

benefit which Jesus could secure for the ungrateful inhabitants, to whom it was of paramount importance.

Thus the whole narrative is coherent and edifying, utterly unlike the miserable witchtales with which its enemies would confound it.

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WEIZSÄCKER ON THE RESURRECTION.

WEIZSÄCKER'S important book on *Apostolic Times*¹—a new edition of which has recently come out, embodying the writer's latest conclusions—opens with an explanation of the New Testament account of the resurrection of our Lord that invites our inquiry, not only because it represents the opinion of a very acute critic, but for the weighty reason that the view it sets forth seems to be gaining favour as a refuge from a perplexing problem, even among persons who are far from accepting the standpoint of the author and his school. The secret of this view may be divined from the statement that we can *easily* ascertain the nature of the appearances of Christ to the predecessors of St. Paul referred to in 1 Corinthians xv. by considering what the Apostle tells us of his own experience. In his list of the appearances of the risen Lord he includes that with which he himself was favoured, saying, "And last of all, as to one born out of due time, He appeared to me also" (1 Cor. xv. 8). St. Paul makes no distinction between this last manifestation to himself and the five earlier ones. He does not scruple to use the same word (*ᾧφθῆ*) for all six cases. Therefore, Weizsäcker argues, if we can discover St. Paul's experience, we shall know what he understood to be the experiences of St. Peter, St. James, the twelve, "all

¹ *Das Apostolische Zeitalter der Christlichen Kirche.* Von Carl Weizsäcker. Zweite neu bearbeitete Auflage.

the apostles," and the five hundred. What then did St. Paul mean when he claimed that Christ had appeared to him? Weizsäcker will not rely on the "Acts of the Apostles" for an answer to this question because the three accounts of the occurrence on the road to Damascus preserved in that book do not quite agree together, although he points out that not one of those accounts contains any allusion to a visible appearance of Christ. In each case we only read of a light and a voice. It is to St. Paul's own words that we are referred for an authentic description of what the Apostle really experienced. This, Weizsäcker maintains, was a spiritual vision, so that when, as St. Paul tells us, he saw Christ he could only have seen Him in spirit ("das was er sah nur im Geiste sehen konnte"). In Galatians i. 16 he rejoices in the thought that God had revealed His Son *in* him, and this revelation he connects with his apostolic call. On the other hand, he never writes of any external seeing of Jesus Christ with the eye. Therefore we are to conclude that he only saw a spiritual being with spiritual vision. Weizsäcker points out that we should be in error if we inferred that the Apostle supposed there was any contrast between such a vision and actuality. To him it was no delusion, it was not a mere idea or fancy, it was a reality,—still, a spiritual reality seen inwardly, not a substantial presence perceptible to the senses.

Of course this will not harmonise with the gospel accounts of the resurrection, where we encounter the empty grave, the invitation to St. Thomas to overcome his doubts by touching the very wounds of his Master's body, etc. We can scarcely identify any of St. Paul's statements with the narratives in the Gospels, if the order in 1 Corinthians xv. is chronological. The Apostle is silent on the subject of the empty tomb, and he says nothing about the women and what they saw. Weizsäcker thinks that the Evangelists avoid the cases cited by St. Paul, for the most part, just

because those cases are not of a kind to satisfy the craving of their contemporaries for corporeal manifestations. Accordingly, while he confines the allusions to the resurrection in St. Paul's unquestionable writings to inward, spiritual experience, he sets aside the gospel accounts of physical phenomena as mythical aftergrowths. One point only will he allow in common to the two sources. They both show that what the Christians experienced in the resurrection of our Lord was sufficiently potent to constitute the summons to their great mission. It must therefore have contained some real and fruitful influence.

Now, as I have said, there seems to be a tendency in some quarters to take refuge in this view of the resurrection as an escape from the difficult questions that bristle round the gospel accounts of the revival of the dead body that had been buried in Joseph's tomb. There is a subtle simplicity about it. It professes to preserve all that is essential to the resurrection, since it gives us the continued life and the returned presence of our Lord. What more do we want?

The present question, however, is, What did St. Paul believe and teach? In order to enter into his ideas we must detach ourselves as far as possible from Greek modes of thinking, and endeavour to enter into the Jewish atmosphere in which he had been reared. Since the days of Origen and Augustin Christianity has been strongly infused with Platonism. But in all probability St. Paul knew little or nothing of Plato or of Platonic thought. At all events he did not approach questions with unconsciously Platonic prepossessions as we do to-day. That the body is a prison to the soul and death its liberation—a conception with which we are perfectly familiar—is purely Platonic. The later Greeks taught the "immortality of the soul." That phrase never occurs in the Bible. The Jews shared with the Homeric Greeks and other early races in a gloomy con-

ception of Hades, where the unclothed soul, a dim and doleful shade, shudders at its own nakedness. There is no life in Hades, which is just the abode of enduring death. All life is associated with some organism, some body. Man is not a soul only; he consists of body, soul, and spirit. Sharing this conception, how could St. Paul expect the future life otherwise than in some sort of bodily resurrection? What he was concerned about was not the saving and restoration of the old fabric. He was thinking of the reality, the intensity, the glory of the life beyond. But to him must it not necessarily have presented itself under the form of a rising from the grave, although he was able to purge the idea of resurrection from the coarse materialism that his Jewish contemporaries revelled in? Accordingly should we expect him to be satisfied with any form of the renewed conscious life of our Lord short of a visible bodily resurrection? We must start with a decided presumption against the idea that St. Paul thought only of a spiritual existence spiritually discerned.

An examination of the Apostle's utterances on the subject more in detail will, I believe, confirm this presupposition with a definite conclusion.

In the first place, he not only mentions certain appearances; he also speaks of a "resurrection of the dead." According to St. Paul's account the Christ who *appeared* on the six occasions gathered together in 1 Corinthians xv. had been first *raised up*. The *ᾠφθη* is preceded by *ἐγήγερται*; and if anybody should say that the latter word may be taken to mean simply "roused," the same cannot be asserted of the substantives *ἀνάστασις νεκρῶν*, which St. Paul uses to describe the process through which our Lord passed. Surely if words have any meaning, this expression must point to something quite different from the subsequent appearances which Weizsäcker understands to be of a wholly spiritual character. Moreover it must not be forgotten that these

are the familiar words used in the New Testament for the resurrection. They are the very words used in the Gospels and the "Acts of the Apostles" for the raising from the dead which Weizsäcker thinks so different from that believed in by St. Paul. Thus in Matthew xxviii. 6 the angel says: "He is not here; for He is risen (*ἠγέρθη*)"; and in Acts i. 22 we read of a "witness of His resurrection" (*ἀναστάσεως*), and so *passim*. But if the Apostle meant something quite other than what was always understood by these very common words, why did he throw dust in our eyes by using the familiar language?

2. Further, it is to be observed that although St. Paul does not make any allusion to the empty tomb or to what happened to the women and others by the grave—a strong point with Weizsäcker—he distinctly asserts that our Lord was buried. Taken by itself this may not seem to be very particularly significant, because it is agreed on all sides that the dead body of our Lord must have been put away somewhere. The hypothesis of catalepsy and the hiding of the comatose sufferer until he was fit to be seen again, is not worth a moment's consideration; it has never been maintained by any number of serious thinkers. But we must not overlook the striking juxtaposition of statements in the language of St. Paul. "For I delivered unto you," he writes, "first of all that which also I received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried; and that He hath been raised on the third day according to the Scriptures" (1 Cor. xv. 3, 4). Here the Apostle notes a succession of three events—death, burial, resurrection. It is impossible not to connect the third with the second as well as with the first. Grammatically, of course, the connection between the second and the third term is the closer. To skip the second so as to understand the resurrection to refer entirely to an awakening from death, without any relation to the burial,

is to throw the whole series of sentences into confusion. Inasmuch as the resurrection is named immediately after the burial, it must be understood by St. Paul to have some reference to it; he must mean that it was in some way a raising up of the body from the grave as well as an awakening of the spirit from the sleep of death.

3. Again, St. Paul's reference to a definite time points to the same conclusion. He agrees with the Evangelists in the statement that our Lord was raised up "on the third day." Here is some occurrence which St. Paul conceives to have taken place at a particular date. The use of the perfect tense is only explicable on this supposition. The Apostle is careful to repeat his words in the same form: "He *hath* been raised" (1 Cor. xv. 4); "Now is Christ preached that He *hath* been raised from the dead" (ver. 12); "Now *hath* Christ been raised from the dead" (ver. 20), etc.—the perfect ἐγήγερται in every case. But is it not the characteristic of this tense that while it describes a present state it does so by representing this to be the result of some previous occurrence? Still more clear is the use of the aorist where St. Paul refers to the action of God in raising up Christ—*e.g.*, "We are witnesses of God that He raised up (ἤγειρε) Christ" (ver. 15). This can only refer to one distinct Divine action.

4. Here we are introduced to another fact that points in the same direction. St. Paul always describes the resurrection of Jesus Christ as a work of God's wrought upon Him, not as a self-originated action of His own; *e.g.*, "We are witnesses of God that He raised up Christ" (1 Cor. xv. 15). This pregnant idea is obscured by the mistranslation in the Authorised Version, where we read, "He rose again" (ver. 4), "Now if Christ be preached that He rose from the dead" (ver. 12), "And if Christ be not risen" (ver. 14), etc. In every one of these instances the Greek verb is in the passive voice (ἐγήγερται); and this is now

correctly rendered in the Revised Version, so that we read there, "He hath been raised," "Now if Christ is preached that He hath been raised," "And if Christ hath not been raised," etc. Such an idea as is here presented to us certainly implies some real experience on the part of our Lord, and this of a most momentous character, and the effect of an action of God. But where shall we find room for anything of the kind, if after His spirit had been freed from His body nothing further happened, as far as His disciples knew, except their spiritual perception of His spiritual presence?

5. The natural understanding of St. Paul's language in regard to the resurrection is confirmed by what he says of the series of appearances that followed that event. The word $\acute{\omega}\phi\theta\eta$ certainly suggests something more external as its subject than a purely spiritual presence that can only be inwardly discerned. It is true the Apostle writes elsewhere of the "eyes of your heart" (Eph. i. 18). The inward vision of the pure in heart was not unknown to him. But surely a more external procedure is suggested by the use of this definite passive term, "he was seen," or "he appeared."

6. Next, it is to be observed that these appearances are sharply distinguished from one another and limited to a certain number. They are six in all. The aorist ($\acute{\omega}\phi\theta\eta$) is used in every case, showing that each appearance was conceived as a separate, definite occurrence. Such an event would be entirely different from the spiritual contemplation of the indwelling Christ, which is no peculiar, abnormal vision, like the glimpse of the Holy Grail vouchsafed to one or two of King Arthur's knights after long toil and search. That spiritual contemplation is not confined to a few favoured spectators, it is free to all Christ's people; nor is it the rare privilege of a single crisis; it is an abiding and deepening experience of consciousness. St. Paul frequently refers

to the indwelling Christ. There is then a very marked distinction between the six unique manifestations of the risen Christ, so carefully recited and so solemnly attested, and the equally real but happily widespread experience of the indwelling Christ, which is the heritage of the Church at large. Deep and vital as the spiritual experience of the Christ-consciousness is, it can scarcely be described with the sharpness of definition or with the numerical and temporal limitations that St. Paul employs in writing of the six appearances. It is not a vision; it is a life. And yet we can scarcely differentiate it from Weizsäcker's "spiritual vision of a spiritual being," for what is a spiritual vision but an interior consciousness? Such a vision is not the seeing of a spirit with the bodily eye. Weizsäcker does not mean that St. Paul and his predecessors saw a ghost, such as people are supposed to see in haunted houses, *i. e.*, some manifestation of a spirit perceptible to the senses. But if this is not to be thought of, it is difficult to separate the spiritual vision of the risen Christ from the spiritual experience of Christians generally; and yet, as we have seen, St. Paul's language plainly requires us to do so. It may be said, indeed, that there is a difference in intensity and significance, practically amounting to a difference in kind, between the normal Christian experience and some rare moment of rapture when the soul is ravished with a sudden and overwhelming consciousness of the presence of its Lord. This may well be the case. But then it points to such an experience as that which St. Paul describes in 2 Cor. xii., where he comes to "visions and revelations of the Lord," and tells how he was "caught up even to the third heaven," and that at a definite time "fourteen years ago." He never identifies this mysterious occurrence with the unique experience he shared with the apostles in seeing the risen Christ. No catching up to the third heaven, no question of being in the body or out of the body, no notion

of catalepsy can be associated with those sober events. But on the theory of Weizsäcker how can we separate the two forms of experience?

6. Weizsäcker directs our attention to Philippians iii. 21, where our Lord's resurrection body is described as a "body of glory" (*τῷ σώματι τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ*), and to the more elaborate description of the resurrection body of Christians in 1 Corinthians xv. Certainly, as Weizsäcker remarks, if Christ is "the first-fruits from the dead," there must be a similarity of kind between the first-fruits and the general harvest. Now St. Paul rejects the materialistic notion of popular Judaism. According to his description, the resurrection body is not of "flesh and blood"; it is not subject to corruption; it is not *ψυχικόν*. What then is it? It is a spiritual body (*σῶμα πνευματικόν*). It is by no means easy to determine how the Apostle really imagines this resurrection body. To suppose, however, that he is thinking only of a purely spiritual existence, *i.e.*, only of a *spirit*, must be an error. Clearly he distinguishes between a spiritual body and a spirit. The former rises from the dead, and in its resurrection clothes the spirit. We can scarcely illustrate his idea by calling in Prof. Clifford's hypothesis of "mind-stuff," for St. Paul means more than that. His spiritual body may be an organism of finest texture, readily responsive to the thought and will of the spirit, and perhaps not consisting of what we know as matter. Still it is a body (*σῶμα*). The Apostle never confounds body and spirit. Thus in another place he writes of the longing "to be clothed upon with our habitation which is from heaven . . . not for that we would be unclothed, but that we would be clothed upon" (2 Cor. v. 2-4). Here the Jew is speaking, though with a refinement of spirituality far beyond the habits of his contemporaries. St. Paul positively shrinks from the chill thought of becoming a "naked" spirit. Therefore, if he teaches that the resur-

rection body of Christ is of the same type as that of His people, it too must be more than spirit, spiritually discerned.

Gathering up the evidence, we find that St. Paul wrote of a resurrection of our Lord as something preceding the appearances, that he closely connected this with the previous burial, that he assigned it to a particular day, that he attributed it to God and referred to Christ as passive under the divine action; then that he detailed the subsequent appearances as happening definitely on six distinct occasions; lastly, that his refined idea of the glorified spiritual body, of which our Lord's resurrection body was the first-fruits, implies some existence over and above that of the eternal, deathless spirit of Christ. Do not these considerations concur in driving us to the conclusion that the Apostle meant more than what Weizsäcker attributes to his words, and that, in fact, there was no essential difference between his conception of the resurrection and the conceptions of that event which found their way into our gospels? Nor is this result only one of formal consistency. The resurrection of our Lord must be more than the optical appearance of a ghost or the spiritual contact of spirit with spirit if it is to take the place assigned to it in the New Testament. It is in the historical event of which St. Paul and the Evangelists wrote that we recognise the seal of God's acceptance of the sacrificial work of Christ, the proof of His own victory over sin and death, the assurance of His full present activity, the pledge of the ultimate establishment of His kingdom, and the type and promise of the glorious future life of all who fall asleep in Him.

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