

Reflections on the Resurrection of our Redeemer



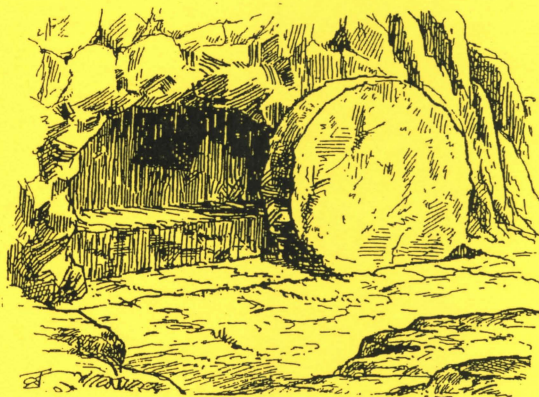
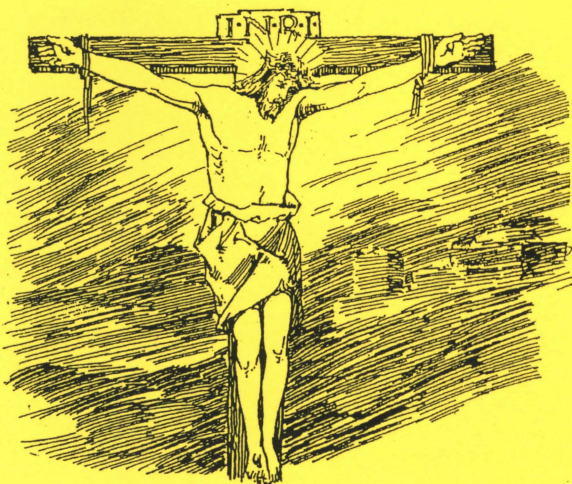
PART 1: THE TIME OF CHRIST'S DEATH AND RESURRECTION

PART 2: THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST IN CONTEMPORARY GERMAN THEOLOGY

PART 3: THE RESURRECTION APPEARANCES OF CHRIST

The Time of Christ's

Death and Resurrection



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THE TIME OF CHRIST'S DEATH AND RESURRECTION

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CHAPTER I

THEORIES AND PROBLEMS CONNECTED WITH THE TIME OF CHRIST'S DEATH

A growing dissatisfaction with existing explanations of the events and time elements relative to the crucifixion and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, together with the intervening time when His body rested in the tomb, as put forth by many recognized authorities, has given the impetus for this investigation.

I. THE STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The problems and main issues may easily be stated with the following questions: Did the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ take place on Wednesday, Thursday, or Friday? Approximately what time of day was the resurrection? Was it in the afternoon of the weekly Sabbath, the early evening hours at the close of the Jewish Sabbath, or at about sunrise on the first day of the week, Sunday? These are the primary problems of the three-sided controversy. Other, less important issues are also closely involved, concerning the harmony of the four separate gospel accounts of the events taking place in close connection with the greatest moment of all time and eternity.

II. THE ORIGIN OF THE DAYS

It has been supposed for centuries that Good Friday marks the day of crucifixion. Catholics as well as Protestants have accepted this without dissent, and millions of believers have never even so much as heard the question raised whether it could be possible that Friday is not the day after all. To many persons a questioning of the time of Christ's death and resurrection would border on sacrilege. Most commentators have taken the side of tradition and with great erudition have expounded the original Greek text to harmonize the rest of the Scriptures with their theory.

That the resurrection occurred on Easter Sunday at sunrise is likewise a well-established tradition. Nevertheless; might it not be that false assumptions have been responsible for misinterpretation, and false conclusions drawn in days past have resulted in setting apart days not warranted by Scripture? One must conclude that it is imperative as well as scriptural to ascertain the facts. The command is given to Christians to prove all things and to hold fast to that which is good (I. Thessalonians 5:21). Every sincere Christian should be willing to see this.

It is commonly assumed that the keeping of these days is based upon early tradition and that apostolic practices continued uninterrupted through the centuries to the present.

This is far from the truth. Nothing can be established on the basis of historical continuity or tradition.¹ Palm Sunday, Good Friday, and Easter are traditions of a much later date, as church historians have ably demonstrated. No special days, apart from the first day of the week, were ever observed in New Testament times.

III. THE PROBLEMS OF ESTABLISHING A DAY

A very likely possibility of making a mistake is due, in part, to the different methods of computing time among the Romans and Jews. The former employed the system which is now used, while the latter started the new day at sundown. Furthermore, there seems to be a widespread ignorance among commentators that the Jews observed special Sabbath days, other than the weekly Sabbath. This can account for the erroneous assumptions made regarding the day of crucifixion, and once this day was set apart and observed every year for generations, it was only the next step that commentators of all persuasions should tacitly accept this position and then attempt to defend it from Scripture.²

Assuming at present for argument's sake that Friday

¹Roy M. Allen, Three Days in the Grave (New York: Loizeaux Brothers, 1942), p. 12.

²Herbert W. Armstrong, The Resurrection Was Not on Sunday! pp. 1-2.

was not the actual day of crucifixion, that tradition is wrong, and that most expositors have erred on this point, how would it be possible to establish the correct day for the crucifixion? The problem indeed becomes greater and more perplexing when it is considered that many godly men have thoroughly studied the problem and yet disagree vehemently in their conclusions. It may be almost construed as proof of Alexander Pope's assertion that "fools rush in where angels fear to tread," to attempt a minute investigation of the problem.

The question still stands as to how the correct day for the crucifixion may be established. It will be universally agreed that any study of the problem should be based, primarily, upon the scriptural record. If it is then possible to produce additional proof from an outside source, such as a historian or a computer of the historical calendar of the passion week, this may be done. But under no circumstances must the scriptural narrative be set aside in favor of some other account.

Despite the fact, however, that on the one hand certain authors state the impossibility of ascertaining the chronological date of the year of the crucifixion,³ other authors, whether they be false apostles or conservative

³R. M. Allen, op. cit., p. 13.

biblical scholars, make elaborate calculations to indicate the year, month, and day. An added problem exists therefore, because of the variation of offered dates, to determine whether or not the precise year can be calculated chronologically, and if so, which scholar's calculations are correct. The value of such an investigation may not yet be seen, but as this study proceeds, it will be demonstrated that, once the correct date for the passion week has been found, many perplexing problems will disappear.

IV. THE VALUE OF THE INVESTIGATION

At this point someone may well ask of what value it is to know the exact day of crucifixion or resurrection. Is it not merely a technical point that does not matter? And also, if some other day be established for the crucifixion and resurrection, does it mean that the Church must change her custom to the correct day or days?

If it were only a technical matter and the investigation a mere gratification of someone's vanity in proving himself correct, it most certainly would not matter in the least. If, on the other hand, the establishing of the day of crucifixion, as well as all other chronology of the passion week, results in substantiating the accuracy and harmony of the various accounts and illuminating passages which are otherwise difficult

to understand, the study is distinctly worth while. To this may be added the resulting appreciation for some of the formerly difficult New Testament passages, a better understanding of Old Testament types, and a new vision of the meaning of the cross. With these results no further incentive to pursue the subject to its conclusion will be required.

There also need be no fear that the ascertaining of the facts would have any bearing on the time-honored customs of such churches which set aside a special day to commemorate the crucifixion. In practice the day can just as well be Friday as any other. Does not Christianity observe December 25 as the birthday of Christ when it is universally admitted that He was not born on this day? The effect of the truth would thus not necessarily influence the observances of the Church, though, of course, it would be by far better to have the observances--if it is decided to have them at all--on the correct day, rather than on one we know to be wrong.⁴

The issue at hand then is to ascertain the facts regarding the death of Christ and let them witness for the truth; whether it be Friday, the day most commonly accepted; Wednesday, the day more popular among Bible students at present; or Thursday, the day in between.

⁴Ibid., pp. 15-16.

CHAPTER II

THE FRIDAY THEORY

It can be said apodictically that Good Friday is looked upon by Christendom as a whole as the day which is a perpetual memorial of the day on which Christ was crucified. Its observance is not of recent development. It has been firmly established for centuries.¹ And to relegate the idea of Friday as crucifixion day from the endearment of Christendom to the realm of false traditions cannot be tolerated without first properly presenting its claims.

I. ARGUMENTS FOR FRIDAY

The argument from antiquity. A primary argument for Friday as being the day on which Christ died is its time-honored position. Practically all great scholars of past generations accept the day. Lange, Edersheim, Alford, Smith, and Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown are just a few of those who adhere to Friday. It was not until Westcott wrote his study on the gospels² that anyone became suspicious of the accepted day. One wonders, if some other day can be established in

¹Armstrong, op. cit., p. 1.

²Brooke Foss Westcott, Introduction to the Study of the Gospel (New York: Macmillan and Company, 1886), p. 340.

It is the easiest thing to assume from these verses that the crucifixion took place immediately prior to the regular Jewish Sabbath. It is said that the women returned after Christ's burial and rested on the Sabbath (Luke 23:56). This seems to further substantiate the implication that the Jews observed the regular Sabbath during that week, that Christ hung on the cross on the day previous to the Sabbath, which was the day of preparation--namely Friday. This seems to be a simple explanation, in light of which all other Scriptures should be interpreted. By the women's visit of the tomb early Sunday morning the time of Christ's resurrection is established.

Thus the simplicity highly commends the theory, for it requires nothing which is not apparent in the text.

The argument from Matthew 12:40. Two verses, Matthew 12:40 and Luke 24:21, require a rather loose interpretation by those that hold to the Friday theory. These passages, indicating that Christ would be in the heart of the earth "three days and three nights," are by no means considered a death blow to the theory. It is said that because Christ was general in many of His other prophetic statements, this expression also is general and of a veiled nature, despite the fact that Christ is using the literal wording of the Old Testament. It in no wise specifically circumscribes the

the time that Christ lay in the tomb.³

Anderson, and all others who propound this theory, have to indicate that Christ ate the Passover meal. This was done on the 15th of Nisan, in the evening following the killing of the Passover lamb. This occurred on the 14th of the month of Nisan. The explanation is given that Jesus rightly was crucified on the day of preparation, but this was the preparation for the weekly Sabbath, instead of the day prior to the Sabbath on which the feast of the Passover was eaten.⁴

II. ARGUMENTS AGAINST FRIDAY

In light of the seemingly strong evidence in favor of this theory, is there anything which may be adduced against it? In order to show that the Friday theory is erroneous, it must first be demonstrated that the theory does not meet all the conditions, and then another theory must be shown which will fit equally well all the evidence used for Friday and the arguments which can be brought against Friday.

³R. C. H. Lenski, Interpretation of St. Matthew's Gospel (Columbus, Ohio: The Wartburg Press, 1943), p. 494.

⁴Robert Anderson, The Coming Prince (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1957), pp. 111-113.

It is very probable that a question will be raised by some regarding an attempt to disprove the Friday theory. What is the difference? Is the question worth investigating? To this it must be answered that the question is all-important, for on it depends the authority and truthfulness of the Lord Jesus Christ. While He was teaching the people, the Pharisees asked Him for evidence of His authority as the Son of God: "Master, we would see a sign from thee" (Matthew 12:38). And it was to this challenge that Christ replied in the familiar words of Matthew 12:40.

The argument from Matthew 12:40. Christ answered the Pharisees:

An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas: For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. (Matthew 12:39-40)

Jesus staked His authority on this. If He did not remain in the tomb for three days and three nights, He is not the infallible Son of God.⁵ Once it is admitted that this means exactly what it says, the Friday theory has lost its case. Even such higher critics as Driver, Briggs, and

⁵M. R. De Haan, Jonah (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, 1957), p. 118.

Plummer admit that, although tradition insists that Christ lay in the grave only one day and parts of two others, Christ added "three nights," which meant exactly what He said it to mean.⁶

It is impossible to make the time stretch three days and three nights if the crucifixion occurred on Friday. It is not at all necessary to assume that "three days and three nights" implies exactly seventy-two hours. The condemning factor is that only two nights or less are provided for by a Friday crucifixion. Other Scriptures (Matthew 26:61; Mark 9:31; John 2:19), translated "in three days," allow for an interpretation of "within three days," or "inside of three days." The emphasis is on the fact that the action must be completed within the limit of three days. Again, even the higher critics admit that the Hebrew expression in Jonah 1:17, "And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights" refers to three literal days and literal nights. And Jesus said distinctly that as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the fish, so He would be the same length of time in the heart of the earth.

Now it must be admitted that the ancient rabbis,

⁶Willoughby C. Allen, Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Matthew (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1907), p. 139.

according to the Talmud, counted part of a day as a whole day. And thus by resorting to some Jewish custom, two hours or so on Friday, all day Saturday, and a few hours on Sunday are supposed to be equivalent of three days and three nights. However, the Bible is not interpreted by the Jewish Talmud. Christ rejected the Talmudic traditions of the Jews, and using the same literal expression as was used of Jonah, said "three days and three nights," and not one day and two nights.⁷

The argument from Luke 24:21. The answer of this verse, made by the two disciples to Christ on the road to Emmaus on Sunday afternoon after His resurrection, is indeed a heavy indictment of Friday:

But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel; and beside all this, to day is the third day since these things were done. (Luke 24:21)

The case against Friday looks black, indeed, for Sunday is not the third day since Friday.

There are those who object that the term "the third day" contradicts the statement "after three days." (Mark 8:31) But the solution to this apparent problem is found in the Scriptures themselves. A look at Esther 4:16 and 5:1 will

⁷Herman L. Hoeh, The Crucifixion Was Not on Friday, pp. 1-2.

suffice to indicate that the expression "on the third day" is equivalent to "after three days and three nights." Queen Esther had implored the people to fast for her for three days and three nights and then, on the third day, she went before the king.⁸

The argument from the two Sabbaths. Another difficult hurdle for Friday to surmount has to do with the fact that there were two Sabbaths in that eventful week. There was a "high day," the day after the regular Passover (John 19:31); then there was, of course, the regular weekly Sabbath.

Matthew 28:1 contains proof that there were two Sabbaths. The first clause is rendered, "In the end of the Sabbath," of more correctly, "after the Sabbath." However, to translate that phrase literally it should be rendered "after the Sabbaths." The Greek word translated "Sabbath" has the plural form in the original (*σαββάτων*). This is admitted by all.

As further proof for at least two Sabbaths, the fact should be noted that Luke says that the women prepared spices and then rested on the Sabbath (Luke 23:56), whereas Mark

⁸William L. Pettingill, Bible Questions Answered (Findlay, Ohio: Fundamental Truth Publishers, n.d.), p. 184.

writes that they bought the spices when the Sabbath was already past (Mark 16:1). If these two passages refer to one and the same Sabbath, then the Scriptures contain a gross contradiction.⁹

Some seek to explain the plural of "Sabbath" by assuming that the day was a doubled Sabbath; that is, the annual Sabbath and a weekly Sabbath had come on the same day. How this could make two Sabbaths out of one is not too clear. Certainly, a doubled Sabbath would be a new thing under the sun.

Why is it that the plural word has been translated singular? It must be that the translators were simply ignorant of the fact that the Jews had other Sabbaths besides the weekly Sabbath. And assuming that Christ was crucified the day before the weekly Sabbath, everything must bend to their Friday theory, even if it means a mistranslation of the Word.

The arguments from circumstantial evidence. There is additional evidence which can be produced against the Friday theory. When it is taken by itself it may not carry much weight. Nevertheless, on top of all the direct evidence it must be recognized.

⁹Roscoe G. Sappenfield, "Did Christ Die on Wednesday, Thursday, or Friday?" Our Hope, LXIII (April, 1957), 620.

There is, first of all, the argument from the two silent days of the passion week. Commentators who subscribe to the Friday theory--and nearly all of them do--are forced to conclude that there are two silent days in this week. Counting from the arrival at Bethany, six days before the Passover, it is said that there is absolutely no record of two whole days. This seems very strange when one considers the amount of space devoted to the events of the last week, as compared with the rest of Christ's earthly ministry.

Approximately one-third of all that is written in the combined gospels relates entirely to this last week, out of a lifetime of thirty-three years and a public ministry of over three...Every moment of His time appears to be accounted for [from the time of the arrival at Bethany], until the morning of the resurrection.¹⁰

Yet when these days are pieced together, the Friday proponents calmly assert that two whole days are missing! And few there are who will even admit this; most of them do not deal with the entire chronology of the passion week, obviously because they sense some incongruity.

One last evidence to be brought against the Friday theory is that of typology. Great spiritual truths are taught through types in the Old Testament. The Lord Jesus Himself recognized this and indicated at various times that He Himself

¹⁰R. M. Allen, op. cit., p. 23.

was the fulfillment of a type. So, for instance, in John 3:14 He taught that the serpent which Moses lifted up in the wilderness was a type of salvation through His own lifting up on the cross.

When John the Baptist called the people's attention to Christ as the Lamb of God, he thereby meant that the Passover lamb was a type of the Lord Jesus Christ. And the Apostle Paul likewise had a clear understanding of this truth, when he wrote to the Corinthians, "For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us." (I. Corinthians 5:7)

Despite the fact that this comparison will again be discussed later on, it would be well to briefly note how Christ completely fulfilled the type of the Passover lamb. In Exodus 12 it is seen that the Passover lamb was set aside for death on the tenth day of the month and it was sacrificed on the 14th of Nisan, four days later. When Christ came riding into Jerusalem on an ass, as prophesied by Zechariah (9:9), He was rejected by the nation of Israel (Luke 19:47) and thus automatically set aside as God's lamb, earmarked for death. If the type holds true to form, He should have been put to death after four days; but from Sunday to Friday are five days.¹¹ Surely everyone has heard of dilemmas with horns, to one of

¹¹A. G. Krushwitz, A Scriptural Calendar of Passion Week, pp. 1-2.

which one might cling if his position failed; but here is a dilemma without horns.

Based upon these cited objections, it can be seen that Friday does not meet all the scriptural conditions for the day of the crucifixion. The great strength of the Friday position--its antiquity and uncontroverted acceptance--has been undermined by the fact that this universal acceptance of the theory led to forced interpretations to fit the assumed conditions. There have been no argumentative constructive foundations laid for it.

Is there then some other day which will meet the conditions in an acceptable manner? Those who adhere to the Wednesday theory steadfastly affirm that Wednesday can meet every test and is the only day probable and possible. Therefore it will be ^{wice} to leave Friday and to state and analyze the claims for Wednesday.

CHAPTER III

THE WEDNESDAY THEORY

One writer proudly asserts that only he could be right:

We have now located, with Bible proof, two of the prophetic days, the triumphal entrance on Saturday, and His trials and crucifixion on Wednesday. Let us now find the day of His resurrection; then we promise you showers of proof establishing all [*italics in the original*] the days.¹

What is the "Bible proof" for Wednesday, and where are these "showers of proof" establishing Wednesday as the day of Christ's death? Before this subject is taken up, it will be necessary to briefly mark the divisions among the Wednesday adherents.

I. CLASSIFICATION OF WEDNESDAY ADHERENTS

Cultic adherents. The zealous adherents of the Wednesday theory may be classified into two groups. First, there are those who vehemently defend Wednesday as the crucifixion day because they belong to a cult which holds that Christians in this age must keep the law and therefore are bound to keep the Sabbath. Perhaps the most cultic of these

¹ William Fredrick, Three Prophetic Days (Clyde, Ohio: William Fredrick, Publisher, n.d.), p. 25.

men is Herbert W. Armstrong. He writes:

The New Testament reveals that Jesus, the apostles, and the New Testament Church, both Jewish and Gentile-born observed God's Sabbath, and God's festivals-- weekly and annually!²

Other groups also stress the necessity of keeping the Jewish Sabbath. The Seventh-day Adventists and other Seventh-day sects are especially outspoken on this. Many a book and pamphlet has been written to defend their position and to demonstrate that Christ died on Wednesday and rose on Saturday afternoon, giving Christians therefore no basis to observe the first day of the week. Perhaps the most widely distributed booklet of this nature is Authoritative Quotations on the Sabbath and Sunday, issued by the Voice of Prophecy. It attempts to take away any ground for a Sunday observance.

Consecrated adherents. The other group which adheres to the Wednesday theory--and this is by far the larger group--does so because it has a love for the Scriptures and considers them as the Word of God. In sensing the impossibility of the Friday theory, the constituents of this group endeavor to do all justice to the biblical teaching concerning Christ's death and resurrection. The cultic motive and slant is foreign to them, while there are still those in their ranks, to be sure, who hold that the resurrection occurred on Saturday.

²Herbert W. Armstrong, Easter is Pagan! p. 12.

II. ARGUMENTS FOR WEDNESDAY

The argument from the time in the tomb. Whether a group among those contenting for Wednesday has one or the other of the above-mentioned viewpoints, the pivotal point for them is still Matthew 12:40. The term "three days and three nights" is assumed to mean exactly seventy-two hours. This period of time, it is insisted, includes the interval from the time the Savior's body was placed in the tomb until He arose from it.³

The different viewpoints have already been briefly mentioned. Some groups--usually the sects--place the entombment at or before six o'clock on Wednesday evening, the exact moment at which the Jewish day changed to the next. Seventy-two hours later, either before or exactly at six o'clock on Saturday evening, Christ arose. In either case, if this were true--and this is usually why this theory is proposed--there would be no justification for the observance of the first day of the week. For if the resurrection did not occur on the first day of the week, then Sunday is of no special significance. To have Christ rise at exactly 6 p.m. on Saturday neatly saves the proponent the problem of explaining how Christ

³R. A. Torrey, Difficulties in the Bible (Chicago: Moody Press, 1907), pp. 104-105.

could have risen on the Sabbath; neither does it compel him to hold that Christ rose on the first day of the week.

Interpretations of this sort are not entirely acceptable to those sincere believers who merely wish to honor God's Word. By them the solution is offered that the interment of Christ's body was retarded for a few moments, allowing Nicodemus and the others to bury Him just after sunset, but definitely at a time within the following day. Dr. De Haan writes therefore, not without some ambiguity as to the exact moment of burial:

Our Lord Jesus Christ was crucified on Wednesday, He died at three o'clock Wednesday afternoon, and was buried at or about sundown that same evening, and remained in the tomb until Saturday evening, and arose at the conclusion of the sabbath. The Jewish day began at sundown and ended at sundown. Hence, Jesus was in the tomb from Wednesday evening until Saturday evening, arising at the beginning of the first day of the week which began immediately after sundown. Only thus can we understand the words of our Lord Jesus, that like Jonah, He would be in the heart of the earth for "three days and three nights."⁴

Generally speaking, those who believe in the Wednesday crucifixion seek to do honor to the Scriptures. They show that they are willing to take God at His word when they insist on an interment of seventy-two hours. Yet another commendable point to their theory is the recognition that there were at least two Sabbaths during the passion week.

⁴De Haan, op. cit., p. 120.

The argument from the two Sabbaths. Though the Wednesday proponents may not agree on the exact number and position of Sabbaths during the week in which Christ was crucified, they do recognize that there was not merely the weekly Sabbath. There is unanimous agreement among them that with the Jews the fifteenth day of this month was always a Sabbath, no matter on what day of the week it came. It was an annual Sabbath, entirely apart from the weekly Sabbath.⁵

The argument from the interpretation of ἄψευδ and ἐπιφώσκω. Those who are not familiar with the Wednesday theory may wonder how it is possible to place the resurrection of Christ in the evening. The need for it to be placed there, instead of early Sunday morning, is apparent, as otherwise Christ's entombment would have exceeded the seventy-two hour mark by several hours!

As proof for this position, two Greek words from Matthew 28:1 are adduced, where it is recorded that the women went to the tomb, supposedly on Saturday evening. The words themselves will be discussed in detail later. Suffice it to say that the contention is that in employing these two words, Matthew is describing the visit to the tomb by the same women,

⁵Fredrick, op. cit., p. 15.

immediately after the Sabbath was over--not on the next morning. Some suppose that just one visit was made to the sepulchre, others believe there were several visits, because of the different accounts.⁶

The argument from the events of the passion week.

Those who examine the writings of the different Wednesday proponents are soon brought to the conviction that there is great confusion relative to the exact events of the passion week. Scriptural accounts are very specific in describing the events of that week. But just as there is one day missing if Christ was crucified on Friday, so there is one day too many if Wednesday was the actual day of crucifixion. To remedy this dilemma the triumphal entry is shifted from Sunday to Saturday, the Jewish Sabbath. Some who subscribe to a Wednesday crucifixion do not mention the triumphal entry at all; others know that it must have been four days before the crucifixion but say that the 10th of Nisan fell on a weekly Sabbath that year. But in the latter case there is no attempt made to establish the correct chronological year.⁷ The position is obviously only a "city of refuge." Consequently it is possible to always detect someone subscribing to the Wednesday theory, when he states that Christ rode as Messiah

⁶R. M. Allen, op. cit., pp.28-29.

⁷Fredrick, op. cit., p. 14.

into Jerusalem on the Sabbath day, instead of Palm Sunday.

These then are the main arguments for the Wednesday theory: Christ's entombment lasted exactly seventy-two hours; Christ's triumphal entry took place on Saturday; and four days later, on Wednesday, He died. Then exactly seventy-two hours after His burial He arose.

While the integrity and sincerity of the theory's proponents is unquestionable, the degree to which many have employed their God-given common sense and reasoning faculties in following out all the ramifications of the theory, is open to serious question. This theory does not satisfy every condition, despite the many statements made to that effect.

II. ARGUMENTS AGAINST WEDNESDAY

The Wednesday theory is packed with inconsistencies and erroneous conclusions, unsupportable by either Scripture or common sense. This shall be demonstrated in the following pages.

The argument from the complete unit theory. The whole theory stands on very precarious ground. It is a complete unit theory. Each of its parts is like a link in a chain, and if one link breaks the whole theory will completely collapse. Once it can be positively demonstrated that the triumphal entry was not on the Jewish Sabbath but rather on

the first day of the week, then the crucifixion could not possibly have taken place on Wednesday. It will be remembered that the triumphal entry was on the 10th of Nisan and the slaying of the Passover lamb was in that year, as in all years previously, on the 14th of Nisan, four days later.

Furthermore, a demonstration that Matthew's account of the women's visit to the tomb is identical to the visits recorded by the other evangelists, will all but destroy the Wednesday theory.⁸

The argument from the triumphal entry. There is, first of all, strong circumstantial evidence that Christ did not come to Jerusalem on Saturday. All four gospel writers record Christ's triumphal entry (Matthew 21, Mark 11, Luke 19, John 12). If the triumphal entry had taken place on the Sabbath, as the Wednesday advocates insist, certain grave questions could be raised. First of all, had Christ ridden on the ass on the Sabbath day, He most certainly would have been criticized for it. Had he not been criticized before (Matthew 12:10; Mark 2:24; Luke 13:14; John 9:36) for supposedly violating the Sabbath day? And would it not seem out of order and entirely incompatible with a Jewish Sabbath to have crowds

⁸R. M. Allen, op. cit., pp. 31-32.

singing, shouting, and breaking off branches from the palm trees, whenever criticism was leveled against the breaking of heads of grain (Matthew 21:16)? This surely would have been a gross violation of the usual solemnity with which a Sabbath was regarded.

In addition to this, the journey between Bethany and Jerusalem, which Christ made with His disciples on the same day (Mark 11:11), was two and a half Sabbath days' journeys away, for Bethany was located a mile beyond the summit of the Mount of Olives. Jesus returned to Bethany on the same day (Mark 11:11) and therefore, He and His disciples walked at least five Sabbath days' journeys on one day.⁹

To further indicate that Jesus would have violated the Sabbath, it may be said that the cleansing of the temple, which Matthew and Luke imply was on the same day, could under no circumstances have been carried out on a Sabbath. Religious legalists like the Jews would never have tolerated the transaction of commercial business that day, even though they permitted to have the temple defiled for worldly gain on other days.

An added bit of conclusive evidence against the Lord's entrance into Jerusalem on the Sabbath may be rightly called

⁹H. B. Hacket (ed.), "Bethany," Smith's Dictionary of the Bible (New York: Hurd and Houghton, 1871), I, 285.

chronological evidence. These proofs are given in distinction to the circumstantial evidence produced above.

Sir Robert Anderson, well known for his scholarship and erudition, has been of invaluable service to Christianity by his calculation of certain scriptural dates. He is generally accepted as an authority on chronology relating to the prophecy and coming of Christ. Because his calculations shall be referred to later, suffice it to say for the present that his conclusions concerning the triumphal entry place the date on the 6th of April, A. D. 32, which is Sunday, the 10th of the month of Nisan.¹⁰ Since the slaying of the Passover lamb was four days later, Christ most certainly could not have been crucified on Wednesday. Some Wednesday proponents (like De Haan) agree with Anderson's chronology and yet still cling firmly to the Wednesday crucifixion.

One is caused to wonder why the advocates of the Wednesday theory have not bothered to figure out some of these implications for themselves, instead of calmly asserting that Wednesday is the only day which meets every condition and is true to the teaching of the Word.

¹⁰Anderson, op. cit., p. 127.

The argument from the visit at the tomb. It is necessary to bring further arguments against the Wednesday theory to demonstrate how ill it fits all the facts.

When the date of the crucifixion is tabulated as being Wednesday, the 14th of Nisan, it follows logically that Thursday, the 15th, is the special Passover Sabbath. Thus Friday becomes a secular day between the two Sabbaths. According to the Wednesday theory, the women bought spices on this day and prepared them, then waited until the weekly Sabbath was passed before they made any move whatsoever to go and embalm the body.

That spices were bought sometime after the entombment of Christ is plainly evidenced by the Scriptures (Mark 16:1, Luke 23:56; 24:1). It has been explained by some that the period of seventy-two hours was necessary to dispel all claims that Christ was not dead. This may perhaps be true, for science has demonstrated that mitotic cell divisions and other vital processes can continue for some time after death. However, if the case of the death of Lazarus is recalled, it should be noted that Lazarus' body was decomposing after four days already. But we are led to believe by the Wednesday advocates that the women failed to go to the tomb on the intervening secular day--^{Friday}~~Thursday~~--but passed up the opportunity for another forty-eight hour period. Then the women are supposed to have gone to the tomb at the

same period which was offered by Martha as an objection to the opening of Lazarus' tomb. How can this be?

It seems obvious that the women went back to the grave because they considered the embalming after the death of their Lord insufficient and incomplete. And they wished to stay the dissolution of the body for as long as possible. The only logical conclusion to the matter is that the women didn't go back to the tomb any earlier than they did because they couldn't. There was no intervening day!

To follow the theory that Mary Magdalene and the other Mary (Matthew 28:1) went to the tomb Saturday evening after sunset already is sheer inanity.¹¹ Elsewhere (Luke 24) the specific information is given that Mary Magdalene (and perhaps the other Mary) were among the party that went to the tomb early the first day of the week. Why Mary Magdalene neglected to tell the others that they were going on a fool's errand in the morning is difficult to understand. If Christ had already met her the night before, why should she go along in the morning and then naively inquire where they had laid the body of Christ (John 20:2)? It is far easier to reconcile the different accounts of the visit to the tomb by holding that they were separate reports of the same event

¹¹Fredrick, op. cit., 105-106.

than to accuse Mary Magdalene of being some sort of a somnambulist.¹²

The argument from Matthew 12:40. It has already been stated that the basis upon which the Wednesday theory is build is Matthew 12:40:

For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

Nothing thus far has been mentioned concerning the proper interpretation of this verse. Wednesday advocates sum up their understanding of the verse thus:

Seventy-two hours later, exactly three days and three nights, at the beginning of the first day of the week (Saturday at sunset), He arose again from the grave. When the women visited the tomb just before dawn next morning, they found the grave already empty. So we are not driven to any such makeshift as that any small portion of a day is reckoned as a whole day and night, but we find that the statement of Jesus was literally true. Three days and three nights His body was dead and lay in the sepulchre.¹³

It should be noticed that in Matthew 12:40 the time interval is three days and three nights. No mention is made of hours, but Wednesday proponents are quick to claim that this means exactly seventy-two hours. Of course, only this period of time is advantageous to their theory, for any less

¹²R. M. Allen, op.cit., pp. 42-44.

¹³Torrey, op. cit., pp. 104-105.

or more number of hours just would not do. The signal import of the phrase here is not that exactly seventy-two hours should be fulfilled, but that the Lord meant exactly what He said; nothing more, nothing less.

The inconsistency of the Wednesday theory is that having determined that "three days and three nights" means exactly seventy-two hours, its proponents insist that Jesus therefore literally fulfilled this by being in the grave for seventy-two hours. Thereafter, all Scripture bearing upon the subject is made to fit this interpretation. Perhaps a rather lengthy quotation from Allen's book is in order, because he skilfully goes right to the heart of the matter:

Three nights and three days, although the equivalent in duration, is not a substitute expression for three days and three nights, for they cannot be reckoned from the same starting-point nor do they terminate at the same time. It might be conceded that there are cases where it would not make any difference which expression was employed, but the present instance cannot be classed among them for the vital point at issue here is the question of when the designated time terminated [*italics in the original*]. There is a difference of twelve hours between them, and the Wednesday advocates are using this very expression to advance the time of the resurrection twelve hours over that generally accepted. If Jesus meant three nights and three days it seems logical to assume that, knowing the distinction, He would have used that expression rather than the one recorded. It also seems logical that we should accept His statement just as He expressed it...than to stretch the expression to mean exactly 72 hours, which is not necessarily implied by His words.¹⁴

¹⁴R. M. Allen, op. cit., pp. 46-47.

The argument from the interpretation of prophecy.

A major segment of those who have cast their lots in favor of the Wednesday theory produce as one of the proofs for holding to this position the utterances of Gabriel to Daniel in the book of Daniel, chapter nine:

And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself; and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week; and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease. (26-27a)

It is falsely regarded that the antecedent of "he" in verse 27 is the "Messiah" of verse 26. Without regard for the "prince" that is mentioned, nor the proper interpretation of the last clause of verse 26--which can even by the furthest stretch of the imagination not apply to Christ--the theory is expounded that here is a clear prophecy that Messiah would only minister for three and a half years, and that He would be crucified on Wednesday, in the middle of the week.¹⁵

The assertions of one of these adherents may be quoted here to give the exact position:

In a sense this is a dual prophecy. Christ died in the midst of the prophetic week of seven years, after 3 1/2 years of ministry; but He also died in the midst of the week--Wednesday!¹⁶

A careful study of the angel's words will show that

¹⁵Fredrick, op. cit., p. 20.

¹⁶Hoeh, op. cit., p. 9.

only verse 23a applies to the Messiah; the other portion finds its fulfillment in the one who is elsewhere referred to as the "beast" (Daniel 12:11, Revelation 13:1). His prototype was Antiochus Epiphanes, who sacrificed a sow upon the altar. There is absolutely no basis for asserting that Daniel 9:26-27 prophesies the exact time when Christ would be crucified in the passion week.

Perhaps these stated reasons will suffice to show that the claim of the Wednesday proponents has been founded upon sand. Facts will not confirm the claim that only this theory can satisfy the Scripture narratives and all conditions in every respect. Once it can be demonstrated that another day can meet all conditions and has consequently fewer problems and difficulties, simple logic and scholarly honesty require that Wednesday be abandoned as the day on which the spotless Lamb of God--the true Passover--was slain.

CHAPTER IV

SCRIPTURAL EVIDENCE FOR THE TIME ELEMENTS

Because it has been shown that neither Friday nor Wednesday adequately satisfies the various factors pertinent to the time of the crucifixion, there is inferential proof that Thursday was the day. If this is true, the correctness of this day ought to be capable of being logically demonstrated. The diverse Scripture references relative to this monumental event must fall into their proper place, without conflict or contradictions. If Thursday be the proper day, the theory would necessarily have to be harmonious and free from incongruities.

I. INTERPRETATION OF KEY PASSAGES

The Interpretation of Matthew 12:40

The two theories which have been discussed have been founded upon certain key passages; and one of the main passages for each theory has been Matthew 12:40, which has been interpreted in the light of certain false assumptions. For the purpose of discovering exactly how the verse has been misinterpreted, it would be expedient to keep the exact wording of the verse in mind:

For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

Matthew 12:40 in the light of John 2:18. At a different occasion Christ was asked by the Jews for a sign of His authority. To this He replied, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." (John 2:18) In this instance He spoke of the temple, His body (2:21). Although the occasion for and the statement of Matthew 12:40 is entirely different, the Wednesday proponents have interpreted this passage as having application to Christ's body as well. Then, based upon a further assumption that the burial took place around 6 p.m., the Wednesday theory is fabricated. Christ's body having to be in the grave for three days puts therefore the resurrection at approximately 6 p.m. Saturday evening.¹

Matthew 12:40 in the light of I. Corinthians 15:4.

Often this verse is produced to prove that Christ's body lay in the grave for three days. The verse reads, "And that he was buried and that he rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures." But it cannot be proven conclusively that this does not merely refer to the prophecy or the burial in Isaiah 53:9, "And he made his grave with the wicked and with the rich in his death." This prophecy has been precisely fulfilled; Christ was crucified with the two thieves and yet was

¹R. M. Allen, op. cit., pp. 48-50.

given an honorable burial by the rich Joseph of Arimathea (John 19:38-42). But no matter in what disposition His body was, in John 2:18 Christ was speaking of His human habitation, His body, which He would not be able to use again until the third day, when He would be resurrected. And this is to what Paul makes reference in I. Corinthians 15:4.

Matthew 12:40 in the light of Ephesians 4:9. In Matthew 12:40 Christ was not speaking of His body. The Apostle Paul announced where Christ was for the three days and three nights: "Now that he ascended, what is it but that he descended first into the lower parts of the earth?" (Ephesians 4:9) The same teaching is given in 1. Peter 3:9. While His body lay dead in the sepulchre, Christ was in the lower parts or heart of the earth.

Matthew 12:40 in the light of Luke 23:43. There is still another verse of Scripture which would at least indicate that Christ was not speaking of His body in Matthew 12:40. To the repenting thief on the cross He said, "Today shalt thou be with me in Paradise." (Luke 23:43) What would have been the difference if Jesus had said, "Today thou shalt be with the Son of Man in Paradise"? Absolutely none. The real person of Jesus was not the body but the soul and spirit. Had it been the body, then it must be assumed that the thief was buried with Him on that same day in the same tomb.

The Interpretation of "the heart of the earth"

The logical inference is inescapable that the "three days and three nights in the heart of the earth" have reference to the place of the living personality of Christ rather than to His body in the tomb. The phrase designates the place where Christ was between His death and resurrection.

It would be dishonest to deny that great theologians have held to either view; that is, that the body or person of Christ is meant. Most of those who are generally considered orthodox have indicated that reference is made to the Lord's spirit rather than to His body. To these belong König, Meyer, Stier, Webster, Wilkinson, and Alford. The Roman Catholic Church holds the same view.²

Old Testament typology. A fact that is commonly overlooked by most expositors deals with the state of Jonah while he was in the belly of the great fish. Though the fact cannot be employed to either prove or disprove the above interpretation of Matthew 12:40, it is nevertheless interesting to notice that Jonah was dead while he was in the fish. De Haan demonstrates in a very convincing manner that this was the case.

²James Morison, A Practical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Matthew (Boston: N. J. Bartlett and Company, 1884), p. 217

The soul of Jonah went into sheol (Jonah 2:2) from whence he cried, while his body rested in death in the abdomen of the fish (Jonah 2:1). Also, there is a description of the place of "sheol" or "hades," namely at "the bottom of the mountains."³

New Testament teaching. Once the truth of Matthew 12:40 is understood, it is easy to comprehend that the Scripture itself sets the start for the three days and three nights. If the heart of the earth is the same as Abraham's bosom (Luke 16:27) or Paradise (Luke 16:32), and if the spirit of Jesus went there immediately upon His death--which it did--then there is no problem in determining at what time of day this took place. The Scriptures are clear on this. Christ died at the ninth hour (Jewish time), or about 3 p.m. (Mark 15:34; Luke 23:44). To apply this time to the Wednesday element would mean that Christ rose three days and three nights later, or around 3 p.m. on Saturday afternoon. But had He remained in the grave until sunset or a few minutes past--as Wednesday advocates assert--He would have been dead seventy-five hours and would have been raised on the fourth day, instead of on the third.⁴

³De Haan, op. cit., pp. 80-82.

⁴R. M. Allen, op. cit., pp. 53-55.

II. THE EXPOSITION OF THE GREEK

In Matthew 28:1, another pivotal verse for the various theories, there are used two controversial words which should be given some consideration. The verse under discussion reads as follows: "In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to the sepulchre."

The words in question are ὄψε̄ , in the phrase ὄψε̄ δε̄ σαββᾱτιων̄ . Upon these two words most of the Wednesday advocates base their pronouncement that two of the women already made an evening visit to the sepulchre. This is to be conclusive proof that Christ had risen shortly after sunset on Saturday , rather than around sunrise on the first day of the week. The other gospels simply mention a morning visit, so it is this verse only upon which the argument hinges. It was already pointed out earlier that it seemed ridiculous for the two women to whom the resurrected Christ appeared Saturday evening, to go back to the tomb on Sunday morning to anoint His body.

The Meaning of ὄψε̄

The definition of ὄψε̄ as given in the Greek lexicon is "after a long time," "at length," "late." It also can mean "late in the day," "at even." The adverb is in direct opposition of the word πρω̄ί .

It must be recognized that the usage of this word admits for considerable latitude of meaning, according to the lexicon definition.⁵ The underlying thought for the word in English is "later on," "after," "subsequently," "following." Despite these broad meanings it will be admitted that the secondary meaning "at even" is permissible. And those that subscribe to the Wednesday theory hold to this. The evening is said to be between 6 p.m. and 9 p.m. Therefore, as far as the time element of that word is concerned, one would be justified in saying that it suggests a time near the end of the Sabbath. Let this be granted, notwithstanding the fact that Lenski rightly remarks,

It is unfortunate that the R. B. has translated *ὄψε Σαββάτων*, "now late on the Sabbath day." This would say that the women came to the tomb late on Saturday instead of early Sunday. This might be the sense of the Greek words used in the classics, but in Koine *ὄψε* is used as a preposition and means "after," "long after something."⁶

The Meaning of ἐπιφωσκούση

This word modifies *ὄψε* and although the other word might be translated in various ways, *ἐπιφωσκούση* has a more limited meaning. It is a form of the verb *ἐπιφώσκω*.

⁵Liddell and Scott, Greek-English Lexicon (New York: Follett Publishing Company, 1956), p. 509.

⁶Lenski, Matthew, op. cit., p. 1147.

There is some little difficulty here, because the end of the sabbath (and of the week) was at sunset the night before. It is hardly to be supposed that St. Matthew means the evening of the sabbath, though ἐπέφωκε is used of the day beginning at sunset (Luke xxiii. 54, and note). It is best to interpret a doubtful expression in unison with the other testimonies, and to suppose that here both the day and the breaking of the day are taken in their natural,⁸ not their Jewish sense [all italics in the original].

Alford notices the two different interpretations, and yet what he assumes is the correct Jewish sense of the word is in actuality nothing more than the imposed meaning, derived through "circular interpretation."

It can be seen that if the interpretation of Luke 23 verse 54 were equally applied to Matthew 28 verse 1, those subscribing to the Friday theory would find themselves impaled on the horns of a monstrous dilemma. To be consistent, they would have to hold that Christ was buried at 6 p.m. on Friday and rose at 6 p.m. on Saturday, exactly twenty-four hours later.

As far as the Wednesday proponents are concerned, they are also in a dilemma. It has been shown that the specific interpretation necessitates a reference to the beginning of daylight. Consequently, both ὄψε and ἐπιφωσκούση properly translated in the verse would render it thus: "Late

⁸ Henry Alford, The Greek Testament (Boston: Lee and Shephard, Publisher, 1885), p. 309.

after the Sabbaths, as it began to get light, toward the first day of the week came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the other sepulchre."

The record harmonizes perfectly with that of Mark, Luke, and John. There is no evidence that Christ rose Saturday evening at 6 p.m. or shortly thereafter. Rather, simultaneously with the visit to the tomb by the two women on Sunday morning, there was a big earthquake and the stone was rolled away from the tomb (Matthew 28:2). It is the most probable conclusion that Christ rose then or just prior to the earthquake.

For the present, sufficient discussion has been given to the time of the Savior's death and resurrection, and it would be advisable to see what may be learned regarding the exact time of His burial.

III. THE TIME OF THE BURIAL

For an extensive investigation of this seemingly simple problem the work of Allen should be consulted. He alone seems to have harmonized properly the various gospel accounts and listed their logical sequence. No one else, as yet, seems to have reached a similar conclusion on grounds of Scripture, though it seems to be the only conclusion possible in light of the Jewish culture, as well as the literal meaning of the Greek language. Allen's view, though greatly

condensed, is given below, after a discussion of the customs regarding the Jewish Sabbaths.

It is generally believed among Christians that Christ was buried around 6 p.m. on the day of crucifixion. Those subscribing to the Wednesday theory emphasize this fact because they start the period of seventy-two hours then. The Friday advocates hold their view because they assume that the weekly Sabbath started then.

Jewish Customs Relating to Sabbaths

A word which is often mentioned in connection with the events of the passion week is "the preparation." The Greek word for this is παρασκευή. Luke 23:45 reads, for example, *Καὶ ἦρα νύ παρασκευή* -- "and it was preparation day." The meaning of the verb *παρασκευάζω* is "to get ready," "prepare," "provide", "furnish."⁹

The background for this day of preparation is given in Exodus 16:5,22-29, where Moses instructs the people concerning the commandments of the Lord:

This is the day which the Lord hath said, Tomorrow is the rest of the holy sabbath unto the Lord: bake that which ye will bake today, and seethe that ye will seethe; and that which remaineth over lay up for you to be kept until the morning. And they laid it up till the morning... And Moses said, Eat that today; for today is a sabbath unto the Lord; today ye shall not find it in the field... See, for that the Lord hath given you the sabbath, therefore He giveth you on the sixth day the bread of

⁹Liddell and Scott, op. cit., p. 527.

two days.

The Jewish Sabbath was no fast day and yet the Jews had to make the preparation of food on the previous day. Therefore, every day before a Sabbath was designated a "preparation day."

As has been previously indicated, apart from the weekly Sabbaths, there were other Sabbaths in the Jewish ceremonial year. These are minutely described in Leviticus 23. Seven of these Sabbath days are mentioned in their order as follows:

1. The Passover Sabbath on the fourteenth day of the first month.
2. The Unleavened Bread Sabbath on the very next day.
3. The Feast of Firstfruits on the seventeenth day of the month.
4. The Feast of Pentecost, fifty days later.
5. The Feast of Trumpets, in the seventh month.
6. The Feast of Atonement.
7. The Feast of Tabernacles.¹⁰

Each of these Sabbaths was to be a day of rest, with complete cessation of labor (Leviticus 23:25). And each Sabbath had its day of preparation.

Now a complication would arise if two Sabbaths fell

¹⁰De Haan, *op. cit.*, pp. 122-123.

on succeeding days. The first Sabbath would be considered the day of preparation in name only. Only one day would be available to prepare for both. This was exactly the situation in the passion week. (The last chapter will deal in detail with this area.) A proper understanding of these Sabbaths and their preparation will help in explaining puzzling references in the gospels. The way in which the days of the Passover week were described permitted considerable latitude of expression. It is therefore necessary to interpret these accounts in the light of the Jewish customs.¹¹

For example, John writes, "And it was the preparation of the passover, and about the sixth hour." (John 19:14) He means that it was about 6 a.m. (according to Roman time) on the 14th of Nisan, which was the preparation day for the Passover Sabbath, starting at 6 p.m. The term "Passover" refers to the feast day. The words "feast of" are omitted because there was one particular passover day requiring a day of preparation.

The Burial

Previous discussion has shown that Christ died around the ninth hour, or three o'clock in the afternoon. The

¹¹R. M. Allen, op. cit., pp. 62-62.

subsequent events in the drama are recorded in John 19:31:

The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should remain upon the cross on the sabbath day, (for that sabbath day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away.

This was still on the day of preparation, the 14th, and therefore must have taken place before 6 p.m.

Jewish customs relating to burial. The common belief is that the Jews desired to have the bodies taken away before the incipient day. There is, however, a wealth of contrary evidence in all four gospels, which indicates that this was not so. The Jews merely took care that the body should not remain on the cross during the daytime of the following day. The literal rendering of the explanatory clause in this thirty-first verse of John 19 is "for the day of that Sabbath was a great one." The *ἡ ἡμέρα* would be superfluous unless it specially indicated the daytime, instead the whole twenty-four hour period.

The Jews did not particularly care when the Roman soldiers removed the bodies from the crosses, just as long as they would not be there on the following day. The Mosaic law relating to such a case is found in Deuteronomy 21:22-23:

And if a man have committed a sin worthy of death, and he be to be put to death, and thou hang him on a tree; His body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt in any wise bury him that day....

The evening time. The argument might be raised that both in Matthew 27:57 and Mark 15:42 there are strong indications that the words "when the even was come" set the time of the burial before sunset on the crucifixion day.

Closely connected with ὄψε̅ , the word discussed earlier, is the word ὀψίας̅ , translated "evening" in these two passages. There can be no doubt that the word has reference to the evening, after sunset, or the evening watch. The same word is used in Mark 1:32 where there is a clear indication that the time period explained commences with the setting of the sun: "And evening having come, when the sun did set." The phrase ὀψια̅ δὲ γενομένης̅ expresses completed action, for the participle is second aorist in tense; and so the entire phrase could be legitimately translated, "When it was already evening, there came a rich man of Arimathea..." In none of the six times that the word is used in the New Testament is there any implied reference to the time before sunset. There is nothing in the references which will not fit into a time period following the setting of the sun.¹²

The logical conclusion from this rather extensive discussion of "evening" must be that the next day, the 15th of Nisan, had already started when Joseph of Arimathea went to Pilate to ask for Christ's body. And the body must still

¹²Robert Young, Analytical Concordance to the Bible (New York: Funk and Wagnalls Company, n.d.), pp. 209-310.

have been hanging on the cross. The reason why Joseph went so late is not given. Perhaps one writer is correct when he remarks that

"when even had come" gains significance from the context that he "took courage" (Mark 15:42f.). His going to Pilate on such an errand was brazen audacity. Besides courage it called for extreme caution. He chose the time when everyone would be indoors partaking of the Passover meal.¹³

Pilate did not agree at once. Probably with customary oriental deliberation he inquired how Jesus could be dead so soon. Then to get proof that Joseph's words indeed were true, he sent for the centurion (Mark 15:45). It is possible that the centurion was called to come from Golgatha. The fact is certain, however, that considerable time must have elapsed before Joseph--carrying his hundred pounds of spices (John 20:39)--with the others reached the cross.

More time must have passed before the body was taken down, carried to the tomb, and the embalming began. John records (19:39-40) that linens and a great quantity of aromatics were used for the process. This must have been very time consuming.

The embalming. The general picture therefore is that much time passed by before the body of Christ was placed into

¹³J. Spencer Kennard, "The Burial of Jesus," Journal of Biblical Literature, VXXIV (December, 1955), 230.

the tomb. It seems entirely feasible that this was not done until 9 or 10 p.m. Several hours must have been consumed in the embalming. The hundred pounds of spices were used up, otherwise there would be no reason for the women to return on another day, having bought more.¹⁴

Only now does the real meaning of the language of Luke 23:53-54 become apparent:

And having it taken down, he wrapped it in a linen cloth and placed it in a tomb hewn in a rock, in which no one ever yet was laid. And it was preparation day, and a sabbath began to grow toward daylight.

Day was approaching. Christ's loyal disciples had worked the greater part of the night! But now it was Sabbath and they were defiled by a dead body. In all haste they concluded their work, so that they would not be seen. The law made provision that they could eat the Passover, which they had missed, one month later (Numbers 9:10-12). But by then Christ was risen and, He being the Passover lamb, there was no more necessity for the eating of the meal.¹⁵

The violation of the Sabbath. Should there be any objection that this view compels the disciples to violate a Sabbath by working, it need only be pointed out that the law commands only concerning this Sabbath, "...ye shall do no

¹⁴R. M. Allen, op. cit., pp. 67-68.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 69.

servile work therein." (Leviticus 23:7b) Other people died on these Sabbaths and nowhere in the law was there said anything against the burial of a body on such a day. Had the body been permitted to remain unembalmed, the disciples would have had to wait for two days, and by that time the decomposing of the corpse would have started, making the embalming useless.

The women rested on the seventh-day Sabbath "according to the commandment" (Luke 23:56b) and, having bought spices, returned to the tomb early Sunday morning to finish the embalming of their beloved Savior. Great controversy exists concerning that visit. Mark, Luke, and John definitely record a visit to the tomb early Sunday morning. Matthew's account, however, is very disputed as to when the visit took place.

IV. THE VISIT TO THE TOMB

All four gospel accounts record the visit to the sepulchre. It forms the connecting link of evidence between the dead and buried Savior and a gloriously risen Lord.

In light of the discussion of the words $\delta\psi\epsilon$ and $\epsilon\eta\phi\acute{\omega}\sigma\kappa\epsilon$ of Matthew 28:1, it would hardly seem necessary to devote another section to the study of the time when the visit(s) took place. However, the problem has a clear solution.

The Problem

Since the problem is such a puzzling one to many minds, and since there must be a definite answer as to why the four gospel accounts differ on this matter, at least a brief attempt should be made to establish the harmony of the gospel records on this important matter. The key passage in each gospel is as follows:

In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week... (Matthew 28:1)

And very early in the morning, the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun. (Mark 16:2).

Very early in the morning they came unto the sepulchre. (Luke 24:1)

The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre. (John 20:1)

Writing of the chapters in which these various accounts of the visit to the tomb appear, that great scholar, Henry Alford, expressed considerable doubt:

Supposing us to be acquainted with every thing said and done, in its order and exactness, we should doubtless be able to reconcile, or account for, the present forms of the narratives; but not having this key to the harmonizing of them, all attempts to do so... carry no certainty with them. And I may remark, that of all the harmonies, those of the incidents of these chapters are to me the most unsatisfactory. Giving their compilers credit for the best intentions, I confess they seem to me to weaken instead of strengthening the evidence, which now rests (speaking merely objectively) on the unexceptionable testimony of three independent narrators, and of one, who besides was an eye-witness of much that

happened.

The Solution.

This perhaps somewhat lengthy quotation from Alford indicates how even men of great learning are perplexed by these accounts. Yet the problem is by no means as unsolvable as the quotation might make it appear. Space will not permit to quote the separate accounts of the early morning visits. The narratives are familiar to most people. An effort will be made to merely piece together, as well as possible, the various details in the separate accounts for the purpose of reconstructing the scene at the tomb on that resurrection morning.

Most Wednesday proponents have arrived at the conclusion that there was an evening visit (according to Matthew) and a morning visit (according to the other gospels). But as has been sufficiently demonstrated, this cannot possibly be. The two women mentioned by Matthew were the same ones who, according to Mark, went to the tomb in the morning. Matthew relates how they even spoke to the Savior. Assuming that people behaved like human beings in those days, instead of inveterate somnambulists, there was no need for them to return with spices on the next morning, pretending that they knew nothing about His already being risen.

Each evangelist tells the story in his own way with

an eye to his reader or readers for whom he has planned his entire record. Should someone attempt to trace the reasons each had for including just what he did, he would be on some uncertain ground and dare not be too insistent. Instead of becoming critical, men should be grateful for the records that they have.¹⁷

The four narratives we have stand as four witnesses. When one reads these gospel records, the one attitude of even the most critical reader must be that the reports are true in even every detail. This attitude is unaffected by the science of textual criticism, which should only rest in the hands of competent scholars. The scholars' approved results are most precious. Therefore no part of the testimony that is offered dare be discredited on any subjective or dogmatical grounds as some critics have done. So, for instance, Briggs and Driver accuse Matthew of maliciously mutilating Mark's record of the sunrise visit to the tomb while they charge Mark with the "misunderstanding of his Aramaic authority" for the account.¹⁸

Whether or not an individual reader is able to fit

¹⁷R. C. H. Lenski, Interpretation of St. Luke's Gospel (Columbus, Ohio: The Wartburg Press, 1951), p. 1168.

¹⁸W. C. Allen, op. cit., pp. 26-30.

all the pieces in the records together has no bearing on the truth and the correction of these pieces themselves. What one man cannot do proves nothing in regard to more competent men. One should learn to patiently content himself with the fact that there are some problems--and they are few in number--that have not yet been cleared up. The Christian student has only one duty, namely, properly to combine all the testimony and thus to reconstruct the entire story. The statement, whether made by Wednesday advocates or anyone else, that this can never be done is unwarranted.

The Narrative

Matthew gives the moment of starting preparation for the journey by his use of ὄψε, and the general time of arrival by ἐπιφώσκειν. John probably has reference to the time he knew his mother left the home, "it still being dark."

(John 20:1) Luke emphasizes the time of the journey itself, "very early in the morning," (Luke 24:1) and Mark the time of arrival at the tomb, "and very early in the morning."

(Mark 16:2). The various emphases on the time of the visit reveal only too clearly the various viewpoints from which the writers explained the visit.

Having felt the need for more spices and ointments after the hurried burial on Thursday night (early Friday Jewish time), the women had decided to buy more and return to

the tomb after the two Sabbaths were past. Right after sundown on Saturday, when the stores opened again after the weekly Sabbath, they bought the necessary aromatics and prepared them. Awaiting the dawn of the first day of the week, they already started out while it was yet dark. They arrived just at sunrise.¹⁹

There is little imagination necessary to visualize what transpired upon the arrival at the tomb. On the way they had probably some doubt as to their strength being adequate to remove the stone from the entrance of the tomb. Beyond question they had no idea that a Roman guard had been placed by the tomb nor that a seal had been put on the stone.

Then they came within sight of the tomb, and to their consternation see that the stone has already been removed and the door is exposed. They all lead to the same natural conclusion that the tomb has been rifled by the enemies of Jesus, the Jews.

An angel had come from heaven (Matthew 28:2) and rolled away the stone and then sat on it. While the women were on their way, the dead body of Jesus Christ in the tomb had come to life and moved out of the closed sepulchre through the rock. Because of its very nature this act

¹⁹R. M. Allen, op. cit., pp 134-136.

was witnessed by no one. The soldiers saw and heard nothing of it. The tomb was then empty. But in the next instance-- just as signs of nature had accompanied the death of Christ-- an earthquake shook the ground, an angel flashed from the sky, perhaps touched the stone, making it fly from its place; the soldiers lay like dead, recovered, and then fled. The stone lying flat on the ground revealed that the sepulchre was empty: the angel sat upon it, and before the women arrived he entered the tomb. There is no way the movements of the other angel can be traced.

The women were convinced that the body of Jesus had been stolen by the Jews. Therefore Mary Magdalene turned and ran for help. She apparently did not see the angels. A short while later she reached Peter and John. She tells them, "They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him." (John 20:2) In meantime the other women have seen the angels and returned to tell the message of the angels to the disciples.

Peter and John start to go to the tomb, and after probably meeting the returning women on the path, they run the rest of the way, only to find the tomb empty, with the linen bands still there, neither cut nor stripped off. A strange sight to behold! Those flat wrappings certainly confirmed the testimony of the women: Jesus was indeed risen from the dead!

CHAPTER V

OLD TESTAMENT TYPOLOGY OF THE DEATH OF CHRIST

All the Scriptures speak of Christ. While talking to two of His disciples on the road to Emmaus He reproved them for not knowing this fact:

O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken; Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself. (Luke 24:25-27)

The Old Testament clearly teaches the death of Christ and His resurrection, in types and symbols. (Luke 24:46) If this is true, then these Scriptures must certainly speak of the exact time at which the lamb of God should be slain, and be gloriously raised as Lord and God. Some of these Old Testament passages will be briefly discussed to see how clearly and marvelously the sufferings of Christ were foretold, confirming the thesis that He died on the fifth day of the week and was raised on the first day.

I. CHRIST AND GENESIS 3:15

The first prophecy of Scripture relates to this combination of suffering and triumph for the Son of God. Christ, the seed of the woman, was to bruise the head of the serpent, Satan. But Satan would be permitted to bring affliction and

suffering to the Messiah, by bruising His heel.

Many other references could be adduced which teach the suffering of Christ, such as Isaiah 53, Psalm 22, and Psalm 69. That Christ used the Old Testament types on various occasions for the teaching of deeper spiritual truths is evident. In His talk with Nicodemus He referred to the serpent lifted up in the wilderness as illustrating what He had to go through. His use of Jonah is another sign. Beyond dispute, the greatest type which Christ fulfilled is that of the Passover lamb.

II. CHRIST AND EXODUS 12

The meaning of the Passover. A brief summary will suffice to indicate what the keeping of the Passover involved. When God announced to the children of Israel His plan of redemption by blood from the bondage of Egypt, He started their calendar with the month of Nisan (Exodus 12:2). The Israelites were commanded to take a male lamb of the first year, without blemish, and set it aside on the tenth day of the month (12:3,5). Then they were to keep it until the evening of the fourteenth day, when it was to be killed. Its blood was to be caught in a basin, then immediately applied to the lintel and side-posts of the door (12:7). The lamb was then taken into the house, roasted, and eaten later that

night, in the early hours of the 15th of Nisan. And no one could go outside until the morning (12:22).

Those dwelling within the blood-sprinkled doors would be passed over by the angel of death, therefore the entire occasion was designated "the Passover." This was to be from then on an annual memorial, to be observed forever (Exodus 12:14).

The institution of the tabernacle changed only slightly the Passover routine. It need only be mentioned that among other minor changes the Passover would be slain earlier in the evening or late afternoon, between three and six o'clock, instead of at the exact time of the setting of the sun: "Thou shalt sacrifice the passover at even, at the going down of the sun." (Deuteronomy 16:6).

The ceremonies of the Passover. The "Passover," in its real sense, is the slaying of the lamb. In close connections is the eating of it. These ceremonies, as noted, occurred on separate days, the 14th and 15th of Nisan, respectively, and necessitated certain terms to identify them. To these two ceremonies must be added a third observance. This is the elimination of all leaven from the Jewish meals for an entire week, from the 14th to the 21st of the month of Nisan. The 14th was called "the preparation day" for the "feast of the Passover," or "feast day," a

term given to the following day, although only a few hours intervened between the killing of the lamb and the eating thereof. The term "Feast of unleavened bread" applies to the entire week during which the use of leaven was forbidden. (Exodus 12:28). There is much difficulty connected with determining the exact Jewish customs of Christ's time, but as far as can be ascertained, especially in light of the Old Testament commandments, these are the right days for the Passover, as well as the proper terms for the days.¹

III. THE LAST SUPPER OF THE DISCIPLES

Commentators are at great variance with each other in setting the time for the last supper. There are those who hold that the last supper was eaten on the 13th, on the 14th, or on the 15th--and many are the proposed reasons. The issue at stake is not so much whether the crucifixion occurred on Wednesday, Thursday, or Friday, but rather it is a matter of reconciling the various accounts for the purpose of systematically setting forth the events on the days of the passion week (chapter VI).

When was the last supper eaten? Most people commonly identify it with the eating of the Passover lamb on the evening,

¹Hacket, op. cit., III, pp. 2349-2351.

that is, the first part of the 15th of Nisan. But this is impossible. John tells us that Christ was crucified on the preparation of the Passover, or, in other words, on the 14th of Nisan (John 19:14). Of course John knew what happened, because he was one of the disciples sent to make preparations for the meal. The statement is clear that the Jews had not yet eaten the Passover before Christ was crucified:

Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas unto the hall of judgment; and it was early; and they themselves went not into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the passover. (John 18:28)

Of necessity the conclusion follows that Christ could not have died as the Passover Lamb and at the same time have eaten the Jewish Passover. The objection might be raised that indeed Mark 14:12 seems to indicate that the Passover was eaten by Christ and His disciples:

And the first day of unleavened bread, when they killed the passover, his disciples said unto him, Where wilt thou that we go and prepare that thou mayest eat the passover? (Mark 12:14)

In light of the above explanation, however, it may be briefly mentioned that it was an universal practice among the Jews to set aside the leaven a whole day before the legal first day of unleavened bread. And the clause "when they killed the passover" serves merely as an identification of the feast of unleavened bread, at the time of the Passover.²

²R. M. Allen, op. cit., pp. 83-85.

The preparation which the disciples may have thought to be for the next day was made the preparation for an immediate meal which became the Paschal meal of that year. The events of the following morning rendered the regular Passover impossible. The time, therefore, at which the supper took place, was shortly after sunset, in the early evening hours of Thursday, the 14th of Nisan, which started, -as must be remembered, at 6 p.m. Christ's remarks will gain real meaning when these facts are kept in mind.

"And he said unto them, with desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer," (Luke 22:15) for here He informs His disciples that He would like to eat the Passover with them but is unable to do so. If this interpretation on the Last Supper seems strange or forced, it should be remembered that while the memory of events was still fresh, as it was at the time when the gospels were written, statements which seem perplexing now may have been readily intelligible from a knowledge of the connecting facts.³

The antitype of the Passover. It was mentioned earlier that one of the benefits for this whole study would be the clearer understanding of Old Testament typology, which of necessity accompanies this investigation. Perhaps nowhere

³Westcott, op. cit., pp. 339-340.

is there a clearer foreshowing of the events of the passion week than in the Passover. Christ was a lamb without blemish and without spot, free from all sin. He was chosen on the 10th day of Nisan, for it was then that the triumphal entry into Jerusalem was made. At this time He was set aside by the Jewish nation and rejected as their Messiah--marked for death. Not a bone of Him was broken (John 19:36 cf. Exodus 12:46, Psalm 34:20), and He was killed on the 14th of Nisan at the exact time of the slaying of the lamb. Truly, the type is marvelously fulfilled in every detail and Paul well remarks that "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us." (I. Corinthians 5:7)

III. CHRIST AND HOSEA 6:1-2

Again it is the Apostle Paul who wrote that Christ rose again the third day, "according to the Scriptures." (I. Corinthians 15:4) Therefore it is not surprising that both direct types and prophecies refer to the three-day interval of Christ's death. The prophet Hosea makes an urgent appeal to Israel:

Come, and let us return unto the Lord: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up. After two days will he revive us: in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight. (Hosea 6:1-2)

This prophecy has its primary application to Israel.

Nevertheless, antitypically the language is so framed as to refer in its full accuracy only to the Messiah, the ideal Israel (Isaiah 49:3), who was raised on the third day. Although Israel was smitten as a nation, the Messiah was the one that actually took the punishment for the nation which rejected Him (Isaiah 53), and it was said of Him that "he shall prolong his days and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand." (Isaiah 53:10)⁴

There is more meaning in Hosea's words than appears at first. Just as God completed the work of creation on the sixth day, having made man, and started His rest on the seventh day, even so the Lord Jesus, finishing His work of redemption near the end of the fifth day, entered into His first full evening-morning rest day on the sixth day. With Christ the whole human race was dead and the judgment pronounced upon Adam was carried out. The seventh day, the interruption of the rest of God, was at the same time eliminated. All creation was restored to the condition preceding the fall--then it was in a judicial sense; soon it will be in actuality. For the second and last time God and man were able to keep the seventh day rest.⁵

⁴Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, and David Brown, Commentary of the Old and New Testaments (Hartford, Conn.: S. S. Scranton and Company, 1871), p. 655.

⁵R. M. Allen, op. cit., pp. 99-100.

The third day indicated the beginning of a new creation. It is the true rest day and the Sabbath had only been a sign of this to Israel. This new day is prophesied by the Psalmist:

The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner. This is the Lord's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes. This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it. (Psalm 118:22-24)

This then, concisely, is "the Lord's Day," the day on which Christ should be raised up and live in the sight of God (Hosea 6:2). The exact day of the week on which this should be established is indicated in type in Leviticus, the twenty-third chapter.

IV. CHRIST AND LEVITICUS 23:10-11

Jehovah commands Moses to

Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest unto the priest: And he shall wave the sheaf before the Lord, to be accepted for you: on the morrow after the sabbath the priest shall wave it. (Leviticus 23:10-11)

Only as the New Testament is consulted will it become apparent that this ceremony speaks of the death and resurrection of Christ. He Himself exclaimed, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit" (John 12:24). There is another

verse which comes as a natural sequence, "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept" (I. Corinthians 15:21). To be the antitype for the firstfruits, Christ needed to be raised at the same time that the priest lifted up the sheaf of the firstfruits, namely on the "morrow after the sabbath," which is the first day of the week.⁶

V. CHRIST AND GENESIS 22:13

Among outstanding types of the three-day period of death in the Old Testament is that of Abraham and his obedience to God's command to offer up to his son Isaac.

This familiar passage in Genesis need not be quoted, but it is interesting to notice the New Testament commentary on the verses, given in Hebrews 11:17-19:

By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son. Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence he also received him in a figure.

From the time that Abraham decided to obey God in this matter, Isaac was as good as dead. This is the reason why Isaac was received back from the dead "in a figure." This was done, according to Genesis 22:4, on the third day, when

⁶Ibid., pp. 101-102.

Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw the place afar off. There is a possibility that the mountain in Moriah, spoken of in Genesis 22:2, where the offering was made, is the same place where Christ was offered up. Josephus indicates that "it was the mountain upon which king David afterward built the temple."⁷ Although this cannot be shown beyond the shadow of a doubt, it nevertheless is a probability, and it certainly would be true to the type.

VI. CHRIST AND THE REST OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

There are many other types and direct prophecies of Christ's death and resurrection. The instance of Jonah in the belly of the fish, used by Jesus Christ Himself to expound this truth, is one of these. To this sufficient reference has been made.

Another passage in which emphasis has been placed on the three-day period is Exodus 8, where Moses expresses his desire before Pharaoh to take the Israelites a three days' journey into the wilderness to sacrifice to the Lord.

(Exodus 8:26-27)

The spiritual meaning of the three days is easily discernible. Egypt is a type of the old life, the bondage of the flesh. God would never reveal His way to the Israelites until they were separated a three-days' journey from the

⁷Josephus, Antiquities, 1. XIII, 2.

flesh life. The three-day separation obviously is the death of the believer to the old life, followed by resurrection with Christ on the third day.

Numerous other examples of Old Testament types could be listed here. These, however, must suffice to show that the prophets clearly spoke of Christ in relation to the time of His death and resurrection. The Old Testament clearly shows the three days of death as symbolizing the finished work of one of the members of the Godhead. The seventh day is a commemoration of the work of redemption by the Son; and the first day the new order of things through the finished work of the Holy Spirit by whom the resurrection and the new life became certainties.

CHAPTER VI

THE DAYS OF THE PASSION WEEK

Thursday is the day of the crucifixion! This has been shown to be so by a careful analysis of the Scripture passages used by the adherents of the Wednesday and Friday theories, which were claimed to prove their position. In addition to ^{these} those verses, there is a great amount of circumstantial evidence, as well as Old Testament typology, which favors Thursday.

Only one more proof need to be adduced to demonstrate that Christ died on Thursday and rose on Sunday. If Thursday fits harmoniously into the detailed chronology of this week which is given by the gospel writers, there remains no more argument against Thursday and reason to still cling to the unscriptural, illogical Wednesday and Friday positions.

I. THE CALENDAR BASIS

Thus far it has seemed wise only to use the Word of God in the attempt to establish the day of crucifixion. The reason for this is plain. The Bible must always be the Christian's first and final basis for doctrine and practice. But in establishing a teaching of Scripture, in addition to the internal evidence itself, outside arguments may be employed, especially if they appear to be founded on logic and truth.

Rejection and distortion by some. Among those who hold the various theories of the time of Christ's death are those who deny that it is at all possible to calculate the exact year and day of the crucifixion. It should suffice to refer to the viewpoint of just one of these men:

Let it be reiterated, for the sake of clarity, that we positively cannot determine, on a primary basis of the calendar, or secular history, upon which day of the modern week the corresponding day of the Jewish month of Nisan, fell. Such is impossible until the exact¹ year of the crucifixion can be stated with certainty.

Allen holds it an impossibility that the year and day can be established. However, much credit should be given him for his ability to demonstrate from the Scriptures alone, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that the crucifixion took place on Thursday.

There is another group of people who resort to calendar calculation as one of the key arguments for their theory. They will go to any extreme to prove their position through use of the historical calendar. Because of their zeal to expound their theory, whether scriptural or not, and because of the extreme variation in their results, their calculations must be rejected. Self-styled scholars of this caliber can best be detected by their premise that Christ died in a certain year. They would not dare divulge to others the secret of

¹R. M. Allen, op. cit., p. 148.

where and how they might have derived at such a date. But once they have established the year, without explanation, they proceed to determine laboriously the month and the day. An example of this follows:

The writer has received two documents from our U. S. Naval Observatory at Washington, D. C., confirming the claims of the Old Testament and New Testament that Jesus Christ was crucified on Wednesday, the 14th of Nisan, by proving that the new moon, between March 4th and April 10th in A. D. 30, fell on March 22, at 6:00 P. M. Greenwich Civil time. According to Jerusalem time, this would be about 9 P. M. and that would put the new moon in and about the end of the first watch of the Jewish night, of the fifth day of the first week, of the first month, Nisan, which is the first month of the Hebrew year.²

One can search in vain throughout this cited work for the way in which the year A. D. 30 has been calculated. A failure to establish this negates all other calculations.

Calculation and reception by others. There is another distinct group of those who hold to one of the three theories. In this group there is primarily one person whose calculation of the year and day of the triumphal entry of Christ has been acclaimed and accepted by most of evangelical Christendom as being correct. Sir Robert Anderson's monumental work, The Coming Prince, has stood for many decades the test of time and scrutiny of scholars. Writing of the day on which Christ made

²Kruschwitz, op. cit., p.3.

His triumphal entry, in relation to the Seventy Weeks of Daniel, he says,

And the date of it can be ascertained. In accordance with the Jewish custom, the Lord went up to Jerusalem upon the 8th Nisan, "six days before the Passover." But as the 14th, on which the Paschal Supper was eaten [sic] fell that year upon a Thursday, the 8th was the preceding Friday. He must have spent the Sabbath, therefore, at Bethany; and on the evening of the 9th, after the Sabbath had ended, the Supper took place in Martha's house. Upon the following day, the 10th Nisan, He entered Jerusalem as recorded in the Gospels.

The Julian date of the 10th Nisan was Sunday the 6th April, A. D. 32. What then was the length of the period intervening between the issuing of the decree to rebuild Jerusalem and the public advent of "Messiah the Prince,"-- between the 14th March, B. C. 445, and the 6th April, A. D. 32? THE INTERVAL CONTAINED EXACTLY AND TO THE VERY DAY 173,880 DAYS, OR SEVEN TIMES SIXTY-NINE PROPHETIC YEARS OF 360 DAYS, [capitals in the original] the first sixty-nine weeks of Gabriel's prophecy.³

It is hoped that this extensive quotation will indicate beyond doubt that the Thursday crucifixion is correct. If the triumphal entry was on Sunday, the 10th, four days later, the time when the Passover would be slain, must be Thursday. Anderson's testimony increases in value when it is recognized that he does not hold to a Thursday crucifixion. (His error is that which is peculiar to most older theologians: a failure to recognize that there were two Sabbaths in the passion week.)

Men like De Haan see the correctness of this calculation

³Anderson, op. cit., pp. 127-128.

in that they place Thursday on the 14th of Nisan, which is proper. But they nevertheless have been so enamored with the exact seventy-two hour position, that they place the crucifixion on Wednesday, having been compelled to shift the triumphal entry back to the Sabbath.

There is one important fact brought out by all those who have made an extensive study of the days of the Passover week. There is universal admission that if Christ made His public entrance into Jerusalem on Sunday, then He must have been crucified on Thursday. This is plainly stated by one author:

...Whatever day of the week He made His triumphal entrance that day was the tenth day of the month that year. If Sunday was the tenth, then the following Thursday was the fourteenth and Christ must have been crucified on Thursday, and not on Friday, as we have been taught. This is evident from the fact that the day on which Christ was crucified "was the preparation day of the Passover." The Passover was prepared the day before it was eaten.⁴

This evidence for Thursday on the basis of a historical calendar should be conclusive. Daniel's sixty-nine weeks were literally fulfilled. Anderson correctly calculated that these weeks of years ended with Christ's rejection at His triumphal entry--on Sunday, the 10th of Nisan, A. D. 32. Christ, our Passover, was slain on the 14th of Nisan, which

⁴Fredrick, op. cit., pp. 17-18.

consequently must have been a Thursday. Thus, the three most important days of the passion week have been established. The triumphal entry, on Sunday, the 10th of Nisan; the crucifixion on Thursday, the 14th of Nisan; and the resurrection, on Sunday, the 17th of Nisan.

In conclusion there remains only the filling in of the scriptural details in relation to the other days of the week.

II. THE SCRIPTURAL BASIS

In presenting the gospel story of these days in its simplest, most logical form, it will be on the basis of such information as is provided by the scriptural narratives. A proper start for the chronological account can be the final stage of Christ's trip to Jerusalem for the Passover, as He arrived in Jericho.

Friday, Nisan 8. Jesus and His disciples stopped at Jericho for some time, where they were guests of Zacchaeus, the publican, during the night, and Zacchaeus was converted (Luke 19:1-10).

In the morning they started from Jericho, with some women from Galilee, and perhaps others. And that day they traveled eighteen miles to Bethany. On their way two blind men were healed (Matthew 10:29-34) and Jesus foretold His

death and resurrection (Mark 10:32-34). They arrived at Bethany toward evening, six days before the Passover:

Then Jesus six days before the paslover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead. There they made him a supper and Martha served. (John 12:1-2a)

This was the day of preparation. Only John tells of the intervening events, between the arrival at Bethany and the journey into Jerusalem.

Saturday, Nisan 9. After sunset the supper was eaten which Mary and Martha had prepared for them. The key to the whole chronology is found here. This matter of the supper (John 1:2-11) not being eaten until after the new day had started appears to be universally overlooked. Friday exponents are forced to include two silent days in their chronology. Most Wednesday exponents insist that either the trip from Jericho to Bethany or the triumphal entry must have occurred on the Sabbath.⁵ Jewish custom invariably placed the supper after the new day had started, in the evening. Thus when John says, "On the next day" (John 12:12), he means that this was the day after the supper, and not the day on which Christ came to Bethany.

At this supper Jesus was anointed by Mary with precious spikenard (John 12:3). It was also at this time that

⁵R. M. Allen, op. cit., p. 150.

Judas went out to the chief priests to sell Jesus (Matthew 26:14-16).

The following daytime still part of the Sabbath day, was a time of rest. No doubt many people were flocking into Bethany to see Lazarus who had been raised from the dead and the One who was able to raise him from the dead.

Sunday, Nisan 10. This day signified the end of the sixty-nine weeks of Daniel:

On the next day much people that were come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, Took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried, Hosanna: Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord. (John 12:12-13)

The details of the triumphal entry are familiar to all: two disciples being sent into the nearby village for the colt; Jesus' riding into the city in fulfillment of Zechariah 9:9 and Daniel 9:25a; the Hosannas of the multitudes; and the official presentation of Jesus as their King (Mark 11:1-11).

Jesus presented Himself as King probably in the morning, but it is worthy of note that He remained in the temple all day, looking round about Him (Mark 11:11), giving the people and rulers a full opportunity for even a belated acceptance of Him. And this is also the reason for His long-suffering during this age of grace. Christ is patiently

waiting and offering lost sinners one last chance to trust Him as their only salvation (II. Peter 3:9).

Monday, Nisan 11. "And now the eventide was come, he went out unto Bethany with the twelve" (Mark 11:11). Jesus returned to Bethany for lodging in the early evening hours.

In the morning Jesus and His disciples returned to Jerusalem, and on the way Jesus cursed the barren fig tree (Mark 11:12-14). Arriving at Jerusalem, Jesus cleansed the temple (11:15-18). After a day of teaching and meeting the assaults of His enemies, Jesus returned once more to Bethany (11:19).

Tuesday, Nisan 12. Jesus and His disciples went back to Jerusalem on Tuesday morning and found the fig tree tried up. This day was the Messiah's last day of public ministry. During the course of the day His authority was questioned (Matthew 21:23; 22:46). After Jesus answered the Herodians, the Pharisees, and the Sadducees, He pronounced Woe upon the Pharisees (Matthew 23:13-36).

The extreme passion which Christ had for Jerusalem is seen in His lamentations over Jerusalem (23:37-38). After He and His disciples had departed from the temple to the Mount of Olives, He delivered the Olivet Discourse (Matthew 24-25).

Wednesday, Nisan 13. It is not certain where they

lodged this night, or where they spent the day, but beyond doubt the hours of the day were spent in solitude. It was the day on which the Jews put away all leaven from their homes, in anticipation of the Passover. Jesus tells Peter and John to go and engage the upper room for the Passover. (Matthew 26:17-19; Mark 14:12-16; Luke 22:7-12)

Thursday, Nisan 14. In the early hours of Thursday, shortly after sunset, Christ and the disciples went to the place prepared and had there the "Last Supper." The incidents of this evening are too well known to necessitate enumeration. Suffice it that three things be mentioned: the Upper Room Discourse, the agony in Gethsemane, and the betrayal by Judas.

The arrest took place sometime between midnight and 3 a.m. Jesus was led before the gathered assembly for examination; after sun-up He had His three trials, followed by the journey to Golgatha, where He was crucified around noon. At approximately the ninth hour Jesus gave up His spirit. From that time on the prophetic three days and nights of Matthew 12:40 begin to be fulfilled.

This day was also the day of preparation for the feast of the Passover. The Passover lamb was to be eaten that night.

Friday, Nisan 15. At 6 p.m. the Passover Sabbath

started. Joseph of Arimathea went to see Pilate and then, together with the women, he buried Jesus. These faithful people worked most of the night, until dawn. All of this day, until 6 o'clock at night, the special Sabbath is being observed.

Saturday, Nisan 16. After the Passover Sabbath was over the seventh-day Sabbath started, on which the people also rested. All shops were closed and no business was transacted. The women eagerly awaited 6 p.m. so that they might buy spices and prepare them for the purpose of finishing the embalming of Christ's body at early dawn.

Sunday, Nisan 17. The women prepare for the anticipated visit to the tomb. While it is yet dark (John 20:1) the women leave for the sepulchre and arrive just at day-break. They find the tomb empty. Jesus had probably risen even while they were yet on their way. He is no longer a dead Christ but a risen Lord.

After Jesus had appeared to Mary Magdalene sometime in the morning, He revealed Himself to Peter (Luke 24:34). In the afternoon Jesus appeared to two disciples as they are on their way to Emmaus (Mark 16:12). Last of all, the same day at evening He appeared to the disciples in the closed room, Thomas alone being absent (John 20:19-20; Luke 24:36).

III. CONCLUSION

That Christ died on Thursday is absolute certainty. There is no contradiction or forcing of texts when the incidents of the various days are arranged in the above manner. The simplicity with which all recorded events harmonize when Thursday is recognized as the true crucifixion day should readily be apparent from this last chapter and especially the appended chart.

The time-honored, almost universal theory that Christ died on Friday must go. Credit should be given to Westcott for being the first theologian to detect a fly in the Friday ointment; namely that there were two Sabbaths in the passion week.⁶ Once this has been acknowledged the whole theory falls, for none of the other arguments are strong enough to support the theory.

The Wednesday theory, held by most contemporary evangelicals, must also go. It is predicated upon the idea that Christ had to remain in the tomb for exactly seventy-two hours. But it has been demonstrated that there is no scriptural support for this concept. Christ prophesied that He would be in the "heart of the earth" for this time, not in the grave, where His dead body lay. And the futile

⁶Westcott, op. cit., p. 229.

attempt by some to shift the crucifixion therefore to the early morning hours⁷ will not stand up in light of the contrary evidence of Scripture. Neither will a false calculation of the historical calendar or a readjustment of the chronology of the passion week lead to the scaling of the insurmountable problems which the Wednesday theory contains.

In closing, it will not be denied that a Thursday crucifixion still has its problems. For one thing, it is only natural for the Western mind to demand exactly seventy-two hours in the interpretation of "three days and three nights," as opposed to the Jewish system in which part of a day was counted as a whole day. So, in actuality, Christ was in the heart of the earth three days and three nights by being there part of one day, two whole days, and three whole nights.

Another difficulty seems to lie in the fact that it is impossible to determine the exact hour of the resurrection. However, the exact time (it probably was right at sunrise) is not of nearly such great significance as is the day on which Christ became victor over death and the grave. And it is certain that Christ rose on the first day of the week, after

⁷Kennard, op. cit., p. 229.

He had died on Thursday at 3 p.m. and was placed in the tomb around 9 p.m. These are demonstrable facts!

Difficulties in ^{the} Scriptures should by no means result in uncertainty on the part of the Christian, nor imply a neglect of their study. But it is a responsibility of every believer to beware of being like the unlearned and unstable who wrest the Scriptures to their own destruction (II. Peter 3:16), merely to make them fit their preconceived ideas.

Despite some minor difficulties, a Thursday crucifixion is beset by far less problems than either a Friday or Wednesday crucifixion. And just as the trustworthiness of a witness is established not only by the amount of truth his evidence contains, but also by the absence of contradictions and mistakes, so it must be the peremptory conclusion that Christ indeed laid down His life on Thursday and then rose again victoriously on the third day--according to the the SCRIPTURES. Soli Deo gloria!

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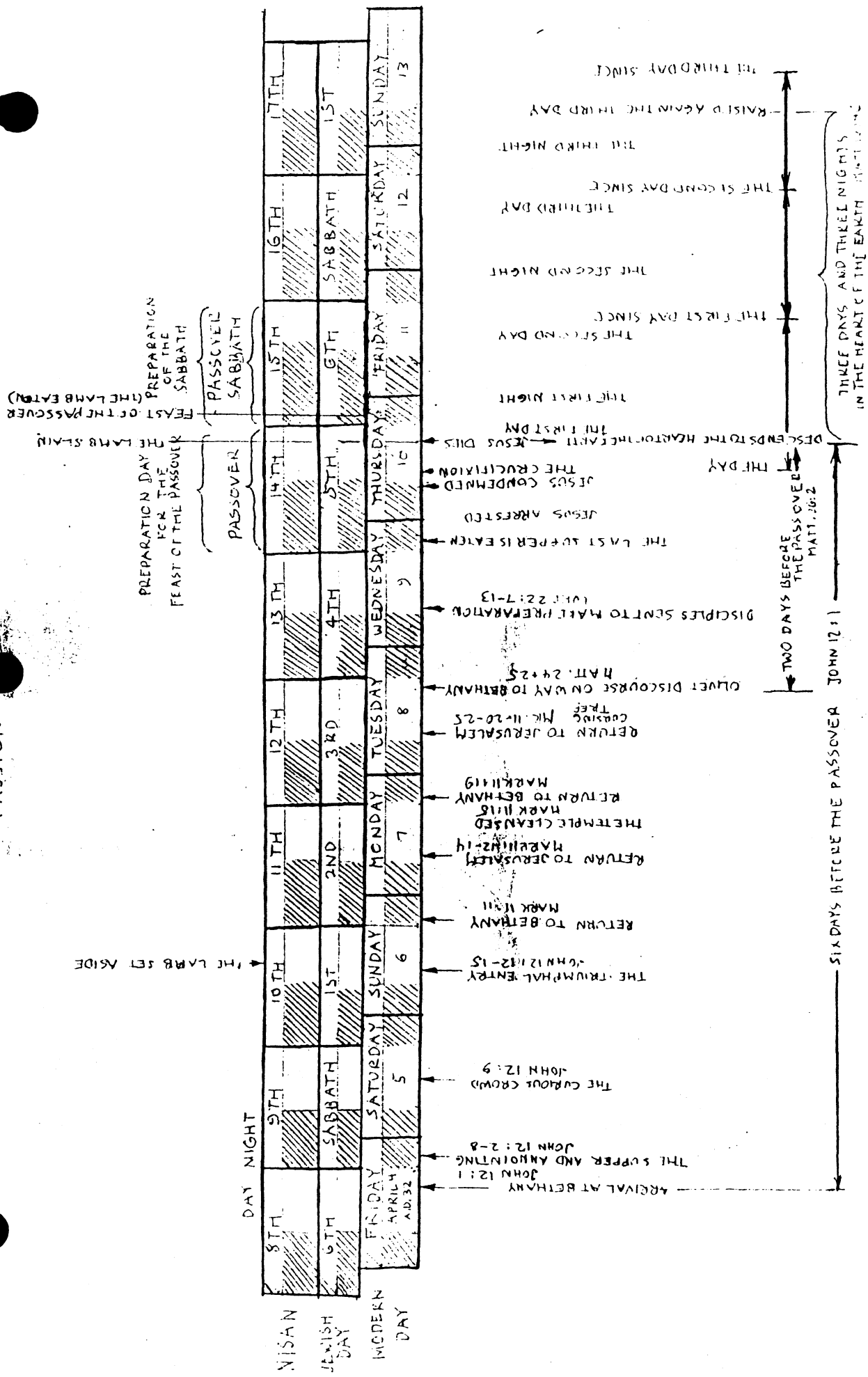
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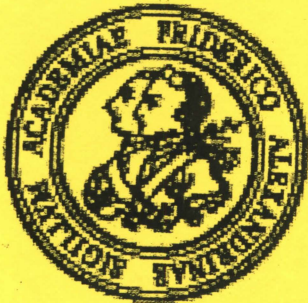
CHRONOLOGICAL PASSION WEEK



The Resurrection of Christ in Contemporary German Theology

A Thesis for the Degree Master of Theology

Dallas Theological Seminary



UNIVERSITY
OF
HEIDELBERG



Friedrich-Alexander-Universität
Erlangen-Nürnberg



THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST IN CONTEMPORARY GERMAN THEOLOGY

A Thesis

Presented to

the Faculty of the Department of Systematic Theology

Dallas Theological Seminary

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Theology

by

Manfred Erno Kober

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Accepted by the Faculty of the Dallas Theological Seminary and
Graduate School of Theology in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree Master of Theology.

Grade _____

Examining Committee

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Importance of the Study

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the cornerstone of Christian doctrine, the Gibraltar of Christian evidence, and the Waterloo of infidelity and rationalism. It is the cornerstone of Christian doctrine because it is the prominent and cardinal point of the apostolic testimony. It is mentioned more than 104 times in the New Testament. The paramount importance of this doctrine is readily seen: (1) It is evidential. It confirms the truthfulness of Christ (Matt. 12:38-40; 16:21; 17:9-23; 20:19; John 2:19-21, etc.) and guarantees the deity of Christ and the atoning character of his death (Rom. 1:4). (2) It is evangelistic. The resurrection is one of the two fundamental truths of the gospel and assures divine redemption (I Cor. 15:1-4; Rom. 4:25). (3) It is experimental. The resurrection is regarded as the source and standard of the believer's holiness. Every aspect of Christian life and experience is associated with it (Rom. 6). (4) It is eschatological. It is the guarantee and model of the believer's resurrection, it furnishes him with an undying hope (I Cor. 15), and it assures final judgment (Acts 17:13).

The resurrection is further the Gibraltar of Christian evidence because it is the best established fact in Bible history. It was announced in prophecy (Ps. 16:10-11; Acts 13:31-37); it was predicted by

Christ (Matt. 16:21; 17:9-23; Mark 8:31); it was reported by the women (Luke 24:11; John 20:13-15); it was evidenced to the disciples (John 21; Acts 10:40-41; Luke 24:34); and Christ appeared to Paul and hundreds of others (I Cor. 15:5-8).

Finally, the resurrection is the Waterloo of infidelity and rationalism. This doctrine is crucial and determinative to any theological system. It is the living center and object of Christian faith. On this account a theological system stands or falls with its view of the resurrection. The believer, who is exhorted to "prove all things" (I Thess. 5:21) and to "try the spirits" (I John 4:1), can and should employ this doctrine as a measuring rod to probe the murkiness of today's theological pools of confusion.

The Intention of the Study

This theological survey attempts to scan the situation of contemporary German theology, to determine what basic views the various theological systems hold relative to the resurrection, and to investigate the presuppositions on which those views are based. This understanding, in turn, will be a key to the theological schools and aid in their evaluation. The German situation is chosen because, without doubt, German theology determines the theology of the rest of the world. In this sense the maxim is true, which is frequently heard, that America is twenty years behind Germany. This therefore being the case, it is only right to examine the theological climate of Germany today and thus to be informed as to the changes and trends which will become evident

before long in America as well.

The Contemporary Situation

The schools

A survey of the theological situation in Germany must of necessity be limited to the faculties of theology at the universities. It is only here that theology gains its impetus and exerts its influence. German theology is integrally connected with the German academic tradition. The universities under consideration are Hamburg, Münster, Göttingen, Marburg, Mainz, Heidelberg, Tübingen, Erlangen, Basel, and Zürich. Although Basel and Zürich are technically in Switzerland, the theological faculties have long been closely linked to Germany because of the common language and the constant exchange of scholars. Since the partitioning of Germany after the Second World War, little is heard of from the still functioning theological faculties of East Germany at Rostock, Leipzig, and Halle-Wittenberg.

Early in this century and before, a theological viewpoint could be determined by a study of the faculty at a given school, so that the brands of theology came to be known, for example, as the conservative Erlangen School, which for many years fought against the rationalism of the liberal Tübingen School. But these designations are no longer true. Theological systems are formed around the scholars instead of a particular university.

The scholars

Actually, there are as many different types of theology in Germany as there are theologians. Decades ago men like Barth, Brunner, and Bultmann nearly eclipsed all other theological directions and made converts to their ideas. But their students, now professors themselves, have long since departed from their masters' methods. Like the medieval scholastic, each theologian has his own system. Nevertheless, certain trends of thought are discernible and it has been advisable, for the purpose of this paper, to gather German theology into four general schools: the Neo-orthodox school, the Mediating school, the Bultmann school, and the Post-Bultmannian school. The designation of these schools, as well as the grouping of the theologians in each, must be somewhat arbitrary, but a wide representation of the various systems has been attempted.

It has been impossible to read all the works of each of the two theologians who are chosen to represent the four schools. But this has not been necessary, even as it is not necessary to drink a whole barrel dry to determine what vintage it contains. The theologians' works have been studied as to their views of the resurrection. In each instance, a sketch of the person himself and his general theological viewpoint will be given, for it is no more possible to separate the theology from the man that holds it than it is to divorce a man from his environment. But again, this had to be limited, because of the nature of the paper and of the fact that many excellent works already exist which analyze the theologians.

CHAPTER II

THE NEO-ORTHODOX SCHOOL

The Rationale of the School

The dilemma in which religious liberalism found itself in the early decades of this century, as a result of its obvious failure and the crisis of Western culture, proved the opportunity for a theological renaissance, commonly called neo-orthodoxy. The leader of this movement in its beginning was the Swiss pastor and theologian, Karl Barth. In his protest Barth was seconded by kindred spirits, especially Friedrich Gogarten, Emil Brunner, and Eduard Tunnensen. The movement emphasized God's transcendence, man's sin and a return to the Word, over against the liberal conception of God's immanence and man's goodness. Rejecting the old liberalism, this movement also repudiated fundamental orthodoxy. Wide variations of viewpoint have appeared in the movement and its influence has been greatly extended. Its leaders' views of the resurrection are representative of the view which the movement as a whole holds relative to this central doctrine.

The Representatives of the School

Karl Barth

The person.--The Reformed theologian was born in 1886 in Basel, Switzerland. After holding a pastorate in Safenwyl from 1911 to 1921, he became professor of Reformed theology in Göttingen. In 1925 he

started to lecture in Münster, was called to the University of Bonn in 1930, but in 1935 he was exiled by the Nazis. From 1935 until his retirement he was professor in Basel.

With his Römerbrief (1919) Barth caused a deep-going revolution in Continental theology. He emphasized the sinfulness of man and the holiness of God, reminding men that God is "wholly other" and that all our statements concerning God are but stammering attempts to give expression to the unspeakable. Barth had been much under the influence of neo-Kantianism and Kierkegaard, and after 1925 his corrective theology has been greatly influenced by Calvinism, becoming a highly elaborate theological system.

Theological divergencies led to breaks with Gogarten and Brunner. Being exiled to Switzerland, Barth continued to exercise influence, although in recent years there has been a decline in his following. Presently, the octogenarian is still working on his massive Church Dogmatics.

His position.--In studying Barth's view of the resurrection--or, for that matter, any other of his positions--one encounters almost insuperable difficulties. The first one is that his theology is a developing one. The time when he said something is as important as what he said. Then too, Barth's way of expressing himself, his dialectic approach, makes him at times very difficult to understand. Seemingly contradictory statements are frequently put side by side to confront one with the whole truth, as Barth sees it. Furthermore,

Barth's acceptance of biblical criticism actually casts doubt on the authority of many passages, though he may appear to be taking them at face value. There is also the difficulty of terminology: the investing of old terms with a new meaning. But perhaps the greatest difficulty in understanding Barth, however, is his concept of the two kinds of history--Historie and Geschichte--and the conception of the nature of revelation. All these factors influence a study of Barth and render an understanding of his view as difficult as putting one's finger on a pellet of mercury. One thinks one has it, but actually it has escaped somewhere else.

Starting with one of Barth's earlier works, The Resurrection of the Dead, one finds ample illustrations of the above difficulties. Barth is basically relativizing the story of the resurrection with his exegesis of I Corinthians 15. Barth raises the question

whether all that Paul meant here might not have the effect, not of disconnecting the historical position of the question as such, but of relativizing it. . . . The verbal forms "he died, was buried, rose again, was seen" . . . are by no means chronologically successive or in juxtaposition.¹

This event of the resurrection happened "in history, to be sure! But in history, the frontier of history."² Thus Barth launches out against every account of the resurrection as "a chronological recital of things."³ Therefore he can say, "This tomb may prove to be a defi-

¹Karl Barth, The Resurrection of the Dead, trans. H. J. Stenning (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1933), pp. 131-2.

²Ibid., p. 134. ³Ibid.

nitely closed or an open tomb; it is really a matter of indifference."¹ He admits, however, that according to the record "the tomb is doubtless empty, under every conceivable circumstance empty! 'He is not here.'"² And yet, Barth relegates the whole event to the boundary of history, or, as he expressed it by dodging an answer to a recent question by one of his students, whether a picture could have been taken of the empty tomb: "The resurrection happened on the rim of history."

In a remarkable little book on the Apostle's Creed according to Calvin's Catechism, The Faith of the Church, comprised of six seminars of Barth, given from 1940 to 1943, some unusually clear statements are found concerning the resurrection:

The New Testament describes Easter by two assertions: the women found the tomb empty. Then they met the risen Christ acting in their midst in a humanly-speaking very strange and new, yet very real manner. The mention of the empty tomb in the Gospels irrefutably marks the bodily resurrection. By this we are instructed concerning man and his life: he is body and spirit. When he is living, he lives as body and soul. Hence also man's resurrection is corporeal.³

A clearer statement of the bodily resurrection of Christ can scarcely be found elsewhere in Barth's writings. With great lucidity Barth proceeds:

The New Testament tells us quite simply: do you want to believe in the living Christ? And it shows us that we may believe in him only if we believe in his corporeal resurrection. For life without a body is not human life. This is the content of the New Testament. We are always free to reject it, but not to modify it

¹Ibid., p. 135. ²Ibid., p. 138.

³Karl Barth, The Faith of the Church, trans. Gabriel Vahanian (New York: Meridian Books Inc., 1958), pp. 106-7.

nor to pretend that the New Testament tells us something else. We may accept or refuse the message, but we may not change it.¹

Unaccustomed as one is to such undeniably orthodox and unusually clear statements from Barth, the question arises immediately whether he really means this. Upon examination of the introduction to the book and the context of the passage, one's fears are soon confirmed: Barth primarily presents Calvin's view. Concerning this the translator remarks:

Actually more than once Barth will have to part company with Calvin, for example on the issue of predestination and the resurrection of the flesh His understanding of the virgin birth and the empty tomb is both in strict conformity with orthodoxy and--we must admit--wholly unorthodox.²

These unorthodox differences with Calvin pertain primarily to Barth's view of history. He appends his discussion of the resurrection with a "Remark on the 'Historicity' of the Resurrection":

Unquestionably, the resurrection narratives are contradictory. A coherent history cannot be evolved from them. The appearances to the women and apostles, in Galilee and Jerusalem, which are reported by the Gospels and Paul, cannot be harmonized. It is a chaos. The evangelical theologians of the nineteenth century . . . were wrong in trying to arrange things so as to prove the historicity of the resurrection. . . . The witnesses attended an event that went over their heads, and each told a bit of it. But these scraps are sufficient to bear witness to us of the event and its historicity. Every one of the witnesses declares God's free grace which surpasses all human understanding.³

All that Barth said about the resurrection in this context--if it did come from him--has been vitiated by the above paragraph. The resurrection is not based on a reliable historical record. But although

¹Ibid., p. 107.

²Ibid., p. 11.

³Ibid., p. 108.

the resurrection accounts be marked "by obscurity, by contradiction, by speaking of it in saga or legend, in unhistorical and pre-historical form, they clearly convey to us the fact that there the disciples had a confrontation."¹ Did the event happen? Barth answers, "Yes." Does this mean that it is a simple historical fact open to verification? The answer is "No." Barth agrees with Bultmann that the forty days after the resurrection are not among the historical facts:

We may well accept as history that which good taste prevents us from calling "historical" fact, and which the modern historian calls "saga" or "legend" on the ground that it is beyond the reach of his methods.²

Indeed the Easter story is such a "saga" and it has only a "tiny" 'historical' margin." But it was objective and it happened, though it cannot be verified. Barth does defend the tomb as an "indispensable sign."³ Barth obviously wrestles with the tension between revelation and history. The basic assumption is that there can be no revelation in history. The fact of the limitation of the post-resurrection appearances to the disciples is proffered by Barth as evidence that the real resurrection did not take place in ordinary history but in *Geschichte*. Christ appeared only to the eye of faith.

According to Barth, the resurrection is actually no new event

¹Cornelius Van Til, *Has Karl Barth Become Orthodox?* (Philadelphia: The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1954), p. 173.

²Klaas Runia, "The Resurrection and History," *The Reformed Theological Review*, XXV (May/August 1966), 46.

³Ibid.

which has its own importance, but it is only the "revelation" of Christ's completed story on the cross. Pannenberg sees the change in Barth's position only in the fact

that he now acknowledges the event of revelation, the unhistorical relationship of the whole life of Jesus to its origin in God, nevertheless as a special event in the time sequence of the history of Jesus.¹

The resurrection as such was not purely historical, since it was of a revelatory character, but inasmuch as it was an event in Christ's historical existence, it does have a relationship to history. Barth will go no farther than this. For all his commendable emphasis on the reality and fact of the resurrection over against Bultmann's demythologizing, he nevertheless departs from the orthodox view by definitely excluding all historical verification of the resurrection. It happened on the "rim" of history. It is nothing less than forced exegesis to explain away the eye-witness account in I Corinthians 15 as being a listing of witnesses who are meant to witness, not to the fact of the resurrection, but to the genuineness of the Pauline gospel.²

Emil Brunner

The person.--Brunner may be considered as the clearest and most

¹Wolfhart Pannenberg, Grundzüge der Christologie (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1964), p. 109. Quotes from untranslated German works are translated by this writer.

²Rudolf Bultmann, "Neues Testament und Mythologie," Kerygma und Mythos, ed. Hans-Werner Bartsch (Hamburg-Bergstedt: Evangelischer Verlag, 1960), p. 45.

systematic thinker of the school of Dialectic theology. He was born in 1889 in Winterthur, Switzerland, and studied in Zürich, Berlin, and at Union Seminary, New York. Like Barth, he has been assistant pastor, pastor, and professor. Since 1924 he has held the chair of systematic theology in Zürich. He is more moderate in his approach and, in distinction to Barth, accepts natural theology in his system, but he "simplifies" orthodoxy by eliminating all topics that in his view have no bearing on spiritual life, such as the virgin birth and most of the New Testament miracles. With his dialectic theology of the Word he wishes to engage man in the existential encounter of personal truth.¹

It may be questioned why Brunner is included in the contemporary theological situation since he passed away in the summer of 1966. The answer is that although he now knows better, his error and influence live on.

His position.--The weakness of Brunner's system, along with Barth's, centers in the dialectical presuppositions that relate revelation only tenuously with history and reason. Brunner observes that "in the Christian church no less than everything depends on the faith in the resurrection. . . . A Jesus who was not resurrected but remained in the tomb, cannot be the Christ."² To Brunner the resurrection was

¹Otto A. Piper, "Emil Brunner," Encyclopedia of Religion, ed. Vergilius Ferm (Paterson, New Jersey: Littlefield, Adams, and Co., 1964), p. 90.

²Emil Brunner, Die Christliche Lehre von Schöpfung und Erlösung, Dogmatik II (Zürich: Zwingli-Verlag, 1950), p. 434.

a fact, a life principle, which guided the early church. On what, then, is this fact based? On a credible record? No! In the same vein as Barth he writes:

In strange contrast to this unquestionably basic fact and to the imperative clarity of the New Testament witnesses in relation to this foundational fact stands the other, which no less can be denied, that the accounts of the specific How, Where and When are greatly divergent from each other. The five accounts of the resurrection of the four evangelists and the Apostle Paul can simply not be brought together to form a picture without contradictions, and the traditional method of harmonization stands in danger to let the more credible witnesses come too short at the expense of the less credible. . . . The more accurate Pauline account stands in considerable contradiction to the stories of the evangelists . . . among whom . . . the process of the formation of the legends becomes visible.¹

The fact of the resurrection stands but the records are not reliable.

It is therefore not surprising that Brunner concludes:

All of this the supposed contradictions brings close the conclusion that the original witness of the resurrection knew nothing of an empty tomb, but had as object alone the confrontation with the resurrected one. . . . The question of the How and Where, exclusively the question of the empty tomb and the bodily resurrection, understood in that sense is therefore for us secondary.²

With an empty tomb excluded and the bodily resurrection denied, what does Brunner mean by resurrection? He deplores the medieval concept of the resurrection of the flesh by asserting:

Resurrection of the body, yes; Resurrection of the flesh, no. But resurrection of the body does not mean identity of the resurrection body with the material (though transformed) flesh body; but the resurrection of the body means continuity between the individual creatureliness this side and on the other side of death.³

¹Ibid., pp. 434-35.

²Ibid., p. 437f.

³Ibid., p. 442.

Not on the basis of his own world view but on the basis of the New Testament records themselves, Brunner maintains that the resurrected body of Christ is the church, because it is always called his body. The New Testament, says he, knows nothing of a physically ascended Christ. The bodily resurrection is thus eliminated and the resurrection that Brunner speaks of is equated with the ascension. The complete subjectivism to which Brunner is driven can be seen from his frank admission:

So we must be willing to admit that there is no uniform answer to the question "What, then, did really take place?" and that probably it is not intended that there should be such an answer. . . . Easter, as an event, stands in a category by itself; it is something which we can sum up under no heading, which cannot be fitted into any ideas and images of thought and experience.¹

All we can actually say is that "he who died on the Cross has revealed himself to the faithful as the living one."² But if we do not have a reliable record of the resurrection and have no right to ask what happened at the resurrection, how is this knowledge obtained in the first place? Brunner's answer is clear. Negatively, he asserts:

Our faith is not based upon the record of the apostles' experience of the resurrection. . . . We would believe in him as the risen Lord even if there were no narratives of the resurrection at all.³

Positively, "the recognition of the resurrected one should be and had to be a recognition of faith."⁴ Brunner stresses that Jesus appeared only

¹Emil Brunner, The Mediator, trans. Olive Wyon (London: The Lutterworth Press, 1934), p. 578.

²Emil Brunner, The Christian Doctrine of the Church, Faith and the Consummation, Dogmatik III, trans. David Cairns (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1960), p. 410.

³Brunner, Dogmatik II, p. 441. ⁴Ibid., p. 436.

to those who had faith, so that there was nothing tangible in this world that produced their faith in the resurrection. Our faith is therefore not based on the records of the apostles, for this would make it dependent upon a "world fact." And this could not be, for the revelation of Jesus Christ would have taken place in history. To us Jesus reveals himself through the total witness of the apostles, through the picture of his life, and through the apostles' interpretation of this picture. Every Christian believes in the Resurrected One not because his resurrection has been recorded but because we recognize him as the living and present Lord.¹

The Resume of the Position

Both Barth and Brunner, along with all other neo-orthodox theologians, retain the fact of the resurrection though they say the biblical record cannot be believed. These theologians find themselves impaled on the horns of a monstrous dilemma, as Dr. Ryrie rightly observes:

Barthians say that the accounts of the resurrection in the Bible are not the ground of our faith in the resurrection; nevertheless, they are an important element in the witness to revelation of the resurrection, and this revelation is the ground for our faith. Reduced to simple double talk this means that theoretically we would not need the Bible accounts of the resurrection in order to believe it, but admittedly they help, and actually we could not believe without them.²

Barth and Brunner further agree that revelation does not relate

¹Ibid., p. 441.

²Charles C. Ryrie, Neo-Orthodoxy (Chicago: Moody Press, 1956), pp. 58-59.

to our world of time and space but rather to Geschichte. The facts of the resurrection, as recorded in the New Testament, are therefore immaterial to one's faith. By being confronted with the living Christ one believes in the resurrection, not because the gospels testify of it. The result of these presuppositions is an inescapable subjectivism. And this is seen by the divergent views as to the meaning of the event, that are represented within the Neo-orthodox school. Barth, with customary vagueness, seems to favor a bodily resurrection, although the empty tomb is not at all necessary to his system. Brunner denies the existence of the empty tomb as well as a corporeal resurrection. The resurrection appearances were nothing more than "an encounter with the resurrected one as a spiritual-personal reality."¹ One cannot help escape the suspicion that a resurrection which happened on the "rim" of history and cannot be historically verified (Barth) and which did not include the existence of the empty tomb nor a corporeal continuation of the body (Brunner) is no resurrection at all.

¹Brunner, Dogmatik II, p. 436.

CHAPTER III

THE MEDIATING SCHOOL

The Rationale of the School

Although it is difficult to limit a theological system to any one university, Erlangen may be considered as representing the Mediating school. The fact that Erlangen is one of the few Protestant cities in the province of Bavaria has given it the title, a Protestant island in a Catholic sea. In geography, as well as in theology, it stands alone. In the last century the great conservative Theodor Zahn taught New Testament there. It is the home of the old Heilsgeschichte school and even today is probably more conservative than any other German university. The New Testament department with Ethelbert Stauffer and Gerhard Friedrich and the dogmatics department with Paul Althaus and Walter Kunneth continue the conservative tradition. Stauffer, although called a radical liberal in conservative garb, has always maintained the verifiable historicity of most events in Christ's life. The other three scholars take a mediating position between crisis theology and the Bultmannian school. These theologians have manifested a constant critique of dialectical as well as existential theology, and yet they have been somewhat influenced by crisis theology and higher criticism.

The Representatives of the School

Althaus and Kunneth continue the salvation-history tradition of

Erlangen. These two men will serve as representatives of the school. Despite the fact that Althaus died in the summer of 1966, his influence continues.

Paul Althaus

The person.---Paul Althaus was born in 1888 and died in 1966. He studied widely under all the leading scholars of his day and first taught in Rostock. Until the time of his death he taught in Erlangen. A leader of confessional Lutheranism, he was the leading theologian of the group theologia militans, a group which showed strong resistance to Nazi ideology. In contrast to Barth, Althaus upheld the traditional concept of general revelation. He disagreed with Barth right from the beginning, which is the fashionable thing to do among theologians in Germany. Althaus took the same position as that of his predecessor: what was valuable in Barth could be found in the Bible and what was false should not be commended to theology students. As a mediating theologian, Althaus follows in the footsteps of conservatives like Hofmann and Schlatter, but is greatly indebted to Barth and places much emphasis on the dialectical tension between creation and sin, eternity and history. Among his greatest contributions to German theology are his works on eschatology.

His position.---Althaus sees revelation as coming both mediately through history and immediately through faith: Revelation reaches us in the word and in no other way. The word of preaching is not only a word that addresses us and which we believe, but it is at the same time

a report about a historical event which happened. The word and the reality of the revelation cannot be equated, however. This word of proclamation in which God subjectively reveals himself is not based upon an objective, authoritative Word of God, the Bible. Thus Althaus writes:

The authority of the word of God is not indeed established for us any longer by a metaphysical miraculous character possessed by the Bible, but it is in part established by the historical element of the original tradition of authenticity.¹

But who determines what is the authentic word of God? Althaus believes that historians have a well-developed "intuition" that enables them to know when they are face to face with a real, historical personage and not just an imaginative creation.² This subjective approach is forced upon Althaus by his rejection of the old liberalism while retaining the critical view of Scripture. To him inspiration is "nothing more than that God himself acts on us through the human word of the Scriptures."³ The canon is still open and human errors and modifications--even in the life of Christ--abound: "Then too besides the genuine passages there are unhistorical words and stories and legends; so especially in the birth and resurrection accounts."⁴ In short, the

¹Paul Althaus, The So-Called Kerygma and the Historical Jesus, trans. David Cairns (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1959), p. 52.

²Ibid.

³Paul Althaus, Die Christliche Wahrheit (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1959), p. 180.

⁴Ibid., p. 118.

early church tampered with the text. Inasmuch as the foundations of the life of Christ are so shaky, the results in the superstructure, with the resurrection as the crowning point, are nothing short of disastrous.

"What happened at Easter?" Althaus asks. His reply is as may be expected:

The answer cannot consist simply in giving back the accounts of the gospels. . . . That Jesus was raised from the dead and appeared as the resurrected one to his own becomes a certainty to us only in faith, and under the impression of the whole witness concerning Jesus, of his life and words and death as well as resurrection.¹

What position does the resurrection take in Althaus' theology? The death of Christ puts in question the validity of the claims of Christ. Therefore it may be said: "Faith lives because of Easter."² Easter is pivotal to the Christian faith. But in what sense does Althaus view the resurrection as the basis for faith? The resurrection is by no means a proof of anything: "The faith must be risked. Therefore it is not up to the dogmatic Christology to prove the presence of God in Jesus Christ."³ The resurrection is not evidential, because it is "not a provable historical fact":

Historically recognizable are the experiences of the disciples, the "appearances" of Jesus after his death and even the fact of the empty tomb. But how these facts are to be understood, what actually happened at Easter, that, history as such, cannot say. That is a matter of religious judgment, of faith, which arises out of the

¹Ibid., p. 485.

²Ibid., p. 432.

³Ibid., p. 425.

total witness about Jesus.¹

The resurrection is interpretive rather than evidential. It interprets the cross and faith interprets and substantiates the resurrection. But although we cannot say anything about the meaning of the resurrection, what can be said about the circumstances of it? Althaus realizes that the early church witnessed that Jesus was raised on the third day. Biblical tradition emphasizes a twofold aspect of the resurrection: Christ's appearances and the empty tomb.

The appearances are to Althaus not subjective visions but "an objective trans-subjective, bodily coming of the resurrected one to his disciples."² Although layers of tradition have formed around the original accounts, the appearances were never described as visions. "To make the origin of the visions historically-psychologically comprehensible is pure fabrication, without and against all witnesses in the sources."³ Faith understands the appearances thus: "Jesus returns from death in an encounter with his own and so gives them the certainty that he is alive and has been exalted as God."⁴ Althaus follows here the conservative Lutheran and Erlangen tradition by vehemently denouncing the visionary hypothesis.

He is equally clear and persuasive on the matter of the empty tomb:

No contemporary could understand the message, that the dead Jesus was alive, in any other way than that he, that is to say,

¹Ibid., p. 246.

²Ibid., p. 486.

³Ibid., p. 487.

⁴Ibid.

his body which was placed in the tomb, returned from the grave; likewise the disciples who saw the Lord had to think this. They could never have appeared in Jerusalem such a short time after the death of Jesus with the message: the one who was laid in the grave has been resurrected by God and is alive, if the tomb had not been empty.¹

However, faith in the resurrection came not because of the empty tomb but because of the appearances. But what of the appearances? What was the resurrected body like? Here Althaus outdoes even Barth in double talk:

We know well: the resurrection from the dead to new corporeal aliveness does not mean that the corpse which was placed in the tomb comes to life--although, of course, at the same time in a changed form. In this matter we have been led beyond earlier naturalistic concepts. . . . There is no continuity between our present life and the new corporeality, but correspondence and personal identity.²

The resurrection of Christ does therefore not demand an empty tomb as an "ontological necessity." But rather, the empty tomb is a sign, a pointer, which has been given to our faith, to confirm the objectivity of the appearances. The resurrection does not necessitate the empty tomb, but it is illuminated by it. "The appearances are therefore neither to be understood spiritually, nor naturalistically-realistically, but eschatologically-realistically."³

The ascension is for Althaus a later legend which expresses the certainty of the disciples that the resurrected Christ has become the exalted God. The resurrection and ascension testify to the exaltation of Christ christologically, in that the man Christ Jesus reenters the

¹Ibid. ²Ibid., p. 488. ³Ibid., p. 489.

eternal life of God, and, soteriologically, that Jesus is a living reconciler and mediator. The "hidden and closed eternity" into which Jesus entered is the future hope of the Christian.¹

Walter Künneth

The person.--Since the death of Althaus, Künneth is the leading light in Erlangen, where he is professor of systematic theology since 1953. Previously he served as a parish pastor in Bavaria and in 1944 he became dean of the Evangelical Lutheran District of Erlangen. He is perhaps the most outstanding conservative scholar in Germany. He belongs to that group in the Lutheran Church which calls itself the Konfessionskirche and adheres closely to the confessional creeds of the Church. His criticism of Bultmann and his students is forthright and devastating. Of the Bultmann-students he says that they have no right to become pastors because they are not believers.

At the recent World Congress on Evangelism in Berlin, Künneth was featured as one of the "distinguished evangelical spokesmen" with his position paper on "Hindrances to Evangelism in the Church."² This is ironic, for men like Künneth, for all their continental conservatism, are among the main hindrances to evangelism. Künneth's critical view

¹Ibid., p. 491.

²"The Good, Glad News," and "Hindrances to Evangelism in the Church," Christianity Today, October 28, 1966, pp. 3, 14-18.

of the Scriptures, his denial of the virgin birth, and his Arian tendencies in Christology greatly vitiate his conservative claims. And yet, despite these views K nneth may still be regarded as staunchly conservative, when compared with the other theologians on the continent.

His position.--To K nneth the resurrection becomes the fulcrum of theology and the starting point of Christology. His teachings are set forth in his translated work, Theology of the Resurrection, first published in 1933, and in one untranslated volume, Glauben an Jesus?, published in 1962, which questions the basis of existential Christology. To understand any theological system, and so, to understand K nneth, is to determine the source of authority. Is the Bible in and of itself authoritative or is man to determine which parts of Scripture can be accepted and which are non-essential or doubtful and thus makes himself the authority? K nneth follows the critics. He rejects biblicists because they derive teachings from individual promises instead of the whole kerygma.¹ To him the biblical sources are of primary and secondary importance and since the gospel records are merely witnesses to the resurrection, not historical accounts, the criterion of judging them lies in "measuring the appropriateness of the content of the confession."² Man judges what can be believed. K nneth observes of the resurrection

¹Walter K nneth, The Theology of the Resurrection, trans. James W. Leitch (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1965), pp. 131-32.

²Ibid., p. 104.

narratives:

The fact of considerable discrepancy in detail is indisputable and can hardly be removed by attempts at harmonizing. The possibility of subjective interference at individual points must be admitted. . . . Believing knowledge is the over-riding factor determining the value of all the Gospel traditions. . . . As soon as the traditions are to be evaluated as confessions, differences between them, even to the extent of possible contradictions, require no apology.¹

The decisive thing to K nneth is the complete unanimity in the universal believing knowledge of the resurrection of Jesus itself. This "believing knowledge" is the way by which the fact of the resurrection is known. It is not based on the historical facts. A new historical approach is required, one which does not go behind the resurrection confession to find a historic core, but whose aim is to understand the "substance" which is contained in the believing statement.² Although paying lip-service to the historicity of the resurrection, K nneth over-stresses the transcendent character of the resurrection. He insists that the resurrection "is a primal miracle and as such lies as it were behind and beyond the spatio-temporal plane, though of course not without having important repercussions on it."³ Were the resurrection historical, its uniqueness would be destroyed, therefore it could not be a point on the historical plane to which we could conceivably have an objective relation. "Accordingly, historical research is not at all a competent authority" when it comes to the question of knowledge of the

¹Ibid., p. 106.

²Ibid., p. 107.

³Ibid., p. 80.

resurrection.¹ This knowledge comes through faith in the confession of the witnesses but it is primarily through the existentialistic fellowship of believers with the ever-present Lord--especially in the Eucharist--that one can become certain of the reality of the resurrection:

Because Jesus as the resurrected Lord proves himself active in faith and faith is sure that Jesus the Lord is living, therefore faith knows consecutively about the historical existence of Jesus of Nazareth.²

The reality of the resurrection does therefore not depend on what happened in history. For this reason Kunneth can say that it is immaterial what happened at the resurrection, "how many appearances took place, where, when and to whom, and what differences there may have been between them."³ The importance of the appearances lies in the fact that in it the reality of the resurrection of Jesus reveals itself and that it forms a basis for the founding of the apostolate. The appearances are real but "the glorified body of Christ who appeared is not to be identified with any resuscitation of a corpse."⁴ The wounds on the resurrection body, the fact that he ate, drank, walked, are expressions of "downright four-square realism" and show merely the

¹Ibid., pp. 31-32.

²Walter Kunneth, Glauben an Jesus? (Hamburg: Friedrich Wittig Verlag, 1962), p. 286.

³Kunneth, The Theology of the Resurrection, pp. 79-80.

⁴Ibid., p. 88.

interest in the bodily realness which is "of an inconceivable corporeality."¹

The account of the empty tomb was definitely a part of the apostolic tradition. But "in itself there is no identity between the empty tomb and the primal miracle of the resurrection of Jesus. The idea creatio ex nihilo is valid in principle here too."² Although there seems to be no real relationship between the body laid in the tomb and the resurrected body, the empty tomb is a sign of the concrete, bodily resurrection and it guards against every tendency to spiritualize the central declarations of the resurrection. It is no proof but merely a sign.

Like Althaus, Kunneth does not give separate consideration to the ascension, but equates it with the resurrection appearances.³ Of supreme importance to Kunneth--and here he differs from Althaus and orthodox Christianity--is the fact that "in the resurrection Jesus receives something from God which he did not until then possess, namely his 'lordship.'⁴ This installation of Jesus as Lord "means the conferring of divine majesty. . . . It is first through his being installed as Lord in the resurrection that Christ takes the place of God."⁵ This is the disastrous conclusion of Germany's most conservative scholar. The historical Jesus is merely in a position between God and man. The

¹Ibid., pp. 88-89. ²Ibid., p. 97. ³Ibid., p. 90.

⁴Ibid., p. 132. ⁵Ibid., pp. 133-34.

resurrection elevates him to deity.

The Resume of the Position

Althaus and Kunneth, as the representatives of the Erlangen school, agree in their general approach to the resurrection, especially in areas in which they depart from historic Christianity. First, the Scriptures themselves are unreliable and therefore a literal interpretation of the resurrection accounts is impossible. One must look at the substance of the accounts. Secondly, the historical dimension of the resurrection is reduced and practically excluded. This distinction between facts and their meaning is unwarranted and rests on the philosophy of Kant. If the historian declares it to be impossible to say what happened at Easter, faith could certainly make no sure pronouncements either, because that upon which faith is built is historical and accessible to historians. Thirdly, knowledge of the resurrection is gained through a personal confrontation with the Lord rather than the credible accounts, which are said to be mere confessions of the disciples' faith. Fourthly, despite an insistence on the appearance of the resurrected Christ and the empty tomb, the resurrection body is in no way related to the corpse that was placed in the tomb. And lastly, both men eliminate the ascension, each one giving his own unbiblical meaning of the resurrection.

CHAPTER IV

THE BULTMANN SCHOOL

The Rationale of the School

The Bultmann school is based on existentialism and is firmly rooted in liberalism. Existential philosophy moves man into the center, not the world or metaphysics. Man is to realize to the fullest his being, his existence. For the existentialist understanding of the New Testament revelation it is first of all essential to distinguish between the "historical fact" and "historic encounter," between the historical Jesus of Nazareth who lived in the years A. D. 1-30 and the "Christ of the kerygma." Turning their back on all historical circumstance, existentialists apply themselves solely to the one all-important encounter with the Christ proclaimed in the "kerygma," to the message of the Risen One.

This philosophical starting point leads to that concept of revelation which is not a simple imparting of information but an event which places one in the new state of selfhood and through this man attains his salvation, his authenticity. Revelation is therefore not a thing that once happened, but the decisive point is how I have to interpret the revelation event for myself today. Bultmann, in his work, Der Begriff der Offenbarung im Neuen Testament, puts the matter succinctly:

What, then, has been revealed? Nothing at all, if the question is one . . . about doctrines . . . which no one could ever have

discovered, secrets which once imparted, are known once for all. But everything, if we mean opening of man's eyes to himself in his being able to understand himself.¹

Bultmann, along with his followers, boasts that the existentialist interpretation of the resurrection is able to give the decisive answer to the anthropological problem posed by contemporary existential philosophy and by historical criticism.² Whether the answer of the Bultmann school is valid in the light of the New Testament accounts and whether it proves to be theologically tenable in principle remains to be seen.

If the old liberalism in Germany is dead, it seems to be a rather lively corpse. In the strict existential school of Bultmann we have a new blossom and fruit of the "old liberalism." True, their existential interpretation of the kerygma differs from the reductions of New Testament truth by the liberals, but basically the approach is the same: (1) Man's reason is the yard-stick which is applied to the biblical sources; (2) epistemologically, every report is doubted which asserts things of supernatural character, and (3) the negative result of the "history of life-of-Jesus research" is accepted, although with an indifference to historic facts.³

¹Walter Künneth, The Theology of the Resurrection, trans. James W. Leitch (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1965), p. 42.

²Ibid., p. 43. ³Ibid., p. 147.

The Representatives of the School

The Bultmann camp is split wide open. Several distinct groups compete against each other, which makes it extremely difficult to evaluate the Bultmann School as a whole. There are the conservative scholars, including Günther Bornkamm of Heidelberg, Otto Michel of Tübingen, and Joachim Jeremias of Göttingen. The Heilsgeschichte scholars, a mediating group, consists of men like Oscar Cullmann of Basel and Eduard Schweizer of Zürich. There is also the radical school of Herbert Braun and Manfred Mezger of Main, who are designated by Bultmann as his "genuine" disciples, and should therefore be discussed. However, they are practical atheists, defining God as a mere "inter-personal relationship," and, as has been remarked, the only thing they retain in the Apostolic Creed is Pontius Pilate. Finally, there is a post-Bultmannian school, which will be discussed in a separate chapter and there are the independents whose viewpoint defies group identification and classification. Actually, each theologian within the various groups and schools has his own elaborately worked-out system. Grouping theologians into schools merely indicates some similarity in viewpoint and enables identification. It is admittedly a subjective approach.

For this present study, Bultmann and Fuchs will serve as representatives: Bultmann because he is the unrepentant founder of the school, Fuchs because he is the deviating disciple of Bultmann.

Rudolf Bultmann

The person.--What Picasso is to modern painting, Bultmann is

to modern theology. He is probably the most influential man in the world of New Testament scholarship. Born in 1884 as the eldest son of an Evangelical Lutheran minister, his education was in the finest tradition of European scholarship. As a student of the historical-critical and religious-historical theology, he was greatly influenced by men such as Johannes Weiss, Gunkel, Wilhelm Herrmann, but above all, by the existential philosopher Martin Heidegger (born 1889). This combination of theology and philosophy in Bultmann has led to dire consequences in the field of biblical scholarship. He received a teaching position in Marburg in 1912, taught in Breslau and Giessen and in 1921 became professor of New Testament in Marburg. The retired theologian still lives in this picturesque university town.

Among Bultmann's influential works are the History of the Synoptic Tradition and his tedious Theology of the New Testament.

Bultmann belongs to the circle of theologians who, like Barth, Brunner, Niebuhr, Tillich, and Gogarten, are the spiritual heirs of the reaction to liberalism, the ground-work for which was laid by Soren Kierkegaard's existentialism. Barth and the more radical Bultmann parted company between 1927 and 1929 and while Barth openly repudiated existential philosophy in 1932, Bultmann was more consistent in his application of the dialectical principle and has since led the field of New Testament scholarship with his distinctive approach of "form criticism"

and his program of demythologizing.¹

His position.--A glance into Bultmann's theological workshop shows indisputably that he is dependent upon liberalism's critical historical principles. Bultmann observes:

To be sure, I am of the opinion that we can now know next to nothing of the life and personality of Jesus, since the Christian sources were not interested in that and are moreover very fragmentary and overgrown by legend and since other sources do not exist. . . . I am personally of the opinion that Jesus did not consider himself to be the Messiah . . . the sources give us the proclamation of the Church. . . . Critical study shows that the whole tradition of Jesus . . . breaks into a series of layers. . . . That the Gospel of John is a source. . . . is out of question altogether. . . . Within what remains . . . secondary material must again be rejected. . . . By means of critical analysis we can reach an oldest layer, even though we can define it only with relative certainty. Naturally there is even less certainty that the words in this oldest layer were really spoken by Jesus . . . for this layer is also the result of a complicated historical process. . . . To be sure, there is no ground for doubting whether Jesus really existed . . . but such doubts are of no essential significance. . . . Anyone who wishes to set this "Jesus" in quotation marks . . . and regard it as a valid designation of a historic phenomenon . . . is welcome to do so.²

Bultmann is never one to let biblical truth stand in the way of his philosophical notions. And so with blatant dogmatism that Jesus said nothing of his death and resurrection, nor of their soteriological meaning: "It is true that a few words of such content were put into his mouth, but they do not come from the faith of the early church . . ."

¹Robert D. Knudsen, "Rudolf Bultmann," Creative Minds in Contemporary Theology, ed. Philip Edgcumbe Hughes (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1966), pp. 131-33.

²Rudolf Bultmann, Jesus (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1926), pp. 12ff.

but from hellenistic Christianity."¹

Thus it becomes clear that a posteriori every attempt to say something of the resurrection of Christ must utterly fail. Since the presuppositions of this approach are untenable, the end result would also necessarily appear throughly erroneous.

Bultmann, in his undue stress of the "kerygma," asserts that the resurrection is an indispensable part of it. In his famous essay on "New Testament and Mythology" he writes that "indeed: the cross and resurrection form a single, indivisible 'cosmic' event."² He also frankly admits that "the death and resurrection of Christ are therefore cosmic events, not once-for-all happenings, which lie in the past."³ What then does he mean by the word event? Is it equivalent to a historical fact? Did the man Jesus who died on the cross really and literally arise from the tomb? Not for Bultmann. He recognizes that Paul in I Corinthians 15 "wants to establish the resurrection as a historical event by the enumeration of witness," but he calls this a "fatal argumentation."⁴ He admits that the New Testament frequently wishes to es-

¹Ibid., p. 176.

²Rudolf Bultmann, "Neues Testament und Mythologie," Kerygma und Mythos, ed. Hans-Werner Bartsch (Hamburg-Bergsteat: Evangelischer Verlag, 1960), p. 44.

³Rudolf Bultmann, Theologie des Neuen Testaments (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1961), p. 299.

⁴Bultmann, Kerygma und Mythos, pp. 44-45.

establish the resurrection as a historical event, but he himself wants nothing of it.

What becomes of the resurrection appearances and the empty tomb? Both are later embellishments of the primitive tradition.

The story of the empty tomb is "an apologetic legend. Paul knows nothing of an empty tomb."¹ The appearances of the risen Lord are "unbelievable because no matter how many witnesses there were, the resurrection cannot be ascertained as an objective fact."² Scornfully he rejects every suggestion that the resurrection was the resuscitation of a corpse.

Is there anything historical about the resurrection? Bultmann answers with a resounding Nein! "As a historical event only the Easter-faith of the first disciples is ascertainable. Christian Easter-faith is not interested in the historical question."³ This Easter-faith is nothing more than faith in the cross as a soteriological event. And the cross, incidentally, is "the tragic end of a noble man."⁴ We meet Christ the crucified and resurrected One in the word of proclamation, nowhere else, and faith in this word is in truth resurrection faith. Faith in the resurrection and the faith that Christ speaks to us in the proclaimed word are identical. And since Christ is present in the

¹Rudolf Bultmann, Die Geschichte der Synoptischen Tradition (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1961), p. 314.

²Bultmann, Kerygma und Mythos, p. 45.

³Ibid., p. 47. ⁴Ibid., p. 46.

kerygma now, so the cross and resurrection happen in the eschatological Now.

It is quite evident that Bultmann does not arrive at his conclusions by applying the historical method to the New Testament. He writes that "the resurrection, of course, simply cannot be a visible fact in the realm of human history."¹ This is not that statement of a historian but of a theologian! On the basis of Bultmann's writings it becomes readily apparent why "of course" the resurrection cannot be a fact of history. Klaas Runia, in his incisive article on "The Resurrection and History," delineates two reasons:²

First, Bultmann accepts the modern world view of closed causality. "Modern science understands the world view and man as a closed inner unit, which does not stand open to the intervention of supernatural powers."³ This, logically, rules out the resurrection. The second reason is more important. Bultmann is imprisoned in the dilemma of Gotthold Lessing, who maintained that accidental proofs of history could never become the proof of necessary truths of reason. For Bultmann this means that his existential truth is not capable of demonstration. He does believe that redemption took place in history: "The agent of God's presence and activity, the mediator of his reconciliation of the

¹Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament, p. 295.

²Klaas Runia, "The Resurrection and History," The Reformed Theological Review, XXV (May/August 1966), pp. 41-52.

³Bultmann, Kerygma und Mythos, p. 19.

world unto himself, is a real figure of history."¹ But if this knowledge were demonstrable, then our faith would depend on the objective world and we would fall back into mythology. "It is precisely its immunity from proof which secures the Christian proclamation against the charge of being mythological."² The resurrection has to be a matter of pure faith, which is always a risk, and for this reason "the resurrection, of course, simply cannot be a visible fact in the realm of human history." The only possibility left is to explain it as "the rise of faith in the risen Lord" on the part of the disciples, or, in concurrence with Bultmann's critics he would assert that "Christ rose in the kerygma." The historical Christ is "of no concern whatsoever to me," says Bultmann,³ and as an outward demonstration of his disbelief in a historical resurrection, the Marburger theologian has for many years now avoided church on Easter Sunday and has gone for an extended walk.

Ernst Fuchs

The person.--Ernst Fuchs was born in 1903 in Heilbronn (Württemberg). He was educated at the universities of Tübingen and Marburg and was greatly influenced by Adolf Schlatter and Rudolf Bultmann. Until 1949 he served in the ministry in Württemberg and subsequently became a lecturer and later external professor in Tübingen. In 1955 he became

¹Ibid., p. 48. ²Ibid.

³Gerhard Bergmann, Alarm um die Bibel (Gladbeck: Schriftenmissions-Verlag, 1963), p. 43.

professor for New Testament in the Church Academy of Berlin, and in 1961 professor for New Testament at Marburg. In 1963 he was appointed director of the newly formed Institute of Hermeneutics.¹

Professor Fuchs aims to follow in the footsteps of Bultmann, although he is even more radical than his teacher. In his writings he concentrates on the problem of hermeneutics and on the question of the historical Jesus. His untranslated work on the quest of the historical Jesus places him in a position very close to that of the nineteenth-century liberals.

His position.--Bultmann had said that the resurrection has to do nothing whatsoever with a "historical event" but is the meaningful expression for the fact that the cross is not to be taken as an ordinary death but as "liberating act of God."² Jesus becomes present in the kerygma, which is an eschatological event in itself. Since this is the case, "all speculations concerning the essence of the resurrected One, all narratives of the empty tomb and all Easter legends . . . become indifferent."³

Fuchs is even more consequential and radical in his views. Faith is without any relationship to the resurrection and must be under-

¹Ernst Fuchs, Studies of the Historical Jesus, trans. Karl E. Braaten (Naperville, Ill.: Alec R. Allason, Inc., 1964), cover.

²Walter Kunneth, Glauben an Jesus? (Hamburg: Friedrich Wittig Verlag, 1962), p. 158.

³Ibid., p. 159.

stood as a strictly formal phenomena. Since faith is not like thought, where content matters, but rather the freedom for faith "matters," Fuchs declares over against his own teacher:

Bultmann too still speaks of "Easter-faith." This concept lies heavily on the discussion. . . . In truth, it must be maintained that Jesus' execution as well as the confession of his exaltation, i. e. resurrection, has nothing at all to do with faith.¹

The fact of the resurrection is completely irrelevant to faith, maintains Fuchs. He singles out an aspect of Jesus' behavior in the gospels as being historical and relevant for faith. This was that Jesus ate and fellowshiped with sinners. The church was not likely to change what Christ did, although it most certainly changed what he said.² The essence of Fuchs' truncated theology therefore is this: nothing what Jesus did in his death and resurrection nor anything he said is relevant for us, but Jesus' emphasis on man's relationship to God, the graciousness towards sinners, is pertinent to faith. For Bultmann there was a continuity between Jesus' message and the kerygma. For Fuchs the behavior of Jesus is the real content of the proclamation. "This conduct is neither that of a prophet nor that of a wisdom teacher, but the conduct of a man who dares to act in God's place."³ In line with his exis-

¹Ibid.

²Ernst Fuchs, Zur Frage nach dem historischen Jesus (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1960), p. 156.

³Kühneth, Glauben an Jesus?, p. 107.

tential presuppositions, Fuchs sees in Christ's behavior Christ's understanding of himself. And this understanding is expressed in the New Testament by the believing church: "Faith in Jesus therefore means essentially to repeat Jesus' decision. . . . Jesus now became the content of faith. . . . To believe in Jesus means to believe like Jesus."¹

This completely excludes a personal relationship to Christ.

And Fuchs admits this unequivocally:

The gospels record only that Jesus loved his own . . . and that this love was not to be returned but to be repeated. . . . If we wanted to understand Jesus as a historical individuality, we would have to love him in return, of course, but this we cannot do and this we should not do.²

We are only to repeat the decision of Jesus, that is, to live for God. How does this relate to a belief in the resurrection, which Fuchs mentions rather frequently? To him there is no such thing as a salvation fact, which he criticizes as a "taboo" and "foolish concept." "It is foreign to living faith. Faith does not reflect concerning facts, but it creates them as well."³ How does faith relate to the resurrection? "Faith relates in this sense to the resurrection of the crucified, because it confesses openly Jesus as Lord." Fuchs explains this by adding that "Christ is resurrected if this confession is a statement

¹Fuchs, Zur Frage nach dem historischen Jesus, p. 164.

²Ibid., p. 48.

³Otto Rodenberg, Um die Wahrheit der Heiligen Schrift (Wuppertal: R. Brockhaus Verlag, 1962), p. 46.

of love."¹

As to the narratives of Christ's death and resurrection themselves, Fuchs eliminates their trustworthiness with one clean sweep: They "stem stylistically from the kerygma of the community."²

The resurrection appearances did indeed take place but faith is not founded on them. In fact, Fuchs comes to the startling conclusion that the witnesses believed the message of Jesus "not because of, but despite their having seen him."³ "The Easter experiences had only personal significance for those concerned. They were an aid from God and hence a working of the Holy Spirit."⁴ Fuchs himself asks the important question what these encounters with the resurrected Christ were. They were of an eschatological nature. And an "eschatological encounter is according to the preaching of Jesus, basically the encounter of man with himself, although in the togetherness of Thou and I."⁵ The disciples encountered Jesus because they suddenly saw him for what he was: the bearer of the will of God. And in faith they followed the example of Jesus. This is conversion.⁶

¹Ibid.

²Fuchs, Studies of the Historical Jesus, p. 27.

³Wolfhart Pannenberg, Grundzüge der Christologie (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1964), p. 110.

⁴Fuchs, Studies in the Historical Jesus, p. 28.

⁵Fuchs, Zur Frage nach dem historischen Jesus, p. 31.

⁶Ibid., p. 32.

The empty tomb? "Easter has nothing to do with a single open tomb . . . but with the faith in the happening of revelation."¹ There can be no resurrection appearances of a bodily resurrected Jesus. He was merely a man. The resurrection merely brings to light what already existed, namely the faith of the disciples. It is nothing more than an existential loudspeaker, the proclamation of the disciples' faith. Since this faith does not depend on a historical fact but on itself, it ever remains a venture (Wagnis) in which one dares to live as Jesus did.

The Resume of the Position

Bultmann and his followers agree that taking the resurrection as a fact of history is more of an offense to faith than a support of it. The Apostle Paul was so certain that the resurrection took place on the stage of world history that he confidently adduced proofs of its historicity (I Cor. 15:3-11). Any impartial examination will bring about a conviction that it actually occurred. However, Bultmann feels that Paul's argument here is fatal. He is alarmed at the prospect of seeing the resurrection rendered uncertain by a critical investigation of the accounts. Therefore, in the interest of faith, he attempts to remove the resurrection as a legitimate object for consideration for the secular historian. He does so by disassociating the event from the space-time line of world history, and by relocating it on the shadowy

¹Ibid., p. 42.

level of "theological history." One need not give himself over to optimistic illusions: the existential interpretation of the Easter message has ultimately dissolved the facticity of the resurrection of Christ into a bundle of existential-theological meanings, into anthropomorphic subjectivism. By banishing the resurrection from real history, the existentialists have robbed it of its saving power. For its value to faith and thus to salvation consists precisely in this, that it occurred in genuine history.

The detrimental consequences of such a position have become obvious: (1) The historical facts of Jesus Christ are confused with a present encounter. (2) Jesus Christ is not a living person with whom a personal relationship is possible. (3) The decisive factor is not the New Testament message, nor even the content of the kerygma, but the formal happening of the proclamation; not the WHAT but the THAT. (4) Christology has become completely dissolved. Man no longer believes on Jesus but as Jesus. (5) A theological confusion of concepts is complete. Words merely become theological concepts for philosophical reflection.

CHAPTER V

THE POST-BULTMANNIAN SCHOOL

The Rationale of the School

In actuality, the title of "post-Bultmannian" might be applied to half of all German scholars, since they at one time or another were close followers of Bultmann. But the inevitable division in the ranks of the Bultmann followers has introduced such a wide variety of theological opinion, that the use of the title of this school becomes well-nigh meaningless. However, in the context of this paper it designates those who at one time followed Bultmann, but whose theological impetus has carried them far beyond Bultmannian viewpoints. It is they who have seized the intellectual initiative and who comprise this new oligarchy of theologian whose one common characteristic is its pointed criticism of Bultmann and its sharp disagreements within its own ranks. The significance of the historical Jesus for Christian faith seems to be the main factor which divides these scholars. They range from the "conservative" Bornkamm, who sees the necessary connection between the historical Jesus and the content of the Christian message, to Pannenberg, who stresses the reality of objective divine revelation in history, and to Braun, to whom divine revelation and "God" consist only in interpersonal relationships.

The Representatives of the School

Günther Bornkamm

The person.---Günther Bornkamm (born 1905) is professor of New Testament exegesis at the ancient University of Heidelberg, whose faculty is one of the most liberal ones in Germany. Gerhard von Rad, for example, the professor for Old Testament, is to the Old Testament what Bultmann is to New Testament interpretation. Bornkamm became known as a conservative post-Bultmannian on the basis of his book, Jesus von Nazareth (Stuttgart, 1956). More recent is a book written in collaboration with two of his students, Tradition and Interpretation in Matthew (Westminster, 1963). Bornkamm's brother Heinrich is lecturing at the same school and is a specialist in Reformation history.

His position.---Bornkamm is a major proponent of the new quest of the historical Jesus. For Bultmann the search of the historical Jesus is theologically forbidden; for Bornkamm it is not only permitted but enjoined. Bultmann writes in his book Jesus: "I am of the opinion that we can know practically nothing of the life and personality of Jesus,"¹ but Bornkamm writes:

The nature of the sources does not permit us to paint a biographical picture of the life of Jesus against the background of the history of his people and his age. Nevertheless, what these sources do yield as regards the historical facts concerning the

¹Rudolf Bultmann, Jesus (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1926), p. 12.

personality and career of Jesus is not negligible, and demands careful attention.¹

Bornkamm made thus the historical Jesus relevant for faith-- something which Bultmann could not bring himself to do. But what is the "nature of the sources" to which he makes reference? The scholar must "desist from rash combinations of the biographical data and must use the greatest critical caution,"² for the birth narratives are too much overgrown by legends to be historically reliable and

should we reduce the tradition critically to that which cannot be doubted on historical grounds, we should be left ultimately with a mere torso which bears no resemblance to the story set forth in the Gospels.³

To take the narratives as they stand is for Bornkamm a "senseless and forced" solution. The gospels, though containing a historical kernel, are the mere expression of the confession of the church. And so Bornkamm can write:

We possess no single word of Jesus and no single story of Jesus, no matter how incontestably genuine they may be, which do not contain at the same time the confession of the believing congregation or at least are embedded in that confession.⁴

It is the Easter faith of the church that pervades every part of the gospels. The virgin birth, the nature-miracles, and the use of Messianic titles are projected back into the life of Jesus by the believing church. Their faith was brought about by the appearances of

¹Cunther Bornkamm, Jesus of Nazareth, trans. Irene and Fraser McLuskey (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1959), p. 53.

²Ibid. ³Ibid., p. 15. ⁴Ibid., p. 14.

the risen Christ and the word of his witnesses. This raises a twofold question: What was the resurrection and what were the appearances? This must be asked despite the fact that Bornkamm asserts that "the insistent question 'what actually happened' in no wise brings us to the point."¹ To every thoughtful person it seems very much to the point, but then, Bornkamm and his German colleagues are not men who are easily side-tracked by basic facts when they set out to twist the meaning of the Scriptures to their preconceived presuppositions. To them the "that" of the event is more important than the "when" or the "how."

Bornkamm removes from historical scholarship the resurrection which led to this Easter faith: "History cannot ascertain and establish conclusively the facts"² about the resurrection as it can be done with other events of the past. Bornkamm denies that the resurrection was merely the overwhelming impression which Jesus' personality had made on his disciples or that it has simply an analogy in the eternal dying and rebirth of nature. The rekindled faith of the disciples cannot be explained satisfactorily in such terms. But Bornkamm gives no substitute view. He affirms that it happened but he refuses to say what happened: "The last historical fact available . . . is the Easter faith of the first disciples."³ The Easter stories are evidence of faith and not records and chronicles. The resurrection appearances? They

¹Ibid., p. 15.

²Ibid., p. 180.

³Ibid.

are only descriptions of a reality by using "massive means of legends."¹ The accounts stand in hopeless contradiction to each other and this is a sure sign that "the Easter message is at any rate earlier than the Easter stories."² The stories were later fabrications.

And the empty tomb? All accounts of it are obviously legends. Is its existence important? Not at all, says Bornkamm: "The resurrection message and resurrection faith in the early church do not depend on uniform versions of the manner of the Easter event, or the physical nature of the risen Christ."³ These versions are said to be not uniform because they supposedly fail to make a distinction between the resurrection of Christ and his ascension to the right hand of the Father.

So it is the appearances of the risen Christ (whatever they might have been) and the word of the witnesses which gave rise to the resurrection faith of the church. This message of the Easter faith resulted in the Easter stories as we find them in the gospels. History, therefore, has for Bornkamm some relevance for an already existent Easter faith. But he stops short of saying that the historical fact of the resurrection engenders this faith. What became clear and grew to be a certainty as a result of the word of the witnesses was

¹Günther Bornkamm, "Glaube und Geschichte in den Evangelien," Der historische Jesus und der kerygmatische Christus (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1961), p. 284.

²Bornkamm, Jesus of Nazareth, pp. 182-83.

³Ibid., p. 183.

that God himself had intervened with his almighty hand in the wicked and rebellious life of the world, and had wrested this Jesus of Nazareth from the power of sin and death which had risen against him, and set him up as Lord of the world.¹

Wolfhart Pannenberg

The person.--Pannenberg was born in 1928 in Stettin. He studied theology in Berlin, Göttingen, Basel, and Heidelberg, receiving his doctorate in 1953. From 1955 to 1958 he was assistant professor for systematic theology in Heidelberg and then, until 1961, professor at the Kirchliche Hochschule of Wuppertal. Since 1961 he is professor for systematic theology in Mainz.

In the early 1950's four students at Heidelberg--Ulrich Wilckens, Dietrich Roessler, Klaus Koch, and Rolf Rendtorff--began meeting once a week to discuss exegetical-historical questions and the relation between faith and history. Soon they asked Pannenberg to join them and in 1961 they published Offenbarung als Geschichte, the thesis of which is that revelation is mediated only through historical events. As the systematic theologian of the group, Pannenberg became the chief spokesman for the new movement, and in his numerous publications sets forth the thesis that God's revelation does not come to men immediately but always mediately via the events of history. This movement is a decided reaction against Barth, who insists that revelation be controlled by what comes immedi-

¹Ibid., pp. 183-84.

ately from Jesus Christ, and against Bultmann, whom they formerly followed, to whom revelation takes place in the kerygma.¹

The movement, under Pannenberg's able leadership, is gaining great momentum and merits close attention. A discussion of Pannenberg's views on the resurrection is warranted for the following reasons:

- (1) Most German theologians and the evangelicals hopefully look to him for leadership and a conservative break-through. In his bold insistence on objective historical revelation, Pannenberg represents the farthest contemporary break from Barth and Bultmann and the dialectical theology.
- (2) He has written very extensively on the resurrection and an examination of his views will aid the evaluation of his entire system.
- (3) His works, especially his recent Grundzüge der Christologie, will appear in English before long and, judging from the practice of certain evangelical scholars in this country, Pannenberg will be highly acclaimed as an evangelical. Using Pannenberg's view of the resurrection as a measuring rod, what can we say of his theology?

His position.--Pannenberg realizes that dialectical theology undermines both historical revelation and the universal validity of Christian truth. He insists that if one really takes history in earnest, he will find that God has revealed himself in history. Maintaining the necessity of knowing something about the historical facts on which Chris-

¹Robert L. Wilken, "Who is Wolfhart Pannenberg?" Dialog, IV (Spring 1965), p. 140.

tianity depends, he strikes at the dialectical theology's disjunction of revelation and reason, and at its consequent refusal to relate Christianity to the realm of objective knowledge. For Pannenberg the history through which revelation is mediated is not a special redemptive history known only through faith, but is regular universal history. History finds its unity in God who works toward a goal by constantly doing new things in history. History thus becomes apocalyptic, and clearly the resurrection of Christ is such an apocalyptic event which challenges the historian, because here God performs something new with a specific goal in mind.¹

Pannenberg is drawn toward the resurrection because its historical question is an imposing task for his theological method. Moreover, since for him the ground for faith and preaching does not rest on Christ's claims but only on their confirmation, and since this confirmation is found in the resurrection, it is to receive close attention.

As a historian, Pannenberg does not regard, a priori, the report of Jesus' resurrection as impossible, nor does he accept it uncritically:

It is the close examination of the reports of the resurrection that determine its historicity, and not the prior judgment that all events must be more or less the same.²

What does Pannenberg say concerning the resurrection? He in-

¹Daniel P. Fuller, Easter Faith and History (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1965), pp. 178-79.

²Ibid., p. 181.

sists that the resurrection happened at a specific time and a specific place. He believes the reports of the empty tomb and of the objective appearances of Christ. Furthermore, the transformed body of Christ appeared to the disciples and because of Christ's resurrection, the believers shall be raised in like manner. As biblical and as orthodox as this view appears, it will be seen that it is unfortunately subject to many modifications.

What grounds does Pannenberg have for declaring the resurrection to be a historical event in the full sense of the term? He holds that there are two independent strands of tradition connected with the resurrection: the appearances of the resurrected Lord and the finding of the empty tomb.

The only account of the appearances which is suitable for historical evidence is I Corinthians 15:11, which Pannenberg connects with Paul's early contact with Jerusalem where he received a first-hand knowledge of the events which the gospels did not have. The appearances reported in the gospels are rejected because they stand in contradiction to Paul and

have in their whole literary form such strongly legendary character that it is hardly possible to find any particular historical root in them. . . . They have been shaped by strong legendary influences, mainly by a tendency to underline the bodily appearances of Jesus.¹

¹Wolfhart Pannenberg, "Did Jesus Really Rise from the Dead?" Dialog, IV (Spring 1965), p. 131.

Pannenberg assumes that Paul presupposes in I Corinthians 15 that the appearances he had were of the same character as the appearances the other apostles had experienced. He then lists five points which were probably true of the appearances: (1) The appearances were of the Lord Jesus Christ, (2) They were of a spiritual, not physical body. (3) The appearances were not an encounter on earth but came from heaven. (4) The appearance near Damascus may have been a phenomenon like a bright light. (5) This appearance entailed a communication.¹

Speaking of the mode of the appearances, Pannenberg claims that "evidently they were not events which could be seen and understood by everybody."² Pannenberg understands the experiences as "objective visions," far more comparable to recent discoveries in parapsychological phenomena (e.g., extrasensory perception) than to the "subjective" visions of pathological psychology. Too, Pannenberg rejects the idea that the appearances were caused by the enthusiastic imagination of the disciples.³ But that this appearance of the resurrected Lord was hardly the person with flesh and bones who ate and talked with the disciples in the Upper Room needs hardly to be pointed out. Pannenberg seems even to weaken his own view of an "objective vision" by writing in a little

¹Ibid., p. 132. ²Ibid., p. 133.

³Wolfhart Pannenberg, Grundzüge der Christologie (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1964), pp. 92-93.

volume on anthropology, hitherto unnoticed by reviewers of Pannenberg's theology, that the resurrection

is therefore that reality of Jesus, which was encountered by his disciples after the catastrophe of his crucifixion and which so overpowered them that they could not find in their language a fitting word except the intimating, parabolic term: resurrection of the dead.¹

The statement seems to refer to a subjective vision, rather than an objective one.

As far as the empty tomb is concerned, it is an inevitable supposition on the basis of general historical consideration. The Christian community in Jerusalem would never have survived without having the reliable testimony of the empty tomb. Because of the independence of the two traditions, however--the finding of the empty tomb and the appearances of the resurrected Lord--Pannenberg thinks it probable that the disciples returned to Galilee before the resurrection, perhaps already before the execution of Jesus.² The gospels are clear that the disciples were present in Jerusalem on the day of the resurrection. Pannenberg rejects this. The women saw the empty tomb in Jerusalem, says he. The disciples saw the resurrected Lord in Galilee. Based upon this completely unscriptural interpretation, that these two traditions arose independently of each other, he establishes the probability of the facticity and historicity of the raising of Jesus--"and

¹Wolfhart Pannenberg, Was ist der Mensch? (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1962), p. 39.

²Pannenberg, Dialog, p. 134.

in historical investigation, that always means it is to be presupposed pending further developments."¹

Daring to go farther than most theologians, Pannenberg discusses the nature of the resurrection body. Here he follows Paul in I Corinthians 15 very closely. The believers will have a body like Christ's body. It is the present physical body which will undergo complete transformation. "A historical continuity relates the old to the new."² Man seeks his final destiny beyond death and this can only be in the unity of body and soul. This is the content of the hope for a resurrection from the dead. But where did this hope originate? We are startled to hear that "the expectation of a future resurrection of the dead was taken over by the Jews from the Persians and was bequeathed later to Christianity as well as Islam."³ Is this not then a false hope, because Christianity took over that which originated in a Pagan culture? No, says Pannenberg. "Before Judaism and Christianity the resurrection was a picture of human longing and phantasy, but now it has become the goal of confident hope."⁴ This hope, however, is not based upon God's promise and revelation in the Scriptures but upon the historical fact of the resurrection. For Pannenberg, revelation is objective only in

¹Pannenberg, Grundzüge der Christologie, p. 103.

²Pannenberg, Dialog, p. 130.

³Pannenberg, Was ist der Mensch?, p. 37.

⁴Ibid., p. 39.

the form of historical events but not in concepts and words, neither does he preserve the distinction between general and special revelation. It is therefore not surprising that he does not consider as genuine the predictions of Christ concerning his own death and resurrection and he goes so far as to claim that

the expectation of the earthly Jesus was not focused . . . in all probability on a so-to-speak private resurrection of the dead, but on a near general resurrection of the dead.¹

Once Christ's resurrection had come, however, it could only mean one inter-related complex of things: (1) the end of the world had begun; (2) God had confirmed the earthly activity of Jesus; (3) the church had received the insight that this was indeed the Son of Man; (4) God is finally revealed in Christ; and (5) a motive is provided for the mission to the nations.²

The Resume of the Position

In distinction to Bultmann, Bornkamm in his book Jesus von Nazareth regards the unmatched authority of Jesus as both historically relevant for Christian faith and proclamation. Like Fuchs, he sets out in his quest for the historical Jesus, whose authority manifests itself to Fuchs in his behavior but to Bornkamm, who goes beyond Fuchs, it is equally recognizable in his words and deeds. However, history itself

¹Pannenberg, Grundzüge der Christologie, pp. 60-61.

²Ibid., pp. 60-69.

cannot engender that faith. The resurrection faith is founded on a historical event but that it happened is more important than what happened.

Pannenberg, in opposition to all other men discussed, bases the fact and meaning of the resurrection squarely on a revelatory historical event. History is revelation of God. Lessing's "ugly ditch," that historical events can provide no basis for faith, is a false approach. History carries with itself its own explanation. Pannenberg affirms that the resurrection took place at a datable time and at a definite place. He believes the tomb was empty, the dead body was transformed, and the appearances were real. But is it right to emphasize these positive aspects of Pannenberg exclusively? Have not evangelical Christians believed these things all along? Is it not legitimate to stress the false presuppositions upon which this and the other systems are built? To what avail is a beautifully-constructed building if the foundation upon which it rests is faulty? A needed shift in emphasis can be illustrated by a quote from Fuller's book, Easter Faith and History, concerning Pannenberg, who delivered a lecture at Fuller Theological Seminary entitled, "Did Jesus Really Rise from the Dead?" Fuller reports:

During the course of this lecture Pannenberg affirmed that while there is much in the resurrection reports that is mythical, yet it is impossible to explain them wholly as the work of the apostles' imagination.¹

¹Fuller, pp. 181-82.

Why not invert the statement and make it read thus:

During the course of this lecture Pannenberg affirmed that while it is impossible to explain the resurrection reports wholly as the work of the apostles' imagination, yet there is much in the resurrection reports that is mythical.

It is only fair to list the negative aspects of a system as well. (1) Pannenberg traces the concept of the resurrection to the pagan Persian religion. (2) The gospels are legendary and undependable. (3) The incarnate Christ did not foresee nor predict his death and resurrection. (4) Revelation in concepts and words is rejected. (5) Pannenberg accepts the higher critical views of the New Testament, as expounded by Grass, von Campenhausen, and Bornkamm. (6) Christ did not appear bodily on earth to his disciples. The contribution which Pannenberg makes to the understanding of revelation and the resurrection is immediately vitiated by these factors. His conservative approach differs only slightly in degree, but not in kind, from the other theologians.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study has been to examine representatives of various theological directions in Germany, particularly in their view of the resurrection. The resurrection is the foundation and the criterion of the Christian faith. It is thus decisive for any theological system.

The Failure of German Theology

None of the men and movements studied subscribe completely to the orthodox biblical view of the resurrection. It is only logical to assume that if a system errs in the central fact of Christianity, it errs in other areas as well. Christian doctrines are not isolated from each other but interrelated with each other.

A False Methodology

As divergent as the theological views might be, they have two factors in common:

An errant Bible.--None of these men accepts the Bible as objective, divine revelation. This results in arbitrariness in choosing the genuine portions--reason exalts itself above revelation, and ends in alterations of the text as the higher critical views of the Scriptures are accepted.

An erroneous world view.--Basic to their understanding of the

Bible lies a false world view based on modern science, rationalist and existential philosophies, and Kantian dualism. It is for this reason that Barth and Bultmann dispense with history. Barth asks us to believe the resurrection but then goes on to relegate it to Urgeschichte and insists we can only talk of resurrection in the language of faith. Bultmann, rejecting the resurrection on historical and natural scientific grounds, nevertheless affirms that "Jesus arose in the kerygma."

No matter what positive views some of these theologians may hold, they will not, and on their own admission, cannot, return to the biblical view of revelation and inspiration, which alone gives content, certainty, and correctness to the Christian faith. These men disclaim biblical inerrancy, and disparage and disregard those that hold it. Whatever fits into their preconceived system is accepted, whatever does not fit is eliminated as "mythological," "legendary," or as the product of the "post-Easter church theology." To ask what actually happened is to show complete ignorance of what history is all about. One is reminded of the Greek legend of Procrustes who tried to fit all guests on his single bed. If they were too long, he chopped them off; if they were too short, he stretched them out. Thus deal these theologians with the truths of the Bible. They are laid on the bed of their system and chopped or stretched where necessary.

That great differences between these theologians exist, no one will deny. But because their approach to the Scriptures is identical, these differences are bound to be more academic than actual. Barth's

return to a theology of the Word was not a return to the Word, neither is Pannenberg's return to historical revelation a return to historical revelation.

In dealing with the gospel records, particularly those of the resurrection of Christ, all the theologians discussed are certainly seen to be something less than honest, by permitting their erroneous world view to answer negatively these obvious questions: (1) Is the record to be intended to be historical? (2) Were the witnesses in a position to know the facts? (3) Were the witnesses properly motivated in communicating the facts? (4) Were the witnesses accurate in their report?

A False Message

These German scholars do not even claim to be conservative and orthodox, as Americans understand those terms. They do not claim that they have returned to the position of the Reformers, nor do they think that a theology based on the literal interpretation of the New Testament is any longer possible. Theology is fluid, developing, ever changing. There is nothing static, there are no absolutes.

Hand in hand with a false theological methodology goes a false Christian message.

A false Christ.--Their Christ is not the sinless Christ of the Bible who offered himself as Messiah. At best he was the erring Son of Man without being Lord until his resurrection (Künneth). At worst he was merely a man and prophet (Bultmann, Fuchs) and as such experienced

no resurrection.

A false Christianity.--A Christianity without a historical resurrection is no longer Christianity. As close as some of these men may come to the biblical view, it is based on their own approach.

There is much talk of faith, but it is not the saving faith of Christ. Man believes in Christ, not because an authoritative Word speaks of him, but because man has an encounter with him (Althaus, Künneth, Barth, Brunner). For Bultmann and his followers, faith is not faith in Christ but faith like Christ. Love for Christ and prayer to Christ have become impossible. Looking to German theology for a simple statement of the gospel and assurance of salvation is like heading South when in search of the North Pole. Faith always remains a venture; Brunner calls it "confident despair."

The Future of German Theology

The results of such theology in German churches are all too apparent. As one professor admitted privately: a typical Lutheran church in Germany has three thousand members; three hundred members attend church; thirty come to the midweek service; and there are three persons with whom the pastor can pray.

At the risk of sounding trite: Are not genuine theological teachers a gift of the Holy Spirit for the building up of the church? After all, theology and biblical scholarship are no sand-box maneuvers. Both have to prove themselves in practice. In the seventeenth century when people "naively" believed the Bible, churches were filled to ca-

capacity; now they are empty. What has gone wrong? The elimination of the facts of salvation and obfuscation of the gospel are but symptoms of the sickness into which theology has fallen. The real problem, simply put, is sin in modern theology. It is a twofold sin, as God's Word points out:

For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water. Jer. 2:13

The living well of the Word has been forsaken. With rationalistic methods new wells are hewn. The de-historizing and demythologizing are treason on the Scriptures. The springs have dried up and so the streams have vanished.

The future looks bleak. University theology has universally bowed to the rationalistic approach to the Scriptures. Even the traditional confessionalistic and Pietistic movements are strongly influenced by historical criticism. There is no vigorous evangelical theological thrust in Germany today. Barring a God-send revival and a return to the Scriptures, the eroding influence of the theologians will become even more acute. These men are dispensers of doubt when they should be champions of conviction. One is compelled to cry out with Goethe the imploring words which he directed to a friend: "Give me the benefit of your convictions, if you have any; but keep your doubts to yourself, for I have enough of my own!" And in the words of Zinzendorf one must say with unflinching devotion to the inspired Word:

Herr, dein Wort, die edle Gabe,
diesen Schatz erhalte mir;
denn ich zieh es aller Habe
und dem grössten Reichtum für.
Wenn dein Wort nicht mehr soll gelten,
worauf soll der Glaube ruhn?
Mir ist's nicht um tausend Welten,
aber um dein Wort zu tun.

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The Resurrection Appearances of Christ

A Proof of Christ's Statements and the Father's Satisfaction



THE RESURRECTION APPEARANCES OF CHRIST



1A. THE RECORD OF THE APPEARANCES:

This is found in Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts and 1 Corinthians, in the following passages:

Mt. 28:1,9,10,11-15, 16-20; Mk. 16:9-11, 12, 13-14, 15-18, 19, 20; Lk. 24:13-32, 33-35, 36-43, 44-49, 50-53; Jn. 20:11-18, 19-25, 26-31; 21:1-25; Acts 1:3-8, 9-12; 1 Cor. 15:5,6,7.

This shows: (1) the records are distributed.
 (2) no evangelist gives a full account.
 (3) the records are not made with regard to chronological sequence.

2A. THE NUMBER OF THE APPEARANCES:

TIME	SEEN BY	SCRIPTURE	PLACE
Easter morning	1 Mary Magdalene	Mk. 16:9-11; Jn. 20:11-18	Jerusalem
Easter morning	2 Other women	Mt. 28:9-10	Jerusalem
Afternoon	3 Peter	Lk. 24:33-34; 1 Cor. 15:3	Jerusalem
Evening 4-6 PM	4 Two disciples	Lk. 24:13-33	Emmaus
8 PM	5 Ten apostles and others (Thomas absent)	Mk. 16:14; Lk. 24:36-43; Jn. 20:15-25	Jerusalem
Sunday past Easter	6 Eleven apostles (Thomas present)	Jn. 20:26-31; 1 Cor. 15:5	Jerusalem
Unknown	7 Seven disciples	Jn. 21:1-24	Sea of Galilee
Unknown	8 Eleven apostles and over 500 brethren	Mk. 16:15-18; Mt. 28:16-20; 1 Cor. 15:6	A mountain in Galilee
Unknown	9 James	1 Cor. 15:7	Jerusalem
Ascension Day	10 Eleven apostles	Acts 1:3-12; Mk. 16:19-20	Bethany
A.D. 35	11 Stephen	Acts 7:55	Jerusalem
A.D. 37	12 Paul	Acts 9:3-6; 1 Cor. 15:8	Damascus Road
Unknown	13 Paul	Acts 22:17-21; 23:11	Temple
c. A.D. 95	14 John	Rev. 1:10-19	Patmos

- 1b. Varied as to the type of individuals or groups:
one, group, two, ten, eleven, seven, eleven, over 500, one, eleven, one, one, one, one.
- 2b. Varied as to time:
1c. the date
2c. Time of day: morning, noon, afternoon, evening.
- 3b. Varied as to distances:
1c. Jerusalem, Emmaus, Galilee, Bethany
2c. Covering the distance to Emmaus.
- 4b. Varied as to empirical evidence: sight, hearing, touch, eating.



3A. THE MANNER OF THE APPEARANCES:

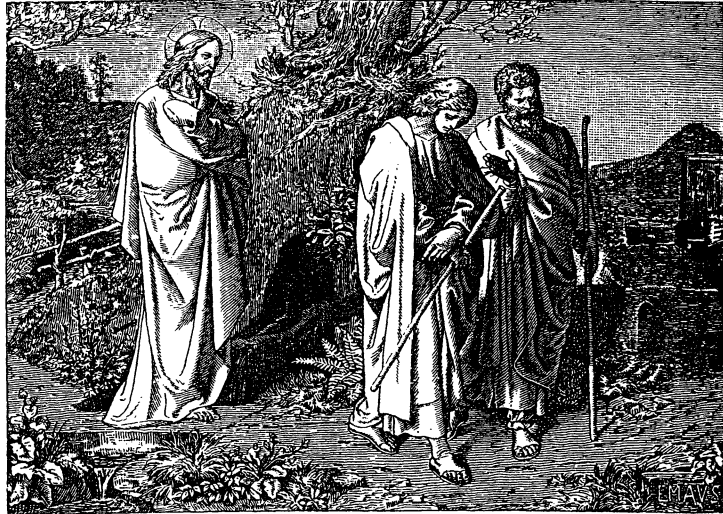
- 1b. The Problem:
- 1c. More is concealed than revealed.
- 2c. Our present ignorance of the properties of the resurrection body.
- 3c. Christ's earthly body was already supernatural:
"Even before the Cross He had a certain power which is strange to us. He could pass through the midst of His enemies, and go on His way; he could convey Himself away; He could hide Himself, and leave the Temple (Lk. 4:30; Jn. 5:13; 8:59)."
(Scroggie, *A Guide to the Gospels*, p. 613).
- 2b. The Passage:
- 1c. Christ's appearance to Mary: John 20:14-17
(1) Christ was visible, (2) He wore a human guise, (3) Mary did not recognize Him, (4) He was commonly dressed, (5) He spoke to her in her language, (6) she did not know

His voice, (7) when He mentioned her name, something in His tone or smile revealed Him, (8) He could be touched, but declined to be, (9) as He was, He could ascend to heaven.

- 2c. Christ's appearance to the women: Matthew 28:9-10
 (1) He is visible, (2) He walks along the road, (3) He speaks to them, (4) He is at once recognized by them, (5) they clasp His feet.



- 3c. Christ's appearance to the Emmaus disciples: Luke 24:13-16, Mk. 16:12-13 (ff.32)
 (1) He was manifested in another form to them, (2) Jesus was visible and human, (3) He walked some miles with the disciples, (4) He entered their house and reclined at the table, (5) He took the bread, broke it, and distributed it, (6) as He did so, their eyes were opened, (7) He vanished out of their sight, (8) the marks of the nail could not have been visible to them either on the road or at the table, (9) "their eyes were holden." For genuineness of Mark 16:9-20, see *Bibliotheca Sacra*, December 1966, pp. 306-307.



JESUS MEETS THE DISCIPLES GOING TO EMMAUS.

- 4c. Easter night: Mark 16:14; Lk. 24:36-43; Jn. 20:19-20
- 1d. The **natural** elements:
 (1) visible, physical body, (2) with marks of the nails in His hands and feet;
 (3) His reference to His "flesh and bones;" and (4) His eating honey and fish.
- 2d. The **supernatural** elements:
 (1) Entering the room without opening the door; (2) His mistaken appearance as a spirit.

3b. The Peculiarity of the Appearances:

- 1c. Mysterious power of withdrawing Himself from recognition: Jn. 20:14; Lk. 24:16; Mk. 16:12.
- 2c. Supernatural quality of withdrawing Himself from sensible perception: Lk. 24:31, 36; Jn. 20:19, 26.
- 3c. Strange ability of withdrawing Himself from conditions of time and space, transcending physical limitations: Lk. 24:36; Jn. 20:16, 26; Lk. 24:5; Acts 1:9.
 - 1d. Closed doors
 - 2d. Ascension; into a new dimension
 - 3d. Distance



4A. THE PROOFS FOR THE APPEARANCES

1b. Common elements in the accounts:

- 1c. No stilted expressions by the Evangelists.
- 2c. No grotesque exaggeration of the account.
- 3c. No abnormal experience for Christ.

2b. Unintentional evidence for the appearances:

- 1c. He was not recognized at first: Lk. 24:16; Jn. 21:4
- 2c. He did not appear to His enemies.
- 3c. He told Mary not to touch Him but no reason is given: Jn. 20:17
- 4c. He emphasized Peter, "tell the disciples *and Peter*." Mk. 16:7
- 5c. He made Himself known simply by calling Mary's name: Jn. 20:18
- 6c. He greeted his disciples in Galilee with, "Have you anything to eat?" Jn. 21:5

3b. Pauline evidence for the appearances:

1 Cor. 15:5-6: "And that he was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve, After that he was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep."

- 1c. The nature of the passage:
 - 1d. It is apologetic in nature.
 - 2d. It is chronological in nature: (Greek words)
 - 3d. It is official in nature.

2c. The names in the passage:

1d. They are only men.

1e. Paul omits certain women whom he had not met and whom the Corinthians would not know.

2e. Evidence of women was inadmissible in a Jewish court. (Josephus, *Antiquities*, IV, viii, 15).

2d. They are only believers.

1e. He appeared to establish their faith.

2e. He said that to His enemies He would only appear in judgment.

3e. Appearance to unbelievers would have contradicted His use of miraculous power.

4e. The most qualified witnesses are friends, not strangers.

5e. Revelation does not supersede but imply faith.

3d. The nature of Paul's vision:

1e. His vision was as objective as that of the disciples.

1f. He uses the identical word "appeared" for them and himself.

2f. He witnessed an objective external fact.

2e. His vision was an **encounter**, theirs was a **recognition**.

3e. His vision concluded the objective post-resurrection appearances, "last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time" (1 Cor. 15:8).



5A. THE PURPOSE OF THE APPEARANCES:

1b. The purpose individually: to reclaim Peter, dispel Thomas' doubts, dry Mary's tears, teach the eleven.

2b. The purpose collectively:

1c. To instill faith.

2c. To instruct.

1e. To show the purpose of His work from the OT predictions.

2e. To teach them concerning Himself: Mt. 28:18

3e. To instruct them concerning their ministry: Act 1:8

- 4e. To teach them by miracle that their needs would be supplied: Jn. 21:6
- 5e. To confer on them authority: Mt. 26:16ff.
- 6e. To assure them of a future kingdom: Acts 1:6ff.

(Merrill F. Unger, *Unger's Bible Handbook*, p. 569)

- 3b. The purpose locally:
 - 1c. They were commanded to go to their homes in Galilee.
 - 2c. His appearances in Jerusalem were perhaps because of their apathetic state. He upbraided them for their unbelief: Mk. 16:14
 - 3c. Had they departed for Galilee immediately, as commanded, there would have been few, if any, Jerusalem appearances.

6A. THE THEORIES CONCERNING THE APPEARANCES:

1b. The Swoon Theory:

- 1c. The Rationale: Jesus was never really dead; He merely swooned from the pain and torture.
- 2c. The Representatives: Paulus, Schleiermacher
- 3c. The Refutation:
 - 1d. The testimony of the Apostles.
 - 2d. John records that Christ's side was pierced: Jn. 20:27
 - 3d. The disciples were not convinced of the resurrection.
"Such a resuscitation could only have weakened the impression which He had made upon them in life and in death; at the most, could only have given it an elegiac voice, but could by no possibility have changed their sorrow into enthusiasm, or have elevated their reverence into worship"
(A.B. Bruce, p. 367a).
 - 4d. The customs of the day demanded that the criminal be guarded until death.

2b. The Theft Theory:

- 1c. The Rationale: Friends stole the body.
- 2c. The Representatives: Pharisees, Joseph Klausner (*Jesus of Nazareth*). Luke gave Christ a drug and revived Him.
- 3c. The Refutation:
 - 1d. All the Roman soldiers couldn't possibly have been asleep.
 - 2d. The change and ministry of the disciples cannot be explained.
 - 3d. Christ would be a liar.



3b. **The Hallucination Theory:**

- 1c. The Rationale: The appearances of Jesus are the creation of excited nerves and ardent expectations.
 "Death is a thing so absurd when it strikes the man of genius or of a great heart, that people cannot believe in the possibility of such an error of nature. *Heroes do not die.* . . . That adored Master had filled the circle of which He was the centre with joy and hope—could they be content to let him rot in the tomb?" (Renan in A. B. Bruce, p. 387).
- 2c. The Representatives: Renan, Strauss
- 3c. The Refutation:
- 1d. Time was needed for the development of such a state of mind.
- 2d. This was not the disciples' frame of mind. Mk. 16:11-12, Jn. 20:25, disappointment and disbelief. Lk. 24:21-27, Emmaus disciples. Mt. 28:17, "some doubted." Mk. 16:11, "believed not." Lk. 24:11, "idle tales." Mk. 16:10, "mourned and wept."
- 3d. Appearances to large groups.
- 4d. Appearances extended over a long period of time.
- 5d. The simple, unembellished account of the appearances.
- 6d. Hallucinations would not have suddenly and simultaneously ceased with the ascension, within six weeks.
- 7d. If Christ willingly permitted them to make this error, He is the author of error and forfeits our moral respect.

4b. **The Telegraph Theory**

- 1c. The Rationale: Jesus continued to live in His spirit and produced the manifestations which the disciples took for *bona fide* bodily appearances, to assure them of His immortality. "A sign of life from Jesus, a telegram from heaven was necessary, after the crushing overthrow of the Crucifixion, especially in the childhood of humanity." (Keim, in A.B. Bruce, p. 392).
- 2c. The Representatives: Keim and Canon Streeter.
- 3c. The Refutation:
- 1d. The tomb was empty.
- 2d. The telegrams were inaccurate because the disciples understood a bodily resurrection.
- 3d. It takes a miracle to get rid of a miracle. A supernatural vision is just as great a miracle in the natural realm, which critics say can't happen.

5b. **The Myth or Legend Theory:**

- 1c. The Rationale: The emphatic teaching of the disciples gave rise to a misunderstanding in the Church, embodied in the tradition of the Gospels. Resurrection is an existential loudspeaker, brings to light faith.
- 2c. The Representatives: Weizsäcker, Brunner, Bultmann
- 3c. The Refutation:
- 1d. The faith of the disciples was in the resurrection. They had seen Him.
- 2d. The theory gives no true account of the appearances to the disciples.
- 3d. The theory gives no probable explanation of the rise of the materialistic legends or the resurrection.
- 4d. Paul defends his apostolic authority and adduces witnesses.

6b. **The Objective Encounter Theory:**

- 1c. The Rationale: Jesus returns from the dead in "an objective trans-subjective encounter."
- 1d. The resurrection is no resuscitation of a corpse but "correspondence and personal identity." *Creation ex nihilo* (a creation out of nothing).
- 2d. The empty tomb is no "ontological necessity" but a sign, pointer, not imperative but illuminative.
- 3d. The resurrection is equated with the ascension, thus no appearances.
- 2c. The Representatives: (See my Master's thesis, "*The Resurrection of Christ in Contemporary German Theology*," Dallas Theological Seminary.) C. H. Robinson, Althaus, Künneth, Bornkamm, Pannenberg
- 3c. The Refutation:



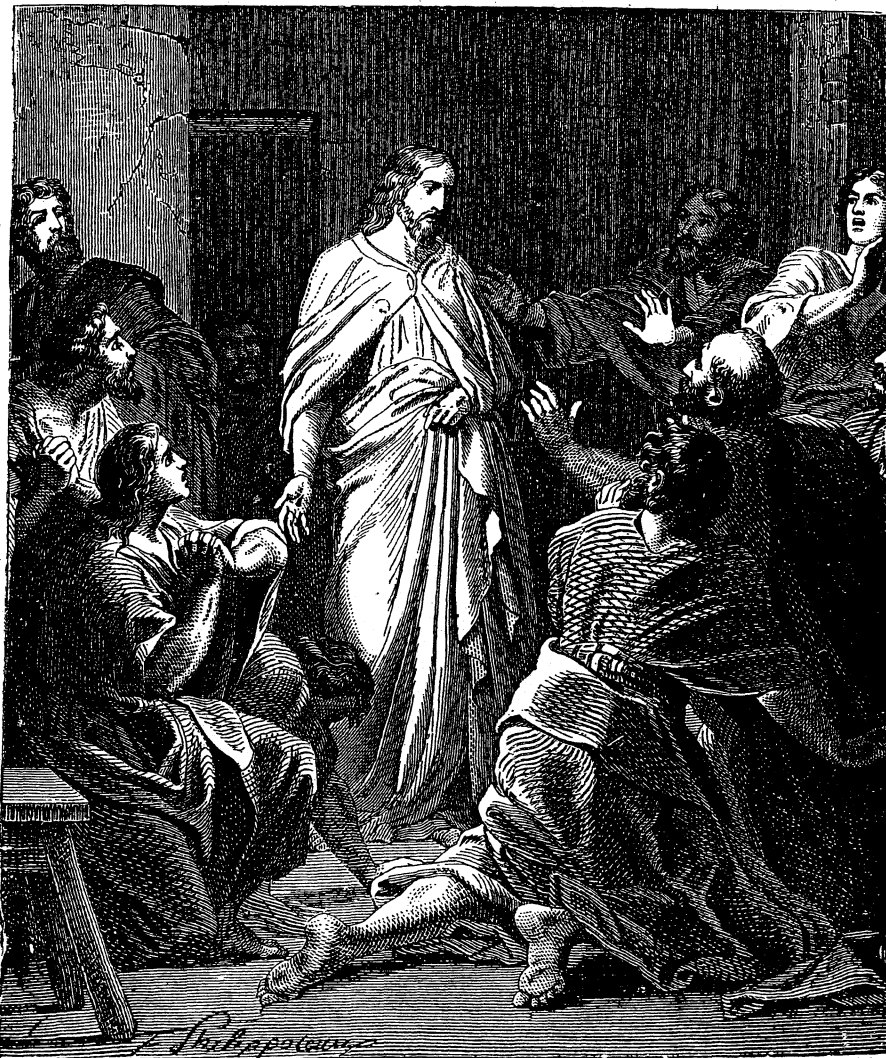
- 1d. The tomb was empty. Disposal of body demands a new miracle.
- 2d. The appearances are meant to be both personal and corporeal. "The body was the same though different, different though the same" (*ISBE*, p. 2567).
- 3d. What is the difference between an objective vision and an objective appearance?
- 4d. The world-view is wrong. These questions are answered negatively: (1) is the record intended to be historical? (2) Were the witnesses in a position to know the facts? (3) Were the witnesses properly motivated in communicating the facts? (4) Were the witnesses accurate in their report?
- 5d. There is no such thing as the resurrection of a spirit!

CONCLUSION:

Is the Christian faith based on facts or on a fraud, on a dream, deception, or delusion? Unbelief must deny the accuracy of the Gospel accounts, completely destroy the witness of Acts, set aside the evidential value of Paul, controvert the testimony of Hebrews, and reject all the testimony of the Fathers, commencing with Clement's *Corinthians*, A.D. 95.

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JESUS APPEARING TO THE APOSTLES.