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War conditions having rendered it impracticable to hold an Ordinary Meeting on January 22nd, 1940, the Paper to be read on that date was circulated to subscribers and is here published, together with the written discussion elicited.

SOME INFALLIBLE PROOFS OF OUR LORD'S RESURRECTION.

By Rev. Principal H. S. Curr, M.A., B.D., B.Litt.

IT has been well and truly said by Principal Marcus Dods, a great Scots theologian of a previous generation, that the Resurrection of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is not only the most important event in the history of Christianity, but also the most important event in the history of the world. In support of the earlier part of that statement it is only necessary to recall the words of Paul, " If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain " (1 Cor. xv, 14). Neither friends nor foes of the Christian faith take any exception to that statement. They acknowledge with one voice that there can be no other explanation of the rise and diffusion of Christianity except the fact that its Divine Founder died and rose again, or that His followers believed that to be the case with such intensity that they were ready to suffer the loss of all things, and to accept death itself rather than to abandon the conviction that Jesus of Nazareth, the prophet mighty in word and deed, who claimed to be the Son of God, was demonstrated indeed to be God manifest in the flesh by His rising from the dead. It is thus admitted on all sides and in all schools that the religion whose centre and soul is Christ Jesus and Him Crucified, has for its keystone the fact, or the belief, that He could not be holden of the grave but rose triumphant over the last enemy of mortal man. This distinction between the fact of history and its acceptance by faith will be discussed in greater detail at a later stage. For our present purpose, it is mentioned without comment as part of the proof demanded by the great apostle's reference to the centrality of the Resurrection of the

Redeemer in the Christian religion. As for the latter part of the statement with which this paper begins, it is only necessary to remark that the greater includes the less. The core of universal history is the history of redemption, if it be not its outermost periphery as well. For what is the history of the world but the condemnation of the world by its righteous and faithful Creator, Preserver and Sovereign, and its reclamation in virtue of the gospel of Jesus Christ, God's Son, and Man's Saviour ? If that be so, then the Resurrection of that same Lord and Christ must be the centre both of sacred and secular history.

Our present concern is the discussion of the infallible grounds on which the belief of the Christian Church from its very inception has held that its Divine Head actually returned from the dead more than conqueror over its terrors. The fact of the belief is universally acknowledged, and so is its cardinal importance, but opinion is gravely divided as to the foundations on which that belief rests. To take a simple analogy, everybody concedes that the taproot of Islam is the belief that there is one God, and that Mohammed is His prophet. To many the basis of that belief is a partial lie. There is indeed but one God, but Mohammed has no right or claim to be regarded as His prophet. In the same way, the Christian believes that Jesus died and rose again, but the basis of that belief is the veritable truth of God expressed in an historical incident. If the belief that Our Divine Lord rose from the dead be only a case of the wish being father to the thought, to put it in an extreme way, then such a belief would be more astounding than the fact itself. Such a figment of the imagination would be a greater miracle than the actual occurrence. It is easier far to believe that Our Lord actually did rise from the dead than to take the view that the story owed its origin to the fond faith and hope of His followers that death had no power over Him. There can only be one explanation of the belief in the Resurrection of Our Lord, and that is its historicity. Such an event defies the inventive powers of men's minds. Just as it is impossible to believe that the portrait of Christ in the Four Gospels was produced by the authors like some character in fiction, in the same fashion it is incredible that the narrative of the Resurrection was due to the same cause. In both cases, it is not such a severe tax on the human heart and mind to acknowledge that these things were true as a matter of historical fact.

The narrative of the Resurrection seems to carry the proof of its trustworthiness on the face of it. That sentence is solely concerned with the bare fact not with the details associated with it. When reduced to an irreducible minimum the story illustrates the old dictum that truth is stranger and stronger than fiction. It defies manufacture by the credulity or ingenuity of men. It may be said to prove itself by its intrinsic character. If we think for a moment of what it contains, we shall be persuaded that these things are so. The narrative is self-evidencing in its unique features. That must be characteristic of it, if the incident be all that it is claimed to be. It is too good not to be true, as my old teacher, Professor Pringle-Pattison once observed in a different connection. Two features of the event will illustrate and demonstrate that point. On the one hand there is the fact that Our Lord's Resurrection differs as the poles apart from all similar incidents in the Old and New Testaments. There are various narratives of people being raised from the dead. Indeed, one gets the impression from the message sent by Christ to John the Baptist when the latter was in prison that the raising of the dead was as common as the cleansing of lepers (Matthew xi, 7), although the words may not bear that interpretation. But the Resurrection of Our Lord differs from all other cases of the same kind in the fact that it took place without any external intervention. In every other case mentioned in the Bible, the soul is recalled to the body by some outward agency, such as the corpse which came to life when it touched the bones of Elisha the prophet (2 Kings xiii, 21). Our Lord, however, raised Himself from the tomb. He laid down His life that He might take it again. "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No one taketh it away from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment received I from my Father" (John x, 17–18, R.V.). Christ rose from the grave like a man rising from sleep which, as the old adage reminds us, is the brother of death. We are not concerned at present with the parts played in redemption by the Father and the Eternal Spirit. The point, on which stress is laid, consists in the fact that Christ returned from the tomb by His own will. That defies invention or fabrication. It never could have entered the mind of man.

Is not the same observation justified by the manner of Our

Lord's Resurrection ? Of that, too, it may be said that it passeth knowledge. In contrast to the hideous publicity of the Cross, the Resurrection took place in secrecy, and while it was yet dark. It is pleasant to think that Our Lord rose from the dead about the time when He was accustomed to get up in the morning. Mark tells us that Jesus rose up a great while before day (Mark i, 35). That was probably His usual practice, and it is arguable that at the same hour He awakened from the sleep of death, and rose in newness of life. His followers would have probably desired a more spectacular and dramatic return from the unseen world, if they had been permitted any voice in the matter. But the actual manner of the Resurrection was of a piece with its peerless grace and glory. It seems to be preposterous to speak of a faith which could beget such a story that Christ raised Himself from the dead, and that this unique indication of His claims was not performed at high noon when all might see and believe, but in the darkness which precedes the dawn. The faith cannot account for the fact. The fact must be anterior to the faith. The extraordinary nature of its record leaves no choice but to take that view. It is indeed self-evidencing. On its face it bears the marks of truth, at once historic and heavenly. Its invention is an impossibility. Water cannot rise higher than its own level. Such a narrative was never produced, or even embellished by the pen of man.

But such a line of reasoning does not carry universal or even general conviction. Many can be found who refuse to believe that the account of Our Lord's Resurrection in its barest outlines offers features which make it unique, and compel the admission that the story must be true for it could never have been fabricated. Accordingly, it is necessary to approach the records from another standpoint. Dr. Sanday has observed that such an event as the Resurrection of Christ would require evidence of remarkable quantity and quality. It is, of course, an event in human history. Two thousand years have elapsed since it took place, and we are dependent for all that we know regarding it on the written testimonies of contemporaries preserved in the pages of the New Testament. The evidence thus furnished can be examined and tested by the ordinary laws of historical investigation. It will be found, as I have already observed, to offer some problems, when it is considered in detail, but the main fact that Our Lord did indeed rise from the dead emerges clear and plain. The narratives of the four evangelists, and the

statements of Paul in 1 Corinthians xv, 1-8 may not be easy to weave into a connected and harmonious whole. Indeed, there are not wanting modern scholars who suggest that the discrepancies and difficulties are insuperable. Such a position seems quite unjustifiable to the devout student of Holy Scripture, but the very fact that it has been maintained shows that the accounts of Our Lord's various appearances to His disciples are not without problems. The central fact is, however, attested in unassailable fashion. There can be no doubt that Our Lord died and rose again. The death of Nelson provides an interesting analogy of the way in which the main fact is decisively attested despite differences in detail. Thus the descriptions of the event by his colleagues do not tally in every particular, but they all agree in bearing witness to Nelson's death in the hour of victory during the Battle of Trafalgar. The evidence for Our Lord's Resurrection is of the same kind. Regarding the main fact, Bishop Westcott said that no event in history has better attestation.

The full force of that statement will be better appreciated if we glance at the evidence which is so highly commended. There is a reference of one kind or another in the overwhelming majority of the New Testament books. These were all written during the life of the Apostle John who saw with his own eyes the Risen Christ and the empty tomb. They vary very much in their proximity to the actual event. The references in some of the Pauline Epistles are probably the earliest, but these are separated from the others by a comparatively brief space of time. Indeed, the books of the New Testament can be likened in their witness to the Resurrection to a constellation where one star differeth from another in glory. It is not necessary or desirable to appraise their dates with a view to grading the value of their evidence. It is enough that the New Testament should contain such ample evidence to the great event from which it derives all its power in the last analysis. A possible exception may be made in favour of the speeches recorded in the earlier chapters of Acts. These bear eloquent testimony to the Resurrection of Our Lord within a few weeks, or months, or years of that stupendous miracle. Reference might also be made to the way in which it is mentioned. Speakers and writers alike are absolutely sure of it, so sure that they evince no tendency to dwell upon it, and to emphasise it to the dwarfing of all else. Indeed, many of the allusions are of a casual type. The apostolic

believer seems to have no difficulty in accepting that article of the gospel which states that Christ was delivered for our offences and raised again for our justification.

A different type of proof is furnished by the failure of rationalist critics of Christianity and others to explain the origin of the Church's belief in the Lord's Resurrection so that it can be regarded as without any adequate basis in actual fact. The various theories have often been described and dismissed, but that is no reason why they should not be reviewed again, if for no other reason than because of their inexhaustible vitality. Despite the refutations which they have received again and again from defenders of the faith, they have been revived again and again with all manner of plausible modifications. There are always minds which are offended at the supernatural and the miraculous, even when these are completely free from these crude and unsophisticated associations which tend to make them stones of stumbling in such an age as this. They seem to regard it as an incredible and impossible thing that Jesus Christ rose from the tomb and was seen of many. The New Testament narratives of such happenings are regarded as psychological problems, capable of being resolved into stories of visions and traditions of men and such like. These attempts must now be surveyed that we may discover how inadequate they are to account for the ancient faith of Christians in a Risen Lord and Saviour.

As an illustration of the lengths to which the opponents of Christianity will go, reference may be made to the theory that Our Lord never rose from the grave, and that the report of His Resurrection was a fraud concocted by His followers. It bears considerable resemblance to the instructions given by the Jewish authorities to the soldiers who were stationed as guards over Our Lord's tomb. They bade them to father and foster a report that Our Lord's disciples had surreptitiously removed His body and then disseminated a story to the effect that their Divine Master had risen from the dead as He himself predicted. Theories of that kind are now wholly abandoned so that no time may be spent in exposing their hollowness beyond remarking that men do not gather grapes of thorns nor figs of thistles. It is contrary to the nature of things that a religion so beneficent and uplifting as Christianity should have for its foundation a piece of trickery. "The hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies" (Isaiah xxviii, 17). As Carlyle is never weary of pointing out, shams and falsehoods destroy themselves in due season. If our faith had

no better foundation than that, it would have long since gone to the wall.

Another theory which has been advanced in sceptical and rationalistic circles as an explanation of belief in the Resurrection of Christ endeavours to eliminate the miraculous by supposing that Our Lord never really died on the Cross. He only swooned, and in that condition he was laid in the new tomb wherein never man was laid. He subsequently recovered consciousness, and, by some means or other, he managed to make good his escape, He was afterwards seen of His disciples and by Paul, finally dying in obscurity. The mere statement of such a hypothesis seems to condemn it, to say nothing of its contradiction of explicit statements in the Four Gospels, and its being in opposition to all the laws of probability. The wonder is that distinguished scholars should have thought it worth while to champion it. For our present purpose, it is chiefly interesting as illustrating the desperate shifts to which men have been driven to escape the acceptance of the clear and convincing testimony borne by the New Testament that Our Lord actually burst the bonds of death. To suggest as an alternative explanation that Our Lord never departed this life on the Cross, but only became unconscious, is surely a counsel of despair.

Two other explanations of this great fact of redemption call for more detailed discussion. Both are variants of what is known as the vision theory. Its champions maintain that the successive appearances of the Risen Christ were neither more nor less than visions, resembling those which are described in so many books of the Old and New Testaments. Thus these manifestations of the Lord after His Passion are of such stuff as dreams are made of. There was no material and substantial reality in them. This theory assumes two forms. One is that these visions which explained the appearance of the Risen Redeemer were purely subjective. They were, so to speak, hallucinations. The disciples could not believe that their Divine Master was really dead. They called to mind dark sayings in which He had intimated that He would rise again. They dwelt on these until they became obsessed with the idea that Our Lord had actually conquered death with the result that they began to see Him in vision. By reflex action these visions strengthened their delusion until it became the Church's faith in a Risen and Glorified Saviour. At the first glance, it must be obvious that such a theory is attended with some serious

difficulties. It takes no account of the deep despondency of the apostles, and the other followers of Jesus. They were in no mood to dream of a resurrection of their Lord. On the contrary, He seems to have carried with Him to the grave their fondest ambitions. The words of Cleopas and his companion to the unrecognised stranger, who met them as they walked to Emmaus, accurately represented the spirit of the earliest disciples: "We trusted that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel" (Luke xxiv, 21). They were disappointed and disillusioned, and yet we are invited to believe that, in a short time after the Crucifixion, these same men were in the settled mood to see the Lord before their eyes, although the sight had no existence outside of their imaginations. Such a theory surely does serious violence to the mentality of Christ's followers, especially the apostles. Our Lord never suffered fools gladly, and never does, and His apostles, with all their shortcomings, mental and moral, were anything but irresponsible and misguided visionaries, such as this theory inexorably required them to be.

The other version of the vision theory is known as the objective. On this view the visions were of heavenly origin. They were not the projections of the disordered minds and imaginations of those who had loved Christ well and lost Him. On the contrary, they were intimations from heaven that their Divine Saviour who was dead, was now alive for evermore. It is true that He never returned to the earth that He might go before them into Galilee, but He revealed Himself in visions which proved that death could not hold Him. The grounds for this theory are the references of Paul to the appearances of the Risen Christ with which he classes that heavenly vision of his Lord on the way to Damascus when he was apprehended of the Saviour. It is argued that all the so-called appearances of Christ after His Resurrection partook of that character. The full significance of these contentions will be grasped at once when it is realised that, on this theory, there could be no empty tomb. Our Lord's body saw corruption. It is surely unnecessary for me to remind you that, on the old and orthodox theory, Our Lord's body illustrated in some measure and prophesied of that change which our mortal vesture will yet undergo. The change is described by Paul in these ineffable words: "It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual

body" (1 Cor. xv, 42–44). I quote these words because it is a joy to do so, not because they apply with strict accuracy to Him who became the first-fruits of them that slept. They serve as a reminder of the mighty change which will be undergone by His people through the power of His Resurrection.

According to the theory which is now being discussed, there was no empty tomb. It is based on a view of the New Testament which denies absolutely the inspiration and guidance of the Holy Spirit in its composition. In the space available, it is impossible to consider the reasoning on which it rests in detail. Its adherents succeed to their own satisfaction in explaining away the references to the empty tomb, and in restricting the Resurrection appearances to a series of visions. I content myself with one comment. These so-called visions are recorded and described by their recipients, or by those who had every opportunity of learning about them from eye witnesses. It is remarkable that the language used should convey the impression that Christ was not beheld in vision but in the flesh. "Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me here" (Luke xxiv, 39). Nothing less would have convinced His apostles that He was alive from the dead. A vision would be inadequate for the purpose, especially when more than five hundred brethren were concerned (1 Cor. xv, 6). In any case, the sealed tomb would contradict all such airy phantasies. Nothing less, and nothing more, and nothing else but the literal truth of the N.T. testimony on the subject will suffice to explain the rise and perseverance of the Christian Church. As Prebendary Row observes, we are not dealing with the genesis of a ghost story but with the source and origin of a spiritual society which will endure as long as the moon endureth, and longer still.

I conclude with a few sentences on a proof which can truly be called infallible although its appeal may be very limited. I refer to the evidence of religious experience. The saints believe that their Lord rose from the dead on the basis of all the proofs and arguments just adduced, chiefly because of the clear and express teaching of the Bible on the subject. But for them deep calls unto deep. The deep things of God are answered from the depths of their own souls, and they can bear witness that Our Lord is the victor over death and the grave, for they have died with Him by faith, and been raised again to set their affections on things which are above, where Christ sitteth at

the right hand of God. It is said that an ounce of experience is worth a ton of theory. In religion that principle applies with tremendous force. "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself" (John vii, 17). But there is no opposition between experience and theory. Rather it is their separation which is so prolific in mischief of all kinds. They have been designed by God to sustain each other, as Luke implies when he tells us that Our Lord showed Himself alive after His passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of His disciples forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.

All laud we would render;
O help us to see,
'Tis only the splendour
Of light hideth Thee;
And so let Thy glory,
Almighty, impart
Through Christ in the story
Thy Christ in the heart.

Written Communications.

The Rev. W. G. Scroggie, D.D., writing from a sick bed, expressed his opinion that the emphasis in the paper fell unduly on antagonistic theories. Insufficient attention has been paid to the proofs of Our Lord's Resurrection. These are very many and very varied. When taken together, they form such a phalanx of evidence as to be impregnable. Ten such lines of demonstration might be mentioned:—

(1) Our Lord being what He was, made His Resurrection absolutely necessary.
(2) The work, which He came to do, demanded it.
(3) Jesus Himself predicted it.
(4) The empty tomb demonstrated it.
(5) The Primitive Belief is inexplicable without it.
(6) The appearances of the Lord elaborate the certainty of it.
(7) The testimony of Paul endorses it.
(8) The evidence of the Christian Church enforces and affirms it.

(9) The convicting and converting power of the Christian message requires it.

(10) The experience of countless Christians for 1,900 years bears witness to it.

SIDNEY COLLETT, Esq., wrote: I would like first to say how very much I have enjoyed Principal Curr's article on the Resurrection of Christ. Indeed his writings are always good.

Then I wish to call attention to a few points which he does not seem to mention with regard to the suggestion that Christ only swooned on the Cross:

(1) Joseph, who had the body of Christ taken down from the Cross, and laid in the tomb, *must* have known that He was really dead.

(2) Again, there is the Centurion's two-fold testimony: (*a*) "He *saw* that . . . Christ gave up the Ghost" (Mark xv, 39); (*b*) *He assured Pilate that it was so* (Mark xv, 44-45).

(3) The testimony of the soldiers who *saw* that Christ was *really dead*, and therefore "they brake not His legs" (John xix, 33).

(4) The individual testimony of one of the soldiers who, in order to *settle the question beyond any doubt, pierced His side*, and forthwith came thereout blood and water, *indicative of a broken heart!* (John xix, 34).

(5) Then there were the soldiers who were specially warned by Pilate to watch the sepulchre in order to make sure that there was no trickery (Matt. xxvii, 65-66). These actually saw the angel descend from Heaven and roll back the stone from the then *empty tomb!* (Matt. xxviii, 2-4). In addition, they deliberately went into the city and told the authorities what they had seen; which so *impressed*—we may say *convinced*—the latter that they had actually *to bribe the soldiers to tell a deliberate lie about it* (Matt. xxviii, 11-15).

GEORGE A. HEATH, Esq., A.M.I.Mech.E., wrote: I would like to comment, in the spirit of enquiry, on two sentences in the Paper

which epitomize two of the arguments, viz., page 24, line 35, " Such an event defies the imagination of Man," and page 26, line 18, " the fact must be anterior to the faith."

As to man's *imagination* the statement may be true, but that the idea of a Saviour's Resurrection is present in man's *mind* is shown by a study of many human religions, notably in the Myths of Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, &c. The pagan festival of the Yule Log (death) and Christmas Tree (resurrection) is only a relic of a widespread ancient belief in the death and resurrection of a God who became a man.

The women weeping for Tammuz and making cakes to the Queen of Heaven also refer to the same belief (Ezekiel viii, 14 ; Jeremiah xliv, 19). Doubtless these ceremonies are degradations of the original revelation of God, but the root-thought seems to be found in the mind of mankind. If there was this original revelation, and as the event was clearly revealed in the Old Testament by the prophetic word (*e.g.*, Isaiah liii, etc.) and by Mosaic types, to which faith responded, then surely the faith was anterior to the fact !

Again (on page 31, line 31), we have the suggestion that a society which believes that the Lord is risen exists and " shall continue to endure as long as the moon endureth."

Does this not need some modification ? Or at least a reference to the time, probably not far distant, when A LIE (Gk. *THE* LIE) will be *universally* believed (see II Thess. ii) ? The Man of Sin will so arrogate to himself the worship and faith due to the Lord Jesus that the whole World will believe in and worship the beast " *whose deadly wound was healed* " (Rev. xiii, 3).

Thus even Satan's masterpiece has as a chief characteristic a form of death and resurrection ; and the words of our Lord are true " When the Son of Man cometh shall He find the faith on the Earth ? "

I find these considerations weaken in measure some of the important arguments of the Paper—regarded simply as arguments. Faith, which is light from God, is another matter and has very happily been given its proper place in the Paper.

Col. the Rev. F. J. MILES, D.S.O., O.B.E., V.D., wrote : My friend Principal Curr is to be congratulated on his very excellent

Paper on the Resurrection of Our Lord. I am sure he will not mind my adding one or two items.

1. It seems to me that one of the greatest evidences of the reality of the Resurrection of Our Lord is found in the conversion of Saul of Tarsus. It has been and is argued, in spite of all the New Testament evidence to the contrary, that the disciples were pre-disposed, and therefore anticipated from the Lord's teaching His Resurrection, so came to believe what they had expected. Of course this is sheer nonsense, but the same argument cannot lie in the case of Saul of Tarsus. He not only had not known Jesus in the flesh, he had never seen His wondrous works, had never been moved by His winsome and wooing personality, but he was taught to hate Him as a blasphemer, as one who was a great spiritual force against that Judaism of which he was a sincere and forceful exponent. He went out of his way to persecute and to do to death those who dared to proclaim Jesus as Lord, the Christ of God, the Messiah; yet he became Paul the pointed and powerful preacher of the Gospel, whole-souledly devoted to Him Whom he had regarded as a malefactor and blasphemer, exercising the whole of his powers in the ministry of the Messiah. Nothing short of the reality of the Resurrection, of his seeing Jesus face to face, could have accomplished this.

2. Along similar lines can be taken the evidence of James the Lord's brother. Certainly the members of His family were not pre-disposed to regard their brother according to the flesh as the Christ of God. The attitude of James, both in the Acts of the Apostles and subsequently, is a further indication of the reality of the Resurrection as realised by him.

3. I think too, some notice should be taken of the fact that the appearance of Jesus subsequent to His Resurrection was only to the spiritually minded. For twelve months I was honorary lecturer in Hyde Park for the Christian Evidence Society. I usually lectured for 40 to 45 minutes and then answered questions on the subject of the evening for another hour and twenty minutes. After lecturing on "Why must we believe in the Resurrection," a man who carried several degrees, but had gone down through the drug demon, said to me at question time: "You know me, sir, you understand my sceptical turn of mind, how difficult it is for me to

believe; cannot you see that if the tomb had remained intact with the stone in front, and the seal unbroken, it would have made a greater impact upon my mind and influence me more than the story of the Empty Tomb does?" I admit that for the moment I was "stumped," but while addressing the man in reply I inwardly prayed, "Lord help me," and the answer came immediately. I asked the man to whom Jesus appeared after His Resurrection, and after some fishing to get the right answer, I got him to state that the Lord only appeared to His disciples. Of course I then stressed the fact that our Lord could only be spiritually discerned by those who had the eyes of their understanding opened, and that in view of this Romans and Jews would, on the testimony of the Disciples, argue that they had not seen Him because they could not. There was the closed tomb and stone *in situ*, the seal unbroken, and of course the body of the Crucified was within.

NORMAN S. DENHAM, Esq., D.Litt., wrote: A closing quotation in Principal Curr's admirable summary appeals as the most cogent argument for the Resurrection, "An ounce of experience is worth a ton of theory." It is impossible to discount the personal experience of Christ's power in one's life. But in recounting "infallible proofs," the author has left most fallible the line of argument dealing with documentary proofs, rightly admitting that "all we know . . . is preserved in the pages of the New Testament."

There is one, and only one, inspired record of the actual Resurrection, that in Matthew's Gospel. Each and all of the ten principal translations of the account agree in placing this sublime event at the close of the Jewish Sabbath. Matthew xxviii, 1-2, actually reads "In the even of (*i.e.*, late on) the sabbaths, as it began to draw towards the first of sabbaths." *Epiphosko* here means the dawning of a new (Jewish) day, not sunrise, for which *orthros* would have been used. Admitting that we have here a Hebraism, yet there is no Scriptural usage permitting the gloss of the early fathers and later translators, which advances the Resurrection to the approach of Sunday's dawn. Our Lord left the cerements and the tomb intact towards sunset of Saturday, as the first day of the Jewish week approached. The correlative usage in Luke xxiii, 54, of the verb *epephosken* confirms this.

It is only natural that modern scholars "suggest that the discrepancies and difficulties are insuperable." The accepted reading and gloss of Matthew xxviii must for ever conflict with the utterance of Our Lord Himself, "The Son of Man shall be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth" (Matt. xii, 40). The arbitrary traditional view makes our Lord to be one day and two nights in the grave. Combining the truth of Matthew xxviii with tradition, makes the period one day and one night only. Yet the anxious and astute Pharisees said, "Command that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day" (Matt. xxvii, 64).

The orthodox view prevents the plain understanding of Jonah i, 17, the solemn sign of Christ's death and burial. It denies to the Greek language and to the evangelist the possibility of prescribing a vital period of time which was to be the significant sign to the nation of our Lord's Messiahship. It makes the watch of the Temple guard a farce, rendering reprehensible the looseness with which Pilate gave, and the soldiers performed, his orders. It precludes, by Jewish law, all opportunity for the women to purchase the spices.

The ordinary laws of historical investigation are confounded for all, who, prejudiced by the orthodox belief, approach the plain evidence of the Gospels. Allow that Our Lord was buried, as Luke shows, as the Paschal Sabbath at sunset of Wednesday "drew on," and that He rose as the first day of the Jewish week "drew on" at sunset on Saturday, and the specific time of Matt. xii, 40, is scientifically accounted for.

This view was presented and generally accepted by this Society at its meeting of May 28th, 1934 (see Vol. LXVI), and all dissidence was adequately met by Scriptural evidences then adduced. To these I would here add significant typical foreshadowings of the very datings of the Passion Week.

The Ark rested upon Ararat on the seventeenth day of the seventh month, later known as the first month, Abib (Ex. xii, 2). From Exodus xvi it can be shown that the Exodus fell on *Wednesday*, 14th Abib or Nisan. On the night of the 17th Abib, Israel passed out of Egypt through the Sea of Reeds, and on its anniversary our Lord passed out of death into Resurrection life. The Exodus was upon the selfsame day, or anniversary, of Abraham's exodus from

Haran, on 14th Abib, A.H. 2083, 430 years before the Exodus. Our Lord suffered His Exodus upon Calvary's Cross on *Wednesday*, the 14th Nisan, A.D. 30. Further, it can be demonstrated that the Crucifixion took place in the middle of the 70th Week of the 70 *Sabbatic* weeks of years, foretold by Daniel, dating from the outstanding Decree of Cyrus' first year, emphasised by Ezra (i, 1). Thus 457 B.C. added to 30 A.D., by the Hebrew system of inclusive reckoning, gives 69½ sevens, or 487 years. A.D. 26, the Baptism year, is proved to be a *Sabbatic* and *Jubilee* year.

It is submitted that the one vital weakness of the substantial evidences offered by our brother rests in the problem he himself stresses—a problem which has been resolved repeatedly, and notably by Dr. Torrey years ago. With this irrefutable argument added to the author's armoury, the vindication of the Gospel records would be complete and unassailable.

Col. A. H. VAN STRAUBENZEE wrote: Man is a very self-righteous animal, and the aim of some clever and scientific persons has been to get rid of the necessity of a Saviour at all. As the Resurrection is the corner-stone of Christianity, such persons endeavour to get rid of its truth and power.

What was the necessity of its secrecy? Both Christ's death and resurrection were said to be according to the Scriptures—that means that He fulfilled all that was foretold of them in type. The Heave Offering, so called because it was lifted up on high in presentation to Jehovah, for himself alone, foreshadowed the resurrection. Likewise with the two goats on the day of Atonement. The blood of one was brought within the veil and sprinkled upon the mercy seat, in closest proximity to the Shekinah, which represented the immediate presence of God. The other goat goes into the solitude of the Wilderness; Christ thus bore sin away, never to return to us.

One of the greatest proofs of the Resurrection is the condition of the linen cloths which John in his Gospel (xxii, 8) states "he saw and believed" (that He was risen).

Our Lord was treated like the rich, being swathed in linen bandages—criminals were wrapped in old rags. John xx, 7, "And the napkin that was about His head, not lying with the linen cloths, but wrapped together (rolled or coiled round and round) in a place

by itself." Here it implies that the cloth had been folded round the head as a turban is folded, and that it lay still in that form with the linen cloths also. The Lord had passed out of them not needing to be loosed.

In John xx, 17, Christ says "Do not be holding me (Why ?) because I am not yet ascended to my Father." On this day, the morrow after the Sabbath, the High Priest, would be waving the sheaf of the first fruits before the Lord, according to Lev. xxiii, 10, 11. "And he shall wave the sheaf before the Lord, to be accepted for you ; on the morrow after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it." Meanwhile Our Lord, the first fruits from the dead, 1 Cor. xv, 23, would be fulfilling the type by presenting Himself before the Father.

1 Cor. xv, 13, "But if there be no resurrection of the dead, not even has Christ been raised."

How did our Lord Himself deal with this question ? In Matt. xx, 23, we read "Then came the Sadducees, which say that there is not a resurrection." They propound the case of a woman with seven husbands ; verse 28, "In the resurrection whose wife shall she be of the seven ? " Our Lord replies, "Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures or the power of God, but as concerning the resurrection of dead bodies did ye never read that which was spoken unto you by God saying, I am the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob. God is not the God of dead people, but of living people." The clever Sadducees were silenced by the only possible conclusion to Our Lord's words, namely, that those named must rise and live again in resurrection, in order that He may be their God.

The two Angels at either end of the rock-cut ledge, wherein the Lord had been laid, represent the cherubims at either end of the mercy seat.

The importance of the occasion demanded the presence of two of the highest angels, probably Gabriel and Michael.

Lieut.-Col. L. M. DAVIES wrote : The fact of Our Lord's Resurrection is indeed vital to Christianity. If the Resurrection did not take place, then, as St. Paul bluntly said in the passage (1 Cor. xv, 14-19) quoted by Principal Curr, our faith is vain, the apostles are false guides, and we—who discount this life for a life to come—are

of all men the most miserable. But if the Resurrection did take place, then this life is nothing by comparison with the next; instead of being fortuitous concourses of atoms, hardly more durable or significant than waves on the surface of the sea, we are eternal entities destined to a fulness and permanence of life which cannot even be conceived under present limitations. Christ is our Type as well as our Head. His experience is both the pattern and the guarantee of ours.

It is noticeable, in this connection, that the enemies of Our Lord were much clearer-sighted than the disciples. The latter seem to have been too stunned by the Crucifixion to appreciate further issues. To them, all seemed over; nothing remained but to pay the last tributes of affection to the supremely lovable Teacher who had come to so tragic an end. His enemies, however, realised that their triumph was not yet perfect; for had their victim not repeatedly declared that they would kill Him, but that He would rise again on the third day? (Matt. xii, 40; xvi, 21; xvii, 23; xx, 19). Unless they could show, therefore, that that day had passed without His rising again, the Crucifixion itself might be turned against them. So they sealed the tomb, and also set a guard to watch it until the critical period should have passed (Matt. xxxvii, 63-66).

It is essential to remember that all-important time limit; for if Our Lord had not risen *within it*, His prophecy enlisting the Crucifixion itself as part of His own programme (*cf.* Luke xxiv, 25-26) would have been discounted. Later sceptics may forget this circumstance; contemporaries did not. So the Resurrection was first testified *by the Pagan guard itself*—Roman soldiers, subject to rigorous discipline and fearless of natural danger.

How is it, since the tomb was admittedly sealed and watched, that the *contemporary* enemies of Our Lord never claimed that it remained intact for the period that it was under guard? They had no need to claim more than that—yet they could not claim as much. There is no possibility of doubting that Matt. xxviii, 11-15, records the actual state of affairs at the time—a demoralised body of soldiers being bribed by disgusted priests to tell a story discreditable to themselves; while the priests engaged to protect them from the punishment which, if the story had been true, those priests would have been the first to demand. It seems significant that "a great

company of the priests" joined the early church (Acts vi, 7); for these men, though belonging to the most hostile class at the Crucifixion, had seen most of what happened behind the scenes afterwards.

And we may well ask who would have wished to rob the tomb—granting, as we must, the fact of its emptying *while under guard?* The disciples were popularly accused; yet sceptics themselves now admit the impossibility of charging such men with deliberate deception. Indeed, the disciples' utter disillusionment, timidity and despair before the Resurrection, together with their astounding courage and self-sacrifice after it, certify that they neither fabricated a sham Resurrection nor doubted a real one. But in that case, who robbed the tomb?

Both the absence of the mangled body, and the sudden exultant courage of these truth-loving men, are inexplicable apart from the literal Resurrection. If robbery will not explain the one, neither will hallucination explain the other, for let us remember that:

(1) Though the disciples did not find the body, when they themselves visited the tomb on hearing of its emptying, they *did see the clothes.* Who would have stolen the body without the clothes? How could hallucination have separated the clothes from the body?

(2) Many as Our Lord's appearances were, and differing with the circumstances of each case, they were at first utterly unexpected by the persons who saw them; yet many of these earliest appearances were to *several persons simultaneously;* and in each case, all present both saw and heard *essentially the same things.*

(3) In many cases the most tangible, as well as visible and audible, evidence was afforded of Our Lord's actual presence. In one case, He broke the bread which was to be eaten; in another, He both brought and cooked the fish which they ate; in another, He Himself ate part of the meal; yet again, He insisted upon the most obstinately sceptical disciple examining and handling His wounds; and at His last appearance, before the whole company of disciples and friends, He was seen by all to pass above a material cloud which hid Him from their sight.

It is worth recalling, at the same time, the supernatural elements in these appearances—the sudden vanishing after breaking the bread ; the passing into and out of a room with closed doors ; the final deliberate ascent into Heaven. For these show that the appearances were not due to an exhausted and desperately wounded survivor revisiting his friends before finally eluding them somehow to die in solitude. No such person could have rolled aside, from within the tomb, the great stone which several women could not move even from the outside (Mark xvi, 3-4), nor have appeared as anything but the shattered victim he was, to the rough Galilean fishermen. But the Christ they saw was obviously above human limitations, evoking their awe and worship instead of their horror and pity.

Only one conclusion fits all the facts, and it is that Our Lord did indeed rise from the grave, as and when He said He would—complete victor over death, on the third day after tasting death to the full.

Author's Reply.

I am deeply touched by the kind words which have been written regarding my paper by those who have contributed to the discussion. The number of these is even more gratifying since the result is that paper and discussion taken together present a very helpful conspectus of a subject whose importance cannot be exaggerated. My hope and prayer will be that the perusal of these pages will prove to be a source of inspiration and consolation to many by the blessing of Almighty God.

It is gratifying to find oneself in cordial agreement with all that has been written. A few points on which clearer explanations are suggested may, however, be mentioned. With regard to Mr. George Heath's kindly criticisms, I should be disposed to reply that the aspect of the Resurrection of Christ, which baffled all expectations, was the fact that He raised Himself from the dead like a man awakening from slumber. It is not disputed that the idea of resurrection often appears in the Old Testament and in ancient mythologies. I intended to lay stress not on the fact, but on the phase of the fact to which I have called attention so emphatically. Our Lord laid down His life that He might take it

again. To my thinking that was a new thing in the world's story but I may be too dogmatic. As for the faith preceding the fact, the primary reference was to the contention of rationalistic schools that the Resurrection is a case of the wish being father to the thought. By the society which will never perish, I meant the Church of Christ whose members have been begotten of God unto a lively hope by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

Dr. Denham's learned contribution deals with the problem as to whether Our Lord's body lay in Joseph's tomb for about seventy-two hours. As he himself reminds me, that is a large question by itself, ably argued in his paper, published in a previous volume of these Transactions. Despite the fact that such a great and gracious teacher as Dr. R. A. Torrey took this view, I am unable to accept of it since it seriously disturbs the narrative of the Passion Week as recorded in the four Gospels, and accepted as accurate by a mighty multitude of authorities, drawn from various schools of thought, when tabulated and distributed over the various days.