

transmitted, in order that it may be entered in the accounts of this Diocese, and forwarded with the offerings of all the other congregations, to the treasurer of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society of the Church of England in Canada.

It was moved by Mr. Reynolds, seconded by Rev. E. P. Crawford, that the Bishop-elect of Niagara, and the Treasurer of the Society, be requested to prepare the Epiphany-tide appeal.

It was moved by Rev. Charles Hamilton, seconded by Rev. J. D. Cayley, that a digest of the minutes of each meeting of this board be prepared and sent to the Church papers, for the information of the members of the Church in this Province.

It was moved by the Lord Bishop of Algoma, seconded by the Lord Bishop of Toronto, that the best thanks of this board be given to the Rev. Dr. Morrison, of Ogdensburg, for his valuable assistance at the Missionary meeting last night.

Notice of Motion.—Mr. Reynolds gave notice of motion, that at the next meeting of this board, he will move that the fifth and sixth clauses of the by-laws be amended by limiting the meetings of this board to two in number, namely in September and April.

The appeal for Ascension-tide was read by the Bishop of Algoma, and on motion of Mr. Thomas White, M. P., seconded by Rev. Charles Hamilton, was adopted and ordered to be published, and it was resolved that along with the appeal, a brief statement of the receipts and expenditure of moneys already received be sent to each clergyman to be laid before his people when he reads it.

The Board then adjourned.

The Historical Evidence of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the Dead.

(Present Day Tracts, by Rev. Prebendary Row, M. A.)

(Continued.)

Let us, however assume, for the sake of argument, that the original followers of Jesus were to the last degree credulous and enthusiastic, only observing that we have not one atom of evidence for the assumption. I am fully ready to concede that a belief in a certain round of supernaturalism is one which is very widely diffused among mankind; and that large numbers of marvellous stories are readily accepted on little or no evidence. It is comparatively easy to get men to believe that they have seen ghosts, and still easier to believe that others have seen them. But there is one marvel at which the most profound credulity stumbles; viz., that a man who has actually died, has been seen alive and conversed with in bodily reality. I doubt whether an authentic instance can be found of any one who has positively affirmed that he has seen and conversed with another after he was dead, not as spirit, but in bodily reality. The old pagans who accepted supernaturalism enough, would have scoffed at such a belief, as lying beyond the bounds of the possible; and would have pronounced any one mad who had affirmed that he had done so. I am aware that there are a few old pagan stories about men who had been brought back from the other world; but these were wisely placed by the poets in the remotest ages of the past. But in the present case history refuses to allow of any sufficient time for the story of a resurrection to have grown up in this gradual manner under shelter of the remote past.

What then is the fact with which in the present case those who deny the reality of the resurrection must inevitably grapple? It is none other than this, that several persons must have believed that they saw the risen Jesus within a few days or weeks after His crucifixion, and what is more, conversed with Him separately and in companies.

Let the reader imagine for himself the amount of credulity which would be necessary to enable a number of men and women to believe that they had not only seen and conversed with one who had been publicly executed at Newgate, and whose body was still close at hand mouldering in its grave, but who actually proceeded to found a

society on the basis of that belief, and the most mightily influential of all the institutions that have existed on this earth; and what is more, that they could actually succeed in the attempt.

Three conditions have been laid down by those who have deeply studied the human mind, as necessary for the production of those mental hallucinations, which have resulted in causing subjective impressions to be mistaken for external realities. These are *pre-possession*, *fixed idea*, and *expectancy*. Now, nothing can be more certain than that, in the case of our Lord's disciples, these three principles, supposing them to have been existent in them, would have acted in a direction directly contrary to that which those who propound this theory as an adequate account of the facts above referred to require.

1. Their pre-possession were all in favor of a Messiah visibly ruling and reigning, and most adverse to the idea of a crucified one. The very idea of a crucifixion dashed in pieces their dearest hopes. Their pre-possession therefore ran directly counter to what this theory requires that they should have been, to have produced the requisite mental hallucinations.

2. Such fixed ideas as they possessed, instead of producing a visionary set of instructions from their risen Master, to re-construct the Church on the basis of His spiritual Messiahship, would have infallibly led them to see visions in conformity with the old Jewish Messianic conception. If fixed idea ever produces visions in credulous minds, these visions will certainly be on the lines of their old ideas, and will not generate new ones. Nothing can be conceived of as less revolutionary than "fixed ideas"; and therefore they will not aid us one single step towards the generation of the idea of a spiritual Messiahship, or to the re-construction of the Church on its basis.

3. Of expectancy of a resurrection, the followers of Jesus certainly had none. The only possible ground for supposing that they had any would be the assumption that our Lord had predicted the event in the most express terms. But this unbelievers do not venture to affirm, for to admit it would be inconsistent with their position. Some mere general utterance, such as that if He was martyred, He would live again in the future success of His cause, is one far too general to produce that enthusiastic state of expectancy which would be necessary to create such visions of Him risen from the dead as could be mistaken for objective realities, it being remembered that all the while His dead body must have been at hand in the grave in the custody of either His friends or His foes.

Hopeless, therefore, is the attempt to produce the requisite visions by the aid of either of these three principles.

It is easy for a student in his closet to invent the theory that Mary Magdalene, in the midst of her grief and dejection, mistook the gardener for Jesus, thought that He was risen from the dead, and communicated her enthusiasm to the rest; but those who have practical experience of the realities of things will be confident that this is much easier to say than to do. What! are we to be asked to believe that an enthusiastic woman succeeded in persuading a number of others that a person who had been executed only a few days previously, and whose body was close by in the grave, had appeared to her in bodily reality, and that they therefore accepted the fact that He was risen from the dead, without further inquiry? Did they do so, I ask, without being favored with a sight of Him themselves; or did they all, in the height of their credulous enthusiasm, take to seeing visions of the risen Jesus, and mistake them for objective realities, and all this while the body was close at hand in the sepulchre? What next are we to be invited to believe in the name of philosophic history?

Further. Is it to be believed that His disciples without authority from Him ventured to proceed to re-construct the Church on the basis of a spiritual and invisible Messiah, in the place of a temporal and visible one, to make His person the centre of the life of the new system, and to lay the foundations of an universal Church in place of the old theocracy? This brings us into immediate contact

with the whole mass of insuperable difficulties with which the theory of visions is attended.

I must once more draw attention to the fact, that it is necessary that those who affirm that the belief in His resurrection was the result of a mental hallucination on the part of the followers of Jesus, should account not only for that belief, but for the erection of the Church on the new basis of a spiritual instead of a temporal Messiah, and the other all-important changes in the entire movement which resulted from this change of front. I know that it will be urged, that His credulous followers fancied that, although His body still continued in the hands of either His friends or His foes, He had been taken up into heaven, from whence He would come again after a short interval in His visible Messianic glory. But the Church had in the meantime to be kept together; and this could only be done by reconstructing the Messianic conception on which it had been based. However, days, months, and years elapsed, and no return of Jesus took place. A thorough reconstruction of the entire basis of the original society became therefore more and more urgently necessary, if utter extinction was to be avoided. But it is an unquestionable historic fact that, instead of dwindling away, it grew and flourished immediately after its Founder's death. The reconstruction in question therefore must have been actually effected immediately afterwards. Are we to be invited to believe that the disciples would have ventured on such a step, unless they had been firmly persuaded that they had received definite instructions from their Master to make the transformation, or that a body of ignorant fanatics, such as is supposed, had wit enough to invent the mighty change which has resulted in the erection of the Catholic Church of Jesus Christ, and in the influences which from thence have issued on the world?

Let us return to the theory of visions. What then are we to be asked to believe? In place of the acceptance of the Resurrection as a fact—a fact, be it observed, adequate to explain all the subsequent phenomena of the history of the Church,—we are invited to believe that the belief in it originated in the followers of Jesus seeing visions of their Master, after His crucifixion, and mistaking them for realities. In that case they must have seen not *one vision*, but *several*, not *only singly*, and *in solitude*, but *in bodies*. St. Paul's testimony on this point is express, and his means of information must have been ample. Will any one, with his epistles in his hands, venture to affirm that he wrote what he knew to be an invention of his own? He tells us that he had private interviews with Peter and James, and also that both these apostles believed that they had private interviews with the risen Jesus. Is it credible that he did not get this information from them, when he actually abode for a fortnight in Peter's house, and had a personal interview with James? He also tells us that on another occasion he had an interview with at least one more of the original apostolic body, John; and he gives us the further information that the eleven apostles, when assembled together in a body, believed that on two separate occasions they had interviews with their risen Master. He also tells us that, on another occasion, He appeared to no less than five hundred in a body. Were all these visionary appearances? Did all the disciples take to seeing visions together, and to mistaking them for realities? When they thus imagined that they saw their Master singly, and in bodies, did not one of them ask Him a question; and, if so, did he get a visionary answer? Is it credible I ask, that circumstanced as they were, they did not ask Him what future course He was going to adopt; or, in event of His removal, what course it was His pleasure that they should pursue with respect to carrying on the work which He had begun? That they should have put to Him no questions such as these is simply incredible. To such questions they either got answers, or they did not. If they got none, the bubble must have burst then and there. If they believed that they got answers, they must have been all visionary ones; and this must have involved a whole set of visionary conversations.

(To be Concluded.)