

out rival. It is unique in its power over individual souls—its power of personal renovation of character. Other philosophers despaired of the world. They gathered about them a few chosen disciples, to whom they made known the arcana of wisdom, which were too precious to be revealed to the many. They shook their heads at the misery and ignorance and men, and confessed that they could do nothing to help them. But none are so fallen, so degraded, so wretched, but the work of Christ may reclaim them. All this is so stupendous that enlightened reason must refuse to believe that it could have proceeded from any merely human source. Therefore, Christ must be divine.

After appealing to the character, the teaching and the work of Christ to prove that He was a revelation from God, our next point was to establish the fact of the Resurrection of this Christ; and this brought us into opposition with still another class of unbelievers, viz., the so-called Rationalists, who, while accepting our Lord as a model man, and divinely inspired, and receiving the Bible in a certain sense as the Word of God, yet reject, as unworthy of credit, all that is miraculous in it, and, consequently, deny that Jesus rose from the dead on the third day.

In discussing this question, we again met our opponents on their own ground, and adduced as evidence only those first four Epistles of St. Paul's, which, after the most merciless criticism, have been admitted by almost all learned unbelievers to be written by that apostle within twenty or thirty years after the crucifixion. We pointed out that incidental allusions to history contained in correspondence was, as a rule, more reliable than an ordinary history, since it was likely to be without bias.

In these letters the Apostle makes twenty-five or thirty references, direct or indirect, to the Resurrection, and not only asserts that it was a fact, but declares that Jesus had been seen on six different occasions after He had risen from the dead, and on one of these occasions five hundred brethren were present, of whom the greater part were still alive at the time of his writing. Now the veracity of St. Paul and the other apostles is unquestioned. No one has dared to say that they intentionally deceived their converts. The only explanation that can be put forward to refute their solemn declarations is that they were themselves deceived.

Two theories have been propounded by unbelievers in proof of this. The first is called the vision theory, which is that the disciples, anxiously expecting their Master to rise again, took the word of an excitable and enthusiastic woman, who declared that she had seen Him. This theory is disposed of by the testimony

of St. Paul, that Jesus appeared repeatedly not only to one disciple at a time, but to numbers assembled together, and there was no more likelihood of them all being deceived than there would be of our being deceived if some person well known to us, who had died a short time ago, should appear in this church now and hold converse with us. Again, if it were only a vision the disciples saw, why did not the Jews produce the body of Jesus, which must still have remained in the tomb, and so prove once and for all the falsity of the reported resurrection. If, on the other hand, the disciples had the body, they could not possibly have been deceived as to the facts of the case, but were deceivers of the worst sort, which even sceptics deny.

The second theory is called the "Swoon Theory," which supposes that Christ did not really die, but fainted away, and after awhile revived, crept from the tomb and returned to His followers. The absurdity of this is evident when we consider the appearance the victim would present after the scourging, the loss of blood, the agony of crucifixion which had been endured by Him. Christ could not have thus deceived His disciples even if he had desired to do so. And surely it requires greater credulity to believe these explanations than it does to believe the actual resurrection—greater faith to be an infidel than it does to be a Christian.

"To anyone who considers the matter dispassionately," (says Canon Maccoll) "the resurrection of Christ will appear to rest on evidence as irrefragable as the assassination of Julius Cæsar. In neither case is mathematical proof possible, nor would it in either case be reasonable to demand it, Christianity is not a speculative philosophy, but a religion for the guidance of human conduct and the regeneration of human nature; and it certainly demands faith in its professors. But what practical system that has to do with conduct does not? Trace to its last analysis the evidence on which repose the sanctities of domestic life, the inheritance of property, the right of our gracious Queen to the throne which she adorns, and you will find yourselves brought to bay by an objection which is from a legal point of view unanswerable, namely that the evidence is of a kind which cannot be tested. The whole edifice rests in every case on the unconfirmed veracity of a single woman. Yes! the right to every title and property in the land rests on no