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PSYCHIC RESEARCH IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

SCIENTIFIC JUSTIFICATION OF
SOME OF THE FUNDAMENTAL
CLAIMS OF CHRISTIANITY

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PSYCHIC RESEARCH IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

NOWADAYS psychic science and its achievements are universal topics of discussion. It is almost impossible to find a person who is not interested in the alleged possibility of communication with the departed. One of the main difficulties is the "honest doubt" of Christian people. Confronting the still more ample extension of knowledge, they hesitate, however, about investigating, or accepting accounts of psychic manifestations because they fancy these things are forbidden by Divine Law. Some of those who believe that the phenomena take place, are convinced that Satan himself is the real operator behind the scenes. Of course, the answer may be given that none of the secrets of Nature are barred to man, if he can manage to unravel them. The very fact that he *can* do so is the best demonstration that the Creator has no objection to it. To the suggestion of Satanic agency surely the obvious reply is that if there be such a personality as Satan, his interests are not advanced by persuading men that the human spirit survives bodily death. His propaganda has most to gain by leaving them in the despair or apathy engendered by the contrary belief. But perhaps the best of all methods of dissipating the hesitancies of Christian people is to investigate briefly some of the phenomena recorded in the New Testament, in order to ascertain to what extent, if at all, they conform to the known laws of psychic science, so far as modern investigators have been able to discover them. No question of criticism, "higher" or otherwise, confronts us in such an inquiry. That the records pre-

sented to us in the New Testament come from a very early period in the Christian era no critic has ventured to deny. Critical assault upon them is concerned only with the attribution of the various books to the individual authors whose name they bear, or with the possible interpolation of passages here and there, inserted (so it may be said) by some daring copyist to support his own theological opinions. Our scrutiny has a totally different tendency and purpose. We are content to take the records as they reach us, as brief stories of alleged psychic episodes which were accepted, and passed current as genuine, among the men and women who trod the pathway of this mortal life nearly nineteen hundred years ago. We desire to ask whether these experiences correspond to ours. If the records purport to tell us of the return of the dead, we desire to know if the phenomena there described are such as in any degree resemble those which in our day are witnessed under circumstances which we believe to be the same, as regards the apparent presence of the departed.

When we come to the selection of the episodes (and the corresponding passages of the record) for examination, our procedure is fairly defined. The Transfiguration may well occupy us as an introduction to the subject, basing the analysis of the phenomena as closely as is practicable upon the Greek rather than the English text. At the outset we find that the disciples are taken up into a high mountain, a place apart. This was an obvious necessity for the success of the great experiment (for so, with all reverence, I venture to call it) which was to be tried. Stillness and the absence of interruption were peremptory requirements. Yet surely, if this record were the fiction of a romancist, anxious only to glorify the subject of his story, he would have been far more likely to say that this great manifestation took place before a wondering multitude, than on a solitary mountain side. St. Luke alone adds that Jesus went up into the mountain "to pray." It was His habit to pray at night (see Luke vi. 12; Matt. xiv. 23-5). Although none of the Evangelists states that the Transfiguration took place at that time, we should expect that it would, for the reason that night would be most favourable (if, indeed, it were not almost essential) for the manifestation which was to take

place. In confirmation of this hypothesis, we have the words of Luke (ix. 37) in allusion to events "on the next day when they were come down from the mountain." The fact that the disciples were "heavy with sleep" is adduced by commentators as a further confirmation of the idea that the Transfiguration took place at night. But I shall give some reasons for attributing their drowsiness to another cause.

The narrative of the actual manifestation opens in St. Luke with the fact that "as he was praying" the fashion of his countenance was altered—literally, in St. Luke's words, became other (ἕτερον = heteron) than it had been. We have the root "heteros" in English in such words as heterodox, i.e. holding *another* opinion than the correct one. St. Luke's expression, "other than it had been," is a curious one, which cannot be exactly paralleled, I believe, elsewhere in the New Testament. There is a near approach to it in the brief account given by the author of the appendix to St. Mark's Gospel (Mark xvi. 12, 13), when he says that Christ showed himself in another shape (ἐν ἑτέρα μορφῇ) to the two disciples on their way to Emmaus. The language of St. Luke suggests to me that there was a different expression ready to his mind, which, for reasons of his own, he was anxious to avoid employing. Therefore he used this almost unique circumlocution to prevent a misunderstanding, and to make his meaning perfectly clear. If we turn to this point of the narrative in St. Matthew and St. Mark, our surmise will be confirmed, and we shall see another reason for assuming the psychic origin and accuracy of the story. The other two historians state that the countenance of Christ was "metamorphosed" (μετεμορφωθη = metemorphothe) before them. The word was clear and unmistakable in its significance so far as the minds of the Jewish readers were concerned, and it was for them chiefly, as we know, that St. Matthew and St. Mark wrote. But St. Luke, writing for a wider circle of Greek readers, must have been reminded that to them the word "metamorphosis" would suggest those fabulous transformations of human beings into beasts, stones, trees, fire and water, which figured so largely in their mythology. He decided to avoid an expression so misleading, and he

does it by the means of the unusual phrase which has been quoted. The Greek verb which he employs means a change in the abiding form, a change in the manner of existence. A mere alteration in external appearance is described by quite another Greek verb which is used, for example, by St. Paul when he speaks (2 Cor. xi. 14) of Satan "transformed" into an angel of light. Here he is referring only to an apparent change, and obviously not to an essential one, such as the word "metamorphosis" would have implied. Looking at the records in this way, with a minute analysis of the forms of expression, I take them to mean that the human characteristics of the countenance of Christ ceased to be manifest, and the spiritual took their place.

The immediate results of this Transfiguration were, according to the narrative before us, to alter the aspect of Jesus. His face shone as the sun, and his garments became dazzling with the glow of a white light. They were exceeding white, says St. Mark, with one of those vivid touches for which he is famous (probably taken directly from the lips of St. Peter, himself a witness of the scene), "so as no fuller on earth can white them." The whiteness stands in need of no explanation to those acquainted with the phenomenon of materialisation.¹ It is the precise characteristic which we should expect to be present. It is the most striking feature of the materialisation séances, that the spirit personalities are able to clothe their materialised forms in a flowing texture of shining white, which they seem able to produce at will in almost any quantity they please. But the alleged dazzling whiteness of garments is a fact which, so far as I know, has hitherto lacked adequate attention on the part of the apologists for Christianity. It is an extraordinary thing that the writers of this Transfiguration story, who are alleged by hostile critics to have been drawing on their imagination, should have described the phenomena as being precisely what modern scientific investigation has

¹ Materialisation is the process by which the spirit personalities clothe themselves in some plastic material, drawn from the medium, so as to render themselves visible to the eye and palpable to the touch (where permitted) for a few moments. Most advanced psychic students have witnessed materialisation. I have seen it hundreds of times, under circumstances which precluded all possibility of fraud.

shown them to be. If this was guesswork, it is the most wonderful of its kind ; so wonderful that I find it easier to believe that the Transfiguration took place, than that a mere romancist drew from his inner consciousness a description, demonstrably accurate in every detail, of something foreign to his experience and to contemporary actuality. A curious feature, worthy of allusion as we pass, is the fact that in some of the best MSS. the Greek verb " became " (referring to the garments) is in the plural, as if to bring into prominence the idea that all the separate items of the garments glowed white against the midnight sky.

Up to this point the exact psychic character of the phenomenon may be differently interpreted by different students. My own view would be that the human body of Jesus was, as it were, laid aside, and became the means for the materialisations of Moses and Elias, which took place, as the narrative distinctly says, " before them " (i.e. Peter, James, and John). The human physical frame being thus disintegrated, the spirit form¹ was left uncovered, unveiled, and glowed with the original splendour of its native beauty in the spirit world whence it had come to earth. On this interpretation Jesus was himself the medium, whose powers were able not only to support the dazzling splendour of his own personality, but to furnish the means for two unique materialisations as well. Moses and Elias, we are told, were seen talking with Jesus. In fact, the Greek verb says that they were *all* " talking together." St. Luke alone of the three evangelists gives the subject of their conversation. In the language of our Authorised Version of the Bible, they " spake of his decease, which he should accomplish at Jerusalem." The Revised Version maintains this rendering, but gives the reader, in the margin, the choice between " decease," and " departure." The Greek word here is, fortunately, one which has taken a permanent place in our own language, so that we can all study its peculiar significance. It is the word *ἐξόδος*, transliterated into modern English, through the Latin, as " exodus." The word *ὁδός* (*hodos*) in Greek means a path, a road, a way. Consequently, " exodus " means a going out of the beaten track, the making of a new

¹ Advanced students of psychic science are asked to bear in mind that this pamphlet is written for non-experts.

departure. Hence its application, as the title of one of the books of the Old Testament, to the account of the departure of the Israelites from Egypt. I think we might well render it in St. Luke's account of the Transfiguration by "passing on." They "spake of his passing on, which he should accomplish at Jerusalem." The rendering is perfectly justifiable. It gives us, as the idea which was in St. Luke's mind when he wrote this passage, the same simile which is constantly employed among students of psychic science to denote the departure of their friends from this plane of existence.

This word is so remarkable and suggestive that we may well dwell upon it for a moment. It occurs only four times in the Bible (the title of the book of Exodus excepted), and three of the four occurrences have direct reference to spirit life. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews employs it (Heb. xi. 22) in allusion to the "departure" of the children of Israel. About the use of the word in that way there is nothing remarkable. The second occurrence of the word is in the passage from St. Luke, which is before us. The third instance is in the Second Epistle of St. Peter (2 Peter i. 15):—

Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance: Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath showed me. Moreover, I will endeavour that ye may be able after my decease [exodos] to have these things always in remembrance.

The word used here for "tabernacle" (*σκήνωμα* = *skenoma*) is a derivative of that (*σκηνή*) employed by the Evangelists in describing Peter's proposal, when he was rapt on the mountain side, that they should make "three tabernacles—one for Thee, one for Moses, and one for Elias"; and the word "exodus" was the one which (either in Greek or else in its Aramaic equivalent) had caught the Apostle's ear long ago, when the spirit visitors on the mountain side spake of the "passing on" of Jesus. Peter employs it to signify his own "passing on." And then, as these words brought the whole of that great scene to his recollection, he goes on, with exquisite naturalness,

to make an allusion to the voice which he and the other two Apostles had heard when they were with Christ "in the Holy Mount." The genuineness of the Second Epistle of Peter has been strongly assailed. Here, at all events, is a rather striking verbal reminiscence, a selection of terms, a collocation of thought, which seems to me to be quite beyond the skill of a forger. The argument is urged in the late Dean Farrar's *Early Days of Christianity*. That most charming of writers alludes very forcibly to these subtle *reminiscences* of the Transfiguration. He thinks that an *appeal* to that episode as a source of the writer's belief and conviction might occur to anyone who had assumed the name of St. Peter, and was forging an Epistle in his name ; "but the casual subsequent introduction of the word 'tabernacle' (*σκήνωμα* as against *σκηνή* in Matthew and Luke), and of the most unusual word for 'decease,' not in any formal connection with the appeal, but by an inevitably natural association of ideas, has always seemed to me an important item of evidence."

The fourth occurrence of the word *ἐξοδος* is the most remarkable, perhaps, of all. It is in the Greek version of the Apocrypha (Wisdom iii. 2). Let us set forth verses 1, 2, and 3 :—

But the souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and there shall no torment touch them. In the sight of the unwise they seemed to die : and their departure [*exodos*] is taken for misery, and their going from us to be utter destruction : but they are in peace.

Here the word "exodos" has the precise and exact significance of passing on. The writer goes on to say that their "going from us" was taken to be utter destruction : but so far from that being the fact, they entered into conscious peace. It was the approaching "passing on" of Jesus, then, which engaged the attention of himself and the two visitants from the spirit world. And doubtless the circumstances which were to attend it, as well as their deep and eternal significance for humanity, and the return of the victim to the spirit world, were all included in the exchange of thought at this unprecedented meeting of some of the great souls who have deeply influenced the history

and engaged the imagination of the human race. So that these three occurrences of this rare word (*exodos*), all of them with a special and vital significance, come home to the mind of psychic investigators, too, more forcibly than to the mind of any other class of persons, though the peculiar meaning is utterly obscured when the word is rendered "decease," as in our version.

Returning from this digression, we may resume the study of the phenomena themselves. A careful comparison at this point of the three versions of the account of the Transfiguration will suggest the strongest reasons for believing that this episode was, in essence, a materialisation on the most splendid scale. If that were the case we should naturally look closely for the mediums, since a scientific analysis of the facts would lead us to the supposition that not even the sublime central Personality of this scene would be free from the law which demands the intervention of a sensitive when the incarnate and discarnate are linked in communion, or when the one is made manifest to the other. And the narrative completely confirms the hypothesis. We are told that Peter and they that were with him (i.e. James and John) had been weighed down with sleep (*βεβαρημένοι ὑπνω* = *bebarēmenoi hūpnō*), but that on fully awaking in the middle of the séance "they saw his glory, and the two men that stood with him." That phenomenon which the Evangelist calls being "weighed down with sleep" is more familiar to us as the medium's utter insensibility, under the conditions necessary for a materialisation.

And here, again, we are rewarded for the labour of an excursion into the Greek. The expression "weighed down with sleep" is composed in the Greek (as we have seen) of two words. The first is the perfect participle passive of the Greek verb *βάρειν* = *bareo*, I am weighed down. This, in its turn, is derived from the Greek word *βάρος* = *baros*, weight or pressure—a word still in daily use among us when we speak of the *barometer*, the measurer of atmospheric pressure. The other word is *ὑπνος* = *hypnos*, sleep, very familiar to us all in its English dress in such words as "hypnotism" and "hypnotic." Now, investigators who have witnessed the return of the medium to consciousness after the hypnotic sleep are well aware that there is generally

a certain confusion of mind, an inability to comprehend the realities of the position, very much akin to the bewilderment of a man who wakes in a strange room, after an accident, perhaps, and sees strange faces and unfamiliar objects around him. We find these phenomena accompanying the Transfiguration, just as we should expect. When the mediums were awake, we are told, they saw His glory, and the two men that stood with him :—

And it came to pass, as they departed from him, Peter said unto Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here : and let us make three tabernacles ; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias : not knowing what he said (Luke ix. 33).

How perfectly all this accords with the experience of the psychic researcher ! Peter and his companions wake from their hypnotic sleep while yet there is sufficient “ power ” for the materialisation of the two prophets to remain visible to their normal eyes. Peter becomes conscious, not only of the presence of the two majestic figures, but of the coldness of the atmosphere. Not only was it night on the mountain-side, but the temperature of the immediately surrounding area would tend to fall, in accordance with the well-known law which gives us the cold wind and the low temperature of the séance room. Peter, therefore, suggests that three huts, made of boughs, be constructed, as a protection from the cold. To the Evangelists (who tell the story) the proposal seems so unusual that they hasten to add “ he knew not what he said.” In the charming Old English of St. Mark’s Gospel, he “ wist not what to say, for they were sore afraid.” St. Peter was fresh from the hypnotic trance, and he was dazed. St. Luke alone adds the vivid detail that the proposal of the dazed Apostle was uttered as they separated. That is to say, it was at the very close of the séance, when the cold would be most obvious, and the sense of exhaustion most severe. At this moment a cloud overshadowed them, and “ they feared as they entered into the cloud.” Why ? Is a cloud on a high mountain side so unusual ? The answer is that even to the half-dazed eyes of the apostles it was evident that this was not the ordinary atmospheric phenomenon with which they were familiar. It was, I suggest, the screen for the process of dematerialisation which had

to follow this matchless display of spirit power. Out of the cloud there came a voice and a command. And then, "suddenly looking round about, they saw no man any more, save Jesus only with themselves." In the striking words of St. Matthew, there was left "Jesus only." The mighty spirit personalities had returned to the spheres of deathlessness, and the most significant séance in all history was at an end. I say the most significant. To all those myriads who have seen it, through the ages, a conspicuous manifestation of the Divine power, a tremendous Divine endorsement, it has truly been in the highest degree significant. To us, who may venture to see an even deeper meaning, a tremendous evocation of the power of unchanging psychic law, it is more significant still; so much so is it that the world has yet to realise all that it implies.

THE RESURRECTION STORY.

If we now turn to the central episode of the whole Christian system—the resurrection—we shall find ourselves in the presence of events even more markedly psychic in their character. We may begin with the display of the wounds of the risen Lord to Thomas and the assembled disciples. If we ask *why* He should show wounds, a suggestive speculation will offer itself. If some dear friend, recently departed, were suddenly to present himself again to one of us, in bodily aspect, exactly and precisely as of old, I imagine we should hardly ask to be provided with physical evidence of identity by means of scars, fractures, or other injuries to the body we knew so well. Recognition would be spontaneous and enthusiastic. But if, although our friend's aspect were practically that which we remembered so well, there was, nevertheless, a certain unfamiliarity of feature and expression, we might seek for such confirmatory evidence as might be afforded by remembered physical defects of the genuine physical personality. Now if you conjecture an imperfect stage of materialisation, the difficulty about the display of the hands and feet is dissipated. They were offered as confirmatory evidence. This could be done, with the greater assurance even by the Risen Lord, because, in accordance with the law that

governs these phenomena, the materialised body would assume the most recent characteristics of that which it represented—those, that is to say, which had existed immediately prior to death. Not even He was exempt, or wished to be exempt, from the psychic laws which sway the universe. It may be said that this is a bold hypothesis—a new and daring interpretation of the interview with the Doubting Apostle. Let us see, therefore, if we have any evidence that the early materialisations of the Risen Lord were imperfect and experimental—that they were the continuously improving efforts, as we may say with all reverence, of One who was as yet hampered by the difficulties which might be supposed to trouble this perfect man, “of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting,” in His primary demonstrations of the fact of the Resurrection.

The truth is that the whole narrative teems with them. They simply amazed me when, throwing aside the veil of a translation made by men who perhaps had little or no experience of psychic phenomena, I began to reflect upon the original wording of the record. The appearances of the Risen Christ were materialisations. Among modern scientists, Professor Bonney has mentioned this hypothesis in his book on the *Present Relations between Science and Religion*. I propose to work it out, as clearly as may be, in the light of the Gospel record, with the aid of reference to the original Greek. At the very beginning of the Resurrection story, we find it affirmed that the body of Jesus had disappeared. In the light of psychic research we should naturally suppose that it had been dematerialised: and this is what the spirit intelligences themselves assert. The spirit operators can materialise a form in a few minutes—sometimes, apparently, in a few seconds. They are equally expert in dematerialisation. They will cause the form rapidly to dissipate, like melting snow, till nothing is left where a moment before there was a human form. That they can do this with the forms built up by themselves I and many others can personally testify, for I have seen it scores of times. There is nothing extravagant in the idea that they possess a similar power where an ordinary human frame (such as that of Jesus) is to be dematerialised. The narrative in the New Testament no-

where asserts dematerialisation : but there is a very remarkable, though quite casual, item of the narrative which points almost unmistakably to it. We are told (R.V.) that Peter beheld "the napkin, [rather, the handkerchief] that was upon His head, not lying with the linen cloths, but rolled up in a place by itself." Now the word used in the original for "rolled up" is *ἐντετυλιγμένον*. The word is derived from *τύλη* or *τύλος*, the hump or callosity on a porter's shoulder. We should therefore read that the handkerchief which had been placed over the face of Jesus was "not lying with the linen cloths, but humped-up (or cushioned-up) in a place by itself." As I understand, the face had been dematerialised from inside it, with such delicacy that the handkerchief still retained the shape of the sacred features which it had once covered. This is, to my mind, a very convincing, and yet entirely unostentatious, intimation that the body of Jesus had been dematerialised from inside its wrappings, just as the psychic researcher would suppose it to have been.

The next pregnant episode is that of Mary at the tomb speaking to the two angels (I use Dr. Weymouth's translation) :—

"Why are you weeping?" they asked.

"Because," she replied, "they have taken away my Lord and I know not where they have put him."

While she was speaking, she turned round and saw Jesus standing there, but did not recognise him.

"Why are you weeping?" he asked. "Who are you looking for?"

She, supposing that he was the gardener, replied, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him and I will remove him."

"Supposing that he was the gardener!" But if the received view of the Resurrection be the correct one, the body before her was that which, only a couple of days previously, she had seen hanging upon the cross. On this view, Christ had stepped from the tomb in his original physical personality, as if in our own day some departed friend were suddenly to rise and emerge from the coffin in which he had been laid for burial. Is not that view excluded by the record itself? Is there not, in this supposition that

He was "the gardener," the plain and unmistakable suggestion that this was an imperfect materialisation, put together in haste and eagerness by the manifesting Spirit with the aid of this single medium, and, therefore, at first sight unrecognisable even by the most intimate of friends? I submit that this, at all events for serious psychic investigators, is a far more likely explanation than those offered by commentators who were precluded by their habitual theological prepossession from seeing the realities of the case. Alford explains that the fact why Mary could not know Him "may be psychologically accounted for—*she did not expect Him to be there*—was wholly preoccupied with other thoughts." A learned German critic says that "her tears wove a veil, which concealed Him who stood before her." Farrar thinks that "some accident of dress or appearance made her fancy it was the keeper of the garden." But as he had just previously told us that "there was something spiritual, something not of earth, in that risen and glorified body," this explanation will not stand. An imperfect materialisation might be taken for such a humble individual as a gardener, but the mistake could scarcely be made if the body were of glorified aspect.

The story of the recognition by the voice of the Saviour, where His mere appearance had evoked no response, is familiar to all of us. No sooner has recognition taken place than Jesus says "Touch me not!" or "Do not handle me!" The best of all renderings would perhaps be "Do not cling to me." The tense implies, at least, that she was attempting to touch Him. There is in the words a certain restraint and tenderness, as if He were saying "Now, don't you cling to me." But why not? If this visible body were simply a revival of that mortality which had hung upon the cross, and had lain in the tomb, would not the fact of its palpability to the touch have been one of the best evidences of the reality of the Resurrection? But the real physical body had, as I have suggested, been dematerialised by powerful psychic agencies. So much is definitely affirmed by the spirit intelligences with whom research brings us into contact. If that were the case, the ancient words were justified, for the Holy One saw no corruption. The material elements of the physical body were scattered

into impalpable dust. Yet the prohibition against touch has perplexed all the commentators. Most of them see in the prohibition, and in the succeeding words, "For I am not yet ascended to my Father," a kind of implied promise that in another state of existence, believers *will* touch Him. Leo the Great, who died in 461, seems to have been one of the earliest exponents of this view. "When I am ascended to the Father," so he paraphrases the passage, "then you shall more perfectly and truly touch, grasping with the mind that which you do not now touch with the hand, and comprehending with the intellect that which you do not now discern with the senses." It seems to me that the explanation of the prohibition is not so far-fetched. If I am right in my conjecture that this was a weak materialisation, made up with the aid of "power" from this single medium, it might have fallen to pieces at a touch, particularly at so electric a touch as that of Mary in her ecstasy. That is an ascertained scientific fact. Hence the prohibition, so familiar to all observers of materialisation phenomena, against touch. Materialisation is a very difficult task. How much more difficult was it likely to be to this Supreme Spirit, fresh from the awful experiences of the last few days, and conscious of the immeasurable destinies which depended upon the successful conclusion of the mighty work, which it had set out from the spirit-spheres to accomplish, during the forty days that yet remained to finish it! If this interpretation be correct, the whole sentence is exquisitely natural: "Now, don't touch me. I am not *yet* ascended to my Father. If touch is necessary to confirm the evidence of your sight, there will be abundant opportunity for it before I pass finally out of this into a higher plane." And the opportunity of touch, as we know, was actually given, together with demonstrations that the materialised body was so perfect as to be capable of taking physical sustenance.

Almost immediately after this episode came a manifestation to the other Mary and Salome, the mother of James (Mark xvi. 1). St. Luke says the second woman was Joanna (Luke xxiv. 10). The sequence of events is not wholly clear, but it is obvious that these women were leaving the empty tomb in order to inform the disciples of its condition, when

“suddenly they saw Jesus coming to meet them.” “And,” adds St. Matthew, “they came and clasped [literally “seized”] His feet, bowing to the ground before Him.” But there was apparently no prohibition against the act of seizure, though only a few minutes before the earlier witness had been bidden not to touch. If the traditional reason for this prohibition were the true one, it must have been as necessary in the case of the two or three women as in the instance of Mary. The facts probably are (a) the materialisation had grown stronger, especially because (b) there were now two, or possibly three, mediums upon whom it could draw for “power.” This again is completely in accord with the results of scientific investigations in the realm of psychic law. Very significant is the fact that these appearances took place in the early morning “while it was still dark.” The later materialisation at Emmaus, which we are about to consider, was in the evening. There is no record, at this point, of any appearance in the full light of day—which once more confirms the hypothesis that these were materialisations of the Risen Lord. If that were so, they could not have been held together in the full sunlight any more than the photographic plate could be safely exposed to the same ordeal.

The third appearance was to St. Peter, but beyond the bare mention of the fact by St. Luke and St. Paul (Luke xxiv. 34 ; 1 Cor. xv. 5), we have no details. The impetuous Apostle, however, was one of the most powerful psychics of the Apostolic band, as we know from his selection to be the medium—or one of the mediums—where exceptional results were aimed at, as in the case of the Transfiguration. The fourth appearance was to the two of His disciples (one Cleopas, the other unknown to us) on the way to Emmaus. I need not add the details of the story. The incident is only fully recorded by St. Luke (Luke xxiv. 13 *et seq.*), though there is the briefest allusion to it among those last few verses of St. Mark (Mark xvi. 12, 13), which, according to the best modern opinion, formed no part of the original gospel, but were added by another hand. The time was the close of the Resurrection day, the eventide of the world’s first Easter Sunday. The two disciples talked as they went to Emmaus. Jesus came and joined them,

though they were prevented from recognising Him. The word for "prevented" is the same Greek verb (*κρατέω*) as we have already encountered when we read of the two women clasping or *seizing* His feet. The antique English of our Authorised Version (which is preserved in the Revised Version) is the best of all—"their eyes were *holden* that they should not know Him." In psychic terminology, there had been, during the course of the Easter Day, an accession of "power," of materialising skill. The materialisation was now so good that, instead of supposing Him to be "the gardener," his companions must infallibly have recognised Him, if psychic means had not been adopted by the spirit band around Him to prevent it. The two disciples told their new friend of all that had occurred during the past few days, and then—

They drew nigh unto the village whither they went ; and he made as though he would have gone further.

But they constrained him, saying, "Abide with us ; for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent." And he went in to tarry with them.

And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them.

And their eyes were opened, and they knew him ; and he vanished out of their sight.

There are two points here which are well worthy of our attention. The first essential of a successful materialising circle is complete harmony on the part of sitters. They must blend—and the simile is very apt indeed—like the notes or a cord in music. The more intimately they blend, the more successful the conditions. In this instance the conditions were good throughout—so good that it was necessary to *prevent* recognition of the materialised spirit form. They would improve as the fellow-travellers, in earnest discussion, came into closer and more cordial sympathy with each other. So much we know from the reluctance of the two disciples to part from their new Friend, and the pressure which they employed to induce Him to stay with them for the night. So that there were in operation two separate lines of psychic action, two different psychic forces. One was represented by the efforts of the

controlling spirits to *prevent* recognition; the other was the strong tendency towards the increasing perfection of the materialisation as the three participants of this marvelous episode drew more and more into harmony and sympathy. One of these forces was bound, in the long run, to triumph. At last the crisis came. He took bread and blessed it and brake it and gave to them; and in that supreme act of sacrifice and remembrance, the loving harmony of the little circle reached its climax, and the materialisation became simultaneously perfect. Their eyes were opened, and they knew Him; and then the "power" faded, and He vanished out of their sight. How natural it all is—how exquisitely life-like to those who have witnessed the process of materialisation and can picture the whole scene almost as vividly as if they had been privileged to be spectators!

In the course of the next verse we get a very instructive insight (palpable in the Greek, and very happily and naturally preserved in the Authorised Version) into St. Luke's meaning when he says that "their eyes were holden" that they should not know Him. After telling us that their eyes were *opened*, and they knew Him, St. Luke goes on to record the mutual reminiscences of the two disciples. "Did not our heart burn within us," they said, "while He talked with us by the way, and while he *opened* unto us the Scriptures?" The opening of the eyes and the opening of the Scriptures are the same word (*διανοίγω*) in Greek and English. The Greek word means to open by drawing aside or asunder some obstacle which has previously been in the way. Hence it signifies clearing of the vision and the mind by drawing aside something which has been an interruption to the activity of the perfected operation of both. The Scriptures had been as dim and obscure to the minds of these disciples as the figure of the Risen Lord to their eyes; and both were *opened*.

Finally, we have the curious and indeed unique expression in which St. Luke records the fact of disappearance—or dematerialisation, for that was really what took place. His words are rendered both in the Authorised Version and the Revised Version by the phrase "he vanished out of their sight." There is nothing about *sight*, save inferen-

tially, in the Greek text. Dr. Weymouth's version is therefore nearer the original—"he vanished from them." But the precise sense of the words is not conveyed even by this translation. I am the more anxious to make it quite clear because I believe that here, as in the earlier instance of his account of the Transfiguration, St. Luke deliberately cast about for an expression which would exclude possible misapprehension and indicate, with complete technical precision, the real character of the incident to those of his Greek readers who had any acquaintance with psychic phenomena. What St. Luke really says is, that "he became invisible from them." Now the ordinary Greek construction here would have been the same as the English—He became invisible *to* them. The anomalous use of *from* is noticed by Alford. He finds in it an indication that this was not only a disappearance of the apparent physical frame, but an actual removal of the personality away from that spot to another. Is it not at least as likely that St. Luke was here endeavouring to convey the idea of dematerialisation? He became invisible from them—that is, He gradually dematerialised until nothing was left where a few moments before there had been a palpable presence? I have seen the phenomena of dematerialisation myself, and so have many fellow-investigators. The expression "he became invisible *from* them" is, to my mind, extremely apt to the circumstances which on this hypothesis the Evangelist was describing.

When we go on to the séance at which Thomas was invited to attend, the Greek becomes very suggestive. "Reach hither thy finger and behold my hands," says the Authorised Version. "Reach hither thy finger and see my hands," says the Revised. Neither is quite a satisfactory rendering. The verb *ὁράω*, used here for "behold" and "see," is the one employed of vision in the intellectual sense. It signifies to discern, or examine, to observe, to become acquainted with a thing by experience. Where the significance is merely that of looking at a thing just to note its existence or presence and without any idea of critical inspection, the sacred writers use another verb. They employ *βλέπειν*—as, for instance, in the record of the Ascension—"When he had said these things, as they were

looking, he was taken up. These considerations led the late Dr. Weymouth to render the passage, "Reach hither thy finger and feel my hands." That is to say, "assure yourself by actual touch that I am what I seem to be, a material form, reproducing the conditions as you knew them on Calvary." In the presence of eleven powerful mediums—for such, undoubtedly, the Apostles were—the spirit becomes overwhelmingly confident, and so far from forbidding the act of touch, as had been done only twelve or fourteen hours earlier, now invites it and commands it. Thus was the prompt fulfilment added to the implied promise of the morning that there would be abundant opportunities of touch before He ascended to the Father. This incident of Thomas, as it stands, is utterly inconsistent with the traditional interpretation of the words, "Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended to my Father."

So, once more, at the final scene of the Ascension—"as they were looking up, a cloud received Him out of their sight." The Greek word *νεφέλη*, whence comes the Latin word *nebula*, familiar enough to us all, might just as well mean a mist or vapour. The word is the same as that which we encountered in our study of the Transfiguration. It was, I take it, simply a screen for the process of dematerialising the materialised body, thus levitated in accordance with the operation of a psychic force familiar enough to the saints of the Middle Ages, and well within the experience of modern investigators—for instance, in the case of the late D. D. Home. There is no need to invoke the miraculous by imagining the departure of a physical body to a physical heaven. Levitation and dematerialisation cover all the facts and meet all the necessities of the case. Modern astronomical science knows the *nebula* as the gigantic fire-mist out of which the planetary systems slowly materialise. The New Testament writer uses the same word to describe the psychic mist in which the materialised form dematerialises; and one Supreme Power employs both—the fire-mist that spreads over immeasurable distances of space, and that which simply floats along the mountain side—for its inscrutable purposes.

One point further. The enquirer (particularly if he is attached to the traditional creed of Christianity), may well

ask a pointed question. He may say—"If these arguments are sound, what becomes of the historic article of the Apostles' Creed, in which the faithful are required to enunciate their belief in the Resurrection of the Body?" If [physical, fleshly] death means the ultimate dispersal of the physical components of the human frame, and if, as has been argued above, the appearances of the Risen Lord were materialisations, this article of the Creed must apparently be abandoned. But that is really not the case. In all probability, the materialisation theory solves the problem which has perplexed Christian theologians ever since modern biology began to challenge the possibility of a re-gathering and re-aggregation of all the particles which had formed part of a physical body. The difficulty has been all the greater because of the impossibility of denying that a given particle of matter has in the course of ages been a part of more bodies than one, or even of two. But if the materialisation theory be sound, the whole question is lighted up with new suggestion. We may then argue that the words in the Creed represent no more than a misapprehension with regard to the real character of the Resurrection. The theologians who formulated the Creed were accustomed to materialisation. They knew that the appearances of the Risen Lord were instances of this phenomenon. They had themselves frequently witnessed it. But they were aware of one infirmity from which the process could not escape, namely, the necessity of the presence of one or more psychic sensitives. They knew also that even when this instrumentality was available, the materialised forms could only be made to last for a few moments. They supposed, however (on the hypothesis now offered), that the Resurrection was a *permanent* materialisation, in which the materialised physical form would not be dependent for its existence and permanence on the intervention of a psychic. They had seen with their own eyes a demonstration of the fact of a *temporary* Resurrection of the Body. They could hardly be blamed if they assumed that in its ultimate manifestation, the *permanent* resurrection would take the same form. This is probably the key to their enunciation of the Resurrection of the Body as one of the essential articles of Christian belief.

ST. PAUL AND THE RESURRECTION

Have we any means of knowing how the Resurrection was regarded by the great protagonists of Christianity themselves? Happily we have. Indeed, the earliest of all the New Testament references to the Resurrection is a critical analysis thereof by the greatest of Apostles, St. Paul. This fact has been somewhat obscured because the books of the New Testament do not stand in chronological order. The unlearned reader is apt to believe that he reads, in the Gospels, the earliest record of the Resurrection. These ideas are mistaken—at all events, if modern critical scholarship is right in its conclusions that none of the Gospels is of earlier date than the year 63 A.D. But the First Epistle to the Corinthians, which contains the famous fifteenth chapter (read for centuries as part of the Anglican Service for the Burial of the Dead), is generally dated as 55 A.D. Chronologically speaking, then, the first witness of the Resurrection is St. Paul. It is not difficult, therefore, to discover in what light the Resurrection presented itself to St. Paul personally, as a man who was among the religious and intellectual leaders of his nation long before he gave his allegiance to the Risen Christ. In his First Epistle to the Corinthians St. Paul briefly summarises the recorded appearances of the Risen Lord. When he has done so, he tells us (1 Cor. ix. 8) that, “last of all, Christ was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.” The verb here is $\omega\phi\theta\eta$, a tense of $\delta\rho\acute{\alpha}\omega$, which (as already pointed out) means to “see” in the physical sense, or to comprehend as the result of physical sight. This verb always contains the sense of perception, discernment, scrutiny, in contradistinction with the other term $\beta\lambda\epsilon\pi\acute{\epsilon}\iota\nu$, which only means to “look” at a thing. The passage, then, contains a positive affirmation by St. Paul that he had *seen* Christ subsequent to His crucifixion and death. That claim does not rest on this verse alone. He begins the ninth chapter of the same epistle with an equally positive declaration, “Am I not an Apostle? Have I not *seen* Jesus our Lord?” He appeals to this experience as one of the credentials of his apostleship; and again he employs the same verb as

before (ἑώρακα). By one of those undesigned coincidences which abound in the New Testament, we find that in each of the three accounts of St. Paul's conversion (in Acts ix., xxii. and xxvi. respectively), two of which profess to be from his own lips, he asks the vision, "Who art thou, Lord?"—thus suggesting that he was unfamiliar with the features of Christ. All these facts go to support the view that St. Paul's first sight of Christ was on the road to Damascus.

Let us turn to the recorded accounts of that tremendous episode. Suddenly, as they journeyed at the height of noon, a light "flashed round" them. "Flashed round" is the nearest English sense that we can get to the original word (περιήστραψεν). It is a remarkable term. Whether St. Luke got the word from St. Paul, or whether St. Paul adopted it from St. Luke, we cannot say. Certain it is that whoever selected it went out of his way to find it. The word is not classical. It occurs only twice in the original of the New Testament—namely, in St. Luke's account of the conversion in chapter ix., and in the parallel passage (Acts xxii. 6), where St. Paul himself is describing the scene. St. Paul fell to the ground, and then amid the blaze of glory he saw, as I think, the materialised figure of the Risen Lord. The language of the story will reward the close inspection. St. Paul's own statement to King Agrippa is that he was not disobedient to the "heavenly vision" (οὐράνιος ὄπτασία). This word ὄπτασία is peculiar to St. Luke and St. Paul. No other New Testament writers use it. The root of the word has entered our language in such words as *optics*, *optical*, *optician*—all concerned with physical sight. In the original ὄπτασια means the act of exhibiting oneself to view. It is employed in the Septuagint of the appearing of the sun when he rises (Sirach, XLIII. 2). St. Luke employs it twice in his gospel—once in his allusion to the popular opinion that Zechariah had seen a *vision* in the Sanctuary (Luke i. 22), and again in the description given by the two disciples to their mysterious companion on the way to Emmaus, of all the events of the Crucifixion and Resurrection. The term occurs in the passage where the women "declared to us that they had also seen a *vision* of angels, who said that he was alive."

Farrar thinks that by using this word St. Luke, and St. Paul as reported by him, desire to convey the idea of objective vision, as distinct from subjective clairvoyance. At all events, it is significant that St. Luke employs another word (*ὄραμα*) when he describes St. Peter's *trance* and the sheet which descended from heaven, where there is no suggestion of objectivity. Moreover, when he is telling us of St. Peter's miraculous liberation from prison, he actually indicates, almost with studied precision, that he uses this latter word *ὄραμα* in the subjective sense. "Peter," he says (Acts xii. 9), "could not believe that what the angel was doing was *real*, but thought he saw a *vision*"—that is, he thought he was dreaming, or, at all events, that there was some optical illusion. The point I desire to bring out is St. Paul's express declaration that he has *seen* the Lord in the physical sense, as well as the fact that, as reported by St. Luke, he employs a special word to indicate an objective as distinct from a subjective phenomenon.

Further, when St. Paul describes the experiences of others besides himself, he is always careful to keep to the verb which signifies physical sight. Christ was *seen* of Cephas (*ὡφθη Σίμωνι*) says St. Paul. When he is preaching (Acts xiii. 31), he declares that God raised up Christ from the dead, "and he was *seen* (*ὡφθη* again) for many days of them that came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem." He was *seen* of James, and by over five hundred brethren at once, "of whom the greater part are still alive," and then *seen* of all the Apostles. I confess that, both as student and man of the world, I find it difficult to reconcile this insistence upon actual physical sight, this persistence in the use of words specially chosen to signify *objectivity* as distinct from *subjectivity*, with the vision hypothesis offered us by modern critics of the Resurrection story. All that actually existed, say the critics, was an impression upon the mental vision of the disciples. They really *saw* nothing. For instance, Professor Schmiedel (in the article "Resurrection," in the *Encyclopædia Biblica*) pronounces for what is called the vision hypothesis. The appearances to St. Paul were, he argues, only subjective. Naturally, their character as such cannot be established from the statements made by the visionaries themselves. In the

first place they were not trained scientists, and therefore could not analyse their own impressions. In the second place, they themselves undoubtedly regarded the visions as *objective*. They believed they actually saw something. When Schmiedel denies this, he concedes that "only the judgment of the visionaries as to the objective reality of what they had seen is set aside": the rest may all be true. Schmiedel goes on to tell us that this destructive criticism need not affect our view of Christianity. It "affects merely the husk—namely, that the Risen Jesus was seen in objective reality, not the kernel of the matter, that Jesus lives in the spiritual sense." It seems to me that the objective reality of the sight really is the *kernel* of the matter. If a man is at pains, by the deliberate and studious choice of words, to convey to me that he actually *saw* something palpable to his physical eyesight, when all the time he was the victim of an optical delusion, my opinion of the value of *his* evidence on other matters, and my willingness to be guided by his judgment where he strives to impress me with his views, may be seriously impaired.

Can we follow St. Paul further without finding him at variance with psychic fact, writing about subjects of which he knows nothing? When he is tested by the known principles of psychic science, is he found to ring true? Now the whole of the fifteenth chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians is concerned with this great question of the resurrection of the dead. It is devoted to combating an error which had arisen in the Corinthian Church. The Corinthians accepted the fact of the resurrection of Christ, but they were by no means persuaded of a *general* resurrection. Therefore St. Paul is not concerned to demonstrate that *Christ* rose from the dead. That was accepted. Faith in Christ's resurrection was the reason why there were Corinthian Christians at all. But the converts had fallen into the idea that Christ's resurrection was a solitary and isolated phenomenon, having no parallel in other lives. The Corinthian believers did not know the improbability of the isolated, disconnected fact. "Our ever-growing recognition of the continuity, the uniformity of cosmic law has gradually made of the alleged *uniqueness* of any incident its almost inevitable refutation." So says F. W. H. Myers.

St. Paul is anxious to demonstrate to his Corinthian converts that Christ's resurrection, however stupendous its significance for them, was *not* unique but rather a mighty demonstration of the potency of natural law. How is it that some of you say there is no resurrection of the dead? If there is no such thing, then Christ has not risen: and if He has not risen, what we preach is a delusion. That is to say, Christ is no unique exception to the rules of the universe. He may be a conspicuous and in some aspects an unprecedented instance of their working. He may be the firstfruits of them that sleep, but He is no exceptional case; as in Adam *all* die, even so through Christ will *all* be made alive again.

Having said so much, St. Paul goes on to deal with a difficulty. Let us have his argument in his own words, as modernised in Dr. Weymouth's New Testament, so that we may not be misled, as we are occasionally apt to be, by the obsolete language of our beautiful Authorised Version:

But some one will say, "How can the dead rise? And with what kind of body do they come back?" Foolish man, the seed you yourself sow has no life given to it unless it first dies; and as for what you sow, it is not the plant which is to be that you are sowing, but a bare grain, of wheat (it may be) or of something else, and God gives it a body as He has seen fit, and to each kind of seed a body of its own. All flesh is not the same; there is human flesh and flesh of cattle, of birds and of fishes. There are bodies which are celestial and there are bodies which are earthly, but the glory of the celestial ones is one thing, and that of the earthly ones is another. There is one glory of the sun, another of the moon, and another of the stars; for star differs from star in glory. It is the same with the resurrection of the dead. [There is sown a decaying body, there is raised one free from decay; there is a sowing in dishonour, there is a raising in glory; there is a sowing in weakness, there is a raising in power; there is sown a natural body, there is raised a spiritual body.]¹ So that as surely as there is an animal body, so there is also a spiritual body. In the same way also it is written: "The first man, Adam, became a living animal" [Gen. ii. 7]; the last Adam is a life-giving spirit. Nevertheless, it is not what is spiritual that came first, but what is animal; *what is spiritual came afterwards*. The first

¹ The bracketed words are different from Dr. Weymouth's rendering.

man is a man of earth, earthy ; the second man is from Heaven. What the earthy one is that also are those who are earthy ; and what the heavenly One is, that also are those who are heavenly. And as we have borne a resemblance to the earthy one, let us see to it that we also bear a resemblance to the heavenly One (1 Cor. xv. 35-49).

The meaning is as plain as meaning can be. To St. Paul resurrection means a future life in *a* body, but not *this* body. The bare seed that you sow has no resemblance to the plant that grows from it. The seed, the husk, the mortal body, *must* perish. The body with which the dead are to be endowed in the resurrection is of another sort entirely from that which is put into the grave. It is as different from the physical body as the plant from the seed. You cannot point to a beautiful plant and say "That is the seed I put into the ground." You did not, as Professor Bowen urges, writing on this passage, sow the plant that should be. Nothing can be clearer, nothing more definite, than the language of verse 44—"It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body." But St. Paul does not say, "*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." These words, with their succession of "it" as the apparent subject of the sentence, have created in millions of minds the idea that all the "its" are the same, that the identical "it" which is sown in a state of decay is raised free from decay. The unlearned reader thinks the "its" all refer to the body. The truth is that all the "its" here are impersonal, just like our "it rains" or "it snows," where the "it" has no reference to any specific person or thing, much less to a suggestion that the "it" which rains is the identical "it" which snows also. It would be quite accurate to translate "there is sown a decaying body, there is raised one free from decay ; there is sown a natural (*ψυχικόν*) body, there is raised a spiritual (*πνευματικόν*) body." All this is scientifically sound to-day just because it *is* scientific, just because the greatest Apostle is also the greatest Spiritualist. All our psychic science adds not one iota to what this wandering tent-maker had learnt on the road to Damascus, and proclaimed to a thirsty world. It points clearly to St. Paul's realisation of

the reality of a spiritual body. It was that body of Jesus, clothed so as to be visible to human eyesight, which he saw on the road to Damascus, which Peter saw, and the twelve, and James, and the five hundred brethren at once. But whatever it may have been, that body was not physical in the ordinary sense of the word. "This I tell you, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God, nor will what is perishable inherit what is imperishable."

Where, then, is the spiritual body coming from? Turn to the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, chapter v., and see the answer:—

For we know that if this poor tent, our earthly house, is taken down, we have in Heaven a building which God has provided, a house not built by human hands, but eternal. For in this one we sigh, because we long to put on over it our dwelling which comes from Heaven—if indeed having really put on a robe, we shall not be found to be unclothed. Yes, we who are in this tent certainly do sigh under our burdens, for we do not wish to lay aside that with which we are now clothed, but to put on more, so that our mortality may be absorbed in Life. And He who formed us with this very end in view is God, who has given us His Spirit as a pledge and foretaste of that bliss.

Our permanent spiritual dwelling, therefore, comes from Heaven, and does not rise out of the ground. St. Paul is nowhere concerned with either the physical body or the grave in which it lay. The great Apostle seems to have hardly been conscious that there was such a thing as a grave, or such an act as that of burying. In all his writings he only once uses the verb *θάπτειν* to bury (1 Cor. xv. 4). He uses the compound *συνθάπτειν* once figuratively (Rom. vi. 4), in the sense of being baptised into burial with Christ, and he quotes himself in this sense, using the same word, in Colossians ii. 12. The Greek word for a tomb, *τάφος* (plainly visible in our word "epitaph") he never uses of his own accord, although in Romans iii. 13, quoting verbatim a passage from the Greek version of the Psalms (v. 9), he is forced to employ a term which he obviously disliked and avoided. The word *μνημειον*, a tomb or sepulchre, freely used by other New Testament writers, never once comes from St. Paul's pen. Evidently the *burial* of Christ was an incident which had only the very slightest significance for

him. He realised, as we all realise, that the physical frame was the mere tool of the soul, and that its fate was a matter of no serious concern when once the soul had left it. St. Paul's phrase, always some combination of the verb ἔγειρω with ἐκ νεκρῶν, has reference, as Professor Stevens says, "neither to resurrection of the body nor resurrection from the ground in which the body is buried, but to a rising of the personality from the realm of death into the realm of light and life whereupon the spirit is clothed with its heavenly habitation." This intellectual attitude of the great Apostle is to me extremely suggestive as an unexpressed and indeed unconscious, but nevertheless most forcible hint of the triviality of body in comparison with spirit. Its complete accordance with the results of modern psychic research shows that St. Paul himself was a psychic initiate of the very highest attainments.

In fact it was in consequence of these sound and scientific views that St. Paul found himself confronted with a difficulty. Like the early Church as a whole, he seems to have been persuaded that the permanent reappearance of Christ in judgment was an impending event. (I say a "permanent" reappearance, because I cannot help thinking that in the adeptual Christian circles the temporary materialisation of Christ may have cheered His followers on many an occasion after Ascension). But whether St. Paul was mistaken, or whether, as has been argued, there really *was* a local return of Christ about the year 70 A.D., we need not pause to enquire. Anyhow, it is evident that if St. Paul had held the ordinary view of the resurrection of the body, this difficulty would never have troubled him. On that view, the problem is no problem at all. The *dead* bodies rise out of the graves, while the *living*, who have no need to rise, join them in standing before the judgment seat. In the one case the mortal dust is collected together again, bone to his bone, and the dead stand upon their feet, an exceeding great army. In the other, no resurrection is necessary, for the various individuals are already alive and in the body. But that was not St. Paul's opinion. Nothing can be more plain and consistent than his utterances on this point. "We shall be changed," he says (ἀλλαγησόμεθα). "We shall be *exchanged*" would be a better rendering.

We shall exchange one form for another, but the identity will remain the same. Even so in the Resurrection: the identity is the same but the body is different. "This corruptible thing must put on incorruption and this mortal thing must be clothed with immortality." These allusions to an "exchange" give no countenance to the usual idea that there will be no change at all, but simply a perpetuation of the mortal body. Yet it is most remarkable that while the "exchange" is impressed upon us, there is a corresponding effort to avoid any suggestion of a discontinuance or disconnection of identity. When I endeavoured to analyse the Transfiguration, I pointed out how carefully St. Luke, writing for Greek readers, avoids the Greek verb corresponding to the modern word "metamorphosis." It would have suggested to Greek readers the fabulous transformation of human beings into beasts, stones, trees, fire and water, with which their mythology had made them familiar. Therefore, he substitutes another term. St. Paul, in all his writings, only twice uses this verb. He tells his Roman converts (Rom. xii. 2) to be *transformed* by the entire renewal of their minds; but here there is no danger of misunderstanding. He exhorts the members of his Corinthian Church (2 Cor. iii. 18) to be transformed from one degree of holiness to another—where, again, there is no possibility of misconception. But in Philippians iii. 21 he comes, as it were, to the very edge of the misleading word—one might almost say that he half writes it—and then it flashes upon him that this will not do. Christ, he says, "will *transform* the body of our humiliation until it resembles his own glorious body." St. Paul gets as far as the *μετα*, of "metamorphosis"—and then flies off to another word, *μετασχηματίσει*, which means to change the figure, the outward seeming, the *scheme* of the body, without disturbing or altering its identity. That is no fanciful suggestion of mine. Archbishop Trench suggests that the one verb was used instead of the other so as to express "transition, but no absolute solution of continuity . . . the spiritual body being developed from the natural as the butterfly from the caterpillar." But that is psychic science pure and simple, whereas the common belief in a bodily resurrection requires the resumption of the caterpillar form.

These then are St. Paul's views. On this great central theme he writes from first to last as a scientific adept, a gifted initiate. When he leaves the central theme, and touches upon allied topics, he remains perfectly consistent. He mentions (1 Cor. xv. 29) a custom apparently prevalent at Corinth of vicarious baptism on behalf of the dead. The meaning of the custom is obvious. The pagan "dead" could not be baptized: but the Christian love of their relatives, yearning for the welfare of their spirits, baptized the living on their behalf, in the hope that the grace might be thus vicariously transmitted to the intended spirit beneficiary in another plane of existence. But the commentators have exhausted themselves in their efforts to get away from the obviously spiritual significance of the words. Robertson declares that in their ordinary sense the words point to a "superstition so abject that St. Paul could not have spoken of it without anger." One of the latest of the critics, however—Rev. J. Armitage Robinson, then Dean of Westminster—points out that St. Paul "neither commends nor rebukes it." He was a psychic student, and he knew that there was nothing to rebuke. Nay, he doubtless knew that "the love of the departed makes answer to our prayers," and that a baptism of the living for the departed must help the struggling spirit on its upward way. Again, "We are made a spectacle to the whole universe," he cries (1 Cor. iv. 9) "both to angels and to men"—that is to say, all the great lessons taught by the evolution of our race are being observed by the spirits around us, as well as by men themselves. And the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, whoever he (or she) may have been, holds fast to the same idea. "We are compassed about by a cloud of witnesses." They are not far away in another world, but here, surrounding us like the spectators in a theatre almost surround the stage.

But here we turn once again to modern critics of the Resurrection story. Their case is, remember, that all these *sights* of the Risen Lord were purely subjective—there was no physical reality. Unhappily, as they tell us, in the years after St. Paul's teaching, people drifted into the error that there actually had been a physical resurrection of Christ. His human body (so it was supposed) had actually

left the grave in the world's first Easter Sunday. When this error gained acceptance, it was necessary to accommodate the Gospels to it when, in later years, they were written. So it was (thus runs the argument) that their authors fell into the error of accepting and recording the mistaken tradition of a resurrection of the fleshly body, and for nearly two thousand years have led the world astray by their error. But, as we have seen, an analysis of the narrative shows that all the recorded happenings are completely consistent with the facts of psychic science. There was no return of the physical frame to life ; but there was materialisation of the most complete and convincing kind. So that the Resurrection stands justified by the severest tests that can be applied to it in the light of modern investigation and experiment.

SOME CLOSING CONSIDERATIONS

In looking at these phenomena as within natural law rather than as exceptions to it, "do we not better understand at once the uniqueness and the reality of the Christian revelation itself, when we regard it as a culmination, rather than an exception—as destined not to destroy the cosmic law, but to fulfil it ?" So said the late F. W. H. Myers, and he added :—

"Then first in human history came from the unseen a message such as the whole heart desired—a message adequate in its response to fundamental emotional needs, not in that age only, but in all ages that should follow. *Intellectually* adequate for all coming ages that revelation could not be ; given the laws of mind, incarnate alike and discarnate—the evolution, on either side of the gulf of death, of knowledge and power."

"No one at the date of that revelation," said he, "suspected that uniformity, that continuity of the universe which long experience has now made for us almost axiomatic :—

"No one foresaw the day when the demand for miracle would be merged in the demand for higher law. This newer scientific temper is not confined, as I believe, to the denizens of this earth alone. The spiritual world meets it, as I think our evidence has shown, with eager and strenuous response. But that response is made, and must be made, along the lines

of our normal evolution. It must rest upon the education, the disentanglement, of *that* within us mortals which exists in the invisible, a partaker of the undying world. And on our side and on theirs alike, the process must be steady and continuous. We have no longer to deal with some isolated series of events in the past, interpretable this way or that, but in no way renewable—but rather with a world-wide and actual condition of things, recognisable every year in greater clearness, and changing in directions which we can better and better foresee.”

“I venture now,” said Myers, towards the end of that matchless epilogue to *Human Personality*, in which he sums up the available scientific evidence for man’s survival of bodily death :—

“I venture now upon a bold saying ; for I predict that, in consequence of the new evidence, all reasonable men, a century hence, will believe the resurrection of Christ, whereas, in default of the new evidence, no reasonable men, a century hence, would have believed it.”

That forecast may perhaps seem all the more probable of fulfilment in the light of the few considerations I have offered in these few pages. In fact, since the first edition of this pamphlet appeared psychic research has moved in giant strides towards the fulfilment of one of its tasks—the re-habilitation of Christianity as the religion of thinking men and women. The view I urge is simply that the Resurrection was no miracle in the sense of being a suspension or abrogation of physical law. To bring it home, as a pregnant fact, to the minds of men, the more effective method is to demonstrate its complete accordance with natural law and with demonstrable scientific fact. If it can be shown that the recorded phenomena of the Resurrection are in complete accord with operative and observable physical and psychical forces, all the historical objections vanish like a morning mist : and Christianity stands not only upon the historic foundation of faith, but on the scientific basis of fact. Upon that foundation it may rest secure while the world remains, for the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

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