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LEGAL AND HISTORICAL PROOF

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RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD

With an Examination of the

Evidence in the New Testament

By

JOHN F. WHITWORTH

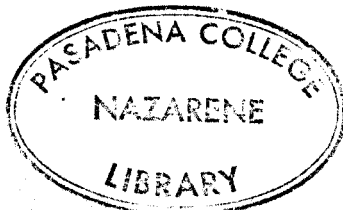
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This pamphlet is affectionately dedicated to
HENRIETTA AND JOHN FORD
by
Their Father
JOHN F. WHITWORTH

PREFACE

Civilization would make little progress if each succeeding age, disregarding all that had already been accomplished, should attempt to establish for itself first and fundamental principles in the various branches of learning. These must, generally, be accepted by the ordinary student as established, and here education begins.

In my view it is not necessary, nor even desirable, to go into an inquiry as to the authenticity of the Holy Scriptures, nor whether these writings are evidence of the facts therein set forth. We have a right to assume that these questions have already been settled upon sound principles, and should begin our religious instruction by assuming as axiomatic the authority of these holy writings. Moreover, faith, the result of training and heredity, is our best assurance. This discussion is

intended, therefore, only as supplemental to faith and not in any way to take its place.

The question "If a man die shall he live again," has been repeated by mankind through all the ages since the time of Job. Many centuries ago the sages of Greece and Rome soon discovered that as none of the properties of matter would apply to the operations of the mind, the human soul must consequently be an existence distinct from the body, pure, simple and spiritual, incapable of dissolution and susceptible of a much higher degree of virtue and happiness after the release from its corporal prison. 1 Gibbon, 528. Philosophers and scientists, from the earliest period even to the present time, through research and reason and without the aid of Divine Revelation, have attempted an answer to the question. Whether the soul shall survive the destruction of the body, is a matter of as much concern now as on the day Job asked the question. A few of the arguments from

a scientific point of view, briefly stated, in favor of the continued existence of the soul, show how far they fall short in satisfying the ordinary inquirer; they also reconcile him the more to a simple trust in Divine Revelation.

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I.

ARGUMENTS OF PHILOSOPHERS AND
SCIENTISTS.

Bishop Butler, reasoning from analogy and the course of nature, assumes what he considers a self-evident fact by saying, "We know we are endowed with capacities of action, of happiness and misery; for we are conscious of acting, of enjoying pleasure and suffering pain." Thence he proceeds to argue, "Now that we have these powers and capacities before death is a presumption that we shall retain them through and after death, unless there be some positive reason to think that death is the destruction of these living powers." His argument amounts to this: That if men were assured that death was not the destruction of the soul, they would have no reason to think that any other power would destroy the soul just at the instant of the death of the body;

that the assumption that the destruction of the body by death results also in the destruction of the soul, must be upon the supposition that the soul has no existence independent of the body and that they are interdependent. He then proceeds to show that the soul has an independent existence; that the body is simply the organ or medium through which the soul manifests itself, and that no inference can be drawn from the destruction of the body that the soul is in the least affected. He illustrates: The eye is not itself percipient, that is, it itself cannot see, but is simply the organ through which the soul looks out and perceives material things. When that organ is impaired by age, glasses are used to aid the defect. The eye is used as an instrument of sight in the same sense as are spectacles. He illustrates with other portions of the body: A limb is amputated, still the soul has the power of directing motion by will and choice, so that it would still be capable of moving if it had an artificial limb with which

to move; and so, all the limbs might be amputated and the soul would have the same power. It remains intact, unaffected by the mutilations of the body. He still enlarges upon his illustrations and shows that while the body preserves its form, the component parts are continually changing. The body one now has is not the same body he had seven, fourteen or twenty-one years ago; yet through all these changes of the body the soul is unaffected and remains the same, for he recollects occurrences through all these changes and knows he is the same person. If, therefore, he argues, the body may be destroyed in part, as by amputation of the limbs, or entirely, as by the gradual changing of the component parts of the body, without in the least affecting the soul, there is no reason for believing that the soul is in any way affected when the body is at once destroyed by death. "Butler's Analogy," "Gilmore's Evidences," "Paley's Evidences," "Thompson's Life, Death and Immortality" (Everybody's Magazine, 1911).

Sir Oliver Lodge proceeds along somewhat different lines. He shows that matter, anything material, is never destroyed. It may change form, but the parts remain. A tree, in the form of a tree, a man, in the form of a man, are certainly mortal. They decay and vanish from view; but the particles of which they are composed remain after the tree and the man have disappeared. Only the groupings of matter are destructible; the matter itself remains. So as to the larger of creations. The stars and planets have their periods of birth and death. The matter of which they were created existed before their creation into planets, and will continue to exist, in a different form, when the planets cease to exist. Then, by various arguments, he shows that the soul is superior to the body and controls the movements of the body; that it is superior to all forms of matter. It may even create matter in the same sense that the world was created; it takes the raw material of the mountains and fashions it into a rail-

road locomotive or a great warship. It may even control and guide the forces of nature; it seizes the electrical forces and directs them into channels of commerce. It is true the soul cannot be seen nor its influence felt except as it manifests itself through the action of the body or impresses itself on matter and material things; but it is something real, a personality with intellect, emotion, consciousness and will; and its existence is as certain as that of the material world. Then, he argues, if matter is indestructible, so is the soul which is superior to matter. What he declares is no less than this: That whereas it is certain that the present body cannot long exist without the soul, it is quite possible and indeed necessary for the soul to exist without the present body. This is based on the soul's manifest transcendence, on its genuine reality, and on the general law of the persistence of all real existence. He extends the doctrine of evolution, as declared by Darwin, to the soul and contends that the soul will certainly

develop and increase in capacity throughout eternity. He very eloquently says: "Whatever evil days may fall upon an individual or a nation, or even sometimes on a whole planet, yet the material is subordinate to the spiritual; and if the spiritual persists, it cannot be stationary. It must surely rise in the scale of existence." "Science and Immortality."

Louis Elbe, like Sir Oliver Lodge, contends for the indestructibility of matter; and, in addition, places much emphasis on the permanency of the Ether of Space. He believes that all matter will be finally resolved into ether, which will be the only really abiding substance. He argues that every act and thought of man are impressed upon ether like the printers type is impressed upon paper; that it contains a complete record of every thought and act from the beginning of time; that the universe itself is indeed the book from which all men are judged at the last day; that it is the incorruptible witness which bears somewhere

in its immensity the ever present and ineffaceable mark of our brief passage through material life, and that God thus embraces all things at a single glance and perceives them as if He were present. Thence, he argues, if even the thought is thus everlastingly preserved, even so must the soul which is the author of the thought, be preserved. He also shows that a belief in some form in the immortality of the soul has been held by mankind, savage and civilized, from time immemorial. It appears from monuments built by primitive races long since lost to memory, and in the laws and customs of ancient peoples who have contributed to the civilization of the human species, and this belief is the whole teaching of ancient wisdom. From this universal desire or belief, he draws an argument in favor of the immortality of the soul. "Future Life in the Light of Ancient Wisdom and Modern Science."

It would seem that all such efforts extend no further than feebly to point out the desire, the hope, or at most, the

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probability of a future state. Even Socrates, the Grecian philosopher, could not satisfy himself by considering the subject in the dim light of reason, and could well say that he could get no further light until God should send a messenger from heaven. The question addressed to Job is still pertinent: "Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?" Mankind stood, therefore, in need of a revelation, and even under the Christian Revelation, as Dr. Paley remarks, "there does not seem to be too much light nor any degree of assurance which is superfluous"

II.

LEGAL PROOF.

It ought to be said concerning the expression, "the resurrection of the dead," that it is here used in this sense: That, notwithstanding the death of the body, the soul shall persist in its existence, and so is used synonymously with the expression, "the immortality of the soul." It will be conceded that the sacred writings declare in unmistakable terms the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, and the believer contends that these writings are competent and *prima facie* evidence in proof of the fact. If so, he may rest upon this proof, and the burden to show it otherwise is upon the objector. It is not necessary nor desirable, however, to shift this burden upon the unbeliever since it is not difficult to establish all that is claimed for these books. Are these writings, especially the New Testa-

ment, legal and competent evidence in proof of the resurrection of the dead? This depends upon the determination of the question whether such writings are within the rules of law governing the admissibility of ancient records and copies thereof. What, then, are these rules, and are these writings such records as come within the rules?

In a court of law the execution of a written instrument, the signing and delivery, must first be proven before the instrument will be admitted in evidence, unless some rule of court dispenses with the proof, or the execution is admitted by the opposite party to the suit. But this rule is not applied to ancient documents. Such documents are said to prove themselves. They must, however, be free from just grounds of suspicion and must come from the proper custody. Being free in this respect and coming from such a place, the law presumes that they were fairly and honestly obtained and preserved for use. The proper custody is the place where such papers might

naturally and reasonably be expected to be found; and it is this custody which gives authenticity to the document. 1 Greenleaf Evidence, Sections 142, 570. This rule has been illustrated both in England and America in many cases involving the rights of property, in which it was held, in a question of title to property, that an ancient document comes from the proper custody when it is produced by one having an interest in the property. On this principle an old chartulary of the dissolved Abbey of Glastonbury was held to be admissible because found in the possession of the owner of part of the abbey lands, though not of the principal proportion. *Bullen vs. Mitchell*, 2 Price, 413 (3 Bingham N. C., 201). In a case touching the right of presentation to a living, as it is called in England, proof depended upon documents several hundred years old, found in the possession of the family of whom the claimant was a member. Chief Justice Tindal, in disposing of the case, remarked: "These documents were found

in a place in which, and under the care of persons with whom, they might naturally and reasonably be expected to be found; and that is precisely the custody which gives authenticity to documents found within it." Lord Bishop, of *Meath vs. Marquis of Winchester*, 3 Bingham N. C., 200. On the other hand, old grants to abbeys and other ancient grants have been rejected as evidence of private property rights where their possession has appeared altogether unconnected with persons who had any interest in the estate. 3 Bingham N. C., 201. And so a manuscript found in the Herald's office enumerating the possessions of the dissolved Monastery of Tutburg; *Liggon vs. Strutt*, 2 Anstr., 601; a manuscript found in the Bodleian Library, Oxford; *Mitchell vs. Rabitts*, 3 Taunt., 91; an old grant to a priory brought from the Cottonian Mss., in the British Museum; *Swinerton vs. Marquis of Stafford*, 3 Taunt., 91 (3 Bingham N. C., 201) were held to be inadmissible in evidence, the possession of the documents being unconnect-

ed with the interests in the property. From the reason of the rule and the necessities of the case, the more ancient the document the stronger the presumption of the law. Documents thirty years old are held in Pennsylvania to be ancient documents, and to such instruments the courts of this state have repeatedly applied the rule. It has been repeatedly held in Pennsylvania that ancient documents, documents which have the appearance of due antiquity and genuineness and which are produced from the proper custody, are admissible in evidence without proof of their execution. *Lewis vs. Lewis*, 4 W. & S., 378; *McReynolds vs. Longenberger*, 57 Pa., 13; *Morris vs. Vanderen*, 1 Dallas, 64; *Rodgers vs. Riddelsburg Coal Co.*, 31 L. J., 325; but where there is anything on the face of the documents to raise suspicion as to their genuineness, they should not be admitted in evidence without further proof of their genuineness. *Lau vs. Mumma*, 43 Pa., 267; *York Trust Co. vs. Kindig*, 7 York, 149. The Executive Depart-

ment at Harrisburg holds in its custody a parchment which purports to be the original grant from Charles the Second to William Penn for territory in North America called Pennsylvania. It is dated 1682, bears the coat of arms of the king, commences with the words "Charles the Second, by the grace of God, King of England, Scotland, France and Ireland," states the consideration for the grant as being, among other things, "two beaver skins to be delivered at our said Castle of Windsor on the first day of January in every year," and closes with the words "Witness ourself at Westminster, the fourth day of March, in the three and thirtieth year of our reign. By writ of privy seal. Pigott." This document has the appearance of due antiquity; there is nothing on the face of the document to raise a suspicion as to its genuineness, and it is found in the custody where it is natural and reasonable to expect that it should be found. If it were a pertinent subject of inquiry in any of our courts, the law would presume it

to be genuine, and it would be admitted in evidence upon simple proof that it came from the custody of the Executive Department. The rule in Pennsylvania is in accord with the general rule of law expressed by an eminent legal writer in these words: "Every document, apparently ancient, coming from the proper repository or custody, and bearing on its face no evident marks of forgery, the law presumes to be genuine, and devolves on the opposing party the burden of proving it to be otherwise." "Greenleaf's Testimony of the Evangelists." The presumption is founded upon the uniform and immemorial experience that such a document found in such a place is genuine.

And this leads to the consideration of another and equally important principle: The law presumes to be genuine copies of ancient documents which were of public and general interest. But in order to warrant such a presumption the documents must be of a public nature, the copies thereof acted upon or assented to by the public, all

having an opportunity of knowing their contents. It is a rule founded upon the same principle as that which permits evidence to be given of the general reputation of an individual; and is an exception to the general rule of law that hearsay evidence is inadmissible. This rule has been applied in England in cases involving adverse claims to a peerage, and in England and America in cases where title to lands was in question. In considering the admissibility of a copy of an ancient document, Chief Justice Kenyon stated the rule in these words: "Evidence of reputation upon general points is receivable because all mankind being interested therein, it is natural to suppose that they may be conversant with the objects, and that they should discourse together about them, having all the same means of information." *Morewood vs. Wood*, 14 East's Repts., 327. And so in a claim of peerage, where there was no patent of creation or enrollment of such patent, and the Contemporaneous Lords' Journals were

not in existence, an old manuscript book, purporting to be copied from the journals by an officer whose duty it was to prepare lists of peers present and absent, was received as evidence of a peer's sitting in Parliament. *Slane's Peerage*, 5 Clark & F., 23. It was on this principle that a list of first purchasers, under William Penn, found in the office of the Surveyor General of Pennsylvania, was admitted in evidence in an action of ejectment to prove the execution and delivery of a deed which had been lost. *Hurst vs. Dipppo*, 1 Dallas, 19; *Morris vs. Vanderen*, 1 Dallas, 64; and upon the same principle a list of the first grantees from the Proprietaries, found in the office of the Surveyor General, made from ancient papers lost or destroyed, was received in evidence in ejectment. *Kingston vs. Tesby*, 10 S. & R., 386. In his opinion, Chief Justice Tilghman says: "The book which contains the list in question is among the public books preserved in the Land Office, and the list itself, it must be presumed, was made out from

ancient papers, many of which may now be lost, or, perhaps, not in existence. It may be presumed too that it was made out as a matter of public convenience, and not with a view of private disputes. Under such circumstances, it ought to be evidence." Where, therefore, the subject of inquiry is as to a copy of an ancient document of public interest, and the faithfulness of the copy is known and proclaimed or assented to by the public, the law presumes it to be a genuine copy. Reliance as to its genuineness is placed, not on the assertion of a single individual, but upon the concurrent opinion and assent of indefinite numbers of persons interested in the matter. Starkie on Evidence (10 Ed.) pages 46-49; and where such a document is lost and a copy thereof is used and acted upon by indefinite numbers of persons, this is an assertion as to its genuineness and is called the prevailing current of assertion as to the faithfulness of the copy, and this assertion is resorted to as evidence.

These legal principles are of easy application to the books of the New Testament. If the original writings could be produced from the custody of the Church, they would be competent evidence of their contents, for that is the place in which it is natural to expect that these ancient documents should be found; and copies of the originals are, upon the principles heretofore stated, also evidence, for they have been used, acted upon and considered by indefinite numbers as genuine copies of the originals. These ancient writings were of public and general interest with which the public were familiar, and purported to relate to matters affecting both the temporal and spiritual welfare of the human race. It is natural to suppose that writings of such importance should be widely distributed and innumerable copies made for use in public worship. Conditions seemed to be ripe for their dissemination, and circumstances seemed to conspire to facilitate the spread of the Gospel throughout the Roman Empire.

That great empire had acquired, by the early part of the first century, the fairest portions of the continent of Europe, and extended her dominion over provinces in Asia and Africa. The conquests of the Roman legions prepared for and facilitated the more enduring and important conquests of Christianity. The accidents of war and commerce contributed to the diffusion of a knowledge of the Gospel. The public highways, constructed for the use of the Roman armies, opened an easy passage for the Christian missionaries from Damascus to Corinth, and from Italy to the extremity of Spain. At an early day the faith of Christ had been preached in every province and all the great cities of the empire; and prosperous churches had been established in Europe, Asia and Africa and the islands of the sea. The Gospel was accepted by great numbers of persons of every rank, and a pure and humble religion grew up in silence and finally erected the triumphant banner of the Cross on the ruins of the capital of the

empire. 1 Gibbon, 32, 504, 532, 575. This world-wide interest was based upon the teachings, life, death, resurrection and ascension of Christ as recorded in the books of the New Testament and upon the ministry of His apostles and disciples. Copies of these books had, before the close of the first century, been multiplied in great numbers throughout the empire, and been preserved and used for public use in every Christian church. 2 Gibbon, 68.

Although the four books of the New Testament were originally written in Greek, they were soon translated into the languages of the various countries in which they were used. Accordingly, as early as the second century, eminent Christian writers are appealing from the authority of Latin and other versions to the Greek, which, even at that time, was called ancient. One author, writing in the year 300, testifies that "the writings of the Apostles had obtained such an esteem as to be translated into every language, both Greek and barbarian, and to be diligently

studied by all nations." There are still extant Latin and Syriac translations made in the second century, the latter now in the British Museum, and the Egyptian translation made in the third century. Paley's Evidences, 143-148. In addition, there are the three Greek manuscripts, the Vatican Manuscript in the Vatican at Rome, and the Sinaitic Manuscript at St. Petersburg, found in a monastery at St. Katharine on Mount Sinai, both copied in the fourth century, and the Alexandrian Manuscript, in the British Museum, found in an Egyptian monastery, copied in the fifth century. These and innumerable other copies, although made in remote and different countries which at the time had little or no communication, differ very little from each other or from the ones now in use, and in nothing that is important. Paley's Evidences, 148; Tischendorf's Introduction; 1 Horne's Introduction, 222.

These and successive copies, even to the present, have been accepted and acted upon as true and authentic copies,

and in the faith of their integrity multitudes in every age have entered with confidence the shadows of death. The prevailing current of assertion of the entire Christian world for 1900 years has gone to the integrity and authenticity of these copies. Considering, therefore, that the originals were ancient writings in the custody of the Church; that they were of public and general interest; that the manuscripts, purporting to be copies of these originals, are of great antiquity; that they were found in the possession of the Church, presumably copied by those upon whom this duty would naturally devolve; that they were of a public nature, their contents known to the public and assented to; that they have been believed in and acted upon throughout the centuries; these ancient manuscripts and copies thereof, are, according to a strict application of the legal rules heretofore stated, competent and legal evidence in proof of the facts and declarations which they contain. Mr. Greenleaf has summed up the whole

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matter in a short note to the text, wherein he discusses the legal rule in his Work on Evidence, in these words: "The rule stated in the text is one of the grounds on which we insist on the genuineness of the books of the Holy Scriptures; they are found in the proper custody or place where alone they ought to be looked for,—namely, the churches, where they have been kept from time immemorial. They have been constantly referred to as the foundation of faith by all the opposing sects, whose existence God, in His wisdom, has seen fit to permit; whose jealous vigilance would readily detect any attempt to falsify the text, and whose diversity of creeds would render any mutual combination morally impossible. The burden of proof is, therefore, on the objector to impeach the genuineness of these books; not on the Christian to establish it." 1 Greenleaf Evidence, Section 142, note.

III.

HISTORICAL PROOF.

These presumptions of the law are sufficient without more; but it is interesting and assuring to note how they are confirmed by known facts. This question is, in effect, no other than this: Is the New Testament, as now in use, the same as originally written? The historical books of the New Testament are quoted or alluded to by a series of Christian writers, beginning with those who were contemporary with the Apostles, or who immediately followed them, and proceeding in close and regular succession from their time to the present. Paley's Evidences, 102. They are quoted or mentioned by the following writers: By Barnabas, the companion of Paul, in an epistle read amongst early Christians, though not accounted a part of the New Testament; by Clement, Bishop of Rome,

named by Paul in one of his epistles; by Hermas, mentioned by Paul in his Epistles to the Romans; by Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, shortly after the death of Christ; by Polycarp, who had conversed with the Apostles; by Papias, an acquaintance of John the Apostle; somewhat later, the year 140, by Justin Martyrs; the year 170 by Irenæus, who had conversed with the immediate disciples of the Apostles; a little later, the year 180, by Clement of Alexandria, one of the most voluminous of ancient Christian writers; by Tertullian, who wrote about the year 200; by Origen, who wrote about the year 250, and who, in the quantity of his writings, exceeded the most laborious of the Greek and Latin authors, and by Eusebius, Bishop of Cæsarea, who, about the year 315, wrote a history of the affairs of Christianity from its origin to his own time. Paley's Evidences, 104-129; 1 Gibbon, 534; 1 Horne's Introduction, 38-46. After this period, says Dr. Paley, "there is no room for any question upon the sub-

ject; the works of Christian writers being as full of texts of Scripture, and of references to Scripture, as the discourses of modern divines." Paley's Evidences, 129. These ancient writers, whose works are now accessible, quote passages liberally from the books of the New Testament, and mention the authors by name. The force of this concurring testimony as to the contents of the gospels, is greatly strengthened when it is remembered that the writers lived in countries remote from one another: Clement lived at Rome, Ignatius at Antioch, Polycarp at Smyrna, Justin Martyrs in Syria, and Irenæus in France. An examination of these quotations, as set forth in Paley's Evidences, shows clearly that the New Testament, as now in use, is the same as when originally written. There is also the testimony of those who wrote against Christianity. Tacitus, seventy years after the death of Christ, records His death as having taken place in the reign of Tiberius, under Procurator Pontius Pilate; Celsus, an Epicurean

philosopher, writing in the second century; Porphyry, writing in the third century, and the Emperor Julian, writing in the fourth century, name the books of the New Testament, quote liberally from them, and concede that they are genuine productions. Paley's Evidences, 30, 161-166. Celsus, especially, takes notice of every important event in the life of Christ from His birth to His ascension, as narrated in the Gospels. Gilmore's Evidences, 180. "This sort of evidence," Dr. Paley has remarked, "is of all others the most unquestionable, the least liable to any practices of fraud and is not diminished by the lapse of ages."

IV.

AN EXAMINATION OF THE EVIDENCE IN
THE NEW TESTAMENT.

While these books are entirely competent as evidence of the matters therein related, the degree of credit to be given them depends, to a certain extent, on the integrity, intelligence and powers of observation of the writers and their ability to accurately narrate the facts. A brief history of the writers shows their peculiar and eminent qualifications for the work to be done, and justifies their selection.

Matthew, called also Levi, was a native of Galilee. Before his conversion he was engaged "at the receipt of customs" under the Roman Empire, collecting the customs or tariff on all goods exported or imported at Capernaum on the Sea of Galilee. While thus engaged, he was called by Christ to be an Apostle. He wrote first of all

the Apostles, the time being about the year 38, and was an eye-witness of the principal events which he narrates. The occupation of Matthew as a customs officer doubtless brought him in contact with men of affairs, and trained him in the detection of fraud and deception often resorted to, especially by the Greek merchants, to evade the payment of customs; he would also become exceedingly suspicious and distrustful, habitually looking for fraud and imposition. Accordingly, he is the only one of the Apostles who records the incident of the placing of the guard at the sepulchre at the instance of the Jews, to prevent, as they alleged, the disciples from stealing the body of Christ, and the bribery of the soldiers by the chief priests to circulate the falsehood that the disciples came by night and stole His body while they slept; and he alone mentions the demand on Christ and Peter for tribute money when they landed at Capernaum, the old home of Matthew, and payment with money taken from the

mouth of the fish caught in the sea by Peter. Since he himself had collected such duties, he would more likely mention the incident than any of the other Apostles. His habit of suspecting fraud and imposition would naturally lead him to closely observe and investigate the miracles of Christ; and his faith and confidence in them are a guarantee of their genuine reality.

Mark was not an Apostle, but said to be one of the seventy disciples. He was the son of Mary, the sister of Barnabas, a pious woman of Jerusalem, at whose house the Apostles frequently assembled. He traveled at different times with Paul, Barnabas and Peter, and doubtless received much benefit and information from these associations. He wrote his Gospel about the year 60 in the city of Rome. While he himself, probably, did not have personal knowledge of the matters of which he wrote, he was doubtless thoroughly informed by Peter, who was an eye-witness, and who is supposed to have dictated the Gospel to Mark. The agency of Peter

in Mark's narrative is asserted by all ancient writers, and appears, as remarked by Mr. Greenleaf, from the fact, among others, that "scarcely any transaction of Jesus is related at which Peter was not present." The Gospel by Mark is, therefore, regarded as the equivalent of a narrative written by one who saw the incidents recorded.

Since Peter was an important factor in this narrative, these observations would be incomplete without some reference to his character and qualifications. Peter was outspoken and honest; he made no attempt to conceal his ignorance; and if there were any questions to be asked of Christ, Peter was usually the one to make the inquiry. Through this habit he acquired much valuable information. His powers of discernment apparently exceeded those of any of the other Apostles. He was the only one that seemed able to answer the question: "But whom say ye that I am?" Peter answered immediately: "Thou art the Christ, the Son

of the living God." Christ rated Peter highly, and had him with Him on several special and important occasions; he was one of three with Christ at the Transfiguration, and one of three at Gethsemane. He was brave even to rashness, as shown by his attempt to walk on the water; his attack with a sword on the servant of the high priest when Christ was about to be arrested; and his rushing into the sepulchre after the Resurrection, while his companion John, stopped at the entrance. It is true Peter acted the coward in denying Christ at the trial, but it was only a temporary weakness; he went out and wept bitterly, and was soon forgiven. After the Resurrection it was to Peter alone that the angel sent a special message to meet Christ in Galilee, while only a general invitation was sent to the other disciples. Peter soon recovered his usual courage, and is found boldly and eloquently, near the very spot where the occurrences took place, and shortly after, charging the Jews

with the death of Christ, and declaring His resurrection from the dead.

Luke was a native of Antioch, a physician, and, for a considerable period, a companion of the Apostle Paul. He wrote his Gospel about the year 63, addressing it to Theophilus, a gentile of high rank in Greece, who had abjured paganism and embraced the Christian faith. He also wrote the Acts of the Apostles as clearly appears from the first verse of the opening chapter. He does not affirm himself to have been an eye-witness of the events narrated, although his personal knowledge may well be inferred from his statement that he "had perfect understanding of all things from the first." If he himself was not an eye-witness, he certainly obtained his information from those who were. The report or narrative, however, concerned matters of great public moment, and was addressed to a high public official, and presumably undertaken at his request. Such a report would possess, according to Mr Greenleaf, every legal attribute of what law-

yers call an inquisition, and as such would be legally admissible in evidence in a court of justice. "Testimony of the Evangelists," 19. He must have been a man of liberal education, was an acute observer, and entirely competent to investigate and report the miracles of Christ, involving, as many of them did, the cure of diverse diseases. It is natural to expect, too, that, by reason of his professional training, he would record circumstances connected with the healing of diseases and other matters with which a physician has to do, not mentioned by the others. Thus, he alone mentions the fact that the sleep of the disciples in Gethsemane was induced by extreme sorrow, and that the bloodlike sweat of Christ was occasioned by the intensity of agony; and he alone relates the miraculous healing of Malchus' ear. And so the circumstances attending the birth of John the Baptist, and the event and manner of the conception of Mary, the mother of Christ, are recorded fully by Luke alone, narratives intensely inter-

esting and exceedingly well written. The world is indebted to Luke alone for the preservation of the Lord's Prayer, and the record of the repentance of the thief on the cross.

John was the son of Zebedee, a fisherman on the Sea of Galilee. He was the youngest of the Apostles, and was called to be an Apostle while fishing on the sea. He was an eye-witness to the works and miracles of Christ, and was called "the Disciple whom Jesus loved." He became one of the Chief Apostles and presided over seven churches in Asia Minor; and having been banished to the Isle of Patmos, wrote Revelations. On his release from exile, he returned to Ephesus, where, about the year 97, wrote his Gospel and Epistles, and died at the age of 100 years. It is stated on high authority that the several Books of the New Testament were first collected by John; that he approved of the Gospels as written by Matthew, Mark and Luke, and added his own by way of supplement, omitting certain incidents which they had

given, and recording many which they had omitted. A comparison of the various Books would make this theory appear very reasonable. Many occurrences related by Matthew, Mark and Luke are not mentioned by John; as examples, the Transfiguration on the Mount, and the raising of Jarius's daughter; while John alone tells of the resurrection of Lazarus, Peter's profession of faith, the discourse of Christ with the woman at the well, the healing of the infirm man at the Pool of Bethesda; and gives the comforting words of Christ as narrated in the 14th Chapter: "Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in Me." John, having established and governed a number of churches, must have been a man of considerable executive ability; and his writings, especially his Book of Revelations, indicate that he had attained a high degree of literary excellence. Horne's Introduction; Paley's Evidences; Greenleaf's Testimony.

These writings indicate that their

authors were men of integrity and intelligence, and, by reason of their calling, training and native ability, peculiarly fitted to observe and accurately narrate the important events occurring in their day.

Having shown the competency of the New Testament as evidence of the facts therein recited, this discussion might, at this point, properly close; for it is therein frequently and explicitly declared that the dead shall rise. But to realize the force of this evidence, some parts of it should be considered somewhat in detail. Every statement therein relating to this subject is founded upon the repeated declarations of Christ that the dead should rise. There can be no mistake as to His meaning. Nothing is left to interpretation. The Epistles of Paul, James, Peter and John declare the doctrine of the resurrection, and they found it upon the declarations of Christ. It is true that the testimony of Christ is apparently of an unusual and startling nature; but it is easily believed when His char-

acter is considered, and in view of what He actually did. He had complete dominion over life and death; He made the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak; He made the blind to see, and He raised the dead to life. Those Christian writers whose works are now accessible, living nearest these wonderful events, were well satisfied that they took place. Quadratus, who wrote only 70 years after the Ascension, was well persuaded, using these words: "The works of our Saviour were always conspicuous, for they were real; both they that were healed, and they that were raised from the dead, were seen, not only when they were healed or raised, but for a long time afterwards; not only whilst He dwelled on this earth, but also after His departure, and for a good while after it, insomuch as that some of them have reached to our times;" and so, a hundred years after the Ascension, Justin Martyrs, and one hundred and forty years after, Irenæus, and those following, were equally confident that these events actually

happened. The arguments of those who wrote against Christianity were answered by the Christian writers of that day from prophecy, wherein it was foretold that Christ should do these things. Thus Irenæus says: "But if they shall say that the Lord performed these things by an illusory appearance, leading these objectors to the prophecies, we will show from them, that all things were thus predicted concerning Him and strictly came to pass;" and so, Lactantius, who came a little later, pursued the same argument, wherein he says: "He performed miracles; we might have supposed Him to have been a magician, as ye say, and as the Jews then supposed, if all the prophets had not, with one spirit, foretold that Christ should perform these very things." Paley's Evidences, 389. That these were miracles is nothing against the truth of the statements. They were events of public observation and notoriety. The blind, the deaf and dumb were known by their neighbors to be such; that they were healed was equal-

ly known; and Christ's agency in their healing was apparent to all. Lazarus was known by his friends and neighbors to be dead four days; they knew where he was buried; were present at the grave; assisted in removing the stone; heard the command of Christ which was given in a loud voice; saw Lazarus come forth from the grave; and, for a long time afterwards, associated with him. These were all matters of observation, witnessed by many, and the truth could be known as readily and certainly as though they were of the ordinary affairs of life. They were the subjects of perception and reason, and that their importance was of the first magnitude should not have the effect of blinding the eye nor paralyzing the mind. This mighty spirit, flashed suddenly upon the world like a newly created planet, of marvelous powers, who healed the incurable, brought the dead to life, and who was declared from the heavens to be the Son of God, He, it is, who declares the resurrection of the dead. It is natural to suppose and be-

lieve that such a person, with a spirit keenly alive to the spiritual, might comprehend future events and reveal the secrets of the spiritual world.

He demonstrated His power of prophecy in a number of instances, especially in His prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem and of the Holy Temple. He did not declare generally that they would be destroyed, but detailed at least a dozen circumstances attending the destruction, and the signs and tokens which would precede that event; he declared that, preceding the destruction, there would rise false prophets, would be wars and rumors of wars, nations would rise against nations, and kingdoms against kingdoms, there would be great earthquakes, fearful sights, and great signs in heaven. Following these things Jerusalem would be compassed with armies, parents, kinsfolk and friends be arrayed against each other, that there would be famine and pestilence, that the inhabitants would fall by the edge of the sword, be led away captive, Jerusalem would be

trodden down of the Gentiles, and that of the Holy Temple, not one stone would be left upon another. It is impressive to note how this prophecy accords with the facts of history. Josephus, in his History of the Jewish Wars, written a short time after the destruction of Jerusalem, which occurred thirt-seven years after the death of Christ, solemnly declares that, preceding the destruction of Jerusalem, there were severe earthquakes in Judea; that many false prophets arose who were suborned by tyrants to deceive and injure the people; that a star resembling a sword stood over the city, and that a comet continued above it a whole year; that at the ninth hour of the night so great a light shone round the Altar and the Holy House that it appeared to be broad day, which light lasted for half an hour; that shortly after one of the feasts before sun setting, chariots and troops of soldiers in their armors were seen running about among the clouds and surrounding cities; that at one of the feasts of unleavened bread, a

heifer, as she was led by the High Priest to be sacrificed, brought forth a lamb in the midst of the Temple, and that the Eastern Gate of the Inner Temple, which was of heavy brass and had been with difficulty shut by twenty men, and had bolts fastened very deep in a solid stone floor, was seen to be opened of its own accord about the sixth hour of the night. Josephus interprets these signs as foretelling the destruction of Jerusalem. He narrates how the city was compassed by the Roman armies under Titus; describes the famine and pestilence in the city; records how parents and children were arrayed against each other in an effort to secure bread; describes the fury that seized upon the Jews, who destroyed each other, as well as the engines of war and the works necessary for their own protection, and even the food necessary for their existence. One million, one hundred thousand perished with hunger and fell by the edge of the sword; ninety-seven thousand were led away captive; the city was completely

destroyed; of the Temple, not one stone was left upon another, and even the place where it stood was torn up by the ploughshares of the hostile armies. Josephus, Vol. 4.

The Transfiguration scene on the Mount is strongly corroborative of the declarations of Christ as to the Resurrection. Christ took Peter, James and John with Him up into the mountain to pray, and while there He "was transfigured before them; and His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light." Moses, who had been dead 1,500 years, and Elias, who had been dead 900 years, appeared and talked with Christ concerning His death. Matthew, Mark and Luke who record this event, were not at the Transfiguration, although they doubtless received the information first hand from those who were; while John, who was present, makes no mention of the event in his Gospel. This is sufficiently explained by the fact that John wrote his Gospel as a supplement to the other three Books, and, as they contained a

full and satisfactory account of the event, it was not thought necessary for him to go into the matter. And moreover, Mark wrote his account of the transaction at the dictation of Peter who was present and Peter himself distinctly refers to the scene in his Epistles. We have, therefore, the testimony of one witness who was present and saw the transaction, and it is uncontradicted. Luke states that the Apostles on this occasion "were heavy with sleep;" but, to leave no doubt, he adds these significant words: "When they were awake they saw His glory, and the two men that stood with Him." It has often been said, even by Christians, in the face of this remarkable event, that none have ever returned from the spiritual world as proof of life beyond the grave. This concession is unwarranted. The statement is not true. Moses and Elias did appear, and this fact is as well attested as that Napoleon appeared in France from Elba, or any other important historical event.

The strongest corroborative evidence

as to the statements of Christ concerning the resurrection of the dead, if corroboration is needed, is found in His predictions concerning His own death and resurrection. His prophecy of these wonderful and happy events was fulfilled in every particular. He was not satisfied to prophesy in general terms, but gave a complete and detailed statement of the things that would take place. He declared that He would be betrayed by one of His own Disciples, naming him; that His Disciples, who had so often professed loyalty, would forsake Him; that Peter, especially, who was accounted the most courageous of all, would deny Him and act the coward, stating almost the very hour; that He would suffer at Jerusalem at the hands of the Chief Priests and Gentiles, the manner of His suffering being by mocking and crucifixion; that He would rise again the third day; that He would appear again to His Disciples after His resurrection, naming the place; and that He would ascend into Heaven. Every detail of this prophecy

was fulfilled; the things that afterwards actually happened were in perfect accord with every prediction, showing the absolute certainty and accuracy of His fore-knowledge.

Christ knew whereof He spake, and did not fear to commit Himself upon so many details whereby the truth of His statements might be tested. Such a detailed statement furnishes all the advantages of cross examination, "which," Mr. Starkie observes, "is one of the principal tests which the law has devised for the ascertainment of truth." Starkie on Evidence, *page 195. He did not declare His resurrection to take place in the distant future when all who heard Him should be mouldered to dust; it was to occur only within three days of His death. He desired that those who had trusted and followed Him should have immediate and convincing proof of His statements. If in three days there was no resurrection for Him, then His prophecy had failed, and His declarations as to the resurrection of others would be

entitled to little credence. Christ was willing to accept the conditions thus created, and rest proof of His divinity upon the result. If, therefore, the failure of His prophecy in this regard could justly be regarded as an impeachment of His testimony in regard to the resurrection of others, then His own resurrection should be considered as corroborative of His testimony that the dead should rise. Paul so regarded it, for he declares in effect that the resurrection of the dead is a necessary inference from the resurrection of Christ. "But if there be no resurrection of the dead," says Paul, "then is Christ not risen; and if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching in vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ; whom He raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not, For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised." His argument simply amounts to this: That the resurrection of Christ is an absolute certainty, beyond con-

troversy, yet certain as it is, it is not true if the dead rise not.

Since so much depends upon the certainty of the resurrection of Christ, the only method ever devised to discredit it should be considered in detail. When Christ was crucified and buried, the chief priests and Pharisees affected to believe that the disciples would steal the body of Christ and thus give the impression that He had risen; and they procured a guard to be set over the sepulchre and sealed a stone at the entrance. When, notwithstanding these precautions, Christ had risen, they bribed the guard to say that the body was stolen by His disciples while the guard slept. When taken from the cross, the body of Christ was laid in a tomb and wrapped in fine linen with about a hundred pounds of spices. This was on the evening of the day of the crucifixion. The next day the chief priests and Pharisees went to Pilate and asked him to make the sepulchre sure until the third day, lest the disciples of Christ steal His body away at

night and say He was risen from the dead. "Pilate said unto them, ye have a watch; go your way, make it as sure as you can. So they went and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch"; and as they made the sepulchre sure, it may well be believed that the guard were first well satisfied that Christ was still in the tomb. This is admitted in the falsehood as to the theft, afterwards invented, in which it is alleged that the body was stolen after the guard had been set and while they were asleep. Upon the first day of the week, very early, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to the sepulchre, and were informed by an angel that Christ had risen, and they went at once and informed the disciples. While they were going some of the guard also went and "showed unto the chief priests all the things that were done," and the chief priests, after consulting with the elders, gave large money to the soldiers to say, "His disciples came by night, and stole Him away while we slept. So they took the money," it is recorded,

"and did as they were taught." The chief priests did not believe that Christ would rise the third day, but suspected that His disciples would steal His body, and so give the impression that He had risen. They, therefore, provided against this contingency by setting at the tomb a guard of sixty soldiers, and sealing the stone at the entrance. The disciples doubtless knew of the precautions that had been taken to prevent the body from being stolen, and would not likely have made the attempt, even if they had been so inclined.

When the guard left the sepulchre they "showed unto the chief priests all the things that were done"; and, therefore, must have told the chief priests that "there was a great earthquake; for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. His countenance was like lightning and His raiment white as snow, and for fear of Him the keepers did shake and became as dead men." These things, at least, the guard did see before being

stricken, and tell to the chief priests; and, doubtless, they also heard the angel declare that Christ had risen; for though they had been paralyzed by the earthquake and the sight of the angel, it does not appear that they were in that condition when, shortly after, the angel told the women of the resurrection; on the contrary, the inference is strong that they had fully recovered, for they started for the city about the same time as the women who immediately left the sepulchre when informed by the angel that Christ had risen. While, therefore, the guard told the truth to the chief priests concerning the matter, the chief priests induced the guard to circulate a falsehood.

The disciples evidently had no thought of stealing the body. They did not expect Christ to rise from the dead, and, of course, would not likely steal the body to create the impression that He had risen. Although Christ had, on several occasions, told them He would rise again the third day, they did not seem to comprehend His words; and

when informed by the women of the empty tomb, "their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not." But Peter and John went at once to investigate, and found it as the women had reported. Even then, Peter wondered "in himself at that which was come to pass; for, as yet, they knew not the Scripture that He must rise again from the dead." His disciples believed only, when, after the resurrection, Christ had opened their understanding by showing, from the Scriptures, that "it behooved Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day." Prior to this, they did not seem to understand that He was to rise the third day; they certainly were surprised when they found that He had risen. These circumstances negative the thought that they would even contemplate stealing the body to create the impression that He had risen.

The condition of the tomb itself refutes the story. When Peter entered the sepulchre, he found the linen clothes lying in order, and the napkin lying in

another place, carefully wrapped together. Gregory of Nyssen, writing 1500 years ago, commenting on these facts, says "that the disposition of the clothes in the sepulchre, the napkin that was about our Saviour's head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself, did not bespeak the terror and hurry of thieves, and, therefore, refutes the story of the body being stolen." Paley's Evidences, 147. Simon Greenleaf expresses the same thought more fully by saying: "The grave clothes lying orderly in their place, and the napkin folded together by itself, made it evident that the sepulchre had not been rifled nor the body stolen by violent hands; for these garments and spices would have been of more value to thieves than merely a naked corpse; at least, they would not have taken the trouble thus to fold them together. The same circumstances showed also that the body had not been removed by friends; for they would not thus have left the grave clothes behind. All these considera-

tions produced in the mind the belief that Jesus had risen from the dead." Testimony of the Evangelists, 542.

While this story was afterwards commonly reported among the Jews, yet, as Dr. Gilmore observes, "not once is it adverted to on those trials of the Apostles which soon took place at Jerusalem, on account of their bold and open proclamation of their Master's resurrection. Though the Apostles were cited before that very body who had given currency to the report of the disciples' theft, they are not even once taxed with the crime; not even a whisper escapes the lips of the Sanhedrin on the subject"; and the story was soon abandoned by those in authority as untenable and absurd.

Notwithstanding these attempts to discredit it, Christ was indeed risen from the dead. He was afterwards seen by many; by day and by night; at a distance and near; and a number of times. They touched Him; conversed with Him; ate with Him; and examined His body. He showed Himself

alive to His Apostles "after His passion, by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God"; and "was seen of above five hundred brethren at once." Dr. Lyman Abbott declares that "no event in the world's history is better attested than is the resurrection of Jesus."

When the time came for His departure, "He led His disciples out as far as to Bethany; and He lifted up His hands and blessed them, and it came to pass while He blessed them, He was parted from them, and carried up into heaven." An important, possibly the most important, fact in connection with the resurrection is that relating to the ascension of Christ. The time, place and manner of His ascension, and the number of witnesses thereto, leave no doubt as to its reality. Christ seems to have been determined that there should be no room for controversy or cavil as to His destination. The ascension was in a mountain where the view was unobstructed and where He could

be more distinctly and for the most considerable space beheld. It was in broad daylight, when all were alert and fully awake. It was in view of the disciples, while they were assembled together, and while He was near them and conversing with them. It was public, gentle and by degrees, so that His disciples steadily followed Him until He was lost from view. "They looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up." He was taken from them "whilst they beheld Him," and when He had disappeared, two angels announced that He had been taken up into heaven, and would, at the last day, "so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven." Shortly before His ascension, Christ promised His disciples that in a few days the Holy Ghost should come upon them, and directed them to remain at Jerusalem. On the day of Pentecost, shortly after, at Jerusalem, "suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost." If a friend, leaving for

London, should promise to write you to Philadelphia, upon his arrival at his destination, and should state in advance the contents of the letter, and you should receive, in due time, a letter purporting to come from London with his signature and with the same contents, you would be justified in saying that the letter was from your friend, and that he had arrived at London. Such evidence is resorted to in a court of law. Wigmore on Evidence, Vol. 3, Section 2153. The narrative concerning the ascension of Christ contains every essential in the illustration given. These facts justified the disciples in believing that Christ had ascended to heaven, and bring home to us a realization of the absolute certainty and reality of His ascension. And this is not all. There is strong corroborative evidence as to the ascension. We have the direct and positive evidence of Paul. Who doubts his testimony when he declares that, while journeying on the road to Damascus, he saw Christ. Paul, a man of commanding intellectual

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powers, trained to habits of reflection and investigation, not easily imposed upon, and, at the time, hostile to the person of Christ, would not bear testimony to the scene if it had not actually taken place.

In conclusion: Paul could well ask the question, in addressing his followers, some of whom probably doubted, "Why then should it be thought a thing incredible with you that God should raise the dead?" Hear the voice of authority: "I am the Resurrection and the Life; he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me, shall never die. Believest thou this?"