

this: How is the origin of the faith of the disciples in the resurrection of Jesus to be explained? The theory of Reimarus, in the "Wolfenbuetler Fragments," that the story of the resurrection was a deception on the part of the disciples to enable them to continue as religious the movement which Jesus began as political but was frustrated on Calvary, cannot be maintained. While it aims to do away with all miracles it does not account for the miracle it implies, namely, the psychological miracle that the disciples were converted from their sorrow into joy by means of a deliberate deception perpetrated by themselves, and that any one should submit to sacrifice, suffering, and death for the sake of a lie invented by himself. The supposition of gross imposture being dismissed, there are only two other theories to be combated: First, that the death of Jesus was only apparent, not real; second, that the disciples had visions on which they based their faith in the resurrection. The first implies that when the body was buried it was not really dead. "The coolness of the grave, which was not air-tight, the ointments, the youthful vigor of Jesus, the help of secret friends who, perhaps, at the descent from the cross discovered traces of remaining life, were instrumental in restoring Him." This would make Jesus Himself a deceiver, for He could not have been ignorant of the real state of the case, and it would base Christianity itself on a lie. The theory of an awakening from apparent death (swoon) has been developed by Schleiermacher, Hase, Herder, and Gfroerer. It is based wholly on speculation, seeks help from accidents to account for the reappearance of Jesus, and cannot escape the conclusion that Jesus practiced deception. Even Strauss argued that one awakening from apparent death, necessarily bearing traces of the act on his person, could not have impressed the disciples with the conviction that He was the conqueror of death and the grave, a conviction which lay at the basis of their preaching. Our author holds the same view, and says that if the body had been only apparently dead the reappearance of Jesus could not have convinced them that His body was a glorified one, such as they concluded it to be according to the accounts of His manifestations to them.

More numerous have been the efforts to account for the faith of the disciples on the theory of visions. Prominent among its advocates are Strauss, Lang, Holsten, Hausrath, Renan, Keim, Schweizer, Schenkel, and Holtzmann. These are by no means agreed respecting the details of the theory. But whatever form it may have assumed, the cardinal question is: Does it account for the faith of the disciples? There are of course other difficulties in the theory; but on this question the attention should be concentrated. Beyschlag has maintained that there is not sufficient proof that the natural conditions for visions of Christ existed among the dis-

ciples, and this argument has been used with effect against the theory. This theory supposes that in the vision something subjectively believed is objectified; so that the vision itself is but a projection or reproduction of a subjective state, and not a phenomenon which teaches anything new. It is consequently implied by the theory that the disciples believed in the resurrection of Jesus before the visions came to them. Now, even admitting that the disciples were in a state for such visions, we must agree with Krauss: "The conviction that one regarded as dead has arisen never could originate from a vision." But, moreover, if the vision theory is correct, how do we account for the disappearance of the body from the grave? Even if this difficulty is somehow overcome, we must admit that all the accounts of Christ's appearance after Calvary are against the vision hypothesis. They are simple and serious, without a trace of the sickly and the sentimental. The conclusion of the critical investigation of our author is that the faith of the disciples cannot have originated, as some suppose, from a combination of visions together with a remembrance of the empty grave, however its emptiness is explained. For that faith is altogether too definite and too fully developed to be the product of a mere conclusion, or of a combination of thoughts. Only definite and unquestionable experience could produce it and make it the basis of the apostolic preaching and hope. No other experience would suffice than the fact that they were convinced by the Risen One Himself, in calm, not ecstatic movements of the reality of His resurrection. In this conclusion we are confirmed, because we know from Acts and the Epistles that the apostles were not ignorant of the nature of visions, and also because the biblical accounts show that at the empty grave of Jesus the disciples did not conclude that He had arisen, but only that His body had been removed.

It is thus the faith of the disciples in the Lord's resurrection which at last decides the question; and in all apologetics on the subject it is this faith which must be made the centre. After this faith has once been established the other difficulties connected with the theory of vision can be considered. In conclusion, proof should be given that the miraculous resurrection and glorification of Jesus solve all the difficulties connected with the whole subject.

HOMILETICAL.

Dr. Ahlfeld, of Leipzig, was one of the most popular preachers of Germany. Besides his parochial work he delivered lectures to theological students on pastoral theology, drawn chiefly from his rich experience in the ministry. In *Pastoral Blaetter*, December, 1886, "Aphorisms" from these lectures are given by Rev. Kummer, Ahlfeld defines the sermon as a living testimony before the congregation of the grace and truth of God, drawn by the preacher from Scripture and from his own experience. Ser-