru
vet.—Tr.

So it was no anti-Jewish prudery of Luke that occasioned the infant church "to occupy the *ἡμερῶν*." This difference, then, in the place of meeting remains, and if we separate, in the way indicated, the appearance on the evening of the resurrection and the so-called ascension on the fortieth day, the discrepance is easily explained. While the pouring-out of the Spirit was expected as near at hand, the Christian church secluded themselves from the outward world in order to pray for preparation. At a later period, when an inward union was established, they separated from each other, and gladly mingled again with the world. But certainly the two narrations of Luke cannot contain the same fact.

Before we deduce a definite result from these notices, apparently so contradictory, it is necessary to compare a passage in the epistle, which seems still further to increase this confusion. We have from Paul (in addition to several passages, whose testimony presupposes the fact of the exaltation of Christ to heaven, but which, on account of the want of particular circumstances, are not of value for our inquiry) a more special notice, not, indeed, of the ascension, but of several appearances of the risen Saviour, which are of interest for our investigation. This is the familiar passage, 1 Cor. 15: 1—8, which is not, indeed, related in an historical manner, but which simply narrates several appearances in proof of the resurrection of Christ; but the record appears so manifestly in connection with *εἶτα*, *ἔπειτα* and *ἔσχατον*, that it is clear that Paul would exactly follow the order of time. And this also gives us an interesting point with which to compare the period when, according to the evangelists, the ascension should be placed. In this Pauline catalogue, the appearances to the women are omitted. Hence the appearance to Peter, which Luke also recognizes and assigns to the day of the resurrection,¹ here stands as the first. Then follows one to the twelve, which can readily be made to harmonize with one narrated in the gospels. But the third manifestation is irreconcilable with those related in the gospels. He appeared to "more than five hundred brethren at once." The number itself occasions difficulty. According to the Acts, Christ assembled² all his disciples before the feast of Pentecost, and all were expecting the out-pouring of the Holy Spirit. But their number was but one hundred and twenty, ch. 1: 15. It can hardly be supposed, that, in addition to these, there were *ἀδελφοί*, and also from not being in Jerusalem, deprived of the gift of the Spirit. Accordingly, the simple conclusion is, that the appearance

¹ Luke 24: 34, *ἡμερῶν*.

² Acts 1: 4, *συνελθόντων*.

to the five hundred brethren was after the forty days, yea after the Pentecost, since immediately subsequent to that, the number of disciples was increased by thousands. We are also compelled, by an additional remark of the apostle, to bring down this appearance as late as possible. "Most of these five hundred were still living," he says, "*τινες δὲ ἐκοιμήθησαν.*" The first epistle to the Corinthians was written, by the way, from twenty to twenty-eight years after the ascension, and yet in this length of time, notwithstanding the persecution that arose about Stephen, and the restless activity of these first converts, only "some" of the five hundred were dead. In case now it is presupposed, that Christ appeared on the earth only before the ascension, then the last ascension must be placed considerably later than the forty days. On the other hand, according to Mark and Luke (in his Gospel), the ascension occurred, as we have seen, considerably earlier than the fortieth day.

Perhaps we should have considered this combination of the different accounts unnecessary. Still, Paul, after he had mentioned an appearance to James, speaks of another to all the apostles; and that Christ, last of all, appeared to him. And the narrative goes on in such an even flow, that one clearly sees, that Paul makes no distinction between the appearances before and those after the forty days. Even the ancient church seems not to have done this. At least Paul, who must have often been compelled to vindicate his apostleship, never defends himself against the objection, that his call was merely through a vision, and thus different from the commission of the other apostles. The opposers rather relied on this, that he had not lived with Christ; to which he sometimes replies, that he had at least known Christ personally, 2 Cor. 5: 16. Consequently, according to 1 Cor. 15: 1, 8, it seems to be firmly established, that there were appearances after the forty days. From seven to ten years subsequently, Paul was favored with such an appearance; at the second time he saw Christ in the temple, (then certainly Paul was in an *ἐν ἑσωράσει*, Acts 22: 17, 18); in the interval of time, the appearances to the five hundred, to James and to the twelve occur. Also the dying Stephen saw Christ in glory, 7: 15. Still this appearance was in a vision. All the appearances after the forty days, however, were perfectly on a level with those before the close of that period; and all show sufficiently, that the ascension recorded in the Acts, was not considered by the early church as such a decided fact, such an absolute separation of the earthly and heavenly life

of Christ, as we are now accustomed to regard it. It follows, that the doctrine of Christ's glorification was not so exclusively connected by them with the fact which is recorded in the Acts, as it is by us. It is, then, clear, from what has been said, that with the common opinion, viz. that Jesus continued his earthly life up to the fortieth day, and that on this day with his ascension from Olivet, his glory with the Father began, all the accounts are at variance except the one in Acts; since on the one hand, they describe the ascension as having taken place earlier, and, on the other, they do not view the ascension from Olivet as a decisive separation between the earthly and the heavenly life of Christ.

Upon these confused accounts (which have not been acutely apprehended by most critics, which have been recognized in a measure by some, and employed by Strauss to disprove the entire fact of the exaltation of Christ), a surprising light is cast by the Gospel of John, the mention of which leads us to our second proposition, which is to show, "that Christ's glorification, and consequently the ascension, must have taken place immediately after the resurrection."

Christ's own explanations must here have the strongest weight as proofs; these we find in the desired abundance in the last discourses by which he prepared himself and his friends for his approaching death. Here it is to be remarked in general, in respect to the fundamental character of these discourses, that they are throughout the words of one who is departing, bidding farewell. The supper itself as a memorial-feast, the new commandment that the disciples should love one another,¹ left behind in the form of a legacy, (by which in the place of the Redeemer, whom they anxiously seek, and will sadly miss, v. 33, love to the brethren is presented to them, as an object,) the peace that was to remain behind, 14 : 27,—all bears the stamp of a complete separation from a present earthly condition, and indeed of a final separation. That, also, which according to Matthew, the Lord prophetically declared at the sacramental cup, viz. that he would no more in this world drink with his disciples of the fruit of the vine, and consequently that bodily communion would cease,² harmonizes still more exactly with the words of John. Certainly something is said of a "return," but it is one wholly spiritual. Indeed, it is declared explicitly, ch. 14 : 18, *ὄχι ἀφήσω ὑμᾶς ὀρφανούς· ἔρχομαι πρὸς ὑμᾶς*, and v. 19, the promise is given to them, that the world should not see him, but they should see

¹ John 13 : 14.

² Matt. 26 : 29.

him (*ὑμῖς δὲ θεωρεῖτέ με*). But the reason which is here expressed by *ὅτι*, shows with perfect clearness how this *seeing* should be understood, viz. "Because I live ye shall live also." Thus the appearance of Christ was made to depend upon the inward life of the disciples, just as in v. 21, it is made to depend on the proof of love, exhibited by keeping his commandments. Visible appearances, such as that to the unconverted Paul, cannot therefore be intended, but that mystical union with Christ, which is produced in the hearts of believers by the witness of the Spirit, is referred to, 1 John 5: 11, 12. Our Lord himself gives the same explanation of this union in reply to Judas, viz. that the Father and Son would make their abode with him who from love to them should keep their commands; an union, which by the very mention of the Father, is removed from the sphere of visible things to that of the spiritual life. The "coming again" was rather referred to that moment when he should take them to the heavenly mansions, which he was going to prepare. More explicitly the Lord (ch. 16: 20) seems to promise a bodily return;—"after the transient grief, I will see you, and your heart shall rejoice;" from earlier verses it is to be inferred, that it would be but a short time (*μικρὸν*) before this "coming again." Yet it is quite remarkable, that v. 16 is given as the ground why they should see him again, viz. "because I go to the Father." How could this be conceived of as seeing him again in a physical sense? Is it not because he goes to the Father, at least is not this one reason, that they shall see him no more in the flesh? The word *ὅτι* can only be explained as a ground of a spiritual visitation; from heaven he sends the Spirit as the bond of a new and most intimate communion. Besides, the clause which is added, viz. 'that on his return they should ask him nothing,' was not true in relation to the bodily appearances of Christ after the resurrection, for certainly some still had the inquiry "whether he would not restore the kingdom to Israel," Acts 1: 6. It follows that the declaration of Christ is to be referred to the understanding of the mysteries of Christianity and of the kingdom of God, which would be first disclosed to them through the illumination of the Spirit. All this leads us to the conclusion, that Jesus is here to be understood as speaking of an actual separation from his disciples in respect to his earthly life; consequently it cannot be presupposed, that he would continue this earthly life forty days after the resurrection. If Jesus, in the sentences hitherto considered, meant simply to say, "I shall die, but after

three days I shall rise again, and see you," it is certainly inconceivable why he did not, when it was his special object to comfort his disciples, simply say this, as was his manner on other occasions. His dark words, which were not comprehended by his disciples, can only be justified on the ground that he wished to announce to them the far deeper and more spiritual truth of an everlasting inward union between the Head and the members.

Several sentences of these last discourses remarkably agree with the view presented, and confirm it in a positive manner. In ch. 16: 12, Christ's loving and sympathizing heart would gladly say many things more to the disciples, but they cannot bear them now. Without doubt they could have borne these words subsequently to the resurrection; but not a syllable is said, implying that he will explain them after that event; this office was assigned to the Spirit. Still more clear is that word of consolation in ch. 14: 2, "I go away to prepare a place for you." It is obvious that he assigns this as the object of his separation from them; but if this was not to occur till the lapse of forty-three days, how strange that he should allude to it now. Besides, it is remarkable that Christ never speaks of this separation as death, but as going to the Father. "I go to the Father," is his thrice-repeated declaration in this discourse, always using the present tense, with the different verbs, *ὑπάγειν*, *ἔρχεσθαι*, and *πορεύεσθαι*, 14: 6, 28; 16: 5, 10. 17: 3 seq. It might be said, that there is a *prolepsis* [anticipation of any word, by referring to it as already spoken]; and who can deny that the Lord, transporting himself in his divine consciousness beyond the present, considers his death as already past and swallowed up in victory? Such a *prolepsis*, however, is not well conceivable, unless that which is uttered at the present moment, approximates to that which I now imagine; events, separated by a month and a half from my present existence, could with difficulty elevate my mind to take such a flight. Still, Christ does not regard himself as bidding farewell to his friends, but to the world, "I leave the world," 16: 28; yea as already actually separated from it, "I am no more in the world," 17: 11. How does this agree with the idea of an earthly existence protracted to such an extent, as the common view of Christ's condition after the resurrection demands? That *κόσμος* cannot be here understood in a moral sense, and that the words of Christ already quoted, cannot mean that he would continue to hold bodily communion only with his disciples, and not with the unbelieving world, is proved from ch. 17: 13, where, still in the circle of his disciples, he says:

“and these things I speak in the world;” the term *κόσμος*, therefore, clearly means *the visible earth*, in distinction from his own abode with the Father, and not the spiritual world. He even renders the idea of this “going to the Father,” intensive, by subjoining the word *νῦν*: “Now I come to thee,” 17: 13. One would say this only when he has now in contemplation to accomplish that of which he speaks. A return to the Father, immediately after death, appears therefore to be undeniably the thought in the mind of Jesus. But what now does this “going home” mean? Can it be objected that it is to be understood in a merely spiritual sense? or that the soul of Jesus, immediately after death, ascended to the Father, while nothing is said of the body? Here one might at first view find a basis in those dying words: “Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit,” and not less in his consolatory words to the murderer: “To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise,” Luke 23: 43, which secures the elevation of his soul, immediately upon the death of Christ, to its heavenly abode. But not taking into the account, that this spiritual division of the return of Jesus, into halves, as it were, does not satisfy all the passages, especially those where he takes a formal leave of the world, it can be shown, moreover, that in this way the meaning of the words is not exhausted. For example, Christ uses, at various times, the word *δοξάζεσθαι* as a synonym with the phrase “coming to the Father.” In John 13: 32, he expresses his confidence that the Father would glorify him, and it is subjoined, “and he shall *straightway* glorify him.” And in 17: 5, this confidence takes the form of a prayer: “Glorify thou me, O Father,” where it is very remarkable that the word *νῦν*, ‘now,’ again occurs. Consequently the glorification appears to have the same meaning as the return to the Father. The Redeemer beholds it as something just impending. Modern interpreters, in support of the orthodox view, which assigns the glorification, or what is expressed by his “sitting on the throne of God,” to the day of his visible ascension, have here spiritualized the glorification, and have understood it of the death of Christ, inasmuch as by his death, Christ’s moral dignity is displayed in the clearest manner. But they should carefully observe, whether they can anywhere find Christ representing his death as a glorification,—his death on the cursed tree, which at least with Paul appears as the lowest step of humiliation; but in the passages referred to, they certainly cannot find such a representation; for in 13: 32, Christ says: “God shall glorify him *in himself*, i. e. in God’s own peculiar region, in his immediate

presence and communion, and in 17 : 5, Christ prays for that glory, which he had with God, *παρά σοι*, before the foundation of the world. This glorification is, however, conditioned on the ascension ; even the man Jesus shared in it, and consequently his body. All these passages imperatively demand, that the ascension should be placed as near the death of Christ as possible.

Before we proceed further, we must inquire, what answer other passages in these discourses will furnish. What had Christ to do on the earth after his resurrection ? It may not be easy to answer this inquiry. In the first place, it is settled, that for himself such a tarrying was without any object. His soul needed no purification by means of the sorrows or joys of earth, for it had been, from the beginning, a pure image of the Godhead. His body must be considered as already glorified in the grave. He appeared "in another form," *ἐτέρα μορφή*, Mark 16 : 12 ; he was not at once recognized by his friends, and passed through doors that were closed, John 19 : 20, 26. To suppose that he was *gradually* freed from earthly materials, is not probable. At least in the resurrection of the saints, which is a copy of that of Christ, no such gradual change will take place, but they rise glorified bodies. In respect to those then alive there will be a change (*ἀλλαγῆς*) in the twinkling of an eye, 1 Cor. 15 : 52. It would on the one hand, mar the miracle of the resurrection, and on the other hand greatly magnify it, if it should be extended over forty days in the sense of gradually freeing Jesus from his earthly body. But such a gradual process cannot be proved ; on the evening of the day of the resurrection, Christ still ate earthly food ; but it is in the highest degree probable that he did this, also, in his far later manifestation at the sea of Galilee ; at least, the question, "Children have ye any meat ?" the producing of the fish and bread, and finally his concluding invitation, "come and dine," John 21 : 5, 9, 12, seem to involve the supposition that he himself partook. If, consequently, the divesting himself of the conditions of his earthly life had been gradual, we do not see how he could have been affected by them in the same degree both at an earlier and a later period. In relation, therefore, to Jesus himself and the necessities of his being, the conclusion is in the highest degree probable, (as appears from the earnest longing for the Father, which is especially manifest in the high-priest-like prayer which he offered,) that this freeing from bodily necessities took place immediately after the resurrection, when the soul was again united with the body and elevated it from the earth. If he now no more from a natural ne-

necessity remains on earth, his forty days' tarrying on it can be explained only on the ground of the wants of the beloved human race. Mankind, however, in the view of Christ are divided into two great parties, the 'world' and 'his own.' With the former he had nothing more to do after the resurrection; to them he could only appear as judge. Yet his office in executing punishment is not assumed till the end of the world; the internal "reproving" (*ἐλεγξίς*) of the world is undertaken by the Spirit, John 16: 8, 11. So there remains as a sphere of labor for Christ's earthly existence, only the company of those who believed on him. Yet for these, Christ finishes his work with his death and resurrection. Not faintly, when expiring, but with a loud voice, Matt. 27: 50, he uttered, in exulting triumph on the cross, his last word, *τετέλεσται*, John 19: 30. Should any one suppose that this was uttered in such close connection with the work of expiation, as not to admit of its having been spoken of the completion of the work of redemption, then we may adduce, in favor of the contrary, those other words of Christ, "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do," John 17: 4. In connection particularly with the third verse, it is readily seen, that he here means his manifestation in the flesh; the same appears according to the ensuing words, where he speaks of making known the name of God to the disciples and of the communication of the words of the Father. Besides, the work of perfectly illuminating the mind and of giving it understanding in the doctrines of Christ, is referred to another Comforter, John 16: 13. Accordingly when the work of redemption is completed, in behalf "of his own," by his manifestation in the flesh and by his expiation, and after the labors of his life were so perfectly accomplished, the earthly existence of Christ as a man seems to be without object. The design of later manifestations can only be to prove the reality of his bodily life, or at all events to speak with his disciples on the extension of the kingdom of God, Acts 1: 3. But for this a continued earthly existence was no longer necessary. Besides, after the ascension of the fortieth day, there were not less than four appearances, as has been shown above, among which those to Paul were accompanied with words and instruction. And if Christ, on account of the disciples, tarried on the earth, why did he not remain a longer time with them? And what is more difficult, *where* did he remain in the very long intervals? These intervals, accordingly, seem to be wholly superfluous? Finally, that Christ in this period made that mysterious descent, which is expressed in the

Confessions by the *descensus ad inferos*, and by Peter as preaching to the spirits in prison,¹ is certainly impossible. Supposing that Sheol and Hades are a dark realm, it is certain that only an unembodied spirit can enter it. Christ's soul could go there only while his body, separated from it, lay in the grave. And as there was no necessity that Christ, after his resurrection, should be either on earth or in hell, there remains for him as the third thing possible, an abode in heaven. Consequently, it follows as a postulate, that Christ rose to heaven immediately after the resurrection.

But how is this conclusion established, since it not merely remains a postulate, but is expressed in so many words by John, one of the principal witnesses in relation to Christ? Evidence is found in a conversation, (most important in support of our view,) of the risen Saviour with Mary Magdalene, John 20: 14, 18, which has been, and remains to our day, a *cruz interpretum*. On account of the difficulty resulting from the forty days' interval between the resurrection and ascension, due honor has not been awarded to words, whose sense is clear.

The special difficulty lies in the word *γάργ* in the 17th verse. It leads us to imagine reasons why Jesus forbade Mary to touch him. But how the fact that he was not yet ascended to his Father could be a reason for this prohibition, is not easily seen. manifold explanations are brought forward, and changes of the text are also proposed. These changes we may let rest, for the text is too firmly established. Bauldry's punctuation, *μή* (*I am not the gardener*) *μοῦ ἑαυτοῦ* (*convince yourself of it*) is untenable on account of an ungrammatical use of *μή*, and because of the impossibility, that Mary could convince herself by the sense of touch, that he was not the gardener. But why elsewhere should Jesus require his disciples to touch him? Had they such slight doubts in respect to his body at all, that they could confound him with another man? If a doubt of this nature were obvious in the case of Mary, then Lamy's opinion would have the preference, since its object is to explain the *γάργ*. According to this view, Mary takes Jesus to be a spirit who has come down from heaven. The sense then is, "You need not convince yourself by touching me; I am actually in the body, I am not yet a glorified spirit." Still it is remarkable, that Jesus permitted other doubters to touch him. How came he to use an expression so plain and almost angry, towards a woman, whose infirmity needed intimations of love? Cocceius supposes that Mary now believed that Jesus had re-

¹ A common explanation by German interpreters of 1 Pet. 2: 19.—T.

turned in order to take away his friends agreeably to his promise, (a promise indeed which Jesus had made only to the Eleven, John 14: 3). With these feelings Mary would embrace him; "Not yet," Christ would repel her, "I shall myself be there, where I shall see you with me." But how could Mary, in her overflowing feelings on seeing him again, have had such a reflection? She *has* him,—which is enough for her trusting female nature. Related to this, but on a better basis, is a modern view. Jesus would call attention to the fact, that though he was yet on earth, still while so remaining, he had no more to do with his disciples; he would wean them from their former affectionate relationship. This accords particularly with the commission to the disciples; it only labors in not sufficiently accounting for the *γάργ.* This is more fully done in a prevalent explanation from the time of Theodorus of Mopsuestia, and admitted by Beza. Jesus urges haste, for without delay the disciples should receive the news that he was risen. "Later," says he, in a quieting tone, "you will have the enjoyment of me, for now I am not ascended." One might appeal to 2 Kings 4: 24. Luke 10: 4, where the hastening messengers are symbolically forbidden even to salute any one on the way. And certainly this affords the most consistent explanation of *μή μου ἄπτον.* Would not the view of Schleiermacher, it may be asked in passing, and those kindred to it, degrade the miracle of the resurrection? These represent, that Christ's body was still tender, that the change into a glorified body was gradual, and that he himself was fearful of permitting the fresh-healed wounds to break out if they were touched. Is it conceivable,—so soon as one allows the natural explanation of this view to appear only in the slightest degree,—that Jesus in the afternoon of the resurrection could have gone to Emmaus on foot?

Accordingly, if we should adhere to the above interpretation of *μή μου ἄπτον* [that adopted by Beza] we shall find a new obstacle in this urgent haste, since it amounts to nothing more than that the disciples shall receive the news of the resurrection one minute sooner. For once, already, unless no faith is to be put in the first evangelists, other women had announced the resurrection from the angel's mouth, and Peter and John (according to John's Gospel,) must at least have known that the grave was empty. Besides, the narrative of Mary, by no means, produced conviction, since at least the two disciples who went to Emmaus were wholly inconsolable, and the absence of his body rather terrified than filled them with hope. The message was not, then, so ur-

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gent, that Jesus could not permit Mary to enjoy a moment's personal communion with him. Accordingly, as the words of Jesus without doubt express haste, we are compelled to find better ground why he would not remain with Mary.

One sends a messenger only when he cannot himself come. It would be strange that Jesus did not at once assure the disciples personally that he was alive, did we not conclude that he had previously to accomplish another object. What that was is so clear from the message sent to the disciples, that no doubt can remain. "*I ascend*" (*ἀναβαίω*, he says at the end of v. 17.) "to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God." He does not speak in the future tense; it cannot be understood as future, for it would be wholly without an object, that Jesus should have had, at this moment, nothing more urgent to say to his disciples, than that he should ascend to heaven forty days afterwards. Time enough to communicate that information remained in every succeeding interview. But it stands in the present, the plainest present tense. What could Jesus have now had to announce to his disciples? He would simply certify why he did not personally manifest himself to them. "Announce to them," he says, "that my ardent desire (*how* ardent it was declared in his last discourse) draws me first of all to the Father; that, at this moment I ascend to Him. Touch me not, I cannot tarry with thee, nor with my disciples, for I have not yet been with the Father, and there must I first be!"

In the morning Christ forbade his disciples to touch him, because he was not yet ascended; in the afternoon, he permitted and commanded it to be done.¹ The conclusion is the most natural, that between the morning and afternoon, the reason which at first existed for not touching him, had disappeared, consequently that the ascension had taken place. And so at once the stone of stumbling is removed; and we have in John also the announcement of the ascension in plain words.

But that John himself so considered the thing may be inferred from the action which Jesus performed in the afternoon, consequently, according to our view, after returning from heaven. He sends them forth as his messengers; declaring their commission, he breathes on them, and says, "Receive the Holy Ghost."² To understand this imperative as a future which indicates a promise, (though Theodorus of Mopsuestia, Lücke in his first edition and Tholuck have vindicated this arbitrary interpre-

¹ Luke 24: 39, *Ψηλασθέντες...*

² Luke 24: 49

tation), is perfectly untenable, because Jesus connects with it an outward sign,—the breathing on them. A real communication of the Holy Spirit is thus here asserted. The fact that Luke relates that the Pentecost miracle happened much later, does not conflict with this. That miracle implies the communication of spiritual powers which operated in a visible manner,—in the power of working miracles and of the gift of tongues; hence it was connected with remarkable external signs. But the communication in question, mentioned in John's Gospel, relates to the inward awakening of a new life in the Apostles, which was thenceforth to be independent of the personal presence of Christ; it relates to the knowledge and illumination which was needed by them as the representatives of the Lord, who were "to loose and to bind." Comp. the following verse. Still, *πνεῦμα ἅγιον*, without the article, seems to imply that this was only a partial communication. Now, however, the Spirit was to take the place of Jesus. He is called another Helper, *ἄλλος παράκλητος*, John 14 : 16, as if Jesus were the first; such a communication of the Spirit, therefore, is conceivable only after Jesus had left his disciples and the earth. There must have been, however, in the moment referred to, [in the gospel of John] an imparting of the Spirit, so that the disciples would not feel that they were forsaken of God, and without which, for example, Peter's energetic words and actions in the matter of choosing an apostle before the day of Pentecost, could not be explained. But that the advent of the Spirit presupposed the departure of Jesus from the world, was already hinted by John. In ch. 7 : 30, he refers the stream of living water which was to flow forth from believers, to the Spirit; but that was still future, "for the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified." The communication of the Spirit, for this is the meaning of the words, cannot take place, till Jesus is glorified. But with the glorification the ascension is necessarily connected, for through this Christ obtains his glory. Therefore if Jesus on the evening of the resurrection, imparts the Spirit, so it is clear in the meaning of the evangelists, that his ascension must have taken place before this evening.

The last appearance of Christ, recorded in Matthew, may here be compared in the way of approximation. The common view, against which, besides, nothing is objected—places this meeting in Galilee with the disciples before the ascension of the fortieth day. But Christ there uses expressions which presuppose an ascension. "All power is given to me," he says, Matt. 28 : 18,

not only on earth, as this had been ascribed to him before his sufferings, ("over all other flesh," John 17: 2) "but also in heaven." This is what Mark means, 16: 19, by sitting down on the right hand of God. It is the dominion over all creatures, delivered to the Son, which he will maintain till the end of the world, when the Father will again enter upon the kingdom, 1 Cor. 15: 28. The assumption of this power is to be considered as clearly connected with the ascension. But to understand the word *ἰδοῦθ*, "given," as a *prolepsis*, in this brief, quiet discourse would be tame; even in Matthew it would be almost unheard of. Christ rather *has* this power already; his *is* the world and its fulness; only because fully conscious of this can he now send out the messengers, who are to require his subjects to do homage to the Lord by the reception of baptism and the keeping of his commands. Hence the entrance on this power, and consequently the ascension are also here presupposed; only we cannot so exactly define the time in Matthew as in John.

This view is the more decisive, because in Luke, Christ on the afternoon of the resurrection, speaks of himself as now glorified. In conversation with the two disciples who were going to Emmaus, he again places his death and glorification in the closest connection. "Ought not Christ to suffer these things and to enter into his glory?"¹ Thus it is evident, that both appear as *past*. Luke therefore, at all events, does not share in the view that the ascension on the fortieth day was the first, since he himself, (before the ascension on the evening of the resurrection which he mentions subsequently in the gospel,) gives us the declaration of Christ that he had already entered into glory. The first entrance into glory must thus coincide with the ascension mentioned by John, which took place immediately after the resurrection.

We now sum up our previous investigations. According to John one ascension of Jesus occurred immediately after the resurrection, before Christ had seen his male disciples; in favor of this, Christ himself furnishes testimony in Luke. According to Mark and the Gospel of Luke, Christ ascended on the evening of the resurrection, consequently after the first conversation with the disciples. Matthew gives confirmation indirectly from the words of Christ, that an ascension took place before the appearance in Galilee, whether we place this in the morning or evening of the resurrection. But in the beginning of this investigation, we felt

¹ Οὐχὶ ταῦτα ἴδεε παθεῖν τὸν Χριστὸν καὶ εἰσελθεῖν εἰς τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ; Luke 24: 26.

compelled to place the departure of Christ, and so the ascension, after this conversation on the mountain; this occurred at the conclusion of the gospel of Matthew. Finally, the Acts record a glorious ascension, accompanied by angels, forty days after the resurrection. In all these ascensions, in addition to the most manifest differences in time, there are, also, differences in place and circumstances. We have no right to cast away all these testimonies, in order to make out one, single narrative, and so identify all the ascensions. On the other hand, were the ascension a fact, single, and standing alone, as now the church expressly understands, on the ground of the history in the Acts, and thus celebrates the fortieth day, then must the moment in which it occurred have been known to all the disciples. Thus we are compelled, on all sides, confidently to affirm as the result of our investigations, that, "Christ arose to heaven several times, and indeed after each single appearance to his disciples, sometimes so that he only vanished from them, at others, rising visibly before them, so that the ascension on the fortieth day appears particularly important, only because with it the regular appearances and communications to his disciples ceased."

It now only remains to show why we modestly believe that this interpretation of the fact will solve all difficulties and remove all discrepancies.

In the first place, the Pauline passage will receive its full elucidation. In it we find the striking circumstance, that the appearances before and after the resurrection, are looked upon as equally significant, and equally convincing, although those which occurred after the ascension might be easily regarded as visions, and so their reality be doubted. According to our view, however, all the appearances narrated in 1 Cor. 15: 5—8, occurred later than the first ascension, which John places on the resurrection day. So in real value these appear on precisely the same ground; and more particularly, by this interpretation, Paul stands on the same equality with the other apostles, as he has placed himself; for thus all the apostles were clothed with their office after the ascension, and were sent forth as the peaceful heralds of a king, who had already assumed his dominion. We may put down the appearance to the five hundred brethren at some time between seven and ten years after the ascension commonly so-called. A more exact determination is not possible, since the conversion of Paul, which occurred after the appearances of Christ referred to, cannot be chronologically fixed from the original documents. At

all events, it becomes easier to show why *some* only of the five hundred brethren had died when the first epistle to the Corinthians was written. That Paul does not mention all the appearances before the ascension of the fortieth day, which we find recorded in the gospels, creates no difficulty. He had to do only with the principal witnesses. The separate appearances to Cephas and James, he mentions, because both these men enjoyed special consideration in the apostolical community. Our view which admits that several of the Pauline appearances took place after the fortieth day, rather aids us to escape easily and happily from those painful efforts which seek to combine the last three of the appearances (to the five hundred, to James, and to all the apostles), with those of the gospels, or that would insert the former among the latter. Even according to the common view, it cannot be supposed that Paul had enumerated *all* the appearances of the risen Saviour which we find in the gospels; there are wanting, e. g. the appearance to the disciples who went to Emmaus, and that at the sea of Galilee, John xxi.

So our result may be an exegetical gain for the gospel of John. It explains to us several dark things in the last sayings of Christ, and first gives to that gospel a proper conclusion.

In respect to the last point, it is proved, that the predictions of Christ in this Gospel respecting his rising from the earth, returning to the Father, etc., are fulfilled by the ascension actually noticed by the evangelists; and, also, from the fact that we may now consider the "breathing of Christ on his disciples," as undeniably a real communication of the Spirit, in which the evangelist shows us that promise fulfilled, which is with Christ, in his last discourses, the predominant promise. Here may be seen the artist-like composition of this Gospel, (a gospel, by the way, which appears to us to be arranged with far more design and art than the common view allows). We have both the prediction and fulfilment; a conclusion is there, *πάντα τετελεσται*. But particularly through our view, that *crux interpretum*, the conversation of Christ with Mary Magdalene, appears to be removed. A more adequate reason for Christ's haste is discovered; both the Preterite *ἀναβέβηκα* and the Present *ἀναβαίρω* retain their just rights; the former is not changed into the Present, nor the latter into the Future; while the message to the disciples has a pertinent meaning.

Besides, this explication seems to be of value as it gives to each evangelist his own due. Were the ascension a single fact, as it is related in the Acts, then it must be narrated by all in the same

manner, and in that case it must be presupposed that all would communicate the last words of Christ as nearly identical. But if there are several ascensions, so that Christ arose to heaven after each manifestation, or after each group of manifestations, (e. g. the appearance at Emmaus does not seem to be separated by an ascension from that on the evening of the resurrection), then we can explain very fully why each of the evangelists has brought out prominently that conversation and with it that ascension, which seemed to him the most important, and why Matthew has wholly omitted the fact of the ascension, (which was often repeated, and which sometimes appears not to have been visible) since he did not wish to have Christ instantly disappear at the end of the Gospel. This view is confirmed by the fact that in all the notices, the last conversation of Christ seems to coincide, in a surprising manner, with the tone and fundamental character of each of the evangelists. Matthew in his Gospel presents Jesus as the theocratic Messiah. Hence in perfect consistency, he concludes with mentioning his dominion. This granting all power in heaven and earth to the Son of Man, is an actual anti-type to the Messianic type in Daniel; the kingdom of David's Son, as an *everlasting* kingdom, is expressed in accordance with the Old Testament emblems, in these sublime closing words: "And lo! I am with you *always* to the end of the world."

Different is the manner of Mark. He is the evangelist of fact. His Christ appears as the mighty worker, the man of miracles. He is not fond of quoting discourses except such declarations as are themselves accompanied by deeds. The people throng around Christ to the danger of his life; he must every where yield to them; he has no time to eat bread, and the disciples force him away, since he is beside himself.¹ Everywhere and always it is fact which is the key-note of this genuinely Roman gospel. So also in the last words of Christ. Deeds and mighty works will proceed from the apostles; therefore powers of working miracles, which shall force a way for the gospel, will be bestowed on them; these are Elijah's mantle, which the departing mighty Prince leaves behind for his friends. Even the last verses are facts. Christ seats himself at the right hand of God, just as if the evangelist himself had seen it; his heralds go out into the world. The Lord attends them with his power, and signs follow them.

The liberal-minded Greek physician next comes in a way which proves his spiritual affinity to Paul. He brings out promi-

¹ "Ἐλεγον γὰρ ὑμῖν"

nently in the Gospel the preaching to *all the heathen*, 24 : 27, and in the Acts, expressly that to the Samaritans,—being thoroughly possessed of the spirit of his great master, the apostle to the Gentiles, in whom the universality of the Christian faith became the essence of his inward life. Besides, being averse to the carnality of the Jews, in the very words of Jesus he discourages that view which would represent that an external Messianic kingdom of Israel was soon to appear; and instead of this he brings forward the hope of a more spiritual, abiding union with Christ, by the Holy Spirit; accordingly he substitutes the Christian idea of the church for the Old Testament idea of the theocracy, Acts, 1 : 6, 8.

But one of the finest conclusions of these communications of Jesus after his resurrection, the elevated John has selected for his gospel. His book was written for a generation which were compelled to look on Christ as an historical person, no more to be seen by the eye, but only by faith; for this generation, it was the legacy of one of the last of those who had seen Christ. We, and all coming generations, stand in the same relation to Christ and to John's gospel. Hence this evangelist causes Christ to appear once more at the conclusion of the book with this admonition and challenge to all future ages, viz. "to believe even without seeing, and thus to be blessed."

I close with one request. If our thoughts here advanced shall be confirmed on biblical grounds, let no one turn away from them because they seem to be somewhat unchurchlike. The church has certainly rejected the idea of there having been several ascensions, but with a meaning wholly different from ours. According to the Socinian doctrine, Christ, who is a mere human being, was raised up to heaven before his entrance on his office, where a revelation was communicated to him; which view is fortified from misunderstanding the passage John 3 : 13. "And no one hath ascended to heaven, except he that came down from heaven, the Son of Man who is in heaven." According to our interpretation, the doctrine of the ascension remains entirely unshaken. One can only object that the church has celebrated the feast at a wrong time. But this is only apparent. For, in agreement with our view, the ascension on the fortieth day remains as the principal one, both because it was the most visible and glorious, and hence is related most in detail, and because, in a certain sense it truly closes the earthly labors of Jesus. Previously, says Luke, Christ was seen of his disciples for forty days, speaking of the

things concerning the kingdom of God. Then there were appearances of Christ later; yet it is manifest that the earlier visits differed from the later only in the fact that they occurred with a certain regularity; from the interval of time which elapsed between the visit on the evening of the resurrection and that to Thomas, one might be led to think, that Jesus always selected the Lord's day; we might, also, here find one of the grounds of the very early observance of Sunday by Christians, which gave to them the name subsequently of Sun-worshippers. That the conclusion of the regular communion of Christ with the earth is to be viewed as on the fortieth day, follows also from the mention of angels Acts 1: 10, who here appeared at the end of the life of Jesus, as they had in the beginning,—in his infancy. From the fortieth day, the regular visions cease; they became unnecessary in consequence of the inward union between Christ and the church, of which the Spirit was the author. But ever and anon, perhaps in the great unfolding epochs of the kingdom of God, the dear and well-known form of the Lord still appeared to his disciples, until, as no one survived who had seen him in life, such visions would altogether lose their convincing and strengthening power. This view of the matter which still, as it were, sees the heavens opened, is much more precious to the Christian's feelings than if, with the fortieth day, we should make an abrupt transition from the earthly to the heavenly existence of Christ. But though there may have been many ascensions, the church at all events has the right to celebrate upon one day these momentous facts, (which we sought to present at the beginning of this discussion,) and to hold fast to one, and that the most glorious manifestation of the truth involved in the ascension. The church stands in the same relation to this, as it does to the outpouring of the Spirit. The Spirit as a Helper had been already granted to the disciples, Matt. 10: 20, when they were first sent out; they receive the Spirit from Christ's breathing on them upon the day of the resurrection; fifty days later the Spirit was granted, together with the power of working miracles. But who will, on that account, deny the church the right to celebrate a single pentecostal feast? Hardly different, also, is the feast of the Epiphany. The church is affected by exegetical criticism, only when the historical basis of one of her doctrines in the personal life of the Redeemer, is either wholly removed, or is so spiritualized as to evaporate; but not when one of these doctrines is separated into parts or into a repetition of the same facts. Thus

there remain the three powers which rule the spiritual life of the Protestant, viz. the Gospel, the Church and Science, all enjoying full honor, and whose conflict in respect to the ascension seems to be removed.

ARTICLE VIII.

THEOLOGICAL ENCYCLOPAEDIA AND METHODOLOGY.

Translated from the unpublished Lectures of Prof. Tholuck of Halle, by Edwards A. Park.

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

THE following lectures were delivered at the University of Halle during the winter semester of 1842, 3, and have probably been repeated in substance during the present winter. An extended copy of them was taken by one of the author's friends, diligently compared with other copies that had been written in preceding years, and was recently forwarded to this country for publication. Prof. Tholuck had previously given his consent to the translator, that these lectures, thus carefully copied and collated, should be published in the English language, although they have never been printed in the German. One object in presenting them to our readers is, to give a comprehensive, and at the same time a particular view of not merely the course, but also the spirit of theological study, as it is pursued in the German Universities. The system there adopted is well known to be in some respects, far more scientific and extensive than that adopted in other lands. Another object is, to remind the reader of the connection which subsists between the several branches of theological science and their auxiliary studies,—a connection which is often forgotten by theologians, and the neglect of which is fraught with evil. A third object is, to suggest the names and the character of various works, which are of prominent importance in theological literature, and with regard to which the opinions of Prof. Tholuck will be thought worthy of deference. For the benefit of such as may wish to procure the volumes, their titles are given in the language in which the books are written, and are also given in English for the satisfaction of those who are not familiar with the German. The Encyclopaedia of Prof. Tholuck