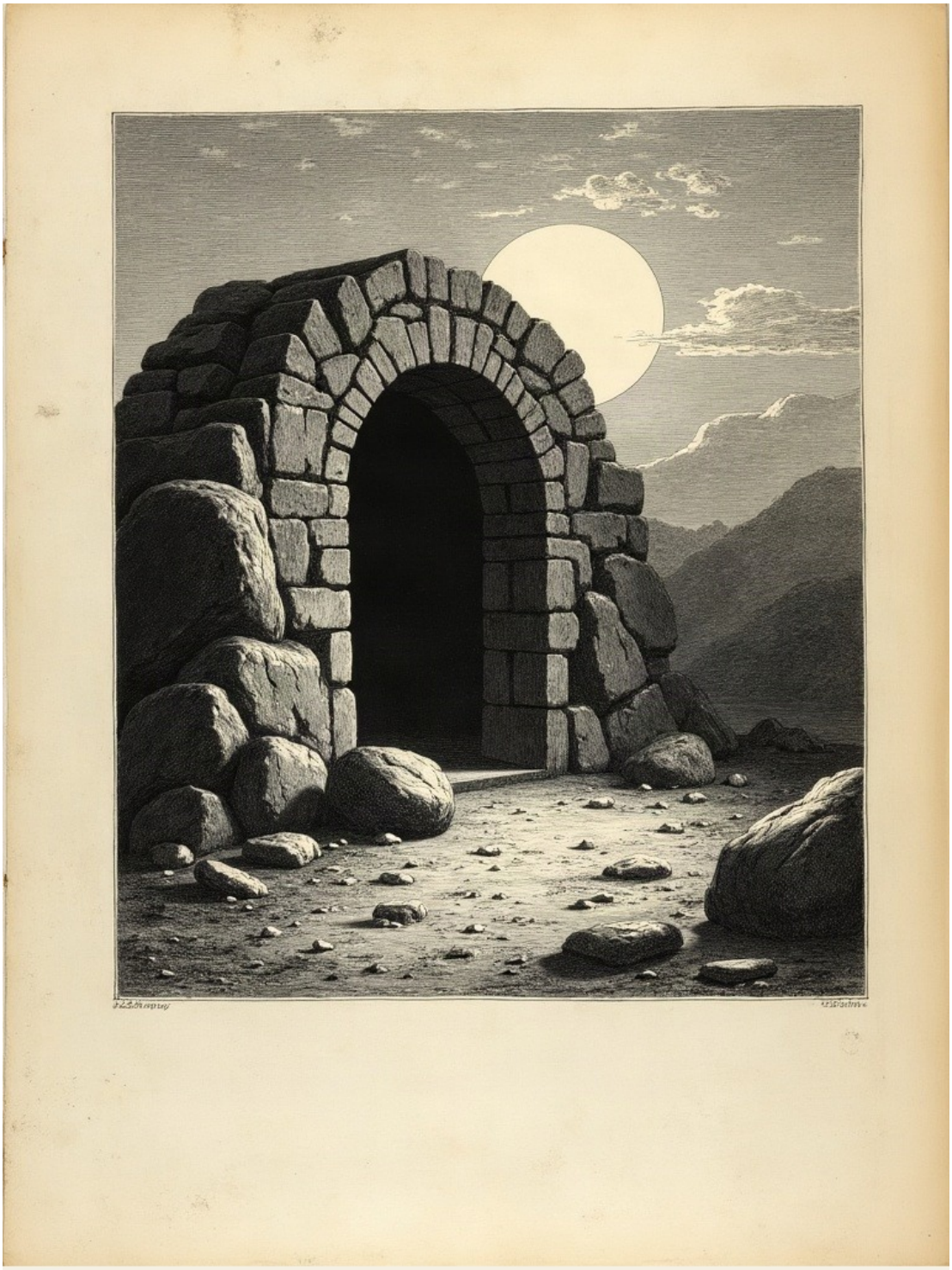


Observations on the Resurrection

by Gilbert West, 1747

Observations on the History and Evidences of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ

by Gilbert West, Esquire

A Condensed Modern-English Edition

by Gilbert West

Originally published in 1747

Prepared for the
Wednesday Evening Bible Study
Church of Christ

A Note on This Edition

This is a condensed companion to the full modern-English edition of Gilbert West's Observations on the History and Evidences of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, originally published in 1747. It is meant for a reader who wants West's case in a sitting or two rather than the complete book: every one of West's main arguments is kept, in the order he makes them, but repetition, secondary examples, and lengthy supporting asides have been trimmed to about a third of the full edition's length.

Nothing has been added, and no argument has been cut outright — only compressed. Where a point is condensed, West's own reasoning and his strongest evidence for it are kept; what falls away is restatement, not substance. Readers who want the complete, unabridged case, with every illustration and aside West offers, should turn to the full modern-English edition.

Scripture quotations follow the King James Version, matching West's own practice and the version most familiar to this congregation.

West was a layman and a friend of George Lyttelton; the two men, according to a durable literary tradition, set out together to disprove Christianity—West by disproving the resurrection, and Lyttelton by disproving the conversion of Paul—and each ended up persuaded of the very thing he meant to overturn. A matching condensed edition of Lyttelton's companion volume, Observations on the Conversion and Apostleship of St. Paul, is available alongside this one.

This book, Observations on the History and Evidence of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, was written by Gilbert West, Esquire, and published in London in 1747, with this line from Ecclesiasticus on its title page: "Blame not before thou hast examined the truth: understand first, and then rebuke" (Ecclesiasticus 11:7).

These observations began as a reply to a pamphlet, The Resurrection of Jesus Considered, in Answer to the Trial of the Witnesses, whose author, a "Moral Philosopher," tried to overturn the Evangelists' testimony by showing that they contradict one another. Two learned answers to that pamphlet had already appeared, and though I read them with satisfaction, I was not fully content with how they cleared the sacred writers of the contradictions charged against them. This led me to examine the Scriptures myself, astonished that writers regarded for sixteen hundred years as holy and inspired should be accused of an inconsistency unworthy of either description. I do not think the charge malicious, for it is of ancient standing and I cannot guess who first raised it; but I believe it groundless, resting on nothing deeper than the surface of the Evangelists' words. What I offer in their defense rests on that same text, compared part with part, noting where their circumstances agree and where they differ—a method that has led me into critical observations whose dryness I would apologize for, were I writing merely to entertain.

Though clearing the Evangelists of mutual contradiction was my only object at first, as I proceeded I found new circumstances at almost every step confirming their testimony to the resurrection, and was led far beyond my original design into the evidence for this article of faith at large—not only the evidence recorded in Scripture but that arising from later, well-attested facts. I first set out the order in which the several incidents appear to have happened; then considered the method by which the proofs of this event were laid before the apostles who were to bear witness of it to the world; and then examined those proofs themselves, to show that the resurrection was fully proved to the apostles and first disciples. But since its having been proved to them, however necessary, cannot alone warrant a Christian's faith today, I have added further reasons for believing, seventeen hundred years later, that Christ is risen: the testimony of Scripture, and the existence of the Christian religion itself.

I publish these observations in the hope that they may be as useful to others as they have been to me—aware how little credit attaches to writing in defense of Christianity, which some dismiss as a superstitious fable and others as a mere political scheme serving the clergy. Both opinions will seem groundless to anyone who fairly examines the proofs and doctrines of the Christian religion—proofs founded on fact, and doctrines derived by inspiration from the Father of mankind; and among those who have acknowledged Christianity's divine origin are the great names of Bacon, Milton, Boyle, Locke, and Newton, who thought it no disgrace to their talents

to submit to the truth of Christ. If it is asked why a layman presumes to write on a subject usually left to the clergy, I answer that the clergy's own excellent defenses of Christianity are too often dismissed by the prejudiced as merely self-interested, a prejudice as unjust as supposing our military officers brave only for pay and promotion. My taking up this cause may escape that suspicion, and I hope the clergy will readily excuse it. I hope too that Christians of every rank will join me in holding that this religion is of the utmost importance to all, and that the greatest service a patriot can do his country is to promote the faith and practice of the virtues Christ and his apostles taught. If any sincere seeker after truth gains even the smallest benefit from what follows, I shall think I have neither written nor lived in vain.

The observations themselves begin with the Gospel of John, chapter 20:

> "*The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre. Then she runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him. Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple, and came to the sepulchre. So they ran both together: and the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulchre. And he stooping down, and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying; yet went he not in. Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie, and the napkin, that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself. Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw, and believed. For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead. Then the disciples went away again unto their own home. But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping: and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre, and seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him. And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away. Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni, which is to say, Master. Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father, and to my God, and your God. Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that he had spoken these things unto her.*" *(John 20:1–18)*

From this passage several things are evident. First, Mary Magdalene had not yet seen any vision of angels before she ran to Peter, and so was not

among the women who were told by an angel in the tomb that Jesus had risen; had she seen any such vision, she would certainly have reported it, and could not then have gone on lamenting that she did not know where the body had been laid. When later, after returning with Peter and John, she did see two angels, she was standing outside the tomb weeping, and only stooping down to look in; and they said nothing to her beyond "Woman, why weepest thou?" Second, it follows that even after her return with Peter and John, the women who had been told by an angel that Christ was risen were not yet at the tomb, and that Mary Magdalene was alone when she saw the angels and when Christ appeared to her immediately after—which agrees with Mark's statement that Christ appeared first to Mary Magdalene (Mark 16:9), a statement that could hardly be made of her had she been accompanied by other women. Third, it is plain that the angels were not always visible but appeared and disappeared as they saw fit, since John and Peter, entering the tomb just before her, saw none.

Luke, chapter 24, gives a further piece of the story:

> "*And, behold, two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about threescore furlongs... And he said unto them, What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad? And the one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering said unto him, Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days?... Concerning Jesus of Nazareth... and how the chief priests and our rulers have delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him. But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel... today is the third day since these things were done. Yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulchre; and when they found not his body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that he was alive. And certain of them which were with us went to the sepulchre, and found it even so as the women had said: but him they saw not.*" *(Luke 24:13–24)*

This report, brought to the apostles before these two disciples left Jerusalem, suggests several observations. First, since the angels here told the women Jesus was alive, this report cannot have come from Mary Magdalene, to whom the angels said no such thing. Second, since no appearance of Christ to these women is mentioned, neither can it have come from the other Mary and Salome, to whom, as I shall show from Matthew, Jesus appeared on their way to tell the disciples. Third, there were therefore several reports, brought at different times and by different women—this one, in the absence of any other candidate, most probably by Joanna and her company. Fourth, some disciples who heard this report went to the tomb and found it as the women had said; if Peter was among them, this must have been his second visit there, which I shall demonstrate more fully below.

Once these conclusions are granted, I think the Evangelists can be defended against the charge of contradicting one another—unless writers who relate different, independent parts of the same history are for that reason alone to be called inconsistent. I will try to prove this by comparing the accounts given by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, beginning with Matthew and Mark together.

Matthew, chapter 28, reads:

> "*In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre. And, behold, 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. And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you. And they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy; and did run to bring his disciples word. And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him. Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid: go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me. Now when they were going, behold, some of the watch came into the city, and shewed unto the chief priests all the things that were done. And when they were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave large money unto the soldiers, saying, Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept… Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted*." *(Matthew 28:1–17)*

Mark, chapter 16, reads:

> "*And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him. And very early in the morning the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun. And they said among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre? And when they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away: for it was very great. And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment; and they were affrighted. And he saith unto them, Be not affrighted: ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: he is risen; he is not here: behold the place where they laid him. But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you. And they went out quickly, and fled from the sepulchre; for*

> *they trembled and were amazed: neither said they any thing to any man; for they were afraid. Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils. And she went and told them that had been with him, as they mourned and wept. And they, when they had heard that he was alive, and had been seen of her, believed not. After that he appeared in another form unto two of them, as they walked, and went into the country... Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen." (Mark 16:1–14)*

I will arrange my observations on these two passages under three headings: circumstances related by one Evangelist but not the other; circumstances on which they agree; and circumstances that seem to clash.

First, the earthquake, the angel's descent and his sitting on the stone, the guards' terror, and the appearances to the women and to the Eleven in Galilee are related only by Matthew; Mark alone mentions the spices, Salome, the young man sitting within the tomb, and the appearances to Mary Magdalene, to the two on the road, and to the Eleven at supper. Since none of these details contradicts anything the other Evangelist says, no argument against their truth can be drawn merely from one Evangelist's silence about what the other relates. Matthew wrote first, and—as Chrysostom tells us—at the request of Jewish converts who asked him to set down in writing what he had already told them by word of mouth; being already familiar with the surrounding circumstances, they needed no explanation of them. Mark wrote later, for Gentile converts in Egypt or Rome who, lacking that same familiarity, required the explanatory notes scattered through his Gospel, such as his opening account of the spices the women had bought. Mark is commonly said to have abridged Matthew's Gospel, but this is said with little accuracy, for how can a book be called an abridgment when, as in the very passages before us, it contains many details the earlier Gospel does not? Granting these two distinct aims, we can see why each included what he did. The disciples' having stolen the body while the guard slept was a tale still current among the Jews when Matthew wrote (Matthew 28:13); to answer it he alone relates the guarding of the tomb, the earthquake, the angel, and the soldiers' terror. Comparing this with the story the soldiers told shows where the truth lay. Three things were asserted in that story: that the disciples stole the body, at night, while the guards slept. That Jesus rose before sunrise even the chief priests could not well deny, since it suited their own tale; but the rest they built on the one fact the frightened soldiers admitted, that they had been overcome and had not actually seen Jesus leave the tomb. From this the priests spun the claim that the disciples had come and stolen him away, bribing the soldiers to confess to a dereliction of duty rather than admit what they had truly seen. Some soldiers, however, had already spread the true report before any bribe reached them (Matthew 28:11), so the priests needed

a story that, without flatly denying the facts, would still undercut the one conclusion the disciples were drawing from them. I will not trouble to refute so self-refuting a tale further than to note that disciplined Roman soldiers, newly posted, are not easily supposed to have all fallen so soundly asleep together that neither the rolling away of so great a stone nor the careful folding of the grave-clothes awakened any one of them; and the story rests, in any case, on the one fact that no soldier, bribed or honest, claimed actually to have seen Jesus leave the tomb—a fact true alike on either account, and explained very differently.

Since nothing beyond presumptive argument could be drawn from what happened to the guards, Matthew goes on to produce positive witnesses who had seen and spoken with the risen Christ. Of the many such appearances, he records only two. The first, to the women on their way from the tomb, raises a small difficulty: Matthew's wording seems by strict grammar to include Mary Magdalene among "the women" the angel addressed, though I have shown from John that she was not present. The difficulty dissolves once we see that something has happened in the interval—Salome has joined the other Mary, the guards have fled, and the angel has moved from the stone into the tomb—so that the conjunction here should be read as marking a new turn in the narrative rather than a bare continuation. Even granting that "the women" includes the other Mary (with Salome, whom Mark alone names), there remains an inexactness in Matthew's compressed account; but this is no more than should be expected of unlearned men writing without regard to grammatical nicety. A similar example occurs in "and when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted," where strict grammar would make the same eleven men both worship and doubt in the same breath—plainly not Matthew's meaning, since it is hardly credible that an author, however unlearned, meant to contradict himself within the space of three words. Rather, others present besides the Eleven doubted; the Greek construction "some... but some," meaning "some... others," is common enough even in writers of the first rank, and occasions no difficulty here except that the persons meant by the second "some" are left to be supplied from the occasion rather than named outright—a fault of compression, not of truth. Writing for Jewish converts who already knew these events by heart, Matthew had no need to spell out every connecting detail; he mentions the appearance to the women chiefly because it leads into the event he is really building toward—Christ's appointed meeting with the Eleven, and others, on a mountain in Galilee. That meeting, foretold well in advance by both angel and Christ, must have been widely talked of, especially since more than twenty people had already seen the risen Christ by then, and it is to this occasion that Paul's mention of an appearance to above five hundred brethren at once (1 Corinthians 15:6) most naturally belongs. That some in so large a company doubted only confirms that most believed; here, then, was a fact well known among the Jews Matthew wrote for, and the strongest possible evidence he could offer them—the testimony of hundreds of their own countrymen, so

convinced of the resurrection that they embraced Christ's teaching on the strength of it. The gospel of Christ and the faith of Christians are both empty if Christ is not risen from the dead, and it was on testimony of exactly this kind—his own, and that of the many who had seen the Lord—that Paul elsewhere rests the case, naming several appearances to Cephas and others and closing, "and last of all he was seen of me also" (1 Corinthians 15:5–8). Each Evangelist, in fact, records only as many of these appearances as suited the purpose he had in writing—Matthew two, Mark three, Luke as many, John four—every one of them selecting from a far larger store of available witnesses. It is worth adding that Paul's epistle naming the five hundred was written, by Locke's calculation, around A.D. 57, and Matthew's Gospel some years earlier still, about A.D. 53; most of those five hundred witnesses, then, were certainly alive when Matthew wrote, and very possibly numbered among the very Jewish converts he was writing for—which is reason enough why he could safely rest so much weight on so brief a mention of them. On this same testimony Matthew rests his case, closing his Gospel with Christ's commission to teach all nations, and his promise to be with them always, even to the end of the world.

Mark's additional details are easily explained by his writing for Gentile converts unfamiliar with Jewish ways. The spices account for the women's early errand and show, from the apostles' own later unbelief, how little anyone expected the resurrection and so how unlikely it was preached except on full conviction of its truth. Salome is named simply because she was there; and the angel seen "sitting on the right side" within the tomb, though related only by Mark, is really implied by Matthew's own words, "Come, see the place where the Lord lay"—the Greek more exactly rendered "come hither"—which places the angel inside, not on the stone without.

It is worth pausing over why the angel should have appeared in two such different guises—terrible to the guards, gentle to the women. Reasoning from an event back to the design behind it is often unsafe in human affairs, but in the actions of a wise providence it is the surest kind of reasoning there is; and here the fitness of the means to the end is plain enough. The angel's descent served two purposes: to roll away the stone, so that all who came that day might freely enter, and to drive off the guard, who would certainly have refused the women and disciples entry had they remained at their post. A being who could cause an earthquake, move single-handed a stone so great that twenty men could scarcely have stirred it, and flash with a countenance like lightning amid the darkness, was fully equal to striking the terror into Roman soldiers that Matthew describes; and once that purpose was served, there was every reason to change the manner of proceeding. Had the angel remained outside in that same terrible form, he would as surely have frightened away the women and disciples as he had the soldiers, defeating the very visits he had come to make possible; the women, in fact, never saw any angel sitting on the stone, only two who were already seated quietly within the tomb by the time they arrived. It was fitting, then, that having done the

work requiring awe, the angel should set aside that terror and deliver his message in the gentler form of a young man—a change of appearance perfectly suited to its two distinct occasions.

Under the second heading, the two Evangelists agree closely: both have the women coming early on the first day of the week, and both put almost identical words in the angel's mouth, Mark only adding Peter's name. Mark's angel is seated within the tomb, which, far from contradicting Matthew, is implied by his words just noted; and the whiteness of the angel's robe in Mark matches the one detail about it Matthew does give, "his raiment was white as snow." Both, too, agree in describing the women's terror, their hurried flight, and their telling no one on the way—a silence that plainly lasted only as long as the fear that caused it, and vanished, as will appear, the moment Christ himself met them.

Under the third heading, only one real difficulty remains: the time of day. Matthew says the women came "as it began to dawn"; Mark, "at the rising of the sun"; John, "when it was yet dark." John and Matthew describe the same moment, the end of night and beginning of day; the question is how to reconcile this with Mark's sunrise. The answer is that Matthew and John speak of when the women set out, Mark of when they arrived—a reading the order of Matthew's own narrative requires, since otherwise his account of the earthquake and the angel's descent would have to be read as an awkward parenthesis, and the resurrection itself, the very event his whole account is meant to establish, would be left with no discoverable hour at all; whereas on this reading we know precisely that Christ rose between the dawning of the day and the rising of the sun. This is strengthened by a word both Mark and John use of the women's coming, usually translated merely "early" but carrying also the sense "too early," ahead of the time appointed (see Scapula's Lexicon)—otherwise redundant alongside "yet dark" and "at the rising of the sun." This suggests that the women, having agreed on the Sabbath eve to meet at the tomb soon after sunrise, did not all arrive together: Mary Magdalene and the other Mary, from eagerness or special devotion, set out while it was still dark merely "to see the sepulchre," were joined by Salome on the way, and so arrived too early, ahead of the rest. This also explains why so few came first, and why, finding themselves unable to move so great a stone (which the two Maries had seen Joseph of Arimathea place there, Mark 15:47), they asked one another, "Who shall roll us away the stone?"—words that show they expected to find no one there, and so knew nothing of the guard.

Luke's account, in his twenty-fourth chapter, reads:

> "*Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them. And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre. And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus.*

> *And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in shining garments: and as they were afraid, and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen: remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee, saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again. And they remembered his words, and returned from the sepulchre, and told all these things unto the eleven, and to all the rest. It was Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and other women that were with them, which told these things unto the apostles. And their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not. Then arose Peter, and ran unto the sepulchre; and stooping down, he beheld the linen clothes laid by themselves, and departed, wondering in himself at that which was come to pass.*"

Here the women see not one angel nor two but two men in shining garments; they fall into perplexity before seeing them; the men's words differ from those in Matthew and Mark; and Peter, on hearing the women's report, runs to the tomb a second time. These marks of difference have led both skeptic and Christian into the same mistake—the skeptic using them to charge contradiction, the Christian straining the text to force an identity that was never there—when the true answer is simply that these are different, not inconsistent, facts, each confirming rather than clashing with the rest.

I begin with Peter, since settling that point settles much else. Both John and Luke use a Greek word meaning to stoop and look in without entering (parakypsas), set against a different word meaning actually to go in (eiselthen); John applies "entered" to Peter and "stooped and looked" only to John himself, while Luke applies "stooped and looked" to Peter alone. Since these are plainly distinct actions when both are performed by the same apostle in John's account, they must be distinct occasions when the same wording is used of Peter in Luke's. Peter, then, went to the tomb twice, on two different occasions: first on Mary Magdalene's report that the body was gone, when, in great haste to check so alarming a story, he entered the tomb and saw the linen cloths and the napkin laid apart; and again on hearing Joanna tell of a vision of angels who had said Christ was risen—news that could hardly fail to stir a disciple of Peter's fervent, impulsive temperament to run there a second time, hoping for some confirmation of a report the rest dismissed as an idle tale. Knowing that any angels still there could be seen without his entering, he this time only stooped and looked, and departed wondering. This also disposes of the two objections raised against this verse of Luke's—that it disagrees with John, and that it disturbs the order of the chapter.

From Peter's two visits several things follow. First, that when he and John had returned from the tomb after Mary Magdalene's report, they had gathered the other apostles together to tell them what had happened—which

explains why, when Joanna's company arrived at the house, they found the apostles already assembled, and why Luke names Mary Magdalene among those who "told these things," since her report of the stone and the empty tomb had already reached the apostles through Peter and John before Joanna returned. Second, since two distinct visits imply two distinct reports, made at different times, it follows that the women who brought them had themselves been at the tomb at different times—confirming what I have already argued about the Maries arriving ahead of the rest.

This difference of time is matched by a difference of purpose. The two Maries and Salome came, as Matthew says, "to see the sepulchre"—to view it, not knowing what they would find, and so brought no spices and needed no great number of hands. Joanna and her company, by contrast, came to embalm the body, bringing the spices they had prepared, and were accompanied by other women—apparently women of Jerusalem, distinct from the Galilean women named earlier, who had followed Jesus to Calvary and now helped roll away the stone and apply the spices, a task for which the Maries, coming only to look, had made no such provision. Hence Matthew says nothing of spices, and Luke says nothing of the Maries asking who should roll away the stone.

A further subdivision then occurred within the first party. As the two Maries and Salome drew near and saw the stone already rolled away, Mary Magdalene concluded the body had been taken and ran at once, alone, to tell Peter and John, leaving her companions at the tomb—probably expecting Joanna's company to arrive soon and wishing word left for them. Whatever her exact reason, it was this leaving behind of the other Mary and Salome that produced two separate appearances of angels at the tomb, and in time two separate appearances of Christ himself, multiplying the independent witnesses to the resurrection rather than collapsing them into one.

The conversation of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus grew directly out of the angels' words to Joanna's company. The angels had said, "Remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee, saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again"—words echoing Christ's own earlier prediction to the Twelve: "Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished. For he shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on; and they shall scourge him, and put him to death: and the third day he shall rise again" (Luke 18:31–33). These two disciples, who had heard the angels' message before leaving Jerusalem, seem to have fallen into debate over it on the road, for when Jesus joined them unrecognized and asked the subject of their sadness, Cleopas answered by rehearsing exactly these points—the rulers' condemning Jesus to death, their own disappointed hope that he would redeem Israel, this being the third day, and the women's report of a vision of angels who said he was alive, confirmed

by others who found the tomb empty "but him they saw not." Their difficulty was not ignorance of the prophecies but reluctance to carry them to their proper conclusion; for this Christ rebuffed them—"O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken"—and, beginning at Moses, expounded in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself, revealing himself only afterward, in the breaking of bread, so that their coming assent to the evidence of their senses would follow, rather than precede, their reasoned conviction from Scripture. This same thread connects to what follows: the two disciples return to Jerusalem and find the apostles already saying, "The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared unto Simon," before Christ himself appears and reminds them again of his words that all things written of him in the law, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled.

The two appearances of Christ to the women—to Mary Magdalene alone at the tomb, and afterward to the other Mary and Salome on the way—likewise prove, on comparison, to be entirely distinct in place, persons, action, and words, the one looking forward to the ascension, the other to the meeting in Galilee, both afterward fulfilled though at first disbelieved as idle tales.

I have, I think, established the following points: that the women came to the tomb at different times and in different groups; that there were several distinct appearances of angels; that the angels appeared and disappeared as they saw fit; that these facts were reported to the apostles at different times by different women; that there were two distinct appearances of Christ to the women; and that Peter was at the tomb twice. Once granted, every charge of contradiction in this part of the Gospel history vanishes, the answer resting on nothing more than the plain, unforced sense of the Evangelists' own words, without straining either their particular expressions or the general construction of their several accounts. That very learned and able men have been troubled by these supposed contradictions is some excuse for those who first raised them, and for those who have lately pressed them again; but that they have now received so plain an answer is proof that they could always have been answered, and makes their having gone so long unanswered the greater surprise of the two.

A further observation, from a reader whose judgment I value, deserves mention. Since the women had agreed to meet early at the tomb, some naturally arrived before others; and since there was something at the tomb to frighten each party as it arrived, this explains both their scattering and the disorder in which their messages reached the apostles—the most frightened sometimes reporting last, though their news came first. The chief difficulty in holding these appearances distinct is that every Evangelist mentions Mary Magdalene. But three Evangelists, speaking of the women at the crucifixion, first describe them in general terms—"many women," or "the women which followed him from Galilee"—and only then single out Mary Magdalene and one or two others by name, as the leading figures of that company, much as

"the Eleven" is used to denote the apostles as a body. Luke follows exactly this pattern at the tomb: having spoken generally of "the women which came from Galilee," he names Mary Magdalene, Joanna, and Mary the mother of James only at the point of their report to the apostles, identifying afterward who the women were, rather than placing each of them at every event just described. This habit of naming a few leading figures for a larger company goes far to explain why Mary Magdalene recurs in connection with reports she did not personally help to bring. Mark, similarly, says only that the women he names had bought spices to anoint the body, not that every one of them carried spices to the tomb that morning; it was probably Joanna's party, familiar with Jerusalem and its customs, who actually prepared and carried them, perhaps with local help, which is why Matthew, describing the earlier, spice-less errand of the two Maries, says nothing of ointments at all.

Drawing all this together, the events of that morning may be set down in the order in which they appear to have occurred—noting first that Christ was crucified on a Friday, died about three in the afternoon, and was buried that evening before the Sabbath; and that toward the close of the Sabbath the chief priests obtained from Pilate a guard to watch the tomb, sealing the stone to prevent any claim that the disciples had stolen the body.

Very early on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary set out, while it was still dark, to view the tomb, in pursuance of their plan, agreed with the other Galilean women, to embalm the Lord's body. About that time there was a great earthquake, for the angel of the Lord descended, rolled back the stone, and sat upon it, his countenance like lightning and his raiment white as snow; and for fear of him the guards became as dead men, during which Christ came forth from the tomb. Once the guards had fled, the angel left the stone, entered the tomb, and there, in the gentler form of a young man, arranged the grave-clothes as they were afterward found. Meanwhile the two Maries, joined on the way by Salome, arrived at the tomb at sunrise, debating as they came who should roll away the stone for them, only to find, on lifting up their eyes, that it was already done. Mary Magdalene, concluding the body had been removed, ran at once to tell Peter and John, leaving Mary and Salome to wait for Joanna's company. These two, going on, entered the tomb and saw the angel sitting on the right side, who told them, "Be not affrighted: ye seek Jesus of Nazareth... he is risen; he is not here... go your way, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee." Trembling and amazed, they fled and, for the moment, told no one.

Peter and John then arrived on Mary Magdalene's report, running together, John outrunning Peter and stooping to look in without entering; Peter followed and went in, seeing the linen clothes and the napkin not lying with them but wrapped together in a place by itself; John then went in also, "and he saw, and believed," though as yet neither of them understood from Scripture that he must rise again from the dead. They then went home, but

Mary remained weeping outside, and stooping to look in saw two angels, who asked why she wept; turning, she saw Jesus himself, whom she first mistook for the gardener, until he spoke her name—"Mary"—and she answered, "Rabboni." He bade her not cling to him, but carry word to his brethren that he would ascend to his Father and theirs. Soon after, the other Mary and Salome, still shaken and silent, were met on their way by Jesus, who greeted them, "All hail," received their worship, and repeated his charge that the disciples should go into Galilee.

With these all gone, Joanna's company arrived, bringing the spices they had prepared, found the stone already rolled away, entered, and, not finding the body, fell into perplexity—until two men in shining garments stood by them and said, "Why seek ye the living among the dead?... Remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee." They returned and told the apostles, whose words "seemed to them as idle tales." But Peter, already uneasy from what he and John had seen within the tomb, ran a second time on hearing Joanna's report, and, stooping only to look, saw the linen clothes and departed, wondering.

That same day two disciples went to Emmaus, met the risen but unrecognized Christ on the road, heard him expound the Scriptures, and knew him at last in the breaking of bread; returning to Jerusalem, they found the Eleven already saying the Lord had appeared to Simon, and told in turn what had happened to them on the road.

This order clears the narrative of confusion and, by dividing the women into separate groups rather than bringing them all to the tomb at once, actually strengthens the proof of the resurrection: instead of one appearance each of angel and of Christ, we have a succession of independent witnesses, each confirming the rest—fitting evidence for a fact at once most astonishing in itself and of the utmost consequence to mankind. Such a multiplication of witnesses, arising naturally out of the ordinary and unremarkable fact that a group of women did not all arrive together, bears every mark of a providence directing even small, unplanned circumstances toward a great end, rather than of any contrivance on the part of the women or the Evangelists themselves. I will now try to show that no fact was ever more fully proved, considering in turn the manner in which the proofs were laid before the apostles, the substance of the evidence itself, and the character of those it was meant to convince.

The apostles and disciples were, almost without exception, men of humble birth and occupation, unlearned and unused to abstract reasoning, deeply possessed by the common Jewish prejudice that expected in the Messiah a temporal prince who would never die. Though convinced by Christ's miracles and the prophecies fulfilled in him that he was indeed the Messiah, they shared their nation's mistaken idea of what the Messiah must be, and could not shake this false expectation even after his resurrection, asking him still

whether he would now restore the kingdom to Israel. Christ had, indeed, repeatedly foretold his own sufferings, death, and rising again, and had tried as often to correct their thinking; but the apostles themselves afterward confessed that they had not understood those predictions until long after the events had fulfilled them—a confession made at a time when they had every reason to feel, and be ashamed of, their own former dullness, which is reason enough to trust their honesty on the point. Since immortality and worldly dominion were, in their minds, the defining marks of the Messiah, his sufferings and death, then, must have seemed to them proof that he was not the Messiah after all, leaving them in perplexity, despair, and terror—unable to reconcile his miraculous life and holiness with so shameful an end, their hopes of a deliverer buried with him, and fearing for themselves from his now-triumphant enemies. This same fear had already made them desert him at his arrest, and made Peter, the boldest of them, deny him three times with oaths and curses; it would soon make the whole company shut themselves behind locked doors for fear of the Jews. It was minds in this disordered state that the evidence of the resurrection had to reach, and reach gently, by degrees.

The first alarm came from Mary Magdalene's report that the body was gone. Who could have taken it, and why? Not friends, who would surely have let the others know; not the Jews, who had no business with it; not Pilate, to whom alone its disposal belonged, and who had only two days before granted it to be buried where it lay. Nor could it have been moved in order to be buried elsewhere, for in that case the winding-sheet and the spices would hardly have been left behind; and whoever did move it must have done so by night, in secret, and yet—since the grave-clothes were found not scattered but folded and laid apart, each in its own place—with a care and deliberation that haste can scarcely account for. Such reflections, with the memory of a life and death already full of wonders, were enough to perplex Peter and John without yet convincing them, and they went home still not understanding "that he must rise again from the dead." Next came Joanna's report of angels who had said Christ was risen and had recalled his own prediction of it; this resolved the mystery of the empty tomb, and matched what they had already seen fulfilled in his sufferings and death, yet left them uncertain what "risen" could mean, since no one had yet seen him—for if, as Enoch and Elijah had been, he was simply taken up into heaven, that was scant hope of ever seeing him walk among them again as their promised king. Then came Mary Magdalene's own report that she had seen the Lord himself, who had told her he had not yet ascended to his Father—words recalling another promise of his, and raising hope that they too might see him—though her having at first mistaken him for the gardener, and his telling her not to touch him, left room for doubt. This doubt the report of the other Mary and Salome went far toward removing, for Christ had let them hold him by the feet, tangible proof against the idea of a mere apparition, and had named a place, Galilee, where the apostles themselves would see him; yet, not having seen him themselves, they still set this down, with the rest, as an idle tale.

All this evidence had come crowded into a single morning, time enough to overwhelm minds already so disturbed, but not yet to settle them into the calm reflection needed to search the Scriptures for themselves. To help them to it, Christ appeared that same day, still unrecognized, to the two disciples going to Emmaus, and led them by reason rather than by sight—rebuking their slowness to believe the prophets, then expounding Moses and all the prophets concerning himself—before revealing himself in the breaking of bread. There seems to have been something distinctive in the manner of this action, and perhaps in the very words of thanksgiving he used, since both Luke and the two disciples themselves, retelling it afterward to the apostles, single it out as the moment of recognition; and if, as seems likely, it recalled the form of words Christ had used at the Last Supper in remembrance of his own death, nothing could have been better suited to call him to their minds at the very instant he chose to reveal himself. Returning to Jerusalem, they found the apostles already declaring that the Lord had appeared to Simon—a report evidently given more weight than any of the women's—yet when, soon after, Jesus himself stood among them saying, "Peace be unto you," "they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit." Here lay the real nature of their unbelief: not doubt that Christ was risen, but doubt that this was truly his body and not a ghost—the very point on which Mark says they had not believed those who had seen him, and which Christ now addressed directly: "Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have." When even this, "for joy," did not wholly settle them, he ate before them, removing the last shadow of doubt, and then once more opened their understanding in the Scriptures, that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, "and ye are witnesses of these things."

Having given every kind of evidence needed, Christ withheld himself for eight days. This interval, far from being a gap in the proof, was itself part of its method: a group of unlearned men, still agitated and only beginning to search the prophets for themselves, needed time, undistracted by some fresh appearance, to compare what they had seen and heard, and to settle into the sober conviction that was to be the ground of their future preaching. Only after this pause did he return to satisfy the one doubt remaining, that of Thomas, who had not been present and had declared, "Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe." Eight days later Jesus again stood among them, the doors being shut, and said to Thomas, "Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing." Thomas answered, "My Lord and my God," and Jesus said to him, "Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."

From this point no doubt seems to have remained among the apostles, though Christ continued to appear to them for forty days, "speaking of the

things pertaining to the kingdom of God." The apostles were to serve both as witnesses of these facts and as teachers of the doctrine built upon them; and while the first office required a close, detailed record of exactly how they came to know what they testified, the second needed only that their hearers trust the gifts of the Spirit as proof of their commission. So of these later appearances, meant now less for their conviction than for their instruction, only a few are recorded—among them the meeting in Galilee, long foretold, where "they worshipped him: but some doubted," and the ascension itself, fulfilling his promise to go to his Father: he charged them to wait at Jerusalem for the promise of the Father, and "while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight," while two men in white told the watching apostles, "This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." The promised Comforter followed at Pentecost, when the sound of a rushing mighty wind filled the house, and tongues of fire sat upon each of them, so that devout men from every nation heard them, each in his own tongue, speaking the wonderful works of God; and the promised power to work miracles followed too, so abundantly that even the shadow of Peter passing by was thought able to heal the sick laid in the streets.

Here, then, is the method of the proof. Christ required of his apostles not a blind but a reasonable and well-grounded faith, and he pursued exactly the means fitted to produce it. Instead of overwhelming their reason by revealing himself at once in full splendor, he let the truth dawn on them by degrees, so that they might be able to bear, examine, and know for certain the full brightness of the Sun of Righteousness risen from the grave. And in submitting himself, as he did, to the scrutiny of their own senses and directing them constantly back to the Scriptures, he waived all claim to mere authority, and required them, in the strongest possible way, to exercise their own reason on the evidence set before them—strengthening their faculties meanwhile by his Spirit, and giving them time and repeated occasion to examine what was set before them. Evidence was never more fairly offered, nor an inquiry conducted by a more reasonable method, nor were there, perhaps, ever facts better able to bear such an inquiry. I now turn to the facts themselves on which that evidence rested, which fall under three heads: the appearances of angels, the appearances of Christ to the women, and his appearances to the apostles.

The angels seen at the tomb that morning were several and distinct, appearing to different persons: to the Roman soldiers; to the other Mary and Salome; to Mary Magdalene; and to Joanna's company. The angel seen by the soldiers came clothed in terror, his face like lightning, his robe white as snow, his strength such that he alone rolled away a stone so great that, by Beza's reading of Luke, twenty men could scarcely have moved it. His purpose was plainly twofold: to frighten off the guard, and to open the tomb, so that all who came that day—apostles, women, and curious Jews alike—might freely examine it and see the body gone. That the tomb would otherwise likely have

remained sealed and guarded until well after the third day shows how necessary this was; and the examination it allowed, though not by itself conclusive proof of the resurrection, was admirably suited to prepare the minds of apostles and bystanders alike for the fuller proofs soon to follow. For it is not to be supposed that only the disciples visited the tomb that day: the soldiers' own story, in its two contradictory versions, must quickly have spread through Jerusalem, and mere curiosity would have drawn numbers of the Jews to see for themselves a sealed, guarded tomb cut from solid rock standing open, and to judge for themselves how likely it was that a few timid disciples could have overpowered a Roman watch and carried off the body undetected. Nor could the miracle itself be any objection among a people whose own Scriptures were full of the wonders God had wrought for Israel, who expected a wonder-working Messiah, and who had already seen miracles enough performed by Jesus and his disciples. Some modern philosophers have claimed to show, by reason alone, that miracles are simply impossible; but until that bold claim is actually made good, it is fair to insist that the miracle here can be no objection to the fact, and that in this particular case it was not merely unobjectionable but fitting, even necessary. Jesus had, only two days before, been put to death by the rulers of the Jews as a blasphemer and an impostor, one who, they said, cast out devils by the prince of devils. His tomb was set under armed guard for the declared purpose of stopping his disciples from pretending he had risen as he foretold. In such circumstances, some open testimony from heaven—visible proof that God had not abandoned the one the rulers had condemned, but had worked with him even in his death and burial—was exactly what the occasion called for, an unanswerable reply to the charge that he was an impostor and a blasphemer.

What has been said of the fitness of an angel's appearing to the soldiers applies equally to his appearing to the women, and settles the question of whether such appearances are credible in principle; the only matter left to examine is the internal evidence each vision carries of its own reality, as against the two alternatives sometimes urged—that these were mere illusions bred of fear and superstition, or outright inventions. The charge of contradiction between the Evangelists has already been answered above; the further suggestion, that the visions themselves were illusions, has, as far as I can discover, never actually been argued, only asserted, and I leave it to those who wish to maintain it to make it good. For my part I will set down a few observations tending the other way, beginning with the vision seen by Mary and Salome. That this was no trick of a disturbed imagination appears, first, because nothing in their circumstances suggests minds already prone to see apparitions: they came expecting to find a dead body to embalm, calmly discussing the task along the way, and so plainly believed neither that Christ was risen nor that he would rise. Had the angel been their own invention, they would hardly have put into his mouth words flatly contradicting the errand they had just set out on. The supposed illusion, too, would have had to deceive both sight and hearing at once, in exact agreement between two people—a

thing no ordinary dream or delirium produces. And the angel's message itself, referring back to a specific prediction of Christ's they show no other sign of recalling, and naming a particular place and promise of his future appearance, contains too much order, consistency, and forward reference to have been composed, on the spot, by two frightened women not yet persuaded that their Master was alive at all.

It may be urged that John himself, on far slighter grounds—an empty tomb and folded grave-clothes—came to believe Christ was risen, and that the women might just as naturally and suddenly have persuaded themselves of the same thing. But John was in a far calmer state to weigh that evidence than were these women. He had time, on his way to the tomb, to turn over in his mind his Master's own predictions; he examined the tomb deliberately, with Peter, before concluding anything; and he then went quietly home. The women, by contrast, are described as falling into the height of terror and confusion the moment they entered the tomb, and remaining so until Christ himself met them on the road. Minds in such disorder are not credibly supposed capable of first reasoning their way, unaided, to a settled conviction that their Master was risen and would appear again in Galilee, and then, the very next moment, imagining a messenger who happens to confirm that conclusion point for point. Nor will it do to call this terror a mere baseless panic, for that only puts a name to the difficulty instead of answering it. It is worth adding, too, that the angel's speech to them contains some ten distinct points in all—bidding them not to fear; telling them whom they sought; that he was risen; that he was not there; inviting them to see the place where he had lain; charging them to tell his disciples, and Peter by name; that he went before them into Galilee; that there they should see him; and reminding them that he had said as much beforehand. That a speech so ordered, so consistent, and reaching so far beyond anything these women are shown to have expected, should be the invention of their own fright is harder to credit than the plain report that they heard it from another.

The vision seen first by Mary and Salome was of one angel; the one Mary Magdalene saw soon after was of two, as was the one reported by Joanna's company—though neither Peter nor John, examining the tomb with care only moments before, had seen any angel at all, a fact which itself confirms what has already been observed, that these heavenly messengers appeared and withdrew as they, not the beholders, saw fit. And just as the number of the angels and the manner of their appearing differed from one vision to the next, so too did the words spoken to... Mary and Salome were seized with fear, and fled from the sepulchre in the utmost terror and amazement. Joanna, and those with her, bowed their faces to the earth in awe. But Mary Magdalene was so absorbed in grief at not finding the body of the Lord that she took little notice of so extraordinary an appearance: she sees, hears, and answers the angels without emotion, and without turning her mind from the one object that filled it, until she was roused by the well-known voice of her Master calling her by name. Could this, then, have been illusion? Could a mind so

fixed on one idea attend at the same time to the production of so many other images, or be strong enough to conjure angels and yet too weak to be moved by them?

Real angels she might see and hear without regarding them; but apparitions of her own fancy could not have failed to engage her notice. For though we cannot help perceiving what our senses present to us, it is generally in our power to give those impressions whatever attention we choose, so that when the mind is absorbed in some thought or passion, it takes no notice of a great many things which the senses nevertheless convey to it. But the images that arise from within, from the working of the mind itself, we cannot help attending to, since we are ourselves active in producing them, and since they can exist no longer than while we attend to them; of this kind are all the phantoms of waking or sleeping dreams, of ecstasy and delirium. The mind cannot apply itself to more than one object at a time, and whichever holds possession of it excludes or obscures the rest.

Mary Magdalene, then, convinced upon finding the stone rolled away that someone had removed the body, and confirmed in this by her fruitless errand with Peter and John, grieved to think her Master's body might have fallen into the hands of his enemies, or at least been deprived of the last offices his followers were preparing for it. Lost in this distress, and looking with tear-filled eyes, as it were by accident, into the sepulchre, she might see the angels there and yet give them little heed, taking them perhaps for two young men without pausing to ask how they could have been there unseen by Peter and John. Intent on what was passing in her own heart, she did not even recognize Christ himself when he appeared to her in the same hidden manner, but, supposing him the gardener, asked him where he had laid the body. From this question, and from her answer to the angels just before, we see how wholly her thoughts were elsewhere — and from this we may conclude that the angels were not creatures of her imagination, since plainly they were not the objects of her attention. The appearance, therefore, was real.

If each appearance of the angels, examined separately, carries marks of reality, considering them together sets the point in a stronger light still. The number, variety, and nature of these visions, seen as they were by different persons at different times, make it incredible, in the natural course of things, that there was here either illusion or imposture. Illusions affecting whole groups of people are not unknown, for nothing is more contagious than superstition; but in every such case it is one person's fancy or artifice that gives birth to the phantom, which then works upon minds already disposed to it by enthusiasm or credulity. Nothing of this kind can be supposed here. The women who separately saw these visions had no communication with one another while they occurred: Mary and Salome had already fled before Mary Magdalene returned, and she had left again before Joanna and her company arrived. Nor were their minds disposed beforehand to expect a resurrection — they came only to finish embalming their dead Master's body, and on not

finding it, their natural thought, like Mary Magdalene's, was that someone had removed it; Luke tells us plainly that Joanna and those with her were much perplexed about it, which they would not have been had they believed him already risen.

Nor were these appearances the work of imposture. Without even asking who could have contrived such a fraud or to what end, the circumstances of the several appearances are themselves proof of a power beyond the human: the earthquake at the first angel's descent; his countenance, like lightning; the strength that single-handedly rolled away a stone sealing the tomb; and, common to all the angels, the power to appear and disappear at will. These were marks of an agent whose abilities went far beyond anything the most ingenious practitioner of natural magic could produce.

I come now to the appearances of Christ himself to the women — first to Mary Magdalene, then to the other Mary and Salome. Since the angels have already been shown real, and since they themselves affirmed that Christ was risen, his appearing afterward is already freed from the chief difficulty, which lay in his breaking loose from the bonds of death; still, before admitting every such appearance, it is reasonable to ask some further proof, though not so much as would be needed had no such prior testimony been given. It might be suggested that the women's own belief in the resurrection, joined to the disorder and amazement they were under, made it too easy for them to mistake a mere phantom of imagination for their risen Lord. Let us see, then, what the history itself gives us to answer that suspicion.

They had the testimony of sight, hearing, and touch: by the first two, the voice and countenance of their Lord could be recognized, and by the third they could know that what they saw was no spectre but a body of flesh and bone. This last proof was withheld from Mary Magdalene, since Christ forbade her to touch him; yet enough remains in the circumstances of that appearance to show it was indeed Christ. He had stood by her, and spoken, before she knew him — she took him, in fact, for the gardener — which shows the vision was none of her own making, for had her mind been free to raise apparitions it would hardly have conjured a stranger she had probably never seen before. Then he called her by her name; she knew his voice at once, turned, and answered him, Rabboni — my Master — offering, as his next words show, to embrace him.

Those next words — Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God — are themselves a clear proof of who spoke them, once we recall the long discourse Christ had given his disciples on the night of his betrayal, in John chapters fourteen through sixteen. There he had told them he would leave them "a little while," and then, after "a little while," they would see him again, because, he said, "I go to my Father" — meaning, as he explained, his final departure out of this world. And lest they

despair at being so forsaken, he had promised to send them a Comforter, who would teach them all things, guide them into all truth, and turn their sorrow into a joy no one could take from them.

These had been great promises, which none but Christ himself could make good; so that when the disciples came to weigh the words spoken through Mary Magdalene, they could conclude nothing else but that it was their Master who had spoken them. For just as "I ascend to my Father" recalled those promises due after his ascension, so "I am not yet ascended" gave them reason to expect, before that ascension, the fulfillment of his other promise — to come to them again. I take his forbidding Mary Magdalene to touch him, then, to be of a piece with that promise: as when one friend says to another, "Do not say goodbye yet, for I am not leaving yet," meaning that he intends to be seen again before he sets out.

This reading is confirmed, I think, by the fact that Christ, having singled out Mary Magdalene for the honor of seeing him first, cannot be supposed at the same moment to have slighted her by refusing an embrace he granted soon after to the other Mary and Salome — unless "touch me not" meant only a postponement to a fitter time, in which case it carries no rebuke at all, but rather a gracious promise of meeting again, matching exactly the message he sent by her to the rest. Other explanations — that she was forbidden because his risen body was of some spiritual nature not perceptible to touch — founder on that same fact of his allowing the other women to hold him by the feet.

Why he allowed the latter women what he withheld from Mary Magdalene is explained by the difference of their case. These women, St. Mark tells us, were so seized with terror at the angel's appearance that, running to tell the disciples as they had been commanded, "neither said they any thing to any man; for they were afraid." So that the angel's testimony, and his promise that the disciples would see their Master in Galilee, might not be lost through the women's terror, or through a suspicion that the whole had been illusion, Christ himself appeared to them, greeted them, All hail, let them come near and hold him by the feet and worship him, and bade them carry his command to the disciples to go into Galilee, where they would see him. Every word, and the embrace besides, was suited to banish their terror and leave no room for doubt. Mary Magdalene, by contrast, suffered from grief alone, which was dispelled the moment she heard her name and knew his voice; she needed, and so was given, no further proof. Terror, the most unpredictable of the passions, required instead to be calmed gradually, and given leave to grow accustomed to him and to seek, in its own time, whatever further assurance it needed. After so intimate a token of his favor as this embrace, and so tangible a proof that he was really and bodily risen, there could be no room left in their minds for doubt or fear: conviction, certainty, and joy must have banished those uneasy feelings from their hearts forever. Christ's different conduct on

these two occasions, then, was owing simply to the different conditions of mind he found in each, to which it was most wisely suited.

I think, besides, that Christ intended a further meaning in these same words. The expression "I ascend to my Father" was meant to recall that same discourse of three nights before, much of which the disciples confessed they had not understood — including the sayings "a little while, and ye shall not see me" and "again, a little while, and ye shall see me." Christ left these to be explained by the events themselves. His betrayal, desertion, and death explained the first; and once he was crucified and buried, the disciples could be in no doubt that the "little while" of not seeing him was fulfilled. But of the second saying — the little while in which they should see him again — they had so poor a notion that, when he actually appeared to them, they imagined they saw a spirit, even though they had just before confessed their belief that he was risen and had appeared to Simon. Plainly, resurrection of the body formed no part of their idea of rising from the dead. To correct this, Christ, speaking through Mary Magdalene, used words implying that he was really, that is bodily, risen: he had not yet ascended, but would.

The force of this lies in the distinction between dying and finally leaving the world. The disciples knew their Master had died, and might easily have supposed that his "going to the Father" was accomplished in that death, so that his promised "coming to them again" meant nothing more than the sort of apparition commonly reported of the dead. Against this error Christ's words guard plainly: he had died, and for a time left the world, as he had foretold; but he was now risen, returned into the world, and would not finally leave it until he ascended. His appearing to Mary Magdalene was proof of that return — but could be no such proof if what she saw were a mere spirit, since the spirits of the dead are supposed to appear, on the common opinion, without their having thereby remained in the world in any sense. When Christ called Lazarus from the grave, had only his spirit been recalled and his body left to perish, Lazarus would still rightly be counted dead, however often his spirit were afterward seen. If, then, Christ had indeed risen, as the angels said; if he had not yet finally departed, as his own words declared; and if his appearing was proof of both — then he who appeared to Mary Magdalene was no spirit, but Christ himself, in the body.

One further point deserves notice: the change of the verb from "go" to his Father, as he had said in his earlier discourse, to "ascend," as he now told Mary Magdalene to report. By this more particular word I think he meant to mark out the manner, and so indirectly the moment, of his final departure, so that his disciples, who would otherwise have had no sign by which to distinguish his last visit from the merely temporary ones that came between, should not be left waiting forever for a Master already gone, nor caught unprepared when he finally went. And when, forty days later, they saw him taken up and received out of their sight by a cloud, they could not but recognize the very event foretold so long before through Mary Magdalene,

and so could no longer doubt that it was Christ, and no other, who had spoken those words to her.

In all, then, these few words contain three things: a renewal, pledged by his forbidding her embrace, of his promise to come again before his final departure; a plain declaration, proven by his bodily appearing, that he was really risen; and a prophecy of the manner of that final departure, by ascension. From these three it was impossible for the disciples, once they came to weigh them — especially after they had themselves handled his body, and after they had seen him ascend exactly as foretold — to conclude anything but that it was Christ himself who had appeared to Mary Magdalene. The alternatives are blasphemous, absurd, or, in her case, wildly improbable: that she should have fabricated, with no benefit to herself, a story resting on events like the ascension which lay wholly beyond any natural power to arrange. The same answer disposes of any like suggestion concerning the appearance to the other Mary and Salome.

Of the many appearances of Christ during the forty days after his passion, the sacred writers recorded only a few, judging them sufficient to prove the resurrection; and whoever examines the nature and variety of evidence even in these few will find that the witnesses appointed to the resurrection had every kind of proof that the most scrupulous could demand or the most skeptical imagine.

The first of these is related in detail by Luke: "And behold, two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus… And it came to pass, that, while they communed together and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them. But their eyes were holden that they should not know him… And he said unto them, What manner of communications are these… Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word… But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel… Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself… And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight. And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures? And they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem… saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon."

Two objections are made against this account: first, that the disciples did not know Jesus during their whole walk and meal with him; second, that once their eyes were opened, he vanished too quickly for them to settle the doubts such an experience must raise. To the first, the Evangelist himself gives the answer: their eyes were holden, that they should not know him — a

proceeding no more unworthy of the power and wisdom of God than it was fitting, since by it Christ could, through the plain light of reason and Scripture alone, first remove the strong delusion that kept them from understanding the prophecies of his suffering, before disclosing himself to their bodily sight as well. He threw a mist before their bodily eyes so that he might, by the pure and unprejudiced light of reason alone, first remove from their inward sight that strong delusion which kept their understanding from grasping the meaning of the types and prophecies by which his sufferings, death, and resurrection had been foreshown. He disguised his person but opened the Scriptures, stripping away the false glosses the scribes and Pharisees had laid over them, until their hearts burned within them; and only then did he reveal himself, leaving them convinced both by Scripture and by their own senses that he was risen.

As to the second objection, it is plain, first, that the disciples had no doubt the person who had joined them and opened the Scriptures was the very one they recognized, on the breaking of bread, as Jesus; second, that in recognizing him they became aware of some change, either in him or in themselves, which let them see the mistake they had been under; and third, that this change appeared to them supernatural, as both the opening of their eyes and his vanishing imply. Since it was plain to them that this person, recognized by his very countenance to be Jesus, possessed powers beyond any ordinary man, they could not conclude him to be anyone but Jesus himself — unless they were willing to suppose, blasphemously, that God allowed some spirit to assume the person of his Son to lend credit to a lie. This was the less possible since, on the road, he had just shown them from Moses and all the prophets that Christ was to suffer, die, and rise again; and it is likely, from their saying their hearts burned within them, that they had already marked in his manner that same note of authority which had always set him apart from the ordinary teachers of Israel. I will add only, with Grotius, that since it was the Jewish custom for the host, or most honored guest, to bless and break the bread himself, Christ's doing so declared him to be something more than the stranger they had taken him for, and so prepared the way for the disclosure that followed. On any reckoning, then, these two disciples had ample reason to be assured that it was Christ himself who had walked, talked, and eaten with them, and so that he was risen indeed, exactly as the angels had told the women that same morning.

The next appearance — to which all those already mentioned were preparatory — was to the Eleven and those with them, that same evening. Three Evangelists relate it, each with details the others omit; I draw them together here. That evening, the doors being shut for fear of the Jews, as the disciples sat at meat, just after the two from Emmaus had told their story, "came Jesus and stood in the midst, and said unto them, Peace be unto you. But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit." And he, upbraiding them for their unbelief, said, "Why are ye troubled?... Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and

see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have. And when he had thus spoken, he shewed them his hands and his feet... And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here any meat? And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb; and he took it, and did eat before them... These are the words which I spake unto you while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me... Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day — and ye are witnesses of these things."

To this I add his appearance to Thomas, who was absent that first evening, and who declared he would not believe except he saw in Christ's hands the print of the nails, and put his finger into the print of the nails, and thrust his hand into his side. Eight days later, the doors again being shut, Jesus stood among them and said, "Peace be unto you." Then to Thomas: "Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing." And Thomas answered, "My Lord and my God." Jesus said unto him, "Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."

The proofs exhibited here fall under four heads: the testimony of those who had already seen him risen, including Simon and the two from Emmaus; the evidence of the disciples' own senses — sight, hearing, touch, and his eating before them of food they themselves had given him; the exact fulfillment of what he had foretold them while still with them; and the fulfillment of everything written of him in the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms.

On the second of these — the evidence of the senses — a difficulty has been raised from St. John's words, Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, which some would-be philosophers take to mean that Jesus passed bodily through the shut doors without any change to either his body or theirs — contrary, they say, to all the laws of nature — and from this conclude that his body was therefore not material at all, and so could not really have been felt by Thomas, so that the whole story collapses into absurdity. I deny that these words carry any such meaning. They do imply that his entrance was miraculous, but not that it involved an outright contradiction. Had St. John meant anything less than a miraculous entrance, he would hardly have troubled twice to mention the shut doors. It is true that a denial without proof is itself a sufficient answer to an assertion made without proof, but I will give my reasons nonetheless. It required no great depth of philosophy to understand that it is impossible, even for omnipotence, to cause a man's body to pass through a wall or a door without causing some change or alteration in the one or the other; and neither can we suppose that John — who elsewhere insists on the plain materiality of Christ's body, felt and examined by Thomas — meant at the same stroke to imply that this body was a spiritual one incapable of being felt at all; no sane writer contradicts himself so directly,

and no interpretation that does so to him should be preferred. Indeed, by the same reasoning that would prove Christ's body spiritual because it passed through shut doors, one might as well prove the doors themselves spiritual, since it is just as contrary to the laws of nature for a material door to be passed through as for a material body to pass through it.

Granting, then, that the manner of his entrance was miraculous, I maintain that this miracle, far from casting any doubt on what the disciples' senses reported of his body afterward, in fact confirmed it. The disciples had already seen Christ, before his passion, override the laws of nature in every kind — healing, raising the dead, commanding winds and seas — by which they had rightly concluded that he came from God; his doing so again after his resurrection was therefore one more mark of his identity, not a reason to distrust him. When, supposing they saw a spirit, he told them plainly that a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have, and bade them handle him accordingly, he was appealing directly to their senses as the proper judges of the matter — an appeal which would have been both mockery and fraud had his body in truth been imperceptible to touch, and which it would have been wholly beneath the character of one who came from the God of truth to have made. And if it be asked why, having power to deceive their senses, he did not use it, the answer is plain: having power instead to enter bodily through shut doors, he had no need of the other, and far less reason to choose a course inconsistent with his whole purpose in appearing to them, which was precisely to convince them, by the plain evidence of sense, that he was bodily risen. The disciples, then, who already knew by many proofs that God was with him, had no more reason to distrust their senses here than on the earlier occasion when, seeing him walk on the water and likewise supposing him a spirit, they had been corrected by the very same kind of proof. They were plain men, strangers to idle speculation, who trusted their senses as all men do, and they had every reason now to trust them most of all, commanded as they were by one whose knowledge and power reached into the very hearts and secret reasonings of those who stood before him.

The third kind of evidence is the exact fulfillment of what Christ himself had foretold of his sufferings, death, and resurrection — a correspondence best seen by setting the predictions beside the events.

His sufferings began with the treachery of Judas, who for thirty pieces of silver guided the chief priests' band to the garden and betrayed him with a kiss. This Christ had foretold, at first obscurely — "Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil" — then plainly at the Last Supper: "One of you shall betray me"; and when asked who, "He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me" — until at last, in answer to John's question on the other disciples' behalf, he named the very man by giving him a sop, having first applied to himself the words of the Psalm, "He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me," adding, "Now I tell you before it come, that when it is come to pass ye may believe that I am he."

Next came the desertion of the disciples, foretold only hours before it happened, at the very moment of their confident profession of faith: "All ye shall be offended because of me this night... for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad." Then Peter's threefold denial, foretold in these precise terms — "This day, even this night, before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice" — with the nature, timing, and number of his offense exactly defined beforehand, and his swift and sincere repentance likewise foreshown: "I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren."

Christ had foretold too that he would be delivered to the chief priests and by them to Pilate, to be mocked, scourged, spit upon, and crucified by the Gentiles — all of which came to pass exactly, down to the mockery of the soldiers who platted a crown of thorns and bowed the knee before him, crying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" Of his death itself I will note only one proof not often remarked: when the soldiers came to break the legs of those crucified with him, "they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs: but one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came thereout blood and water; and he that saw it bare record." As Beza observes, the flowing of water from the wound shows the spear had pierced the pericardium, an injury fatal of itself — proof, against those who might later claim he was taken down alive, that he was truly dead before his burial.

Of his rising on the third day — precisely, neither sooner nor later — there is a further proof worth noting, drawn from his very enemies. The chief priests and Pharisees came to Pilate the day after the burial, which was itself the Sabbath, asking for a guard to be set until the third day, lest the disciples should steal the body and falsely claim a resurrection. That such scrupulous men would profane the Sabbath by this errand at all shows how pressing they felt the need to be; and since no urgency existed until the third day — set by Christ's own prophecy — was about to begin, it follows that the day they went was the second day, the next the third, exactly as the Gospel records, and that, on their own reckoning, Christ was not risen before it. This also answers the common objection raised over the phrases three days and three nights and after three days: for the same men who used this reckoning hurried to secure the tomb from that very evening, understanding it, as all the Jews did, to mean simply in three days — a phrase about which they would have felt no such urgency had they read it with the strict literalness that would require two full days and nights still to come.

The fourth kind of evidence Christ appealed to was the testimony of Scripture, which contains not only the promise of a Messiah but the marks by which he was to be known — marks so numerous, and seemingly so hard to reconcile with one another, that the Jews, fixed on the glorious and triumphant side of the prophecies, largely overlooked what was foretold of his sufferings and death, though these are set out there just as plainly. To trace

this out, I begin with the first prophecy ever given to man, in Genesis: "And I will put enmity between thee, the serpent, and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed. It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."

On this the present Bishop of Salisbury has written so well that I will borrow his main point rather than my own words. Our first parents, he observes, stood condemned before God, having forfeited all claim to happiness; and had they been left there with nothing more than a bare sentence of toil, sorrow, and death, no religion grounded on hope could ever have taken root in the world, for a sense of religion without hope is nothing but a state of frenzy and despair. This prophecy, then, however obscure, was given expressly to furnish that hope: by its telling them that the serpent, who had conquered them, had not conquered their Maker, and that they themselves would yet contend with him and prevail. Taken in the strictest literal sense — as a bare prediction that serpents would sometimes bite men on the heel, and men sometimes crush serpents underfoot — the words would be absurd in such a scene of judgment, and could have been no comfort at all to our first parents in their distress; so that they must instead have understood the sentence in the only sense the circumstances allow, namely that they and their descendants would, through a return to righteousness, recover victory over him who had subdued them through sin. This language, however figurative, carried a plain enough meaning to its first hearers, that righteousness recovered would bring back what sin had lost. It could convey no more than this to Adam and Eve themselves; but, as the Bishop goes on, "the argument from prophecy is not to be framed in this way, that all the ancient prophecies expressly pointed to and described Christ Jesus; it must rather be framed thus, that all the notices which God gave to the fathers concerning his intended salvation are perfectly answered by the coming of Christ" — so that the very obscurity which left room for so much more to be found in the words, once the event itself had come, is no objection at all, but exactly suited to the wisdom of a God who declares the end from the beginning.

In all the books of Moses I find no further prophecy of Christ's death; I turn next, as our Savior himself did, to the Prophets — first to Isaiah, whose application to the Messiah even the sternest enemies of the gospel have not denied: "Who hath believed our report?... He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief... Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray... and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth... for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken. And he made his grave with the wicked, and with

the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth… he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors" (Isaiah 53).

So exactly was this fulfilled that the later rabbis, to escape its force, invented a fable of two Messiahs, one to suffer and one to reign; but Bishop Pearson has shown this distinction both false and, even if allowed, still fatal to the Jewish cause, since it concedes that a suffering Messiah was foretold at all, and that the ancient rabbis themselves read this very chapter as describing one Messiah only. Pearson goes on to compare the particular predictions with the particular events: Zechariah's thirty pieces of silver with the price paid to Judas; Isaiah's and David's "they pierced my hands and my feet" with the print of the nails shown to Thomas; the Psalmist's "they shall look upon me whom they have pierced"; the mockery foretold — "he trusted in the Lord that he would deliver him" — with the very words of the priests at the cross; the cry "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me" with Christ's own words from the cross; the vinegar given him to drink in fulfillment of "in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink"; and the parting of his garments and the casting of lots for his coat, foretold in the Psalm, "they part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture." Let the Prophets further teach that he would be brought like a lamb to the slaughter, and cut off out of the land of the living, and you will find all the Evangelists declaring how like a lamb he suffered, and even his own enemies acknowledging that he was indeed cut off — every one of these predictions fulfilled, Pearson shows, to the letter.

That his burial too was foretold appears from the same chapter of Isaiah: he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death — a prophecy fulfilled in a way remarkable enough to deserve notice. Since the power of life and death lay with Rome, the Jewish rulers had to beg Pilate's leave not only to put Jesus to death but to take down the bodies before the Sabbath, as the law of Moses expressly required: "If a man have committed a sin worthy of death, and he be put to death, and thou hang him on a tree, his body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt in any wise bury him that day, that thy land be not defiled" (Deuteronomy 21:22–23). Among the Romans, for whom crucifixion was the usual punishment of slaves and criminals, it was customary to leave the body hanging until it decayed or was devoured; but on a friend's petition, leave to bury was seldom refused, and so Pilate's permission was readily granted, and Joseph of Arimathea obtained leave to bury that of Jesus. The place of execution, Golgotha, "a place of a skull," was most likely itself a common burying-ground for such criminals, and since the Jews were pressed for time before the beginning of that high Sabbath — the hour of the Passover slaying already begun before Jesus even died — it is overwhelmingly likely that the two thieves were buried at or near that same place, exactly as the wicked. But here the distinction foretold so long before took effect: for Joseph of Arimathea, "a rich man and an honorable counselor," together with Nicodemus, wrapped his body in a mixture of myrrh

and aloes and laid it in Joseph's own new tomb, hewn out of rock — so that Christ, though numbered with the wicked in the place and manner of his burial, was yet, in its particulars, buried like the rich, exactly as Isaiah had said.

The resurrection itself was foretold by David, as Peter explains in his sermon at Pentecost: "For David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face... because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption... Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day... he seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption" (Acts 2:25–31). Peter's reasoning was so convincing that three thousand souls were added to the church that very day: since these words cannot possibly be true of David, who was buried and saw corruption like other men, they must belong to that Christ who, according to the flesh, was to descend from him and sit upon his throne — and they were fulfilled to the letter in Jesus, who rose so soon after death that he saw no corruption at all.

Besides plain prediction, there were types and figures pointing the same way, two of which Christ applied to himself — the brazen serpent lifted up by Moses, and Jonah's three days in the whale's belly — besides the Passover lamb and the wave-sheaf, both applied by Paul. How far such types may properly be pressed I will not inquire at length, but will only quote Bishop Sherlock's remark on the question generally: that since the temporal covenant given to the Jews was itself meant only to prepare the way for the everlasting covenant, "it is highly probable that all the parts of the Jewish dispensation were designed to serve the same end" — so that the law itself, rightly read, contains not a bare command only but "the figure and image of good things to come," the whole Jewish religion being, in this sense, itself a species of prophecy. Many of its ceremonies, indeed, can scarcely be reconciled with the wisdom of the lawgiver on any other reading; and once such types are granted at all, it is no hard matter to show that they found their fulfillment in Christ, the great antitype to which they all pointed.

Taken together, these predictions show the plan of providence for man's redemption opening gradually across the ages, growing more particular as its fulfillment drew near: the bare promise to our first parents, narrowed to Abraham and his seed, then to Isaac, then Jacob, then Judah, and at last to the house of David — until, the lineage once fixed, the Prophets went on to declare the very time of his coming, the manner of his birth, and the circumstances of his life, sufferings, and death, by which he might be surely known when he came.

Some of these prophecies remained obscure, not from any fault in the words but because the things foretold seemed so hard to reconcile with one

another: at one time the Messiah a triumphant prince whose throne should endure forever, the desire of all nations, the Holy One; at another, a man of sorrows, despised, afflicted, smitten, bruised, scourged, numbered with transgressors, and making his grave with the wicked. Enough was clear, however, that the Jews were encouraged to expect a redeemer at a fixed time; and they could calculate the period set by the prophet Daniel so precisely that at the birth of Christ there was a general expectation, spreading even to other nations, of a great king about to be born in Judea, and the place of his birth and the family from which he was to come were just as clearly understood. But being proud of their place as God's chosen people, and failing to see the full breadth of the promise to Abraham — that in his seed all nations, not Israel only, should be blessed — they looked for a merely temporal deliverer, a king who would make the Jews masters over all other nations; and from this false expectation came their blindness to everything the Prophets had said of his sufferings, and their fury against Jesus for claiming to be Messiah while refusing that earthly throne.

The disciples themselves, gripped by the very same prejudice, could not at first bear to hear of his sufferings: "Peter rebuked him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee." Yet Christ suffered and died and rose again exactly as he had foretold, still claiming to be the Messiah, and founding that claim on the very sufferings the Prophets had foretold of him; and it was to the Prophets, therefore, that he sent his disciples for their conviction — for unless the Scriptures themselves could be shown to require a suffering Messiah, no proof of his resurrection could have overcome their fixed expectation of a conquering one. By expounding to them, in Moses and all the Prophets, the things concerning himself, he brought them at last to see that the promised kingdom was not temporal but spiritual and eternal — the redemption not of Israel alone from earthly enemies, but of all mankind from the power and penalty of sin, accomplished on the one hand by Christ's perfect righteousness and on the other by his death as a sacrifice for sin, of which his resurrection, overthrowing the power of death itself, was the necessary completion.

Jesus's own predictions of his rising on the third day furnish a further and independent proof, resting on grounds exactly like those on which the disciples already relied for the prophecies of Moses and the Prophets. They had seen him, in the very details of his passion, foretell things no mere human foresight could have reached: the sudden reversal by which the chief priests, who for fear of the people had resolved not to act during the feast, and Pilate — a man of a haughty, harsh, and unforgiving spirit, who had never before shown the Jewish nation any courtesy or regard for their customs, and who more than once had acted in flat defiance of their most reasonable demands — and the very crowd that had so lately welcomed him into Jerusalem with palm branches and hosannas, were all brought within a few hours to clamor for his death, against the declared judgment of his own Roman judge, who pronounced him innocent again and again, and at last washed his hands

before the multitude in token of it; the desertion of his disciples and Peter's threefold denial, each falling out within hours of being foretold, and directly against the disciples' own confident protestations to the contrary; and the studied cruelty of a mockery that went far beyond anything his sentence required. Having seen all this come to pass exactly as foretold, including abuse and mockery from the Roman soldiers far beyond anything his sentence required, by one who alone could search the secret workings of men's hearts, the disciples could have no more reason to doubt his foretelling of his own resurrection — a prediction confirmed, besides, by the plain fact that his body was nowhere to be found. On this ground alone, without the testimony of others or the proof of their own senses, John is recorded to have believed on seeing the empty tomb; and it was to this same kind of faith, beyond the evidence of sight, that Christ pronounced Thomas's believing brethren blessed.

By the time of his appearance to Thomas, then, the apostles who were to be witnesses of the resurrection to all the world had no doubt left of his having truly, that is bodily, risen; accordingly they went into Galilee, to a mountain where Jesus had appointed them, and worshiped him there, before returning to Jerusalem to await, as commanded, the promise of the Father, fulfilled a few days later in the coming of the Holy Ghost.

A word is worth adding on these two points, for the sake of some passages in Matthew, Luke, and Acts that depend on them. The law of Moses required all Jewish males to appear at Jerusalem three times a year, at Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles, each feast lasting a full week; and so the apostles, who had come up from Galilee for the Passover, were bound to remain in Jerusalem until that feast ended — during which time Christ appeared to them there a second time, eight days after the first, with Thomas present. The next appearance to any number of them together was by the Sea of Tiberias, which John expressly calls "the third time that Jesus shewed himself to his disciples after that he was risen from the dead" — so that the appearance on a mountain in Galilee recorded by Matthew must have come later still, and in a different place.

Three reasons can be given for Christ's choosing to meet his disciples chiefly in Galilee rather than Jerusalem. First, Galilee was the country where he had spent his life and worked the greatest part of his miracles, and so was the place where he was best known and had the most followers to serve as witnesses of his resurrection — Paul tells us he was seen there by above five hundred brethren at once, almost certainly at that same mountain appointed by Matthew.

Second, Galilee was the home of nearly all the apostles, who supported themselves and their families there by humble trades, and for whom a long absence at the very time of the barley harvest would have been a serious hardship. Christ had promised before his death that after he rose he would go

before them into Galilee; the angel repeated this same notable expression to the women at the sepulchre, telling them that Jesus would go before his disciples into Galilee and meet them there; and Christ himself, through those same women, commanded the disciples to go into Galilee, with the added promise that there they should see him. This command is not to be read as implying any fear that, left to themselves, they would have lingered uselessly in Jerusalem, where, once the feast was over, they had no other business; it is rather a confirmation of his earlier promise, and a strong encouragement to count on its being kept, in its proper place and time. The time for them to take up their apostolic calling — to abandon home, family, and country for a life of hardship and danger in preaching the gospel to the world — had not yet come, nor were they yet prepared for it; and their gracious Lord, who understood the claims of natural affection as well as anyone, allowed them this interval to see to their families before that final parting, meeting with them repeatedly in Galilee over the forty days Luke speaks of.

Third, and I think the weightiest reason, Galilee was the place best suited for the sort of extended instruction these meetings were meant to provide. Luke tells us Christ spoke to his disciples in these forty days of "things pertaining to the kingdom of God" — doctrine they needed thoroughly to grasp before setting out to preach it, old prejudices about the law and the Jewish nation that needed uprooting, and courage that needed building against the dangers ahead. Nothing could do this better than frequent visits from their risen Lord, each one fresh evidence of his power, his faithfulness to his promises, and the certainty of the Comforter still to come. And no place could so well allow such frequent, extended meetings as Galilee, where the apostles could gather in their own homes without arousing suspicion, under the jurisdiction of Herod rather than of the Roman governor and the chief priests who had just murdered their Master. Had they instead remained and met often in Jerusalem, while the report of the resurrection was still freshly stirring the city, the same rulers whose hatred did not end with his blood — as their later persecution of the church shows — would certainly have found ways to disrupt such gatherings, forcing Christ to resort continually to miracle to protect them; and it better suits the wisdom of God, which, as Mr. Locke observes, does not multiply miracles beyond what necessity requires, to suppose these meetings were held instead where no such necessity existed. This agrees, too, with Christ's own practice before his death, when, the Jews seeking to kill him, "he would not walk in Jewry," but kept himself in Galilee.

For these reasons I take it that all the appearances of Christ to his disciples, from the one granted to Thomas to the last in Jerusalem on the day of his ascension, were chiefly in Galilee, and that the apostles' brief return to Jerusalem before Pentecost excited no suspicion, since they came then, like all their countrymen, only to keep that feast — on the great day of which, according to his promise, they were filled with the Holy Ghost and armed with power to defy every danger in preaching Christ to the world. And this likewise explains why Luke's Gospel, having said nothing of the journey to Galilee or

the appearances there, passes directly from his account of the appearance in Jerusalem on the day of the resurrection to the ascension itself: since the scene of both was the same city, and since he did not think it needed, for his purpose, to mark the apostles' coming and going between the two.

By this long examination of the several parts of the evidence, I have tried to show that no fact could better bear the strictest scrutiny than the resurrection of Jesus Christ. We have the testimony of the Roman soldiers, who can be supposed to have had no bias either for or against the resurrection, yet reported that the tomb was miraculously opened by an angel, or divine being; we have the testimony of the women and the apostles, who were themselves at first prejudiced against believing Christ risen, and yet affirmed not only that angels told them so but that they themselves had seen, talked with, and touched him — testimony which, considering all its circumstances, must be allowed sufficient to prove any event that is not itself either impossible or highly improbable; and, beyond all this human testimony, the evidence of prophecy — the predictions of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalmist, setting out from the beginning God's design to redeem mankind through the sufferings, death, and resurrection of the woman's seed. Without the resurrection that design would have remained incomplete, the triumph over sin left without its necessary companion, the triumph over death; with it, everything the Scriptures had foretold of the Messiah's glory was fulfilled entire. And since every other part of what was promised concerning Jesus was so exactly fulfilled in his life and death, it is reasonable to conclude that God did not fail to fulfill the other part as well, in his resurrection. In the same class of evidence may also be ranked the prophecies of Jesus himself concerning his own rising from the dead. Coming from one whose other predictions had always been fulfilled, these deserved to be believed no less than the rest, and were further confirmed by other events he had likewise foretold before his passion and linked to that same proof of his divine power — his meeting his disciples in Galilee, his ascension, and his sending of the promised Comforter. With so varied and well-connected a chain of evidence is the resurrection bound up and fortified.

Yet not all these proofs were shown to all the Jews, for Christ appeared after his passion not to all the people but to witnesses chosen before by God — "to us," says St. Peter, "who did eat and drink with him after he arose from the dead" (Acts 10:41). That Christ chose a select number, and particularly twelve called apostles, to witness his resurrection and preach his gospel to the world is well known. To qualify them for this office he discoursed with them on the kingdom of God, poured on them the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and gave them every evidence the most skeptical could require — eating and drinking with them for forty days after his passion. It is fitting that those on whose testimony a fact is to rest should have the fullest possible evidence of it, since their having had every means of information adds weight to their witness.

From this we may understand why our Savior appeared so often to his disciples after the resurrection: why he required them to handle him, why he ate and drank with them, referred them to the Scriptures and to his own predictions, and satisfied the scruples of Thomas — who, being one of the Twelve, needed knowledge of the fact equal to his fellow apostles'. That such perfect knowledge was required of an apostle appears from St. Peter's words, proposing that one be chosen to replace Judas: "Wherefore of these men that have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us... must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection" (Acts 1:21–22). These infallible proofs, then, were given not merely for the disciples' own sake, but that others, through their testimony founded on the most exact information, might likewise believe. Christ's blessing on those who, not having seen, had yet believed shows that he thought his disciples had sufficient cause to believe even before he appeared to them — and that they had, in fact, so believed; John himself tells us he believed before he saw his Master.

Had Christ intended only to bring the apostles themselves to believe, he might have left them to the testimony of the Roman soldiers, the women, Moses and the Prophets, his own predictions, and the empty sepulcher, without ever appearing to them, and they would have been without excuse had they remained unbelieving. But without those further infallible proofs, the apostles would not have been so well qualified as witnesses to all the world; for heathens would not have admitted the authority of Moses and the Prophets, and the testimony of the women, even apart from questions about their character, would have invited the objection that Christ had not likewise appeared to those he commissioned to preach his gospel. But when the apostles could say that they themselves had seen, handled, eaten and drunk with Christ for forty days after his resurrection, people could not but allow that they had had the fullest evidence of the resurrection, supposing what they told them to be true. And of this — the purity of their doctrine, the holiness of their lives, their courage and constancy in defying and undergoing every kind of hardship, danger, and death in advancing a cause which every worldly interest obliged them to desert, joined to the testimony of the Holy Spirit working with them and confirming the word with signs following — were such assurances as no other man could give of his own truthfulness.

From this it may appear how little ground there is for two common objections: that Christ forbade Mary Magdalene to touch him, denying her the evidence of his resurrection; and that he broke a promise, implied in his words to the Pharisees — "there shall be no sign given to it but the sign of the prophet Jonas" (Matthew 12:39–40) — by not showing himself after his resurrection to that "evil and adulterous generation," the Jews. That Christ promised by these words to give the Jews sufficient proof that he would rise on the third day, I allow; but that he promised to appear to them personally, I deny, and think it cannot be proved from this passage. Of his rising again they had the testimony of the prophets, of his own predictions, of the Roman

guard, of the empty tomb, and of the apostles, who before the Sanhedrin declared that they had healed a lame man "in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, whom... ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead" (Acts 4:10) — evidence sufficient to acquit our Lord of any further promise to a generation that had rejected his doctrine, put him to death, and now forbade his apostles to preach in his name.

That Mary Magdalene was convinced it was Jesus who appeared to her I have shown already, and that was all that was necessary for her, since she was not one of the chosen witnesses. It is remarkable that none of the apostles, preaching to Jew or Gentile, or writing to the Church, ever appeal to Christ's appearances to the women — these being related by the evangelists only as connected with the larger history. The testimony of the women was, to those who had it only at second hand, mere hearsay; the apostles therefore always insisted on having themselves seen their risen Master, as Paul does in closing his list of Christ's appearances to the Corinthians: "and last of all he was seen of me also" (1 Corinthians 15:8).

All that has so far been said relates to the proofs of the resurrection as they were laid before the apostles themselves, those chosen witnesses of that great and astonishing event; and I hope, upon a serious view of the fair and unforced manner in which those proofs were offered to their consideration, every judicious and candid inquirer after truth will allow that to them, at least, the resurrection was most fully proved. I will now offer some arguments that may lead us, who live so remote from that age of miracles, likewise to believe that Christ rose from the dead.

The first and principal argument is the testimony of those chosen witnesses, transmitted in writing, either penned by themselves or authorized by their inspection. The second is the existence of the Christian religion. Before admitting the testimony contained in the Gospels, Acts, Epistles, and Revelation, it is proper to ask first what reason we have for believing this testimony genuine — that is, for believing the apostles and evangelists to be the true authors of the books received under their names — and next, supposing it genuine, what reason we have to credit it.

To prove that the apostles and evangelists wrote the Scriptures that bear their names, we have the unbroken attestation of the earliest writers of the Church, an authentication not to be overturned by a bare, unproven charge of forgery. I will only urge, in support of this, the probability that the apostles left their doctrine in writing and that their disciples preserved it, and the improbability that any book forged in an apostle's name could have escaped detection.

First: if the precepts of Christ and his apostles were meant to govern all succeeding ages, it is consistent with the wisdom of God — who gave his Law to Israel in writing rather than trusting it to oral tradition — that this gospel too should be committed to writing rather than to so uncertain a conveyance.

This is the more reasonable since all revelation of Christian doctrine was confined to the apostles and ended with them: though the power of miracles and tongues continued for generations in the Church, it was to the apostles alone that Christ revealed his will, so that even Christians endowed with spiritual gifts still needed Paul's instruction in matters of faith and practice, and the earliest writers after the apostles, however gifted themselves with many of those same miraculous powers, appealed on all occasions not to new revelation but to the holy Scriptures, as to that fountain from which alone they could draw the waters of life. Would not those first converts, aware of their own deficiencies and liable to error even while the apostles' voices still sounded in their ears, have sought by every means to obtain the evidences and doctrines of the faith either in writing from the apostles themselves, or taken down from their mouths or under their inspection, or, failing both, transcribed at least from their own memories what they could recollect of the apostles' teaching? Of these three ways, the first two were unquestionably the best, the last liable to many mistakes, for though Christ promised to enable his apostles by the Holy Spirit to call to mind what he had said to them, no such miraculous assistance is anywhere said to have been given to the memories of those who merely heard the apostles. St. Luke's preface shows that many such writings were current in that age; none of these survive, having presumably been superseded by writings of greater authority — that is, by those either penned by the apostles or sanctioned by their inspection — which is the best explanation for why these alone have survived in unbroken veneration for now almost seventeen centuries.

That this distinction between genuine and spurious writings was made in the apostolic age itself is probable, since both the apostles' own contemporaries and those who were to receive the gospel from their hands needed the authority of men who alone had been guided into all truth by the Spirit of God, and whose successors could at most attest the facts and doctrines delivered to them, not add fresh revelation of their own. Whatever the apostles wrote or approved, then, must necessarily have been preferred above every other writing; and the churches that held these treasures would preserve them with the utmost fidelity, share copies with their brethren, and transcribe and translate them with all possible exactness. From this arises a strong presumption that the apostles and evangelists were indeed the genuine authors of the books received under their names; that though other gospels and epistles later appeared under apostolic names, only the books we now call canonical were accepted from the earliest ages; and that copies of these were immediately dispersed through the Christian world — the apostles, says Irenaeus, "first preparing the gospel, and afterward, by the will of God, delivering it to us in the Scriptures, to be from then on the pillar and foundation of our faith"; while Tertullian, writing in the third century, bids heretics go to the apostolic churches, "where the authentic epistles of the apostles are still read aloud." And the first successors of the apostles, as Eusebius tells us, leaving their own countries to preach to nations that had

not yet heard the gospel, delivered to them, as the foundation of their faith, the writings of the holy evangelists. Translations, too, were made early enough to precede the general acceptance of some books later received as genuine — the ancient Syriac version, for instance, omitting 2 Peter, 2 and 3 John, and Revelation, which were for a time disputed in the eastern churches — showing how carefully the first Christians scrutinized what they admitted into the canon.

The next question is the improbability that any book forged in an apostle's name could have escaped detection — a point for which the reasons already given, showing the probability that the apostles left their doctrine in writing and that their disciples carefully preserved it, likewise prepare the way. For if the Christians of the apostolic age themselves needed in writing the apostles' directions on faith and practice, they equally needed assurance that what was delivered to them under an apostle's name was truly his — and this, surely, could be known in many ways without having seen him write it with his own hand, or heard from his own mouth that he wrote it. Since only six apostles (Matthew, John, Peter, Paul, James, Jude) are known to have left writings of their own, while Mark and Luke, among the seventy-two disciples, wrote under apostolic sanction, the churches that received these writings were the proper witnesses that they were genuine, since they knew the character of those, like Tychicus, who delivered them in an apostle's name (Colossians 4:7–9), and had many other proofs, external and internal, to test their truth. Suppose, for instance, that the Corinthians received an epistle claiming to be Paul's, years after his death, though plainly written, by its contents, long before: would they not have asked how it came into the bearer's hands, and why it had not been sent at the time the disturbances it answers occurred? An impostor could never have satisfied such questions, and it is absurd to suppose the first Christians — who in an age of real persecution staked their lives, estates, and everything on the truth of what they believed — would have acted with less caution in so weighty a matter than any sensible man would use in ordinary life. This, no doubt, is what unbelievers will say, for what else can they claim; but common sense itself, no less than the testimony of all the earliest writers of the Church, is against them.

And let it not be forgotten that professing Christianity, at its first appearance, very deeply affected the earthly circumstances of its professors: it brought no honors or advancement, but exposed men, upon the mere confession of the name, to death without any crime alleged, leaving them only the peace of a quiet conscience and the hope of a future immortality. It is no more reasonable to imagine that the people of those ages gave up all their worldly prospects without good reason than to imagine that a sober man would surrender his whole estate to a stranger and leave himself a beggar. Unless it can be proved by positive evidence that the Scriptures on which the first Christians built so costly a faith were forged or falsified, it cannot fairly be concluded that they acted like fools or madmen in taking up the cross of

Christ; and if they did not so act, their own near contemporaries must have had, and used, the means of detecting any fraud, had one existed.

Nor, indeed, could the fraud, if attempted during the apostles' lifetimes, have gone undetected, given how many persons and facts mentioned in these writings were then living to confirm or refute them; nor, if attempted soon after their deaths, could it have escaped a tradition of facts and doctrines, oral or written, that would have exposed any clash with the truth — especially since, if an apostle's bare name sufficed to win credit for a writing, it is strange that whoever forged the Gospels of Mark and Luke did not simply publish them under some apostle's name instead. Nor can it be supposed that a few of the wiser sort practiced a kind of pious fraud upon their weaker brethren, for the authors of such a fraud must themselves have been Christians, without worldly motive, and acting on a principle — that we may do evil that good may come — expressly condemned in Paul's own epistle to the Romans (3:8); besides which, they could never have been sure their invention would not instead hand triumph to the avowed enemies of the gospel, heathen, Jew, and heretic alike, who had every motive to expose it. Since, then, no motive can be found for such forgery, and since detection was all but inevitable had it been attempted, we may conclude, from the Church's acknowledging these writings as authentic, that the apostles and evangelists were indeed their true authors.

But granting this, how do we know that, among all that has since been ascribed to them, only these genuine books have come down to us uncorrupted? To the first question: the early Christians, being competent judges of such claims, are sufficient warrant for what they received as genuine, and no other writing has an equal claim, since most of the false gospels are not even mentioned before the fourth century. To the second, I refer the reader to Dr. Whitby's examination of the various readings of the New Testament, which shows the great mass of them insignificant, and none of them altering any article of faith or rule of life — a conclusion unsurprising given how many centuries, copies, and translations lie between us and the originals, but also given how many heretics, Jews, and heathens, all hostile in different ways, were watching these texts for any alteration that might serve their turn. Even the Church of Rome, which held these Scriptures so long in her keeping, and would gladly have altered them to match her own doctrines, was restrained chiefly by fear of exposure from the Eastern Churches that did not acknowledge her authority, and contented herself instead with locking the Scriptures away from the laity and claiming the sole right to interpret them — an expedient which, however corrupt, has at least preserved intact the text on which that very claim must finally be judged.

I come now to what grounds we have for crediting this testimony, supposing it genuine. Two qualities are required to establish the credibility of a witness: a thorough knowledge of the fact he testifies to, and a fair and unblemished character. That the apostles were duly qualified in the first

respect, as far as knowledge of the resurrection is concerned, has, I hope, already been shown at large in what has gone before; it remains, then, that we inquire into their characters, which may very clearly be gathered from the whole course of their lives and conduct as preachers of the gospel, and from the purity of the doctrines they taught — without even needing to insist, in their favor, on the fact that their very enemies were never able to fix upon them any stain or blemish which they themselves have not acknowledged and lamented.

Their lives, after embracing Christianity, were blameless and holy, their conduct as preachers unselfish and generous in the highest degree: they gave up house, land, trade, friends, kindred, and country to carry salvation, through infinite labor and danger, into every corner of the world, requiring of their converts nothing but a bare subsistence, and disclaiming for themselves all power and worship, teaching superstitious people who would have sacrificed to them that they were but men like other men. Would impostors, commonly vain and self-seeking, have behaved this way? Certainly not. Enthusiasts, it may be said, would have acted just this way. Let it be so — but how shall it be shown that the apostles were enthusiasts? If Christ did not rise and did not converse with them after his crucifixion, it is hard to explain their return to faith in a Master they had deserted and disowned in his extremity; but if he did rise and did so converse with them, then they had ample reason to believe, and to obey his command to preach the gospel to the world, especially once they found themselves so remarkably equipped for that commission by the gift of tongues and the other miraculous powers of the Holy Ghost. If this was the case, the apostles were no enthusiasts, since they neither believed without reasonable proof themselves, nor claimed a divine commission without being able to furnish others the same evidence of it.

Of their doctrines, two bear especially on our argument: the certainty of a coming judgment, and the strict obligation to speak truth — "putting away lying," they taught, "speak every man truth with his neighbour" (Ephesians 4:25); "lie not one to another" (Colossians 3:9); indeed even a lie told for God's glory is pronounced damnable (Romans 3:7–8). That the apostles themselves believed both these doctrines is proved by their choosing persecution and death rather than cease declaring what they had seen and heard. Men who believed that God would punish even a well-meant falsehood would hardly, at the cost of their lives and with no prospect of gain, have asserted that they had seen and conversed with the risen Christ while knowing it false — and expected, besides, to be judged hereafter by that very Christ. Such a supposition can satisfy none but those great believers in absurdities, unbelievers themselves.

Besides these marks of integrity in their lives and doctrine, several internal marks of truthfulness appear in the writings of the evangelists themselves. The seeming contradictions some have found in their accounts of the resurrection, on close inspection, prove shadowy and merely verbal; and

far from discrediting the evangelists, they argue that the writers did not compose in collusion with one another — for had they agreed beforehand on how to divide and tell the story, they would surely have dropped some hint connecting their several portions, or marked the order of events more precisely. Truth, like honesty, commonly neglects appearances; imposture is always on its guard. The same kind of agreement in substance together with disagreement in detail may be seen between Xiphilinus and Theodosius, the two abridgers of Dio Cassius, who plainly drew on one common original, yet no one on that account doubts either of them merely because one omits what the other includes. Why, then, should the same kind of variation be turned into an objection against the evangelists alone, who likewise drew their narratives from one and the same history — the life of Jesus Christ — laid before them by the Spirit of truth?

Another mark of truthfulness lies in the evangelists' naming the time, place, actors, and witnesses of what they record. Consider the guarding of Christ's tomb. The time was the Passover, the place Jerusalem crowded with Jews from every nation; the actors, the chief priests and elders, Pilate, and the Roman soldiers who kept the tomb. Had this story been false, the chief priests, who are said to have obtained the guard and sealed the tomb, had every opportunity and motive to clear themselves — by a sworn denial, confirmed by the Roman officers still then in Jerusalem, that any such guard had ever been set. Instead, they were driven to invent a story — that the disciples stole the body while the soldiers slept — so absurd it refuted itself, since sleeping soldiers could testify to nothing, and confessed, besides, to a capital breach of military discipline. That a guard had in fact been set was evidently too well known in Jerusalem, through the scattering of the soldiers into the city, for the chief priests to deny it outright; and the very naming of time, place, and persons, where any falsehood could so easily have been exposed, is itself strong presumption of the story's truth — especially since this account comes from the evangelist said to have written nearest to the time, for Christians living in Judea, many of whom, still living, were probably in Jerusalem when the event took place.

The same attachment to truth appears in the evangelists' freely recording things that could only discredit themselves — their deserting their Master in his extremity, their dullness in grasping his plain predictions of rising again. A man's testimony against himself is commonly presumed true. Still more striking is their portrait of Christ himself: hungry, homeless, weeping, sorrowful even unto death, praying that his cup might pass, betrayed, bound, beaten, and crucified as a common criminal — and yet, by the same writers, said to have fed thousands with five loaves, commanded the sea, raised the dead, and risen himself and ascended to sit at God's right hand. Such a mixture of weakness and power, humiliation and glory, is a composition no mere invention would ever attempt, since it was, as Paul says, "unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness." The Jews looked for a conquering temporal Messiah and were so scandalized by Christ's humble

estate that even his own disciples at first refused to believe his predictions of suffering — Peter rebuking him, "Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee" (Matthew 16:22). Had Christ wrought no miracles and not risen from the dead, the apostles' own Jewish prejudices must have kept them from ever acknowledging him as Messiah at all; and having done so, and having appealed for proof to his miracles — which even Celsus, who lived nearest those times, admitted as fact, though he ascribed them to magic — it is strange, if they were inventing falsehoods to recommend their Master, that they did not also suppress or deny the sufferings and crucifixion that posed the greatest obstacle of all to believing in him, both among Jews and Gentiles.

One more mark deserves notice: the plain, unadorned manner in which the sacred writers relate truths and wonders that might have kindled eloquence in the coldest heart — angels descending, voices from heaven, countless miracles — all set down without exclamation, comment, or any attempt to magnify themselves or their Master, "not with excellency of speech... but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God" (1 Corinthians 2:4–5) — words from a man, Paul, whom even the critic Longinus counted among the great Grecian orators, and who did not lack learning or eloquence, as his speeches in the Acts attest. Had they been left to mere human wisdom, they would surely have seized on such rich material — themes greater than any possessed by Cicero, Demosthenes, or Plato — to dress up their cause, turning attention to the divine side of their Master's character and hiding, as it were in a blaze of glory, his weakness, his sufferings, and his death; instead they followed the same method by which God reveals himself in the great book of nature, the vast structure of the universe — laying all its wonders before us in silence, and expecting from our own observation the comments and conclusions which, having endowed us with reason, he has enabled us to draw. And though a careless observer may imagine he perceives in that great volume many inconsistencies and defects, yet to the diligent and unprejudiced inquirer there appear, in all he is capable of examining, such clear marks of wisdom, goodness, and power as leave him no room to doubt their Author.

The same may be said of that second volume of God's revelation, the Holy Scriptures. There too are passages that, to a careless reader, seem idle or inconsistent with the marks of truth and goodness so plainly visible elsewhere; and yet many of these, on closer examination, are found to agree with the plainer parts, as no foreign portion of one and the same harmonious composition. In both books, the natural and the written, there will always be difficulties human ingenuity cannot fully resolve. But will a wise man, because he cannot understand everything, therefore reject the many plain and unmistakable evidences of the finger of God that appear throughout both? The question ought rather to be why God has given men such varying abilities to examine his works, than why he has not expressed himself more clearly to all alike; for what is necessary for all to know is knowable by all, and those

endowed with superior faculties have reason rather to use them in patient inquiry than to take offense at what they have not yet taken the pains to understand.

To these internal evidences — and may I not add the inspiration? — of the apostles and evangelists, I will add two external proofs of great weight: one negative, the other positive.

The negative proof lies in this: that of the great number of public and extraordinary facts related by the sacred writers, not one, in near seventeen hundred years, has ever been disproved — denied often, but denial is not disproof. The only fact ever set up against the resurrection is the charge that the disciples stole Christ's body, supported, as Matthew tells us, by the bribed testimony of the Roman guard (Matthew 28:13). This story, revised and spread afterward by an official deputation of the Sanhedrin to all the synagogues of the Jews throughout the world — which, dropping all mention of the Roman guard, said no more than that the disciples came by night and stole the body away — was, even in that more careful form, never once investigated, though the accusers were the chief priests and elders, armed with every means to extract a confession, and the accused were a handful of poor, unlearned men who had just fled at the first sign of danger. Can it be supposed that among so many lowly people who must have known of such a theft, not one, from honesty, religious conviction, fear of punishment, or hope of reward, would have betrayed the secret, and settled the question of the resurrection beyond all dispute? For had it once been proved that the disciples stole away the body of Jesus, their word would hardly have been accepted as proof of his resurrection. But how did these poor men actually behave? Conscious of no fraud, they remained in Jerusalem a week or more after the report had spread through the city, and about a month later returned there again; and not long after, they boldly declared to the very faces of the chief priests that God had raised Jesus from the dead; and when, for working a miracle in his name, they were seized and brought before the council, their judges did not charge them with the theft at all, but instead asked each other, "What shall we do to these men? for that indeed a notable miracle hath been done by them is manifest to all them that dwell in Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it... let us straitly threaten them" — and finding nothing they could punish them for, let them go (Acts 4:15–22). Nor is it any objection that this account comes from Christian writers, for had the Jews possessed any proof of the charge, they would hardly have failed to produce it; and the rapid progress of Christianity in Jerusalem itself is stronger evidence than their silence that no such proof existed, or could be found.

I have dwelt the longer on this alleged theft because it is the only fact I know of ever set up in opposition to the many facts on which the evidence for the resurrection rests; and those who now deny that any guard was placed at

the tomb thereby remove the only positive evidence ever brought to support the story in the first place — the testimony of the Roman soldiers themselves.

Among the many extraordinary facts recorded by the sacred writers, the miracles of Christ and his apostles, performed openly before friend and foe alike, offered the fairest opportunity for enemies of the gospel to disprove the evangelists; and yet the feeble shifts to which pagan and Jewish writers were reduced — Celsus ascribing them to magic, the Jews to a stolen name of God, both admitting the facts themselves — are a strong presumption that they could not be disproved.

The positive proof of the sacred writers' truthfulness rests on the exact fulfillment of predictions recorded in the New Testament. I pass over those whose fulfillment lies within Scripture itself, and turn to prophecies concerning the altered condition of Jews and Gentiles — a condition very different from what it was when these prophecies were given.

By the covenant God made with Abraham and renewed with Israel under Moses, the Jews became his special people, bound to obey his law in exchange for his protection; and he governed them through Moses, the prophets, and the kings, until Christ, mediator of a new covenant, should come — a covenant offered first to the Jews, but then opened also to the Gentiles, all nations who acknowledged the Messiah as their King. Since the ceremonial law was local to Israel, it was set aside for the Gentiles, who could not keep it, while the moral law, the true substance of both covenants, remained, along with baptism and the Eucharist as the new seals of the covenant. Of Israel's twelve tribes, ten had already fallen away under Jeroboam and were lost among the nations; the remaining two, though chastened and even carried to Babylon, were restored to their land, but having grown exact in ceremony while corrupting the moral law through the traditions of the scribes and Pharisees, were in this state when Christ came to offer them his new covenant. The Gentiles, meanwhile, lay under a far more wretched superstition, having for many ages transferred their obedience from the one supreme God, Creator of heaven and earth, to deities of their own nations' invention — becoming, as it were, the people of the Egyptian Isis, the Athenian Pallas, or the Capitoline Jove — and, left as outlaws from that original law once written on the hearts of all mankind, had fallen into every kind of immorality and superstition. Some of the wisest among them, by the still-flickering light of reason, had come to recognize many of their grossest errors, but thought it better to go along with the superstition of their countries than to fight it; and had they attacked it with the boldness of the apostles, it is very doubtful that, with all their eloquence, they would have prevailed.

In this state of things our Savior told the chief priests, under the parable of the vineyard let out to wicked tenants who killed the owner's son, "The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof" (Matthew 21:43) — signifying the transfer of God's

kingdom from the Jews to the Gentiles, the obedience of the latter, and the punishment of the former for murdering his Son. This was exactly fulfilled: the Jews as a nation rejected the gospel down to the destruction of their city and temple, and persist in rejecting it to this day, while within a few centuries the Gentile world, the whole Roman Empire, abandoned idolatry for Christ — God testifying his acceptance of the one and rejection of the other by pouring his Spirit upon the Gentiles while permitting Jerusalem to be destroyed and the Jews scattered among all nations.

Many particulars of this national catastrophe were likewise foretold: the destruction of the temple — "there shall not be left one stone upon another" (Mark 13:2) — fulfilled when Titus had its foundations dug up, as Josephus and the Jewish Talmud both attest; the ruin of the city itself, encircled and "laid even with the ground" (Luke 19:43–44), fulfilled when Titus's army built a wall of thirty-nine furlongs about Jerusalem in three days and razed the city to three towers; the "great signs from heaven" (Luke 21:11), echoed by Josephus's account of storms, a sword hanging over the city, a comet, the great gate of the temple opening of itself, and armies seen battling in the clouds — prodigies so strange, says Tacitus, that they would pass for fable were there not still living witnesses to attest them; and the unparalleled "great tribulation" of the siege itself (Matthew 24:21), of which Josephus says that no nation ever suffered as the Jews then did — indeed, that all the miseries mankind had endured from the beginning of the world were not to be compared with what that nation then suffered — and after them, fifty-two years later, under Hadrian at Bethar, where the Talmud records a slaughter scarcely less terrible. Christ had further said that wherever the carcass was, there the eagles — the Roman armies — would be gathered together; and accordingly the Jews were hunted down throughout the empire. "When the Romans had no enemies left in Judea," writes Josephus, "the danger still reached many of them living far from it, for many perished at Alexandria, at Cyrene, and in other cities of Egypt and Syria." Christ had added, too, that the Jews would be "led captive into all nations" (Luke 21:24): Josephus records ninety-seven thousand captives, dispersed by Titus through Egypt and the Roman provinces.

The duration of their calamity, and their eventual restoration, were foretold together: "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled" (Luke 21:24) — fulfilled when Vespasian sold the whole land of Judea to Gentile buyers, and Hadrian forbade any Jew to approach Jerusalem, now rebuilt as the Roman colony of Aelia; Paul explains the further sense of this treading-down: "blindness hath happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved" (Romans 11:25–26). Remarkably, the Emperor Julian the Apostate, intending to defeat this very prophecy of Christ, resolved to rebuild the city and temple of Jerusalem on its old site, writing to the Jewish community that he would rebuild by his own efforts the holy city they had so long desired to see inhabited. He set Alypius of Antioch, aided by the provincial governor, to

hurry the work forward at vast expense; but, as Ammianus Marcellinus — himself a pagan living at that very time — relates, terrible balls of flame kept bursting out near the foundations, burning the workmen repeatedly, until the place became impossible to approach, and the work, stubbornly repelled by fire, ceased. The story is attested not only by Ammianus but by Zemach David, a Jew, who admits that Julian was divinely hindered; by Nazianzen, Chrysostom, Ambrose, and Rufinus, who lived at the very time it happened; and by Theodoret, Sozomen, Philostorgius, and Socrates, who all recorded it within fifty years of the event, while eyewitnesses were still living. It took place, moreover, not under Christian emperors but under the bitterest enemies of the Christian name, when they had no liberty to speak in their own defense — which makes it the more remarkable with what confidence Christians of the time cited this fact against the Jews and the pagan philosophers alike, as proof of the expiration of the old legal worship and the certainty of the Christian faith; and St. Chrysostom could appeal to it as a thing admitted on all sides, its bared foundations still to be seen, and no other account of the matter possible than the one the Christians gave, "these things having happened not long ago, in our own time."

The reader who wishes to see many more particulars of these predictions and their fulfillment, which I have omitted here for brevity, may consult Dr. Whitby's Preface, from which the articles above are drawn. A few observations on these prophecies: first, they cannot be dismissed, as prophecies often are, as too obscure to be understood except by the event, for they are as plain as any historian's record of their fulfillment. Second, it is remarkable that John alone of the evangelists, who outlived the destruction of Jerusalem, says nothing of these predictions or their fulfillment — perhaps so that unbelievers could not say, as some have said of Daniel's prophecies, that they were written after the fact. Third, though the prophecy of Israel's restoration remains unfulfilled, both Julian's thwarted attempt and the present extraordinary condition of the Jewish people stand as living guarantees that it too will be accomplished in its season. On this last point I will cite, in brief, the observations of a French writer on the astonishing preservation of the Jews: scattered without a political body, a priesthood, or any public exercise of their religion, lacking every ordinary means by which nations elsewhere have kept their identity, the Jews have nonetheless survived every nation that has despised and persecuted them, while the ancient Romans, Gauls, and Spaniards have vanished into the peoples that absorbed them. "Who today," he asks, "can pick out the ancient Romans from the great crowds of people who have poured themselves into Italy? The face of the world has changed, both in the East and the West, and all nations are mixed and blended together in a hundred different ways." Yet the Jews, by a tradition no calamity has been able to interrupt, still trace themselves back to the ancient stock of Abraham, still multiply, and still remain visibly set apart from every other people, in spite of the hatred and the power of all the nations that rule over them. This, he argues, can only be the hand of the same God

who declared by his prophets, "Fear thou not, O Jacob my servant... for I will make a full end of the nations whither I have driven thee: but I will not make a full end of thee" (Jeremiah 46:28), and who bound Israel's survival to the very ordinances of heaven and earth: "If my covenant be not with day and night, and if I have not appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth, then will I cast away the seed of Jacob... for I will cause their captivity to return, and have mercy on them" (Jeremiah 33:25–26); "If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the LORD, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever" (Jeremiah 31:36). Had the Jews only been punished, this would prove only God's justice; had they only been preserved, only his power; it is their being kept in reserve to worship him one day that proves also his mercy and his faithfulness to his word. Their dispersion, punishing them for rejecting Christ, and their preservation, reserving them for the day they will at last receive him, are thus two wonders that together prove what neither could prove alone — that Jesus is indeed the promised Messiah: "Thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob... Fear not, for I am with thee: I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west... Bring forth the blind people that have eyes, and the deaf that have ears" (Isaiah 43:1, 5–6, 8).

Can anyone, after these prophecies and their fulfillment, question the truthfulness of writers who staked their Master's credit and their own on outcomes so remote and improbable? Does not their exact accomplishment establish the authority of Scripture and confirm every event it records?

I come now to the second argument for the resurrection: the existence of the Christian religion itself. From the existence of Christianity we may draw the same kind of evidence for the resurrection as we draw for the Flood from the petrified shells and bones found buried deep within mountains and mines: just as those remains cannot be accounted for without some convulsion of nature as violent as the breaking up of the fountains of the great deep, so the spread and present existence of Christianity through so much of the world can hardly be accounted for without supposing that Christ rose from the dead and endowed his disciples, by his Spirit, with power to overcome obstacles no merely human strength could have surmounted.

Consider what those obstacles were. The Jews, though possessed of a law from God, had through the traditions of their scribes reduced religion to outward ceremony, neglecting "judgment, mercy, and faith" (Matthew 23:23), and had, moreover, so misread the prophecies of a Messiah as to expect not a suffering Savior but a conquering king who would subdue the nations to Jewish rule — an expectation that even infected Christ's own disciples for a time, in spite of his own plain declarations to the contrary, until they were convinced, and not without an explicit miracle, that the Gentiles too had a share in the kingdom of the Messiah. To this were added the fierce rivalries of the many sects that divided the Jewish people among themselves — chiefly the Pharisees and Sadducees, whose chief doctrines and bitter

opposition to the gospel are noted by the evangelists, and who, though holding great authority in the state and bitterly opposed to one another, agreed with equal eagerness in opposing the progress of Christianity. The Gentile world, meanwhile, was sunk in idolatry so deeply interwoven with civil government — the worship of the gods being, in most states, the chief instrument of rule — that Roman emperors took to themselves the title of Pontifex Maximus, judge of both human and divine affairs, and so felt bound, as chief priests no less than chief magistrates, to suppress a religion that denied their gods. Worse, wicked emperors, deified by their own flattering senates — who erected altars to their names and offered them sacrifice even in their lifetimes — grew jealous of these impious honors and made the worship of the emperor's image, and swearing by his name, a test of loyalty which governors and other officials were bound, by virtue of their office, to see punctually rendered throughout their provinces. Christians, forbidden all idolatry, could never meet this test, and were thereby exposed to the one charge tyrants never forgive, however ready they might be to overlook offenses against religion or the state. Pliny's letter to Trajan shows the test in practice: those accused of being Christians were required to "call upon the gods," offer incense and wine to the emperor's image, and curse Christ — "none of which things," Pliny notes, "it is said, a genuine Christian can be made to do" (Pliny, Letters, Book 10, Epistle 97). Beneath these powerful enemies stood a whole economy of priests, diviners, augurs, and managers of oracles, together with sculptors, shrine-makers, and dealers in incense, all bound to idolatry by self-interest; and to these may be added the circus games of Rome and the four great games of Greece — Olympic, Pythian, Isthmian, Nemean — religious festivals which, through pomp and pleasure, bound still more of mankind to the cause of superstition.

But superstition, universal as it was, was not the only obstacle, nor even the greatest; vice recruited a still greater number against the gospel. The ambitious and the self-indulgent, the debauched, the miser, the unjust, and the vengeful were all enemies of a religion that taught humility, purity even of thought, and the forgiving of injuries — virtues agreeable to reason, but the difficulty lay in making men who had given themselves over to superstition and pleasure listen to reason at all, when the gods themselves, like the tyrants they so resembled, were held up as patrons and examples of license and revenge. Nor was philosophy a much better friend to virtue: some philosophers denied providence outright and placed happiness in sensual pleasure; others, doubting everything, erased the distinction between virtue and vice; and those who did profess to lead men to virtue were so divided by contradictory and overrefined systems, and so reduced by their endless rivalries to sophistry, pride, and stubbornness, that philosophy, however noble in its origins, had degenerated into a mere science of disputation. Men of this temper, so confident in the sufficiency of their own reason, and so attached to their own systems, could hardly welcome as their Master a crucified Jew, or as teachers a handful of obscure, lowly men of that same

despised nation, who professed to glory in the cross of Christ and to know nothing but him crucified, and who taught doctrines the philosophers had never considered — the redemption of mankind and the resurrection of the dead.

From this survey of the Jewish and Gentile world, it is clear that everything that most powerfully dominates the mind of man — religion, custom, law, policy, pride, self-interest, vice, and even philosophy — stood united against the gospel, entrenched moreover, since prejudice and falsehood are always fearful, behind every kind of civil disadvantage, and even behind torments, chains, and death: terrors no one could make light of who had any ambition or interest of his own. Against this union stood only a dozen or so ignorant, humble men from a despised province, lacking all the ordinary means by which such a revolution might otherwise be achieved: learning, eloquence, wealth, or power. Paul alone among them had eloquence and rabbinic learning, and that learning had only made him, before his conversion, a fierce persecutor of the Church; nor did he make any use of it afterward, coming to the Corinthians "not with excellency of speech, or of wisdom... and my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom," but, as he explains, "that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God... that no flesh should glory in his presence" (1 Corinthians 2:1,4; 1:17–29). Here, then, stood all the wisdom, authority, and power of the world on one side, and ignorance, contempt, and weakness on the other; and yet, as history and experience alike attest, the weaker side prevailed. To what can such an outcome, so contrary to every ordinary rule by which human affairs proceed, be ascribed, except the intervention of God, manifest in Christ's resurrection and the miraculous powers given to his apostles? Armed with these, a poor Galilean fisherman could stand before the high priest himself and prove, from the Scriptures and from mighty works done in Christ's name, that the humble, crucified Jesus was the promised Messiah; and when the hardest question of all arose — whether uncircumcised Gentiles might be admitted to equal standing in God's kingdom — the apostles had an argument no rabbi could answer: that the Holy Ghost had given the very same gifts to believing Gentiles as to believing Jews.

By this same power the apostles established, even to the very senses of mankind, the first article of all true religion — that there is one God — by casting demons out of the possessed and forcing them to confess their own inferiority and acknowledge Christ's dominion, as at Philippi, where a spirit cried out that Paul and his companions were "the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation" (Acts 16:17); and from this and their other gifts — healing, tongues, prophecy — they drew authority to teach repentance, forgiveness of sins, holiness of life, and the resurrection of the dead, of which Christ's own resurrection was both pattern and pledge. Nor could these powers be doubted as proceeding from God, since every supernatural effect must have a cause above nature, and no being less than

God could grant men authority over spirits themselves subject to his sovereignty. The Scriptures assure us there are beings, both good and evil, of powers exceeding man's own; but these too are limited, and subject to laws laid down by their Creator, who may nevertheless employ them as instruments of his own purposes — as he did in establishing Christianity, by the ministry both of angels, who on many occasions assisted Christ and his apostles, and of demons, who trembled and fled at their command, both alike declaring Christ and his apostles clothed with authority derived from their Lord and King. So that mankind, seeing the apostles possessed of power superior to every other known being, whether angel or demon, could no more doubt their divine commission than doubt that the order and magnificence of the universe is the handiwork of God.

Thus, arguing from visible effects back to their necessary cause — the surest method of proving many kinds of truth — I have endeavored to show the certainty of Christ's resurrection, on which the whole of Christianity depends. For if Christ did not rise, then, as Paul says, the faith of Christians is vain and the preaching of the apostles is vain; the apostles, believing him an impostor, could never have become preachers of his gospel without becoming impostors or fanatics themselves, and in neither case could they have succeeded as, by universal admission, they did succeed, given their natural insufficiency and the united opposition of the whole world. Supposing Christ did not rise, then, Christianity by every rule of human probability could never have existed at all, or must have perished at its birth. Yet it has now existed above seventeen hundred years — a fact disputed by no one, though Christians and unbelievers explain it differently. Christians affirm their religion to be of divine origin, grown and prevailing under the miraculous protection of God, and offer to prove it by the same kind of evidence by which all remote historical facts are proved; and they believe this may very fairly be inferred from the remarkable circumstances of its growth and from its present existence. Unbelievers, on the other hand, maintain that Christianity is an imposture, invented and carried on by mere men. But in maintaining this, unbelievers cannot simply object that the resurrection and the other proofs of the gospel are miraculous and therefore incredible, for a miracle stands in their way regardless — the birth and growth of Christianity itself, a fact they cannot deny even if they cannot explain it. To overturn the evidence Christians draw from this fact, they must show how such weak and unequipped instruments as Christ and his apostles could, by the ordinary course of human affairs, have produced so vast and lasting a revolution — a task, I believe, as far beyond the reach of the ablest philosopher — even granting his postulate, as Archimedes granted his — as it would be to make good that ancient boast, and move and shift the globe of this earth by machines built of nothing but such materials as nature provides for the ordinary use of man.

FINIS.