The Open Court
A MONTHLY MAGAZINE


Editor: Dr. Paul Carus.  Associates: E. C. Heckler, Mary Carus.

COAT OF ARMS OF JERUSALEM.

The Open Court Publishing Company
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CONTENTS:

Frontispiece. Map of Jerusalem.

The Lost Resurrection Document. Albert J. Edmunds. 129

The Babylonian Good Friday. Editor. 138

The Cabala. Bernhard Pick. 143

The City of Jesus and the Via Dolorosa (Illustrated). Editor. 164

Nazareth. Dr. Eberhard Nestle. 191

Book Reviews. 192

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There is no similar journal in the field of scientific philosophy. It is identified with no philosophical tradition and stands preeminently for the correlation of philosophy with the problems and experience of the present. The contents of recent numbers include:

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MAP OF JERUSALEM.

Frontispiece to The Open Court.
THE LOST RESURRECTION DOCUMENT.

A REVIEW AND AN ESSAY.

BY ALBERT J. EDMUNDS.

An anonymous writer uses the theory of telepathy to explain the apparitions of the risen Lord, and this book, due to the advent of psychical research, marks a new era in New Testament criticism. "It is not in any degree irreverent," says the author, "to suppose even a Divine Person to utilize a law which, in the opinion of Myers, operates as universally in the spiritual world as does gravitation in the material, and which is becoming quite a favorite explanation of the inter-communion of God and man."

The author then proceeds to say that he wishes to avoid the danger of making the resurrection a mere case of post-mortem apparitions, and he believes that Paul had personal experiences which raised it above this category. It is just here that weakness lurks at the outset. If Paul had any such experiences, he has not communicated them to us, for the vision on the Damascus road was such as many a mystic has enjoyed.

The author goes farther astray by treating Luke and John as equally good witnesses as Mark. We need not go over the old familiar ground of Synoptical criticism to disprove this. The author seeks to reconcile the contradictions between Luke's exclusively southern apparitions and Mark-Matthew's exclusively northern ones by postulating a "Universal Christophany." He believes that the apparition to the five hundred brethren "once for all" (1 Cor. xv. 6) happened to all of them simultaneously in different places, and he

1 Resurrectio Christi: an Apology Written From a New Standpoint and Supported by Evidence, Some of which is New. London: Kegan Paul & Co., 1909, 12mo, pp. xii + 127.
further supposes that the Lord impressed upon the subconscious minds of the five hundred the command to go to Jerusalem. Gnostic and apocryphal books are ransacked to show late traces surviving in fictitious documents of the supposedly ancient idea that the five hundred of 1 Corinthians were the five hundred at Pentecost, impelled to Jerusalem by the Universal Christophany. The awkward fact that Matthew (depending on the lost Mark-ending) has an apparition in Galilee expressly excluded by Luke, is explained upon the telepathic principle that Jesus and the Twelve were seen in Galilee, while the latter were physically at Jerusalem.

As one who accepts the facts of telepathy and apparitions, both of the living and the dead, I should heartily endorse this clever explanation if criticism had not taught me that it is impossible to put Luke and John on the same historic footing as Mark. Mark has been shown by scientific analysis to be a more trustworthy record than any other of the four. Where the others exaggerate, Mark simplifies. In my unpublished *Documentary Introduction to the Gospels*, I give abundant proof of this. To take only one example: Mark relates that James and John asked the Lord that they might sit at his right and left hands in his glory; Matthew says it was *their mother* who made the request. This was because, when the canonical First Gospel was compiled, the Apostles were saintly characters, incapable of ambition. Of course this one case would not prove such a thesis; but a dozen such cases do prove it by cumulative evidence. Similar traces of later exaggeration abound in Luke, and above all in John.

Mark being thus raised to the level of chief witness, his account of the Resurrection is of transcendent import. But it is lost, and can only be pieced together by criticism. The oldest manuscripts of the New Testament, at Rome and St. Petersburg, omit the last twelve verses of Mark, and have a mysterious blank where those verses are found in later copies. The Old Syriac (second century) ends the Gospel at verse 8, and clinches it by adding:

"Here endeth the Gospel of Mark."

The Armenian translation (fourth century) also omits the verses, and a tenth-century Armenian manuscript ascribes their authorship to the presbyter Aristion (or Arison). Now, as Papias (early second century) quotes a certain presbyter Aristion as an oral authority on the life of Christ, and as the incident about drinking poison (Mark xvi. 18) is among the traditions associated with Aristion and other oral witnesses, we are quite safe in saying that Mark
xvi. 9-20 is the work of a second-century divine. To distinguish it from the original Mark, we call it the Mark Appendix, or the Longer Appendix, for some manuscripts have a different and shorter appendix. Eusebius and Jerome both declare that the Appendix was lacking in many ancient manuscripts in their time (fourth century), so that the external evidence is altogether against their authenticity as a part of the true Mark's Gospel.

We come now to the internal evidence. This is equally conclusive. The genuine Mark ends in the middle of a sentence:

"They went out and fled from the tomb; for trembling and astonishment had come upon them: and they said nothing to any one; they were afraid because"....

Here then we have an exciting story ending in mid career, and at verse 9, the Resurrection is told all over again from a different standpoint and in a cold conventional way. Nothing is said about what became of the women; nothing about the mystery of the empty tomb; nothing about the charge of the young man (an angel, of course, in Matthew and Luke) to go into Galilee. Thus do internal and external evidence agree in throwing the Mark Appendix under a cloud. This is not higher criticism, but lower criticism—the rules of evidence used in courts of justice.

The orthodox explanation of the gap is that after the fire at Rome in 64, the Italian civil wars that followed, and the destruction of Jerusalem in 70, so few manuscripts were left that Mark was reduced to a single copy, mutilated at the end. But Paul Rohrbach (Schluss des Markus evangeliums, 1894) has given weighty reasons for believing that the Church herself deliberately suppressed Mark's (i.e., Peter's own) account of the Resurrection, and had Aristion's compilation put in its place.

According to the concurrent testimony of the Fathers, beginning with Papias, Mark is Peter's Gospel, having been based upon that disciple's discourses about Jesus and his doings. It is therefore of supreme importance to know why this eminent apostle's account of the Resurrection has not come down to us. The tantalizing thing about it is that Luke and Paul (Luke xxiv. 34; 1 Cor. xv. 5) both relate that the Lord made an early appearance to Peter. Shahras-tâni of Persia, a twelfth-century writer (see Open Court, September, 1902) tells us that when he did so he transmitted to him the power. Why, therefore, in Peter's own Gospel, are there no details of this

The abruptness can only be seen in the Greek ἐφοβοῦτο γὰρ. The particle γὰρ can no more end a sentence, much less a book, than the word "because."
weightiest of all the apparitions? The extant genuine Mark leads up to it. At the supper-table (Mark xiv. 28) Jesus says:

"After I am raised up, I will go before you into Galilee."

And at the tomb the young man says to the women (Mark xvi. 7):

"Go, tell his disciples and Peter, He goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you."

We are therefore led to expect that the Lord appeared in Galilee and appeared there to Peter. Rohrbach explains the suppression of the story by the fact that in the second century when the Gospels were officially published by the Church, the schools of Paul and John had supplanted the earlier one of Peter, and that Peter's account was at variance with the traditions current at the time of redaction. It was therefore suppressed.

Renan had already hinted at this. The mystery of the floating tradition about the woman taken in adultery, in John viii, absent in the oldest manuscripts, put into Luke by others, and once extant in the lost Gospel of the Hebrews, prepares us to believe that the Gospels were manipulated in very early times. Rendel Harris once put this fact humorously thus:

In the nineteenth century, said he, in 1895, if a man wishes to establish heresy and finds an awkward text that upsets his notion, he twists the meaning; but in the second century the process was easier: he altered the text!

The Quaker apologist, Barclay, in his chapter on the Scriptures, says:

"Other Fathers also declare that whole verses were taken out of Mark, because of the Manichees."

I have not found any scholar who could verify this statement, and moreover the Manichees (third century) are too late. But the practice was older than the third century, as abundant interpolations and excisions betray; and it is a reasonable piece of higher criticism (this time) to maintain that the original Mark (which was taken quite early to Alexandria, says Eusebius) was not reduced to a single copy by Italian or Syrian wars, but was altered by the Church.

What was the motive? It lurks in a passage which I have always maintained is borrowed from the lost ending of Mark: viz., Matthew xxviii. 16, 17:

"The eleven disciples went away into Galilee, unto the mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And when they saw him they worshiped him: but some doubted."

* See New Church Messenger, July 21, 1897.
Now this note of doubt is not Marcan, but Matthæan. It is Mark, not Matthew, who makes Pilate doubt that Jesus was dead; it is Mark, not Matthew, who says that he could not heal skeptics. (Matthew merely says he did not.) The narrative element in Matthew is taken almost wholly from Mark, as has been abundantly proven by analysis. (See Edwin Abbott's article "Gospels," in the Encyclopedia Britannica). Now, as Matthew follows Mark step by step throughout, he follows him here, and this priceless story of the scene on the Galilean mount is the chief remnant left us of the lost ending of Mark. But why should the percipients doubt? Because the apparition was phantasmal, as it was to Paul (1 Cor. xv. 8).

Now, in the second century docetism had already arisen; i. e., the belief that Jesus was not a man of flesh and blood, but a phantom. The Buddhist Church had to combat a similar heresy (see my Buddhist and Christian Gospels, 4th ed., Vol. II, p. 119). Mohammed, who mixed the Buddha-legends and the Christ-legends, and to whom an apocryphal docetist Gospel was just as good as a canonical one, adopted the heresy in his Koran. When the Athanasian creed was composed, the heresy had become so dangerous that the words were inserted, "man, of the substance of his mother, born in the world."

It is therefore reasonable to believe that when, in the reign of Trajan, the Church collected the Gospels and put the chosen four into one volume, they determined to suppress an account which might play into the hands of the docetists, just as Epiphanius affirms that they suppressed the statement that Christ wept. Peter's account was probably more detailed than the fragment in Matthew, and the reasons for the doubts would probably be given.

Only in the latest Gospels, Luke and John, do we find the grossest forms of the Resurrection story: the statement that the Lord appeared in a substantial form, and ate and drank with the disciples. Paul puts the phantasmal appearance to himself on the Damascus road upon the same footing with all the Resurrection apparitions, and it is quite probable that Peter, our earliest original witness, had already done the same. But a later age and a newer school would not permit it to stand. As a believer in all the phenomena vouched for in the immortal work of Myers,¹ I consider the materialized apparitions possible; but I reject them for want of evidence.

¹ Myers, it is true, though accepting their reality himself, admits the difficulties of accurate observation and the chance of fraud, and refuses to press them on the reader's belief.
In the lost Mark-ending we should place the famous charge to Peter, so dear to the Roman Church. It exists at present nowhere but in Matthew xvi, and yet it is absent at the corresponding point in Mark. As Mark is Peter's Gospel, it ought certainly to have contained the words which gave him the primacy, and it probably did. Similar words occur in John as uttered after the Resurrection, and near the place in Matthew where the charge is found there are similar utterances. (John xx. 23; Matt. xviii. 18-20.) But these refer to the Church, giving her the same power as the charge to Peter gives to him. If the charge originally stood in the lost Mark-ending, this would explain why Shahrastâni declared that the Lord transmitted his power to Peter during the apparition to him. But the school of John, which was established at the great literary center of Ephesus after Peter was dead, disputed the primacy of Peter and made John the Beloved Disciple. Moreover, John's Gospel maintains that the Beloved Disciple ran a race with Peter to the tomb and won it. If we had Peter's version of the incident, we might hear another tale.

I do not believe that the Gospel of John was written by the fisherman of Galilee, but I do believe it was based on traditions received from him by an unknown Philonic philosopher, and the distinguished name of the Apostle was fastened upon the book, according to the dictum of Tertullian: "The works of disciples are accounted those of their masters."

Whether the lost ending contained a passage about the Descent into Hades (known to us only from the First Epistle ascribed to Peter) I cannot say. Perhaps it did.

Another reason for the suppression of the Mark-ending was its Galilean partisanship, as we noted at the outset. The Evangelist Luke, whose poetic Gospel became far more popular than Mark's plain Roman prose, maintains that all the apparitions occurred in or around Jerusalem, thus excluding the Galilean ones:

"Tarry ye in the city, until ye be clothed with power from on high." (Luke xxiv. 49.)

"He charged them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, [said he], ye heard from me: for John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." (Acts i. 4.)

This means that they were to stay in the capital until the feast of Pentecost, when the great outpouring or illumination took place. Further to shut the door against Galilean appearances, Luke gives
us the only account of the Ascension, or final appearance of Jesus, and this took place at Bethany, a suburban village:

"And he led them out until [they were] over against Bethany: and he lifted up his hands and blessed them. And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he parted from them." (Luke xxiv. 50, 51.) [Some manuscripts, but not all, add: "and was carried up into heaven." ]

"As they were looking, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight." (Acts i. 9.)

Here in Acts, too, the scene is at Jerusalem, and this account, in the Acts of the Apostles, is the only one which suggests a bodily ascension. The line in Luke which suggests it is not in all manuscripts; Matthew and John give accounts of farewell apparitions, but not of bodily ascension, while the genuine Mark is truncated, and we do not know what this earliest record said. We may justly surmise, however, from the Galilean tone of Mark, and from the closeness wherewith the First Gospel in its narrative element sticks to Mark, that he contradicted Luke, had at least one Galilean appearance, and that probably the final one. The John Appendix (as Rohrbach points out) tries to reconcile the two claims. The original John (which ended with Chap. xx) knows only of Jerusalem apparitions, but the Appendix (Chap. xxi) introduces Galilee, thus agreeing with the Petrine tradition, accepted by the First Gospel also.

I too explain this contradiction partly upon psychical grounds, but differently from our Anglican divine. I have long believed that the Ascension story of Acts is a late fiction, and that the original Gospels knew only of farewell apparitions, but not of a bodily ascent, Romulus-like, into heaven. These farewell scenes were many; they were different with different people, both individuals and companies. Until the Gospels were officially edited, each region was free to maintain that the Lord was last seen in its vicinity; but when the final redaction took place, the contradiction was impermissible, and the ruling party, that of the capital, had its way. This, together with the phantasmal nature of Mark’s apparition-story, was enough to condemn his narrative to the flames; and Aristion and others were allowed to round off the Gospel according to their taste.

I believe that the original Mark ended something like this:

"They went out, and fled from the tomb; for trembling and astonishment had come upon them; and they said nothing to any one; for they were afraid of the Jews. But they told all things

5 Gospel of Peter, second century.
unto Peter and his companions, who went into Galilee. There Jesus appeared unto Peter, [and forgave him for his denial]. And he said unto him: Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jonah; for flesh and blood hath not revealed me unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I also say unto thee, that thou art a Rock, (Peter), and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. I will give unto thee the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. I have been put to death in the flesh, but quickened in the spirit, wherein also I have descended and preached unto the spirits in prison; and now angels and authorities and powers are made subject unto me.

"And Peter, with the rest of the eleven, went unto a mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And when they saw him they worshiped [him]; but some doubted, [for his form was phantasmal]. And Jesus came to them and spake unto them, saying: All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations in my name, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the consummation of the æon.

"[After this Jesus was seen no more of his disciples.]

* * *

P. S. I take this opportunity to correct two mistakes (both my own) in former articles. In The Open Court for April, 1906, p. 253, the age at death of William Brockie, founder of the Sunderland Free Associate Church, should be seventy-nine (1811-1890). In the issue for August, 1908, p. 477, the age and dates of William Metcalfe's widow should be eighty-six (1819-1906).

EDITORIAL COMMENT.

All theologians, including the orthodox, are agreed that the end of Mark has been lost and that the conclusion which appears in our authorized version is a later substitute. This is not a theory

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6 Shorter Mark Appendix.  
7 Matthew xxviii. 16.  
8 Luke xxiv. 34; 1 Cor. xv. 5; John xxi. 15.  
10 1 Peter iii. 18, 19, 22.  
11 Matt. xxviii. 16-20.  
12 For the reason of this reading and the omission of the Baptismal Charge and the Trinitarian formula, see Open Court, September, 1902, reprinted in my Buddhist and Christian Gospels.
but a fact. It is not invented to explain difficulties in the text, but it is the state of things to be explained and the commonly accepted explanation must be sought in some such way as suggested by Rohrbach, that the original conclusion of Mark did not agree with the orthodox church doctrines of the second century. That the original conclusion of Mark furnished evidence in favor of docetism, which assumed that Jesus was not a real man but a spiritual being who only appeared to be a real man, is not only possible but even probable, and the facts presented by Mr. Edmunds furnish enough evidence in favor of this belief. But we must protest against the view of Mr. Edmunds that psychical research has succeeded in establishing the theory of telepathy, and in spite of the bulk of Mr. Myers's work we make bold to say that the proof furnished by psychical research is for many reasons insufficient. We do not deny that the belief in apparitions and telepathic communications existed and that many of the disciples were convinced of having seen Jesus after his death, but this is far from furnishing true evidence in favor of the objectivity of this phenomenon. p. c.