

firm conviction that He was the conqueror of death. Instead of restoring the faith of the apostles, such an appearance of Jesus would have only deepened their despair and gloom. With forceful language Strauss and Keim have rejected the swoon theory of Paulus. In speaking of this theory, Bernhard Weiss says, "It is not worth while to dissolve this phantasy destitute of all historical meaning."

Although the swoon theory of Paulus now finds little support among scholars, numerous ones have embraced the vision theory of Strauss. This view which claims that some time after the death of Jesus the disciples had certain visions or hallucinations in which they thought they saw Jesus is open to serious objections. The vision theory does not fit the facts of the New Testament records.

The first argument against the vision theory of the resurrection is the empty tomb of Jesus. If Jesus did not rise from the grave as the New Testament account says He did, then His body must either have been removed or it remained in the tomb. If the body was removed by the disciples, they are thus charged with deliberate falsehood in proclaiming the resurrection. On the other hand, if the body of Jesus was removed by His enemies, then these men really had the best evidence against the resurrection, for if such was the case we may be sure that they would not have failed to produce the body of Jesus and thus expose the baselessness of the vision. If the body of Jesus had remained in the tomb, then the murderers of Christ would have taken full advantage of this opportunity to stamp out the Christian movement.

According to the advocates of the vision hypothesis, time was needed to take care of the psychological preparation for the visions. The New Testament gives evidence that the appearances of Jesus took place within a space of little more than a month. At this point the vision theory has departed very seriously from the Gospel witness.

We have already observed that at the time of Jesus' death the