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THE ASCENSION STORY

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PERHAPS the most interesting and important detail of the ascension story with which the book of Acts opens is the statement that it took place forty days after the resurrection. It is well known that the only mention of the ascension in the New Testament is in Luke-Acts, and perhaps only in Acts, save for the phrase, *ἀνελήμφθη ἐν δόξῃ*, in the fragment of the early Christian hymn in 1 Tim. 3 16, a passage almost certainly dependent on the Acts account. Granted the belief which was apparently held by the early followers of Jesus, at least from the time of their restored hopes, that he was in heaven and would speedily come again, it would perhaps be only a question of time when some daring and imaginative follower would seek to visualize the snatching up to heaven. And with the stories of the translation of Elijah, and of Isaiah, of Enoch, and of Moses at hand there need be little wonder at the emergence of a Christian parallel.¹ The noteworthy thing is not the mechanics of the miracle. The representation is natural enough for the thought world of the first century. Heaven was above; if Jesus were to reach it, he would have to ascend. The noteworthy thing is that this parting is here represented as taking place forty days after the escape from the tomb, instead of

¹ The notice to the effect that the disciples beheld him as he was taken up ("And when he had said these things, as they were looking, he was taken up . . . and while they were looking steadfastly into heaven as he went," Acts 1 9, 10) may perhaps be reminiscent of the condition laid upon Elisha by Elijah . . . "if thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee; but if not, it shall not be so . . . And Elisha saw it, and he cried . . ." (2 Kings 2 10 ff.).

being a part of the resurrection, as is certainly the case for Paul and Matthew, and perhaps even for John.

Indeed it is held to be highly probable by some scholars that that is the representation of the gospel of Luke. Were it not for Acts 1 probably no one would question that the separation of Luke 24 51 is represented as taking place on the evening of the resurrection day. The objections raised on the basis of the distance of Emmaus and of the necessity of a parting at night need not be considered. The author is recounting a series of marvels; why a night parting should have been undesirable I do not know. Certainly verses 36-53 run smoothly and without apparent lapse of time.

It is unnecessary here to discuss the problem of the text of Luke 24 51. The probability that the words, *καὶ ἀνεφέρετο εἰς τὸν οὐρανόν*, are a non-Western interpolation, and accordingly a later addition to the text, has commended itself to most critics. Luke 9 51, rendered by the ARV: "And it came to pass, when the days were well nigh come that he should be received up," etc. (*ἐγένετο δὲ ἐν τῷ συμπληροῦσθαι τὰς ἡμέρας τῆς ἀναλήψεως αὐτοῦ*) is most obscure. *ἀναλήψεως* apparently refers to the coming ascension, not to his acceptance among men (Wieseler and Lange) or to his passion (Klostermann). There is apparently no problem of text here. Whether the choice of this word—apparently regularly but not exclusively used to refer to the "Assumption of the Blessed"—implies the story of Acts 1 is not clear; that it implies an interval of forty days before the *ἀνάληψις* is of course not the case.

The possibility that the account in the closing chapter of the gospel is intentionally foreshortened is of course not to be overlooked, although the current explanations that this was due to the author coming to the end of his roll prematurely or that this parting is not a final parting may safely be disregarded. And yet on the whole it does not seem a violence to feel that in the interim between volumes I and II the author has gained information of a kind that causes him to correct his chronology.³

³ It need not be objected that this makes a modern and artificial severance between the two parts of a closely connected writing. Unless

Those who have accepted this position have usually stressed the fact that ἀνελήμφθη (Acts 1 2) implies that in the earlier part of the work the author had carried the story down to the final parting; and that accordingly it was illegitimate to argue that the Western text of Luke 24 51 implied an "earlier" parting.

In the *Beginnings of Christianity*, Vol. III, pp. 256-261, Professor Ropes has urged the excision of ἀνελήμφθη on grounds that seem to me probable, as being "due to the innocent desire of a very early editor to introduce here a mention of the Ascension." He continues, "Without an express statement of the Ascension in Luke 24 51 the reference of Acts 1 2 is positively unsuitable, and in any case the natural place for any mention of it in Acts is not reached until verse 9, where the full account of the event is given as an integral part of the narrative reserved for the present 'treatise'."

This change of text would not affect the possibility of the ascension story and of the forty days being new material obtained since the completion of volume I. He receives them or evolves them and quietly inserts them at the beginning of the second part. He does not raise the question of literary dishonesty by pretending that he had described the ascension, as might have been the case if he had used ἀνελήμφθη in verse 2 as a tacit interpretation of the concluding incident of volume I. Rather he resumes the story and works in this new material.

In an article in the *Expositor* for March 1909, pp. 254-261, *The Ascension in Luke and Acts*, Professor Bacon has argued that the apparent contradiction between the two accounts vanishes if Acts 1 3 be regarded as "interjected parenthetically, simply to inform the reader that the main manifestations already

the recent suggestion of Professor Lake be accepted that the two were written as one work, and that their separation was due to a later hand, who framed a conclusion for the former and an introduction for the latter (which is interesting but unsupported by evidence), Acts 1 1 intimates that there actually was a division. Is it not quite as artificial to think that in the course of the composition of so extended a piece of writing as Luke-Acts no new evidence appeared, but at the moment of penning the opening words of the gospel all the material had been compiled and tabulated?

related were not the only ones, but that the appearances to the disciples continued for 'forty days'." This verse, he maintains, interrupts the context, for Acts 14 refers to Luke 24 48-49, while Acts 1 6-11 clearly continues the preceding paragraph. Accordingly, "Luke" conceived the ascension *at the beginning*, not at the end, of the appearances to the disciples, and did not depart from *all* the testimony available from the apostolic and post-apostolic age.

Though this suggestion is not lightly to be rejected and is worthy of more consideration than has been granted it, several objections seem to me to argue decisively against it. First, it must be frankly admitted with Professor Bacon that Acts 1 3 does seem to be an interjected parenthesis to the effect that appearances were granted the apostles. Nothing is implied about their time or nature. But in the next verse it is said, *καὶ συναλιζόμενος παρέγγειλεν . . . συναλιζόμενος* has long been a *crux interpretum*, as a recent writer aptly remarks. Attempts to derive it from *συναλιζω* in the sense of "eat with" or from *συναλιζομαι* in the sense of "gather" (transitive or intransitive) have always met with difficulties which need not be repeated here. Recently Professor Cadbury has proposed a way out of the dilemma of these alternatives.³ He suggests that *συναλιζόμενος* is to be derived from *αυλιζομαι*, and is an alternative spelling for *συναυλιζόμενος*. He then translates it "living with," in the sense of spending the night together in the open. The evidence he cites appears to me to make this interpretation highly probable. If this view be accepted, it would seem to exclude definitely the suggestion that Luke understood the appearances to be of the ascended Lord, for verse 4 would then be seen to continue verse 3. Jesus not only appeared to the apostles by the space of forty days, but lived with them during the period. The appearances could then hardly be understood as those given in the gospel, and Professor Bacon's strongest argument, that these verses resume the concluding words of the gospel, will not stand. If, as seems probable, *ἀνελημφθη* is to be excised from verse 2, the whole section is seen to be an orderly statement

³ JOURNAL OF BIBLICAL LITERATURE, XLV (1926), pp. 310 ff.

that after the resurrection Jesus stayed with the disciples for a period of forty days, and then was taken from them.

Furthermore, it is to be noted that Professor Bacon's statement that "all the testimony available from the apostolic and post-apostolic age" was to the effect "that the ascension was conceived to have occurred *at the beginning*, not at the end, of the appearances to the disciples" is not consonant with the evidence, as we shall see below.

The origin of the forty day interval, which was so contrary to the earlier tradition and which because of this seems to have been disregarded for many years, is an interesting question. Acts 13 31 makes Paul say of Jesus in his speech at Pisidian Antioch that "God raised him from the dead, and he was seen for many days of them that came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem." May we have here a possible clew as to what started "Luke" in this new line? He becomes acquainted with a tradition, perhaps somewhat akin to that of Paul's in 1 Cor., that Jesus had appeared for many days. This he takes over, and understands "the appearances" of Jesus had been in a resuscitated body. At the conclusion of the period of "many days" he visualizes him in his assumption to heaven, for which models, as suggested above, would not be wanting.

Are there any clews to the choice of the number forty? Two points may perhaps be noted. Pentecost apparently is the *terminus ad quem*. For the author that was the time when the prophecy of the pouring out of the spirit had been realized. Unlike the author of the Fourth Gospel, who makes Jesus breathe upon his disciples on the resurrection evening, the author of Acts has Jesus send his spirit from heaven. It had been hinted at in the gospel (24 49), "tarry ye in the city, until ye be clothed with power from on high." The Pentecost incident is apparently in his mind as he wrote these words. Is it not conceivable that after finishing the first volume his attention is caught by some such simple statement as he preserves in Acts 13 31, that as a matter of fact Jesus had appeared over a period of days? This gives him a reason for the command to wait in Jerusalem. It is in order that the series of appearances or visits with the Lord may not be interrupted. But

Pentecost stands as the fixed date for their close. Jesus had sent his spirit from heaven. Accordingly the departure must have been prior. If it were desired to be a little more explicit than "many days," forty could hardly be surpassed. It had come to be a round number probably because of its being the approximate length of a generation. The flood had lasted forty days and forty nights; Moses had been in the mountain forty days and forty nights, while Elijah too had fasted for that period. Ezra is directed to tell the people not to seek him for forty days. This he does, and then spends the time in dictating to his five companions the scriptures which had perished in the destruction of Jerusalem. "And then was Ezra caught away, and taken up into the place of such as were like him, after having written all these things" (4 Ezra 14 23-49). Similarly Baruch is directed to give instructions to the people for forty days after which he will "depart from this earth, nevertheless not unto death, but shall be preserved unto the consummation of the times" (2 Baruch 76 1-4). While the date of these two apocalypses probably precludes their use by the author of the story in Acts, it is equally improbable that they were influenced by the Acts account. The forty years of wandering in the wilderness, corresponding to the forty days in which the spies had spied out the land; the forty years of subjection to the Philistines; the occasional forty years of rest that came upon Israel as the result of the exploits of Othniel and Gideon; the fact that many of the worthies, notably David, Solomon, Joash, Eli, ruled or judged forty years; that many of them started their rule at that age; that Ezekiel was bidden to lie on his right side forty days, each day for a year; or that Goliath challenged Israel for forty days;—all these, and they are not exhaustive, show the prominence this number had in Hebrew and Jewish thought. There is accordingly a very fair chance that the fixed date of Pentecost (i. e. fifty days after the Passion), in addition to the extreme appropriateness of the number forty—already used of an earlier exploit of Jesus⁴—contributed to the church calendar.

⁴ Luke 4 2.

In an article *Die Tesseractaden und Tesseractadenlehren der Griechen und anderen Völker* (Berichte d. sächs. Ges. d. Wiss. zu Leipzig, phil.-hist. Klasse, 1909, pp. 21-206), W. H. Roscher has collected and partially analyzed a vast quantity of cases where the number forty occurred among non-Semitic peoples. He also refers to and gives an index of an earlier article in which the same task was performed for the Semites. I have not been able to discover this earlier section.

It is perhaps worth suggesting that the occurrence of a forty days' *Trauerfrist* among many non-Semitic peoples makes us wonder if after all there is some more subtle reason for the choice of forty than the connexion with Pentecost, and that we have here a trace of a view that, due to the contamination of death, a period of ceremonial defilement resulted making an advent into the presence of God during such a time unthinkable. It is of course to be noted that the period of public mourning even for the greatest Jewish men was but thirty days. Roscher remarks there may be „eine Spur davon“—i. e. of a forty day mourning fast—in Jewish teaching as there surely is among the Mandaeans, Arabs, and other Mohammedan tribes (*op. cit.* p. 23), and refers to the Midrash, *Beresch. R.* on Gen. 50 4, but this is almost surely not the case. In the *Vitae Adae et Evae* Adam decides to stand in the river Jordan in water up to his neck for forty days because of the uncleanness resulting from the sin in the garden, and Eve stands similarly for thirty-seven days in the Tigris (VI, VII).

But the absence of any real evidence of a forty day defilement from death makes any such guess precarious. It will probably be wise to hold it in abeyance as a bare possibility³, and to see the forty days as the natural expression of a period between the resurrection and the Pentecost experiences.

That Paul is unacquainted with the story of an ascension is hardly open to debate. That as a result of death Christ had

³ It may be noted in passing that from the ninth hour of the crucifixion Friday (Lu. 23 44; cf. Mk. 15 33) to “the first day of the week at early dawn” (Lu. 24 1) is just forty hours. I commend this to those more skilled and interested than myself in the highly diverting game of sacred arithmetic.

been highly exalted and had taken his seat at the right hand of God is a fundamental point.⁶ The resurrection was the way. Nor do the appearances in 1 Cor. 15 1-11 demand a post-resurrection-ante-ascension activity. The point of moment for Paul was that his experience with the risen Lord was just as real as were those of the other apostles. This he is at pains to stress in Galatians. Accordingly in his catalog of appearances in 1 Cor. 15 the significant point is that they are all of exactly the same type. The appearance to him can hardly have been else in his thinking than an appearance from heaven of the exalted Christ; similarly then those to Cephas, to the twelve, to the five hundred, to James, and to all the apostles.

What Mark's conception was is of course not clear. As the gospel stands now there are no appearances.⁷ If the ending has been removed, there may have been appearances in Galilee, perhaps indicated by the words, "he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him, as he said unto you" (Mk. 16 7). *προάγει* is surely not to be understood in the sense, "he conducts or walks with you," but "he precedes you. It is in Galilee ye shall see him." It in no wise implies that the appearances will be other than from heaven.

Similarly in the case of Matthew. It seems reasonably clear that the Jesus who meets the disciples in Galilee with the words, "All authority hath been given unto me *in heaven and on earth*" (28 18), is the ascended Jesus who having come from heaven may thus appropriately speak. Probably the earlier appearance to the women (28 9-10) would not have suggested a meeting

⁶ Phil. 2 9 ff.; Ro. 8 34; Col. 3 1 ff., *et pass.* Passages such as 1 Thes. 4 16 and 2 Thes. 1 7 do not seem to me to justify the contention of Swete (*The Apostles' Creed*, 2nd ed., 1894, p. 67) that the hope of a *παύσις* postulates an antecedent *ἀνάστασις*, which is distinct from the resurrection. That Jesus was in heaven was of course Paul's belief, but that his ascension had been as described in Acts 1 is certainly not implied. 1 Pet. 3 22 (*ὅτι ἔστιν ἐν δεξιᾷ θεοῦ προσεθίς εἰς οὐρανόν*) and Hebr. 4 14 (*ἔχοντες οὖν ἀρχαῖα μέγαν διελθούσθα τοῖς οὐρανόσ*) are probably to be understood in the same way.

⁷ The appearances and the ascension in the later ending (16 9-26) have no independent value, but simply reflect the three other gospels and the book of Acts.

before Jesus had rejoined the Father except on the basis of the Acts account.

In the case of the Fourth Gospel it is not so clear. The word with which Jesus deters Mary, "Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended (*ἀναβέβηκα*) unto the Father; but go unto my brethren, and say to them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and my God and your God" (20 17), implies an interval between the resurrection and the ascension, but does not imply knowledge of the ascension story of Acts or of a forty day interval. At the next meeting which took place on the same evening Jesus breathes on them and says, "Receive ye the Holy Spirit" (20 22). Earlier in the gospel (7 39) it is said, "But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believed on him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet given; because Jesus was not yet glorified." Apparently this glorification was the reception into heavenly glory which the author would thus maintain had already taken place.⁸ On the following first day of the week the invitation to Thomas to touch him, which had previously been denied "for I am not yet ascended unto the Father," would imply that in the interim the *ἀνάβασις* had taken place. It is perhaps not clear whether the author of the Fourth Gospel is acquainted with the Acts account; it is certain that if he were he did not accept it. Apparently the rejoining the Father was on the same day as the emergence from the tomb, certainly not more than a week later.

Nor did the Acts story fare better in the early church. In the Epistle of Barnabas (15 9) the statement is explicit: *διὸ καὶ ἄγομεν τὴν ἡμέραν τὴν ὀγδόην εἰς εὐφροσύνην, ἐν ἣ καὶ ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἀνέστη ἐκ νεκρῶν καὶ φανερωθεὶς ἀνέβη εἰς οὐρανοῦς*. It would seem as if he meant by the eighth day the resurrection Sunday (i. e. the day after the Sabbath, the seventh day). If this be rejected, it could only be some other Sunday; forty days after the resurrection surely would fall on Thursday, not Sunday.⁹

⁸ Yet cf. John 13 st.

⁹ Swete (*op. cit.*, p. 69) maintains that although Barnabas "seems to affirm that both the Resurrection and the Ascension occurred on the eighth day, or on a Sunday," he does not necessarily conflict with the account in Acts. "Undoubtedly it was a natural inference from

The silence of Clement of Rome, Ignatius,¹⁰ Polycarp, Hermas, and the Didache regarding any ascension, while of course not conclusive, is tolerably strong evidence that they were unacquainted with, or rejected, any tradition separating it from the resurrection.

In the case of Justin Martyr the situation is different. The ordinary statement that he "continues to regard both events [i. e. resurrection and ascension] as two parts of one act,"¹¹ runs counter to the evidence. It may be well to quote the evidence in full:

St. Luke's words that the Ascension took place on the fortieth day after the Resurrection; and this inference is already drawn by the author of the fifth book of the *Constitutions* (*Const. Ap. V*, 19 ἀπὸ τῆς πρώτης κυριακῆς ἀριθμήσαντες τεσσαράκοντα ἡμέρας, ἀπὸ κυριακῆς ἀχρη πέντε ἐορτάζετε τὴν ἑορτὴν τῆς ἀναλήψεως), and since the fourth century has been sanctioned by the annual celebration of Holy Thursday. Yet the words of the Acts allow greater latitude, and would be satisfied if the Ascension could be shewn to have taken place on the following Sunday, the forty-third day after Easter. Indeed the Syriac *Doctrine of the Apostles* carries it forward to the fiftieth day, making it coincide with the Descent of the Holy Ghost (Cureton, *Ancient documents*, pp. 24, 27). This is clearly inconsistent with the Acts, but it supports the statement of Barnabas that the Ascension occurred on the first day of the week."

¹⁰ In the "long" recension the following accounts are given, Trall. 9: "He also rose again in three days, the Father raising him up; and after spending forty days with the apostles, he was received up to the Father, and 'sat down at his right hand, expecting till his enemies are placed under his feet;'" Smyrn. 8: "Nor was this all; but also after he had shown himself to them, that he had risen indeed, and not in appearance only, he both ate and drank with them during forty entire days. And thus was he, with the flesh, received up in their sight unto him that sent him, being with that same flesh to come again, accompanied by glory and power. For, say the [holy] oracles, 'This same Jesus, who is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come, in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.'"

The words, "Hasten all to come together as to one temple of God, as to one altar, to one Jesus Christ, who came forth from the one Father, and is with one, and departed to one" (Magn. 7, 2) implies nothing as to how this departure was conceived.

¹¹ P. W. Schmiedel, art. "Resurrection—and Ascension—Narratives," *Enc. Bibl.*, p. 4061.

1 Ap. 46 5: Ἰησοῦς . . . καὶ σταυρωθεὶς καὶ ἀποθανὼν ἀνάστη καὶ ἀνεληλυθεν εἰς οὐρανὸν . . .

ibid. 51 6: ὡς δὲ καὶ εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν ἔμελλεν ἀνίεναι, καθὼς προεφητεύθη, ἀκούσατε. Then follows the familiar quotation from Ps. 23 (24) 7, 8.

Τιτυρ. 32 3: ὅπερ γίνεται ἐξότου εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν ἀνελήφθη μετὰ τὸ ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀναστῆναι ὁ ἡμέτερος κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστός . . .

ibid. 36 5 [In answer to the query of Ps. 23 (24) 8 τίς ἐστὶν οὗτος ὁ βασιλεὺς τῆς δόξης; κ. τ. λ.]: κύριος οὖν τῶν δυνάμεων ὅτι οὐκ ἔστιν ὁ Σολομὼν ἀποδέδεικται· ἀλλὰ ὁ ἡμέτερος Χριστὸς ὅτε ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀνάστη καὶ ἀνέβαιεν εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν, κελεύονται οἱ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς ταχθέντες ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ ἄρχοντες ἀνοίξει τὰς πύλας τῶν οὐρανῶν, ἵνα εἰσέλθῃ οὗτος ὃς ἐστὶ βασιλεὺς τῆς δόξης, καὶ ἀναβὰς καθίσῃ ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ πατρὸς . . .

ibid. 38 1: εἶτα ἄνθρωπον γενόμενον σταυρωθῆναι, καὶ ἀναβεβηκέναι εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν . . .

ibid. 108 2 . . . λέγοντες ἐξηγῆσθαι αὐτὸν ἐκ νεκρῶν καὶ εἰς οὐρανὸν ἀνεληλυθέναι . . . [the early charge that the disciples had stolen the body and had claimed that Jesus had risen]. To these passages perhaps should be added 1 Ap. 54 6-8, in which Justin asserts that the legends of the assumption of Dionysus and Bellerophon and Perseus are the creations of the evil demons who through their failure to interpret aright the prophecies of Jesus' ascension made clumsy imitations of this event to discredit it.

But while these passages are such as to seem to bear out the usual statements about Justin's identification of the two events, this is not the case for 1 Ap. 50 12: μετὰ οὖν τὸ σταυρωθῆναι αὐτὸν καὶ οἱ γνώριμοι αὐτοῦ πάντες ἀπέστησαν, ἀρνησάμενοι αὐτόν· ὕστερον δέ, ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀναστάντος καὶ ὀφθέντος αὐτοῖς καὶ ταῖς προφητεῖαις ἐντυχεῖν, ἐν αἷς πάντα ταῦτα προεῖρητο γενησόμενα, διδάξαντος, καὶ εἰς οὐρανὸν ἀνερχόμενον ἰδόντες καὶ πιστεύσαντες καὶ δύναμιν ἐκείθεν αὐτοῖς πεμφθεῖσαν παρ' αὐτοῦ λαβόντες καὶ εἰς πᾶν γένος ἀνθρώπων ἐλθόντες ταῦτα ἐδίδαξαν καὶ ἀπόστολοι προσηγορεύθησαν. Here the text is explicit.¹²

¹² With this may be compared the passage in *περὶ ἀναστάσεως*, chap. 9: "And when he had thus shown them that there is truly a resurrection

καὶ εἰς οὐρανὸν ἀνερχόμενον ἰδόντες can mean nothing else than that they saw him ascending into heaven. Apparently then this precludes the assumption that he regarded the resurrection and the ascension as "two parts of the same act." While the other passages are in themselves indeterminate upon this point, they by no means demand identification but may be interpreted as this last passage must be. However, it is to be observed that there is no indication of the length of time between the resurrection and the ascension and that the former entails the latter.

The one reference to the passion in the Apology of Aristides (chap. 15: μετὰ δὲ τρεῖς ἡμέρας ἀνεβίω καὶ εἰς οὐρανοὺς ἀνῆλθεν) gives no clew as to the conception of the author upon the point at issue.

The statement that Irenaeus too considered the resurrection and ascension parts of the same event must not be understood in the sense of an ascension from the grave. He explicitly states: "[It is certain], too, from the fact that the Lord rose from the dead on the third day, and manifested himself to his disciples, and was in their sight received up into heaven . . ." (II, 32 3 Mass.). His other references (I, 10 1 and III, 4 2) throw no light on the problem.

In his writing *Adv. Judaeos* (cap. XIII, Migne 2, 636 D) Tertullian's words, *cum utique post resurrectionem eius a mortuis, quae die tertia effecta est, coeli eum receperunt secundum prophetiam*, can hardly yield a sense other than that the heavens received him on the day of his resurrection. In his *Apologeticus adv. Gentes* (cap. XXI, Migne 1, 402 A), on the contrary, he

of the flesh, wishing to show them this also, that it is not impossible for flesh to ascend into heaven (as he had said that our dwelling place is in heaven) 'he was taken up into heaven while they beheld,' as he was in the flesh."

Whether this treatise is to be ascribed to Justin or not is very difficult to decide. Both Harnack (*Die Chronologie d. altchristl. Lit. bis Euseb.* I, pp. 506 ff.) and Krüger (*Altchristl. Lit.*, p. 69) express themselves with caution on this point. At any rate it can hardly be dated later than 180 (so Harnack), and accordingly, if not from the pen of Justin, bears witness that another writer in the second century differentiated the ἀνάστασις and ἀνάβησις.

follows the Acts account: *Cum discipulis autem quibusdam apud Galilaeam Judaeae regionem ad quadraginta dies egit, docens eos quae docerent. Dehinc ordinatio eis ad officium praedicandi per orbem, circumfusa nube in coelum est ereptus multo verius quam apud vos asseverare de Romulo Proculi solent.* Though the tradition of the forty days is followed here, it may be observed in passing that the Luke-Acts representation of appearances restricted to Jerusalem is disregarded in favor of those in Galilee.

Brief mention should be made of another ancient writing which has a direct statement of the ascension. In the Gospel of Peter the angel says to the seeking women, "Wherefore are ye come? whom seek ye? him who was crucified? he is risen and gone (*ἀνέστη καὶ ἀπῆλθεν*). But if ye believe not, stoop down and look in and see the place where he lay that he is not here; for he is risen and gone thither from whence he was sent (*ἀνέστη γὰρ καὶ ἀπῆλθεν ἐκεῖ ὅθεν ἀπεστάλη*) (cap. 13)." The *ἀπῆλθεν* may look back to the exit from the tomb, but more probably to the crucifixion where it is said: *καὶ ὁ κύριος ἀνεβόησε λέγων ἡ δύναμις μου, ἡ δύναμις, κατέλειψάς με. καὶ εἰπὼν ἀνελήφθη* (cap. 5). Here the ascension is connected with the moment of death. Swete (*The Akhmûm Fragment of the Apocryphal Gospel of St. Peter*, p. 10) argues that Origen apparently accepted this view.¹³

The evidence thus suggests that the story of the forty days intercourse of the Lord with his disciples on earth and of a final translation to glory is a late and not widely diffused tradition that either came to our author after the completion of volume I, or was produced by him on the basis of some such statement in his sources as he has preserved in Acts 13 31. That it was not accepted by the early Christians in spite of the fact that it was sponsored by a writer later to be reckoned as a producer of scripture is also clear. Aside from occasional gnostics who taught a post-resurrection period of eighteen

¹³ For a discussion of the relation of the ascension from the cross to the later account of the resurrection, see Lake, "*The Historical Evidence for the Resurrection of Jesus Christ*," pp. 155 ff.

months, or in the case of the *Pistis Sophia* twelve years, in order to provide opportunity for the risen Lord to communicate his esoteric teaching,¹⁴ the commonly held view seems to have been that the resurrection in itself entailed the translation to glory.¹⁵ But as the years went by and the Christian writings became scripture, the need of harmony prevailed. Since the statement in Acts was explicit and could hardly be explained otherwise than as it read, and since scripture could not contradict scripture, the tendency seems to have been to take the Acts statement as the standard and to force the other views into its mold. Harmony has usually been purchased at the expense of historical accuracy.

¹⁴ Iren., I, 32; 30¹⁴ says that the Valentinians and the Ophites taught that Jesus remained on earth eighteen months. A similar note is found in the present Ethiopic text of the Ascension of Isaiah 9 10: "He will ascend on the third day, [and he will remain in the world 545 days]." According to Charles (*The Ascension of Isaiah*, 1900, p. 63) the bracketed words are to be seen as a gnostic interpolation. In the *Pistis Sophia* (I, 1) it is said: "It came to pass, when Jesus had risen from the dead, that he passed eleven years discoursing with his disciples, etc." The wisdom contained in the book is communicated in the twelfth year.

To these may be added the remark by Eusebius that, as Jesus' ministry was the week prophesied by Daniel 9 27, in the midst of which sacrifice and oblation ceased, it extended over a period of seven years bisected by the passion: εἴη ἂν οὖν ἑβδομάς ἔτων μία ὃ πάς χρόνος τῆς μετὰ τῶν ἀποστόλων αὐτοῦ συνδιατριβῆς, ὃ τε πρὸ τοῦ πάθους καὶ ὃ μετὰ τὴν ἐκ κερῶν ἀνάστασιν αὐτοῦ. πρὸ μὲν γὰρ τοῦ πάθους ἐπὶ τρία καὶ ἡμισυ ἔτη τοῖς πᾶσι λαοῖς παρέχων μαθηταῖς τε καὶ τοῖς μὴ τοιοῦτοι ἀναγέγραπται, καθ' ὃν <χρόνον> διδασκαλίας παραδόξους τε θεραπείας τῆς θεότητος αὐτοῦ τὰς δυνάμεις πᾶσι ἀπὸ τῆς Ἑλλάδος τε καὶ Ἰουδαίας παρείχτο. μετὰ δὲ τὴν ἐκ κερῶν ἀνάστασιν τὸν ἴσον, ὡς εἶπες, τῶν ἔτων χρόνον τοῖς λαοῖς μαθηταῖς καὶ ἀποστόλοις συνῆν, δι' ἡμῶν τεσσαράκοντα ὀκταμήνητοι αὐτοῖς καὶ συναλιζόμενοι, καὶ λέγων τὰ περὶ τῆς βασιλείας τοῦ θεοῦ, ὡς γούν αἱ Πράξεις τῶν ἀποστόλων περιέχουσιν, ὡς εἶναι ταύτην τὴν δηλουμένην τῆς προφητείας τῶν ἔτων ἑβδομάδα, καθ' ἣν ἀνευδύναμοις διαθήκην πολλοῖς, τὴν καιρὴν δηλαδὴ διαθήκην τοῦ εὐαγγελικοῦ κηρύγματος κρατίσας (*Demonstr. evang.* VIII, cap. 2, 108-110, p. 400 Fabric.).

¹⁵ As we have seen, this statement should not be understood to mean that for all early Christians the translation was direct from the grave or from the cross. Yet the two were at least loosely connected. No trace of a forty day interval, save in the case of Tertullian's reflection of the Acts account, is known to me down to the end of the second century.