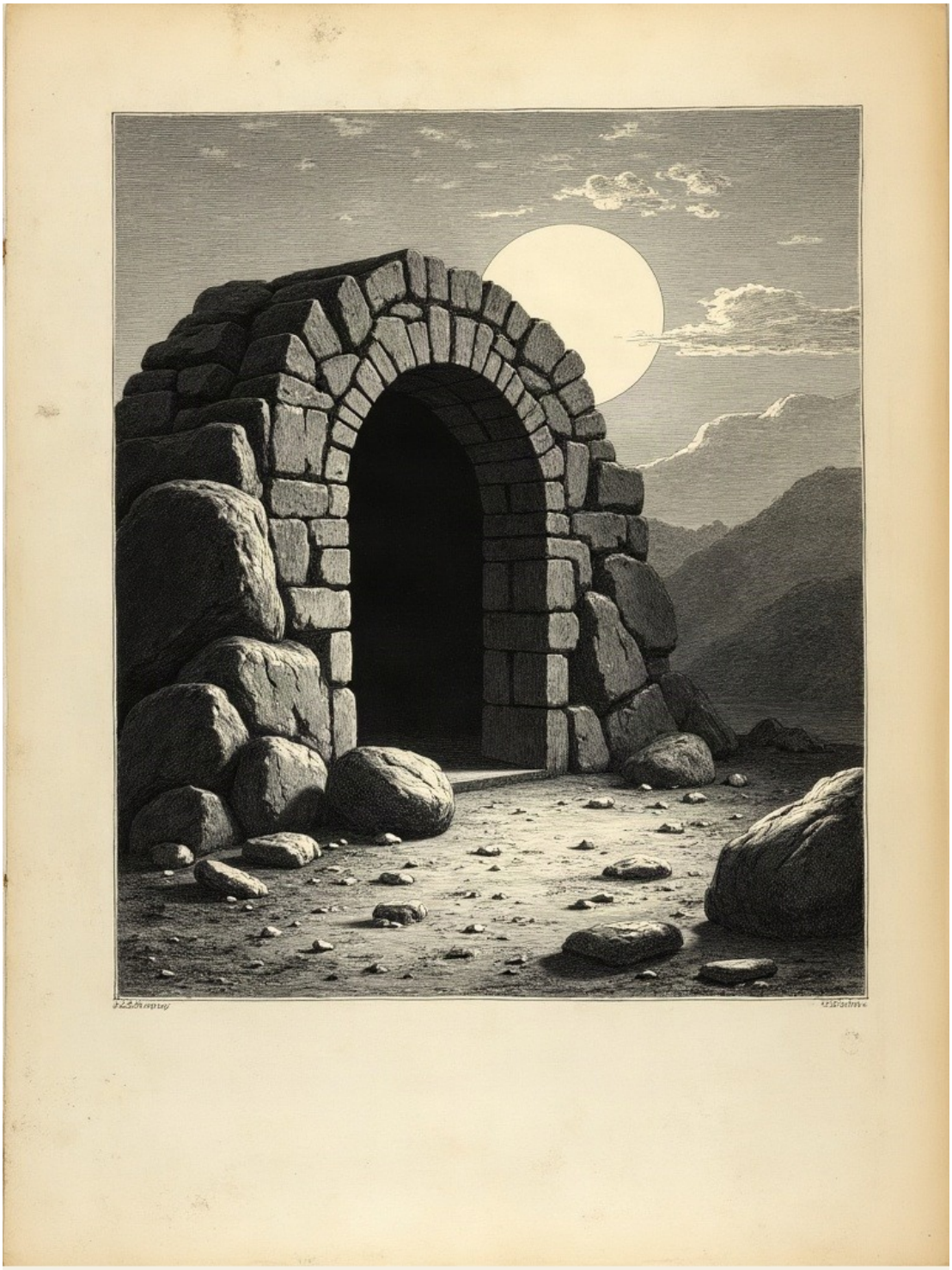


Observations on the Resurrection

by Gilbert West, 1747

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

by Gilbert West, Esquire

A 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 complete, unabridged rendering of Gilbert West's Observations on the History and Evidences of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ into contemporary English. Nothing in West's original argument has been cut, condensed, or summarized — every illustration, aside, and line of reasoning in the 1747 edition appears here, in the same order West gave it.

What has changed is the surface: eighteenth-century spelling, punctuation, and sentence construction have been smoothed into the kind of English a reader today can move through without constantly stopping to untangle the grammar. Long, nested periodic sentences have sometimes been broken into two or three shorter ones for clarity, but no content has been lost in the process.

Scripture quotations follow the King James Version, which was West's own translation of choice and remains the version most familiar to this congregation. Where West's citation of a verse reference was unclear or evidently a printer's error, it has been corrected against the passage actually quoted.

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. Lyttelton's companion volume, Observations on the Conversion and Apostleship of St. Paul, has been modernized in the same manner and is available as a companion to this edition.

This book, Observations on the History and Evidence of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, was written by Gilbert West, Esquire, and published in London by R. Dodsley at Tully's Head in Pall Mall, in the year 1747. On its title page the author placed this line from the book of Ecclesiasticus: "Blame not before thou hast examined the truth: understand first, and then rebuke" (Ecclesiasticus 11:7).

These observations had their origin in a pamphlet titled The Resurrection of Jesus Considered, in Answer to the Trial of the Witnesses, written by a "Moral Philosopher." In order to overturn the testimony of the Evangelists, its author tried to show that they contradict one another in the accounts they give of this event. Two very learned and ingenious answers to that pamphlet were published, and I read them with great satisfaction, finding in them solid refutations of many of the objections against Christianity that the first pamphlet had raised. But I must confess—though with the utmost respect for the knowledge and ability of the authors of those two later pamphlets—that I was not fully satisfied with the way they cleared the sacred writers of the contradictions charged against them. This led me to read and examine the Scriptures themselves with care, and with no bias except the astonishment I felt at finding writers who for more than sixteen hundred years had been regarded as holy and inspired, accused of an inconsistency in their accounts that sits poorly with either of those descriptions.

I admit I found it hard, at first, to believe this charge was true. And indeed it was not long before I discovered, or so I imagined, the emptiness and weakness of such an accusation—though I cannot call it entirely groundless, since it does have the appearance of being founded on the actual words of the Gospel, even though in reality that foundation goes no deeper than the surface of those words. Nor will I call the charge malicious, since on further inquiry I found it to be of very ancient standing, and I do not know who first raised it, and so can form no judgment about their motives. What I have to offer in defense of the Evangelists rests, in the same way, on the sacred text itself. I have tried to discover and demonstrate its true meaning—which, on this subject, I searched for in vain in the notes of many eminent commentators—by comparing the Evangelists' several accounts with one another and noting where the circumstances agree and where they differ. This method has unavoidably led me into critical observations whose length and dryness I would feel obliged to apologize for, if I were writing merely to amuse, or expected to be read by those who look for nothing more substantial in books than entertainment.

But although clearing the sacred writers of the charge of contradicting one another was my principal—indeed my only—object at the outset, as I pursued that object I found the light breaking in on me more and more the further I went, and at almost every step I discovered some new circumstance that helped to illustrate and confirm the testimony these inspired historians give to the resurrection of Jesus Christ. These discoveries led me to go far

beyond my original design, into a consideration of the evidence for this great and important article of faith—not only the evidence recorded in the sacred writings, but also evidence arising from later events and facts, of which we have, in several ways, many clear and unquestionable proofs. I have proceeded as follows. I began by setting out the order in which the several incidents related by the Evangelists appear to have happened. Next, I made some observations on the method and manner in which the proofs of this astonishing event were laid before the apostles, who were appointed to bear witness of it to the whole world. And to these I have, third, added a careful and rigorous examination of the proofs themselves. From all this I have tried to show that the resurrection of Christ was most fairly and fully proved to the apostles and disciples, those first converts and preachers of Christianity.

But since the resurrection's having been fully proved to the apostles, though absolutely necessary, is not by itself enough to warrant, at this distance of time, the faith of a Christian today, I judged that what I had already written would be incomplete, if not altogether useless, unless I added some further arguments and reasons meant to persuade us—who live seventeen hundred years after that miraculous event—to believe that Christ is risen from the dead. I have accordingly set out these reasons under two headings: the testimony of the chosen witnesses of the resurrection as recorded in Scripture, and the existence of the Christian religion itself.

From this account of how these observations arose, developed, and came to their present design, the reader will see that they began with the single aim of satisfying myself on certain difficulties in the Gospel history of the resurrection, and that they are now published in the hope of being as useful to others as they have been to me. This is the chief, if not the only, end that a layman can reasonably set for himself in publishing anything on a subject of this kind. I am well aware how little credit is to be gained by writing in defense of Christianity—which many regard as a superstitious fable not worth a wise man's attention, and which still more regard as nothing but a political scheme designed to serve the power and interest of the clergy alone.

How completely groundless both these opinions are will easily appear to anyone who takes the trouble to examine, fairly and impartially, the proofs and doctrines of the Christian religion—proofs established on fact, the surest foundation evidence can have, and doctrines derived by inspiration from the great Author of reason and Father of all mankind. Whoever has neglected, or refuses, to make this examination has no right to pass judgment on Christianity, and for the same reason ought, I think, to be somewhat cautious about condemning those who acknowledge it to be of divine origin—especially since he will find, among the roll of Christians, the great and venerable names of Bacon, Milton, Boyle, Locke, and Newton: names to whose authority everything should yield except truth, and who themselves thought it no disgrace to their superior talents to submit to truth, even when truth required them to believe in Christ.

It may be asked why I, being a layman, presume to meddle in a field usually thought to belong especially to the clergy. My answer is that, besides the motives already mentioned, this very prejudice was itself a strong reason for me to publish these observations under my own name. The clergy, I am well aware, are both willing and able to defend the cause of Christianity, as their many excellent writings in its defense sufficiently show. But because most people are governed more by prejudice than by reason, the clergy's writings are not read as widely, or received as fairly, as they deserve—because people suppose they spring not from conscience and conviction but from self-interest and professional solidarity. This supposition is as unfair and unjust as it would be to attribute the gallant conduct of our military officers merely to concern for their pay and hope of promotion, leaving out every nobler motive of a gentleman, such as a sense of honor and love of country. But the clergy—who alone, I think, would have any right to raise this objection if there were anything to it beyond mere prejudice—will, I am sure, readily excuse my taking up the cause of Christianity.

And I hope the laity—at least those of them who are Christians in more than name and profession—will join me in declaring, against the empty prejudices of unbelievers, that the Christian religion is of the utmost importance to people of every rank and condition, and that the greatest service the most zealous patriot can render his country is to promote the faith, and so encourage the practice of the truly divine virtues taught by Christ and his apostles.

For my own part, if any sincere seeker after truth, any single honest man, gains even the smallest benefit from these observations, I shall think that I have neither written nor lived in vain.

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

> "*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 therefore she was not among the women who went into the tomb and were there told by an angel that Jesus had risen. For if she had seen any angels before going to Peter, she would certainly have included so extraordinary a detail in her report to him. And if an angel had already told her that Jesus was risen, she could not have gone on lamenting that she could not find the body, nor have asked the man she took for the gardener where he had put it so that she might take it away. It is also worth noting that when, after returning to the tomb with Peter and John and after their departure, she did see a vision of angels, she was standing outside the tomb, weeping; and that stooping down and looking—not going—into the tomb, she saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain, and that they said nothing more to her than, "Woman, why weepest thou?" to which she answered, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him."

From all this it appears, second, that even after her return to the tomb with Peter and John, she was not among those women who went into the tomb and so on; that she had not yet heard anything of Christ's having risen from the dead; and that therefore the women who had been told by an angel that he was risen were not at the tomb when she came back there with Peter and John. Indeed, from the whole tenor of this passage of John's Gospel—throughout which no woman but Mary Magdalene is mentioned—it is more than likely that she was alone when she saw the angels and when Christ appeared to her immediately afterward. That she was alone when Christ appeared to her is plainly implied by what Mark tells us, namely that Christ appeared first to Mary Magdalene (Mark 16:9)—a statement that could not properly have been made of her if she had been accompanied by the other women.

Third, it is plain from this account that the angels were not always visible, but appeared and disappeared as they saw fit; for John and Peter, going into the tomb, saw no angels, while Mary, after they had left, looking in, saw two—one sitting at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain.

Luke, chapter 24, from verse 13, reads:

> "*And, behold, two of them [the disciples] went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about threescore furlongs. And they talked together of all these things which had happened. 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 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? And he said unto them, What things? And they said unto him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people: 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. And beside all this, 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)*

The latter part of this passage—which gives a condensed account of a report brought to the apostles by some women, before these two disciples had left Jerusalem—suggests the following observations.

First, the angels these women saw at the tomb told them that Jesus was alive; it follows that this report was not brought by Mary Magdalene, since the angels she saw told her no such thing.

Second, since no appearance of our Savior to these women is mentioned, it is also clear that this report could not have come from "the other Mary" and Salome, to whom—as they were on their way to tell the disciples the angel's message—Jesus appeared, as I shall shortly show from Matthew.

Third, there were therefore several reports brought to the apostles, at different times, and by different women. At different times: because the two disciples who heard this particular report before leaving Jerusalem had not yet heard the reports of Mary Magdalene or of the other Mary and Salome. By different women: because, since it has just been shown that this report could not belong to either of those last-named women, it must have come from

someone else—and since no Evangelist names anyone else but Joanna, it most likely came from her and those who were with her.

Fourth, some of the disciples, on hearing this report, went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said—that is, taking the words in their most obvious sense, they saw that the body was gone and that they saw some angels. I will not insist on this interpretation, but will only observe that if Peter is supposed to have been one of the disciples who went to the tomb on hearing this report from the women, this must have been the second time he went there. That Peter did go to the tomb a second time I shall demonstrate at greater length when I come to examine the earlier part of this chapter of Luke.

Once these several conclusions are granted, I think it will not be difficult to defend the Evangelists against the charge of contradicting one another in their accounts of what happened on the day of the resurrection. Unless authors who relate different and independent parts of the same history can, for that reason alone, be said to contradict each other, the Evangelists, I will venture to say, stand as clear of that charge—at least in the part of their writings we are now examining—as any of the most careful historians, ancient or modern. I shall now try to prove this by considering and comparing the several accounts of this day's events given in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. I have already quoted John's account, so there is no need to repeat it here; I will quote and examine Matthew's and Mark's accounts together, for reasons that will become clear later.

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. And if this come to the governor's ears, we will persuade him, and secure you. So they took the money, and did as they were taught: and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day. 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. And they went and told it unto the residue: neither believed they them. 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 the observations I intend to make on the various details contained in these two passages under three headings: first, circumstances related by one of these Evangelists but left out by the other; second, circumstances on which they both agree; and third, circumstances that seem to clash or disagree with each other.

First, the various details of the earthquake, the angel's descent from heaven, his rolling away the stone from the door of the tomb and sitting on it, and the terror of the soldiers guarding the tomb, are related only by Matthew —as are also the appearances of our Savior to the women and to the eleven disciples in Galilee, the guards' flight into the city, and everything that passed between them and the chief priests on that occasion. Mark, on the other hand, is alone in mentioning that the women had bought spices in order to anoint

the body of our Savior; that Salome was one of those women; that they went into the tomb and saw there a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment; and the appearances of Christ to Mary Magdalene, to the two disciples on their way into the country, and finally to the Eleven as they sat at supper. Since none of these details can be shown to contradict, or even disagree with, anything either Evangelist chose to mention, no argument against their truth or credibility can be drawn merely from the fact that they are not mentioned by both—unless it can be shown that a fact related by one historian, or one witness, must be false simply because another passes over it in silence.

Matthew wrote his Gospel first, within a few years of our Lord's ascension. Mark, who wrote his some years later, is commonly said to have abridged Matthew's Gospel—though I think this is said with very little accuracy, for how can a book be called an abridgment when it contains many details not found in the original author? That Mark relates many circumstances Matthew does not mention will be plain to anyone who takes the trouble to compare the two; and, to look no further, we have a clear example of this in the two passages before us.

Matthew wrote his Gospel at the request of Jewish converts who, having lived in the very country where this great history took place, were doubtless already familiar with many details, and so had no need to be told them. This explains the conciseness, and apparent incompleteness, of his narrative in many places, as well as his omission of circumstances the other Evangelists thought worth relating. Mark wrote his Gospel for Christians of other nations, who, not having the same opportunities of being informed as their brethren in Judea, needed some explanatory notes to help them better understand the account Mark chose to draw from Matthew's Gospel. It was therefore necessary for Mark to include many details that Matthew's purpose in writing did not require him to mention. Granting that these two Evangelists had these two distinct aims in view, let us see how they carried them out in the passages now before us.

That the disciples of Jesus came by night and stole away the body while the guards slept was a story commonly told among the Jews, even as late as when Matthew wrote his Gospel, as he himself tells us (Matthew 28:13). To give Jewish converts an answer to this absurd tale—so industriously spread among their unbelieving countrymen, and backed by the authority of the chief priests and elders—Matthew relates at length the history of the guarding of the tomb: the earthquake, the angel's descent, his rolling away the stone, and the soldiers' terror at his appearance, which made them shake and become like dead men. Indeed, by comparing this account with the story the soldiers put out, it is easy to see on which side the truth lay. For if there is nothing in the miraculous resurrection of our Lord so contrary to reason and probability as the notion that the disciples could have rolled away the stone sealing the tomb and carried off the body of Jesus without being noticed by the soldiers

posted there precisely to prevent such an attempt, it is equally clear that the particulars of the soldiers' story were built on the actual circumstances of this history. Three things are asserted in that story: that the disciples stole the body, that they stole it at night, and that they stole it while the guards were asleep. That Jesus came out of the tomb before sunrise, Matthew tells us, for he says the earthquake and the rest happened at the very time Mary Magdalene and the other Mary set out to look at the tomb, which was just as day began to break. This fact was no doubt too well known for the chief priests to risk denying it, and besides, it suited the other two points of their story. So they allowed it to stand; and taking their cue from what the soldiers told them—that they had been thrown into a swoon or trance (becoming like dead men) when the angel appeared, and so had not actually seen our Savior come out of the tomb—they invented the rest of the story: that his disciples had come and stolen him away while they slept.

I say they took their cue for these last two points from the detail Matthew reports, that the guards shook and became like dead men at the sight of the angel; for throughout this whole episode, there was no other point they could quibble over or dispute. The stone had been rolled away from the tomb, and the body was gone—this the chief priests had to explain away, without admitting that Jesus had risen from the dead. "The disciples stole it," they said. "What, with the guards right there?" "Yes—the guards were asleep." They knew perfectly well that many people would be satisfied with this answer and would not inquire any further. But they could not expect everyone to be so easily satisfied, especially since they had reason to fear that, although the soldiers who had taken their money might keep faith with them, keep their secret, and swear to the story invented for them, the truth might still come out through those they had not bribed. For Matthew tells us (Matthew 28:11) that some of the guard went into the city and reported to the chief priests everything that had happened. Some of the soldiers, then, stayed behind, who probably had no share in the money the chief priests gave the others—or if they did, it likely came too late, since they had already spread the truth, partly from the natural eagerness everyone has to tell an amazing story, and partly from a desire to excuse themselves for having abandoned their post. The chief priests therefore also had to guard against this possibility; and nothing could serve that purpose better than to work against the testimony of one group of soldiers by putting into the mouths of others a story which, without directly contradicting the facts, would still tend to undercut the one conclusion the disciples of Jesus would try to draw from those facts and which the priests were so anxious to discredit—namely, that Jesus had risen from the dead.

For if the disciples and followers of Jesus, informed by one of the soldiers of the several circumstances Matthew relates, should press these miraculous events as proof of their Master's resurrection, the unbelieving Jews were, through the testimony of those bribed witnesses, equipped to answer that the earthquake and the angel were illusions or dreams; that the soldiers had

honestly admitted they were asleep, though some of them, to spare themselves the shame or punishment such a breach of duty deserved, pretended they had been frightened into a swoon or trance by some extraordinary sight they either never saw at all or saw only in a dream; that while they slept the disciples came and stole the body—since not even the soldiers who claimed to have seen the most pretended to have actually seen Jesus come out of the tomb, and all of them were equally ignorant of how the body had been removed; that when they woke it was simply gone; and that it was far more likely the disciples had stolen the body than that an impostor had risen from the dead.

I will not trouble myself to refute this story; to any fair-minded, thinking person it refutes itself. But I must point out that it rests entirely on the fact that the soldiers did not see Jesus come out of the tomb—a fact that even those who told the real truth could not deny, though they accounted for it differently, saying that they had been frightened into a swoon or trance by the sight of a terrifying figure who came, rolled away the stone, and sat on it. The chief priests, however, judged it imprudent to allow this fact to stand as told, since it lent too much support to the idea that Christ had risen from the dead; yet neither did they think it wise to reject it outright, since they meant to turn it to their own advantage. So, denying everything miraculous in it, they reinterpreted this swoon or trance as ordinary sleep, and with a large bribe and promises that they would not be punished, hired the soldiers to confess to a dereliction of duty, taking the shame on themselves to cover up the real event. And it must be admitted that, to this extent, they succeeded: for until further proof of Jesus's resurrection should be produced—and at that time they had heard of none—this story would certainly have served to confuse the issue and keep people in doubt. Argument and reason, indeed, were entirely on the other side, but prejudice and authority were on theirs, and they understood very well which of the two most people are inclined to follow.

But since nothing more than presumptive arguments in favor of the resurrection could be drawn from what happened to the soldiers at the tomb —even if the chief priests had allowed them to tell the truth—Matthew goes on, in his narrative, to reinforce and confirm those arguments with positive evidence, producing witnesses who had seen and spoken with Jesus Christ after he rose from the dead. Judging from the other Gospels, these witnesses were quite numerous, and the occasions on which Christ appeared after his resurrection were many. Yet of all these, Matthew has chosen to record only two, and on each I would like to offer a few remarks.

The first appearance of Christ is to the women, which happened as they were on their way to tell the disciples the angel's message to them in the tomb. I have already shown, in my observations on John, that Mary Magdalene was not one of these women; and yet Matthew's wording, by the ordinary rules of grammar, seems to suggest otherwise.

In the first place, the sentence "And the angel answered and said unto the women" is, in our translation, joined to what comes before it by the simple conjunction "and." Second, since nothing earlier in this chapter mentions any women other than Mary Magdalene and the other Mary, and no angel other than the one described as descending from heaven, the words "the angel" and "the women" in this sentence would seem to refer to them.

My answer is, first, that this sentence should not be read as though nothing had happened in between it and what precedes it. A closer look, comparing it with the parallel passage in Mark, shows that between the guards becoming like dead men and the angel speaking to the women, Salome had joined the two Marys on their way to the tomb; that by the time they arrived the guards had already fled, and the angel had left his place on the stone and was now seated inside the tomb. For this reason the Greek particle rendered "and" in this verse should rather be translated "but" or "now," marking a break in the narrative and the start of a new paragraph.

Second, I grant that the angel spoken of here is the same one mentioned in the preceding verses, and that the other Mary is one of the women to whom this angel in the tomb, and afterward Christ himself, appeared; and so I grant that the words "the angel" and "the women" in this verse do refer to them. But this does not remove the difficulty, for it will then be objected that either Mary Magdalene was present with the other Mary in the tomb, or there is an inaccuracy in the wording—since the plural forms "women" and "fear not ye" imply there was more than one woman present. I grant this too, and Mark tells us Salome was there. But then, instead of one inaccuracy to charge against Matthew, there are two: Mary Magdalene, who was not present when the other Mary saw the angel, is, by the natural reading of his words, said to have been there; while Salome, who actually was present, he does not mention at all. I grant this as well, and those inclined to raise objections may make the most of it. But let it be remembered, at the same time, that most of the Gospel writers were unlearned men, untrained in the rules of formal eloquence or grammatical precision, against whose standards it is easy enough to point out many faults in the writings of most of them.

The other passage I intended to comment on gives another example of the same kind. It reads: "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." Here, by strict grammar, the words "some doubted" would have to refer to some of the eleven disciples, who have just been said, on seeing Jesus, to have worshipped him—which hardly fits with their also doubting. Nor is it likely that a writer, however unlearned, meant to contradict himself within the space of three words. We should therefore look for another reading, even if it does not follow the grammar quite so strictly, since it is a lesser fault to offend against grammar than against common sense. "Some doubted" must mean that some people other than the Eleven, who were also present on that occasion, doubted. And

indeed, if Matthew had mentioned earlier in his account that others besides the Eleven were present, there would be no difficulty, even under the strictest rules of syntax, in understanding to whom "some doubted" refers. The Greek construction translated literally as "some… but some," set in opposition to each other and meaning "some… others," or "these… those," occurs often in Greek authors of the highest standing; and there is no reason the phrase here should not likewise be read as "the eleven disciples worshipped him, but others doubted," except that the words to which this second "others" would refer are simply missing from the text.

But however troubling these defects may seem to grammarians, or to critics even more fussy and exacting than grammarians, they do nothing to damage this Evangelist's truthfulness in the eyes of anyone willing to consider the purpose for which he wrote his Gospel. As I noted earlier, he wrote at the request of Jewish converts, who, as Chrysostom tells us, came to him and asked him to put in writing what they had already heard from his own lips. His aim in writing the Gospel for the Jews, then, was to set down again what he had already preached to them; and in doing so he had no need to relate every small detail, since he knew they were already well acquainted with it, and the mere mention of the main fact would be enough to bring it back to their memory. So, in the two passages quoted above—to confine myself to those—it was not necessary for him, writing to Jews, to explain, as it was necessary for Mark, writing for Gentile converts, what business had taken Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to the tomb. It was surely common knowledge among the Jews that these women had bought spices and gone to the tomb to embalm the body of Jesus. Nor was it worth interrupting the flow of his narrative, merely for the sake of grammatical precision, to explain that Salome joined the two Marys on their way to the tomb and went with them there, or that Mary Magdalene, on seeing the stone rolled away, ran at once to tell Peter and John—especially since he did not think it necessary to mention Christ's appearance to her at all. And it seems to me that he mentions Christ's appearing to the other women only because it connects to the main point he is building toward: the story of Christ's appearing in Galilee to the Eleven and others.

The disciples' going to meet their Master on a mountain in Galilee, at the place he had appointed, must have caused considerable talk among the Jews, especially since it did not happen until at least a week after the resurrection—during which time he had already appeared three times to his disciples, not counting his appearances to Peter, to the two disciples on the road, and to the women (see John 20:14). And since more than twenty people witnessed one or another of these appearances, word of them had, in all likelihood, spread not only through Jerusalem but throughout Judea. It is no wonder, then, that on this solemn occasion—announced so far in advance, both by an angel at the tomb and by Christ himself on the day of his resurrection, and even foretold by him before his death—a great crowd besides the Eleven should have gathered. Paul mentions an appearance of Christ to more than five hundred

brothers at once (1 Corinthians 15:6), and there is no occasion this can more reasonably be understood of than this one in Galilee. And although some in so large a gathering doubted, as Matthew says, that very exception implies that the greater number believed; and even those who doubted must have agreed with the believers on certain basic points. Like the Eleven, they too saw Jesus, but not having had the same vivid evidence of the reality of his body, they doubted whether what they saw was Jesus himself or merely his apparition; while the others, who needed no further convincing, fell down and worshipped as soon as they saw him. Here, then, was a fact that must, in all its circumstances, have been widely known among the Jews, and was therefore entirely appropriate for Matthew to record.

Here was a whole cloud of witnesses, most of whom were still alive when Paul wrote his epistle to the Corinthians—written, according to Locke's notes on the passage, around A.D. 57—and who were therefore certainly living when Matthew wrote his Gospel, which dates to about the year A.D. 53; and many of them were probably among the very converts for whom Matthew wrote. On either of these suppositions, and especially the last, it is easy to see why he related this important event so briefly. It either was, or could easily have been, known in full detail to those he was writing for. The minor accompanying details were therefore as unnecessary for him to spell out as the event itself was essential to record. The gospel of Christ and the faith of Christians are both empty if Christ is not risen from the dead. It was therefore absolutely necessary for the apostles and preachers of the gospel to prove the resurrection, which they did both by their own testimony and by that of others who had seen Jesus after he rose. Thus Paul lists several appearances of Christ to Cephas and others, and closes with his own testimony, adding, "and last of all he was seen of me also" (1 Corinthians 15:5–8). The Evangelists do likewise, each recording several instances of the same kind: Matthew mentions two, Mark three, Luke as many, and John four—each selecting whichever appearances best suited the purpose he had in mind when writing his Gospel. This was certainly Matthew's approach. For what better way could he prove the resurrection of Christ to the Jews than by appealing to the testimony of several hundred of their own countrymen, all of whom had seen Jesus after his death and were so thoroughly convinced of the reality of his resurrection that they believed and embraced his teaching? This was surely enough to satisfy anyone who demanded a sufficient number of witnesses, and it was, among the Jews at least, the best possible answer to those who, on the word of a few Roman soldiers, claimed the disciples had stolen the body. On this fact, then, Matthew seems to rest his case, and with it he closes his Gospel, adding only Christ's commission to the apostles—and so to Matthew himself as one of them—to go and teach all nations, together with his promise to be with them always, even to the end of the world.

In this way, on the supposition that Matthew wrote his Gospel for Jewish converts—which Chrysostom explicitly affirms—I have tried to account for some of the gaps and omissions found in his writing, as well as for his

inclusion of the story of the guard at the tomb and of Christ's appearance to the Eleven in Galilee, neither of which the other Evangelists mention at all.

I will now make a few remarks on the details Mark gives that Matthew does not. So as not to stray too far from my purpose, I will limit myself to those details which, belonging to facts Matthew also relates but mentioned only by Mark, have led some people to accuse these two Evangelists of contradicting each other. The points I mean to consider are: first, that the women had bought spices in order to anoint the body of Jesus; second, that Salome was one of those women; and third, that on entering the tomb they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white robe, and that they were terrified.

I have already noted that Mark wrote his Gospel for the use of Egyptian Christians—some say Roman, but whether Roman or Egyptian makes no difference here. What is certain is that they were Gentiles, unfamiliar with Jewish customs and religion, as can be seen from several small explanatory notes scattered through his Gospel. To give these readers a full understanding of the event he meant to relate, he found it necessary to begin his account with the detail that the women had bought spices to anoint the body of Jesus. This let them understand what business had brought the women to the tomb so early, and let them see—from the preparations these women made for embalming the body, and from how little credence the apostles gave to the reports of those who had seen the Lord on the day of the resurrection (which Mark mentions later)—that Christ's rising from the dead was an event none of them in the least expected, and one the apostles did not believe even after the kind of evidence Jesus rebuked them for not accepting. From all this it was natural for Mark's readers to conclude that this foundational article of the Christian faith was neither accepted nor preached except on the fullest conviction of its truth. But I will have more to say on this last point later.

As for his mentioning Salome—the second point to be considered—no reason can be given, and none better need be required, than that she was simply there. And as to the third point, their entering the tomb and seeing an angel sitting there on the right side, and so on, I will show, under the next heading, that although Mark gives a more detailed account of it, the main points are already implied in Matthew's version.

The second heading covers the points on which these two Evangelists agree. These are: first, the women's going to the tomb early in the morning on the first day of the week; second, their being told by an angel that Christ had risen. I have nothing to add to what I have already said about the first point, but about the second I must note that the words these two Evangelists put into the angel's mouth at the tomb are almost identical, except that Mark adds Peter's name—doubtless for some particular reason that it is no surprise we cannot discover at this great distance in time. I do not think this single

difference should be enough to overturn the conclusion I want to draw from the otherwise exact agreement between all the other details: that the event these two sacred writers describe is one and the same. This is especially so if we consider that the detail—given explicitly by Mark—that the angel was inside the tomb is, far from being contradicted by Matthew (as some have supposed), actually implied by Matthew's own words: "He is not here. Come"—the Greek word here might more properly be translated "come here"—"see the place where the Lord lay." The same holds for the detail of the women entering the tomb: the Greek word in the parallel passage in Mark should have been translated "they went out" rather than "they departed." I would add further that the angel's clothing, described by Mark as a long white robe, matches the one detail about it that Matthew does mention, namely its whiteness: "his raiment was white as snow." In Matthew's account, this angel is also described as having a countenance like lightning, and the guards are said to have trembled with fear of him.

The purpose of the angel's descending from heaven seems to have been not only to roll away the stone from the mouth of the tomb, so that the women on their way there could freely enter, but also to frighten off the soldiers posted to guard it. Had those soldiers stayed at their post, they certainly would never have allowed the disciples of Jesus to make the inquiries they needed for their own conviction—nor is it likely either the disciples or the women would even have attempted to enter the tomb while it stood ringed by a Roman guard. For this purpose, it is not unreasonable to suppose that the angel not only caused an earthquake but assumed a terrifying appearance, and then, once this purpose was accomplished, took on the gentler form of a young man—the very form in which the women, as Mark tells us, saw him sitting within the tomb, on the right side. This supposition, I repeat, is neither unreasonable nor presumptuous. For while arguing from an event back to its underlying design or intention may be unreliable or misleading when we are judging human affairs, in the actions of God, the supreme governor of all events, such reasoning is most certain and conclusive. So in this case: the sudden appearance of an angel from heaven, accompanied by an earthquake; his single-handed moving of a stone which, according to Beza's copy of Luke's Gospel (as cited by Whiston in his work on the resurrection), twenty men could scarcely have rolled; his taking his seat upon it; and his countenance, from there, blazing and flashing like lightning amid the darkness of the night —all these were circumstances so full of terror and astonishment that they could not help producing, even in the hearts of Roman soldiers, the consternation the Evangelist describes, and driving them from a post which some divine being (for that is surely how, in their own way of thinking and speaking, they would have described the angel) had now taken for his own. A cause so perfectly suited to produce such an effect is itself evidence that it was meant to produce it; and once that purpose had been achieved by the event, there was good reason to change the manner of proceeding afterward. And so the angel, having removed the stone and frightened the guards away

from the tomb, left his post outside, set aside his terrifying appearance, and, entering the tomb, sat there in the form of a young man, in order to tell the women that Jesus of Nazareth, whom they were seeking among the dead, had risen.

That the women did not see the angel sitting on the stone outside the tomb is clear not only from the silence of all the Evangelists on any such appearance, but also from what has already been observed about Mary Magdalene, who, although she saw the stone rolled away, saw no angel, as shown above. Besides, had the angel remained sitting on the stone outside the tomb in all his terrifying splendor, he would very likely have frightened away the women and disciples just as he had the soldiers, and so prevented the very visits to the tomb he had come to make possible. It was necessary, then, either that he not appear to the women at all, or that he appear within the tomb, and in a form which, though more than human, would not be so terrifying as to overwhelm their senses and leave them unable to hear—or certainly unable to remember—the message he commanded them to carry to the disciples. From all this it may fairly be concluded that the appearance of the angel outside the tomb, as Matthew describes it, was meant for the guards alone, and that when the women saw him, he was inside the tomb, just as Mark expressly says, and just as Matthew's own words, quoted above, strongly imply. So these two Evangelists agree not only in the words they report the angel as speaking, but in the main, defining circumstances of the event itself—an agreement from which I conclude that they are describing one and the same occurrence.

A similar agreement appears in their accounts of the women's terror at seeing the angel, their hurried flight from the tomb, and the confusion and turmoil that so extraordinary an event stirred up in their minds—a troubled mixture of fear, astonishment, and joy, which, according to Mark, was so overwhelming that it kept them from telling anyone they met along the way what had happened. This is how we must understand the words "neither said they any thing to any man"; for it is not to be supposed that they never spoke of it at all afterward. Their silence surely lasted only as long as its cause did—their fear and amazement—and this, in all likelihood, vanished the moment they saw Christ himself, who, as Matthew tells us, met them as they were on their way to deliver the angel's message to the disciples, greeted them with "All hail," and told them to set aside their fears. But more on this later.

I come now, under the third heading, to consider those points on which these two Evangelists are thought to clash or disagree. But so many of these have already been examined and, I hope, reconciled under the two previous headings, that only a single point remains to be discussed here: the apparently differing accounts of the time when the women came to the tomb. Matthew says that Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb "as it began to dawn." Mark says, "they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun." To these I must add John, who, speaking of the same women and

the same event, says they came "when it was yet dark." John's phrase, meaning it was still dark, and Matthew's, meaning the day was beginning to dawn, will, I think, without much difficulty be allowed to describe the same point in time—namely, the end of night and the beginning of day. The only real question, then, is how this is to be reconciled with the time Mark gives, namely, sunrise. But this question, however puzzling it may look at first glance, is easily resolved simply by supposing that Matthew, and John with him, is speaking of when the women set out, while Mark is speaking of when they arrived at the tomb. Indeed, the order of Matthew's narrative requires that his words be understood as referring to the time they set out; otherwise, everything he relates about the earthquake, the angel's descent, and so on would have to be read as a parenthesis inserted into the story, which badly disrupts its sequence and creates far greater awkwardness in the construction than it avoids. For my own part, I confess I see no awkwardness at all in the interpretation I am proposing here. The Greek word used by Matthew could just as well be translated "went" as "came," since the verb in question means both to go and to come, and so is capable of either …in the other sense, according as the context shall require. The sense in St. Matthew, as I said before, requires us to take the word in the former sense, for the sake of order, and for another reason, which I shall now explain. The principal fact on account of which the whole story of the women's going to the sepulchre seems to have been related is the resurrection of Christ, and this fact is absolutely without a date if the words of St. Matthew are to be understood as denoting the time of the women's arrival at the sepulchre. When I say "without a date," I mean that nothing in St. Matthew or the other evangelists tells us what hour of that night this great event happened. All the information they give us is that when the women came to the sepulchre, they were told by angels that he was risen. But on the contrary, if we understand St. Matthew to be speaking of the time of Mary Magdalene's setting out to take a view of the sepulchre, then we have the date of the resurrection settled, and know precisely that Christ rose from the dead between the dawning of the day and the rising of the sun. And can any substantial reason be given why St. Matthew, having thought it worthwhile to give so detailed an account of the resurrection, should omit the date of so important a fact? Or why, if he did not intend to mark that date, he would place the mention of the women's going to the sepulchre before another fact that, in order of time, actually came first? All these considerations, therefore, are in my opinion powerful arguments for understanding this passage of St. Matthew in the sense I have expressed above. About St. Mark's meaning there is no dispute. He certainly intended to express the time of the women's arrival at the sepulchre; his words cannot be taken in any other sense. Those of St. John are limited to the same interpretation as those of St. Matthew, since it has already been granted that they both speak of the same point in time.

Before I leave the examination of these evangelists, I beg leave to add a few remarks occasioned by a word used in this place by both Mark and John,

the explanation of which will shed proper light on some passages that have not yet been sufficiently brought into view. The word I mean is the Greek word rendered by our translators as "early." It has been limited to that sense only, and yet it carries a further meaning: it conveys not merely "early" but "too early" — ante constitutum tempus, before the appointed time — not only early, but over-early, ahead of the appointed time. (See Scapula's Lexicon.) I am persuaded this is the sense in which the evangelists used it here. For had they intended to denote only the time of the women's setting out and arriving at the sepulchre, the descriptive phrases "while it was yet dark" and "at the rising of the sun" would have been sufficient, and the more general word "early" would have been entirely redundant. Whereas in the other sense it is very meaningful, and goes a long way toward illustrating and confirming what I hope to show more fully by comparing the several parts of this history together: that the women came to the sepulchre at different times, and not all at once, as has been supposed. The business that brought them all there was to pay their last respects to their deceased Master by embalming his body, for which purpose they had bought and prepared ointments and spices, but were obliged to put off this devoted work by the coming of the Sabbath, on which day, St. Luke tells us, they rested according to the commandment. On the eve of the Sabbath, then, when they parted and each returned to her own home, it is most natural to suppose that they agreed to meet at a certain hour at the sepulchre. And since the errand they were engaged in required daylight, the hour they agreed on was in all likelihood soon after sunrise — their fear of the Jews, as well as their devotion to their Master, prompting them to seize the earliest opportunity. But Mary Magdalene, it seems — whether from a naturally eager temperament, or a more ardent love for her Lord, to whom she owed the greatest debt, or from some higher cause — set out together with the other Mary just as day began to break, in order to take a view of the sepulchre. Having either called for Salome or met her along the way, she arrived there together with her, too early, ahead of the time that had been agreed. This, in my opinion, is a very natural account of the whole matter, and it brings out the importance of these notable expressions: "went to see the sepulchre" in St. Matthew, and "who shall roll away the stone for us" in St. Mark. For, first, the reason the two Maries set out so early is given right here: they went to take a view of the sepulchre — that is, generally speaking, to see whether everything was in the same condition in which they had left it two days before, so that if anything extraordinary had happened in the meantime, they could report it to their companions and, together with them, decide what to do. This is also, secondly, why they were so few in number: they came to view the sepulchre, and came before the time appointed for the full meeting. Third, since on this understanding there were only three women who came first to the sepulchre, their purpose in coming so early could have been no other than the one St. Matthew expresses, for they knew they themselves were not able to roll away the stone — which at least two of them, the two Maries, had seen placed there by Joseph of Arimathea (Mark 15:47), and which they knew could not be moved without more hands than their own.

Accordingly, as they drew near, they said among themselves, "Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre?" These words show that one of their chief purposes in coming to see the sepulchre was to examine this stone, which closed up its entrance, and to consider whether they and the other women who were to meet them there would be able to move it by themselves, or whether they would need to call on the help of others. For "who shall roll away the stone for us?" implies both a sense of their own inability and the necessity of calling in others — after which the only remaining question was whom, and how many. This, then, was the point under discussion as they approached the sepulchre. Second, it is also plain from these words that they did not expect to find anyone there, and therefore that they knew nothing of the guard the high priest had set to watch the sepulchre — for had they received any word of that, they would hardly have ventured to come at all, or would not have been debating the rolling away of the stone as though it were their only or their greatest difficulty.

Here is St. Luke's account, from the twenty-fourth chapter of his Gospel:

> "*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.*"

In this account of St. Luke's there are many particulars that differ greatly from those mentioned by the other evangelists. First, the women, entering into the sepulchre, see neither one angel nor two. Second, not finding the body of the Lord Jesus, they fall into great perplexity. Third, in the midst of this perplexity, two men stand by them in shining garments, who, fourth, say to them words very different from those spoken by the angel in St. Matthew and St. Mark. Fifth, when these women return from the sepulchre and tell all these things to the Eleven and all the rest, St. Peter is said to be present, and upon hearing their report, to rise at once and run to the sepulchre. One would think these marks of difference were enough to keep anyone from confusing the stories just cited of Joanna and St. Peter with those concerning the Maries

and the disciple related in the other Gospels — especially since these differences have been noticed and acknowledged by Christian and skeptic alike. The skeptic has used them to support the charge of inconsistency and contradiction he tries to pin on the sacred writers, while the Christian, misled and dazzled by a few points of resemblance, has agreed with him in treating these different facts as though they were the same — while denying his conclusion, and laboring instead to reconcile the apparent inconsistencies by strained and unnatural rules of interpretation that serve only to reveal how badly he is stuck. Whereas the true way, in my opinion, of answering this charge is to show that it rests on a mistake — by showing that the evangelists relate different, but not inconsistent, facts, and that instead of clashing and disagreeing, they actually confirm, illustrate, and support each other's evidence. This, then, I shall now try to do by making a few remarks on the points mentioned above.

I shall begin with the one concerning St. Peter, because settling that will settle many other points as well. "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." This has always been taken to be the same event related by St. John, from which, however, it differs — among other things — in this very important respect: St. John expressly says that Peter went into the sepulchre, while John himself, who arrived there first, contented himself with merely stooping down and looking into it. St. Luke, in the passage before us, tells us that Peter, stooping down and looking in, beheld the linen clothes laid by themselves, and departed. The word rendered "stooping down and looking in" (parakypsas), used by both evangelists — and in the latter case applied only to St. Peter, in the former only to St. John — is in John's Gospel plainly distinguished from the word "entered in" (eiselthen), and set in direct opposition to it, not merely by etymology and grammar but by certain features of the actions these two words describe, which prove them to be distinct and different from each other. The one who went into the sepulchre saw more than the one who, staying outside, only stooped down and looked in. Thus Peter and John, when they entered into the sepulchre, saw not only the linen clothes lying, but the napkin that had been about his head, lying not with the linen clothes but wrapped together in a place by itself; whereas when they only stooped down and looked in, they could see only the linen clothes — as is clear from the words of St. John, where the whole passage runs thus:

> "*Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple, and came to the sepulchre. 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... and saw,*" *etc.*

Now, since these two actions are so clearly distinguished from each other in St. John by these marks — as clearly as the different places where they occurred can be distinguished by the terms "entrance" and "inside" of the sepulchre — and since, so distinguished, they were separately performed by that same apostle, they must also necessarily be taken as separate and distinct actions when related of St. Peter. And if it is reasonable to conclude from St. John's account that Peter, when he came with John to the sepulchre, did not stop at the entrance, stoop down, and look in, but actually entered it, it is no less reasonable to conclude from St. Luke's account that when he came, at the time Luke mentions, he did not enter in, but stooping down, beheld the linen clothes and departed — especially if we consider the force of the Greek word for "only" (mona), and render the whole passage as it ought to have been rendered: "beheld the linen clothes lying by themselves only." From all this it clearly follows that the event here related of St. Peter and the one related of him by St. John are separate and distinct events, not one and the same, as has been supposed. And as the events were different, so they arose from two different occasions. In other words, as it is now plain from everything just said that Peter went twice to the sepulchre, so there are two distinct reasons given in the Gospels of Luke and John for his doing so, namely, the report of Mary Magdalene, and that of Joanna and the other women. On hearing from the former that the body of Jesus had been taken out of the sepulchre, he ran in great haste to check the truth of that report, and in pursuit of that purpose entered into the sepulchre so that he might be fully satisfied on that point. In the latter report there were two additional circumstances important enough to stir the curiosity even of a less zealous disciple than St. Peter, whose love for his Lord matched his natural temperament — fervent and impulsive. When he heard, then, from Joanna and the other women of a vision of angels who had appeared to them at the sepulchre and told them that Christ was risen, can we wonder that he ran there a second time, hoping to receive some confirmation of a report that, though the rest of the apostles dismissed it as an idle tale, he clearly gave credit to, as the whole tenor of this passage implies? I say a second time, because had he gone for the first time on this report of Joanna's, he could have had no reason to go to the sepulchre a second time based on anything he had already learned from the first report made by Mary Magdalene, whose account contained nothing beyond what was implied in that given by Joanna and the other women. His behavior on this occasion, too — when he only stooped down and looked into the sepulchre, so different from the first time, when he entered it — is very sensible, and fits the purpose of this second visit, which was to see whether the angels who had appeared to the women at the sepulchre were still there. This could be discovered just as well by looking into the sepulchre as by going into it, as is plain from the story of Mary Magdalene, who, stooping down and looking in, saw two angels sitting, one at the head and the other at the feet where the body of Jesus had lain, as St. John tells us.

Having now, I hope, proved that this visit of St. Peter's to the sepulchre, mentioned by St. Luke, must have been his second visit, I have cleared this passage of two objections that were raised against it — one, that it did not agree with the account given by St. John, and the other, that it disturbs and confuses the whole order of St. Luke's narrative. So, although this verse is missing from both the Greek and Latin copies of Beza, there is no reason to reject it, as some have proposed.

This point being settled, I beg leave to draw a few inferences from it, in order to explain some passages in the preceding verses of this chapter.

First, then, it is plain from this verse and from the ninth verse that St. Peter, after he had been with St. John and Mary Magdalene at the sepulchre, was now gathered together with the other apostles and disciples, whom, in all likelihood, he and John had assembled on the occasion of Mary Magdalene's report. Peter and John, I say, had probably gathered the other disciples and apostles together to tell them what they had heard from Mary Magdalene, and that they themselves had been at the sepulchre to check the truth of her report. For it is hard to imagine that these apostles would not have immediately told the rest of an event of such consequence to them all as the Lord's body being missing from the sepulchre. And since we now find them gathered together, with Peter among them, it is no unnatural supposition that they had been summoned there by John and Peter. At the very least, their meeting together so early in the morning is explained this way. Here, then, we see the reason for St. Luke's naming Mary Magdalene and the other Mary among those who told these things to the apostles. For although these two women were not with Joanna and her party, and so could not have joined with them in relating to the apostles the vision of the two angels and so on, yet since the account of their having found the stone rolled away and the body of Jesus missing had already been reported, through Peter and John, to the other apostles before Joanna returned from the sepulchre, St. Luke thought it fitting to set them down as witnesses to some of the events he relates. And indeed it was very proper to give the testimony of the two Maries regarding the stone's being rolled away and the body being gone, because they were first to go to the sepulchre and first to give an account of those two particulars to the apostles. I join the other Mary here with Mary Magdalene, for though I think it is pretty clear from St. John that she alone brought this report, it is notable that in her account she says, "we know not where they have laid him," speaking, as it were, in the name of the other Mary as well as her own. Doubtless she did not fail to tell them that the other Mary had come with her to the sepulchre, so that this report, though made by Mary Magdalene alone, may fairly be taken as the joint report of the two Maries, and was probably described that way by Peter and John, and therefore represented as such by St. Luke in the passage before us.

Second, from this I also infer that the women's reports were made separately and at different times. For if Peter went twice to the sepulchre,

there must have been two distinct reasons for his doing so, which I have shown to be the reports of Mary Magdalene and of Joanna. And since there was a considerable interval between his first and second visit, a proportionate space of time must have passed between the two reports. After Mary Magdalene's report he had gone to the sepulchre, returned from there to his own home, and was now with the other apostles and disciples, whom, as I said, he and John had probably called together before Joanna and the women with her arrived to make theirs.

Third, since the reports were made at different times and by different women, and since the facts reported were different, yet said to have happened all in the same place — namely, at the sepulchre — and since these facts must consequently have happened at different times, it follows that the women who reported those facts as having happened in their presence must themselves have been at the sepulchre at different times. For had they all been present at each of these events, no reason can be given for why their accounts would differ so widely, and it would be rather hard to explain why they varied so much as to the time of making their reports. Here, then, is a strong argument in favor of what I have already argued concerning the women coming to the sepulchre at different times, and in particular about the Maries arriving there earlier than the rest. I have already pointed out the reason for their doing so in my observations on St. Mark, and have shown that, on the supposition that this reason is the true one, their whole conduct was proper and consistent. This brings me to consider the conduct of Joanna and the other women, who came somewhat later, and for a different purpose, to the sepulchre. The former came to take a view, or survey, of the sepulchre, as St. Matthew expressly says; the latter came to embalm, or anoint, the Lord's body, and for that purpose not only brought the spices they had prepared, but were also accompanied by other women. "Other women" must mean some besides those who followed Jesus from Galilee, of whom alone St. Luke speaks in the earlier part of this verse and in the latter part of the preceding chapter. By these, then, as distinguished from the Galilean women, he probably means the women of Jerusalem, a great crowd of whom followed Jesus as he went to his crucifixion, weeping and lamenting him (see the 27th verse of the preceding chapter). But how many of them went on this occasion with the women of Galilee is nowhere said; none of them are named, besides Joanna, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James — though many others followed Jesus from Galilee to Jerusalem, as both Matthew (27:55) and St. Mark (15:41) tell us, and were present at his crucifixion. It is therefore very probable that most, if not all, of those who were accustomed to minister to him in Galilee, who attended him to Jerusalem, and who accompanied him even to Mount Calvary, took part in this devoted task of embalming their Master's body — either by buying and preparing the ointments and spices and carrying them to the sepulchre, or by going to help their companions in embalming the body and rolling away the stone. For this latter purpose, I suppose, the women of Jerusalem mainly attended, since none of them seem

to have purchased any spices for embalming the body, and it is further likely they thought their numbers sufficient for this purpose. Accordingly, we do not find them saying among themselves, "Who shall roll away the stone for us?" as the Maries did, nor do we find the Maries bringing the spices they had bought, as is here related of Joanna and those with her. Doubtless the evangelists meant something by their choice and use of these expressions — the former being very fitting to the purpose that brought the Maries so early to the sepulchre, as the latter is to that of Joanna, who, coming to embalm the body, brought with her everything necessary for that task, namely the spices, and other women to help her roll away the stone, and so on. The different conduct of the women, then, points to their several purposes in going to the sepulchre, and tends to confirm what I have all along been laboring to prove: that they went there at different times, and not all together.

And since their having different motives was the cause of their going at different times and dividing themselves into different groups, so, from their coming to the sepulchre in different parties, arose a further subdivision within one of those parties, which I shall now explain. The two Maries and Salome came first to the sepulchre, and as they drew near, lifting up their eyes, they saw that the stone — which was very great — had been rolled away from the entrance. At this sight, Mary Magdalene, concluding that the body of Jesus had been taken away, ran at once to tell Peter and John, leaving her two companions at the sepulchre. That she was alone when she came to those two apostles is strongly implied by the whole tenor of that passage in St. John where this event is related, as I have already noted; and that she left her companions at the sepulchre is just as clear from what St. Mark says of their entering into the sepulchre, and so on. The reason for this was probably as follows: she knew that Joanna and her company would not be long in coming, and so she might have thought it proper to ask the other Mary and Salome to wait for them there, to tell them that they had found the stone rolled away, and so forth, and that she had gone to tell Peter and John about it. But whether this, or some other reason, was the cause of Mary Magdalene's going by herself to Peter and John, and the other two women's staying behind at the sepulchre, is not very important to inquire into; all I contend for is that it was so — and that from this arose a subdivision of this company, which gave occasion to two appearances of angels, and as many of Christ, and so multiplied the proofs and witnesses of the resurrection.

I hope by now it is sufficiently clear that the facts related by the several women to the apostles were different and distinct facts, and so I think it unnecessary to pursue any further argument on that point. And although, at the start of my observations on this chapter of St. Luke, I noted some particulars in which the story of Joanna differs from that of the other women, and promised to make some remarks on them, I dare say that, for the reason I have just given, I shall be easily excused from that promise, especially since those marks of difference are so obvious and striking that little more needs to be done than pointing them out. I must, however, note that the point about

the angels appearing and disappearing as they thought fit, which I set down in my remarks on St. John, is further proved by the manner of their appearing here in St. Luke's account, which is implied to have been sudden — not only by the force and meaning of the expression, but by the remarkable circumstance that the women did not see them upon entering the sepulchre. Although the following passage of this chapter, concerning Christ's appearance to the two disciples at Emmaus, has already been quoted in part, I think it proper to insert it here in full, so that the reader, having it all before him at once, may be better able to judge of the observation I intend to make on it:

> "*And, behold, two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about threescore furlongs. And they talked together of all these things which had happened. 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 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? And he said unto them, What things? And they said unto him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people: and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him. But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, to day 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. 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 they drew nigh unto the village, whither they went: and he made as though he would have gone further. But they constrained him, saying, Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And he went in to tarry with them. 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, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them, saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon. And they told what things were done in the way, and how he was known of them in breaking of bread.*"

Whoever reads this story with any degree of attention, and considers the subject of the conversation our Savior held with the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, will see that it must have grown out of what the angels had said to the women, as related in the earlier verses of this chapter. To put this matter in the clearest light, let us set the several parts side by side. The angels said to the women who came to embalm the body of Jesus, "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." The words of our Savior that the angels refer to are these (Luke 18:31–33): "Then he took unto him the twelve, and said unto them, 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." These two disciples had heard the angels' words from the women before they left Jerusalem, and as they walked toward Emmaus, talking over all the wonderful things that had happened, they seem at last to have fallen into a debate on the subject of these words and the prophecies they referred to — just as our Savior drew near. That they were engaged in some argument or inquiry I infer not only from the Greek word meaning "to discuss, examine, or inquire together," but from our Savior's question, who, apparently having overheard part of their conversation, asks them, "What arguments are these that you are debating with one another, as you walk and are sad?" The subject of their argument appears in their answer to this question, in which they let him know that they were reasoning about the things that had happened concerning Jesus of Nazareth, whom — plainly alluding to the words of the angels — "the chief priests and our rulers have delivered to be condemned to death, and have crucified him." "And hence arises all our sadness, for we trusted that it should have been he which should have redeemed Israel; and over and above all this, today is the third day since these things were done" (another allusion to the angels' words); "and today some women of our company astonished us with an account of their having been early at the sepulchre, and, not finding the body of Jesus, had been told there by angels that he was risen from the dead. And some of our companions, running at once to the sepulchre, found the women's report to be true — but him they saw not." The sufferings, death, and resurrection of Jesus were the subjects of their debate, foretold — as the angels had bidden them remember — out of the prophets, by Christ himself; and the point of their inquiry was how to reconcile these events with the prophecies to which they had been directed. Part of these prophecies they had seen fulfilled in the sufferings and death of Christ, and that should have assured them of the fulfillment of the rest. But either from not understanding, or from a reluctance to believe all that the prophets had said, they stopped short of this conclusion. For this ignorance and reluctance Christ reproves them, asking them whether, according to the prophets, Christ ought not to have suffered these things and so entered into his glory — that is, to rise again

— and then, beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounds to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself. The connection is plain: at the beginning of the chapter the angels point the disciples to the prophets for proof of the resurrection, and here, Christ joining two of those disciples on the road, is led by their conversation on that very subject to explain those prophecies and prove from them that the Messiah had certainly risen from the dead. And in the same way the rest of this chapter, down to verse 46, is connected with this passage and the one before it. For these two disciples, returning to Jerusalem, relate to the apostles and the rest, whom they found gathered together, what had passed between Christ and them on the road to Emmaus; and while they are speaking, Christ himself appears, and, after giving them tangible proof that he is risen from the dead, reminds them, as the angel had done, of the words he had spoken to them in Galilee, saying, "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." "Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, and said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day."

The connection and dependence of the several parts of this chapter on one another point out to us the reason that led St. Luke to relate the vision of the two angels to Joanna and the other women, and at the same time prove that vision to be distinct and different from those seen by the Maries — each of which had, in the same way, its own separate and particular bearing on other facts, as will presently be seen.

I shall now go on to consider the appearances of Christ to the women on the day of his resurrection, which, like those of the angels, have also been confused with one another, and for the same reason — namely, a failure to attend carefully enough to the several circumstances that plainly distinguish them from each other. First, I observe that these appearances of Christ are so connected with the appearances of the angels that, these having been proved to be distinct, it follows that those are distinct as well. Second, St. Mark expressly tells us that Christ appeared first to Mary Magdalene, which, by all the ordinary rules of speech, implies that she was alone at the time of that appearance, as I have already said once before. But I think it best to set down the passages themselves, from St. John and St. Matthew, in which these appearances are related.

John 20:11–18: "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."

Matthew 28:9–10: "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."

Having set down these two passages, it would be a waste of both time and words to go about proving the appearances they mention to be different. Compare them, and you will find they disagree in every circumstance — in the place, the persons, the actions, and the words. Of this last point I must note that they refer to two different events, namely, the ascension of Christ into heaven, and his meeting his disciples in Galilee, of which they were prophecies — and by which they, and consequently these appearances of Christ, were, not long after, verified, though at first disbelieved and treated as idle tales.

I have now gone over the several particulars of the history of the resurrection as related in the four evangelists, have examined them with all the attention I am capable of, and with a sincere desire of discovering and embracing the truth, and have, I think, established the following points. First, that the women came to the sepulchre at different times and in different groups. Second, that there were several distinct appearances of angels. Third, that the angels were not always visible, but appeared and disappeared as they saw fit. Fourth, that these several facts were reported to the apostles at different times and by different women. Fifth, that there were two distinct appearances of Christ to the women. And sixth, that St. Peter was at the sepulchre twice. Once these points are established, all the objections against this part of the Gospel history as contradictory and inconsistent entirely vanish and come to nothing. That very learned and clever men have been troubled by these objections is some excuse for those who first raised them, and for those who have lately pressed them again. That they have now received an answer (if that will be allowed) is clear proof that it was always possible to answer them, even with a very modest amount of common sense and learning. The nature of the answer itself — which is founded on the usual, obvious, plain sense of the words, without forcing either the particular expressions or the general construction of the several passages — is evidence of what I am saying. So that I must admit that its having been missed for so long is a matter of far greater surprise than its having been found now.

I shall here beg leave to add a few observations from a very distinguished and sensible person, to whose review I submitted these pages, and whose approval of them I have good reason to take pride in. They are as follows:

To prove the appearances at the sepulchre to be different, and made to different people, two things come together.

First, the several accounts as given by the evangelists.

Second, the circumstances attending the case.

The first point has already been fully considered; and of the second it is very justly observed that, the women having agreed to be early at the sepulchre, it naturally happened that some arrived before others. Now, since there was something at the meeting place to frighten them as soon as each party arrived, this also accounts for their scattering, and for their never all gathering together in one body. It may also help to explain the manner in which they delivered their messages to the apostles, supposing the messages were not delivered in the same order, time-wise, as the appearances themselves occurred — for the most frightened might be the latest to report, even though they received their instructions first. This observation is supported by St. Mark's words, "neither said they any thing to any man."

The difficulty in stating that the appearances were different, and made to different people, arises chiefly from Mary Magdalene being mentioned as present by every evangelist. But there seems to be a reason for this: she was at the head of the women, the chief among those who attended our Lord and followed him from Galilee, and the phrase "Mary Magdalene and the women with her" denotes the women who came from Galilee, in the same way that "the Eleven" denotes the apostles.

Three evangelists expressly say that many women were present at the crucifixion. Had the matter been left so general, we would have had no account of who they were. So St. Matthew (27:56) adds, "among whom was Mary Magdalene," and so forth. The same is true again at Mark 15:40. St. Luke, having said in general terms that the women who followed from Galilee witnessed the crucifixion, goes on with the account (24:1) of their coming to the sepulchre, seeing angels, and returning to tell the Eleven and all the rest. But to give credibility to their report, and to make up for not having described them before, he tells us who they were. And how does he describe them? Why, by saying they were of the company of Mary Magdalene: "ēsan de hē Magdalēnē Maria," and so on (24:10) — a verse that admits, perhaps even requires, a different reading from the one in our translation.

These considerations seem to account for her being mentioned in connection with the dealings of these women, even though she was not always present herself. St. Luke says (24:1) that besides the women from Galilee, there were other women present. To distinguish those who made the

report to the disciples from the other women, he adds the words already referred to.

The words of St. Luke deserve particular examination. In the Greek they run thus: "Kai hypostrepsasai apo tou mnēmeiou apēngeilan tauta panta tois hendeka kai pasi tois loipois. ēsan de hē Magdalēnē Maria, kai Iōanna, kai Maria Iakōbou, kai hai loipai syn autais, hai elegon pros tous apostolous tauta." In English: "And turning back from the sepulchre, they told all these things to the Eleven, and to all the rest. Now they who related these things to the apostles were Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and the rest with them" — that is, of their company. Since the account of the doings of the Galilean women begins in the preceding chapter and runs on without interruption to the ninth verse of this one, the several verbs occurring in this and the preceding verses are all governed by the same subject, namely "the women," as used in verse 55 of chapter 23. From this it is clear that "all these things" must be taken to extend to all the particulars mentioned in that account, and cannot be limited to the events at the sepulchre only — and the same observation holds equally for the word "all" in the following verse. The most, then, that can be inferred from St. Luke's naming Mary Magdalene and the other Mary is that they were involved in some or other of these events, and joined in relating some of these things to the apostles — which is true, for "they sat over against the sepulchre, when Joseph laid in it the body of the Lord" (Matthew 27:61), and "beheld where he was laid" (Mark 15:47). They also had bought sweet spices that they might come and anoint him (Mark 16:1), and they were the first to come to the sepulchre that morning, and brought the first account of the body's being missing (Matthew and Mark). And although, comparing the accounts given by the other evangelists with this one of St. Luke's, it appears that neither of these women went with Joanna and her company to the sepulchre, yet since they were Galilean women and bore a part — and a leading part at that — in what the women of Galilee were then chiefly occupied with, namely the care of embalming the body of Jesus, there is certainly nothing improper in St. Luke's naming them along with Joanna and the rest, as he does at the end of the general, collective account he gives of what was reported and done by the Galilean women. Nor does his naming them assign to them any particular part of that general account, any more than his not naming them would have excluded them from their share in those events and in the report then made to the apostles. In that case they would simply have been included under the general term "Galilean women"; whereas by being named, they are singled out and marked as the most eminent persons and leaders of that company of women who followed Jesus from Galilee, and so on.

It is worth noticing that St. Mark says of the women he mentions no more than that they had bought spices to anoint the body — enough to show their intent in going to the tomb — but he does not say that they actually had any spices with them. St. Luke, however, says of those he mentions that they actually brought the spices with them, and not only that, but that they had

prepared them — that is, made them ready for the use intended. The various drugs would have been bought separately, each on its own at the shop, and would necessarily have had to be mixed or melted together for use. And I imagine that, although all the women joined in buying the spices, the task of obtaining and preparing them was left particularly to the women mentioned by St. Luke. And since they were Galileans, not at home in Jerusalem, and probably unfamiliar with the method of embalming bodies, they likely employed some local residents to buy and prepare the spices and go with them to apply them to the body — and these are the "others with them" mentioned in St. Luke.

This also accounts for St. Matthew saying nothing about spices, for they had none with them: they set out before those who were to bring the spices, in order to see what condition the sepulchre was in, and their business is properly described by the phrase "to see the sepulchre."

Mary Magdalene was among the first (in Matthew and Mark) to go toward the sepulchre, but I think she did not actually go to the sepulchre that time. As soon as it came into sight, lifting up her eyes (Mark 16:4) and seeing the stone removed, she turned back at once (John 20:2) to tell Peter and John. And it is plain from her behavior on her second visit that she had no share in the fright that seized those who went on after she left them.

Having thus cleared the way, I shall now set down the several events of this wonderful day in the order in which, according to the observations above, they seem to have occurred — after first noting that our Savior Christ was crucified on a Friday (the day of preparation, the day before the Jewish Sabbath), gave up the ghost about three o'clock in the afternoon of that same day, and was buried that evening, before the Sabbath began — the Sabbath among the Jews always being reckoned to begin at the first appearance of the stars on Friday evening, and to end at their appearance again on the day we call Saturday. Some time — most probably toward the close of the Sabbath, once the religious duties of the day were over — the chief priests obtained from Pilate, the Roman governor, a guard to watch the sepulchre until the third day had passed, claiming to fear that his disciples might come by night and steal away the body, and then report that he had risen, just as he himself had predicted while still alive. They did, accordingly, set a guard, made the sepulchre secure, and, to prevent the soldiers themselves from conspiring with the disciples, sealed the stone that closed the entrance of the sepulchre.

The order, I believe, was as follows.

Very early on the first day of the week (the day immediately following the Sabbath, and the third from the death of Christ), Mary Magdalene and the other Mary, in pursuit of their plan to embalm the Lord's body — a plan they had agreed on with the other women who had attended him from Galilee to Jerusalem, and for the carrying out of which they had prepared ointments and spices — set out to take a view of the sepulchre just as day began to break.

And about the time they set out, there was a great earthquake, for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, came and rolled back the stone from the door of the sepulchre, and sat upon it. His countenance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow; and for fear of him the guards shook and became like dead men — and during their terror and amazement, Christ came out of the sepulchre. Once the guards had recovered from their daze and fled, the angel, who until then had sat on the stone, left his post outside and entered the sepulchre, where he probably arranged the linen cloths and the napkin in the order in which they were afterward found and observed by John and Peter. Mary Magdalene, meanwhile, and the other Mary, were still on their way to the sepulchre, where — together with Salome, whom they had either called for or met along the way — they arrived at sunrise. And as they drew near, discussing how they would go about embalming the body of their Master, they said among themselves, "Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre?" — for it was very great, and at least the two Maries had seen it placed there two days before, and had seen how much difficulty it took to do so. But in the middle of their deliberation about removing this great and, so far as they knew, only obstacle to their purpose (for it does not appear that they knew anything about the guard), lifting up their eyes while they were still some distance off, they saw that it had already been rolled away. Alarmed by so extraordinary and unexpected a circumstance, Mary Magdalene, concluding that since the stone could not have been moved without a great number of hands, it had not been rolled away without some purpose — and that whoever had rolled it away could have had no purpose but to remove the Lord's body, and being convinced by appearances that this had indeed happened — ran at once to tell Peter and John what she had seen and what she suspected, leaving Mary and Salome there so that, if Joanna and the other women should arrive in the meantime, they could tell them of their surprise at finding the stone removed and the body gone, and that Mary Magdalene had gone to inform the two apostles of it. While she was on this errand, Mary and Salome went on and entered the sepulchre, where they saw an angel sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment, and they were frightened. And he said 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."

After Mary and Salome had left, John and Peter arrived, having been told by Mary Magdalene that the Lord's body had been taken out of the sepulchre, and that she did not know where it had been laid. They ran together to the sepulchre, and the other disciple, John, outran Peter and came first to the sepulchre, and, stooping down and looking in, saw the linen cloths lying, yet did not go in. Then came Simon Peter following him, and went into the

sepulchre, and saw the linen cloths lying, and the napkin that had been about his head, not lying with the linen cloths but wrapped together in a place by itself. Then the other disciple, who had come first to the sepulchre, went in also, and he saw, and believed — for as yet they did not understand the Scripture that he must rise again from the dead.

Commentators have generally agreed to understand this word "believed" as meaning no more than that St. John believed what Mary Magdalene had suggested — namely, that they had taken away the Lord's body — and they seem to have been led into this opinion by the words immediately following, "for as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead," which contain a kind of excuse for their not believing he was risen. It is, however, certain that when the word "believe" is used on its own, the sacred writers most commonly mean what is called faith — and in that sense it is used no fewer than three times in the latter part of this chapter. To get around this objection while keeping the word's usual meaning, and still reconcile this verse with the one following, it has been suggested that Beza's old Greek manuscript reads "he did not believe" rather than "he believed." Rather than examine which of these two readings is to be preferred, I will only note that Beza himself, in his commentary on this passage, makes no mention of the alternate reading just mentioned — on the contrary, he argues that St. John did believe in the resurrection. These are his words: "Et credidit, kai episteusen — Christum videlicet resurrexisse, quanquam tenuis adhuc fuit haec fides, et aliis testimoniis egeret, quibus confirmaretur. Joannes igitur solus jam tum hoc credidit," etc. — that is, "And he believed — he believed, that is, that Christ had indeed risen, although this faith was still weak, and needed other testimonies to confirm it. John, then, alone believed this at that time," and so on. (See his Greek Testament, folio edition, printed at Geneva, A.D. 1598.) And I confess I am most inclined to his opinion, for reasons that will appear in the course of this work.

Then the disciples went away again to their own homes. But Mary stood outside the sepulchre weeping, and as she wept she stooped down and looked into the sepulchre, and saw two angels in white, sitting, one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. And they said to her, "Woman, why weepest thou?" She said to them, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him." And when she had said this, she turned herself back and saw Jesus standing there, and did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, "Woman, why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou?" Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, "Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away." Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned herself and said to him, "Rabboni!" — which means "Master." Jesus said to her, "Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended unto 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."

After this appearance of Christ to Mary Magdalene — to whom St. Mark expressly says he appeared first — the other Mary and Salome, who had fled from the sepulchre in such terror and amazement that they said nothing to anyone (that is, as I understand it, had not yet delivered the angel's message to those they met, who were probably John and Peter, running with Mary Magdalene to the sepulchre about the time these women were fleeing from it — they might have caught sight of them at a distance, though their terror might have kept them from recognizing them right away; but I shall say more on this later) — were met along their way by Jesus Christ himself, who said to them, "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."

With these several women and the two apostles now gone from the sepulchre, Joanna, with the other Galilean women, and others with them, came bringing the spices they had prepared for embalming the body of Jesus, and finding the stone rolled away from the sepulchre, they went in. But not finding the body of the Lord Jesus, they were greatly perplexed about it, and behold, two men stood by them in shining garments; and as they were afraid and bowed their faces to the ground, the men said to 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 to the Eleven and to all the rest. And their words seemed to them like idle tales, and they did not believe them.

But Peter, who on Mary Magdalene's report had already been at the sepulchre and entered it, and with a curiosity that showed he expected something extraordinary, and a desire to be satisfied, had noticed that the linen cloths in which Christ had been wrapped, and the napkin that had been about his head, had not merely been left in the sepulchre but carefully wrapped up and laid in separate places — and who might have begun from this to suspect what his companion St. John, from those very circumstances, seems to have come to believe — this same Peter, hearing from Joanna that she had seen a vision of angels at the sepulchre who had assured her that Christ was risen, started up and ran there at once. And knowing that the angels, if they were still within the sepulchre, could be seen without his having to go in, he did not, as before, enter in, but, stooping down, looked far enough in to see the linen cloths, and departed, wondering in himself at what had happened. And either with Peter, or about that same time, went some other disciples who had been present when Joanna and the other women made their report, and they found it to be just as the women had said.

The same day, two of the disciples went to a village called Emmaus, which was about seven miles from Jerusalem. And they talked together of all these things that had happened. And it came to pass that, as they talked together

and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near and went with them. But their eyes were kept from recognizing him. And he said to them, "What manner of communications [arguments] are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad?" And one of them, named Cleopas, answering, said to him, "Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days?" And he said to them, "What things?" And they said to him, "Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him. But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel; and beside all this, 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." Then he said to 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 to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself. And they drew near to the village to which they were going, and he acted as though he would go further. But they urged him, saying, "Abide with us, for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent." And he went in to stay with them. And it came to pass, as he sat at the table with them, he took bread and blessed it, and broke it, and gave it 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 hearts burn within us, while... ...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, and found the eleven gathered together, and those who were with them, saying, "The Lord is risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon." And they told what things were done on the road, and how he was known to them in the breaking of bread.

This is the order in which the several incidents related above appear to have arisen. I have shown the agreement of this order with the words of the Evangelists, interpreted in their obvious and most natural sense, in my remarks on the passages where they occur. And although the reasons already given are, I think, sufficient by themselves to justify the interpretation I am arguing for, still, for the better confirmation of what has been advanced, let me lay before you one or two observations suggested by this very order itself —observations that will show how fitted and directed it was, in all its parts, by the hand of Providence, toward the great end to which it was aimed: namely, the proof of the resurrection of Christ.

First, then, by this order, in which all the different events naturally and easily follow one another, arising as it were out of each other, the narrative of the Evangelists is cleared of all confusion and inconsistency. And second, the

proof of the resurrection is better established by thus dividing the women into two or more groups than it would be on the opposite supposition, which brings them all together to the tomb at once. For in that latter case, instead of three separate appearances of angels to the women, and two of Jesus Christ, we would have only one of each; whereas on the view I have given, there is a succession of witnesses, a series of miraculous events mutually strengthening and illuminating one another, all equally and jointly combining to prove one and the same fact—a fact which, being in its own nature most astonishing, and in its consequences of the utmost importance to mankind, required the fullest and most unexceptionable evidence. And I will venture to say that no fact was ever more fully proved, as I do not doubt I can show to anyone who will consider with me, first, the manner; second, the substance of the evidence; and third, the character and disposition of the persons it was meant to convince. By these last I chiefly mean the apostles and disciples of Jesus, who were to be the witnesses of the resurrection to the whole world. By "manner" I mean the method and order in which the several proofs were laid before them; and by "substance" I mean the several facts of which the evidence consisted.

I shall begin with the apostles and disciples, since it was chiefly for their conviction that the miraculous appearances of the angels, and of Christ himself to the women, were designed. Understanding their general character, as well as the particular state of their minds at that time, will throw light on the other points we are to consider.

The greater part, if not all, of the apostles and disciples of Jesus—at least those who openly and avowedly followed him—were men of low birth and humble occupations: unlearned, unused to deep inquiry or abstract reasoning, of coarse understanding and narrow views, and strongly possessed by the selfish, worldly, and nationalistic prejudices of the Jewish religion as it was then taught by the scribes and Pharisees. And hence, although it is evident from several passages in the Gospel history that, convinced by the many miracles Jesus of Nazareth performed, and by the fulfillment in him of many prophecies, they believed him to be the Messiah, yet their idea of the Messiah was the same as that of their fellow Jews—who, by misunderstanding the true meaning of certain prophecies, expected to find in the Messiah a temporal prince, a redeemer and ruler of Israel who would never die. And this prejudice was so deeply rooted in the minds of the apostles, as well as the rest of the Jews, that even though our Savior constantly disclaimed the role of a temporal prince, and on many occasions tried to correct his disciples' thinking, they still could not entirely give up their opinion—even after they had seen him risen from the dead and received that incontestable proof that he was the Messiah, and that they had mistaken the meaning of the prophecy about his never dying. For in one of his conversations with them after his resurrection, they ask him whether he would at that time restore the kingdom to Israel—so stubbornly did they cling to their former prejudices. Since this, then, was their settled notion of the

Messiah, can we wonder that their former faith in him was extinguished when they saw him suffering, crucified, and dying, and—instead of saving others—unable to save himself? To prepare them for these events, he had indeed foretold, in the most detailed way, his own sufferings, death, and resurrection. But the apostles themselves assure us that they did not understand those predictions until some time after they were fulfilled, and they made this confession at a time when they were as conscious of their former dullness, and no doubt as astonished at it, as those who now hold it against them pretend to be—so that their honesty on this point is not to be questioned. Since immortality and temporal dominion were, in their view, the defining marks of the Messiah, the sufferings and death of Jesus must have convinced them, before his resurrection, that he was not the Messiah—not the person in whom they had trusted as the redeemer and king of Israel. And having, as they thought, found themselves mistaken in their faith on this point, they might with some show of reason be cautious and slow to believe any predictions about his rising from the dead, even had they understood what those predictions meant. The state of mind, then, into which the apostles fell upon the death of their Master must have been a state of perplexity and confusion. They could not help reflecting on his miraculous works and his still more miraculous holiness of life, and yet could not account for the shameful death of so extraordinary a person. It was a state of dejection and despair: they had conceived great expectations from their conviction that he was the Christ of God, but these had all vanished; their promised deliverer, their expected king, was dead and buried, with no one left to call him from the grave as he had called Lazarus. With his life, they might suppose, his power to work miracles had also ended, and death, perhaps, was an enemy he could not overcome, since it was plain he could not escape it—and from this came their despair. It was also a state of anxiety and terror. The Jews had just put their Master to death as a criminal and an impostor; what then could his followers expect from his bitter and now triumphant enemies but insults, reproaches, disgrace, scourging, chains, and death? Fear of the Jews made them desert their Master when he was first seized; made Peter, the most zealous of the apostles, deny him three times, even with oaths and curses; and made the apostles and disciples, when they gathered together on the day of the resurrection to discuss the reports they had received of Christ's being risen, withdraw into a room and shut the door, for fear of being discovered by the Jews. Such, then, was the state of the apostles' minds upon the death of their Master: full of prejudice, doubt, perplexity, despair, and terror—disorders that required gentle treatment, mild remedies, and a gradual cure. This brings me to consider, next, the manner—that is, the method and order—of the evidence by which they were restored to soundness of mind, and converted from deserters of their Master into believers, teachers, and martyrs of the gospel.

The first alarm they received was from Mary Magdalene, who, early in the morning of the third day after our Savior's burial, came running to tell Peter

and John that she had found the stone rolled away from the mouth of the tomb, and that the body of the Lord had been taken away. This news brought the two apostles there, and they went into the tomb and found the linen cloths in which his body had been wrapped, and the cloth that had been around his head, folded up and lying in different parts of the tomb. These circumstances, trifling as they may seem at first glance, were, if properly considered, very striking, and well suited to prepare their minds for something extraordinary—since nothing but the resurrection of Jesus could, by sound reasoning, be concluded from them. The body they saw was gone; but who could have taken it away, and for what purpose? Not friends, for in that case they would in all likelihood have known something about it. Not the Jews, for they had no business with it. Pilate, to whom alone its disposal belonged, as the body of a criminal executed by his order, had given it to his disciples, who had laid it in that tomb only two days before—so why would they remove it again so soon? Not to bury it elsewhere, for in that case they would not have left the spices, the winding-sheet, and the head-cloth behind. Whoever, then, had removed the body could not have done it meaning to bury it—and yet no other purpose for removing it could easily be imagined. Besides, it must have been removed by night and in secret, and therefore in haste—so how did the winding-sheet and the head-cloth come to be folded up and arranged so neatly within the tomb? Add to this that the stone was very large, so that many people must have been involved in this business, yet not one of them was there to answer any questions. Such reflections could not help arising in their minds, and these difficulties could not help preparing them to expect some extraordinary event. His life, they knew, had been a life of miracles, and his death had been accompanied by wonders and signs—all of which must have come crowding into their memories. And yet none of them at that time (except John) believed that he was risen from the dead, for as yet, as that apostle tells us, they did not know the Scripture that he must rise again from the dead—that is, they did not understand from the prophets that the Messiah was to rise again from the dead, being persuaded, on the contrary, that these very prophets had foretold that the Messiah would not die but remain forever.

The next piece of information they received was from Joanna and the women who had gone with her to the tomb, who told them two new and very surprising things: that they had seen a vision of angels there, and that these angels had told them Jesus was risen, and had also reminded them of what he himself had earlier told his disciples concerning his sufferings, his death, and his resurrection on the third day, as foretold by the prophets. What various thoughts these two astonishing facts must at once have stirred in them! The great difficulty about their Master's body being missing, which had so alarmed and puzzled them, was now at once resolved. Angels had told the women he was risen from the dead, and, to make it easier for them to believe so astonishing an event, had reminded them that Christ himself had foretold his own sufferings, death, and rising again from the dead on the third day—not only through the spirit of prophecy, with which they knew he was

endowed, but also through the prophets. The very words of their Master they remembered well, and they were thus far convinced that the women spoke the truth. Those parts of this prediction that concerned his sufferings and death they had already seen exactly fulfilled, and that was a strong argument for believing the rest might be fulfilled too. Besides, this was the third day—the very day on which Jesus had told them he would rise from the dead. So the argument drawn from the testimony of the prophets, on which their disbelief in the resurrection had chiefly been based, was here undermined; and their Master's own interpretation, already verified in most particulars by what had happened, was now set up against that of the scribes and Pharisees, whose influence they had so often been warned against. But still they did not understand what was meant by his rising from the dead. Was he to live once more with them on earth? If so, where was he? Nobody had yet seen him—neither the women themselves, nor those among them who, upon their report, had gone to the tomb. By his "rising from the dead," then, it might be meant that God had taken him up into heaven, as he had done Enoch and Elijah—and could they hope he would return from there to be the redeemer and king of Israel?

To remove these several difficulties, and to carry the explanation of the resurrection one step further, they were probably next told by Mary Magdalene that she had seen not angels only, but Christ himself, who had appeared to her as she stood weeping at the tomb; that at first she did not recognize him, taking him for the gardener; that when he called her by name she knew him; that when she offered to embrace him, he told her not to, giving as his reason that he had not yet ascended to his Father; but told her to go and tell his disciples that in a short time he would ascend to his Father and their Father, his God and their God. In this account of Mary Magdalene's there were three points of great importance. First, it was a stronger proof than any they had yet received that Christ was risen from the dead, since Mary Magdalene had herself seen him. Second, he told her he had not yet ascended to his Father, which seemed to give them hope that they too might have the joy of seeing him. Third, the words "I ascend to my Father," and so on, plainly referred to a conversation he had held with them before he was betrayed, in which he told them that he would go to his Father. By these words, then, they were not only reminded of another of his predictions, but also called upon to expect the great things that were to follow from his going to the Father: namely, the coming of the Comforter, a power to work miracles, and—as a foretaste of all these—the joy of seeing him again, all of which he had promised them in the conversation this message referred to. Yet some doubts and difficulties remained. Nobody but Mary Magdalene had seen him, and she had not even recognized him at first, taking him for the gardener. Perhaps the whole thing was an illusion. But even allowing that it was Christ whom she saw, why was she told not to touch him? Perhaps it had been only an apparition, and not Christ himself. Besides, why had he not appeared to his

disciples, who, according to his own promise, were to see him again? The whole story, then, might still seem to them an idle, fanciful tale.

To free them from these doubts, nothing could have been better designed than the account given by the other Mary and Salome, which was this: that they too had been at the tomb, where they had seen an angel who not only assured them that Christ was risen, but ordered them to tell his disciples that they should meet him in Galilee, in keeping with what he himself had told them during his life. They reported that they were so amazed and terrified by this vision that they fled from the tomb in the greatest haste, intending to tell the apostles what the angel had commanded them, but were so overcome with fear that they could not bring themselves to tell what they had seen and heard to some people they met on the way. They said that as they were going, Jesus Christ himself met them, and, greeting them with "All hail," told them not to be afraid, but to go and tell his brothers that they should go into Galilee, and that they would see him there—to which they added that they went and took hold of his feet, and worshiped him. They further told Peter that the angel had expressly instructed them to deliver this message to him in particular. Had the apostles and disciples believed this account from Mary and Salome, they could have had only one scruple left. Jesus had now appeared to two women besides Mary Magdalene; he had allowed those women to take hold of his feet, giving thereby tangible proof that it was really himself and not an apparition; and he had appointed a place where they themselves were to see him. The only scruple remaining, then, arose from their not yet having seen him themselves, and until they did, they seemed determined to withhold belief in his resurrection, treating all these several visions of the women as nothing but idle tales.

It is worth noting that all these miraculous events followed closely on one another's heels, and so were crowded into a very short space of time; so we ought to be less surprised that the apostles did not yield at once to so much evidence. Such a heap of wonders was enough to overwhelm and bewilder their understanding. They were therefore left for a time to turn over in their minds what they had heard, to compare the various reports with one another, to search the Scriptures, and to recall the predictions and sayings of their Master, to which they had been directed both by the angels and by Christ himself. But examining the Scriptures was a task that took time, and in the state they were then in, their minds were undoubtedly too agitated to settle into such work with the calm and attention it required. Besides, it must be remembered that they were a group of unlearned men, not skilled in interpreting prophecy or accustomed to lengthy arguments and reasoning, and moreover still under the grip of an entrenched prejudice, sanctioned by the scribes and Pharisees, the priests and elders, whose learning and teaching they had been raised from childhood to revere. To help them in their inquiry, and lead them to the true meaning of the Scriptures—the only reasonable means of overcoming their prejudices—Christ himself appeared that same day to two of his disciples, who were going to Emmaus, a village

about seven miles from Jerusalem, and whom he found discussing and reasoning, as they walked, about these very matters. These disciples, as I have already shown, had left Jerusalem before any of the women who had seen Christ had made their report—or at least, that report had not yet reached them. All they had heard was that some women who had been early at the tomb had there been told by angels that he was risen from the dead, and reminded that he himself had earlier predicted his own resurrection by showing from the prophets that it was to happen. This was the argument they were discussing when our Savior joined them. Questioning them about the subject of their discussion, and about the sorrow visible in their faces, and understanding from their account that they were still unconvinced on the main point, and seemed to make the proof of his resurrection depend on his showing himself alive, he first rebuked them for their slowness and reluctance to believe all that the prophets had spoken, and then, beginning with Moses and all the prophets, explained to them, out of all the Scriptures, the things concerning himself. During this entire conversation they did not recognize him; their eyes were kept from knowing him, as St. Luke tells us, and the reason for this is quite plain. Christ's purpose in giving them so detailed an exposition of the prophets was to show that, by properly using their own understanding, they could have been convinced, from those very Scriptures whose authority they accepted, that the Messiah was bound to suffer, as they had seen him suffer, and to rise from the dead on the third day. That is, Christ chose to convince them by reason rather than by the senses alone—or at least to prepare their minds so that their later assent to the evidence of their senses would come with the agreement of their reason. He had followed the same method with the other disciples in Jerusalem, from all of whom he had so far withheld the evidence of the senses, having appeared to none of them except Peter until after these two disciples returned to Jerusalem. This course of action, so fitting for the Lord of righteousness and truth, and so respectful of man's freedom as a reasoning being, could not have been followed had Christ revealed himself to them at his first appearing. Wonder and astonishment would, in that case, have taken the place of reason, and might have left them, once the first strong impression had worn off a little, in doubt and skepticism. But now, having duly prepared them to receive the testimony of their senses, he revealed himself to them—and did so through an act of devotion, the breaking of bread, which among the Jews was always accompanied by giving thanks to God, the giver of our daily bread. But there seems to have been something distinctive in this action, which is why it was mentioned both by St. Luke in his account of this history, and by the two disciples themselves when they later told the apostles at Jerusalem what had happened to them at Emmaus. The manner, no doubt, of breaking the bread—and probably the very words of the thanksgiving—were particular to our Savior, and these latter were perhaps the very same words he had used at the Last Supper. At the least, these two actions are described by St. Luke in the same words: "He took bread, and gave thanks, and broke it, and gave it to them." If so, how powerfully this action must have called them to remember

their Lord, who had instituted that very form in remembrance of his death! And how fitting it was that it should accompany this revealing of himself, which he now chose to make to them! Accordingly they were convinced, and returned that same hour to Jerusalem, where they found the apostles gathered together and discussing—apparently—the various reports they had heard that day, and in particular what Peter had told them, to whom Christ had appeared at some point that day. But since neither the time nor the particulars of that appearance are recorded by the Evangelists, I will not venture to say anything more about it than that the apostles seem to have placed greater weight on that appearance alone than on all those reported by the women. For as soon as these two disciples came into the room, the others greeted them at once, without waiting to hear their story, with "The Lord is risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon"—making no mention of any of his appearances to the women. After this the two disciples told what had happened to them on the road to Emmaus, and how he was recognized by them in the breaking of bread. But St. Mark says that they did not believe these two disciples any more than they had believed the others to whom Christ had appeared—words which seem to contain a kind of contradiction to what they themselves appear to acknowledge in saying, "The Lord is risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon." Let us therefore examine these two passages a little more carefully. The whole passage in St. Mark reads: "After that, he appeared in another form to two of them, as they walked and went into the country, and they went and told it to the rest, and they did not believe them." To this I must add the following: "Afterward he appeared to the eleven as they sat at supper, and rebuked them for their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they did not believe those who had seen him after he was risen." By comparing these passages in St. Mark with the parallel passage in St. Luke, it will become clear what the apostles' belief was, and what their unbelief was. The parallel to the first has already been considered; the course of my narrative now leads me to consider the second—and in doing so, I will take occasion to show how the two accounts illuminate and explain one another, and so clear these two Evangelists from any suspicion of contradicting each other's account.

The apostles, having received the several reports of the women early in the morning, and having had ample time since then (for it was now night) to discuss and reflect on them, and having afterward heard the reports of Peter and of the two disciples from Emmaus, were now ripe for conviction, and Christ was pleased to give them the evidence they so much seemed to desire, and which, having already been granted to others, they had some reason to hope for and expect. Accordingly, just as the disciples from Emmaus had finished telling their story, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them and said to them, "Peace be unto you." And they were terrified and frightened, and supposed they had seen a spirit. Here, then, was their error, and in this consisted their unbelief. They acknowledged, indeed, that Christ was risen from the dead, but did not believe that he had bodily appeared to those who

claimed to have seen him and to have had sufficient proof of it. These, St. Mark says, they did not believe; and we learn from St. Luke that when Christ appeared to them, they did not even believe their own eyes, but supposed they had seen a spirit. That this was the unbelief for which, as we read in St. Mark, our Savior rebuked them is clear from what follows in St. Luke: "And he said to them, Why are you 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 does not have flesh and bones, as you see me have." And when he had spoken this, he showed them his hands and his feet. We may judge the disorder by its remedy. He told them to feel and see that it was no spirit but himself. Why? Because they doubted it—and he rebuked them for their unbelief and hardness of heart because they doubted it, despite the testimony of people whose honesty they had no reason to suspect, and who brought with them proofs that could not have been faked. Since it is clear from these passages, thus compared, that the unbelief of the apostles mentioned by St. Mark, and the belief they professed according to St. Luke, were both partial, these two Evangelists are thus perfectly reconciled.

But if someone should still insist that these words of the apostles and disciples, "The Lord is risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon," imply that they already had a full and explicit belief in the resurrection of Christ—as, from the force of the word "indeed," I myself am inclined to think—and should then ask how they came afterward to disbelieve the two disciples, and even to doubt the appearance they themselves witnessed, I answer that in the appearance of Christ to the two disciples, and afterward to the apostles themselves, there were certain circumstances which, at first, and until more satisfying proof was given, might naturally tend to confuse and unsettle the faith they had built upon Peter's testimony. For Christ's appearing first to the two disciples in another form, and vanishing out of their sight as soon as he made himself known to them, seemed better suited to the idea of his being a spirit than a living body; and his entering the room where they were gathered, though the doors were shut, only reinforced that idea at the first sudden impression it made on their minds. This mistake, in both cases, arose from their not paying sufficient attention to the miraculous powers belonging to Christ, to whose working his having a body was no obstacle. This oversight, and lack of due consideration on the part of the apostles and disciples, justifies our Savior's rebuking them for not believing those who had seen him. But the doubts it caused were soon overcome by the further proofs of the reality of his body that he afterward gave them. And by this explanation, as well as by the former one, the Evangelists are cleared of contradicting each other.

However, even these proofs did not entirely satisfy them, for, as the history goes on, "while they still did not believe for joy, and wondered, Christ said to them, Have you any meat? And they gave him a piece of broiled fish and a honeycomb, and he took it and ate before them." So much compassion did he show for their weakness, and so much care did he take that not even a

shadow of doubt should remain in their minds on a point of the utmost importance to the great work he had come to accomplish! And perceiving now that every doubt had vanished and that they were fully convinced, he said to them—pursuing the argument begun by the angels and carried on by himself with the two disciples on the road to Emmaus—"These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still 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." Then he opened their understanding, so that they might understand the Scriptures, and said to them, "Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for Christ" (that is, the Messiah) "to suffer, and to rise from the dead on the third day; and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be preached in his name, beginning at Jerusalem; and you are witnesses of these things."

The apostles, having now had every kind of evidence laid before them that was needed to convince them of the reality of Christ's resurrection, and being moreover given, through the gift of the Holy Spirit which had inspired the prophets, the ability to understand the true meaning of those sacred writings to which their Master constantly directed them for the marks and features of the Messiah—which he affirmed were found in him, both in his sufferings, death, and rising again from the dead on the third day, and in the miraculous works and spotless holiness of his life—were again left to consider and examine at leisure the several proofs of the resurrection they had heard and seen that day, and particularly those arising from the fulfillment of the predictions contained in the Holy Scriptures. So that they might undertake this examination with the calm, deliberate, and sober attention especially necessary for uprooting deep-seated religious prejudices and planting in their place a rational and well-grounded faith—such as is required of all who believe in Christ, and was especially necessary for men who were to be witnesses of all these things to the whole world—he refrained from visiting them again for eight days. After that time he condescended to submit himself to a further examination, in order to remove the unreasonable doubts of St. Thomas, one of the apostles, who, not having been present when our Savior appeared to the other disciples, and consequently not having seen him himself, refused to believe, on the mere report of others, so wonderful a thing as Christ's rising from the dead. Indeed, he was resolved not to be convinced by sight alone: "Unless I see in his hands," he said, "the mark of the nails, and put my finger into the mark of the nails, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe." When Jesus had appeared to his disciples, he had shown them his hands and his feet as proof that he was the same Jesus who had been crucified. This detail, among others, the apostles no doubt related to St. Thomas as evidence by which they themselves were assured it was their Master whom they had seen; and on this same kind of evidence St. Thomas, too, was willing to believe—but first he must be convinced it was real. He would not merely see the mark of the nails, which might be counterfeited; he would put his finger into the mark of the nails, and put his hand into Christ's

side. Eight days later, then, when his disciples were again gathered together in a room, and Thomas was with them, Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the middle of them, and said, "Peace be unto you." Then he said to Thomas, "Reach your finger here, and see my hands, and reach your hand here, and put it into my side; and do not be unbelieving, but believing." What could St. Thomas do but yield at once to the evidence he had demanded? And what could he say to one who seemed to know all his thoughts, but "My Lord and my God"? Jesus said to him, "Thomas, because you have seen me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen, and yet have believed."

After this there seems to have remained no doubt in the minds of any of the apostles, though Christ was still pleased to continue his visits to them, being seen by them, as St. Luke testifies, for forty days after his passion, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. But since up to this point all the appearances of Christ seem to have been intended only for the conviction of his apostles, while those that followed were intended rather for their confirmation and instruction in the faith and doctrines of the gospel, the sacred writers, who have been very detailed in their accounts of the former, have mentioned only a very few of the latter. I say "few," for I think it highly likely that the appearances of Christ to his apostles during the remaining thirty days were more numerous than they thought fit to record. And the reason for this difference is quite clear. The apostles are to be considered both as witnesses of the miracles, sufferings, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and as teachers and preachers of his doctrine. In the character of witnesses, a detailed account of the means and opportunities they had of certainly knowing the several facts they testified to must necessarily give great weight and credibility to their evidence; whereas in the character of preachers it is enough if their hearers were satisfied in general that the doctrines they taught were derived from the instructions, and authorized by the commission, given them by their Master to teach all nations—and of this, the various gifts of the Holy Spirit, poured out not on the apostles only but, through them, on all believers, were full and unquestionable proof. But among the last-mentioned appearances of Christ there are two which, because of their connection with what came before, ought by no means to have been left out. The first concerns Christ's meeting his disciples in Galilee, which had been foretold by Christ himself before his death, repeated by the angels to the women at the tomb, and afterward confirmed again to them by Christ himself. It was certainly necessary to show that this prophecy had been fulfilled, and accordingly we find it in St. Matthew, who says, "Then the eleven disciples went into Galilee, to a mountain where Jesus had appointed them, and when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted." The second, in the same way, corresponds to what our Savior had said to Mary Magdalene in these words: "But go to my brothers, and say to them, I ascend to my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God"—words which, as I have already observed, referred to a conversation he had held with his disciples the night before he was betrayed, in which he told them, first, that he would go to

his Father; second, that he would come to them before he went to his Father; third, that after he had gone to the Father he would send them a Comforter, even the Spirit of truth, who would teach them all things and bring all things to their remembrance that he had said to them; and fourth, that whoever believed in him would have the power to work miracles as great, or even greater, than his own. The fulfillment of these several promises or prophecies I shall now set down, noting only that the second article was abundantly fulfilled by the several appearances mentioned above, as we have already seen. The first—his ascension into heaven—came about in this way: "And being assembled together with them, he commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, you have heard from me. For John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now. When they therefore had come together, they asked him, saying, Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel? And he said to them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father has kept in his own power; but you shall receive power after the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you shall be witnesses to me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and to the uttermost parts of the earth. And when he had spoken these things, while they watched, he was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, two men in white clothing suddenly stood by them, who said, Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who is taken up from you into heaven, will come again in the same way you have seen him go into heaven." The history of the fulfillment of the third article is found in the next chapter, in these words: "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all together in one place; and suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them divided tongues, as if of fire, and it sat upon each of them, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven. Now when this was reported abroad, the crowd came together and were confused, because every man heard them speak in his own language. And they were all amazed and marveled, saying to one another, Are not all these who speak Galileans? And how do we hear them, every one of us, in our own language in which we were born? Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the inhabitants of Mesopotamia, and of Judea, and Cappadocia, of Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, of Egypt and the parts of Libya around Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, Jews and converts, Cretans and Arabians—we hear them speaking in our own tongues the mighty works of God." For proof of the fulfillment of the fourth article, I will refer the reader to the history of the Acts of the Apostles, where he will find countless instances of the apostles' power to work miracles; by whose hands, says that historian (chapter 5, verse 12), "many signs and wonders were done among the people… so that they brought the sick out into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, so that at the

very least the shadow of Peter passing by might fall on some of them. And a multitude also came from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing sick people, and those troubled by unclean spirits, and they were healed, every one."

From this view of the method and order in which the several proofs of the resurrection were laid before the apostles, it is clear that, since Christ required of them a reasonable and well-grounded faith, he also pursued the most proper and effective means of achieving that end. With this purpose in mind, instead of overpowering their reason and dazzling their understanding by revealing himself all at once in full splendor, we see him letting in the light upon them little by little, preparing their minds through the gradual dawning of the truth, so that they might be able to bear the full brightness of the Sun of Righteousness rising from the grave—to consider and examine it, to know for certain that it was indeed he himself, and to assure the world that they could not possibly have been deceived. And just as, by this general course of action, he intended to open their understanding by degrees and lead them step by step to full conviction and knowledge of the truth, so too, by directing them to the Scriptures and submitting himself to the scrutiny and judgment of their own senses, he not only waived all claim to mere authority, but required them, in a strong and particular way, to use their own reason in examining the evidence placed before them. For this purpose he also strengthened their faculties by the infusion of his Holy Spirit, and gave them ample time and frequent opportunities, "showing himself to them alive after his passion, by many convincing proofs," as the author of Acts says, "being seen by them for forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God." And certainly, evidence was never more fairly offered for consideration; an inquiry was never conducted by a more rational method; nor, indeed, were there ever facts better able to stand up to such testing. This I shall now try to demonstrate, by examining the facts themselves on which the proof of the resurrection, and consequently the faith of the apostles, was established.

The facts that make up the evidence of the resurrection may be grouped under three headings: first, the appearances of the angels; second, the appearances of Christ to the women; and third, the appearances of Christ to the disciples and apostles.

First, the appearances of the angels at the tomb on the morning of the resurrection were several, each differing from the others and seen by different people: first, by the Roman soldiers who guarded the tomb; second, by the other Mary and Salome; third, by Mary Magdalene; fourth, by Joanna and those with her.

The angel who appeared to the Roman soldiers was clothed in terror. His face was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. His coming was accompanied by an earthquake, and his strength was so far beyond that of mortal men that he alone rolled away the stone from the mouth of the tomb—a stone which, according to Beza's manuscripts, both Greek and Latin, was so

large that twenty men could hardly have rolled it. I have already noted the two purposes for which this angel of the Lord descended from heaven: to frighten away the soldiers, and to open the tomb, so that the women who were then on their way there, and the others—both women and disciples and Jews—who would come there that day, might have free entry into it and see that the body of Jesus was not there. Everyone, I think, must acknowledge how reasonable these two purposes were, and that is a very important point in establishing the credibility of the event—especially when we consider that, without heaven's intervention, the tomb would probably not have been opened, nor the guard removed, until after the third day had fully passed—the day Christ had set for his rising from the dead. In that case, although no earthly power could have prevented Christ, who is the power of God, from coming out of the grave, yet the tomb's door remaining closed, and the guard remaining there, would have effectively prevented that examination of the state of the tomb which convinced St. John that Christ was risen. And even if that examination did not by itself amount to clear proof of the resurrection, it was at least wonderfully suited to prepare the minds, not only of the apostles, but of all the Jews then in Jerusalem, to accept the further proofs that were afterward brought before them. For it is not to be supposed that only the disciples of Jesus visited the tomb that day. The soldiers' story undoubtedly spread quickly all over Jerusalem, and mere curiosity, with no other motive, was surely enough to draw numbers of people to view the scene of so astonishing an event: a tomb cut out of solid rock, sealed with a huge stone, that very stone sealed only the evening before by the chief priests and elders and placed under guard by Roman soldiers—this tomb, despite all these precautions, now open, as one group of soldiers reported, by an angel from heaven, or, as others said, by the disciples of Jesus, who, as was claimed, had come by night while the guard slept and stolen away the body of Jesus, which in fact was missing. These two different and irreconcilable reports must likewise have led others to go and examine, on the spot, the nature and layout of the tomb, to judge how likely it was that the disciples had stolen the body of Jesus—for, on that theory, only human means were supposed to have been used, and in order to know whether those means were adequate to produce the effects attributed to them, it was necessary to compare what had actually been done with the manner in which it was claimed to have been carried out. And upon such an examination, I think it must have appeared to every thoughtful person, if not impossible, then at least highly improbable, that the disciples of Jesus could have stolen away his body while the guards were at their posts. For suppose the disciples to have been the very opposite of what they actually were—bold, enterprising, cunning impostors, capable of attempting so dangerous a scheme—can it also be supposed that a company of Roman soldiers, trained under the strictest discipline, and stationed there only the evening before, would all have fallen asleep at the same time, and slept so soundly and so long that they were not awakened either by the rolling away of the stone (which, since it alone closed the mouth of the tomb, must certainly have been very large) or by the carrying off of the body? The former

would have required many hands, and the latter must have been done with some care and deliberation, since the linen cloths in which the body had been wrapped, and the napkin that had been wound about the head, were found folded up and laid in different parts of the tomb. The tomb was cut, or hollowed out, of solid rock, so there could be no question of making a secret passage into it by digging through the rock; and so they must have entered only by the one entrance, which was closed by a great stone and guarded by a band of Roman soldiers. These several circumstances, properly considered, were by themselves enough to undermine the testimony of those soldiers who claimed that the disciples had stolen their Master's body while they slept. But on the other hand, they were very strong arguments for the credibility of the account on which all the soldiers at first agreed, and which some of them had undoubtedly made known before the other story was put into their mouths by the chief priests and elders. For in this account a cause is given that is proportionate to all the effects—effects which, being visible and well known as well as extraordinary, could not fail to arouse people's natural curiosity to ask by what means they had come about. The explanation is simple and complete: an angel of the Lord came down from heaven, rolled away the stone from the mouth of the tomb, and sat on it; his face was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. This accounts for the soldiers' terror, their abandoning their post, and their headlong flight into the city; for the stone being rolled away from the mouth of the tomb even while surrounded by a Roman guard; for the burial linens being left in the tomb, folded up and lying in different places; and for the body being missing. And therefore the cause assigned here, however extraordinary, is most likely to be true.

Nor could the miracle itself be any objection to the credibility of this account among the Jews, who, on the authority of their lawgiver, their prophets, and their historians, were accustomed to think the working of miracles entirely consistent with the idea of God, the almighty and all-wise creator of heaven and earth—even though some modern philosophers have claimed to discover, by reason alone, that miracles are utterly impossible by the common sense and understanding of man, and contrary to the unchangeableness of God. This point, indeed, if it could be proved (which most certainly it cannot) would by itself be a sufficient answer to all the arguments that can be brought in support of the credibility not only of this story, but of the whole Gospel history, and of the Jewish religion as well, and would make all other objections to them needless and superfluous. Let those, then, who on the strength of this speculation deny Christianity, try their strength here: let them prove that miracles are utterly impossible; or, until they do, let them allow those of the contrary opinion to insist that, in the present case, the miracle can be no objection to the credibility of the fact—and that, as I have said, it could have been none among the Jews in particular, who from their childhood had heard, read, and believed in the mighty signs and wonders God had worked for his people Israel; who had expected to find in the Messiah a power to work miracles; and who had evidence of many

miracles performed among them by Jesus and his disciples. And indeed, the appearance of an angel on this occasion, far from being an objection, was highly fitting—I might almost say necessary. Jesus had, only two days before, been put to death by the rulers of the Jews as an impostor—one who, they said, cast out devils by the power of Beelzebub, and who blasphemed God by claiming to be the Messiah. His tomb, too, was guarded by a company of soldiers, under the pretense of preventing his disciples from carrying on the deception their Master had begun, by stealing away his body and claiming he had risen from the dead, in fulfillment of what he had said before his crucifixion. Under these circumstances, the testimony of heaven was necessary to show that God, though he had allowed him to die on the cross, had not forsaken him, but had, on the contrary, worked together with him even in his suffering, death, burial, and resurrection from the dead on the third day—having, by the hidden workings of his providence and his almighty power, fulfilled in every detail the several predictions Jesus had made concerning each of these events; events which, at the time those predictions were made, none but God, or an eye enlightened by his all-knowing Spirit, could have foreseen, and which nothing less than his all-controlling power could have brought about. The descent, then, of the angel of the Lord from heaven, and his rolling away the stone from the tomb, was visible proof that the finger of God was at work in the great act of the resurrection; it was a fitting honor paid to one who claimed to be the Son of God, and it unanswerably refuted the wicked slanders of those who, because of that claim, called him an impostor and a blasphemer.

What has just been said about the fitness and necessity of an angel's descending from heaven on this occasion applies in general to the several appearances of angels seen by the women, which I shall examine next, taking it for granted that the miraculous nature of such appearances will no longer be used as an argument against their possibility. The only thing left to consider in this examination, then, is the internal evidence these several visions carry with them of their own reality and truth—for some have treated them as pure illusions, and others as outright falsehoods. The chief argument used to prove their falsehood rests on a supposed contradiction and inconsistency in the several accounts given of them by the Evangelists; and since that argument has already been thoroughly examined earlier in this discourse, I must refer the reader there for an answer to it. That these appearances were illusions, the effects of superstition, ignorance, and fear, has been suggested rather than actually argued, and has never, as far as I know, been proved. I will not, therefore, waste my time in a vain search for arguments which, I suspect, are not easy to find—or they would surely have been produced by those who have worked so hard to expose and ridicule the faith of Christians. But leaving it to those who wish to maintain that claim to make it good, I shall proceed to set down a few observations tending to prove the reality and truth of these appearances of the angels to the women.

The angel first seen by the women was the one described by St. Mark, in the form of a young man sitting (within the tomb) on the right side, clothed in a long white garment—at the sight of whom the women (Mary and Salome), showing clear signs of fear, were told by him, "Do not be afraid. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who 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 goes before you into Galilee; there you shall see him, as he told you." That this was a real vision, and no trick of the imagination, is clear from the following particulars. First, it does not appear from this or any other account that the women, on coming to the tomb, were under any such terror or disturbance of mind as tends to fill the imagination with ghosts and apparitions. On the contrary, they went there a little after daybreak, prepared and expecting to find the dead body of Jesus there, intending to embalm it—a matter they had been calmly discussing along the way. So, second, by their coming with the intention of embalming the body, it is plain they had no notion either that he was already risen, or that he would rise from the dead; and therefore, third, had the angel been merely the creation of a disturbed imagination, they would hardly have put into his mouth a speech that directly contradicted all the ideas they had been acting on only a moment before. Fourth, it should be noted further that the illusion, if it was one, must have been double: two senses must have been deceived, hearing as well as sight, for the angel was heard as well as seen; and although this often happens in dreams, and sometimes perhaps in delirium or a fit of madness, I doubt whether an instance exactly matching, in every detail, the case supposed here was ever known—for no two people dream alike together, nor are affected by delirium with exactly the same imaginings. Fifth, the words spoken by the angel refer back to other words spoken by Christ to his disciples before his passion, in which he told them that after he was risen he would go before them into Galilee. This promise, or prediction, the angel here reminds them of, telling them to tell the disciples, on his behalf, to go into Galilee, and promising them that Christ would meet them there. Now, since not only the resurrection but Christ's personal appearance is implied in these words, the reasoning given above under the third point applies even more strongly in the present case against supposing that these words came only from the women's imagination; for no adequate cause can be given for so sudden a change in their opinion, from disbelief in the resurrection to full and explicit belief in it. Even if we grant that they knew of this prediction of Christ's (which, however, does not appear to be the case), the very errand that brought them to the tomb makes it plain that, up to that moment, they either did not remember it, did not understand it, or did not believe it. And if it is further suggested that, upon entering the tomb and not finding the body of Jesus, this prediction might naturally have come into their minds all at once, and that they might just as suddenly and reasonably have believed Christ to be risen as St. John did—whose faith was built on no more evidence than these women now had before them—I answer that, even granting that St. John, when he is said to have first believed in the resurrection, had no more evidence than these women now

had, or might have had, it should be noted that St. John was in a better state of mind to reflect on and judge that evidence than the women were. St. John ran to the tomb on being told by Mary Magdalene that the body of Jesus had been removed from there, and laid she did not know where, nor by whom; and since the tomb was some distance from where he was staying, many thoughts must naturally have occurred to him on the way, attempting to account for the removal of the body—among them, perhaps, some vague and uncertain hope that he might be risen from the dead, in keeping with the many predictions to that effect Jesus had given his disciples. But whatever his thoughts were at the time he arrived at the tomb—about which, admittedly, nothing can be offered but mere conjecture—it is certain he had time to reflect on his Master's predictions and to examine the state of the tomb, which both he and Peter did (and that implies some measure of deliberation and presence of mind), and that after this careful examination he went quietly back home. The women, by contrast, are described as falling into the greatest terror and amazement the moment they entered the tomb, and remaining in that same state of confusion until they met Christ himself while fleeing from there. Under such disorder of mind, can we suppose them capable of recalling Christ's predictions about his resurrection, weighing the proofs of their fulfillment arising from the state of the tomb, and persuading themselves all at once not only that he was risen from the dead, but that he would personally appear to his disciples? And then, immediately upon reaching this conviction, imagining they saw an angel, and heard him clearly assure them that Christ was risen, call them to view the place where he had lain, and tell them to inform his disciples that he would meet them in Galilee? In a word, if this supposed illusion arose from a strong conviction that Christ was risen from the dead, where did that belief come from? If that belief arose from calm reflection on our Savior's predictions and on the state of the tomb (the very cause of St. John's faith), where did their terror come from? That terror, if not prior to the angel's appearance, was at least prior to the words "Do not be afraid," with which he first greeted them. If it is argued that this terror was simply one of those baseless and unaccountable terrors called panics, the answer is that this merely gives us a name instead of a reason, and amounts, in effect, to saying nothing at all—or saying no more than that they were frightened, but nobody can say why or on what grounds. Sixth, it should be noted that the angel's speech to the women consists of ten distinct points: 1. Do not be afraid. 2. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. 3. He is risen. 4. He is not here. 5. Behold the place where they laid him. 6. But go your way, tell his disciples, 7. And Peter, 8. That he goes before you into Galilee, 9. There you shall see him, 10. As he told you. The order and connection of these several points are no less remarkable than their number; and so, taking both of these considerations into account, I leave it to anyone to judge whether it is conceivable that women in so great a state of terror and distraction of mind, as to imagine they saw and heard an angel when there was no such thing, could compose a speech for this phantom of their own fear and imagination containing so much substance, order, and reasoning—and

doing so on the assumption that they were not yet convinced Christ was risen from the dead, even though belief in his resurrection is supposed not only to have preceded but even to have caused this illusion in the first place.

I have lingered longer over the examination of this first appearance of the angel to the women, because settling the nature of that one will spare us the trouble of entering into a separate discussion of the rest, the several details of which will fall under one or another of the observations already made. All I shall do, then, is note the different circumstances observable in each of them, and from there attempt to draw another argument for the truth and reality of all of them.

The vision we have just considered was of one angel; the one seen by Mary Magdalene was of two, as was likewise the one reported by Joanna and those with her. And whereas the first angel was found by the women, upon their entering the tomb, sitting on the right side, the two later appearances were sudden and abrupt. For the angels Mary Magdalene found sitting, one at the head and the other at the feet of the place where the body of Jesus had lain, had not been seen by Peter and John, who had just before entered the tomb and examined every part of it with great attention; and Joanna and those with her had been in the tomb for some time before they saw any angels at all—angels who also seem to have appeared to them in a different posture from those seen by Mary Magdalene and by the other Mary and Salome. And just as the number of the angels and the manner of their appearance differed, so too did the words spoken to… …to them by the women, and the behavior of the women on these several occasions. Mary and Salome were seized with fear, and fled from the sepulchre in the utmost terror and amazement. Joanna, and those with her, were struck with awe and reverence, and bowed their faces to the earth. But Mary Magdalene seems to have been so immersed in grief at not being able to find the body of the Lord that she took little or no notice of so extraordinary an appearance: she sees, hears, and answers the angels without any emotion, and without turning her attention away from the one object on which her mind was wholly fixed, until she was awakened out of her trance by the well-known voice of her Master calling her by name. But here let us stop a little, and ask a question or two. Could this appearance, then, have been an illusion? Could a mind so occupied, so lost in one idea, attend at the same time to the production of so many other images of a different kind? Or could her imagination have been strong enough to see and converse with angels, and yet too weak to make any impression on her, or to draw her attention away from a less affecting, less surprising subject?

Real angels, indeed, she may be supposed to have seen and heard without regarding them; but apparitions raised by her own fancy could not have failed to engage her notice. For although, when we are awake, we cannot avoid perceiving the ideas excited in us by the organs of sensation, it is nevertheless, in most instances, within our power to give those ideas whatever degree of attention we think fit. And hence it happens that when we

are earnestly occupied with some action, intent on some thought, or carried away by some passion, we see, hear, and feel a thousand things of which we take no more notice than if we were entirely insensible to them, as everyone's daily experience can testify. But the ideas that do not come directly from sensation, but are formed within us by the internal working of our own minds, we cannot help attending to, because we are ourselves active in producing them, and because, by their very nature, they cannot exist any longer than while we attend to them. Of this kind are all the phantoms that haunt our sleeping or waking dreams; for all ecstasies, deliriums, and the ravings of madness may not improperly be called by that name. And whatever the physical cause may be that, on these occasions, sets the mind to work and influences the imagination, the mind is certainly more than passive in producing these things, and is generally so attentive to them that it disregards, during these fits, all the demands of external objects, or else blends and colors with the ruling idea everything that comes in from the senses. From all this it is evident that the mind cannot apply itself to contemplating more than one object at a time; and whichever object holds possession of it, for as long as it holds that possession, excludes or obscures all the others.

Mary Magdalene, therefore, having become strongly convinced, upon seeing the stone rolled away from the mouth of the sepulchre, that some persons had removed the body of the Lord — a notion she was confirmed in still further after her return to the sepulchre with Peter and John — and grieving at being thus disappointed in paying her last duty to her deceased Master, whose body (since neither Peter, his most zealous disciple, nor John, his most beloved, knew anything of its removal) she might imagine had fallen into the hands of his enemies, to be exposed perhaps to fresh insults and indignities, or at least to be deprived of the pious offices which the duty and affection of his followers and disciples were preparing to perform — Mary Magdalene, I say, falling into a passion of grief at this unexpected distress, and giving herself over to all the melancholy reflections that must naturally arise from it, with her eyes full of tears and therefore seeing less clearly, looking as it were by accident, and while her mind was on other matters, into the sepulchre, and seeing angels there, might, according to the reasoning laid down above, give but little heed to them — not perceiving, all at once, and under so heavy a cloud of sorrow, any signs of something extraordinary in that appearance. She might take them, perhaps, for two young men — which was the form assumed by those who appeared to the other women — without at first reflecting that it was impossible they could have been in the sepulchre without being seen by John and Peter, and unlikely that they could have entered it after their departure without being observed by her. Intent on what was passing within her own heart, she did not give herself time to consider and examine external objects; and so she did not even recognize Christ himself, who appeared to her in the same hidden and miraculous manner — but, supposing him to be the gardener, begged him to tell her, if he had

removed the body, where he had laid it, so that she might take it away. From this question, and from the answer she had given the angels just before, we can see what her thoughts were so earnestly occupied with; and from this we may conclude further still that the angels were not creatures of her imagination, since they plainly were not the objects of her attention. The appearance of the angels, therefore, was real. But let us return from this digression.

If the several appearances of the angels, examined separately, can be shown to carry with them evident marks of reality and truth, then considering and comparing them together will set that point in an even stronger light — strong enough, we would presume, to clear up entirely every doubt in the minds of those who seem inclined to believe anything possible except that the Gospel should be true. For both the number, the manner, the variety, and the nature of the circumstances of these visions, together with the fact of their being seen by different persons at different times, make it, according to the natural course of things, utterly incredible that there could have been in them either illusion or imposture. Many instances, perhaps, of illusions affecting single persons, and even groups of people (for nothing is more contagious than superstition and enthusiasm), might be produced; how well authenticated they are, there will be time enough to inquire once we know what they actually are. But I believe it will generally be found, upon strict examination, that whenever any number of people have fallen into such an illusion as to hear and see spectres and apparitions purely through the force of imagination, it is because the imagination, or the artifice, of one person among them has given birth to the phantom; and that phantom, working upon minds already disposed by superstition, enthusiasm, or credulity, or perhaps cunningly prepared beforehand for that particular occasion, has led them easily to see and hear things that existed only in their own overheated and already-persuaded fancies. But none of this can be claimed in the present case. The women by whom these different visions of angels were separately seen had no communication with one another during the time these appearances occurred, as is evident from the whole course of this history: Mary and Salome had already fled from the sepulchre before Mary Magdalene returned, and Mary Magdalene had departed from there again before Joanna and those with her arrived; so that they could not have caught the illusion from one another. And that their minds, at the time they came to the sepulchre, were very far from being disposed to imagine that Christ had risen from the dead, is evident from the very errand that brought them there. They came to perform the last rites customarily paid to the dead, and by embalming the body to complete the burial of their deceased Master — a task which, because of the oncoming Sabbath, they had been forced to leave unfinished. And when, upon entering the sepulchre, they did not find the body, it was more natural for them to think, as Mary Magdalene did, that some persons had taken it away and laid it somewhere unknown to them, than to conclude that it had risen from the dead. And it is plain that Joanna and

those with her held this same view; for when they went in and did not find the body of the Lord Jesus, St. Luke tells us, they were much perplexed about it — that is, they did not know what had become of the body, could not account for its being missing, and were therefore in great distress and anxiety about it, which would not have happened had they believed that he had risen from the dead.

If, from what has been said, it seems reasonable to conclude that the appearances of the angels were not the effects of illusion, the phantoms of a disordered, visionary mind, it will, I think, be more easily granted that they were not the work of artifice and imposture either. For, without even examining who the actors in such an imposture could have been, or what their motives might have been, there is evidence enough, arising from the circumstances of these several appearances, to show that the powers that produced them were more than human. Such, for example, is the earthquake caused by the descent of the first angel; the amazing brightness of his countenance, which St. Matthew tells us was like lightning; and the prodigious strength shown in his single-handedly rolling away a stone large enough to seal the entrance of the sepulchre; and what was common to all the angels, the ability to become visible or invisible as they chose. These were certainly the distinguishing marks of an agent endowed with powers and privileges superior to the limited abilities of man, whose operations can go no further than his knowledge of the laws and powers of nature allow — and how far short of such wonderful effects as these that knowledge would fall, I leave the most ingenious professor of natural magic to determine.

2. I come now, in the second place, to consider the appearances of Christ himself to the women, which were two: the first to Mary Magdalene, the second to the other Mary and Salome. But I will not need to dwell long on this point, since the appearances of the angels, having already been shown to be real, put these appearances of Christ further beyond doubt and suspicion. The angels affirmed that he had risen from the dead; and if he had risen, it was natural to expect that he would appear. The main difficulty lay in his getting loose from the bonds of death and breaking open the prison of the grave; and therefore, whoever believed the resurrection on the testimony of the angels — as all those must have done who acknowledged them to be real angels — would not, upon seeing Christ himself, be very inclined to call the reality of his appearance into question. But although the testimony of angels affirming that Christ had risen from the dead makes his later appearing less open to doubt and question, still, before we admit the reality of every such appearance that might be claimed, I grant that it is reasonable to expect some further proof — though perhaps not as much, or as strong, as would be needed had no such prior evidence been given. And in the case of Mary and Salome it might be suggested that their very belief in the resurrection of Christ, combined with the disorder and amazement they were then under, might have made it too easy for them to be convinced of the reality of his appearance, when at the same time it might have been nothing but a spectre of their imagination and a

mere illusion. Let us therefore examine what evidence may be gathered from the account given of this appearance to lead us to believe that these women were not deceived; and the evidence, I believe, will be found sufficient.

They had the testimony of their sight, their hearing, and their touch. By the first two, the voice and countenance of their Lord could be recognized; and by the third they could be assured that what they heard and saw was no spectre, but a body consisting of flesh and bones. One of these proofs, indeed, was withheld from Mary Magdalene, since Christ forbade her to touch him; and yet, anyone who considers with due attention the circumstances of this appearance will find sufficient reason to be persuaded that it was Christ himself who appeared to her. For, first, he had stood by her for some time, had spoken to her, and she had answered him, before she knew him to be Christ — indeed, she took him for the gardener. From all this it is clear that the spectre, if it was one, was not of her own creating. Her mind was engaged elsewhere, and had it been either free or disposed to raise apparitions, it is most likely she would have called up some person with whom she had more acquaintance and concern than a keeper of a garden, whom she had probably never known or seen before. Second, he called her by her name; and just as this showed that he knew her, so it seems she then recognized him too — for, turning immediately about, she addressed him with the respectful title "Rabboni," meaning "my Master," and, as may be inferred from Christ's following words, offered to embrace him. His voice and his countenance convinced her that it was Christ himself. Third, in these 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" — is contained a most clear proof that it was Christ himself who spoke them. To understand this, it must be remembered that these words refer back to a long discourse which our Savior gave his disciples on the very night he was betrayed (John, chapters 14, 15, and 16), in which he told them that he would leave them for a short time ("a little while, and ye shall not see me") and that he would come to them again, though also for only a short time ("and again, a little while, and ye shall see me"), because, as he added, "I go to my Father" (John 16:28). By the phrase "I go to my Father," Christ meant his final departure from this world, as he himself explained to his disciples, who did not at that time understand either of the expressions just quoted: "I came forth from the Father," he says, "and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father." But lest they should fall into despair at being thus forsaken by him, for whom they had forsaken the whole world, he promised at the same time to send them a Comforter, even the Holy Spirit, who would teach them all things, and bring to their minds whatever he had said to them (John 14:26); who would guide them into all truth, show them things to come, and abide with them forever (John 16:13); and that whoever believed in him would be able to do even greater works — that is, miracles — than he himself had done, because he was going to the Father; and that,

finally, though they would be sorrowful for a time, their sorrow would be turned into joy, and that joy no man would take from them (John 16:20–22).

These were magnificent promises — promises which, since the disciples could not help remembering that Christ had made them, assured them that no one but Christ himself could make good on them. And so, when they came to reflect seriously on the meaning of these words — "Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended to my Father; but go to my brethren, and say to them, I ascend to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God" — it was impossible for them to conclude anything other than that it was Christ himself who had appeared and spoken to Mary Magdalene. For just as the latter expression, "I ascend to my Father," implied a remembrance, and therefore a renewal, of those promises which were to take effect after his ascension to the Father, so the former expression, "I am not yet ascended to the Father," gave them reason to expect the fulfillment of that other promise — his coming to them again before his ascension — by letting them know that he had not yet left this world. And I take Christ's forbidding Mary Magdalene to touch, or embrace, him to have been meant as a sign of his intention to see her and his disciples again — just as in ordinary life, when one friend says to another, "Don't say goodbye yet, for I'm not leaving yet," he means to let the other know that he intends to see him again before he sets out on his journey.

That this is the true meaning of the words "Touch me not" is, in my opinion, evident not only from the reason given in the very next words, "for I am not yet ascended to my Father" (by which expression, as I have shown above, Christ meant that he had not yet finally left the world), but from these further considerations as well. Christ, by showing himself first to Mary Magdalene, undoubtedly intended to give her a distinguishing mark of his favor, and therefore cannot reasonably be supposed to have intended, at the same time, to slight her by refusing her a pleasure which he granted not long after to the other Mary and Salome — and yet this must be supposed if "Touch me not" is understood to imply a prohibition against Mary Magdalene embracing him for some reason inconsistent with the regard shown to the other women, and different from the one I am arguing for here, namely, that he intended to see her and his disciples again. On the other hand, if these words are taken to mean only a postponement to some more fitting occasion, they will be far from implying any unkindness or rebuke toward Mary Magdalene; rather, they may be seen as a gracious assurance, a kind of friendly promise to come to her again. And in this sense they correspond exactly with Christ's purpose in sending this message by her to his disciples, which, as I observed before, was to let them know that he remembered his promise of coming to them again, and was still in a position to fulfill it, not having yet left this world. And of his intention to fulfill it, his refusal to allow the affectionate, reverential embrace of Mary Magdalene — who loved much, for much had been forgiven her — was a pledge, just as his coming to them again would be a pledge of his resolve to fulfill, in due time, those promises which were not to take effect until after his final departure from this world.

And so this whole discourse of our Savior's to Mary Magdalene becomes, in all its parts, intelligible, rational, and coherent — whereas, if it is supposed that Mary Magdalene was forbidden to touch Christ for some mystical reason contained in the words "for I am not yet ascended to the Father," it will be very difficult to understand either the meaning or the purpose of the message she was commanded to carry to the disciples, and still more difficult to account for his allowing, not long after, the embraces of the other Mary and Salome. The same, or even greater, difficulties will attach to that interpretation of this passage which supposes that the prohibition given to Mary Magdalene was grounded on the spiritual nature of Christ's body, which, it is presumed, was not perceptible to touch. And indeed, both of these explanations for Christ's behavior toward Mary Magdalene are overturned by his opposite behavior toward the other Mary and Salome. But if the sense I am arguing for is accepted, it will not be difficult to account for this difference in his behavior on those two occasions.

Why he forbade Mary Magdalene to touch him has already been explained; why he permitted the other Mary and Salome to hold him by the feet and worship him, I will now try to show. These latter women, as St. Mark tells us (ch. 16), were so terrified and amazed at the sight and words of the angel who appeared to them in the sepulchre that, although they ran with the intention of telling the disciples what they had heard and seen, as the angel had commanded them, yet, through the greatness of their confusion and disorder, they neglected to deliver this important message to some persons whom they saw along their way. For (as I understand it, along with all the commentators) these are the words of St. Mark: "neither said they anything to any man; for they were afraid."

[That these words, "neither said they anything to any man," must be limited to a certain period of time will, I believe, be readily granted; for it cannot be supposed that after all the other appearances of the angels, and so forth, had become known, these women alone never opened their lips to anyone about what they had seen and heard at the sepulchre. The question, then, is: how long are they supposed to have kept silent about it? And this, I think, was no longer than during the time of their flight from the sepulchre, until they were met by Christ himself — because the only reason given here for their not saying anything to any man, namely, "for they were afraid" (or affrighted, rather), is removed by Christ's appearing to them; so it is reasonable to believe (if it is not actually implied) that their silence lasted no longer than its only cause, their terror. Besides, since St. Mark breaks off his account of what happened to these women quite abruptly, stopping short of Christ's appearing to them, in order to relate his appearance to Mary Magdalene instead — which, though it happened before this one, came after the angel's appearance to these women at the sepulchre — what he says about their not saying anything to any man cannot be taken to extend beyond the point where he chose to break off his narrative, without supposing him guilty of a needless impropriety. And if these words, "neither said they

anything to any man," are to be understood as meaning that they did not tell what they had seen and heard to certain people they saw while fleeing from the sepulchre, it seems reasonable to conclude that these were some of the disciples, to whom they had been ordered to deliver the angel's message, and to whom they probably would have delivered it, had they not been under so great a terror and amazement. For had the persons they saw been anyone other than the disciples of Jesus, it is unlikely that St. Mark would have taken any notice of their not saying anything to anyone, since it is reasonable to suppose that they would not, even if they had not been frightened, have told the angel's message to anyone but the disciples. And since the time of Peter and John's running to the sepulchre, upon Mary Magdalene's first report, coincides with the time of these women fleeing from it, it is not an unreasonable guess that these were the very persons they saw along their way, perhaps at some distance, coming to the sepulchre by a different road — especially considering that St. Mark's words, "neither said they," seem to carry with them an implication of neglect on the part of these women, though he at the same time both accounts for it and excuses it by adding "for they were afrighted," since the same Evangelist has already told us (verse 7) that they had been ordered by the angel to deliver his message particularly to Peter.]

So that this testimony of the angel to the resurrection of Christ, and the assurance given to the disciples that they would see their Master in Galilee, might not be lost — either through the women's forgetting, in the greatness of their amazement, what the angel had said to them, or through a suspicion that the whole thing had been a mere illusion, causing them to neglect or hesitate to tell it — Christ himself thought it proper to appear to them, to calm their minds, dispel their terror, and remove their doubts. With this purpose he first greets them with the gracious salutation, "All hail!" then allows them not only to approach him, but to take hold of his feet and worship him; and finally, telling them to set aside their fears, commands them, in confirmation of what the angel had told them, to tell his disciples from him to go into Galilee, assuring them with his own mouth that they would see him there. Every word, we can see, was meant to inspire them with courage and confidence; and the gracious effect of every word on their minds could not help being made still more powerful and effective by his allowing them to embrace him. After this intimate token of his favor and kindness, and this tangible proof that he was really and bodily risen from the dead, there could be no room left for doubt or terror — conviction, certainty, and joy must have banished those uneasy feelings from their hearts forever. And from this it appears that Christ's different conduct on these two occasions was owing to the different circumstances surrounding them, to which it was most wisely suited.

Mary Magdalene's grief — the only disturbance of mind she was then suffering under — over the supposed loss of her Master's body, was soon dispelled upon hearing him call her by her name and seeing him standing beside her; she was at once convinced that it was Christ, and testified to her

conviction by giving him the title "Rabboni," my Master. She needed no further proofs, and so there was no need to give her any; satisfied with what she had seen and heard, she went to the disciples and told them that she had seen the Lord, and that he had said such and such things to her. But terror — the most unpredictable of all the passions when excessive — had seized the other Mary and Salome; a terror which, had it come from the unexpected and supernatural appearance of an angel, was more likely to be confirmed than removed by a similar appearance of Christ, had he not dealt gently with them, and, by his gracious words and manner, given them encouragement and permission to grow accustomed to him gradually, and to take, in their own time, whatever proofs they thought necessary to remove their fears or doubts, and to convince them that their beloved Master had truly been restored to them from the grave.

But besides the assurance given by Christ to his disciples, in the words spoken here through Mary Magdalene, of his intention to fulfill his promises of coming to them again, and so on, I cannot help thinking that he had a further meaning, which, though not as obvious, is nevertheless, in my opinion, equally derivable from those same words as the one just mentioned. That remarkable expression, "I ascend to my Father," Christ undoubtedly used on this occasion to call back to his disciples' minds the discourse he had held with them three nights before, in which he had explained so clearly what he meant by going to his Father, that they said to him, "Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no proverb" (John 16:29). But this was not the only expression that had puzzled them; they were equally in the dark about the meaning of "a little while, and ye shall not see me," and again, "a little while, and ye shall see me," which they likewise admitted they did not understand. But Christ did not think it fit to clear up their doubts at that time, and left those words to be explained by the events to which they each referred, events which were then fast approaching. For that very night he was betrayed and seized, and was deserted by his disciples — just as he himself had foretold only a few hours before, when they had professed to believe that he came forth from God. The next day he was crucified, died on the cross, and was buried. After this sorrowful catastrophe, the disciples could no longer be at a loss to understand what Christ had meant when he said to them, "A little while, and ye shall not see me": he was gone from them, and, as their fears suggested, gone forever — even though he had expressly told them that he would come to them again, and had added to those words, "A little while, and ye shall not see me," the further words, "And again, a little while, and ye shall see me." This second expression, one would think, was every bit as clear as the first; and just as the first, now explained by the event, was plainly a prophecy of his death, so the second must be understood as a prophecy of his resurrection from the dead. But if they understood it in that sense, they were still very far from having a correct notion of what the resurrection from the dead actually meant — as is evident from the fact that, when Christ first showed himself to them after his passion, they thought they were seeing a

spirit, even though they had just before declared their belief that he had indeed risen, and had appeared to Simon. The resurrection of the body, it would seem from this instance, formed no part of their idea of resurrection from the dead. To lead them, therefore, into a correct understanding of this most important article of faith, Christ, in speaking to Mary Magdalene, and through her to his disciples, uses terms that strongly imply that he was really — that is, bodily — risen from the dead: "I am not yet," he says, "ascended to my Father; but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father," and so on.

The words "I go to my Father," Christ, as has already been noted, explained by the well-understood phrase of leaving the world; and the words immediately preceding this give so much light to that explanation that it is impossible to mistake his meaning. The whole passage runs as follows: "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father" (John 16:28). By the expression "I am come into the world," Christ certainly meant to signify that he was living and moving visibly and bodily on earth; and therefore by the other expression, "I leave the world," he must have meant to denote the opposite of all this — namely, his ceasing to be and move visibly and bodily on earth. And this is undoubtedly how the disciples understood him to mean, when they said to him, "Now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no proverb." But since they knew well that the usual road by which all men leave this world passes through the gates of death, and were sure that their Master had walked that same irreversible path, they might naturally have concluded that what he had told them about leaving the world and going to his Father had been accomplished in his death; and consistent with that notion, they might have imagined that by his "coming to them again" he meant nothing more than appearing to them in the same way that many persons have been thought and said to appear after their death. To guard against this double error, which Christ — to whom the thoughts of every heart are open — perceived in the minds of his disciples, he plainly signals to them in the words "I am not yet ascended to my Father, but I do [or shall] ascend to my Father," that his dying and his final leaving of the world were two distinct things, the latter of which was still to come, though the former had already taken place. He had indeed died like other mortals, and had, like them, left the world for a time, just as he himself had often foretold would happen; but he was now risen from the dead, had returned into the world, and would not leave it finally until he ascended to his Father. His appearing to Mary Magdalene was doubtless intended as proof of his having returned into the world; and yet it could be no proof of this at all if what she saw was no more than what is commonly called a spirit, since the spirits of many people have been thought to appear after their death, who are nevertheless supposed to have left this world just as completely by their death as those who have never appeared at all. Lazarus, like Christ, had died, and was by Christ's life-giving word called back to life, which consists in the body being animated through its union with the soul. Now, had Christ called up

nothing but the spirit of Lazarus, and left his body to decay and perish in the grave, would not Lazarus, I ask, have still been considered dead, and therefore regarded as having left this world, even if his spirit had appeared to a thousand different people? If Christ, then, had truly risen from the dead, as the angels affirmed he had; if he had not yet finally left the world, as the words "I am not yet ascended to my Father" plainly indicate; and if his appearing to Mary Magdalene was meant as proof of those two points, as it undoubtedly was — then it follows that he was really, that is, bodily, risen from the dead; that he was still in the world in the same manner as when he first came forth from the Father and entered the world; and that it was he himself, and not a spirit without flesh and bones, who appeared to Mary Magdalene.

Before I conclude this argument, I must ask leave to make one further observation on the word "ascend," which our Savior uses twice within the compass of these few words. In the discourse that Christ was alluding to here, he told his disciples that he would "go" to his Father; but now he tells Mary Magdalene to say to them that he would "ascend" to his Father — a change in wording which I am convinced had a particular meaning, and one not very difficult to discover. For just as, by the earlier expression, he intended, as we have seen, to signify in general his final departure from this world, so by the later expression the particular manner of that departure is indicated — undoubtedly with a view to letting his disciples know the precise time after which they should no longer expect to see and converse with him on earth, but should instead wait for the coming of that Comforter whom he had promised to send them in his place, and who, unless he himself departed from them, was not to come. Jesus made frequent visits to his disciples after his passion, "being seen of them," as St. Luke says, "forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God" (Acts, chapters 1 and 3). Between some of these visits there were fairly long intervals, during which he seems to have disappeared — that is, not to have been residing on earth (see John 20:21). Had Christ, then, left his disciples without any mark or sign by which they could tell his final departure apart from those that were only temporary, they would probably have taken each visit for the last one, or else lingered on, after his final departure, in a fruitless hope of seeing him again — either of which states of uncertainty, and especially the latter, were liable to many troubles, to doubts, jealousies, and fears, which it was an act of both goodness and wisdom on our Savior's part to prevent. Nor was preventing these troubles the only benefit that came from this early indication of the manner of Christ's final departure from this world — an indication contained in the words "I ascend to my Father," and fulfilled in his ascension into heaven. For just as this ascension could not have been accomplished without the power of God working together with him, so neither could it have been foreknown by him without the communication of that Spirit which alone knows the counsels of God. When the disciples, therefore, saw their Master taken up into heaven, and received out of their sight by a cloud of glory (Acts 1:9 — see Whitby on this passage), they could not help knowing for certain

that this was the very event foretold about forty days before to Mary Magdalene; and knowing that, they could no longer doubt that it was Christ himself who had appeared and spoken those prophetic words to her — however little credit they had given her when she first told them that she had seen the Lord.

And so, as I have tried to show, these far-reaching words of Christ spoken to Mary Magdalene — "Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended to my Father; but go to my brethren, and say to them, I ascend to my Father" — contain three distinct things. First, a renewal of the several promises Christ had made to his disciples on the night he was betrayed, one of which was his promise to come to them again before his final departure from this world; and I take his forbidding Mary Magdalene to touch or embrace him to be a pledge or token of his intention to fulfill that promise. Second, an indication that, since his death and his final departure from the world were two distinct things, the latter of which was still to come, they were to understand, by his rising from the dead, that he had returned and was present in the world in the same way as those who have not yet left the world through death — and consequently that he was really, that is, bodily, risen from the dead, of which his appearing to Mary Magdalene and speaking these words was undoubted evidence. And third, a prophetic statement of the manner of his final departure from the world, namely, by ascending into heaven.

From these several points it was impossible, as I said before, for the disciples to draw any conclusion other than that it was Christ himself who had appeared and spoken to Mary Magdalene. I do not say that the disciples must necessarily have grasped, the very first time they heard these words, all the particular points I have drawn from them; but when they came to consider them carefully, to reflect on what their Master had said to them on the night he was betrayed (to which these words plainly referred), and when, after having touched his feet and his hands, they were convinced by their own senses that he was bodily risen from the dead, and finally, when they had seen those words, "I ascend to my Father," fulfilled before their very eyes in his ascending into heaven — then, I think, they could hardly have failed to perceive these several implications, and to draw from them the conclusion mentioned above. For if it was not Christ who appeared to Mary Magdalene, it must have been either some spirit, good or evil; or some man who, in order to deceive her, imitated the person and voice of Christ; or, finally, the whole thing must have been invented and made up by her. The first of these possibilities is blasphemous; the second is absurd; and the third is improbable. For even granting that she was capable of telling a lie in order to carry on a deception from which she herself could gain no benefit, and that she had somehow been informed of what our Savior had said to his disciples on the night he was betrayed — which does not appear to be the case — it would have been either extreme madness or folly on her part to stake the credibility of her story on events, such as Christ's appearing to his disciples and his ascending into heaven, which were so far from being merely possible

occurrences that they were not even within the power or workings of what are called natural causes.

The same answer may be given to the suggestion that the appearance of Christ to the other Mary and Salome was likewise a fabrication of those women; and with this I will conclude the second point.

3. Of the many appearances of Christ to his disciples during the forty days following his passion, the sacred writers have specifically recorded only a very few — believing, no doubt, that those few were sufficient to prove that fundamental article of the Christian faith, the resurrection of Jesus. And indeed, whoever pays attention to the nature and variety of the evidence contained even in those few particulars which they have passed down to us cannot, I think, help acknowledging that those who were appointed to be witnesses of the resurrection had every kind of proof that, in similar circumstances, either the most scrupulous person could demand, or the most skeptical could imagine. I do not doubt my ability to demonstrate this over the course of the following observations, in which I will confine myself to examining only those appearances whose circumstances the Gospel historians thought it proper to record, and on which the faith of the apostles was principally established.

The first of these, although only briefly mentioned by St. Mark (ch. 16), is related in great detail by St. Luke (ch. 24), in the following words: "And behold, two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about threescore furlongs. And they talked together of all these things which had happened. 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 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? And he said unto them, What things? And they said unto him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people: And how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him. But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, to day 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. 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 they drew nigh unto the village, whither they went: and he made as though he would have gone further. But they constrained him, saying, Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And he went in to tarry with them. 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, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them, Saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon. And they told what things were done in the way, and how he was known of them in breaking of bread."

Two objections have been made to the credibility of this account: first, that these disciples did not know Jesus during the whole… time of his walking, talking, and sitting at meat with them: and second, that when, upon his breaking of bread, their eyes were opened and they are said to have known him, he vanished so suddenly out of their sight that they seem not to have had time enough to satisfy those doubts which must have arisen from their having talked with him so long without recognizing him. To the first of these objections the Evangelist himself furnishes us with an answer, telling us that their eyes were holden, that they should not know him. This, since no one will pretend it to be beyond the power of Him whom the Apostle of the Gentiles styles the power of God, I have already shown to be a proceeding not unworthy of Him whom that same inspired writer, in the very same place, calls also the wisdom of God. He threw a mist before their bodily eyes so that he might, by the pure and unprejudiced light of reason alone, remove from before their inward sight that strong delusion which kept their understanding from grasping the true meaning of those types and prophecies by which his sufferings, death, and resurrection had been foreshown. He disguised himself, but he laid open the Scriptures, which until then had appeared to them in quite another form; and having, by expounding Moses and the Prophets in a way that made their hearts burn within them, stripped away those veils and false colors which the worldly and carnal-minded scribes and Pharisees had laid over those writings, and set them before their eyes in their true shape and brightness, he then disclosed himself, and left them convinced, both by the Scriptures and by their own senses, that he was risen from the dead. This brings me to the second objection, founded on his vanishing out of their sight so soon after revealing himself to them.

Here I will observe, first, that it is plain they had no doubt that the person who had joined them on the road to Emmaus and opened the Scriptures to them was the very same person whom, upon his breaking of bread, they recognized as Jesus. Second, that upon taking him to be Jesus, they must have become aware of some change, either in themselves or in him, by which they were able to discover the mistake they had been under while they did not know him. Third, that this change must have appeared to them supernatural

and miraculous, as is implied in the phrase their eyes were opened, and they knew him, and likewise in his vanishing, or disappearing, from their sight. And since from these facts it could not but be evident to them that the person whom, once their eyes were opened, they recognized from his countenance to be Jesus was endowed with powers beyond those of any ordinary man, it was impossible for them to conclude that it was anyone other than Jesus himself — unless they were willing to suppose, blasphemously, that God would permit some spirit, whether good or evil, to assume the person of his beloved Son for the purpose of lending countenance to a falsehood and an imposture. This was all the more impossible since, in the conversation he had held with them on the road, he had opened the Scriptures to them and had shown them from Moses and all the prophets that Christ was to suffer and die, and rise again from the dead. But besides clearing up all their doubts arising from his sufferings and death — doubts which had shaken their faith in him, whom until then they had trusted to be the one who should redeem Israel — it is very likely, from what they say about their hearts burning within them while he opened the Scriptures to them, that they perceived, either in his manner or in his teaching, some vivid marks of that dignity and authority which had always set him apart so strikingly from the ordinary teachers of Israel, the scribes and Pharisees. And without repeating what I have already said about the likelihood that Christ, on this occasion, made use of some gesture or form of words peculiar to himself in breaking and blessing the bread, I will add only one further observation, from Grotius: since it was the custom among the Jews for the host of a feast, or the most honored guest present, immediately after blessing the cup, to take the bread, give thanks over it, break it, eat a piece of it himself, and then distribute it around the table, Christ, by performing this action, declared himself to be something more than what these disciples had taken him for up to that point — a stranger and traveler whom they had picked up along the road and persuaded to stay with them. By that declaration he drew their attention toward the disclosure of himself that followed immediately upon it, an act of solemn religious significance that was certainly a fitting introduction to what came next. The conclusion naturally to be drawn from all these observations is that these two disciples, even on the assumption that Christ disappeared the very moment their eyes were opened and they recognized him, had ample reason to be assured that it was indeed he himself who had walked, talked, and sat at table with them, and consequently that he was risen from the dead, just as the angels had told the women who had been at the sepulcher that morning.

The next appearance of Christ that I will take notice of — and the one to which all those already mentioned were preparatory — was his appearance to the Eleven and those with them, on the evening of that same day. This appearance is recorded by three of the Evangelists, each relating some particulars not given by the others; so I will draw from each of their Gospels those circumstances not related by the others, and, putting the scattered pieces together, compose from all of them a single complete account.

Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews — while they sat at meat, immediately after the two disciples from Emmaus had finished telling 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 and hardness of heart, because they had not believed those who had seen him after he was risen, said unto them, 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. 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. Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord. And he said unto 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. Then, breathing on them and saying, Receive ye the Holy Ghost, he opened their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures, and said unto them, 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 will add the appearance of Christ to St. Thomas, so that I may bring all the proofs of the resurrection into a single view. But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, 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. And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you. Then said he 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 and said unto him, 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 of Christ's being risen from the dead, as exhibited to the disciples in the passages just quoted, may be arranged under four heads: first, the testimony of those who had seen him after he was risen; second, the evidence of their own senses; third, the exact fulfillment of what he had told them beforehand while he was still with them; and fourth, the fulfillment of everything written concerning him in the Law of Moses, in the Prophets, and in the Psalms. I will try to show, through some observations on each of these in turn, how conclusive all these proofs taken together are.

On the first, I have nothing to add to what I have already written under the second general head above, and at the beginning of this one, except to note that our Lord, by upbraiding his disciples for not believing those who had seen him after he rose, took from them every possibility of afterward doubting the truth and reality of those appearances — appearances now confirmed and verified by his own unimpeachable testimony. Under the phrase those who had seen him after he was risen is included also his appearance to Simon, mentioned by both St. Luke and St. Paul, as well as that to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus. On the second head — the evidence of their own senses — it might, one would think, be sufficient simply to observe that the disciples had the same infallible proofs, as the author of the Acts calls them, of Christ's being alive after his passion as they had ever had of his being alive before it. They saw him; they saw the particular marks of identity in his person and countenance, in his hands, feet, and side, which had been pierced at his crucifixion; and one of them, who had refused to believe unless he put his finger into the print of the nails and thrust his hand into his side, was granted that further proof, unreasonable as the demand was. They also saw him eat — eat what they themselves had given him, a piece of broiled fish and a piece of honeycomb. They heard him speak, and were commanded by him to handle him and see that he had flesh and bones, a command which, no doubt, they obeyed — the words as ye see me have strongly imply that they had already received the satisfaction offered them of feeling his hands and feet. And yet all these infallible tokens or proofs — these tekmēria, certain and undoubted signs, as Luke's phrase in Acts 1:3 calls them, by many infallible proofs, using the Greek word that Quintilian, following Aristotle, says denotes certain and most sure signs, just as the acts of speaking, walking, eating, and drinking are the undoubted signs of life — have been set aside by certain would-be philosophers and philosophizing theologians, on no better grounds than their own groundless inferences from these words of St. John: Then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst. For, taking for granted what, as philosophers, it would have better become them to prove — namely, that these words imply that Jesus passed through the walls or doors while they remained shut, without either his own body suffering any change or causing any change in them during his passage — and having discovered that for one solid or material body to pass through another solid or material body without altering the form of either, both the passing and the passed-through body remaining exactly as they were, is contrary to all the laws of nature, they have concluded that the body of Christ was not a real, that is, a material body, and was consequently incapable of being felt by St. Thomas. From this it would follow that the whole story is absurd and false.

In answer to this, I deny that the words Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst imply that Jesus passed through the walls or doors while they remained shut, without either suffering any change in his own body or causing any change in them during his passing. They do indeed seem to imply that he came in miraculously — though not by a miracle that involves

a contradiction or an impossibility — and I am persuaded that had St. John not intended to signify that he came in miraculously, he would not have mentioned twice that otherwise trivial detail of the doors being shut. But although a denial without proof is a proper and sufficient answer to an assertion made without proof, I will nonetheless give some reasons why the interpretation argued for by these philosophers cannot be the correct one. First, it is not to be presumed that St. John, who along with the other disciples had received sensible evidence of the reality — that is, the materiality — of Christ's body, would be so absurd as to imagine at the same time that it was a spiritual body; which he would have had to think, had he believed that Jesus passed through the walls or doors while they remained shut, without either his own body suffering any change or causing any change in them during his passing. It required no great depth of philosophy to understand that it is impossible, even for omnipotence, to cause the body of a man to pass through a wall or a door without causing some change or alteration in the one or the other. Second, it is likewise not to be presumed that St. John — who clearly intended, by relating the story of St. Thomas, to inform the world that Thomas, like the other disciples, had sensible evidence, by feeling and examining his Master's body, that he was really, that is, bodily, risen from the dead — would be foolish enough to insert into his account a detail that would tend to prove that the body which St. Thomas is supposed to have felt was not a material but a spiritual body, and therefore incapable of being felt and handled at all. Contradictions and absurdities are not to be presumed in any writer. On the contrary, since every sane man is assumed to have some meaning in what he speaks or writes, the sense of any ambiguous word or sentence is to be determined only by that meaning — which is best gathered from the whole drift and tenor of the discourse — and any interpretation of such an ambiguous word or sentence that can be shown to be inconsistent with the plain meaning of the speaker or writer is, for that very reason, to be rejected. Justice, fairness, and common sense all require this. Third, by the same manner of reasoning employed on this occasion by these free-thinking philosophers, one could just as well infer the spirituality of the walls or doors as the spirituality of Christ's body. For since Christ's body is proved to be material by having been handled by his disciples, and since it is granted that he passed through the walls or doors while they remained shut without either body suffering change, it would follow that the walls or doors themselves had spiritual bodies — since it is contrary to the laws of nature for one solid or material body to pass through another. This is an argument that would have suited very well the Philosophical Answer to the Trial of the Witnesses, being just as sophistical, absurd, and ridiculous as that work.

Having now given my reasons for rejecting, as false, the interpretation that some have tried to fasten upon these words of St. John, Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst — and having also granted that these words naturally suggest that our Savior's entrance was miraculous — I will next attempt to show that the miracle here worked by Jesus, far from

awakening in the minds of the disciples any suspicion that their senses might have been deceived in the examination they made of their Lord's body, actually served, on the contrary, to remove all their doubts and convince them fully that it was Jesus himself, in a body of flesh and bones and not a spirit, who had appeared to them. One might object that since it is just as easy for a power capable of overriding the laws of nature to produce in us the sensations of hearing, seeing, and feeling without the real existence of any object causing those sensations, as it is to open a passage for a human body through walls or doors without leaving any visible breach in them, this miracle ought to have raised, rather than removed, such a suspicion. But this miracle, I maintain, had precisely the opposite effect.

The disciples, during their time with Christ before his passion, had grown accustomed to seeing him work miracles of every kind — casting out devils, healing every sort of disease, giving sight to the blind, speech to the dumb, the use of limbs and nerves to the lame and the paralyzed, and life to the dead — and all this by a single word, which they had also seen even the winds and the sea obey. From this vast power of overriding the laws of nature established by the Creator himself, joined to the more-than-human purity of his life and teaching, the disciples had most reasonably concluded that he came forth from God. And so, on the one hand, the power of working miracles was a defining mark of Jesus, and his working of miracles after his resurrection was therefore one proof of the identity of his person; while on the other hand, the assurance that he came forth from the God of truth, founded on his doing works that no man could do unless God were with him, was an infallible safeguard to the disciples against any suspicion that he might be intending to deceive them. From this it follows that when, upon their imagining they saw a spirit, he assured them it was he himself and no spirit — which, he said, hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have — and they, by feeling and handling him, saw that he did have flesh and bones, they could have had no shadow of excuse either for disbelieving his word or for distrusting their own senses. For in truth, does not his appealing to their senses to confirm what he asserted — namely, that it was he himself and not a spirit — imply an affirmation that their senses were the proper judges of the question, and that he was therefore leaving the determination of it to them? And are not both parts of that affirmation utterly false, if it is supposed that the body here assumed by Christ was a spiritual, that is, an immaterial, body? And if, instead of the object they were meant to judge — namely, a material body capable of producing such-and-such sensations — something entirely different was substituted, namely a mere idea of such an object, produced by illusory and counterfeit sensations impressed upon their minds by a miraculous power, would not an appeal to the judgment of their senses in such a case have been nothing but mockery? And would not deceiving their senses, after such an appeal, have been fraudulent and dishonest? And would not such a course of action have been absurd as well as dishonest? For if it is granted that Jesus had the power to deceive his disciples' senses

miraculously, it surely cannot be denied that he had the power to enter miraculously into the room where they were gathered while the doors were shut. The second of these two miracles makes the first unnecessary. For if Jesus could, in his human body, enter the room while the doors were shut, there was no need for him to deceive the senses of his disciples at all. And if it was within his power to work either miracle as he pleased, would it not have been absurd — with all reverence be it said — for him to choose the one that was inconsistent with the character of one who came forth from the God of truth, and directly opposed to the whole purpose of his appearing to his disciples after his passion, which was, by offering his body to the examination of their senses, to convince them that he was really — that is, bodily — risen from the dead?

The disciples, then, who by the mighty signs and wonders he had done before his passion were already convinced that God was with him, could not, on this occasion, but draw the same conclusion from his entering miraculously into the room while the doors were shut, and from his equally miraculous perception of the secret doubts and reasonings in their hearts. And although, not understanding what was meant by rising from the dead, they had at first suspected him to be a spirit, yet having been satisfied to the contrary by handling his body, they had no more reason to distrust the evidence of their senses than they had on an earlier occasion, when, having seen him walk upon the waves and having likewise imagined him to be a spirit, they had been corrected of their mistake by the very same kind of proof — namely by seeing, hearing, and feeling him, and by eating and conversing with him in the same manner as with any other man. And indeed there is no suggestion anywhere in the sacred writers that the disciples harbored, on either of these occasions, any suspicion of fraud or deception. They were simple, plain men, strangers to vain and fanciful speculation, and they went upon those same grounds on which all men act, however some may talk who have reasoned themselves out of every principle of reason. Having therefore throughout their whole lives trusted the testimony of their senses, they could not now refuse to believe them on this occasion — especially when they were commanded to believe them by one whose transcendent knowledge and power showed him to have a thorough insight into the very frame of man, as well as supreme authority over the laws of nature.

Third, the exact fulfillment of the words in which our Savior foretold to his disciples his sufferings, death, and resurrection will be plainly seen by comparing the words of those prophecies with the actual circumstances of the events themselves. And so, to make this comparison easier for the reader, I will first set down the several particulars of the passion and death of Christ, and then produce the prophecies that correspond to them.

The sufferings of Jesus, properly so called, began with the treachery of Judas, one of the twelve, who — as all the Evangelists relate — having obtained a band of soldiers from the chief priests, with whom he had

bargained to deliver Jesus up for thirty pieces of silver, went with them to a garden where he knew Christ was accustomed to withdraw, and there, by the prearranged sign of a kiss, pointed him out and delivered him into their hands; whereupon they seized him at once and led him before the high priest.

This fact was foretold by Jesus several times, at first rather obscurely, as in these words, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil — diabolos, an informer; and in these, The Son of man shall be betrayed into the hands of men; and in other sayings to the same general effect. Then, more plainly, at his last supper, he said to his disciples, Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me — at which they were exceedingly sorrowful, and each began to say to him, Lord, is it I? In answer he said, He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me. These words, as Grotius observes, come somewhat closer to identifying the betrayer than the earlier statement, One of you shall betray me. "Hence," that learned commentator adds, "I am persuaded that Judas sat close by Christ, so as to eat from the same dish or portion as him, there being several such dishes set upon the table." This conjecture is indeed very probable and sheds a good deal of light on the whole matter. We may further observe that, since the disciples were still in doubt as to whom he meant even after this statement, there must have been others besides Judas who dipped their hands in the same dish as Jesus — otherwise that description alone would have sufficiently identified him, and there would have been no need for Simon Peter to signal to the disciple who was leaning on the bosom of Jesus, asking him to find out whom he meant. In response to this request, made to him by St. John on behalf of all the disciples, and in order to put an end at once to all their uncertainty, Jesus told them he would point out the very man, saying, He it is to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it; and when he had dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon — who, appearing surprised at being thus named a traitor, either to satisfy himself further or to mask the wickedness of his own heart, himself asked Jesus whether it was he; to which Jesus answered, Thou hast said. "And thus," Grotius concludes, "Christ gave proof of his foreknowledge by degrees: first, by including the future traitor among the number of the twelve; then, within the smaller circle of those seated nearest him; and finally, by certain and precise marks, pointing out the very man himself." To this I must add that, in order to impress this prophecy strongly on the minds of his disciples, he introduced it by applying to himself a passage from the Psalms — He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me — together with these striking words, Now I tell you before it come, that when it is come to pass ye may believe that I am he.

Second, the next event is the desertion of the disciples, who, as we learn from both St. Matthew and St. Mark, upon seeing their Master seized by the soldiers and officers of the chief priest who had come with Judas, all immediately forsook him and fled. Jesus had forewarned them of this desertion only a very short time before it occurred, and that at the very moment of their proud and confident profession of faith that he came forth

from God. Then saith Jesus unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night — or, as it is put in St. John, shall be scattered, every man to his own home — for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad.

Third, the third particular is Peter's denial of Christ, recorded by all the Evangelists. From their accounts it appears that Peter, following Christ at a distance to the palace of the high priest, was admitted into the courtyard through the help of St. John, who spoke to the woman who kept the door and had Peter brought in. Standing there among the crowd while his Master was under examination, Peter was accused three separate times by people around him of belonging to Christ, which he denied each time, swearing with oaths and curses that he did not even know the man; and immediately after his third denial the cock crew. And the Lord turned and looked upon Peter, and Peter remembered the word of the Lord... and he went out and wept bitterly. The prophecy runs as follows: Verily I say unto thee, Peter, this day, even this night, before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice. Here we see the nature, the timing, and the exact number of repetitions of Peter's offense precisely defined in advance. And I take the suddenness and sincerity of his return to his former faith in his Master — implied in his weeping bitterly at the recollection of his crime and of his Master's words — to have been foreshown in this passage from St. Luke: And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not; and when thou art converted — turned back again to the faith — strengthen thy brethren.

Fourth, the fourth event foretold by Christ was his being handed over to the high priests, and by them to Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor, along with many particulars of his sufferings from that point up to his crucifixion. All of this is related by the Evangelists as follows. And they that had laid hold on Jesus led him away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled, who, after examining some witnesses whose testimony yielded nothing criminal against him, at last put him under oath by the living God to tell them whether he was the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus said to him, Thou hast said. Then the high priest tore his clothes, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy; what further need have we of witnesses? Behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy: what think ye? They answered and said, He is guilty of death. Then they spat in his face and struck him with their fists, and others slapped him with the palms of their hands, saying, Prophesy unto us, thou Christ, who is he that smote thee? And when they had bound him, they led him away to Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor, who, overcome by the clamor of a tumultuous crowd, at last delivered him up to be crucified, after having declared him innocent five separate times and having tried in vain to persuade the Jews to let him go free, or at least to be content with having him scourged. Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the common hall and gathered to him the whole band of soldiers; and they stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, and when they had plaited a

crown of thorns they put it on his head, and a reed in his right hand. And they bowed the knee before him and mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews! And they spat on him, and took the robe off him, and put his own clothes back on him, and led him away to be crucified.

The words in which many of these particulars were foretold are these: Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests, and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify him. In St. Mark it reads, They — the Gentiles — shall mock him, and shall scourge him, and shall spit upon him, and shall kill him. In St. Luke, For he shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spit on, and they shall scourge him and put him to death. Of his sufferings at the hands of the elders and chief priests he spoke in these words: From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples how he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed.

Fifth, his crucifixion and death are mentioned in every one of the passages just cited, and in many others scattered throughout the Evangelists, either in plain words or in figures and allusions which I do not think it necessary to insert here, any more than an account of those events themselves, which are too well known to be disputed. One proof of his death, however, I will take the liberty of mentioning here, since it has not received much attention from ordinary readers. St. John, in the nineteenth chapter, verses thirty-three and thirty-four, after relating that the soldiers broke the legs of the two thieves crucified with Jesus, adds, But when 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. On these words Beza makes the following observation: among the reasons that led St. John to assert this fact with such emphasis, one which ought not to be passed over — and which Erasmus also touches on — is that this wound fully proves the death of Christ. For the water flowing out of the wound in his side was a sign that the spear had pierced the pericardium, in which that water is contained, and the wounding of which must necessarily cause any living creature to die at once. This detail, then, was included to answer in advance the slanders of the enemies of the truth, who might otherwise have claimed that Jesus was taken down from the cross before he was actually dead, and so cast doubt on the reality of his resurrection from the dead.

Sixth, of his rising from the dead I need not produce the proofs again here, having set them forth so fully in all the preceding parts of this discourse; but concerning the evidence that he rose precisely on the third day, I think it worthwhile to add an observation or two. That he did not rise before the third day is clear from what St. Matthew relates about the watch, or guard, being set at the door of the sepulcher. The passage runs thus: Now the next day,

that followed the day of the preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate, saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again. Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first. From these words I observe, first, that the watch or guard was set at the sepulcher on the day following the death and burial of Christ. Second, it is most likely that this was done toward the evening of that day, because that day was a high day — not only a Sabbath but the Passover — and it is hard to imagine that the chief priests, and especially the Pharisees, who claimed to observe stricter purity than any other Jewish sect, would defile themselves by going to Pilate before the religious duties of that day were finished. That they were in fact very scrupulous about such things is clear from what St. John reports: that they would not enter into the hall of judgment, the Praetorium where Pilate's tribunal sat, the day before, for fear of being defiled and thereby kept from eating the Passover.

And if it should be objected that since the Paschal lamb was always eaten at night, all their scruples on that score would have been satisfied, leaving them free to go to Pilate in the morning or whenever else they pleased, I answer that, even granting the objection, it must still be considered that this was the Sabbath day. And can it be supposed that the Pharisees — who had condemned Jesus for healing, and his disciples for plucking and eating ears of corn, on the Sabbath day — would themselves profane that day and defile themselves, not only by going to Pilate but by going with the soldiers to the sepulcher of Christ and sealing the stone over its door, before the religious observances of that solemn day were over? This is especially unlikely given that they were under no sort of necessity to act before evening, although it was certainly expedient for them not to delay beyond that time. I will now explain both of these points.

Jesus had said, while he was yet alive, that he would rise again from the dead on the third day — a prophecy that would have been equally disproved by his rising on the first or second day as by his rising on the fourth. If, then, his body was not in the sepulcher by the close of the second day, the chief priests and Pharisees would have gained their point and could boldly have declared him an impostor; from which it follows that there was no urgency for them to visit the sepulcher before the close of the second day. On the other hand, since he had declared he would rise on the third day, it was necessary for them — assuming they really believed, as they claimed, that his disciples might come and steal him away — to guard against any such attempt specifically on that day, and only on that day. And since the third day began at the evening, or close, of the second day, according to the Jewish way of reckoning time, it was equally necessary for them not to delay their visit to the sepulcher and the setting of their guard until after the beginning of that third day; for had they come to the sepulcher even a short time after the third

day had begun, and found the body missing, they could not have proved him an impostor from that alone. And accordingly St. Matthew tells us they went there on the second day, which was the Sabbath. And although going to Pilate, and with the Roman soldiers to the sepulcher, and sealing up the stone, was certainly, in the eyes of the scrupulous Pharisees, a profanation of the Sabbath, they might nevertheless excuse themselves to their own consciences, or — what seems to have mattered more to them — to the world, by pleading the necessity of doing it that very day. And surely nothing but the urgent necessity of doing it then, or not at all, could have driven them to undertake such business on such a day. And as I have shown above that this urgent necessity could not arise until the close of the second day, just one moment, though no more, before the beginning of the third, it follows that, by the reckoning of the chief priests and Pharisees themselves, the day on which they set their guard was the second day, and the next day was consequently the third — the day to the end of which they asked Pilate to have the sepulcher made secure. Here, then, we have a proof, furnished by the very murderers and blasphemers of Christ, that he was not risen before the third day; for it must be assumed that before they sealed up the sepulcher and set the guard, they had inspected it and seen that the body was still there.

This also enables us to answer the uninformed objections that have been raised over the phrases three days and three nights and after three days. For it is plain that the chief priests and Pharisees, by going to the sepulcher on the Sabbath day, understood that day to be the second day; and it is equally plain, from their setting the guard from that time onward, and from the reason they gave Pilate for doing so — lest the disciples should come by night and steal him away — that they took the day which was then just beginning to be the day Christ had set for his rising from the dead, that is, the third day. For had they taken our Savior's words, The Son of man shall be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth, in their strict literal sense, they would have been in no such hurry to set their guard, since, on that reading, there were still two full days and nights to come; nor, for the same reason, would they have had any cause to fear bad consequences from the disciples coming that very night to steal away the body of their Master. So unless we are willing to suppose that the chief priests and Pharisees — the most learned sect among the Jews — did not understand the meaning of a phrase in their own language, or that they were impious and foolish enough to profane the Sabbath and defile themselves for no reason at all, and senseless and pointless enough to ask Pilate for a guard to watch the sepulcher day and night in order to prevent the disciples from stealing the body of Christ on some later night or day — unless, I say, we are prepared to accept these strange suppositions, we may fairly conclude that, in the language and understanding of the Jews, the phrases three days and three nights and after three days were equivalent to in three days. That he rose on the third day, the testimony of the angels, and his own appearances to the women, to Simon, and to the two disciples on the

road to Emmaus — all of which took place on that day — are clear and sufficient proofs.

The predictions of Christ concerning this miraculous event are numerous; for brevity's sake I will set down only a few of them here. And as they — the three disciples — came down from the mountain, where Christ had been transfigured, Jesus charged them, saying, Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of man be risen again from the dead. But after I am risen, I will go before you into Galilee. From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day. Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests, and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify him; and the third day he shall rise again.

I will postpone whatever remarks I have to make about these predictions and their fulfillment until I come to consider the prophecies contained in the writings of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms concerning the sufferings, death, and resurrection of Christ, since those alone belong to the present subject.

Fourth, the fourth kind of evidence appealed to by our Savior was the testimony of the Scriptures, which contain not only the promises of a Messiah and Savior of the world, but also the marks and descriptions by which he was to be recognized. Of these there are so many, and so various, and seemingly so incompatible with one another when applied to a single person, and set forth under such a multitude of types and figures, that just as it would have been absurd for a mere mortal to claim to fulfill the character of the Messiah on every point, so it was difficult for those who, swayed by certain expressions of the prophets, had filled their minds with the image of a glorious, powerful, and triumphant deliverer, to grasp what was intimated elsewhere about his sufferings and death. But this difficulty arises rather from the prejudices and blindness of the interpreters than from any real obscurity in these latter passages greater than in the former. His sufferings and death, and his offering of himself as a sacrifice for sin, are set forth just as plainly in the writings of the prophets, and in the types of the Mosaic ceremonies, as his power and his priesthood. And if the Jews, and even the disciples, caught up in the same vain and worldly imaginations, turned their attention and expectations toward the one and overlooked the other, this was owing to their mistaking the true nature of his kingdom and the end and purpose of his priestly office. This, I have no doubt, could be demonstrated by comparing the various types and prophecies with one another, but doing so would carry me too far from my present purpose, which is simply to show that the sufferings, death, and resurrection of Christ were foretold in the types and predictions contained in the books of Moses, in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, and so to derive from them a further proof in support of the resurrection.

The first prophecy on this subject found in the books of Moses — and indeed the very first ever given to man — is the one recorded in the third chapter of Genesis, verse fifteen, in these words: 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 prophecy I will take the liberty of quoting a passage from the present Bishop of Salisbury's most excellent Discourses, Of the Use and Intent of Prophecy in the Several Ages of the World, Discourse III, page 57.

> "*Let us consider the history of Moses as we would consider any other ancient Eastern history of similar antiquity. Suppose, for instance, that this account of the Fall had been preserved to us out of Sanchoniatho's Phoenician history. We would, in that case, perhaps be at a loss to account for every mode of representation, for every figure and expression in the story; but we would quickly agree that all these difficulties were owing to the manners and customs of that age and country, and we would show more respect to so venerable a piece of antiquity than to charge it with a lack of sense simply because we did not understand every minute detail. We would likewise agree that there were plainly four persons concerned in the story — the man, the woman, the figure represented by the serpent, and God. We could not disagree about their respective parts. The serpent is clearly the tempter; the man and the woman are the offenders; God is the judge of all three. The punishments inflicted on the man and the woman present no obscurity; and as for the sentence passed on the serpent, we would think it reasonable to give it whatever sense the whole course of the story requires.*
>
> "*It is surely no unreasonable thing to ask the same fairness of you in interpreting the meaning of Moses that you would certainly use toward any other ancient writer. And if that same fairness is allowed, this plain fact undeniably emerges from the history: that man was tempted to disobedience, and did disobey, and forfeited all claim to happiness and to life itself; and that God judged him, and likewise judged the deceiver under the form of a serpent. We require nothing more, and will proceed on this basis to consider the prophecy before us.*
>
> "*The prophecy forms part of the sentence passed on the deceiver. The words are these: I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel (Genesis 3:15). Christian writers apply this to our blessed Savior, understanding the seed of the woman to refer, in a special sense, to him, who came in the fullness of time to bruise the serpent's head by destroying the works of the devil and restoring to the liberty of the sons of God those who had been held under the bondage and captivity of sin. You will say, What an unreasonable liberty of interpretation is this! Tell us by what rules of language the seed of the woman is made to denote one particular person, and by what art you discover in this ordinary expression the mystery of Christ's miraculous conception and birth. Tell*

us likewise how the bruising of the serpent's head comes to signify the destruction of the power of sin and the redemption of mankind through Christ.

"It is no wonder that such questions are asked by those who look no further than the third chapter of Genesis to find the basis of the Christian interpretation. As the prophecy stands there, nothing in it appears to point to this particular meaning, much less to confine the prophecy to it alone. But more on that later. For now, let us set aside all our own preconceptions and go back to the actual state and circumstances of things at the time this prophecy was given, and see — if we may discover it — what God intended to reveal at that time through this prophecy, and what we may reasonably suppose our first parents understood it to mean.

"They were at that moment in a state of sin, standing before God to receive sentence for their disobedience, and had every reason to expect the full penalty threatened would be carried out: In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die. But God came in mercy as well as in judgment, intending not only to punish but also to restore man. The judgment itself is solemn and severe: the woman is doomed to sorrow in childbearing; the man to sorrow and toil all the days of his life; the ground is cursed for his sake; and the sentence concludes, Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return. Had they been left there, they might have gone on in their labor and sorrow for their appointed span of years and at last returned to dust, without any well-grounded hope or confidence in God. They would have had to regard themselves as rejected by their Maker, given over to trouble and sorrow in this world, with no hope of anything beyond it. On such a footing, I believe, no religion could have survived in the world at all; for a sense of religion without hope is nothing but a state of frenzy and despair, offering no inducement whatever to love, obedience, or anything else praiseworthy. If, therefore, God intended to preserve them as objects of his mercy, it was absolutely necessary to give them enough hope to provide a rational basis for their future efforts to reconcile themselves to him through a better obedience. This appears to be the primary purpose of this first divine prophecy, and it was necessary for the condition of the world and of religion, which could not possibly have been sustained without the giving of such hope.

"This prophecy is admirably suited to that purpose, and plainly did convey such hope to our first parents. Let us consider, then, in what sense we might suppose them to have understood it. They must necessarily have understood the prophecy either according to the strictly literal meaning of the words, or according to the meaning that the whole circumstance of the event, of which it was a part, requires. If we suppose them to have understood the words literally, and that God intended them to be so understood, the passage becomes absurd. Picture God coming to pass judgment on the offenders — Adam and Eve standing before him in the depths of distress — and imagine hearing God pronounce pain, sorrow, misery, and death upon the first of the human race, and then, in

the very midst of this scene of grief and calamity, hear God solemnly foretelling some trivial incident that would occasionally occur in the world: that serpents would sometimes bite men on the heel, and that men would retaliate by striking them on the head. What would such a trifle have to do with the ruin of mankind, with the corruption of the natural and moral order, and with the loss of all the glory and happiness of creation? What great comfort would it have been to Adam, after being told that his days would be short and full of misery and his end without hope, to learn that he would occasionally crush a snake underfoot — and not even that without paying dearly for his small victory, since the snake would often bite him on the heel in return? Surely Adam could not have understood the prophecy in this sense, though some of his descendants have understood it exactly that way — a plain sign of how much more concerned some people are to maintain a literal reading of Scripture than to make it say anything sensible. Setting this reading aside, then, as utterly absurd and ridiculous, let us consider what meaning the actual circumstances of the event necessarily attach to the words of this prophecy. Adam, tempted by his wife, and she by the serpent, had fallen from their obedience and now stood before God awaiting judgment. They knew very well, at that moment, that their fall was the serpent's victory — a being they now knew by experience to be an enemy both to God and to man: to man, whom he had ruined by seducing him into sin; to God, whose noblest work of creation he had defaced. It could not but have been some comfort to them, then, to hear the serpent condemned first, and to see that, however much he had triumphed over them, he had gained no victory over their Maker, who was fully able to vindicate his own honor and punish this great author of wickedness. By this method of proceeding, God secured them against the thought that there might exist any evil being equal to the Creator in power and dominion — an opinion that gained ground in later ages through the growing influence of evil, and which, wherever it prevails, is destructive of all true religion. The condemnation of the serpent, then, was an assertion of God's supremacy; and that it was understood in this way we have, unless I am mistaken, very ancient testimony in the book of Job: With God is strength and wisdom, the deceived and the deceiver are his — that is, both are equally subject to his command (Job 12:16). Once the belief in God's supreme dominion, which is the foundation of all religion, had thus been secured, it was still necessary to give them hope enough to make them capable of religion toward God at all. And such hope they could not help conceiving when they heard, from the mouth of God himself, that the serpent's victory had not been a complete victory even over them; that they and their descendants would be enabled to contest his dominion; and that, though they would suffer much in the struggle, they would in the end prevail and bruise the serpent's head, delivering themselves from his power and dominion over them. What, then, could they have understood this victory over the serpent to mean? Is it not natural to expect that we will recover, through victory, what we lost through defeat? They knew that the enemy had subdued them through sin; could they then conceive

of hope for victory by any means other than righteousness? They had lost, through sin, the happiness of their creation; could they expect anything less, from a return to righteousness, than the recovery of the blessings they had forfeited? What else could they possibly have expected? For the certain knowledge they had of what they had lost when the serpent prevailed could not but give them an equally clear understanding of what they would regain by prevailing against the serpent in turn. The language of this prophecy is, indeed, partly metaphorical, but it is a great mistake to think that all metaphors carry an uncertain meaning; for the intention and purpose of the speaker, together with the attending circumstances, give even metaphorical language a fixed and definite sense. Were it otherwise, there could be no certainty in any language at all, since all languages — those of the East especially — abound in metaphor.

"Let us now return to our subject and see what application we are to make of this example.

"This prophecy was, to our first parents, still quite obscure. It was, in St. Peter's phrase, only a light shining in a dark place. All they could be certain of from it was that their case was not hopeless; that some remedy, some deliverance from the evil they were under, would appear in time — though when, or where, or by what means, they could not understand. Their own sentence, which returned them to the dust of the earth, made it hard for them to grasp what this victory over the serpent could even mean, or how they, who were soon to become dust and ashes themselves, would be any better for it. But after everything that might be said to emphasize the obscurity of this promise, I would ask one question: was not this promise or prophecy, obscure as it was, still a sufficient foundation for religion, and for trust and confidence toward God after the Fall, in the hope of deliverance from the evils brought on by disobedience? If it was, then it fully met the need of those to whom it was given, and revealed to them everything God intended to reveal. They could have had no religion toward God at all without some hope of mercy; it was therefore necessary to convey such hope — but to tell them exactly how, when, and in what manner that hope would be fulfilled was not necessary for their religion. So what objection can now be raised against this prophecy? You say it is very obscure; so it is. But it is obscure only in those points which God did not intend to explain at that time, and which were not then necessary to know. You can see a plain reason for giving this prophecy at all, and the prophecy is as plain as that reason requires it to be. It is obscure only where there was no reason for it to be plain — which is surely an easily forgivable shortcoming, and hardly grounds for complaint.

"But if this prophecy conveyed to our first parents only a general hope and expectation of pardon and restoration, and God intended it to convey nothing more to them, how is it that we, their descendants, find so much more in this promise than we suppose they found? How is it that we claim to discover Christ in this prophecy — to see in it the mystery of his birth,

his sufferings, and his final triumph over all the powers of darkness? By what new light do we perceive all these hidden things? By what art do we draw them out?

"It is no surprise to me that those who come to examine the prophecies applied to Christ expecting to find in each one some explicit mark or description of Christ, meant to be understood as such even before his coming, should ask these or similar questions — or that the argument from ancient prophecy should seem so slight and trivial to those who know no better way to use it.

"Known unto God are all his works from the beginning; and whatever degree of light he saw fit to communicate to our first parents, or to their descendants in later ages, there is no doubt that he had, at every point, a perfect knowledge of all the means by which he intended to rescue and restore mankind. All the notices he gave to mankind of his intended salvation must therefore correspond to that great event once the fullness of time should make it manifest. No reason can be given why God should, at any or every time, openly reveal the secrets of his providence to men; that depends entirely on his own good pleasure, as to when and how he thinks fit to do so. But there is a necessary reason why every notice God chooses to give must correspond, in due time, exactly to the fulfillment of his great design. It is therefore absurd to complain that the ancient prophecies are obscure, since that amounts to finding fault with God for not telling us more of his secrets. But if we claim that God has at last, through the revelation of the Gospel, made known to us the means of our salvation, it is incumbent on us to show that all the notices of that salvation given to the ancient world correspond to the things we have seen and heard with our own eyes. The argument from prophecy, then, is not to be framed in this way: all the ancient prophecies expressly pointed to and described Christ Jesus. Rather, it must be framed in this way: all the notices which God gave to the fathers concerning his intended salvation are perfectly answered by the coming of Christ. He never made a promise, or gave his word, regarding any particular aspect of the common salvation, which he did not fully make good by sending his Son for our redemption. Let us apply these principles to the prophecy before us. If you ask us to show you, from the text alone and in advance, Christ Jesus... If you ask whether God set forth in this prophecy, and whether God had limited himself by this promise to convey the blessing intended by sending his own Son in the flesh, and by no other means whatsoever, you are demanding what I cannot show, nor do I know who can. But if you ask instead whether this prophecy, in the obvious and most natural meaning of it—in the sense in which our first parents and their children afterward might easily understand it—has been verified by the coming of Christ, I believe it can be made as clear as the sun at noonday that all the expectation raised by this prophecy has been completely answered by the redemption wrought by Christ Jesus. And what more could you wish for than to see a prophecy fulfilled exactly? If you insist that the prophecy should have been more explicit, you must ask God why he gave you no

more light—but you ought at least to suspend that demand until you have some reason to offer for it.

"*I know that this prophecy is pressed further still, and that Christian writers argue from its very wording that Christ is specifically foretold in it: that he is properly the seed of a woman in a sense in which no other man ever was; that his sufferings were well prefigured by the bruising of the heel, and his complete victory over sin and death by the bruising of the serpent's head. When unbelievers hear such reasoning, they think themselves entitled to laugh—but let the scorn fall on themselves. We readily grant that the words do not necessarily imply this meaning. We grant further that there is no evidence our first parents understood them in this sense, or that God intended they should understand them so. But since this prophecy has been plainly fulfilled in Christ, and by the event appropriated to him alone, I would like to know how it comes to be thought so ridiculous a thing in us to suppose that God—to whom the whole event was known from the beginning—should choose such expressions as naturally conveyed as much knowledge as he intended to convey to our first parents, and yet should also prove, in the fullness of time, to have been peculiarly adapted to the event which he foresaw from the beginning and meant the world one day to see; so that when they should see it, they might the more easily acknowledge it to be the work of his hand, by the hidden evidence he had enclosed from ancient days within the words of prophecy. However much the cleverness of man may despise this method, there is nothing in it unworthy of the wisdom of God. And when we see this to be the case not only in this instance but in many other prophecies of the Old Testament, it is not without reason that we conclude that, beneath the obscurity of ancient prophecy, there was evidence of God's truth kept in reserve, to be made manifest in due time.*"

"Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure." (Isaiah 46:9–10)

The exquisite and masterly sense, clarity, and force of reasoning so conspicuous in this passage will be obvious to every ordinary reader and admired by every thoughtful one, and its relevance to the present subject will, I trust, sufficiently excuse the length of the quotation. ("The works of the Lord are done in judgment from the beginning; and from the time he made them, he disposed the parts thereof," Ecclesiasticus 16:26.)

In all the books of Moses I find no other prophecy than this one relating to the death and sufferings of Christ. I shall therefore, following the pattern our Savior laid out in his own words, move on next to the Prophets—and first produce one from Isaiah, whose application to the Messiah even the most stubborn enemies of the gospel have not been able to deny.

Isaiah, chapter 53: "Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed? For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. 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; we have turned every one to his own way; 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. He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? 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. Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors." (The margin of the Bible renders it, "He was taken away by distress and judgment.")

It is impossible for anyone with even the slightest acquaintance with the history of Christ not to perceive many circumstances of his life, his sufferings, and his death plainly pointed to in this prophecy. Indeed, it was fulfilled in Christ so apparently and so completely that the later rabbis, in order to avoid the conclusions Christians might draw from this and other prophecies in favor of the gospel, invented a distinction between two Messiahs: "one who was to redeem us, and another who was to suffer for us—for they say there are two separate persons promised under the name of the Messiah: one of the tribe of Ephraim, the other of the tribe of Judah; one the son of Joseph, the other the son of David; the one to go first, fight, and suffer death; the other to follow, conquer, reign, and never die." But Bishop Pearson, from whom I borrow this observation, has clearly shown this distinction to be not only false in itself but actually advantageous to the Christian faith, since it admits that a suffering Messiah was foretold by the Prophets. He has also proved that the ancient rabbis understood this fifty-third chapter of Isaiah to be a description of the Messiah without any hint of a double Messiah—an invention introduced by

the modern Jews to favor their vain expectations of a temporal prince and deliverer.

As for what further can be gathered from the other prophecies, and especially the Psalms, relating to this subject, I cannot do better than give it to the reader in the words of that same Bishop Pearson, whose observations on the several articles concerning the sufferings, etc., of Jesus I would urge the reader to consider.

> "*All of this—the predictions of his sufferings, and particularly this fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, compared with his life—if we look at it in general, we must acknowledge it fulfilled in him [Jesus] to the highest degree imaginable: that he was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. But if we compare the particular predictions with the historical record of his sufferings, if we join the Prophets and the Evangelists together, it will appear most plainly that the Messiah was to suffer nothing which Christ has not suffered. If Zechariah says, 'They weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver' (Zechariah 11:12), Matthew will show that Judas sold Jesus at the same rate—for the chief priests covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver (Matthew 26:15). If Isaiah says that he was wounded (Isaiah 53:5); if Zechariah says, 'they shall look upon me whom they have pierced' (Zechariah 12:10); if David, even more particularly, says, 'they pierced my hands and my feet' (Psalm 22:16), the Evangelist will show how he was fastened to the cross, and Jesus himself will show the print of the nails (John 20:25). If the Psalmist tells us they would 'laugh him to scorn, and shake their heads, saying, He trusted in the LORD that he would deliver him; let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him' (Psalm 22:7–8), Matthew will describe the very same action and the very same words: for 'they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads, and saying, He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God' (Matthew 27:39, 43). Let David say, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' and the Son of David will show in whose person the Father spoke it: 'Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?' (Psalm 22:1; Matthew 27:46). Let Isaiah foretell that 'he was numbered with the transgressors,' and you will find him crucified between two thieves, one on his right hand, the other on his left (Mark 15:27). Read in the Psalmist, 'In my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink' (Psalm 69:21), and you will find in the Evangelist that 'Jesus, that the scripture might be fulfilled, said, I thirst. And they took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink' (John 19:28; Matthew 27:48). Read further yet, 'They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture' (Psalm 22:18), and to fulfill the prediction, the soldiers will make good the very distinction: 'Who took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also his coat: now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout. They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be' (John 19:23–24). Lastly, let the Prophets teach us that he would be brought like a lamb to the slaughter, and be cut off out of the*

land of the living (Isaiah 53:7–8); all the Evangelists will declare how like a lamb he suffered, and even the Jews themselves will acknowledge that he was cut off."

These examples, I think, are enough to show that according to the Prophets, thus it was fitting for Christ to suffer and to die. That his burial also, and his resurrection, were likewise foretold will appear from the following passages.

Isaiah, in the chapter quoted above, verse 9, speaks of his burial in these words: "And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death"—and the exact fulfillment of this is too remarkable not to be noted.

The power of life and death had been taken from the Jews and placed in the hands of the Roman governor from the time Augustus annexed Judea to the province of Syria, which happened some years after the birth of Christ. The chief priests and rulers of the Jews were therefore obliged to apply to Pontius Pilate not only to put Jesus to death but also for permission to take down his body and those of the two criminals executed with him, so that they would not remain on the cross during the Sabbath day. Among the Romans—for whom crucifixion was the usual capital punishment for slaves, robbers, and others beneath the rank of Roman citizens—it was customary to let the corpse hang on the cross until it either decayed over time or was devoured by birds and beasts. However, upon a petition from the executed person's friends or relatives, permission to bury them was seldom or never refused; and so Pilate, without any difficulty, granted the Jews' request to take down the bodies, and gave permission to Joseph of Arimathea to bury that of Jesus. What became of the bodies of the two thieves after they were taken down from the cross is not mentioned by any of the Evangelists. That they were buried is almost certain, because not only the custom of the Jews but the explicit command of Moses required it: "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). This command was doubtless the reason for their petitioning Pilate to have the bodies taken down from the cross that same day, reinforced by the added consideration of the special solemnity and sanctity of the Passover Sabbath then immediately approaching.

That they were buried in or near the place of crucifixion is, I think, most probable, for the following reasons. First, the place where they were executed was called Golgotha, that is, "a place of a skull" (Matthew 27:33)—a name most likely derived from the number of skulls that, if it was indeed the usual place of execution (as this instance makes it most reasonable to conclude), might often have been found there, either fallen from bodies left to rot on the cross, or turned up by the digging of ground for such criminals as the governor allowed to be buried. Second, the Passover Sabbath was fast

approaching. For just as among the Jews the day was always reckoned to begin at evening, so, out of greater caution, they were accustomed to begin the Sabbath rest from all kinds of work an hour before sunset; but on this particular day, which was the preparation day of the Passover, the sacred hours (if I may put it that way) began even earlier, because the Passover lambs were always slain between the ninth and eleventh hours. Within that span of time the whole multitude of the Jews went up to the temple, where alone the Passover was slaughtered, and having there offered up the blood and entrails of the Passover victims, they brought the remaining carcasses back to prepare and eat at their own homes, according to the law of Moses. The Jews were therefore under great pressure of time, for the ninth hour had already begun before our Savior died, and the soldiers, coming to the two criminals after that time, found them not yet dead; and so, by a cruel kind of mercy meant to end a painful life and dispatch them more quickly, they broke their legs—the coup de grâce obtained for those wretched men from the Roman governor at the request of the Jews, and intended likewise for him who, though innocent and delivered up by their malice to that infamous and horrible death, yet with unparalleled benevolence and generosity interceded for them even on the cross, in these compassionate words: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34).

Now since Jesus, and consequently the two thieves, did not die until after the ninth hour, and since the Jews were obliged to go up to the temple before the eleventh hour—at the end of which the Sabbath rest from all work began—and since they were anxious that the bodies should be taken down and buried before the beginning of that high and solemn day, it is most likely that they buried them at or near the place where they were crucified. This is because they did not have time to carry them any great distance; because Golgotha, from its very name, seems to have been a place of burial for those executed there; and because the lack of time is the very reason the Evangelist gives for laying the body of Jesus in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea, which was nearby, as John tells us in these words: "Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid. There laid they Jesus therefore, because of the Jews' preparation day; for the sepulchre was nigh at hand" (John 19:41–42). Here, then, we may see and admire the exact fulfillment of this famous prophecy of Isaiah: "He made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death."

Jesus was buried like the wicked companions of his death, under the general permission granted to the Jews for taking down their bodies from the cross; and so he was buried in or near the place of execution, like them. But here the distinction, foreseen and foretold many hundred years before, took effect in his favor: though numbered with the transgressors, he had done no violence, nor was there any deceit in his mouth. For Joseph of Arimathea, a rich man and an honorable counselor (Matthew 27:57; Mark 15:43), and Nicodemus, a man of the Pharisees, a ruler of the Jews, a master in Israel, together arranged to "make his grave with the rich" by wrapping his body in

linen cloths with a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds in weight, and laying it in a new tomb carved or hollowed out of rock, which Joseph of Arimathea had had made for his own use. These circumstances clearly show that he was not only buried by the rich but like the rich as well, exactly according to the prophecy.

The words of David foretelling the resurrection of Christ, together with Peter's commentary upon them, I will quote in full, as they stand in the second chapter of Acts, verses 25 and following.

> "*For David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved: therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope: because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance. 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. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; 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)*

The apostle's reasoning was well understood by the Jews, and so convincing that three thousand souls were that day added to the church and baptized into the faith of Christ. His argument runs like this: you acknowledge David to be a prophet, who in his own person often spoke of the Messiah. To the Messiah, then, belong these words: "Thou shalt not leave my soul [life] in hell [Hades, the grave], neither shalt thou suffer thy Holy One to see corruption"—because these words can by no means apply to David, who it is not claimed ever rose from the dead; on the contrary, he was buried, and his body remained and decayed in his tomb, which is with us even to this day. But by divine illumination he foresaw that the Messiah, or Christ, who according to the flesh was to descend from him, would be raised up from the dead to sit upon his throne—that is, to reign, as David did, over the people of God. And therefore he foretold the resurrection of Christ in words most exactly fulfilled in Jesus, who rose alive out of the grave so short a time after his death that he saw no corruption, "whereof," Peter adds, "we are witnesses."

Concerning these words, no other question can be raised than whether they relate to the Messiah, for they certainly can never be applied to David. If they relate to the Messiah, then Jesus was the Messiah, for they were fulfilled in his resurrection; and no doubt the three thousand Jews converted by the preaching of Peter acknowledged both of these propositions. Indeed, by the way these words of the Psalmist were used by Peter, and afterward by Paul, it seems to have been taken for granted by them that, since these words could

not apply to David, they must be understood of the Messiah—who, therefore, according to Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalmist, was destined to suffer, to die, to be buried, and to rise again from the dead, as the various passages cited above clearly show.

Besides the explicit word of prophecy, there were several predictions of another kind concerning the sufferings, death, and resurrection of Christ, conveyed through types and figures—such as the two mentioned by our Savior and applied to himself: "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up" (John 3:14; Numbers 21:9); and again, "As Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth" (Matthew 12:40; Jonah 1:17, 2:10). There is also the Passover lamb, alluded to by Paul in these words, "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us" (1 Corinthians 5:7); and the wave-offering sheaf, alluded to in similar fashion by the same apostle (1 Corinthians 15:20, 23; Romans 11:16), and many others. I will not inquire here how far, and in what cases, an argument from types and figures may be admitted, but will content myself with quoting a passage on this point from the excellent discourses of Bishop Sherlock on prophecy, as follows:

> "*Another question, proper to be considered with respect to the state of religion under the Jewish dispensation, is this: how far the religion of the Jews was preparatory to that new dispensation which was, in due time, to be revealed in fulfillment of the promise made to all nations. Now if Abraham and his descendants were chosen not merely for their own sakes, or out of any partial regard toward them, but to serve as instruments in the hand of God for bringing about his great designs in the world; if the temporal government was given for the sake of the everlasting covenant, and to serve the introduction of it—then it is highly probable that all the parts of the Jewish dispensation were designed to serve the same end, and that the law, founded on the temporal covenant, was intended, as the temporal covenant itself was, to prepare the way for better promises. If this, on the whole, appears a reasonable supposition, then we have grounds to inquire into the meaning of the law, not merely as a literal command to the Jews, but as containing the figure and image of good things to come. It can hardly be supposed that God, intending finally to save the world through Christ and the preaching of the gospel, would give an intermediate law that had no connection or relation to the covenant he intended to establish forever. And whoever takes the trouble to consider seriously the whole administration of providence together, from beginning to end, may see more reason than he imagines to allow for types and figures in the Jewish law.*
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> "*To proceed, then: the Jewish dispensation, not conveying to all nations the blessing promised through Abraham's seed, but being only the administration of the hopes and expectations created by the promise of God, stood in this respect entirely upon the word of prophecy—for future*

hopes and expectations from God can have no other real foundation. Inasmuch, then, as the Jewish religion virtually contained the hopes of the gospel, the religion itself was a prophecy, and so on."

That the Jewish rabbis and the fathers of the Christian church, as well as our Savior and his apostles, understood many things in the law of Moses, in the historical books of the Old Testament, in the Prophets, and in the Psalms to be types and shadows of things to come is very certain. And if the first two groups carried their fancies on this subject further than reason or sense could allow, types and figures are not to be wholly rejected on that account—especially since many precepts and ceremonies in the Mosaic institution can be well explained by supposing them intended as images and shadows of things to come, and can scarcely be reconciled with the wisdom of the lawgiver without such an explanation. And once such types are admitted, it will be no difficult matter to show that they were fulfilled in Christ Jesus, as the great antitype to which they all pointed.

Whoever takes an attentive look at the predictions relating to the Messiah contained in the writings of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalmist will see the great plan of providence for delivering mankind from the power of sin and death opening gradually, in a succession of prophecies through the various ages of the world—each of which, as the accomplishment of God's wonderful and gracious purpose drew nearer, grew more explicit and particular, until at last they pointed to the very time and person of the expected deliverer. Thus the promise of redemption to mankind, given to our first parents in very general and obscure words—"the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head" (Genesis 3:15), meaning that some of their descendants would conquer their great enemy—was renewed to Abraham in clearer terms and narrowed to his descendants through Isaac: "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed" (Genesis 22:18; 26:4; 28:14); then narrowed again to Jacob, the younger of Isaac's two sons; and afterward to Judah and his children; and finally to the family of David, who was of the tribe of Judah (2 Samuel 7:12). Once the particular lineage from which this branch of righteousness and immortality was to come had thus been fixed and settled, God was pleased, in the next place, to bring the long-promised seed into nearer and clearer view, declaring through his prophets the precise time of his coming, the place and miraculous manner of his birth, and so many remarkable details of his life, his sufferings, and his death that by such characteristic marks and signs he might, when he came, be readily and plainly recognized.

These prophecies, some of them at least, were not only dark and obscure at the time they were given but even up to the time of their fulfillment. But that obscurity came not so much from the words in which they were expressed as from the things foretold—which seemed so inconsistent with one another that no human wisdom could reconcile them. For sometimes they described the Messiah under the character of a deliverer, a prince whose

throne should endure forever, the desire of all nations, the Holy One, and so on; at other times they spoke of him as a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, as despised and rejected of men, as afflicted, smitten, wounded, bruised, and scourged, numbered with the transgressors, cut off out of the land of the living, and making his grave with the wicked, and yet with the rich in his death. So much of these prophecies, however, was clear at all times that the Jews, to whom they were given, were encouraged to expect a redeemer to come at a certain fixed time; and they were able to calculate the period set by the prophet Daniel so precisely that at the birth of Christ there was a general expectation among the Jews—spreading from them to other nations—of a great king who was about that time to be born in Judea. The place of his birth, too, and the family from which he was to come, were just as clearly understood. But the Jews, too attached to the temporal covenant, proud of being the chosen and special people of God, and, from that pride, failing to grasp the full extent of the promise made to Abraham—that in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed—expected instead a temporal deliverer, a king of the Jews only, still regarded as a separate and distinct nation. They imagined that the Jews alone were to be redeemed, and that from their temporal enemies, and that under their Messiah they would reign forever over the other kings and nations of the earth. From this imagination—than which nothing could be more contrary to the explicit promises made to Abraham, or more insulting to the character of that God whose mercy is over all his works—came their blindness and reluctance to see and believe all that the Prophets had spoken, and their indignation against Jesus for claiming the title without asserting what they took to be the kingdom of the Messiah, the throne of David.

With these same prejudices the disciples and apostles themselves were so strongly gripped that when he told them of his sufferings and death, "Peter rebuked him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee" (Matthew 16:22). Jesus, however, suffered and died, and rose again from the dead, just as he had foretold; and notwithstanding his sufferings, he still claimed to be the Messiah—indeed, he even founded his claim upon those very sufferings, asserting that according to the Prophets, it was fitting for the Messiah to suffer in just this way. To the Prophets, therefore, he sends them for their conviction, and to remove those prejudices which, as long as they persisted, would have kept them from ever acknowledging his claim—unless they were willing to renounce the very Scriptures on whose authority alone their expectations of a Messiah were grounded. For if the Prophets spoke only of a victorious, triumphant redeemer of Israel, a king who should never die, then certainly Jesus could not be that redeemer, for he was oppressed and afflicted, and instead of delivering the Jews, was himself delivered up to their enemies and put to death by them.

What the Prophets wrote about the sufferings, and so on, of the Messiah we have just now seen, and we cannot, I think, but acknowledge their predictions to be very clear and explicit, and to have been fulfilled in the most

exact detail in Christ Jesus. And perhaps to us, who are not blinded by the vain imaginings of the Jews, it may seem a matter of wonder that the apostles should so long and so stubbornly shut their eyes against so strong a light. The truth is, they were unwilling to give up the pleasing and flattering expectations of a temporal kingdom, which they understood to be plainly spoken of by the Prophets, and knew to be incompatible with a suffering, dying Messiah. By expounding to them, therefore, in Moses and all the Prophets, the things concerning himself, and by opening their understanding so that they might understand the Scripture, Jesus at length brought them to see that the kingdom of the Messiah was not a temporal but a spiritual and eternal kingdom—that the kingdom promised to Adam and the patriarchs was not merely the redemption of the children of Israel from their earthly enemies and oppressors (an event in which the first father of the world, and even the patriarchs themselves, could have had little or no interest), but the redemption of all mankind from the power and penalty of sin. This was to be achieved, on the one hand, by Christ's fulfilling all righteousness—the original covenant upon which happiness and immortality had been promised to Adam—and, on the other hand, by his offering up his soul as a sacrifice for sin, that is, paying the penalty of death which all sinners, all mankind, had incurred; paying it not as a debtor, for he was without sin, but as a surety, who willingly and freely took upon himself to make good the failings and discharge the obligations of others. Of this plan the death of Christ was a necessary part, and so was his resurrection from the dead—by which, having defeated that enemy who brought death and sin into the world, he was placed in possession of that throne which was to endure forever, and was, like David, appointed by God to reign—not over the Jewish nation to the exclusion of the rest of mankind, but over all those of every nation in the world who should, like the Jews, make themselves the people of God by entering into a covenant with him to keep his commandments—the sole basis by which the children of Israel originally became the people of God. Over them, as such, God, their legal and constitutional king, if I may put it that way, set David as a ruler under him, and promised to continue that delegated, vicarial scepter of righteousness in David's descendants forever.

Of all these points there are frequent hints in the books of Moses, in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, by a fair and unprejudiced examination of which the disciples and apostles could be fully convinced that, according to the plan for the redemption of mankind promised to Adam and the patriarchs, as well as by the explicit word of prophecy, the Messiah was destined to die and rise again from the dead. And just as, on the one hand, had the Scriptures been silent on the latter of these two points, they would still have had sufficient proof from the testimony of their own senses that Christ was risen from the dead; so, on the other hand, from the exact fulfillment of all the predictions relating to his life, his sufferings, his death, and his burial, they could—without any further evidence than the fact that his body was nowhere to be found—have infallibly concluded from the Scriptures alone that he was risen

from the dead. And therefore, when all these testimonies came together to prove the resurrection, how could they possibly withhold their assent?

The prophecies Jesus himself made about rising from the dead on the third day were another proof of the same kind, on which they might reasonably and confidently rely, just as they relied on the one grounded on the predictions of Moses and the Prophets. Moses had foretold that the Messiah would be a prophet, and they had already been convinced that Jesus was one in the fullest sense of that word, through many instances that had come under their own observation—particularly those relating to his passion and crucifixion, most of whose minute and extraordinary details he had told them about before they came to pass. Such were the treachery of Judas, the desertion of his disciples, Peter's denying him three times, the insults and abuses he suffered from the chief priests and elders, and the cruel mockery of the Roman soldiers. The exact correspondence of each of these events with their respective predictions provided the strongest possible presumption in favor of the resurrection, since it too had been foretold in the same way by the one whose foreknowledge they had just received so many convincing proofs of—especially since some of the predicted events were of such a nature that they could not have been foreseen except by that eye which penetrates into the innermost depths of the human heart and discerns all its thoughts even before they are formed. For although the chief priests and Pharisees had for some time been seeking how they might put him to death (Matthew 26:5), they had resolved against doing it on the feast day for fear of the people (Mark 11:8–9), who only a few days before had, in a kind of triumphal procession, accompanied his entry into Jerusalem, cutting down branches of palm, strewing them before him, spreading their garments in the way, and crying, "Hosanna, blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." Yet on the feast day he was put to death, at the urging of the chief priests and Pharisees, and by the clamor of this very same people, against the inclination and efforts of Pilate, in whose hands the power of life and death lay, and who, as his judge, declared him innocent again and again; and when he handed him over to be crucified, he "took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it" (Matthew 27:24).

This sudden change in the counsels of the chief priests, in the hearts of the multitude, and in the manner of Pontius Pilate—who was a man of a haughty, harsh, uncompromising, and unforgiving spirit, who, far from showing any courtesy toward the Jewish nation or regard for their customs or religion, had all along treated them with the most cruel and tyrannical insolence, and who more than once had contemptuously acted in direct opposition to their most just and reasonable demands—such a sudden change, I say, from one extreme to another, could not have been reliably predicted beforehand merely from a consideration of the instability of human judgment and the fickleness of the human mind. The same may be said concerning the desertion of his disciples and Peter's threefold denial of him, each of which events came to pass within a few hours after they were foretold, and within the very time specified—

contrary to their own explicit and confident declarations, made at the very time and on the occasion of this same prophecy, that though they should die with him, they would never deny (renounce) him (Matthew 26:35).

Add to this the inhuman abuse, insults, and mockery he endured from the chief priests and from the Roman soldiers—for these surely were no ordinary part of the punishment inflicted upon criminals; even the most wicked of criminals are seldom treated with more severity than their sentence requires, especially when that sentence involves taking their lives by a slow and painful death. And our Savior's case undoubtedly deserved more than ordinary compassion, especially from the Roman soldiers, since he had been declared innocent by the Roman governor himself, and was known to have been sacrificed only to the envy and malice of the Jews. Therefore the disciples could have had no reason to doubt that Jesus, who foretold all these extraordinary particulars, was endowed with the all-foreseeing Spirit of God; and consequently they could have had just as little cause to doubt his resurrection, which he had foreseen and foretold by that same divine Spirit, from whom no event, however remote or unusual, can be hidden, and who can never deceive or lie. And therefore the apostles, even without the testimony of those who had seen him after he had risen, without the authority of the Scriptures foretelling his resurrection, and without the infallible proofs of his being alive after his passion which they themselves received from seeing him, touching him, and talking with him, might well have found grounds to believe that he was risen from the dead, on the single evidence of his having predicted it, joined with the fact that his body was nowhere to be found—as John in fact did, and was therefore pronounced blessed by our Savior himself, in these words spoken to Thomas on the occasion of his refusing to believe without the testimony of his own senses: "Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed" (John 20:29). More on this later.

I will rest the case here and close the evidence for the resurrection of Jesus, since it is clear that the apostles, who were to be witnesses of this great event and preachers of the gospel to all the world, had no doubt or hesitation left concerning his being truly, that is, bodily, risen from the dead, after his appearance to Thomas. For "they went into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them" (Matthew 28:16–17), in obedience to his command, and in expectation of meeting him there according to his promise; and when they saw him there, they worshiped him. From there they returned again to Jerusalem and remained in that city in obedience to another command, waiting for the promise of the Father, which within a few days afterward was fulfilled to them by the coming of the Holy Ghost (Acts 1:4; 2:4).

On these two points I beg leave to say a few words, for a better understanding of some passages relating to them in Matthew, Luke, and the Acts of the Apostles.

All the males among the Jews were, by the law of Moses, commanded to go up three times every year to Jerusalem, to appear, as it is put, "before the LORD"—namely at the three great feasts: the Passover, also called the Feast of Unleavened Bread; the Feast of Weeks, called Pentecost; and the Feast of Tabernacles (Exodus 23:17; Deuteronomy 16:16). Each of these festivals lasted a full week. The apostles and disciples, therefore, who had come up to Jerusalem from Galilee, their native country, not merely to attend their Master but in obedience to this law of Moses, to keep the Passover, remained, as they were obliged to, in Jerusalem until the end of that festival. And there Jesus appeared to them a second time—eight days after his first appearance—with Thomas present among them (John 20:26). The next appearance of Christ to any number of his disciples together was at the Sea of Tiberias, also called the Sea of Galilee; and this is explicitly said by John to be "the third time that Jesus showed himself to his disciples, after that he was risen from the dead" (John 21:14). From this it is clear that the appearance on a mountain in Galilee mentioned by Matthew came after the one described by John, and took place in a different location—on a mountain, whereas the latter was by the Sea of Tiberias.

Three reasons can be given for our Savior's meeting his disciples in Galilee. Galilee was the country where he had lived for more than thirty years, from his infancy until the time he first began to preach the kingdom of God. There he first began to proclaim and demonstrate his mission through miracles, and in the towns of that region he performed the greatest part of his mighty works, so that he must necessarily have been better known and had more followers there than in any other part of Judea. And so one reason for his appearing in Galilee after rising from the dead seems to have been that, where he was personally known to so many people, he might have the greater number of qualified witnesses to his resurrection. Accordingly, Paul tells us he was seen by above five hundred brethren at once, which therefore most likely happened at the mountain in Galilee where, as Matthew says, Jesus had appointed his disciples to meet him, as I have noted once already.

Second, Galilee was also the native country of the greatest part, if not all, of his apostles and disciples. There they lived and supported themselves and their families, some of them at least, by humble and laborious occupations. So restricted and needy a condition of life must have made a long absence from their own homes highly inconvenient to them at that time, especially since the barley harvest, which always fell around the time of the Passover, was either beginning or about to begin. As soon, then, as the Passover festival was over—which necessarily kept them in Jerusalem for a full week—it was natural to suppose they would return to Galilee. Based on this expectation, our Savior, before his death, had promised that after he rose he would go before them into Galilee. This notable expression was used again by the angel after his resurrection, who told the women to tell his disciples that he (Jesus) would go before them into Galilee—that is, would be in Galilee ahead of them and would meet them there. Christ himself afterward commands them, through

these same women, to go into Galilee, adding a promise that they would see him there. But this command should not be taken to imply any suspicion that, without those direct orders from their Master, they would have remained in Jerusalem, where, once the festival was over, they had nothing to do. It should rather be understood as a confirmation of his promise to meet them in Galilee, and a strong encouragement for them to count on its fulfillment in the proper place and time.

The time for them to take up the apostolic office—to preach the gospel to all the world—had not yet come, nor were they yet fully prepared or qualified for that important work, which, once they had undertaken it, was to be not only the sole occupation of their lives but also the reason for their leaving their fathers, their children, their country, and their friends, to travel the world over, exposed to hardships, dangers, persecution, and death in unknown and remote corners of the earth. Of all this their Master had frequently warned them before his death, particularly in that affectionate discourse he gave them on the night he was betrayed. To prepare them gradually, then, for a condition of so much affliction and hardship, and to give them an opportunity to see to and provide, as best they could, for their relations and families, to whom they would soon have to say farewell forever, their gracious Lord—who knew how to be understanding of the affections and weaknesses of human nature because he had felt them himself, and who, by entrusting his mother, even from the cross, to the care of his beloved disciple, had taught them what regard was owed to those tender bonds of nature—not only permitted them to return to Galilee but promised to meet them there, and did in fact meet them there, not only once but several times, as can be inferred from what Luke says of his having shown himself to them for forty days after his passion (Acts 1:3), compared with what John says of the appearance by the Lake of Tiberias, which he explicitly calls the third time that Christ showed himself to his disciples after his resurrection.

After this, Matthew speaks of another appearance in Galilee, on a mountain, where, he adds, Jesus had appointed his disciples to meet him. When this appointment was made, none of the Evangelists give any indication. If it was not made at the appearance by the Lake of Tiberias—which there is no reason to think it was, since John says nothing of any such matter—it was probably made at some other appearance in Galilee, between that last one and the one mentioned by Matthew. And since a great number of brethren were present on that occasion, it is reasonable to conclude that advance notice was given of both the day and the place of meeting. But however that may have been, I am persuaded that the greatest part of Christ's appearances during the forty days after his passion took place in Galilee, since the reasons that required the apostles to return there were just as strong for their remaining there until the approach of the Feast of Weeks, or Pentecost, called them back to Jerusalem.

Another reason for his meeting his disciples in Galilee, and for concluding that the appearances mentioned in the Acts were chiefly in that country, and that there were many of them, can be drawn from what Luke tells us about the subjects our Savior spoke to his disciples about on these occasions—namely, "things pertaining to the kingdom of God" (Acts 1:3). Before they set out on the great work of preaching the kingdom of God to all the world, it was necessary that they be fully instructed in the doctrines they were to preach and in the various duties of the apostolic office; that they should thoroughly understand the intentions of their Master, and have some view of the means and assistance by which they would be enabled to carry out a task so clearly beyond their own abilities; and that they should have some hope and encouragement to sustain them in facing the difficulties and dangers they were told to expect in spreading the gospel. To accomplish all this, many deep-rooted prejudices concerning the law of Moses and the Jewish nation had to be uprooted; the plan of God for the universal redemption of mankind had to be laid open to them; many human emotions, reluctances, and fears had to be overcome; and their hearts needed to be strengthened with courage and constancy, a disregard and contempt for hardships, perils, pain, and death. To these several purposes nothing could contribute more than frequent visits from their Lord, whose resurrection (of which every appearance was a fresh proof) was undeniable evidence of his power; whose every appearance was an instance of his affection and condescension toward them, and of his faithfulness in keeping the promise he had made before his passion to come to them again after his death and remain with them a little while before he went to his Father; and whose faithfulness and precision in keeping this promise was an infallible guarantee and assurance of the coming of that Comforter who was to take his place, to guide them into all truth, to bring to their remembrance whatever he had spoken to them, to enable them to do greater works than he had done, and to fill their hearts with that joy which no man would be able to take from them. Add to this the weight and authority given to his precepts and instructions by being delivered in person by himself, and the great strengthening of their faith that came from having frequently before their eyes the captain of their salvation, who, having fought against the powers of darkness and triumphed over sin and death, was to sit from then on at the right hand of God, invested with power to help those who should fight under his banner, and to reward their labors, their sufferings, and their death with a crown of immortal life.

And if nothing could more effectively bring about all these great results than Christ's frequently meeting with his apostles, it will clearly appear that no place could be more suitable for those meetings than Galilee—if we consider that the apostles, having their homes in that country, could reside there without any suspicion, and gather together without any fear of the persecutors and murderers of their Master, the chief priests and the Roman governor, for Galilee was under the jurisdiction of Herod (Luke 23:7). Whereas, had they remained in Jerusalem and continued to gather frequently

together while the report of their Master's rising from the dead was still fresh and on everyone's lips, the chief priests and elders—whose hatred or fear of Jesus Christ was not extinguished by his blood, as shown by their persecuting and killing his followers long afterward—these rulers of the Jews, I say, would undoubtedly have caused such interruptions to those meetings and thrown such obstacles in the way that our Lord would have had to use his miraculous power to prevent or remove them. Now, since all these inconveniences could be avoided by our Savior's meeting his disciples in Galilee, it better fits the wisdom of God (which, as Mr. Locke observes, does not usually resort to miracles except in cases that truly require them) to suppose these frequent meetings took place in Galilee rather than in Jerusalem, and that this is more consistent with the conduct of our Lord himself, who, being in danger from the scribes and Pharisees, refrained from appearing publicly in Jerusalem for some time before the hour appointed for his sufferings and death had come, and instead walked in Galilee, as John tells us: "for he would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him" (John 7:1).

From these considerations I think it clear that all the appearances of Christ to his disciples, from the one to Thomas mentioned in John to the last one in Jerusalem on the day of his ascension mentioned by Luke both in his Gospel and in the Acts, took place in Galilee. And when the apostles afterward returned to Jerusalem, they were protected from any suspicion of causing trouble by residing there, for the short time between their return and their taking up the apostolic office, by the obligation they were under, along with the rest of their fellow Jews, to go to that city for the celebration of the Feast of Weeks, that is, Pentecost (Acts 2:1). On the most solemn day of that festival, according to the promise of their Master, they were filled with the Holy Ghost and endued with power from above to defy all danger and overcome all opposition in preaching the gospel of Christ.

And from this we learn that the entire latter part of the twenty-fourth chapter of Luke's Gospel, from verse 49 to the end, relates to what happened at Jerusalem after the apostles' return from Galilee. Since this Evangelist had not thought it necessary to his purpose to mention their departure to Galilee after Christ's resurrection, or his promise to go there before them, he likewise thought it unnecessary to say anything about their leaving Jerusalem—since the scene of the last appearance, as well as of the earlier one he relates, was in that city, and since those who should come to know the whole history of our Savior by other means would run no risk of confusing these two appearances. As for those who might happen to have no other account but his Gospel (if such a thing could even be supposed), no great harm could come from their mistaking the two for one and the same event.

By this long and careful examination of the various particulars that make up the evidence for the resurrection, I have tried to show that no facts could ever better withstand the test of scrutiny. And if I have succeeded to any degree in my efforts, I will neither regret my own labor nor apologize to the

reader for having dwelt so long on this subject, since the conclusion that will inevitably follow from this discussion is that no fact was ever more fully proven than the resurrection of Jesus Christ. For besides the testimony of some who may be supposed to have had no bias either for or against the resurrection—I mean the Roman soldiers, who reported that his tomb was miraculously opened by an angel, or a divine being (for so they must have described that heavenly apparition)—and besides the testimony of others who were apparently prejudiced against the belief that Christ was risen from the dead, and yet affirmed not only that they were told by angels that he was risen, but that they themselves had seen him, talked with him, and touched him—besides this human testimony, I say, which, considering all the circumstances surrounding it, must be allowed sufficient to prove any event that was not either impossible or highly improbable, there were also (as it was reasonable to expect there would be) other evidences just as extraordinary and miraculous as the resurrection itself. Of this kind are the predictions contained in the writings of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalmist, setting forth the design and purpose of God to redeem mankind through the righteousness, sufferings, death, and resurrection of the seed of the woman. Without the resurrection, this great plan of divine mercy would have been incomplete; by it, the plan was made perfect, and the triumph over death was added to the triumph over sin, the Messiah thereby fulfilling all that the Scriptures foretold of his glory and power. When, therefore, one part of the promises relating to Jesus had been 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 relating to his rising from the dead. Coming from one whose other predictions—and there had been many—had always been fulfilled, these prophecies deserved to be believed no less than the others. They were not only verified by the event itself, but confirmed by other, subsequent events, likewise foretold by him before his passion, and linked with and depending upon that great proof of his divine power. Such, for instance, were his meeting his disciples in Galilee, his being with them a little while before he went to his Father, his ascension into heaven, and his sending to them the promised Comforter, with all the glorious faculties and powers they received at his coming. With so varied, so astonishing, so well-connected and irrefragable a chain of evidence is this important article of the resurrection bound up and fortified.

But not all these proofs were exhibited to all the Jews, for Jesus was not shown alive after his passion 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 rose from the dead" (Acts 10:41). That Christ made choice of a select number of disciples, and particularly of twelve (who were called apostles), to be witnesses of the great actions of his life, and especially of his resurrection, and preachers of his gospel to all the world, is a thing too well known to need any proof. To qualify them for this double office, he not only, on many

occasions both before and after his crucifixion, discoursed to them in particular of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God, and poured upon them all the various gifts of the Holy Spirit, but gave them every kind of evidence of his being risen from the dead which the most scrupulous and skeptical could imagine or require—showing himself alive to them by many infallible proofs, such as eating and drinking with them, for forty days after his passion. And indeed, it is highly fitting that those upon whose testimony and credit the truth of any fact is to be established should have the fullest and most unexceptionable evidence of it that can be had, because their having had every possible means of information must needs add great weight and authority to their testimony.

From this, then, we may learn the reason for our Savior's appearing so often to his disciples after his resurrection; for his requiring them to handle him and see that it was he himself; for his eating and drinking with them; for his referring them to the Scriptures, to his own predictions, and to the testimony of those to whom he had appeared before he came to them; and lastly, for his satisfying the unreasonable scruples of St. Thomas—who, being one of the chosen witnesses (one of the Twelve), it was proper he should have an equal knowledge of the fact he was to attest with his fellow apostles. That this perfect knowledge of the things they were to testify to was necessary for those who were ordained to be apostles is further evident from the following words of St. Peter, who, after the ascension of our Lord, proposing to the rest of the disciples to fill the vacancy left by the transgression and death of Judas by electing one to take part with them in their ministry and apostleship, describes the qualifications required in an apostle by limiting their choice in these words: "Wherefore of these men that have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection" (Acts 1:21-22). From this it is also plain that all these infallible proofs were not granted by Christ to his disciples merely out of a particular favor and regard for them, that they themselves might believe and be saved, but with a further purpose—that others also, through their testimony founded on the most complete and exact information, might likewise believe and be saved. Christ's reproof of St. Thomas for not believing without the testimony of his own senses, implied in the blessing he pronounced on those who, not having seen, had yet believed, is a clear argument that our Savior thought his disciples had sufficient cause to believe he was risen from the dead even before he showed himself to them. And that they had, in fact, so believed, I have endeavored above to prove; and that St. John did believe before he saw his Master, he himself assures us.

Had Christ therefore intended nothing more than to bring his disciples to a belief of his resurrection, he might have left them to the testimony of the Roman soldiers, to that of the women, to the writings of Moses and the Prophets, to his own predictions, to the state of the sepulcher and that wonderful circumstance of his body being nowhere to be found. To all this

evidence he might, I say, have left them, without appearing to them himself, and left them without excuse had they still continued faithless and unbelieving. But although the apostles had, on this evidence, believed their Master to be risen from the dead, yet without those other infallible proofs mentioned by St. Luke, they would certainly not have been so well qualified as witnesses of the resurrection to all the world—that is to say, the reasons on which they believed would not have appeared so convincing. The heathens would not have admitted the testimony of Moses and the Prophets, of whose writings they knew nothing, and of whose divine authority they had no proof. And as to the depositions of the women, besides that they were strangers to their characters, they might, from Christ's appearing to the women, have had some color of reason to ask why he did not likewise appear to those whom he had commissioned to preach his gospel and to be witnesses of his resurrection. But when, on the contrary, the apostles could tell them that they themselves had seen Christ, had handled him, had eaten and drunk with him, and had conversed with him for forty days after he was risen from the dead, 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, pain, 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 what has been said, it may appear how little ground there is for the objections that have been raised regarding our Lord's forbidding Mary Magdalene to touch him, and regarding his not showing himself, after he was risen, to the Jews—to the chief priests and elders, to the scribes and Pharisees. The first of these has been interpreted as a refusal to Mary Magdalene of the necessary evidence of his being risen from the dead; and the other as a breach of the promise implied in these words: "An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign, and there shall be no sign given to it but the sign of the prophet Jonas: for as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of man be..." (Matthew 12:39-40). In this, it is said, Christ promised to appear, after he was risen, to that evil and adulterous generation—that is, to the Jews—as distinguished from his disciples and apostles. That Christ promised by these words to give that evil generation sufficient proof of his rising from the grave after having lain in it three days, I readily allow; but that he promised to appear to them, I absolutely deny, and think it impossible to prove that he did, from the passage just cited. Of his rising again from the grave on the third day, the Jews had the testimony of the prophets, of the predictions of Christ himself, the evidence of the Roman soldiers, of his body being nowhere to be found, and of the women, disciples, and apostles to whom he had appeared—who, before the Sanhedrin, bore witness to his resurrection, and having just before worked a

miracle upon a lame man, declared that they had done it "in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, whom," they said, "ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead" (Acts 4:10). This surely was evidence sufficient to convince any reasonable and unprejudiced person, and consequently to acquit our Lord of any promise to give that evil generation further satisfactory proofs of his being risen from the dead. To the evidence granted by Christ, either out of favor to those who had forsaken all and followed him, or to those whom he had chosen to be witnesses of him to all the world, they certainly could have no just claim—they who, instead of being his disciples, had rejected his doctrine and put him to death as an impostor and blasphemer, and, instead of showing any disposition to embrace or spread his gospel, opposed it with all their power, and by threats and punishments forbade his apostles to preach any more in his name.

That Mary Magdalene was convinced that it was Jesus who appeared to her, I have already shown very fully; and that was all that was necessary for her own sake. Supposing, then, that she never afterward had permission to touch or embrace her Master (which, by the way, cannot be proved), neither she nor anyone else had reason to complain or object, since neither her own faith nor that of any other person depended on her having that particular proof of the resurrection of Christ, for she was not an apostle, not one of the chosen witnesses. And it is very remarkable that none of the apostles, either in preaching to the unconverted Jews or Gentiles, or in their epistles to the Church, ever make any mention of the appearances of Christ to the women. The evangelists seem to have related them only because they were connected with other, more important parts of the history of the resurrection. The truth is, the testimony of the women, though of great weight with the apostles and with those who received it from their own mouths, was only secondhand hearsay evidence to those who had it only by report from the apostles—who, for that reason, always insisted on their having themselves seen their Master after he was risen from the dead, a circumstance, as far as I can recall, omitted by none of them in their arguments concerning the resurrection of Jesus, as may be seen in the passages of Scripture that give any particular account of those discourses. And thus St. Paul, in his epistle to the Corinthians, after enumerating many appearances of Christ to the twelve apostles and to others, closes it all by saying, "And last of all he was seen of me also" (1 Corinthians 15:8). So much care did they take to give reasonable evidence for the reasonable faith they required.

All that has so far been said relates chiefly to the proofs of the resurrection of Jesus Christ as they were laid before the apostles, those chosen witnesses of that great and astonishing event. And I hope, upon a serious and attentive view of the fair and unforced manner in which those proofs were offered to their consideration, and of the number and certainty of the facts on which they were grounded, every judicious and candid inquirer after truth will allow that, to the apostles at least, the resurrection of Jesus was most fully and most unexceptionably proved. I shall now proceed to lay before the reader some arguments—for I cannot enter into all of them—that may lead us, who live at

so remote a distance in time from that age of evidence and miracles, to believe that Christ rose from the dead.

The first and principal argument is the testimony of those chosen witnesses, transmitted down in writing, either penned by themselves or authorized by their inspection and approval.

The second is the existence of the Christian religion.

Before we admit the testimony of these chosen witnesses contained in the Gospels, the Acts, the Epistles, and the Revelation, it may be proper to consider, first, what reasons there are for believing this testimony to be genuine—or, in other words, for believing them to be the authors of those books which are now received under their names; and next, what arguments can be offered to induce us to give credit to this testimony, supposing it to be genuine.

To prove that the apostles and evangelists were the authors of those Scriptures which are now received under their names, we have the concurrent attestation of all the earliest writers of the Church, carried forward by an uninterrupted and uncontested tradition from the very times of the apostles—an authentication of these sacred records that cannot be overturned by bare assumptions and an unsupported and unproven charge of forgery. But for the proofs of this proposition, I shall refer the reader to the discourses of those learned men who have treated this subject more particularly, and shall content myself with offering, in support of those proofs, the following considerations, in which I shall endeavor to show: first, the probability that the apostles left in writing the evidences and doctrines of the religion they preached, and that their disciples preserved and transmitted those writings to posterity; and second, the improbability of any books forged in the names of the apostles escaping detection. (I use these two words, apostles and evangelists, here to denote and distinguish the authors of the four Gospels, the Acts, and the Epistles, etc., though they might all have been comprehended under the general term "apostles"—a title given by some of the Fathers not only to the twelve so called by Christ himself, but afterward to Matthias and to Paul, and to all the seventy or seventy-two disciples. Among this last number were the evangelists Mark and Luke, as Dr. Whitby has shown from Origen and Epiphanius; and as such, they were qualified by their own personal knowledge of most of the facts, and by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, to write their Gospels without the oversight of the two great apostles Peter and Paul—though this oversight, we are told by some of the Fathers, was a further authority given to them, one that would have sufficed even if they had not themselves been particularly inspired.)

First: if the precepts and examples of Jesus Christ and his apostles were meant to be the rules by which all those who in succeeding ages should believe in him were required to govern themselves, it seems most consistent with the wisdom of God—because agreeable to what he himself practiced

when he gave the Law to the Israelites—to commit those rules of salvation to writing, rather than to the unsure and treacherous conveyance of oral tradition, which cannot safely be depended on for scarcely even one or two generations. It is therefore highly reasonable to suppose that the same Spirit which incited and enabled the apostles to preach the gospel and bear witness to the resurrection of Jesus Christ in every nation of the known world, should likewise incite and enable them to deliver down to posterity, in a method least liable to uncertainty and error, that testimony and those precepts upon which the faith and practice of after-times were to be established—especially when it is considered, second, that all revelation (I mean revelation of the doctrines and system of the gospel) was confined to the apostles, and consequently ended with them. The power of working miracles, speaking with other tongues, casting out unclean spirits, and so forth, was frequently, if not universally, given to the first converts to Christianity, and some of these gifts continued for many generations in the Church. But it was to the apostles alone that our Savior was pleased to reveal his will. Accordingly, in the epistles of St. Paul (see particularly the epistles to the Corinthians) we see that those Christians who were endowed with many and various gifts of the Holy Spirit nevertheless stood in need of the instruction and direction of that apostle in many points both of faith and practice; and the earliest writers after the apostles, though possessed themselves of many of those miraculous powers, instead of claiming immediate revelation, have recourse on all occasions to the holy Scriptures, which they acknowledged to have been written with the assistance of the divine Spirit, as to that fountain from which alone they could draw the waters of life. Both these appeals—that made to the apostles by their contemporaries, and that made by succeeding Christians to the Scriptures—would have been unnecessary had they, like the apostles, been taught all things by revelation and been guided into all truth by the Holy Spirit directly.

This being the case with those Christians who were converted to the faith by the preaching of the apostles themselves, and who were to transmit to succeeding ages that gospel on which, according to their belief, the salvation of mankind depended, is it not natural to suppose that they would take the most effective means to make up for those deficiencies which they were aware of in themselves, and to guard against those errors into which, through the weakness of the human mind, they had fallen even while the voices of the apostles still sounded in their ears—errors to which their posterity must of necessity be still more liable? And what more effective means could they pursue than either to obtain in writing from the apostles themselves the evidences and doctrines of the Christian faith; or, which amounted to much the same thing, to write them down from their mouths, or under their inspection and approval; or, finally, to transcribe from their own memories what they could recollect of the doctrines and instructions of the apostles? Of these three methods, the first two were unquestionably the best; the last was subject to many imperfections and mistakes. For though our Savior promised

to enable his apostles, by the Holy Spirit, to call to mind whatever he had said to them, I do not find that the memories of those who heard the apostles were ever assisted in any such miraculous manner. If the apostles, therefore, had not—either from their care for the household of faith, or from the promptings of the Holy Spirit—transmitted the proofs and doctrines of the gospel to posterity in one of the two first-mentioned ways, it is to be presumed they would have been called upon to do so by those who looked on them as teachers commissioned and inspired by the Spirit of Truth, and who alone had the words of eternal life. And if neither of those two desirable things could have been obtained, recourse would undoubtedly have been had to the last. And indeed it is evident, from St. Luke's preface to his Gospel, that many writings of this kind were current among the Christians of those times. None of these, as far as I know, have come down to us; it is to be presumed that they were superseded by writings of greater authority—that is, writings either penned by the apostles themselves, or authorized by their inspection and approval—because this seems the best account that can be given for the different fates that have attended these several writings: the former having disappeared and died soon after their birth, and the latter having survived now almost seventeen centuries in the same degree of esteem and veneration with which they were first received by the converts of the apostolic age.

I say "by the converts of the apostolic age," for that the distinction between these writings was made in that age is very probable: first, because those very contemporaries of the apostles themselves stood in need of their instructions, admonitions, and exhortations for their own direction and encouragement; and second, for the conviction of the next age, who were to receive the gospel from their hands. They needed the testimony and authority of those persons to whom the facts on which their faith depended were most completely proved, and who alone, in matters of doctrine, were guided into all truth by the infallible Spirit of God; for by their own evidence they could prove no more than what fell within the compass of their own knowledge, which could extend no further than to what they had themselves seen of the apostles, or heard from their mouths. And this evidence of theirs could gain no further authority by having been committed to writing. The apostles alone could prove what they alone knew, and were the only authentic preachers of those doctrines which they alone received from Christ, or, after his ascension, from the Holy Spirit. Their successors, besides bearing testimony to their characters, and giving evidence perhaps of some incidental facts that had come under their own observation, could do no more than witness to their depositions—that is, that these and these were the facts, and these and these were the doctrines, delivered by the apostles. If the apostles, therefore, either from the secret prompting of the Holy Ghost, or from their fatherly care and affection for the household of faith, or at the request of their children in Christ Jesus, did commit to writing the proofs and doctrines of the Christian religion (as it is reasonable to suppose they did), it is equally reasonable to conclude

that whatever they either wrote or approved must necessarily have been preferred above all other writings whatsoever.

And as the writings of the apostles must, for the reasons already given, have been of great weight and importance to the Christians of their own times, and of still greater importance to those of the succeeding ages, who could not, like their predecessors, on any occasion have recourse to the living and infallible oracles of God, it is natural to suppose that the persons in whose hands those sacred and invaluable treasures were deposited would preserve and guard them with the utmost fidelity and care; would share copies of them with those of their brethren who could not have access to the originals; and would, from that same principle of Christian benevolence and fidelity, see that those copies were transcribed with all the exactness that human nature, ever liable to slips and errors, was capable of. The same care, under the same allowances, is to be supposed to have been taken by those who translated them into the various languages spoken by Christians of different nations, who did not understand the language in which the apostles originally wrote.

These several steps appear to me so natural and obvious that I cannot but think any set of reasonable and honest men could not fail to take them, under the same circumstances as attended the first preachers and converts of Christianity. And from this arises a strong presumption in favor of those accounts which inform us: that the apostles and evangelists were the genuine authors of those writings which are now received under their names; that although many, even in the apostles' own time, had taken it upon themselves, as St. Luke puts it, "to set forth in order a declaration of those things which were most surely believed among" Christians, even as they were delivered by those who were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word; and although, some years after the deaths of the apostles, many gospels, epistles, and so forth appeared which were ascribed to them, to the Virgin Mary, and even to Jesus Christ himself—yet those only, which we now regard as canonical, were admitted as such from the very earliest ages of Christianity; that these canonical books were preserved and kept, with the most scrupulous and religious care, by the various churches or societies of Christians, who neither did, nor indeed, by their own principles, could presume to add to them or take from them the least particle; that copies of them were immediately dispersed throughout the whole Christian world—the apostles, says Irenaeus (Book 3, chapter 1), 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. And the first successors of the apostles, as Eusebius tells us (Ecclesiastical History, Book 3, chapter 37), leaving their own countries, preached to those who had not yet heard of the Christian faith, and then delivered to them, as the foundation of their faith, the writings of the holy evangelists; that the originals of the epistles were still preserved in the respective churches to which they were addressed, down to the time of Tertullian, who, writing to the heretics of his age—that is, of the third century—bids them go to the apostolic churches, where, he says, the authentic

epistles of the apostles are still read aloud; and finally, that translations of these Scriptures were made early enough to precede the general acceptance of some parts of them that were afterward received as genuine—the Syriac version, for instance, being so ancient that it leaves out the second epistle of Peter, the second and third epistles of John, and the Revelation, as these were for a time disputed in some of the eastern churches. This, by the way, shows how careful the first Christians were about admitting into the canon of Scripture writings which, though bearing the names of the apostles and received by some churches as genuine, were nevertheless questioned and suspected by others. To all this we may add further that these several accounts, relating merely to facts, serve only to establish another fact, namely, that the apostles and evangelists did compose the Gospels, Epistles, and so forth ascribed to them—a fact capable of being proved by the same kind of evidence as any other fact of the same nature; that the evidence for this fact cannot be overturned except on principles that would equally undermine the proofs of all facts that existed at any great distance of time from the present; and that we ought therefore either to admit this fact, or to reject, without distinction, all those facts that stand only on the credit of histories and records—facts of whose truth we can have no stronger assurance than we have of the authenticity of these holy writings. (The reader who wishes to see the authorities on which these several points were founded may consult Whitby's prefaces to the Gospels, etc.)

The next point to be considered is the improbability of any books forged in the names of the apostles escaping detection.

The reasons given under the preceding point, to show the probability that the apostles left in writing the evidences and doctrines of Christianity, and that their disciples preserved and transmitted those writings to their successors, will help us see the improbability of any books forged in the names of the apostles escaping detection. For if it was necessary for the Christians even of the apostolic age to have in writing the directions and instructions of the apostles on many points both of faith and practice—as is evident from almost all the epistles that it was—it was equally necessary for them to be assured that what was delivered to them in the name of an apostle was certainly of his composing. And this could be known in many ways; for surely we may have undoubted proof that a given person is the author of a given book or letter, without having seen him write it with his own hand, or having heard from his own mouth that he wrote it. "The apostles," says Irenaeus, "having first preached the gospel, afterward delivered it to us in the Scriptures." Now, since we have no reason to believe, from any accounts that can be depended on, that any of those styled apostles besides the six whose works we now have left anything in writing, if these words of Irenaeus are taken to relate to the whole number of the apostles, it will follow from them that even those apostles who wrote nothing themselves did nevertheless deliver to their children in Christ such parts of the Scriptures as had come into their hands. In that case, those Scriptures, thus delivered and

recommended by an apostle, must have been allowed the same authority as if they had been written by that apostle himself, since he, as well as his brethren who wrote them, was under the inspiration and guidance of that Holy Spirit who, according to the promise of Christ, was to lead them into all truth, and who therefore could not be ignorant whether the matters contained in those Scriptures were true or false. (These six are Matthew, John, Peter, Paul, James, and Jude. Mark and Luke, though supposed with good reason to be among the number of the seventy-two disciples, were not apostles.)

But if the general term "apostles" is limited to those of them only who composed the writings that Irenaeus calls "the Scriptures," then the meaning of his words will be that the apostles, once they had preached the gospel (that is, the whole system of facts and doctrines that it was necessary for Christians to know and believe), committed it to writing for the use of the churches, to serve from then on, as he puts it, as the pillar and foundation of their faith in Christ Jesus. Those churches, then, were the proper witnesses to prove that the apostles were the authors of those writings which they had received from them. And the testimony they gave to that matter of fact, on the one hand, does not appear to have been liable to any suspicion of fraud; and on the other, it seems equally free from any likelihood of error or misinformation. For they must have had certain knowledge of the character and credit of the persons who delivered those writings to them in the name of any of the apostles—as, for instance, Tychicus, mentioned by St. Paul in his epistle to the Ephesians as sent by him, and most probably the bearer of that epistle and of the one to the Colossians (where he is also mentioned as sent to them by that apostle, together with Onesimus—Colossians 4:7-9). Tychicus, I say, and Onesimus, were doubtless able to give such proofs of St. Paul's being the author of those two epistles as the Christians of those nations must have been satisfied with, if we suppose that they wanted other reasons to convince them of it—though this supposition, I believe, no one will think reasonable to make. And many other undeniable proofs, both external and internal, served to convince them that these writings were genuine, or to expose the falsehood if they were not.

Allowing, for instance, that the epistles which now pass under the name of St. Paul were received during his life by the churches to which they were addressed, there are, in all of them, many circumstances by which they could certainly have known him to be the author. These circumstances the reader, if he has either received or written any business letters to or from his acquaintances and friends, may easily suggest to himself, and may just as easily discover upon reading through those epistles. But it will, indeed it must, be said by those who deny that these Scriptures were written by the apostles whose names they bear, that they were forged after their deaths, and consequently could not have been received by the churches during their lives. This, no doubt, is what unbelievers will say, for what else can they claim? But I am at a loss to see how they can support their assertion, since not only the testimony of all the earliest writers of the Church, but common sense itself, is

against them. For can it be imagined that the Corinthians, for example, would have received as genuine an epistle not delivered to them until after the death of the apostle whose name it bore, yet appearing, from many circumstances mentioned in it, to have been written several years before—unless such an extraordinary delay was very satisfactorily accounted for? Is it not to be presumed that, in a matter of such importance, not only to themselves but to all Christians, they would have asked the person who first produced it: How did he come by it? How did he know it was written by St. Paul and addressed to them? Why was it not sent at the time it was written, especially since it was evident, on the face of the epistle itself, that it was written on the occasion of certain disturbances and irregularities that had crept into that church, and in answer to certain questions put to that apostle, which required a speedy correction and reply? These questions, and many more that the particulars referred to in the epistle must have suggested, the Corinthians would, in ordinary prudence, have asked. And if the impostor could not—as it is most reasonable to conclude he could not—return a satisfactory answer to those questions, can we believe the Corinthians would have accepted, on his bare word, or even on probable assumptions, an epistle which, if they acknowledged it to have been written by St. Paul, they must from then on have regarded as the infallible rule of their faith and practice? This is to suppose that the first Christians (as their fair-minded opponents are indeed inclined to suppose) acted with much less wisdom and caution than any men would now use in any serious matter of ordinary life.

And let it not be forgotten that Christianity, at its first appearance in the world, very deeply affected the earthly circumstances of its professors. Professing Christianity did not then, as it does now in some parts of the world, entitle men to, and qualify them for, honors and advancement. Christians, upon merely confessing themselves to be such, were many times, without any crime alleged against them, put immediately to death; all the advantages they reaped from a life of faith and virtue were the peace of a quiet conscience here, and the hope of a blessed immortality hereafter. Professing Christianity, therefore, was a matter of serious, weighed decision. And why is it more reasonable to imagine that the people of those ages would give up all their worldly prospects and interests without being convinced that it was worth their while to do so, than it is to imagine that a man in his right mind, of this or any past age, would, without good reason, surrender his estate to a stranger and leave himself a beggar? I say this to those people who seem to consider all the first Christians either as fools or knaves, enthusiasts or impostors, without being able to assign any reason for their opinion except that there have been fools and knaves, enthusiasts and impostors, among the professors of all religions whatsoever. But in order to prove a man a fool, or an enthusiast, for embracing this or that religion, it will be necessary to show, first, that he took up his faith without duly examining the principles or facts on which it is founded; that his faith was not properly derivable from those facts or principles; or that those principles and facts were in themselves

absurd and false. These points, I say, are not to be assumed, but proved. And with regard to the question now under consideration, unless it can be proved by positive and undeniable evidence that the Scriptures on which the Christians who lived immediately after the time of the apostles built their faith were either forged or falsified (that is, forged in part), it cannot, I think, be fairly concluded that they acted like fools or madmen in forsaking everything and taking up the cross of Christ.

Let this point once be proved, and it will readily be granted that they took up their faith without due examination, since it must be admitted that if we, at this distance in time, are able to discover the forgery, those who lived at the very time when those writings first appeared could not have lacked the means of detecting it, had they thought fit to use them. For since it is evident from the testimonies of the oldest Christian writers, some of whom lived very near the times of the apostles themselves, that these Scriptures were quoted, read, and generally received as genuine by the Christians of their age, and even earlier, they must have been forged either during the lifetime of the apostles, or very soon after their deaths. That they were forged and generally received as authentic while the apostles were still living, no one, I imagine, will venture to assert, who considers the many circumstances and facts related in them concerning the apostles themselves, and countless other people then living—any one of which, if proven false, must have utterly destroyed the claim that they had been composed by an apostle, whom some of those Scriptures affirmed to have been under the guidance and inspiration of the Spirit of Truth.

If they were forged and published soon after the deaths of the apostles, there was still great danger of the fraud being detected—if not by many living witnesses, then by such a tradition of facts and doctrines, whether oral or written, as, if it had been found to clash with that supposed gospel or epistle, must have made its authenticity suspect, unless it was supported by better evidence than the bare name of an apostle attached to it. And if it could be supposed that the bare name of an apostle was, in those times, of weight sufficient to establish the authority of any writing, however otherwise liable to suspicion, how did it come about that those cunning impostors who wrote the Gospels of Mark and Luke did not publish them under the venerable and all-sanctifying names of the apostles? If these Scriptures, then, were forged and published in either of the periods mentioned above (and for the reasons already given, the forgery could not have been of a later date), it is highly improbable that the imposture should have escaped detection; and had it been detected, it is equally improbable that Christians, who staked everything on the truth of the gospel, would receive as genuine, and acknowledge as divinely inspired, writings which were known or even suspected to be forged.

But it will perhaps be urged that the deception was discovered and known only by a few of the wiser sort, who, for the advancement of a good cause,

thinking it at most a venial sin—a fraud that might even be called pious—to deceive their weaker brethren, recommended to them, under the name of an apostle, a religious treatise meant only to improve their piety and strengthen their faith. But this supposition will appear just as groundless and improbable as any of the former, if we consider that both the supporters and the authors of the forgery must have been Christians (Christians, I mean, as distinguished from Jews, heathens, and heretics), and men of abilities and knowledge superior to the common people. As Christians, they could not, in those ages of persecution, have had any worldly interest in promoting the cause of Christianity, and therefore could have had no motive to deceive their brethren except a conviction that it was at least lawful to do evil that good might come of it—a principle which, as men of ability and knowledge, they could not but have known was unworthy of a disciple of the Lord of truth and righteousness, and which is expressly condemned in the epistle to the Romans (3:8); so that this epistle cannot be supposed to have been forged by men who held and acted on that very principle.

Besides, since by far the greater number of the books of Scripture contain facts, as well as precepts and doctrines, these impostors, however well-intentioned, could not be sure that their imposture would not turn out more to the harm than the benefit of Christianity. For though they might think themselves safe in the compliance of their weaker brethren and the loyalty of their partners in the fraud, they had reason to fear the zeal and ability of their open and avowed enemies—heathens, Jews, and heretics—who, lacking neither the means nor the inclination to examine the principles of a religion which they strove with all their power to overthrow, might very probably discover their imposture, and would certainly take every advantage such a discovery could give them to discredit a religion which they might then, with some plausibility, have claimed could not be maintained without fraud. This danger, which, with the same sharpness of perception that enabled them to carry off a deception upon ordinary people, they must undoubtedly have foreseen, would, it may be supposed, have checked their zeal and made them cautious about venturing on an imposture whose success was so very uncertain.

Since, then, no motive can be found strong enough to have induced any Christians of those times either to contrive or support a forgery of this kind; and since, had any of those Scriptures attributed to the apostles, and especially the epistles of St. Paul, been forged and published as early as the writings of the most ancient Fathers show them to have been known and received, it is next to impossible that the fraud should have escaped detection; and since the Christians of those ages must, as a consequence of such a detection, necessarily have disowned and rejected those Scriptures as spurious—may we not, from their having acknowledged them as authentic, conclude, for the several reasons given above, that the apostles and evangelists were the true authors of the writings now received under their names?

But granting that the Christians of those early ages were able to distinguish the genuine works of the apostles from any spurious writings forged in their names, and granting that those books now received into the canon of Holy Scripture were written by the authors whose names they bear, it may be asked how we, at this time, can be assured that, among the great number of writings that have since been ascribed to them, they wrote only these—or that, through such a succession of ages, these have come down to us pure and uncorrupted. To the first of these questions I answer that, since the Christians of those early ages must be acknowledged competent judges of the authority of any books or writings ascribed to the apostles, whatever book or writing they allowed to be genuine has an indisputable claim to that character. But to this claim no other writings ascribed to the apostles, besides those now received into the canon of Scripture, can lay claim, since of most of them, especially the false gospels, we find no mention before the fourth century. (See Whitby's prefatory discourse to the four Gospels.)

For an answer to the second question, I shall refer the learned reader to Dr. Whitby's *Examen Variantium Lectionum D. Millii*, published at the end of his second volume of annotations on the New Testament, where he will find that the various readings on which the adversaries of Christianity (among whom I count the clergy of the Church of Rome) have laid so great a stress will be of little service to their cause—the greater part of them being entirely insignificant, and none of them, says that learned writer, either changing or corrupting any article of faith or rule of life.

And although, considering the great length of time that has passed since these Scriptures were written, and the number of copies and translations that have been made of them, it is no wonder that many errors should have crept into them, either through the carelessness or oversight of copyists and translators—all of which have helped swell the number of variant readings—yet, considering, on the other hand, the number of heresies that have sprung up in every age of Christianity, all of which claimed to derive their opinions from the Scriptures; and considering also the watchfulness of the Jews and heathens, those avowed enemies of the gospel, who, as appears from their own writings, were no strangers to the Scriptures—it would be a far greater wonder if any material alteration had been made in them. For whoever had attempted any such alteration, whether Christian, heretic, Jew, or heathen, could not but have known it was impossible for it to escape the notice of the many eyes that were continually watching, though with different motives, over these important writings.

And this seems to me the only reason these writings passed uncorrupted through the untrustworthy hands of the Church of Rome, who had them so long in her keeping. She was restrained from altering the Scriptures by fear of being exposed by the Eastern Churches, who did not acknowledge her authority; and yet there is little doubt that she would have done it, had she not hit upon that less dangerous, though more absurd, expedient of locking them

away from the laity, and assuming for herself the sole right of interpreting them—a right which she has claimed and maintained with all the trickery and cruelty that fraud and tyranny could invent. This expedient, however, though it has so far preserved Popery, has also preserved the Scriptures, and with them, Christianity. For considering the duration, extent, and absoluteness of her power in the West, had she altered the text of Scripture to match the commentary she has built upon it, Christians—could there have been any truly such, at this time and in these parts of the world—would have been reduced to contending with the Church of Rome not from the Scriptures, but for the Scriptures themselves. And what advantages unbelief and skepticism would have had in the meantime is easy to imagine, since they are bold enough even now to dispute the genuineness of those Scriptures which the very people whose doctrines are most opposed to them have been forced to acknowledge and maintain.

I am now to consider what arguments can be offered to induce us to give credit to the testimony of the apostles and evangelists.

Two qualities are required to establish the credibility of a witness: namely, a thorough knowledge of the fact he testifies to, and a fair and unblemished character.

After what has been said in the preceding parts of this discourse concerning the evidences of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, it will, I hope, be granted that the apostles were duly qualified to be witnesses, as far as knowledge of the fact they are brought to testify to is concerned. 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 conclusion that may be drawn from 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, then, after they had embraced Christianity, were not only blameless but holy; and their conduct, as preachers of the gospel, was unselfish, noble, and generous in the highest degree. For they not only gave up their houses, their lands, their occupations, their friends, kindred, parents, wives, and children, but their countries also—every pursuit and every attachment of life—in order to spread, with infinite labor, through countless difficulties, and at the utmost danger, in every corner of the known world, the salvation of mankind; certain of meeting, in every new region, new enemies and opponents; and yet requiring of those who, through their preaching, had become their friends and brethren, nothing but a bare subsistence—and sometimes laboring with their own hands to spare them even that light and reasonable burden; disclaiming for themselves all authority, preeminence, and power; and teaching those ignorant and superstitious people, who, taking them for gods, would have worshiped them and offered sacrifices to them,

that they themselves were men like other men, and servants of that one God to whom alone worship was due. Would impostors, who are most commonly self-interested, vain, and ambitious, have acted in this way? Certainly not. But it may be said, enthusiasts would have. Let it be so. But how can it be shown that the apostles were enthusiasts? If Christ did not rise from the dead, then most assuredly he did not speak to them after his crucifixion; and on that supposition, I think it will be very difficult to account for their returning to their faith in that Master whom, in his distress, they had abandoned and disowned. But if Christ did rise from the dead, and did, after his resurrection, converse with his apostles, I suppose it will readily be granted that they had sufficient reason to believe in him, and to act in obedience to the command he gave them to preach the gospel throughout the world—especially when they found themselves so well equipped for that important commission by the miraculous powers conferred on them by the Holy Ghost, and particularly the gift of tongues, so evidently and so wisely suited to carrying forward that great, that universal work. If this, I say, was the case, then surely the apostles were no enthusiasts, since they neither believed themselves without reasonable proof, nor claimed inspiration and a divine commission without being able to give others sufficient evidence of both. (See Mr. Locke's chapter on enthusiasm.)

Of all the admirably pure and truly divine doctrines taught by the apostles, I shall consider only two, as more particularly relevant to the present argument: the belief in a coming judgment, and the obligation to speak the truth. That God will judge the world by Jesus Christ is a necessary article of the Christian faith, and as such is strongly and frequently taught in the writings of the apostles and evangelists, so that it is needless to give examples. And that Christians were required by these preachers of holiness to speak truth on all occasions, the following texts will clearly show. In Ephesians 4:25 the apostle commands that, "putting away lying," they "speak every man truth with his neighbour." And again, Colossians 3:9: "Lie not one to another." Indeed, that even the man who lies out of zeal for the glory of God is, by their own reckoning, to be counted a sinner, may be inferred from these words in Romans 3:7-8: "For if the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory; why yet am I also judged as a sinner? And not rather, as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say, Let us do evil, that good may come? whose damnation is just." That the apostles themselves were fully convinced of the truth of these two propositions, no one can deny who recalls that they chose to suffer persecution and death itself rather than not speak the things they had seen and heard, and that, "if in this life only" they had hope, they were, of all men, "most miserable." Now, that any men who firmly believed that God would punish them for speaking an untruth, even for the advancement of a good cause, should, at the risk of their lives, and without any prospect of gain or advantage, assert facts which at the same time they knew to be false—should, for instance, claim that they saw and conversed with Jesus Christ after his resurrection while knowing or believing

that he was not risen from the dead, and yet expect to be judged hereafter by that very same Jesus—is too improbable to gain credit with anyone except those great believers in absurdities, unbelievers and skeptics.

But besides the many infallible marks and evidences of the integrity of the apostles and evangelists that may be gathered from their lives and doctrines, there are also, in their writings, several internal marks of their truthfulness, some of which I shall now attempt to point out, confining myself to those parts of their writings that belong to the present subject.

The contradictions and inconsistencies that some imagine they have discovered in the gospel accounts of the resurrection have been put forward as arguments for setting aside the authority of the Gospels and rejecting their evidence. But since these supposed contradictions have been considered in the earlier parts of this discourse, and have, upon close inspection and upon comparing the several narratives with one another, been shown to be shadowy and imaginary, lying no deeper than the surface of the words—we need not be afraid to admit these appearances of inconsistency, since from them it may be inferred, to the advantage of the evangelists, that they did not write in collusion with one another. For had they agreed together on how to give an account of the resurrection of Christ, and had each of them taken, by prior arrangement, his own portion of that history, it is likely they would somewhere or other have dropped some hint that the particulars they omitted were supplied by the others, and that such and such parts of their narratives were to be connected with such and such facts related by their brethren; or they would have distinguished the several incidents by such clear and visible marks and circumstances of time and place as might have been sufficient, at first glance, to reveal their order and keep them from being confused with one another. Some, or all, of these things, I say, they would probably have done, had they written in collusion. And doubtless they would—indeed they must—have written in collusion, had they intended to impose upon the world a cunningly devised fable, and had they not trusted to the truth and well-known nature of the facts they related. Truth, like honesty, often neglects appearances. Hypocrisy and imposture are always on their guard. And as from these… these seeming discrepancies in their accounts, we may conclude that they did not write in collusion with one another; and yet from their agreement in the principal and most material facts, we may infer that they wrote according to the truth. In Xiphilinus and Theodosius, the two abbreviators of Dio Cassius, the same kind of agreement and disagreement may be observed: the one takes notice of many particulars which the other passes over in silence, and yet both of them relate the chief and most remarkable events. And since both of them frequently use the very same words and expressions when speaking of the same thing, it is apparent that they both copied from the same original. So I believe no one was ever foolish enough to imagine that the particulars mentioned by one of them were not taken from Dio Cassius merely because they are omitted by the other. And it would be still more absurd to say, as some have lately said of the Evangelists,

that the facts related by Theodosius are contradicted by Xiphilinus merely because the latter says nothing of them. But against the Evangelists, it seems, every kind of argument may not only be used but applauded. The case of the sacred historians, however, is exactly parallel to that of these two abbreviators. The latter extracted the particulars related in their several abridgments from the history of Dio Cassius, just as the former drew the material for their Gospels from the life of Jesus Christ. The last two transcribed their accounts from a certain collection of facts contained in one and the same history; the first four transcribed theirs from a certain collection of facts contained in the life of one and the same person, laid before them by that Spirit who was to lead them into all truth. Why the faithfulness of the four transcribers should be called into question for reasons that apply equally against the two who are never suspected, I leave to those who place such weight on this objection to determine.

Another mark of the truthfulness of the Evangelists appears in their naming the time, the place, the actors, and the witnesses of most of the events they record. I will give a remarkable instance of this bearing on our present subject, the resurrection: namely, the guarding of Christ's tomb. The time was that of the celebration of Passover, the most solemn festival of the Jews. The place was Jerusalem, the capital of Judea, at that time crowded with Jews who had come from every part of the earth to keep the Passover. The actors and witnesses were the chief priests and elders, Pontius Pilate the Roman governor, and the Roman soldiers who guarded the tomb. Now if the story of the guard at the tomb had been false, there is no doubt that the chief priests and elders, who are said to have obtained the guard and sealed the door of the tomb, would have cleared themselves by some official act of the folly and guilt the Evangelist lays on them. He charges the chief priests with having bribed the soldiers to tell not merely a lie, but an absurd lie that carried its own refutation within it; he charges the soldiers with confessing a breach of discipline punishable by death under military law; and he charges the governor with at least the suspicion of overlooking so grave a crime at the instigation of the chief priests, and so on. All these several charges against the whole government of Judea could have been answered at once by a sworn statement from the chief priests declaring that they never demanded a guard be set at the tomb, confirmed by the testimony of all the Roman officers and soldiers — many of whom were probably still in Jerusalem when this Gospel was written — denying that they had ever been assigned to that guard. Not only the reputation of the chief priests but their open hostility to Christ and aversion to his teaching and religion required this; and they would probably have done it, even supposing the story of the guard were true, had they been free to invent and spread whatever lie they pleased. But that a guard had been set at the tomb was, in all likelihood, too well known in Jerusalem — through the scattering and flight of the soldiers into the city — for them to risk denying it. For this reason, as I have observed before, they were forced to invent a lie consistent with that known fact, however absurd and improbable

it might appear upon examination. Now, just as the story put into the mouths of the Roman soldiers by the chief priests and elders is no proof of the falsehood of this fact, but rather evidence of the contrary, so the naming of the time, the place, the actors, and the witnesses forms a very strong presumption of its truth, since no forger of lies would willingly and knowingly hand over the means of his own exposure — especially when we consider that this story is related by the Evangelist who is said to have written nearest to the time, and to have composed his Gospel for those Christians living in Judea, many of whom, still living, were probably in Jerusalem when this event took place.

The strict attachment and regard for truth shown by all the Evangelists is further demonstrated in their recording of themselves and their fellow disciples many things that, in the world's judgment, could only bring them dishonor and discredit. Such are their denying and deserting their Master in his extremity, and their dullness in failing to understand his predictions about rising from the dead, even though expressed in the plainest and most intelligible words. A man's confession against himself or his friends is generally presumed to be true. So if the Evangelists are allowed to be the authors of the Gospels that bear their names, or if those writings are supposed to have been forged by friends of Christianity, they must at least in these instances be acknowledged to be telling the truth — until some other good reason, besides their attachment to truth, can be given for their including such disgraceful and dishonorable accounts of themselves and their friends.

But nothing places the truthfulness of the sacred writers so far beyond all question and suspicion as what they tell us about the low condition, the weaknesses, the sufferings, and the death of the great author and finisher of their faith, Christ Jesus. He hungered, they tell us; he was poor, so poor that he had nowhere to lay his head; he wept; he hid himself for fear of the Jews who sought to kill him; and when his hour drew near, he was downcast, sorrowful, exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death. He prayed that the cup of suffering then being prepared for him might, if possible, pass from him. And though he was strengthened by an angel from heaven, yet being in agony, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling to the ground. After this he was seized like a common criminal, abandoned by all his followers and friends, led bound first to Annas, then to Caiaphas, then to Pilate, then to Herod, then back again to Pilate; and at last, after enduring a thousand insults and indignities, after being beaten, spat upon, and scourged, he was led to suffer on the cross the shameful and painful death reserved for runaway slaves and the vilest criminals. And yet this same hungry, homeless, suffering, dying Jesus is said by these same writers to have fed a multitude of many thousands with five loaves and two fish; to have commanded a fish of the sea to provide him money to pay the tribute; to have been ministered to by angels; to have been obeyed by the winds and the sea; to have held in himself, and imparted to his disciples, authority over unclean

spirits and the power to heal every kind of disease; to have raised the dead with a touch; in a word, to have been able to obtain from God, whom he called his Father, an army of more than twelve legions of angels — a force sufficient not only to rescue him from the sufferings and death he prayed to avoid, but to win him the empire of the whole world. And finally, as proof that he was endowed with a power superior even to death itself, he is said to have risen from the dead, to have ascended into heaven, and to sit forever at the right hand of God. From these accounts it is plain that the character of Jesus Christ, as the Evangelists present it, is such a mixture of seeming inconsistencies, such a remarkable composition of weakness and power, humiliation and glory, humanity and divinity, that no mere mortal could aspire to it, and the wit of man would never have conceived and proposed such a figure as the founder of any sect or religion. The sufferings and cross of Christ were, as St. Paul confesses, to the Jews a stumbling block, and foolishness to the Greeks. The Jews, as is well known, expected a temporal deliverer, an earthly prince, a glorious conquering Messiah; and they were so scandalized by the low condition and humble circumstances of Jesus — so ill-matched, as they thought, to the exalted character of the Son of God — that on account of these merely human limitations alone, they rejected all the miraculous evidence of his divine mission and put him to death as a blasphemer for taking upon himself the title of Messiah without its expected temporal splendor and power. That the disciples of Jesus were tainted with the same prejudices as their unbelieving fellow Jews is very natural to believe, and can certainly be gathered from the writings of the Evangelists, from which we learn that when they had been convinced by his miracles, his teaching, and his life, and had acknowledged him to be the Messiah, they were so offended by what he told them of his coming sufferings and death that they refused to believe him — and Peter took him and began to rebuke him, saying, "Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee" (Matthew 16:22). Granting the humble condition, the sufferings, and the death of Christ, I think it impossible to give one probable reason for supposing that the apostles and Evangelists invented the rest, the more-than-human part of his character. Had he worked no miracles, had he not risen from the dead, their religious prejudices as Jews must have forever kept them from acknowledging him as their Messiah; and yet it is a matter of record that not only did they themselves acknowledge him as such, but they strove to persuade their unbelieving fellow Jews that God had made that same Jesus, whom they had crucified, both Lord and Christ. This was the great article, the foundation stone, on which the whole structure of Christianity was built; and to prove this article, they appealed to his miracles as so many evidences of his divine mission. But here modern unbelievers — for Celsus, who lived nearest to those times, admits all the miracles of Christ but attributes them to his skill in magic — come forward with their suspicions and presume to call into question the Evangelists' accounts of these miracles, which, without any proof, they are pleased to treat as forgeries. In answer to this — not to dwell on the improbability that any man, or any group of men in their senses, would venture to appeal to their

enemies for the truth of facts they themselves knew to be false, especially when those enemies had not only the means of exposing them but both the inclination and the power to punish them for their frauds; not to dwell, I say, on this point, nor on the one I just mentioned, that it is impossible to assign any motive that could induce them to commit such a forgery — I will only observe that even granting them to have been so shameless and so wicked as to invent and spread a set of lies in order to win credit for their Master and his religion, it is strange that they did not go one step further and at least suppress, if not deny, his weaknesses, his sufferings, and his crucifixion, thereby removing that stumbling block which they could not help knowing would be the greatest obstacle to the advancement of their religion, both among the Gentiles and the Jews. But it will perhaps be argued that his sufferings and crucifixion were too public to be denied — and so, say the Evangelists themselves, were most of his miracles. This, no doubt, is why they were acknowledged even by Celsus. To suppose, then, that the Evangelists, for fear of being found out, would confess truths that plainly worked against their great purpose of spreading faith in Christ Jesus, and yet would not be restrained by that same fear of exposure from relating falsehoods they imagined might be advantageous to their cause, shows no fairness or candor, but only partiality and prejudice. But it will possibly be said — for what will unbelievers not say, and I will add, however strange it may sound, what will they not believe — that the Scriptures were forged long after the events recorded in them, and consequently long after all the evidence of their truth or falsehood had vanished and been lost. In answer to this it may again be asked, as in the case of the Evangelists, how did these later forgers come to choose the suffering, crucified Jesus as the founder of their religion? And why, since they were free to say whatever they pleased without fear of discovery, did they relate such things both of him and his disciples as, in the world's judgment, could not fail to discredit the faith they preached in his name and under an authority claimed to be derived from him and his disciples? But without going further into these considerations, it may be enough simply to deny this charge until those who insist on it can establish it, either by authentic testimony or even by probable and presumptive arguments, as to when the Scriptures were forged, by whom, and to what end. Until they can do this — which I venture to say will never happen — we have a right to insist, for the reasons given above, that the Scriptures of the New Testament were written by those whose names they bear, and that all the facts related in them are most certainly true.

Before I leave this subject, I cannot help noting one more mark of integrity found in all the writings of the sacred authors, and particularly the Evangelists: the simple, unaffected, unadorned, and unpretentious manner in which they relate truths so important and sublime, and facts so magnificent and wonderful, as one would think capable of kindling a flame of eloquence even in the dullest and coldest of hearts. They speak of an angel descending from heaven to foretell the miraculous conception of Jesus; of another

proclaiming his birth, attended by a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men"; of his star appearing in the east; of angels ministering to him in the wilderness; of his glory on the mount; of a voice heard twice from heaven saying, "This is my beloved Son"; of countless miracles performed by him and by his disciples in his name; of his knowing the thoughts of men; of his foretelling future events; of signs and wonders accompanying his crucifixion and death; of an angel descending in terror, opening his tomb, and frightening away the soldiers set to guard it; of his rising from the dead, ascending into heaven, and pouring down, according to his promise, the various miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit upon his apostles and disciples. All these astonishing events these inspired historians relate plainly and without embellishment, without any of the coloring and heightening of rhetoric, without so much as a single exclamation of wonder, without offering any comment or remark upon them, and without drawing from them any conclusion in honor either of their Master or of themselves, or to the advantage of the religion they preached in his name. Instead, contenting themselves with relating the plain truth, whether it seems to help them or hurt them, without either exaggerating on the one hand or softening on the other, they leave their cause to the unbiased judgment of mankind — seeking, as true apostles of the Lord of Truth should, to convince rather than to persuade. And so, as St. Paul says of his own preaching, they came "not with excellency of speech… not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that," he adds, "your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God" (1 Corinthians 2:2, 4–5). And let it be remembered that the man who says this did not lack learning, skill, or eloquence, as is evident from his speeches recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, and from the testimony of that great critic Longinus, who, in listing the great Grecian orators, includes among them Paul of Tarsus. And surely, had they been left solely to the promptings and guidance of human wisdom, they would not have failed to seize upon such rich material as the wonders of their Master's life and the surpassing purity and perfection of the noble, generous, benevolent morality contained in his teachings provided them. These themes, I say — greater than any ever possessed by Cicero, or Demosthenes, or Plato — mere human wisdom would doubtless have prompted them to use, in order to recommend the religion of Christ Jesus to mankind as forcefully as possible, by turning attention to the divine side of his character and hiding, as it were in a blaze of light and glory, his weaknesses, his sufferings, and his death. And had they, on such themes as these and in such a cause, called upon all the arts of composition, rhetoric, and logic to their aid, who would have blamed them for it? Not, I presume, those persons who, dazzled and captivated by the glittering ornaments of human wisdom, mock the simplicity of the gospel and think it clever to ridicule the style and language of the Holy Scriptures. But the all-wise Spirit of God, by whom these sacred writers were guided into all truth, saw fit to direct or permit them to proceed by a different method — a method, however, very similar to the one

by which he has chosen to reveal himself to us in the great book of nature, the vast structure of the universe. All its wonders he has judged it sufficient to lay before us in silence, expecting from our own observation the proper comments and conclusions which, having endowed us with reason, he has enabled us to draw. And though a careless and superficial observer may imagine he perceives in this great volume many inconsistencies, defects, and superfluities, yet to a diligent, unprejudiced, and rational inquirer — one willing to examine the laws, consider and compare the various parts, and weigh their use and purpose in relation to the whole design of this astonishing structure, as far as his limited abilities allow — there will appear, in those instances he is capable of understanding, such clear marks of wisdom, goodness, and power as will leave him no room to doubt their Author, or to suspect that in those particulars he has not examined, or cannot fully grasp, there is nothing but folly, weakness, and malice.

The same may be said of the written book, that second volume, if I may put it so, of the revelation of God — the Holy Scriptures. For just as in the first volume, so also in this one, there are many passages that to a careless, unobserving reader appear idle, disconnected, inexplicable, and inconsistent with those marks of truth, wisdom, justice, mercy, and goodness so plainly visible elsewhere that even the most careless and inattentive reader cannot fail to notice them. And even these difficult passages — many of them, at least — will often be found, upon closer and stricter examination, to agree and align with the plainer and more intelligible passages, and to be no foreign parts of one and the same wise and harmonious composition. In both books indeed, the natural as well as the moral book of God, there are, and always will be, many difficulties that human ingenuity may never be able to resolve. But will a wise philosopher, because he cannot understand everything he sees, for that reason reject all the truths within his reach, and let a few unexplained difficulties outweigh the many plain and unmistakable evidences of the finger of God that appear throughout both his created and his written works? Or will he presume so far on his own wisdom as to say that God ought to have expressed himself more clearly? The precise degree of clarity that would equally suit the different capacities of men in different ages and countries will, I believe, prove far more difficult to determine than is imagined, since what is clear to one man in a certain state of mind, time, and place will inevitably be obscure to another who views it under different circumstances and from a different position. How varied, and even contradictory, are the interpretations and comments that different people, in different ages and regions of the world, have made upon nature! And yet her characters are equally legible, and her laws equally intelligible, in every time and place; there is no speech nor language where her voice is not heard; her sound has gone out through all the earth, and her words to the ends of the world. All these misinterpretations and misunderstandings of her works are therefore to be charged only to mankind, who have applied themselves to studying them with varying degrees of ability, effort, and fairness. The

question, then, should be: why has God given men such varying abilities? and not: why has God not expressed himself more clearly? And the answer to this question, so far as it concerns man to know, is that God will require of each person according to what he has, not according to what he does not have. If what is necessary for all to know is knowable by all, then those whom God has been pleased to endow with abilities and faculties superior to the common run of people have no just reason to complain that he has left them material for the exercise of those talents — talents which, if everything were equally plain to everyone, would be of little advantage to those who possess them. If, therefore, there are in the sacred writings, as in the works of nature, many passages hard to understand, it would be good if the wise and learned, instead of taking offense at them and teaching others to do the same, would be persuaded that both God and man expect them to examine such passages carefully and fairly, with a sincere desire to discover and embrace the truth, rather than with an arrogant and unphilosophical conceit that they are already sufficiently wise and knowing. And then I have no doubt that most of the objections to revelation now urged with the greatest confidence would be cleared up and removed, just as the objections once raised against creation, and against the being and providence of God, were removed — objections raised by those most ignorant, most absurd, and yet most self-satisfied pretenders to reason and philosophy, the atheists and skeptics.

To these internal evidences of the truthfulness — and may I not add the inspiration? — of the apostles and Evangelists, I will add two external proofs of great weight in considering the grounds we have for trusting their testimony: one negative, the other positive.

The negative proof is contained in this proposition: that out of the great number of facts related by the sacred writers — public and extraordinary as they are said to have been — not one, in the course of now nearly seventeen hundred years, has ever been disproved or shown false. Denied, indeed, many of them have been, and still are; but there is a great difference between denying and disproving. To prove a fact false, the positive and probable evidence brought against it must outweigh that produced in its support. In opposition to the testimony of the disciples of Jesus Christ, who asserted that he had risen from the dead, the chief priests and elders of the Jews claimed that his disciples had stolen away his body and then put out the report that he had risen. In support of this charge, as St. Matthew tells us (Matthew 28:13), they produced the Roman soldiers who had been set to guard the tomb, and who testified that his disciples came by night and stole him away while they slept. Not to dwell again on the absurdity of this report as it stands in the Evangelist's account, but taking it instead as it was afterward more carefully revised by the Sanhedrin and spread by an official deputation sent to all the synagogues of the Jews throughout the world — in which, making no mention of the Roman guard, they said no more than that the disciples came by night and stole away the body — taking it, I say, in the form these wise counselors settled on after further deliberation, it may be enough to observe that this

theft charged against the disciples, far from being proved, was never even investigated. And yet the accusers were the chief priests and elders of the Jews — men held in high reverence and authority by the people, invested with all the power of the state, and therefore equipped with every means of gathering information and of obtaining or extracting a confession. And who were the accused? Men of humble birth, modest means, without learning, without standing, without support, who out of timidity and fear had deserted their Master the very first time an occasion arose to prove their loyalty and devotion to him. Can it be imagined that the chief priests and council would have made no inquiry into a fact whose belief they took such pains to spread, had they themselves been convinced of its truth? And had they inquired into it, can it be supposed that among so many lowly people who must have known of it, not one — whether from honesty, religious conviction, fear of punishment, or hope of reward — would have betrayed the secret and given them information that could have 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 or deception, they remained in Jerusalem a week or more after the report that they had stolen their Master's body had spread through the city, and about a month later they returned there again. Not long after, they boldly declared, to the very faces of their powerful enemies and accusers, the chief priests and elders, that God had raised from the dead that same Jesus whom they had crucified. And how did these learned rabbis, these watchful guardians of the Jewish church and state, behave? Why, they allowed the disciples of Jesus, charged by their own order with a fraud meant to disturb the government, to remain unquestioned in Jerusalem and to leave the city unmolested. And when, upon their return, the authorities had them seized and brought before them for preaching through Jesus the resurrection of the dead (Acts 4), what did they say to them? Did they charge them with having stolen away the body of their Master? Nothing of the kind. On the contrary, unable to refute the apostles' testimony to the resurrection of Jesus, confirmed by a miracle they had just performed in his name, they ordered them to withdraw and conferred among themselves, saying, "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. But that it spread no further among the people, let us straitly threaten them, that they speak henceforth to no man in this name." And they called them and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. Peter and John answered and said unto them, "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye: for we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." So when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding nothing how they might punish them (Acts 4:15–22). Who, after hearing this account, could ever imagine that the disciples stole the body of Jesus, or that the chief priests and elders themselves believed they did? But it may perhaps be objected that this

account comes from Christian writers — and could the objectors expect to find it in Jewish authors? We might indeed expect to find in their writings some proof of this charge against the disciples, and had there been any, the chief priests and the other enemies of Christ would doubtless not have failed to produce it. But the progress Christianity made at that time in Jerusalem is an even stronger argument than their silence that no proof of this charge either was offered or could be offered. Could the apostles have had the audacity to preach, and could so many thousands of Jews have been foolish enough to believe on their testimony, that Christ was risen from the dead, had it been proved that his disciples stole away his body? An unbeliever may, if he pleases, believe this, but let him account for it if he can.

I have dwelt the longer on examining this alleged theft by the disciples because it is the only fact I know of that has ever been set up in opposition to the many facts on which the evidence for the resurrection rests. How weak it is in point of proof, whether probable or positive, I need not point out to the reader. But I cannot help observing that those who deny that any guard was placed at the tomb thereby remove the only positive evidence ever brought to support this story — namely, the testimony of the Roman soldiers.

Among the many extraordinary particulars related by the sacred writers, the miracles performed by Christ and his apostles, being almost without number and most commonly performed in public, in the presence of unbelieving Jews and Gentiles, offered the fairest opportunity for opponents of the gospel to overturn the credibility of the gospel historians. And yet the feeble explanations that pagan and Jewish writers have been reduced to using, in order to blunt the conclusion Christians drew from these miracles, form a very strong presumption that they could not be disproved. Some, such as Celsus, attributed them to magic; others, such as the Jews, attributed them to the ineffable name of God, which, they say, Jesus stole out of the Temple. Both have admitted the facts themselves. I will not undertake to show the absurdity of either of these two ways of accounting for those miraculous works, but I must take this occasion to ask the reader to reflect a little on the strange perversity of the human mind, the vanity of human reason, and the force of prejudice. Celsus believed in magic; the Jews put their faith in amulets; and yet both the one and the other disbelieved Christianity!

The positive proof of the truthfulness of the sacred writers is founded on the exact fulfillment of the predictions of our Savior and his apostles recorded in the New Testament.

So as not to draw out this point to an excessive and unnecessary length, I will make no remarks on those predictions whose fulfillment is to be found within the Scriptures themselves, some of which I have already noted. The Scriptures, unbelievers will perhaps say, were written after these events, and the predictions were therefore likely tailored to fit them. But those who raise this objection will gain little by it, since if they admit the events occurred, it

will not be difficult to demonstrate the truth of Christianity. Besides, the reader himself may, with very little effort, find and compare these predictions with their several fulfillments.

The prophecies I shall offer relate to the differing states of the Jews and the Gentiles — different not only from each other but very different from the condition both were in at the time these prophecies were written. To fully understand this, it will be necessary to take a general view of the religious condition — since that is what these prophecies chiefly concern — of the nations distinguished by the names Jews and Gentiles.

From the time of the covenant, or compact, that God was pleased to make with Abraham and his descendants, and to renew with the whole body of the Israelites under Moses, the Jews became the special people of God — a phrase fully justified and explained by the terms or conditions of the covenant. On the part of the Israelites, these were taking God alone as their Lord and obeying the law, both ceremonial and moral, which he had given them. On God's part were pledged temporal blessings and his almighty protection to the Jews, so long as they kept to the conditions they had entered into. By virtue of this covenant, the Jews acknowledged God as their King, and God governed them as his subjects through his deputies and representatives — the prophets, judges, and kings of Israel. Moses, the mediator of this covenant, was the first of these deputies, and the Messiah, who was to be the mediator of a new covenant, was to be the last. Through him the new covenant was to be offered first, indeed, to the Jews, with whom the covenant mediated by Moses was until then to remain in force. But the new covenant was not to be limited to that people alone. The Gentiles — that is, all the nations of the earth who had no part in the former covenant — were to be invited to join this one; and all those, of whatever nation, who acknowledged the Messiah as a King appointed by God to reign over them, were to be admitted into this covenant and reckoned from then on as the people of God. But since the boundaries of this divine kingdom were to be changed and enlarged, it became necessary to change and enlarge the terms of its government. The ceremonial law was national and local; and although, without some such religious and political bond of union, the Jews probably would not long have remained a separate and distinct people of God, yet since most of the duties prescribed by that law were confined to the Holy Land, and even to the holy city of Jerusalem, the Gentiles, who were now to be admitted into the covenant, could not possibly keep it. This law, therefore, had necessarily to be set aside. But the moral law, which was the foundation and purpose of the former covenant, was in the same way to remain the foundation and purpose of the new one. Both Gentiles and Jews alike could obey this, as well as the other terms added to it in the new covenant — namely, acknowledging the Messiah as their King, and, as an outward sign of their allegiance and entry into this covenant, receiving baptism, and commemorating from time to time, by celebrating the Eucharist, the sealing of this covenant on God's part through the death of Christ. These two sacraments, properly so called, may be termed the

ceremonial law of the Christians, just as circumcision and the other ritual observances were of the Jews.

Of the twelve tribes of Israel who were party to the Mosaic covenant, ten fell away at once from their allegiance to God under Jeroboam; and ceasing from that time to be the people or subjects of God, he ceased to be their King. Withdrawing his protection, he allowed them to be carried into a captivity from which they never afterward returned, but, becoming lost and mingled among the nations where they were transplanted, were from then on no longer heard of as a distinct and separate people. The two remaining tribes then became the only people of God, and as such, though often punished by him for their frequent transgressions of his laws, and even carried captive to Babylon, they were by his providence brought back again to the land of Canaan and restored to the capacity of fulfilling the terms of their covenant through the rebuilding of the city and temple of Jerusalem. From that time they were very exact in their observance of the ceremonial law, but had most grossly corrupted the moral law, rendering it, as Christ told them, of no effect, through the interpretations and traditions of their scribes and Pharisees. This was the state of the Jews when Jesus the Messiah — that great prophet and king foretold by Moses and all the prophets — came to offer them a new covenant.

The state of the Gentiles was far more wretched. For many ages they had transferred their obedience from the one supreme God, Creator of heaven and earth, to his creatures, or to deities of their own invention, under whose imaginary protection they had organized themselves by nations and communities, becoming, in almost the same sense that the Israelites were called the people of God, the people of the Egyptian Isis, the Assyrian Belus, the Athenian Pallas, the Ephesian Diana, and the Capitoline Jove, and so forth. But there was this further difference between them: the God of the Israelites, like a righteous and just sovereign, had given his people a law to be the rule of their obedience — or rather had confirmed and reinforced that original law which from the very beginning he had written on the hearts, that is, in the reason, of all mankind, adding to it such other provisions as their particular situation at the time required. Meanwhile the Gentiles, having through their idolatry fallen away from obedience to that original universal law, were left from then on, like outlaws and rebels, to devise for themselves whatever moral and religious rules the imagined whims of their deities, or their own corrupted reason, might suggest. As a result, they became overrun with immorality and superstition. And though some of the wisest among them, following the still-flickering light of reason, had come to recognize many of their grossest errors and had tried to reform certain abuses, superstition had taken such a firm hold on the majority that, until it was entirely rooted out, it was impossible to bring them back to what is called the religion of nature, that is, the religion of reason — even granting that those wise men were as fully acquainted with it, in all its aspects, as some have since claimed to be since Christianity arose. But those wise men thought it better to go along with

the superstition of their countries than to fight it. And had they attacked it with the boldness and persistence of the apostles, it is very doubtful whether, with all their eloquence and logic, they would have won the victory. Such was the dark and hopeless condition of the Gentiles.

In this state of the Jews and Gentiles, our Savior, after presenting to the former, under the parable of a certain householder who planted a vineyard and leased it to tenants, the righteous dealings of God toward them and the poor return they had made to him — not only refusing him the fruits but murdering the servants he had sent to demand them, and finally his son — and after extracting from them an admission that these wicked tenants ought to be severely punished and the vineyard taken from them and given to other tenants who would render him the fruits in their season, spoke to them these words: "Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder" (Matthew 21:42–44). By these words are plainly signified, first, the transferring of the kingdom of God from the Jews to the Gentiles; second, the obedience of the Gentiles; and third, the miserable punishment of the Jews for having rejected and murdered the Son of God. There are many other prophecies relating to each of these events scattered throughout the Gospels, which I think it unnecessary to produce, since this one is so complete and explicit. I shall therefore proceed to show the exact fulfillment of it in each of its parts.

The kingdom of God, as may be gathered from what has been said above, denotes the spiritual or moral dominion of God over moral subjects, that is, free agents; and by the people of God are meant such free agents as freely and willingly acknowledge the sovereignty of God by worshipping him and receiving and obeying all those laws, whether natural or revealed, that appear to have been established by him. The Jews, therefore, by rejecting Jesus Christ — who proved himself to have been commissioned and sent by God, not only through the testimony of Moses and all their prophets, the holiness of his life and teaching, and the countless miracles he performed among them, but still more plainly, if possible, by his rising from the dead and empowering his disciples to work the same mighty signs and wonders in his name — the Jews, I say, by rejecting this messenger, this Son of God, and refusing to accept the laws he proposed to them in his Father's name, plainly renounced their allegiance to God and ceased to be his people or subjects. The Gentiles, on the other hand, by renouncing their vices and idolatrous superstitions, returning to the worship of God, and receiving his Messiah along with the laws he proposed to them in God's name, just as plainly placed themselves under the dominion of God, acknowledged his rule, and became the people or subjects of God. And from this it becomes clear what is meant by the kingdom of God being taken from the Jews and given to the Gentiles. God

removed the throne on which David and his descendants had sat as his representatives and deputies from among the Jews, who had renounced his authority, and moved it from earth to heaven; and, setting it at his right hand and placing on it his Messiah, his only Son, he gave him for his subjects not one nation only, but all nations and kindreds and peoples, and all the ends of the earth for his dominion. That the kingdom of God was in this sense, and in this manner, actually transferred from the Jews to the Gentiles is too well known to require proof. The Jews as a nation rejected the gospel and persisted in their refusal of the Messiah right up to the final destruction of their holy city and temple; and what is still more remarkable, they persist in this obstinacy to this day. The Gentiles, by contrast, embraced it so universally that within a few centuries after Christ, almost the whole Roman Empire — that is, almost the entire known world of that time — abandoned idolatry and became Christian. And God, for his part, testified that he had entered into covenant with them and accepted their allegiance by pouring out upon them the gifts of his Holy Spirit; just as he signified, on the other hand, his renunciation of the Mosaic covenant, not only by allowing the seat of his former kingdom, the city and temple of Jerusalem, to be utterly destroyed, but also by permitting the Jews to be banished from the Holy Land and scattered throughout all the nations of the earth. And thus was this prophecy most exactly fulfilled in all its parts.

Besides the general change in the condition of the Jews and Gentiles expressed in this prophecy, many particulars relating to the state of the Jewish nation were most precisely foretold by our Savior Christ. First, the destruction of the city and temple of Jerusalem; second, the signs and wonders that would precede that destruction; third, the miseries the Jews would suffer before, during, and after the famous siege of that city; fourth, the scattering of that condemned people; fifth, the duration of their calamity; and sixth, their restoration.

Our Savior foretold the destruction of the temple, after it had stood for almost five hundred years, in these words: "Seest thou these great buildings? There shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down" (Mark 13:2). And this prediction was fulfilled by Titus, who, according to Josephus, commanded his soldiers to dig up the foundations both of the temple and of the city. And both the Jewish Talmud and Maimonides add that Terentius Rufus, the commander of his army, tore up the foundation of the temple with a plowshare.

With equal precision and detail did our Lord foretell the ruin of the city of Jerusalem: "The days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground… and shall not leave in thee one stone upon another" (Luke 19:43–44, paraphrased by West). That the event answered the prediction exactly is clear from the Jewish historian, who tells us expressly that Titus, having commanded his soldiers to dig up the city, had

this so fully carried out — leveling the entire extent of the city except for three towers — that those who came to see it were convinced it would never be rebuilt. The same historian tells us that when Vespasian besieged Jerusalem, his army surrounded the city and shut them in on every side; and though it was judged a vast and nearly impossible undertaking to encircle the whole city with a wall, Titus, urging his soldiers on to attempt it, had them build, in three days, a wall thirty-nine furlongs long with thirteen forts upon it, cutting off all hope that any of the Jews within the city could escape.

In the twenty-first chapter of St. Luke, Christ, speaking of the destruction of Jerusalem, says (verse 11): "and great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and pestilences; and fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven." Now, to pass over the frequent earthquakes that occurred in other places in the times of Claudius and Nero, Josephus tells us that there happened in Judea and Jerusalem an immense storm, with violent winds and rain, frequent lightning and terrible thunder, and extreme roaring of the quaking earth, which made it plain to all that the world itself was disturbed at the destruction awaiting men, and that these signs foreboded no small disasters. Josephus devotes a whole chapter to the clear signs of the approaching desolation of the Jews, which Tacitus, a Roman historian of that age, nearly summarizes in these words: armies seemed to meet in the clouds, and gleaming weapons were seen there; the temple seemed to be aflame, with fire bursting out from the clouds, and a voice more than human was heard declaring that the gods were abandoning the place, accompanied by the sound of a great commotion as if departing. Josephus adds, and Tacitus also touches on, that the great gate of the temple, which twenty men could scarcely shut and which was secured by bolts and bars, was seen to open on its own; that a sword was seen hanging over the city; that a comet was seen pointing down upon it for an entire year; and that before sunset there were seen in the clouds armies in battle array, and chariots encircling the countryside and surrounding the cities — a thing so strange, he says, that it would pass for a fable, were there not still men living who could attest to it. So detailed an account have we of the fearful sights and signs from heaven mentioned by our Lord.

Our blessed Lord is equally explicit in predicting the miseries that would befall that sinful nation — miseries so great as to have no parallel. "For then shall be great tribulation," he says, "such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be" (Matthew 24:21). These are the very words Josephus seems to have echoed when he says that no nation was ever more wicked, nor did any city ever suffer as they did. Indeed, in another place he goes so far as to say that all the miseries mankind had suffered from the beginning of the world were not to be compared with what the Jewish nation then suffered. And indeed, the account he gives of the numbers who perished in that siege is almost unbelievable, and even more so is what the Talmud and other Jewish writers record of the slaughter inflicted by Hadrian's army fifty-two years later, when the Jews rebelled under Bar

Kokhba and were besieged in the city of Bethar. And yet our Savior had further said that wherever the carcass was — that is, the Jews — there would the eagles — that is, the Roman armies — be gathered together; and accordingly they were hunted down and destroyed throughout the Roman Empire. "When the Romans had no enemies left in Judea," says 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, to the number of sixty thousand, and in all the cities of Syria." In a word, Eleazar, in Josephus, having listed many places where they were cruelly slaughtered, concludes by saying it would take too long to speak of all these places individually.

Again, our Savior adds that they should be led captive into all nations (Luke 21:24). Accordingly, Josephus tells us that the number of Jewish captives was ninety-seven thousand, of whom Titus sent many to Egypt and dispersed most of the rest into the Roman provinces — thus exactly fulfilling this prediction.

The duration of the Jews' calamity, and their eventual restoration, are signified in these words: "And Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled" (Luke 21:24). This came to pass so exactly that Vespasian ordered the entire land of Judea to be sold to any Gentiles who would buy it; and Hadrian, about sixty-three years later, made a law that no Jew should come into the region around Jerusalem, as Aristo of Pella, who was himself a Jew and lived in the very time of Hadrian, relates. Thus, says Eusebius, it came about that the Jews, being banished from there, and there being a flood of foreigners settling there instead, the place became a city and colony of the Romans, and in honor of the emperor Hadrian was named Aelia. "Jerusalem," says Christ, shall thus be trodden down, or made subject to the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled — that is, until, through the conversion of the Jews to the Christian faith, the fullness of the Gentiles converted to it should come in along with them. For "blindness," says the Apostle, "hath happened to the Jews, until the fulness of the Gentiles shall come in, and then all Israel shall be saved" — and with them also the still-heathen Gentiles. "For if," he says, "the casting away of them was the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?" And again: "if the fall of them were the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles, how much more their fulness?" (Romans 11:25–26, 15, 12).

Now here it is especially worth noting that Julian the Apostate, intending to defeat this prophecy of Christ, resolved to rebuild the city and temple of Jerusalem on its old site, which until his time had been left in ruins, since Aelia had been built outside its boundaries. For in his letter to the Jewish community he writes: "The holy city of Jerusalem, which you have for so long desired to see inhabited, I will rebuild by my own efforts, and dwell in." He began this undertaking by trying to build that temple in which alone the Jews would offer up their prayers and sacrifices; but the direct hand of Providence

soon forced the workmen to abandon that ill-fated enterprise. Ammianus Marcellinus, a pagan who lived in those very times, gives us the story in this way: that Julian endeavored to rebuild the temple at Jerusalem at vast expense, and put Alypius of Antioch in charge of hurrying the work along, with the provincial governor assisting him in it; and while Alypius was earnestly pursuing the work, and the governor was assisting him, terrible balls of flame kept bursting out near the foundations with repeated attacks, burning the workmen on several occasions, until the place became impossible to approach; and so, the fire stubbornly repelling them, the work ceased.

The story is remarkable, and notable for several particulars. First, the witnesses who relate it: Ammianus Marcellinus, a pagan; Zemach David, a Jew, who admits that Julian was divinely hindered in this attempt; Nazianzen and Chrysostom among the Greek writers; St. Ambrose and Rufinus among the Latin writers, who lived at the very time this happened; Theodoret and Sozomen, orthodox historians; Philostorgius, an Arian; and Socrates, a sympathizer with the Novatians — who wrote the story within fifty years of the event, while eyewitnesses of it were still living.

Second, the time when it took place: not in the reign of Christian emperors, but under the bitterest enemies of Christians, when they were forced into hiding and had no liberty to speak in their own defense. Observe,

third, with what confidence Christians cite this fact against the Jews, as a convincing proof of the expiration of their legal worship, and of the certainty of the Christian faith against the pagan philosophers, asking what the wisest minds of the world can say to these things; and against the Emperor Theodosius, to deter him from requiring them to rebuild a synagogue that had recently been burned by a Christian bishop.

And fourth and finally, the undeniable evidence of the thing itself: this fact, say the Christians, all men freely believe and speak of; it is on everyone's lips, and is not denied even by the atheists themselves; and if it should still seem incredible to anyone, he may go and verify the truth of it both from witnesses of it still living, and from those who have heard it from their own mouths; indeed, he may view the foundations still lying bare and exposed; and if you ask the reason for this, you will find no account other than the one I have given; and of this we Christians are all witnesses, these things having happened not long ago, in our own time. So says St. Chrysostom.

The reader who wishes to see many more particulars of the predictions of our Savior relating to this remarkable catastrophe, which I have omitted for the sake of brevity, and Anyone who wants to know how these prophecies were verified by the event would do well to consult Dr. Whitby's Preface, from which the articles above are taken.

The observations I have to make on these prophecies are as follows:

First, the common objection raised against prophecies in general — that they are so obscure and figurative that they cannot be explained except by the event itself — cannot be brought against these, which are expressed in words as plain and intelligible as those used by the historian who records the events that correspond to them.

Second, it is very remarkable that of the four Evangelists, John alone — who is said to have survived the destruction of Jerusalem — makes no mention either of these prophecies or of their fulfillment. Of the other three, in whose Gospels the prophecies are found, Matthew and Mark admittedly died before that event; the time of Luke's death is uncertain. May we not then very fairly conclude that this remarkable silence of the beloved disciple, concerning prophecies of such importance to the credit of his Lord and his religion, was ordered from above, lest unbelievers should say — as some have said of the predictions of Daniel — that they were written after the event?

Third, as to the prediction concerning the length of the Jewish people's calamity and their eventual restoration — though this is the only one of all those cited above that has not yet been completely fulfilled — I beg leave to observe that not only the miraculous thwarting of the Emperor Julian's attempt to rebuild the city and Temple of Jerusalem, but also the present extraordinary condition of the Jews, is such a guarantee and proof that this prophecy too will have its fulfillment in due time, that it cannot fail to strike powerfully those who will open their eyes to look at it. To move the unobservant and unthinking people of this age to do so, and to help them consider this living evidence of the truth of Christianity which lies within their notice, even at their very doors, I will lay before them some observations of an excellent French author on this subject, whom I have chosen to translate rather than to present his arguments in my own words. (The work is his *Principes de la Foi Chrétienne*, volume 1, chapter 16; the reader may also consult the preceding chapter of that work.)

> "*But neither the dispersion of the Jews among all nations, nor the general contempt into which they have fallen, is so extraordinary as their preservation through so many ages, notwithstanding this dispersion throughout the earth and the universal contempt which all nations have for them.*
>
> "*Without a singular providence, a people disunited and divided into an endless number of distinct families, banished into countries whose language and customs differed from their own, must have become mingled and confounded with other nations, and all trace of them must, after so many ages, have entirely disappeared.*
>
> "*For they not only no longer exist as a political body, but there is not a single city where they are permitted to live according to their own laws, or to appoint magistrates of their own; nor are they held together by any public exercise of their religion. Their priests have no function; their*

sacrifices are suppressed. Their feasts can be solemnized in only one place, and to that place they are not allowed to go.

"By what miracle, then, have they been preserved among so many nations, without any of the means that keep other peoples united? How does it come about that, having been scattered like so many specks of dust among all nations, they have nevertheless been able to survive longer than any of those nations, and even to outlive the extinction of all of them?

"Who today can pick out the ancient Romans from the great crowds of people who have poured themselves into Italy? Who can point to a single family of old Gaul among those of another origin? Who can draw the same distinction in Spain, between the ancient Spaniards and the Goths who conquered it? 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. It is only by conjecture — and often very flimsy conjecture — that a single family can trace its origin back beyond the public upheavals of the state.

"But the Jews, by a tradition that no calamity, public or private, has been able to interrupt, can trace themselves back as far as the ancient stock of Abraham. They may be mistaken in assigning themselves to this or that tribe, because since their dispersion they have had no public records — which, incidentally, is proof that their Law has been set aside, since neither the priests nor the Levites can establish by any reliable record that they belong to the family of Aaron and the tribe of Levi. But every father has taken care to tell his children that his origin was different from that of the Gentiles, and that he descended from the patriarchs celebrated in the Scriptures.

"The general contempt into which they have fallen should, one would think, have led them to merge themselves with the peoples under whose rule they lived, and to suppress everything that marked them out as different. By keeping themselves separate from those in power, they only brought hatred and mockery upon themselves. In many places they exposed themselves to death by bearing the outward mark of circumcision. Every human interest urged them to erase the shameful stain of their origin.

"They saw their Messiah day by day pushed further away from them; they saw that the promises of their teachers about his speedy coming were false; that the predictions of the prophets, which they could no longer understand, were wrapped in obscurity; that all their calculations of the time either ended in Jesus Christ or came to no fixed conclusion at all; that some among them lost all hope and fell into unbelief regarding the Scriptures.

"And yet, in spite of all this, they still exist, they multiply, they remain visibly set apart from every other people; and in spite of the general

hostility, in spite of the efforts of all the nations who hate them and hold power over them, in spite of every human obstacle, they are preserved by a supernatural protection that has not in the same way preserved any other nation on earth.

"*One must truly have very little feeling for what ought to produce astonishment and wonder, if this marvel does not strike him; and one must have a strange notion of the providence of God to think he had no hand in all this.*

"*But the Holy Spirit was not willing to leave us in any uncertainty on this point, and has declared to us through his prophets that the preservation of the Jews is his own doing. 'Fear thou not, O Jacob my servant, saith the LORD: for I am with thee; 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, but I will correct thee in measure; yet will I not leave thee wholly unpunished' (Jeremiah 46:28).*

"*This promise was made to the ancient patriarchs, to whom God has reserved children, heirs of their faith, and to the remnant of Israel who, at the end of the ages, shall believe in Jesus Christ.*

"*It is for the sake of these that the unworthy descendants of the unbelieving are tolerated; and it is to keep up the connection between the first fathers and their latest descendants that the nation is preserved in spite of its iniquity, and in the midst of the punishments that have threatened to overwhelm it.*

"*But let it be noted that this promise was made to the nation of the Jews alone — that all other nations shall be either wiped out or so mixed together as no longer to be distinguishable — and that it is the power of the word of God that preserves the Jews through everything that would otherwise, by all appearances, have utterly sunk and swallowed them up.*

"'*Thus saith the LORD; 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 and David my servant... for I will cause their captivity to return, and have mercy on them' (Jeremiah 33:25–26). This, I say, is the promise, and this is the purpose of the promise. The Jews shall one day be called back in mercy; and it is for the sake of those who shall one day be called back that the patience of God sustains everything else, and his power preserves them.*

"'*Thus saith the LORD, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar: the LORD of hosts is his name. 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. Thus saith the LORD: If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the*

seed of Israel for all that they have done, saith the LORD' (Jeremiah 31:35–37).

"That is to say, heaven and earth will pass away sooner than the Jews will cease to be a distinct people. The same power that has given laws to nature watches over their preservation. And the unheard-of crime they committed in crucifying the Savior promised to their fathers — a crime that filled up the full measure of their earlier wrongdoing — will not move God to take back his promise and reject the posterity of Jacob entirely and beyond recovery.

"With what light were the prophets illuminated, that they dared to speak in so lofty and exalted a tone about something so improbable as the survival of a people weak, scattered, universally hated, and guilty of the greatest of all crimes?

"Who would question the other prophecies after seeing the fulfillment of this one? What more astonishing proof could anyone want of the truth of the Christian religion than these two events joined together: the dispersion of the Jews among all nations, and their preservation for sixteen hundred years? Either one of these things taken by itself was hard to believe; joined together they became harder still; but both of these wonders were necessary to prove that Jesus Christ was the Messiah.

"It was necessary that those who had rejected him should be banished into every region, should carry the Scriptures with them wherever they went, and should everywhere be covered with disgrace.

"But in order that the promises made to their fathers might be fulfilled, it was necessary that their exiled family should be called back, and that, once their blindness had been lifted, they should worship him whom Abraham had longed to see, and whom he had worshiped with a holy transport of joy and gratitude (John 8:56).

"The Jews, punished and dispersed, bear witness to Jesus Christ. The Jews, called back and converted, will give him a testimony still more solemn and striking. The Jews, preserved by a continual miracle so that they may preserve for Jesus Christ the stock and line of those who shall one day believe in him, bear witness to him continually.

"Had they only been punished, they would have proved only his justice. Had they only been preserved, they could have proved nothing but his power. Had they not been kept in reserve to worship him one day, they could not have proved his mercy and faithfulness, nor made him any amends for their outrageous crimes.

"Their dispersion proves that he has come, and that they rejected him. Their preservation shows that he has not rejected them forever, and that they will one day believe in him; and together the two declare that he is the Messiah, the promised Savior. They show that their miseries come

from not having known him, and that the only hope left to them is that they shall one day come to know him.

"*We ought not to ask why God sustains them so long without giving them light, nor why he leaves so great a gap between the faithful fathers and the children who will one day become faithful too. To try to probe the unsearchable judgments of God and the depths of his wisdom is to try to measure the height of heaven and search out the foundations of the earth. God has set limits to the unbelief of the Jews and to the ingratitude of the Gentiles; his mercy and his justice follow one after another, and no one knows at what time he will carry out what he has promised to the last generations of Israel — though his promises never fail (Romans 11:32–33).*

"'*Thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel: Fear not, for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee, and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. Fear not, for I am with thee: I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west; I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth; even every one that is called by my name, for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him, yea, I have made him. Bring forth the blind people that have eyes, and the deaf that have ears.*'

"*This prophecy, truly admirable in every part of it, is addressed to Jacob, head of the tribes of Israel and heir of the promises of the Messiah and of salvation.*

"*His descendants are scattered into every corner of the world. This has been the condition of the Jews since the coming of Jesus Christ.*

"*Their dispersion is the punishment for their spiritual deafness and blindness. And with how great a blindness, how great a deafness, might the Jews rightly be reproached, for not having known Jesus Christ, and for not having listened to him, even though he proved his divine mission by countless miracles!*

"*Their condition seems hopeless: the waters are ready to overwhelm them; flames surround them on every side. But the protection of God follows them everywhere, and delivers them.*

"*This protection is granted to the whole body of the nation, for the sake of those who will one day call upon that name which the rest have dishonored with their blasphemies.*

"*Out of pure mercy, God will give a teachable and faithful heart to those who renounce their former unbelief. They will be the handiwork of his grace, to which alone they will owe their repentance and their return.*

"*They will not then be seeing some new thing, but rather a thing which their own blindness had hidden from them. They will not then be hearing a teacher who had only just appeared a few days before, but one whom their own willful and stubborn deafness had kept them from hearing earlier.*

"*The change will take place in them, not in his religion; his religion will remain what it has always been, but they will then begin to see it. Jesus Christ will take away the veil that is over their eyes, but he himself will be unchanged. He will cure their deafness, but he will say the same things he has always said.*

"*It is clear, then, that the Jews are preserved for his sake, and that the whole body of the nation continues to exist only through the power of that promise which is to lead the remnant of Israel to Jesus Christ: 'Bring forth the blind people that have eyes, and the deaf that have ears.*'"

Can anyone, after reading these several prophecies quoted above, question the truthfulness of the sacred writers — who, by publishing them in this way, staked their Master's credit and their own on outcomes very remote and seemingly improbable? And does not the exact fulfillment of these, and several other predictions that could be cited, sufficiently establish the authority of the Scriptures and confirm the truth of all the events recorded in them?

I come now to consider the second argument for believing that Christ rose from the dead: namely, the existence of the Christian religion.

From the existence of the Christian religion we can draw the same kind of evidence for the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and the wonders that accompanied it, as we are given for the Flood by the many petrified shells and bones of fish and other animals from distant regions, and so on, so often found at the bottom of the deepest mines and deep within the highest mountains. Just as it is impossible to account for these various petrifactions being lodged in so many parts of the earth — some many leagues from the sea, others far above its level — without admitting such an overturning and confounding of this globe as could only have been caused by something as violent as the breaking up of the fountains of the great deep and the waters rising above the tops of the highest hills, so, I think, it will prove extremely difficult to account for the spread and present existence of Christianity in so many regions of the world without supposing that Christ rose from the dead, ascended into heaven, and enabled his disciples, through the miraculous gifts of his Holy Spirit, to overcome obstacles that no merely human ability could possibly have surmounted. In the first case, a cause superior to the ordinary workings of nature must be assigned to produce effects plainly above and contrary to

those workings; and to account for the second, recourse must likewise be had to an agent of power and wisdom surpassing and governing the natural faculties and wisdom of man. This cause, this agent, can be none other than the great Lawgiver of nature, the all-wise and almighty Creator of heaven and earth. He alone could break up the fountains of the great deep, open the windows of heaven, and cover the whole earth with water — that is, bring about that universal deluge which alone accounts for so many otherwise inexplicable phenomena. And he alone could break the jaws of death and the prison of the grave, open the kingdom of heaven, and pour down upon mortals such mighty gifts and powers as are the only adequate explanation for the astonishing and supernatural birth and growth of Christianity. This will not seem an exaggeration if we consider the difficulties the Gospel had to struggle against at its first appearance, and the inability — the merely human inability, I mean — of its first preachers to oppose and overcome those obstacles.

The difficulties they had to face were nothing less than the superstition, the prejudices, and the vices of the whole world — difficulties all the harder to overcome because they sprang, though through corruption, from good principles: namely, the religion, the nature, and the reason of mankind. How powerful an opposition all these formed against the Gospel will best appear from a brief survey of the state of the world in the earliest ages of Christianity.

The Jews, although they possessed a body of laws framed, as they themselves acknowledged, by God, had nevertheless, by listening to the comments and traditions of their scholastic and legalistic scribes and rabbis, departed so far from the spirit and intention of their Lawgiver as to place almost the whole of their religion in the observance of ritual purifications and ceremonies, neglecting the "weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith" (Matthew 23:23), which, as our Savior told them, they ought to have attended to without leaving the others undone. That is to say, the Jews had fallen from true religion into a superstition that differed from that of the Gentiles chiefly in this: the Gentiles worshiped a multitude of deities, while the Jews acknowledged and worshiped only one; yet they still worshiped him superstitiously, with merely outward observances — washings, sacrifices, the keeping of special days, and other ceremonial duties — without noticing, or without remembering, the great and wise purpose behind those ceremonial institutions. That purpose was this: by permitting no forms of worship except those prescribed by the Law, and admitting to that worship no one who had not become, through circumcision, a true Israelite, the ceremonial law not only kept the Jews from mixing with the Gentiles and picking up their idolatrous polytheism — by which means that fundamental article of all true religion, belief in one God, though lost among every other nation, was preserved for many centuries among the Jews — but also, through the fasts, festivals, purifications, offerings, and atoning sacrifices required by the ritual law, kept constantly before their minds the duties of prayer and thanksgiving to God, the importance of moral purity, the obligation to repent, and the need

for atonement for sin. But since holiness of life was harder to practice than the observance of ceremonies, numerous and burdensome as those ceremonies seem to have been, the Jews soon became willing to substitute the one for the other; and, placing their main hope of winning God's favor and protection in their compliance with the ceremonial law, they turned their attention chiefly to that, and attached themselves to it so strongly that, although they did not hesitate to commit a thousand moral wrongs, they would sooner die than eat any unclean food or allow their Temple to be profaned.

From this attachment to what they regarded as the Law of Moses, they presumed upon the special favor and protection of God, and considered themselves the sole heirs of the promises made to Abraham and David, and repeated and confirmed by all their prophets. But the same blindness that kept them from seeing the spiritual intent and meaning of the ceremonial institutions likewise kept them from understanding the spiritual sense of those prophecies. The blessing promised through the seed of Abraham to all the nations of the earth, and the kingdom assigned to the descendants of David, they wrongly interpreted as belonging to themselves alone; and, interpreting in a worldly sense the deliverance of Israel foretold by the prophets, and the victories and dominion of the Son of David, they expected, at the time of Christ's coming, a Messiah who would not only free them from their subjection to the Romans, but would even conquer and subdue the Romans and every other power on earth to the empire of the Jews — the sole favorites of heaven and destined lords of the universe under their invincible, glorious king. These expectations, so flattering to the whole nation, had so infected the minds of people of every rank and condition that even the disciples of Jesus — some of whom, at least, were among the lowest of the people — remained tainted by them for a long time, in spite of the spiritual instructions and plain declarations of their Master to the contrary. And although, soon after his ascension, they seem to have given up all thought of an earthly kingdom, yet for some time, and not without an explicit miracle, they could not be convinced that the Gentiles had any claim to the mercies of God, or any share in the kingdom of the Messiah. Such was the superstition, and such were the prejudices, of the whole Jewish nation.

To these national prejudices may be added others arising from the particular beliefs of the different sects that divided almost the whole people of the Jews among themselves. The most powerful of these were the Pharisees and the Sadducees, some of whose chief doctrines are noted by the Evangelists, along with their bitter opposition to the Gospel of Christ. The reader who wants a more detailed account of the opinions of these and the other sects may consult the *Universal History* (volume 4, page 160 and following). It is enough to observe here that all these sects had many followers, had great authority with the people, and — the Pharisees especially — held a large share in the government of the Jewish state. And although there was constant hatred and rivalry between them, and consequently so

strong a zeal in each party to advance its own opinions that they would go to any lengths to gain a single convert, they all agreed, with equal eagerness, in opposing the progress of Christianity.

The idolatrous superstitions of the heathen world, and the zealous attachment of every nation and city to the worship of their own guardian deities, are too well known to need elaborating here. But I must point out that, besides the prejudices of the ignorant and bigoted masses, these superstitions gave rise to other obstacles to Christianity that were no less formidable, though of a different kind. For many religious rites and ceremonies, having become, either through long custom or through the policy of lawmakers, interwoven with the administration of civil affairs, the worship of the gods had become not merely an essential part of the constitution, but the chief instrument of government in most states and kingdoms. Thus, among the Greeks and other nations, omens and oracles — among the Romans, auspices, auguries, and sacrifices, whether of thanksgiving or of appeasement — were often used very successfully on great and important occasions. For this reason, all the Roman emperors, who had taken for themselves the authority of the whole empire that had formerly been divided among several officials, following the example of Julius Caesar and Augustus, either actually took on the office, or at least the title, of Pontifex Maximus, Chief Priest — that is, according to the definition given by Festus, "judex atque arbiter rerum humanarum divinarumque," the judge and arbiter of both human and divine affairs. Hence those wise as well as humane emperors, Trajan and the two Antonines, might well have thought themselves under a double obligation, as chief magistrates and chief priests, to persecute the Christians, whom they evidently regarded as innovators with respect to the constitution as well as the religion of the empire. This, though no sufficient excuse for such barbarous and inhuman conduct, may nevertheless help lessen the astonishment we naturally feel on hearing that so virtuous a religion as Christianity was persecuted by so virtuous a prince as Antoninus the Philosopher — though it must at the same time be admitted that there was in him a strong element of superstition, however incompatible that may seem with philosophy. This also helps show us the distressing position Christianity was in, against whose progress not only the superstitious zeal of the masses, and the laws and policies of almost every state and kingdom, but even the apparent duty of good and just magistrates, were fatally combined.

If, for shrewd and pious princes, religion and the laws of the state might serve as reason or pretext for opposing Christianity, wicked emperors had yet another motive distinct from any consideration of duty or policy, or even of their own vices — namely, their own claimed divinity. Once all the power and dignity of the Roman people and their various magistrates had been transferred to the single person of the emperor, the senators — by a transition natural enough for men who had become slaves, moving from counselors into flatterers — had not only established by law the absolute authority of their tyrants, but had gone so far as to deify their persons, even during their

lifetimes, erecting altars to their names, placing their statues among those of the gods, and offering them sacrifices and incense. Although these impious honors were granted to all emperors alike, good and bad without distinction, the bad ones — being unable, through their own merit, to win any genuine respect or reverence — had nothing to rely on but the power and privileges of their office. They therefore grew so jealous of these honors that it became dangerous for anyone to neglect paying them, however extravagant and irreligious the demands of either the law or the emperor's own mad pride might be. And so, worshiping the emperor's image, swearing by his name, and the like, became a test and mark of loyalty, with which everyone who sought the emperor's favor, or feared his power, complied most scrupulously — especially those who held any office under him, or who governed the provinces. These officials, by virtue of their positions, were further obliged to ensure that, within their own jurisdictions, that most essential part of subjects' duty toward bad rulers — outward respect and reverence — was most punctually rendered. Now, since the doctrines of Christ were entirely opposed to every kind of idolatry, Christians, being unable to comply with this test in any way, were thereby exposed to the charge of that kind of treason which tyrants and their ministers never forgive, however ready they may be to overlook offenses against religion or the state. That this test was, among others, used against professed Christians even under the best emperors is evident from a passage in the famous letter of Pliny to Trajan, in which Pliny describes how he dealt with those who offered to clear themselves of the charge or suspicion of being Christians (Pliny, *Letters*, Book 10, Epistle 97). In his own words: "A document was put forward, without any author's name, containing the names of many people who denied that they were, or ever had been, Christians. These persons, having, following my example, called upon the gods, and having, with incense and wine, made offerings to your image — which I had caused to be brought out for this purpose along with the images of the gods — and having moreover cursed Christ (none of which things, it is said, a genuine Christian can be made to do), I thought it right to dismiss them. Others, who had been named by an informer, admitted that they had once been Christians but denied being so now, saying that they had given up that religion some three years before, others longer still, and some even twenty years before. All of these worshiped both your image and those of the gods, and also cursed Christ."

To these powerful patrons of superstition and enemies of the Gospel may be added others, whose authority, though inferior and subordinate to the former — at least within the bounds of the Roman Empire — was nevertheless very great and far-reaching. I mean the priests, diviners, augurs, and managers of oracles, along with all the lesser attendants upon the temples and worship of an almost endless number of deities; and also many trades which, if not entirely dependent on that worship, were nevertheless greatly encouraged and enriched by it — such as sculptors, shrine-makers, breeders

of sacrificial animals, and dealers in frankincense, and the like. All of these were, through self-interest if nothing else, firmly devoted to idolatry.

It may also not be out of place here, under the subject of religion, to mention the circus games and other spectacles put on among the Romans, and the four great games of Greece — the Olympic, Pythian, Isthmian, and Nemean — along with many others of the same kind, celebrated with great splendor in every country and in almost every city of Greece, both in Europe and in Asia. All of these were religious festivals which, through the attractions of pomp and pleasure — not to mention the glory and rewards gained by the winners in those games — bound many people to the cause of superstition.

But superstition, universal and powerful as it was through its alliance with the interests and pleasures of a large part of mankind, was neither the only obstacle Christianity had to contend with, nor even the greatest. Vice recruited a still greater number against it. The ambitious and the self-indulgent, the debauched and the lewd, the miser and the extortioner, the unjust and the oppressive, the proud and the vengeful, the fraudulent and the grasping, were all enemies of a religion that taught humility and self-restraint, temperance and purity even of thought, generosity and mercy, justice, kindness and gentleness, the forgiving of injuries, and doing to others only what we would want them to do to us — virtues that are indeed agreeable to reason, and discoverable in part by the clear light of nature, but the difficulty lay in getting those who had given themselves over to superstition to listen to reason at all. And how was the almost extinguished light of nature to be seen amid the many false and dazzling lights of religion, opinion, and philosophy, which recommended and sanctioned so many enormous vices? The gods, like dissolute and tyrannical princes — to whom they have often, and quite fittingly, been compared — were themselves the great patrons and examples of tyranny, licentiousness, revenge, and almost every other kind of vice. Popular opinion had glorified Alexander and deified Julius Caesar for an ambition that should rather have made them objects of mankind's loathing and curses.

Nor was philosophy as great a friend to virtue, or enemy to vice, as it claimed to be. Some philosophers, on the contrary, denied the existence, or at least the providence, of God, and denied future rewards and punishments; and, as a natural consequence of that opinion, placed human happiness in the enjoyments of this world — that is, in sensual pleasure. Others, affecting to doubt and question everything, erased the distinction between virtue and vice, leaving their followers to pursue whichever their inclinations led them to. These were, at least indirectly, preachers of vice. And among those who undertook to lead their disciples to the temple of virtue, there were so many different and even contradictory opinions — some so paradoxical and absurd, others so overrefined and obscure, and all of them so mistaken in their first principles, and so deficient on many important points of religion and morality — that it is no wonder philosophy, however venerable in its origins and noble

in its claims, degenerated into mere speculation, sophistry, and a science of disputation, and, instead of being a guide for living, became a pedantic ruler of the schools. From this arose another kind of adversary to the Gospel: men who, from seeing further than ordinary people, came to imagine they could see everything, and to think everything subject to the scrutiny of reason; and who, carrying their inquiries into the nature of God, the origin of the universe, and the essence of the human soul, either devised for themselves, or adopted, some elaborate or mysterious system by which they claimed to account for every working of nature and to measure every action of God and man. And since every sect had a system of its own, each strove to advance its own system at the expense of all the rest; and this involved them in a perpetual war with one another, in which, for lack of real strength and solid arguments, they were reduced to defending themselves and attacking their opponents with all the devices commonly used to cover up or make up for a lack of sense and reason — sophistry, grandstanding, ridicule, stubbornness, pride, and bitterness. Men of this temper — accustomed to reasoning about matters where reason loses its way; so confident in the sufficiency of reason that they thought they could account for everything; so attached to their own systems that they dreaded being proved wrong more than being mistaken; and so used to arguing stubbornly, asserting boldly, and pronouncing judgment as if from the bench on every question, that they were almost incapable of learning anything new — could hardly be anything but hostile to accepting as their Master a crucified Jew, and as teachers a handful of obscure, lowly men of that same nation, who professed to glory in the cross of Christ, to know nothing but him crucified, and to neglect and look down on the so highly admired wisdom of this world; men who, moreover, taught doctrines the philosophers had never considered, such as the redemption of mankind and the resurrection of the dead; and who, though far from forbidding the proper use of reason, nevertheless kept it within its proper limits, and urged their followers to submit with full humility, and to rely with full confidence, on the wisdom of God, instead of presuming to sit in judgment on his dealings, "whose judgments are unsearchable, and whose ways are past finding out."

From this survey of the Jewish and Gentile world, it is clear that everything that most powerfully influences and dominates the mind of man — religion, custom, law, policy, pride, self-interest, vice, and even philosophy — stood united against the Gospel: enemies formidable and difficult to overcome in their own right, even had they been willing to be attacked on equal terms and brought to a fair fight. But, not relying on their own strength alone — for prejudice and falsehood are always uneasy and fearful — they entrenched themselves behind the power they already held, and made themselves, as they supposed, unreachable by Christianity, by surrounding themselves not only with every kind of civil disadvantage, but even with torments, chains, and death: terrors that no one could make light of who had any ambitions or interests of his own, and who was not even willing to give up, without having done anything wrong, what he might otherwise have peacefully enjoyed — his

reputation, his comfort, his fortune, and his life. These were the difficulties Christianity had to struggle against for many ages, and over which it eventually prevailed so completely as to change the whole face of things: overturning the temples and altars of the gods, silencing the oracles, humbling the impious pride of emperors — those earthly and more immediately powerful deities — confounding the presumptuous wisdom of philosophers, and introducing into the greater part of the known world a new principle of religion and virtue. This was an event apparently far too vast and overwhelming to have been brought about by merely human means, even if all the accomplishments of learning, all the persuasive powers of eloquence, combined with the deepest knowledge of the nature and duty of man, and long practice and experience in the ways of the world, had all been united in the apostles. But the apostles, Paul excepted, were ignorant and unlettered men, for the most part raised to humble occupations, natives and residents of a remote province of Judea, and descended from a nation hated and despised by the rest of mankind. So that, even granting it possible that so total and universal a change could have been brought about by the natural powers and faculties of man, the apostles themselves possessed none of those powers — Paul alone excepted, who was indeed eloquent and well versed in all the learning of the Jews, that is, in the traditions and doctrines of the Pharisees, the sect to which he belonged — a learning that, instead of helping him win converts to the Gospel, gave him the strongest prejudices against it, and made him a fierce persecutor of the Christians. Yet of this eloquence, and of this learning, he made no use in preaching the Gospel. On the contrary, "When I came to you," he tells the Corinthians, "I came not with excellency of speech, or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling; and my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom" (1 Corinthians 2:1–4). And in the preceding chapter, comparing the inadequacy of the preachers of the Gospel with the success of their preaching, he attributes that success to its true cause — the wisdom and power of God — in these striking words: "For Christ sent me to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent (Isaiah 29:14). Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: but we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men. For ye see your

calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: that no flesh should glory in his presence" (1 Corinthians 1:17–29).

This is a true picture of the condition of the first preachers of the Gospel and of their opponents. The opponents possessed all the wisdom, authority, and power of the world; the preachers were ignorant, despised, and weak. Which of the two, then, according to the ordinary course of human affairs, ought to have won out? The former, without any doubt. And yet not only the Apostle, but all history and our own experience, assure us that the ignorant, the despised, and the weak won the victory over the wise, the mighty, and the noble. To what other cause, then, can we attribute a success so contrary to all the laws by which the events of this world are normally governed, than to the intervention of God, shown in the resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ and the miraculous powers given to his apostles and disciples? A cause fully equal to all the effects, however great and astonishing they were. For, equipped with such ample credentials from the King of Heaven, even a poor fisherman from Galilee could stand with dignity before the high priest and the Sanhedrin of the Jews, boldly declare that God had made that same Jesus whom they had crucified both Lord and Christ, and back up his declaration by proving — strange and supernatural as it might seem — that Jesus had risen from the dead. He could do this not only by his own testimony and that of his brethren the apostles and disciples of Jesus, by whom Jesus was seen for forty days after his passion, but also by countless instances of a power, likewise above nature, given to them by him and exercised by them in his name. From the Scriptures, too, these same ignorant and unlettered Galileans could show, against the traditions of the elders, the learning of the scribes, and the prejudices of the whole Jewish nation, that the humble, suffering Jesus was the mighty, triumphant Messiah spoken of by the prophets. For if any doubt could have arisen among the people as to whose interpretation of those prophecies they should follow — that of the scribes and elders, or that of the apostles — the apostles had, to support their authority, the testimony of that very Holy Spirit by whom those prophets had been inspired, now speaking through their own mouths in every language on earth. And with regard to that other matter, still harder for the Jews to accept — namely, the calling of the uncircumcised Gentiles to an equal share in the kingdom of God, and with it the abolishing of circumcision and the whole ceremonial law — the apostles were armed with an argument that none of the rabbis could answer: the Holy Ghost gave to Gentile converts to Christianity the very same heavenly gifts he had given, at the beginning, to the believing Jews.

Equipped with such full power from on high, these same obscure Jews, despite the contempt and hatred that every other nation had for their people,

could undertake and accomplish the difficult and astonishing task of preaching the Gospel to the whole world. Belief in one God is the fundamental article of all true religion, and the unity of the Godhead can certainly be discovered, and even demonstrated, by reason. But, as I said before, this article of belief was not found in the religion of any nation besides the Jews, and the long chains of argument and reasoning by which it had to be demonstrated were beyond the reach of most of mankind. To establish this important truth, then, in a way easy enough for the weakest mind to grasp, yet not open to refutation even by the strongest, the apostles and their followers were, for many ages, given — besides all their other miraculous gifts — power over devils, or demons, the only deities of the pagans that had any real existence. These were perhaps permitted, at that time, to manifest themselves in extraordinary ways, for the sake of illustrating and proving this great truth. By this power the apostles cast demons out of many who were possessed by them, drove them from their temples, groves, and oracles, forced them to confess their own inferiority, to acknowledge the dominion of Jesus Christ, and to declare his apostles to be "the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation" (Acts 16:17). They exercised this power in the name of Jesus Christ, in order to prove his mediation and intercession between God and man — the second article of the Christian creed. And just as, through this power exercised in the name of Christ, the apostles and their followers were able to prove, even to the very senses of all mankind, that there is but one God and one Mediator, so too, from this and the other miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit — healing every kind of disease, speaking in various tongues, prophesying, and so on — they derived authority to teach the great doctrines of Christianity: repentance, forgiveness of sins, holiness of life, future rewards and punishments, and the resurrection of the dead. Of this last doctrine, the resurrection of Christ was both an example and a pledge, just as the outpouring of the Holy Ghost upon believers was clear evidence of the effectiveness of repentance and the forgiveness of their sins. And of the necessity of a holy life, and the certainty of future rewards and punishments, nothing could offer a stronger or more convincing argument than the lives and deaths of these ambassadors of God, who were plainly guided into all truth by his inspiration, and who, resting on the assurance of a blessed immortality, not only practiced all the virtues they preached, but cheerfully endured every kind of suffering, even death itself.

In this way the first preachers of the Gospel, weak, ignorant, and despised as they were, were given strength enough to overthrow the strongholds of Satan — the superstitions, prejudices, and vices of mankind — and, through the demonstration of the power of God, an argument whose force was plain even to the dullest mind, were enabled to confound the subtleties of the most argumentative people, and surpass the wisdom of the wisest philosophers, in establishing religion on the belief in one God, grounding the obligation to virtue on its true foundation — the command of God — and drawing encouragement to a holy life from the promises of God to reward with eternal

happiness, obtained through the sacrifice and mediation of Jesus Christ, those who obeyed his will. This last point, together with the doctrine of providence, the free agency of man, and assisting grace, however far beyond the reach of reason, could nevertheless not fail to be accepted by all reasonable people as certain truths, resting as they did on the authority of persons visibly commissioned and inspired by God. For what conclusion of reason, what principle in philosophy, is more evident than that men speaking by the immediate inspiration of God cannot lie? And is not the divine inspiration of the apostles to be inferred with just as much certainty from the mighty wonders they performed, as the divine creation of the world is inferred from the astonishing beauty, order, and magnificence of the universe? Every effect must have a cause, and a supernatural effect must have a cause above nature; and this cause can be none other than God. There may indeed be — and the Scriptures assure us that there are — many beings, both good and evil, endowed with faculties and powers exceeding those of man. But these beings are, no doubt, limited, just as man is, in the exercise of those powers, and are subject to laws laid down for them by their great Creator, which, with respect to them, might likewise be called the laws of nature. From which it follows that they cannot interfere with or disturb the laws governing any other system of creatures, even one inferior to themselves, without the permission of the Supreme Being — who may nevertheless certainly make use of them as instruments for carrying out his wise purposes, even beyond the bounds of their own proper spheres. Thus, in establishing Christianity, he saw fit to employ the ministry not only of angels, but of demons as well — though in such a way as to leave no doubt of their subjection to his sovereignty. The angels, on many occasions, assisted Christ and his apostles; the demons trembled and fled at their command; and both — the angels through their service, the demons through the servility of their obedience — plainly declared Christ and his apostles to be clothed with authority and power derived from their Lord and King. So that mankind, seeing the apostles in possession of a power plainly superior to the powers of every other known being, whether angel or demon, could no more question that they had been commissioned and inspired by God than doubt whether the magnificent structure of the universe, with all the various natures belonging to it, was the handiwork of his almighty hands.

Thus, by arguing from effects — notorious and visible effects — back to their causes, which is the surest method of investigating and proving certain kinds of truth, I have tried to demonstrate (if I may say so without offense) the certainty of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, on which the whole system of Christianity depends. For if Christ has not risen from the dead, then, as St. Paul says, the hope of Christians is in vain, and the preaching of the apostles is in vain; indeed, we may go further still and say that the preaching of Christ himself would have been in vain. For had he not risen, and proved himself by many infallible signs to have risen from the dead, the apostles and disciples could have had no reason to believe in him — that is, to acknowledge him as

the Messiah, the Anointed of God. On the contrary, they would have had to take him for an impostor, and under that conviction could never have become preachers of the Gospel without themselves becoming either fanatics or impostors; and in either case it is impossible that they should have succeeded to the degree we know they did, given their natural insufficiency, the strong opposition of the whole world to the doctrines of Christianity, and their own lofty claims to miraculous powers — claims about which they could neither have deceived themselves nor deceived others. Supposing, then, that Christ did not rise from the dead, it is certain that, by every measure of human probability, there could never have been any such thing at all as Christianity, or it must have been stifled soon after its birth. But we know, on the contrary, that Christianity has already existed for more than seventeen hundred years. This is a fact about which there is no dispute, though Christians and unbelievers disagree in explaining it. Christians affirm their religion to be of divine origin, and to have grown and prevailed under the miraculous assistance and protection of God; and they not only affirm this and offer to prove it by the same kind of evidence by which all remote historical facts are proved, but believe it may very fairly be inferred from the remarkable circumstances of its growth and increase, and from its present existence. Unbelievers, on the other hand, maintain that Christianity is an imposture, invented and carried on by men. But in maintaining this claim, their chief argument against the credibility of the resurrection and the other miraculous proofs of the divine origin of the Gospel — namely, that these things are miraculous, that is, outside the ordinary course of nature — will be of no use to them, since they will still find a miracle standing in their way: namely, the astonishing birth, growth, and increase of Christianity itself. These facts, even if they cannot account for them, they cannot deny. In order, then, to destroy the evidence Christians draw from them, unbelievers must prove that these facts were not miraculous, by showing how they could have come about in the ordinary course of human affairs, through such weak instruments as Christ and his apostles — taking them to be, as unbelievers are pleased to call them, fanatics or impostors — and by such means as they actually possessed and used. But this, I imagine, is as far beyond the ability of the greatest philosophers to show as it would be to prove the possibility of carrying out the proud boast of Archimedes — even granting his postulate — of moving and shifting the globe of this earth by machines of human invention, built only of such materials as nature provides for the ordinary use of man.

FINIS.