

*The New Testament and the
Laws of Evidence*

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THE NEW TESTAMENT and the LAWS OF EVIDENCE
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FOREWORD

THE time is more than ripe when the world of honest scholars should consider, and take steps to rectify, the deep injustice which has been practiced upon the Christian community by those who object to our Gospel. The presentation of the historic facts of Christianity is customarily treated with suspicion such as would not be tolerated in the presentation of evidence on any other subject in a civilized court of law. This strong conclusion is not the result of any sudden idea, but has developed after some years of study of the rules governing the presentation of evidence in American courts. In the course of that study we have become familiar with such masters of the subject as Greenleaf, Thayer, Starkie, Roscoe, Phillips, Russell, and the other standard guides that govern the presentation of evidence in our own courts of law.

Some time after we had begun this research we happened upon the "Harmony of the Gospels" written by Simon Gage Greenleaf, who was undoubtedly one of the greatest authorities for the presentation of evidence that America has known. This present manuscript was suggested and inspired by a close perusal of the ideas presented by this master of American law. It is sent out with

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the hope that our Christian brethren may be encouraged to stand upon the evidence for Christianity that God has placed in our hands, putting the burden of proof concerning the credibility of that evidence where the law demands that burden should properly rest.

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*The Legal Value of the Gospels
As Evidence*

CHAPTER I

THE LEGAL VALUE OF THE GOSPELS AS EVIDENCE

IT IS highly improper to refer to Christianity as “one of the world’s great religions.” There are many great world religions, of which Christianity is certainly not one. A “religion” consists of man’s systematized thinking concerning God, and is the result of humanity’s attempts to approach God, and to find Him out for their own satisfaction.

Christianity is God’s search for man. The revelation of Jesus Christ owes nothing to human wisdom or the thinking of fallible man. It is God in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself. Far from being merely a great world religion, Christianity is the only sure method of salvation which God has established for the redemption of all mankind.

Buddhism is a great world religion. The net result of centuries of its teaching and philosophy has been the degradation and degeneration of the multitudes who have accepted its teaching. In exact opposition to this tragic record is the history of Christianity. Wherever

the Gospel of Jesus Christ has gone, regeneration of the individual and enlightenment of the race have been the inevitable results.

The religion of Islam is a great world religion, but it has blighted all peoples who have accepted it as true. In sharp contrast to the freedom and redemption that Christian nations possess in the application of the philosophy of Christianity, is the slavery of Mohammedan women and the brutish culture of all who are under its damning power. In beautiful and happy contrast to the sad situation of the Moslem is the uplift that has come to every nation that has practiced the teachings of Jesus Christ.

But the greatest contrast between Christianity and the world religions is found in the two-fold fact that Christianity is a personal relationship, and is also an historic faith.

Christianity is the revelation of a Person whose name was Jesus Christ. Therefore, the Christian is one who worships Christ as Savior and Lord. A great modern preacher recently achieved some temporary notoriety by preaching on the subject, "The Sin of Worshipping Jesus." He raised the question, "Should the Christian worship Christ?" It is sheer folly to ask such a question, for Christianity is the worship of the God-Man Jesus Christ. It is this fact which characterizes the Christian, and sets him apart from all religionists.

Christianity is *not* the worship of God. The Jews worship God, but they are not Christians. The Moslem worships God, but does not honor the Son of God. A Christian is one who receives Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, and believes Him to be the only begotten Son of Almighty God. Therefore all who worship Christ are Christians, in the exact meaning of that term. Christianity, then, is the worship of a person, Jesus Christ, by such persons as find in Him their Savior and Lord.

The supreme strength of Christianity, however, is found in a set of historic documents called the New Testament, which are the foundation and evidences of the Christian faith. Therefore the greatest question of the day must be the credibility of the documents that sustain Christianity.

A discussion of this theme is not an idle argument.

It is not a controversial, dogmatic discussion, but is vital to a saving faith in the Son of God.

There are two methods by which the New Testament may be investigated in serious study. The method frequently advocated in our day is the so-called higher critical method. This consists of applying to the New Testament records the rules by which we would study any piece of literature in the secular world. This system of study has resulted in what has been frequently called "the assured results of higher criticism." Briefly stated,

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these so-called results consist of a refutation of the historicity, credibility, and value of the New Testament evidences.

The one, great objection, however, to proceeding along this line is the fact that the entire technique and procedure of higher criticism has been legally and historically discredited.

In the realm of archaeology, every basic conclusion of the critical school has been discredited by substantial evidence of a positive nature. The technique of the historical and literary school of criticism has also been tested in Anglo-Saxon courts and has been repudiated utterly in the strongest and most uncompromising terms. As evidence, the so-called results of higher criticism have no standing whatever.

As an instance, we could cite a famous case contained in the "Ontario Law Reports, 1931". A great many pages of this record are given to the results of a trial that went to the highest appellate court of the British Empire. As this case was widely reported and given great space in the *Sunday School Times*, we will cite only the salient features in this brief mention. According to the record contained in the volume of Ontario Law Reports, a certain Miss Florence Deeks spent three years writing a manuscript which she entitled "The Web". This was an historical presentation of the con-

tribution to the world progress made by women through past ages, to the present period. Her manuscript was sent to a certain Toronto publishing house who retained it for eight months while they studied its content and considered the question of publishing the book. At the end of the eight months the manuscript was rejected by the publishing house and returned to Miss Deeks. The following year the English branch of this same publishing firm offered to the market the famous work, "The Outline of History," by H. G. Wells. Upon examination, Miss Deeks was convinced that Mr. Wells had plagiarized her manuscript, and accordingly, sued the publishing house for damages. The publishers denied that Mr. Wells had any access to the manuscript, or any portion of it. In their defense they maintained that the manuscript was never out of their hands, that no copies of any portion of it had been made, and that Mr. Wells was not in Canada during the time they possessed the manuscript.

Miss Deeks had no direct evidence. She had neither eye witness nor documentary testimony and was advised, consequently, to consult a world authority in the so-called science of textual criticism. It was hoped that such an expert could make out a case for her by applying the accepted rules of higher criticism. She, therefore, appealed to the Rev. W. A. Irwin, M.A., B.D., Ph.D., who occupied the Chair of Old Testament Lan-

guage and Literature at the University of Chicago. Professor Irwin very eagerly accepted the invitation. He stated in his brief that he had been called upon by Miss Deeks and listened to her side of the controversy. He said he consented to examine the two documents by the accepted rules of higher criticism because that was a sort of task with which his study of ancient literature repeatedly confronted him. Concluding his statement, we offer his words in a direct quotation: "I was interested to test out in modern works the methods commonly applied to those of the ancient world." Professor Irwin then applied to the two modern works the technique of investigation common to the school of literary criticism. It is not necessary to point out that this method applied to the Bible has resulted in a repudiation and discrediting of the Old Testament manuscript. After a long study and careful analysis, Dr. Irwin testified upon oath that by his analysis and comparisons and by the application of the rules of Biblical criticism, it is established beyond a doubt that, "The author of 'The Outline of History' had access to 'The Web'; that it was on hand when he wrote, was constantly available and referred to repeatedly; and was palpably a disguised copy of it." Professor Irwin filed with the court a sixty-page memorandum of the results of his research and the conclusions based thereon.

The court dismissed the case in a summary fashion. On page 828 of the Ontario Law Reports we cite this paragraph from the opinion and judgment of the Trial Judge: "But the extracts I have quoted and the other scores of pages of Professor Irwin's memorandum are just solemn nonsense. His comparisons are without significance and his arguments and conclusions are alike puerile. Like Gratiano, Professor Irwin spoke an infinite deal of nothing. His reasons are not two grains of wheat hidden in two bushels of chaff. They are not reasons at all."

Miss Deeks appealed to the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court of Ontario. The four Judges of this dignified body, in a fourteen-page opinion, unanimously agreed in dismissing the appeal. Citing again from the Law Reports of Ontario, we bring this conclusive statement from the said opinion: "I have no hesitation in agreeing with the Trial Judge in the utter worthlessness of this kind of evidence—it is almost an insult to common sense."

Taking the last step available to an appellant, Miss Deeks then carried her case to the Lords of the Privy Council, who constitute the highest appellate court in the British Empire. Once again the judgment was unanimously against the appellant, repudiating any legal credibility to the results that she, by the so-called higher critical method had obtained.

This Supreme appellate body took note of the fact that the plaintiff's case rested entirely upon the value of the testimony as given by Professor Irwin. In the final judgment, the Lords of the Privy Council stated: "The defendants were not, we think, called upon to offer any evidence to rebut Professor Irwin's fantastic hypotheses."

Since in the eyes of courts trained in the evaluation of evidence, the assured results of higher criticism, in spite of its claims to scholarly ability, constitute puerile nonsense and are an insult to common sense, we would suggest a better way of testing the credibility of the New Testament text.

A more honorable and intelligent method of study, however, would be *to apply to the Christian writings the recognized rules of evidence such as govern court proceedings in twentieth century America*. For generations the Christian documents have been treated with suspicion and the Christian himself has been under the unjust burden of re-establishing for every inquirer the historicity and credibility of the records that support Christianity. This is contrary to the accepted rules of evidence. When the New Testament is considered by recognized legal methods of inquiry, it is attested, established, and demonstrated to the satisfaction of any honest inquirer.

The first rule that must be considered in presenting written evidence in a court of law, and which should

If there are errors or discrepancies in those copies there can be no presumption in law, the originals being lost, that they also contained errors, contradictions, or discrepancies. This is why it is stated in law, "The prevailing current of assertion is resorted to as evidence. To this fact every member of the community is presumed to be privy." It is utterly irrational to presume that a Christian today is under any obligation to offer further proof of the genuineness or authenticity of the New Testament records. According to the clear demands of the law, the objector must show them spurious. Not only by every demand of common sense, fair dealing, and justice, but by the adamant rules of evidence the burden of proof lies no longer on the church of Christ, but on those who would question the credibility of the New Testament text.

Once more referring to the previously cited case of Bullen versus Michel, an important factor that influenced the highest court of England in their history-making decision was the manner in which these ancient copies were made. It became apparent to the appellate court that the copies of instruments presented seemed to have been copied by a person *employed for the purpose*, probably one of the monks, and later deposited among the muniments of the abbey. This was done because it was important for the interests of the abbey that the instruments should be preserved. Therefore the court ruled

that for this same reason it might be presumed that they were faithful copies. At least there appeared to have existed no motive to make them otherwise, and they were found where they were likely to be kept.

Now if this is true in the procedures of law concerning private property, financial returns, and those things of value which men prize most, how much more would it be true of things of eternal value? When the soul of man and his immortal destiny are the prize for which contending forces are striving, we would expect that the natural interest of man would make every possible human effort to preserve his title deeds to immortality. Until the objector can bring forth legal, accepted, and credible evidence to the contrary, in the eyes of the law the copies of the New Testament text that we possess today are to all practical purposes as valuable as though we had the original writings.

The collapse of every attempt of infidelity to set aside the accuracy and strength of the New Testament constitutes one of the most ludicrous records extant in our day and age. If evidence exists that the New Testament is spurious, unreliable, or lacks value as evidence, let the contender of this fact bring forth evidence or confess himself prejudiced, incapable of sustaining his case, and a special pleader for ignorance!

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Since there are no living eye-witnesses to these events, the case must be decided on the basis of written records. The value of those records, however, is irrevocably bound up in the question of the integrity of their writers, and for that reason we shall, in the second chapter, proceed to examine the credibility and character of the writers.

The Integrity of the Witnesses

CHAPTER II

THE INTEGRITY OF THE WITNESSES

IN the first chapter we have sought to show by an appeal to the laws of evidence that the New Testament records are legally unimpeachable. In the eyes of the law these documents must be received as conclusive and Christianity accepted and established on their record, unless fresh evidence can be produced by the objector to this position. Since these documents meet every requirement of modern law according to the accepted rules of the presentation of evidence, the Christian is protected by this law from any further need of defense of the Scriptures.

Thus the opponent of Christianity is faced with the necessity of choosing one of two alternatives. Either he can bring forth fresh evidence to show that these documents are not reliable, or he can impeach the testimony and credibility of the witnesses who have produced these records with which we deal. Since the attempt to set aside the value and force of the four Gospels has met with total failure, and since the critic is not willing to change his prejudiced position and make his thinking conform to the evidence, the enemies of Christ have

adopted the second alternative. They are basing their present objection to the reception of Christianity on the important point of the character and integrity of these witnesses. Admitting that the Gospels were written by eye-witnesses, the neo-critics demand to know how we can be assured of the credibility of those witnesses. They maintain that it is too late to cross-examine these witnesses now, therefore accepting their utterance is a matter of faith, and not evidence.

To this objection there is a two-fold answer that may be presented. First, the credibility of the witnesses themselves is bound up in the question of the integrity of Jesus Christ.

Their testimony is presented before the court of human inquiry by the Son of God.

He chose them personally.

Remembering His singular honesty, it is highly important to consider the purpose of the choice of the twelve.

In terms of direct finality the Scripture states that they were chosen *to be witnesses* of the events of His ministry, and particularly of His resurrection.

The transparent honesty of Jesus of Nazareth shines through every record of His earthly conduct. No faker was He. When He wrought a miracle of healing, He picked a ruler of the land, and performed His miracle in the glaring light of the publicity that beats about those

who are seated in high governmental positions. As a parallel instance, we doubt if any fake healer of our generation would attempt a fraudulent demonstration of his power in the family of a governor or that of the president himself! Public scrutiny is too intense when it touches the events of the prominent citizens of our land. In the healing of the daughter of Jairus, Christ established His honesty of purpose as no great public leader had done before Him or has done since!

So also when Jesus was choosing witnesses to His miracles, He took men who were too shrewd to be deceived. Generally they were men who were specialists in the field in which the Savior intended to perform. To illustrate this point, we remind you that the miraculous draught of fishes occurred in the eyes of men who were themselves professional fishermen. They knew the contours of the lake and the deep places where success in their craft might be expected. When they followed the simple directions of the Savior when He commanded them to cast their nets in a place where they knew fishing was generally useless, He won their respect, admiration, and belief by performing a supernatural work that they of all men were most capable of judging.

Again, the miracles of healing wrought by the Savior were investigated by a practicing physician. To show the clear-cut honesty manifested in such conduct, we

might point out that the alleged cases of healing in the cult of Eddyism today are never submitted to the medical profession for their authentication!

The Gospel witnesses were *sponsored* by Jesus Christ.

He is called the "Perfect Man," the "Great Teacher," the "World Leader." His witnesses are presumed to be as honest, credible, sincere, and honorable as was He.

Again the burden of proof to the contrary, according to the clear laws of evidence, devolves upon the objector. If the credibility of the witnesses is questioned it is also necessary to question the character, sincerity, and honesty of Him Who is the sponsor of those witnesses.

The second reply to this objection, however, takes longer to present. The witnesses *can* be cross-examined! Later we shall proceed to do that exact thing. At present we merely set forth the foundation and procedure of that cross-examination.

It is self-apparent that if these witnesses had been false or unreliable historians they would not have committed themselves on so many particulars. The success of a lie depends in large measure upon its simplicity. A bald, bold, generalized statement may be able to carry itself even though it is untrue. It is a known phenomenon, however, that every detail added to the general structure of a false account decreases the possibility of the success of the fraud. All lawyers know that when a

story is told naturally, ingenuously, with minute details freely introduced, they are probably listening to the unvarnished truth of the matter. Skilled and able deceivers do not commit themselves on minute matters and minor particulars if they hope to succeed in a deception.

Also, had these witnesses been in a united conspiracy to perpetrate a public fraud, they would not have given the people of their day and the historians of our times so many chances to check them up. Running through the Gospel narratives is a continual thread of minute historical references that are of tremendous weight and value in the examination of the credibility of those records. Capable and able historians of that generation have left us a clear account of the secular history of that time. The apostles of the New Testament have woven their narrative about those known and accepted historical incidents and have given us an opportunity to examine their general fidelity and truthfulness, which is absolutely unimpeachable.

Again, false witnesses would not have foolishly supplied on every page of their narrative the material for the cross-examination which would inevitably disgrace them if subjected to a careful scrutiny. Intimate details of every event are voluminously supplied by the writing apostles, and we are challenged by their very attitude to cross-examine their testimony. It is not true that it is too late for such cross-examination. We can today conduct

a shrewd, careful, legal search into the value of their testimony, and as these studies proceed we shall attempt to do so. Now, however, we look only at their credibility and their authority to speak.

In introducing his record Peter argues for the credibility of all these witnesses in these exact words:

“For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, *but were eyewitnesses* of His majesty.”

The question naturally arises, “Who were these eye-witnesses? How capable were they of observing these events, and what was their special training for the recording of that which they had observed?”

Let us begin in a chronological fashion by looking first of all at the man called Matthew. He is also called Levi in the Scriptures, and was a Galilean Jew. We do not know the city of which Matthew was a native, but every other essential fact about him is known to the scholars of our generation. This man had a rather important position in the government of his day. He was a customs officer in Capernaum, in the territory of Herod Antipas. In this capacity he was not really a Roman official, but was a minor official in the Galilean government, being enlisted in the service of the tetrarch of Galilee. He was undoubtedly a subordinate officer belonging to the class called “portitores.” These were helpers

or assistants to the upper tax gatherers who in turn were called "publicani." These latter were the men who farmed out the taxes that were gathered for the Roman government from all of their conquered territories.

Matthew's duties were various and voluminous, and his powers and authorities were extensive. His primary business was to gather revenue for the crown, and therefore he is referred to sometimes as a publican or tax-gatherer. The taxes and assessments that were levied within his district were gathered by him. In addition to that, all duties and customs on goods or persons passing in and out of his province via Lake Gennesaret were under his authority. While engaged in this business of gathering revenue for his government he was called by the Lord Jesus and forsook his prospects of a fortune to follow the Messiah.

This ready acceptance of the call of the Master would indicate that he belonged to that group of publicans and sinners who, throughout Galilee and the general territory occupied by men who possessed a Messianic hope, looked to Jesus with longing and faith. Later, having satisfied his own heart and intellect concerning the honesty and Scriptural credibility of the Messiah, he gave a feast in his own house in honor of Jesus and invited other publicans to hear the new teacher. This event is recorded by all three of the synoptic writers. Mark and Luke say that the feast was held in Levi's house. Matthew Levi

himself tells of the feast, but does not name the host. This fine touch in the narrative is an evidence of modesty and humility such as would be expected from a man of humble heart, not writing in the first person.

It cannot be gainsaid, according to the light of later research, that Matthew, whose Gospel comes first in the New Testament, wrote first in point of time. Dates for the writing of Matthew's Gospel have been given all the way from 37 to 63 A. D. Undoubtedly the earlier date is the more credible. It is highly improbable that the Christians were left long without authentic and complete accounts of Jesus' life and His teachings. The hearts of the apostles were burning with a desire to tell the things that they had seen. By the time Luke wrote, innumerable written records were in existence setting forth various episodes in the life and teachings of the Savior.

The repeated suggestions in the Gospel of Matthew which manifest a state of persecution at the time of the writing, are a strong argument for the early date of its production. It may also be noted that the titles of sanctity ascribed to Jerusalem in Matthew's Gospel were not customarily ascribed at a later period. Also, Matthew shows forth a high veneration for the temple not generally found at the close of the century. Herod seems to have been still alive when Matthew wrote, and Pilate was evidently still governor of the territory. A late date for the Gospel of Matthew has never been established on

credible evidence. Modern research combined with ancient tradition establishes the fact that the Gospel of Matthew is the first one written, and that it came into existence very shortly after the resurrection of the Savior.

So concerning the nature and value of his testimony, we need only refer to the character, the training, and the national background of this witness. All these factors add to the value of his record. In his life and experience there is no one single event or characteristic that would weaken the value of his testimony. In the first place, he was a native Jew. He knew the opinions, the customs, and the ceremonies of the people of Israel. He knew their expectations and their hopes, and above all else, Levi was deeply learned in the sacred writings of Israel. That means that he was reared in the Messianic hope and was steeped in the prophecies of the coming Savior. At any time Jesus departed from the historical preview sketched by the prophets and to which the acceptable Messiah must conform, Matthew would be instant to check such a discrepancy.

Also, he was a man of plain living, possessed of vast common sense. Although his principal education had been in the text of the Old Testament, which was customary for the Jews of his day, he was also a master of the Greek language, which was common to all men at the time Matthew lived. In addition to his knowledge of Hebrew and Greek, both of which might be called his native

tongues, there is evidence that he possessed an inexhaustive knowledge of the Aramaic language.

Matthew was well acquainted with the common "current assertions" to which the law gives authority. The events of those stirring days were known to him with an intimate knowledge such as no modern student could possess. The sub rosa currents of unrest, the mutterings of rebellion against Rome, and the hopes and aspirations of a people who never took kindly to Gentile dominion, were as the breath of his nostrils.

But above all else, Matthew knew men. He was a master of practical psychology. In this regard special attention is due his occupation. It must be remembered that Matthew was engaged in no mean task. The Roman conquerors were greedy for revenue. Their tremendous standing army, which was necessary to maintain their grip on a far-flung empire, absorbed finances as a thirsty desert drinks water. Rome laid as heavy a burden of taxation on every conquered territory as the people could possibly bear and still live to produce more revenue. From the Asiatic provinces, of which Judea was one, she collected more than twenty-two million dollars a year. Galilee was crushed with a burden of taxation such as modern men do not experience.

In addition to the ordinary customs and levies there was a sales and transportation tax on all items consumed in the province, or en route through the province.

This tax might equal twelve per cent of the market value of the goods. There was also a special land tax which all who possessed real estate were forced to pay on demand. Perhaps the most unpopular tax was that which was called "capitation tax." Literally, a tax was levied against a man for possessing a head! Without intending any pun, but to call attention to the ruthless brutality of that day, we need only say that the penalty for failing to pay the capitation tax was decapitation. A citizen of that land paid the government for the privilege of having a head, or he lost his head to the government.

Against that background it must be remembered that Judea was a conquered province. Taxes were paid by the children of Israel with extreme reluctance, to a conqueror whom they hated. Such commerce of the country as was not in the hands of Jews was largely in the hands of Greeks. The Greeks of antiquity are proverbial for shrewd deceit and business sharpness. There is an old proverb of the East which says, "One Armenian can skin three Jews in a business trade, but a Greek can best four Armenians."

So the task of Matthew was not simple. He must be able to detect fraud and evasion instantly. Every trick, every subterfuge, and every wile that fraud and dishonesty could suggest to an embittered people who counted it a worthy thing to defraud a despotic government, was known to the man Matthew. *The honesty of Jesus Christ*

was never more manifested than when He picked such a man to be a witness of the strange and startling events of His Messianic ministry!

Could Matthew have been deceived by a demagogue?

Could fraudulent miracles and fake healings have escaped the shrewdness of a man with *this* background and training?

The sincerity of Jesus Christ and the credibility of Matthew both stand attested by a simple and honest examination of the character and integrity of this one witness.

As we read the record of Matthew it strikes us at once that he wrote with conviction of events that he had personally witnessed. He stresses facts of peculiar interest to Israel, and therefore it is generally conceded that Matthew wrote for Jewish readers.

He brings out the fact that Jesus fulfilled the prophetic pattern established for the coming Messiah!

He stresses His lineage through the Davidic line.

He calls attention to the fulfillment of the prophecy that Messiah would be born in Bethlehem.

He quotes the prophecies in their exact rendition, as when he uses Isaiah 7:14, and states that it was completely fulfilled in the miraculous birth of the Savior.

The history and career of Matthew are the most striking, unshakeable evidence of the integrity of the New

Testament witnesses that modern man could demand. In any court of law he would qualify as a witness.

So here we have in the first case, a shrewd and able observer who wrote an eyewitness account of the events upon which Christianity proves her case. There is no present way in which he can be refuted. His material is so detailed and specific as to admit of cross-examination. This cross-examination has been applied to his writings in an exhaustive manner by the bitterest enemies of Christianity. As a result, we *could* rest the case for Christianity upon Matthew's record alone.

The law of Israel was similar to that of our modern day in demanding a certain multiplicity of witnesses. Jesus, well versed in that law, never evaded its just demands, but honestly sought to make His mission clear, resting His case on such evidence as would stand every test of man's devising. In fact, He himself quoted that law when He said, ". . . in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established."

In conformity to this legal demand Jesus was always careful to provide Himself with the requisite number of witnesses. Thus when Jesus ascended the mount of transfiguration to be glorified in the eyes of His apostles, and to talk with the heavenly witnesses concerning His forthcoming death on Calvary, He took with Him Peter, and James, and John. When He entered into the chamber of Jairus' daughter to raise the maid from the dead,

He had with Him the requisite and legal number of witnesses. His own sense of fairness, coupled with His desire to present to the world an unimpeachable case for salvation through His Name and grace, led Him to establish *twelve* witnesses as the number qualified to establish the fact of His resurrection.

Therefore when the faithless Judas was driven to suicide by the pangs of remorse, the remaining eleven apostles sought one who had witnessed the resurrection to fill up the required number.

Matthew, then, is ably buttressed by sustaining witnesses. It would be profitable for the reader if time and space permitted an exhaustive study of each of the other three who wrote their own eyewitness record of the events dealt with by Matthew. Instead, we shall bring a brief and concise summary of those whose testimony is equally authoritative.

In the early days of the foundation of the Christian Church there was a man by the name of Barnabas who was himself an apostle, and at whose home Christians often assembled. Paul the Apostle was a constant visitor there and was a frequent companion of the Apostle Barnabas. This Barnabas had a sister whose name was Mary, who in turn had a son. The Hebrew name of this son was John, but as a gesture to the Greek populace, John, son of Mary, assumed the Greek name Mark, conforming to a common custom of his day.

According to the reliable and credible traditions of that day, Mark, surrounded by the Christian influences that centered in the home of his mother, was brought into contact with Peter the Apostle, and by him was converted to Christianity. This young man, John Mark, wrote the record of the events of the life of Jesus Christ as the amanuensis for Peter. There is no historical reason for doubting that the second Gospel, though written by Mark, was transcribed in his stenographic character, and contains the record that Peter refers to in his later epistle. Certainly, no man of his generation was more capable of acting as historian of the events that he transcribed, than was young Mark. He was steeped in Christian evidence and was able to check the accuracy of Peter's dictation. Mark had been the companion of Barnabas and Paul on their journey from Jerusalem to Antioch. He had also been the companion of Timothy, and journeyed to Rome at Paul's own request. History assures us that Mark also accompanied Barnabas to Cyprus, and was with Peter in Asia. Later in his life Mark resided in Egypt while Peter was at Babylon, which is now part of the city of Cairo. It is established on highly credible evidence that Mark dwelt at Alexandria as bishop of that region, and the Coptic Church of Egypt claims its descent from the ministry of Mark. So although he acted purely as an amanuensis, he had abun-

dant opportunity to investigate the case of which he wrote.

Be it remembered that no modern critic can so qualify. If it is objected that Mark should be discarded on the grounds that he records only events that were reported to him, how much greater should be the objection to the opinions of a critic of the twentieth century, who is many hundreds of years further removed from the event than was Mark, the historian.

Undoubtedly he wrote for Gentiles, and especially for Romans. His manuscript is interspersed with explanatory notes which would be utterly useless and needless in a document written for Jewish readers. He introduces numerous phrases from the Latin language, and the united opinion and testimony of the ancients is that this second Gospel was written for Romans to read.

It used to be objected that the Gospel of Mark was merely a redaction of the writings of Matthew. No capable scholar of our generation would attempt now to sustain such an erroneous idea in scholarly debate. Mark wrote independently of Matthew, and wrote at Peter's dictation. Thus he frequently deviates from Matthew in minor particulars, such as the order of time and the arrangement of facts. Matthew closes the Olivet discourse with the parable or prophetic account of Christ's kingly judgment on the nations because of their treatment of Israel. The last words are a solemn injunction of ever-

lasting punishment for the wicked, and everlasting life for the righteous. Mark, however, closes his account of the discourse with the famous admonition to watch. Mark has incorporated into the Gospel that bears his name many minor incidents not given by Matthew in his account of the same events. Conversely, Mark omits certain matters that Matthew considers important to the narrative.

It must be strictly noted here that there is internal evidence of the lack of collusion between these two men in the giving of the testimony. Peter, also an eyewitness as was Matthew, tells how he saw the same events. In these two records there is no contradiction, just independent observation and reporting such as any skilled jurist would expect from honest and accurate witnesses. If Matthew and Mark agreed in precise exactitude on every detail of their testimony, collusion would be apparent to any intelligent observer. It is just this minor independence of testimony that lends the most tremendous value to the records of these two men.

So also is the case with the Gospel as given by Luke. Luke was undoubtedly a Gentile. Converted in his early youth to Judaism, he, too, became learned in the Hebrew Scriptures and was thus prepared for his conversion to Christianity. He was undoubtedly influenced by Paul the Apostle in their intimate contacts and fellowships. He journeyed often with Paul on his missionary enter-

prises, and was his companion at Rome in the two years' imprisonment there. It cannot be questioned that Luke also wrote his Gospel for Gentile readers, but while Mark wrote for the Roman populace, Luke seems to have aimed his style and record to appeal especially to the Greek culture and philosophy.

Christian antiquities in their most reliable sources bear record to the fact that Luke did so write.

In dedicating his document to a Greek, he follows the Gentile fashion of tracing the lineage of Jesus back to Adam.

He incorporates data valuable to Gentiles but familiarly known to Jews throughout the entire length of his manuscript.

He also follows the Gentile custom of marking eras of history by the reign of emperors.

There are many, many unique matters introduced in the Gospel of Luke, all calculated to influence Gentiles to turn to Christ. Among such there is the parable of the publican and the Pharisee. There is the beautiful parable of the lost piece of silver, and the superb message of the prodigal son. With master strokes he makes a strong appeal to the Greek mind by delineating in detail the visit of Christ to the home of Zaccheus. It is Luke who introduces with tender passion and mighty power the pardon of the penitent thief.

In many trials of fact, it is customary in the courts of our day to introduce expert testimony. In anticipation of this demand of the law of our time the Holy Spirit presents the evidence of a physician. It is not only *stated* in the New Testament that Luke was a physician, but the fact is manifested in many internal evidences and proofs in the third Gospel. Luke unconsciously displays a deep familiarity with the medical terms of his day and time. He introduces evidences of ecology. There are unconscious introductions of symptomology and such minor details as only a physician would count important to the narrative.

Dr. Luke made a particular study of the miracles of healing as a medical man. Being alive in that generation and having opportunity to examine not only the objects of these cures but also the witnesses to the events, he qualifies as an authority. In a word, he ought to know, and no living man can dispute his authority.

By way of illustration, we remember an interesting conversation with a young interne that we met in a Detroit hospital. With the calm assurance of those whose diploma is still damp with the ink of signatures, he stated that with the authority of a medical education he rejected on scientific grounds all the miracles reputed to have been performed by Christ.

When we questioned him concerning some of these miracles he was so hazy on their details that we pressed

our examination to the point where he finally confessed that he had never read the New Testament record of those details!

The question of authority resolves into a simple proposition, namely: Whose opinion shall be accepted by the honest student of our day? Shall we heed Luke, the investigator who was alive and made a scientific inquiry into these events, or shall we listen to the modern skeptical "scholar" who is confessedly ignorant of the details wherewith he deals?

Luke states his authority for writing, when he professes to have had a "*perfect understanding of all things from their very beginning.*" The phrase that is so translated in our English version is a Koine phrase of specific and peculiar meaning. According to the authority of James Hope Moulton, the technical meaning of Luke's phrase is simply "first-hand information." That is to say, he was an eyewitness of the events with which he deals.

We have no detailed historical record of Luke's conversion. According to the best known sources, it probably resulted from the resurrection of Jesus Christ and his own close study of the matters wherewith he deals in his historical document. In respect to Luke's testimony, may we quote this law of evidence:

"The results of inquiries made under competent public authority concerning matters in which the public are

concerned, possess every legal attribute of an inquisition and as such are legally admissible as evidence in a court of justice." ("Phillips on Evidence," P. 95).

In the light of this legal procedure, Luke's strong title to credence is unshakeable. His narrative is the work of a contemporary historian. It is the careful inquiry made by a man of science, intelligence, and education, concerning matters he is particularly competent to investigate. Much of his material consists of the personal observations of a physician concerning matters in his own field. This inquiry resulted in a written testimony drawn up for a prominent person in high public position whom it was neither easy nor safe to deceive. Consequently we have a document "possessing all the moral and legal attributes of an inquest of facts entitled to be adduced as original, competent, and satisfactory evidence of the matter dealt with," as Greenleaf says. Of all the Gospels, none is more authoritative, credible, and convincing than that of the Gospel of Luke.

In equally brief fashion it is a matter of great satisfaction to glance at the authority of the fourth witness, who bears the name of John. This writer was a son of Zebedee, who seems to have been a wealthy fisherman of Bethsaida. The family owned their own vessels and had hired servants in their employ. It is evident from the contents of the narrative that John possessed great

influence with the high priest and therefore he must have moved in high political and social circles.

John was the youngest of the apostles and is referred to as the most beloved. He had an intimate and close association with the Savior that admitted him to scenes and episodes that the others sometimes missed. The fact that John's mother was a follower of Jesus, coupled with the manner in which Christ committed His mother to John's care at Calvary, testifies to an intimacy that was unusual in the extreme.

John was with Peter and James at the resurrection of Jairus' daughter.

Again he was with these two apostles on the mount of transfiguration.

In Gethsemane the Savior took these same three men to comfort Him in His hour of agony.

John was the first at the sepulchre following the resurrection, and was present at the several appearances of Jesus when He came forth from the dead.

The value of any testimony turns on the authority of the witness and his knowledge of the subject. John is the greatest possible authority that the world could expect or demand. Is there any living man who can refute the record of John the Apostle? Not in the eyes of an honest court, legally constituted, and proceeding to its

conclusions under the exact demand of the laws of evidence!

But the motives of a witness also enter into the question of the extent of his integrity. It is proper to ask why John wrote. In an honest, straightforward, sincere fashion he tells us in these words:

“But these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.”

The purpose of John is thus honestly expressed. At peril of his own life he wrote to convince you that Christ was the Son of God and your Saviour, that you might escape eternal judgment.

Therefore when refutation of John's testimony is attempted, it is only fair to ask the underlying reason for that refutation. If John wrote that we might believe and be saved, then it is a self-apparent fact that those who dispute John and set aside his testimony, do so that we might believe *not* and so perish eternally!

Nowhere else in modern thinking is the dishonesty of criticism so blatantly apparent. Disguising their purposes with honeyed words and posing in the guise of friends, the ministers of Satan would win us to a rejection of Christ, that we might condemn ourselves to eternal loss.

Let the reader ponder the clear significance of John's honesty as contrasted with the dishonesty of his critics.

The honest straightforwardness of John is completely wanting among those who seek to set aside his testimony.

John was the last of the apostles to write. Some time between the years 68 and 98, the man who knew the most about the life and ministry of the Savior wrote an independent account of those events. Not contradicting the other three in any detail or incident, he nevertheless adds additional information that is highly valuable to an honest inquirer. He was evidently moved to write his record to supply certain facts that were omitted by the other three writers, and hence he *supplements* their testimony.

To show conclusively the value of that testimony, may we note three points of the law of evidence: (1) In trials of fact the proper inquiry is not whether it is possible that the testimony may be false, but whether there is sufficient probability that it is true. (2) A proposition of fact is proved when its truth is established by competent and satisfactory evidence. (3) In the absence of circumstances which generate suspicion, *every witness is to be presumed credible until the contrary is shown, the burden of impeaching his credibility lying upon the objector.* In the light of these legal demands which we shall later examine in detail, we have in the first four books of the New Testament, *not* four Gospels, but one Gospel presented by four independent witnesses,

whose integrity is attested and whose evidence cannot be refuted.

It is highly probable that their record is true, as they died to defend their thesis.

They have produced competent and satisfactory evidence, according to all the demands of honest court procedure.

Since no single circumstance has ever been established that generates suspicion against them or their testimony, their credibility is established until such time as the objector can impeach it with overwhelming proof.

Let him who can do so step forth and produce this proof! In the interim, the four witnesses are sheltered behind the shield of the law—and their record is final.

*The Amazing Record of
Critical Injustice*



CHAPTER III

THE AMAZING RECORD OF CRITICAL INJUSTICE

WE CLOSED our preceding chapter by calling attention to the fact that the Apostle John completes his record of the life of Jesus Christ with a sincere affidavit of veracity. John's testimony is given under an oath more sacred and binding than any ever offered in a court organized for the purposes of human justice. Standing where the shadows of eternity are forming across the immediate future, John is looking back on the revelation of Christianity which he saw with his own eyes, and is looking ahead to immediate entrance into heaven, and reunion with the Christ upon whose bosom he had leaned. John writes in the hallowed certainty that before the ink has more than dried upon his record, in all probability he, the writer, will stand before the judgment bar of Almighty God to give account of the things that he had written. In the face of that solemn fact, John closes his testimony with an oath that is unusually sacred, stating that he has writ-

ten and given an accurate and complete presentation of evidence concerning matters with which he was unusually familiar.

We have noted that to this affidavit of veracity there was added a singularly honest statement as to his motive for writing. John's purpose in writing was that men by faith in Christ might be saved from sin and enter into life everlasting. We feel that it is not improper to raise the question as to the actuating motives of higher criticism. When men offer themselves as expert witnesses before any human court of man's organizing, they expect to be cross-examined on three general grounds. First, they must be able to maintain their credibility and knowledge as touching the matter to which they testify. Secondly, they must be able to maintain against the assault of the opposition the integrity of their character and conduct. Finally, they must be able to uphold the purity of their motives and give a reasonable explanation of their interest in the case. In the previous study we have seen how John did these things. It is therefore only just that the enemies of Christianity, who disguise themselves under the scholarly title of higher criticism, should meet this three-fold test when they offer themselves voluntarily as witnesses against the truth of the New Testament documents.

If John told the truth, why do the critics bother to write?

If the critics differ from John concerning the evidences that would save the immortal souls of lost men, then their purpose in testifying must be the opposite of the purpose of John.

We repeat, John wrote that men might be saved; therefore the critics write that men might be lost!

With no intent to sound harsh, but only with the purpose that an honest and fair examination may be conducted, we state and will later maintain that the honesty of the enemies of Christianity is at least highly questionable. Certainly their conduct is open to suspicion. None of them are open, sincere, and clear in their statements as were John and the other writers of the Christian evidence.

We have also previously showed how the entire New Testament record is sustained by the laws of evidence. To refresh the reader's mind, we repeat one such here for emphasis:

“In the absence of circumstances which generate suspicion, every witness is to be presumed credible until the contrary is shown, the burden of impeaching his credibility lying on the objector.”

In the light of this accepted procedure of legal practice, two things are clearly manifest. First, the Gospel evidence is unimpeachable, and secondly, the record of criticism is most certainly open to suspicion in that they have never even established a ground for impeaching the credibility of the witnesses, but have dogmatically rejected historical evidence to suit their own dark purposes.

Further, this rule of evidence has been so universally ignored as to prove the bitter injustice by which the Gospel writers have been treated by infidels of all classes for many past generations. We have established in our study of the laws of evidence that these records are acceptable as to accuracy and unimpeachable as to credibility. The church of Jesus Christ, possessing her records from the age of the apostles to the present hour, is under no obligation to establish to any further degree the credibility of these Gospel witnesses. Foolish Christians have silently acquiesced in the violation of this rule of evidence, in that they have unwisely allowed criticism to thrust upon Christianity the burden of proving on every occasion the value and reliability of the witness of the apostles. We cannot repeat too often that, as the old saw expresses it, "The shoe is on the other foot." If the church of Christ would unite solidly in a demand that criticism first legally refute the evidence that we possess

in the New Testament text, the battle would die in a hurry.

Why should the unsupported word of Professor Blank outweigh the enormous mass and weight of our historic records? If the entire world of scholarship should unite to express as a unanimous opinion, a decision against the credibility of the New Testament, no court would consider their unsupported claims against the weight and value of the great documentation of Christianity.

The fact of law is to the contrary! It may surprise the casual reader to learn that the unsupported word of any one Christian on questions touching Christianity is of more legal value than that of any non-believer, no matter how learned the latter may be.

This statement is based upon two facts of law. The first we have already briefly touched upon, "that all members of a community are presumed to be privy to matters of common interest to that community." As an illustration, in case there was a legal controversy over the affairs of some municipality, a citizen of that municipality could give testimony that was more weighty and effective than could a man from any other section of the union. In matters pertaining to American government the American citizen is presumed to have a more authoritative knowledge than is a citizen of Canada or France.

This demand of law fits in thoroughly with the statement of the Holy Scriptures that "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God . . . neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." The Christian is one who has emigrated to a new kingdom called the Kingdom of God. No individual who is a foreigner to that kingdom can possibly know the conditions of life clearly understood by those who are citizens of that kingdom, and who have achieved that understanding through experience. Therefore, if a question pertaining to Christianity should be tried by a duly constituted court of equity, the opinion of a practicing, confessing Christian would outweigh the statements and opinions of any number of infidels or non-Christians that could be assembled against him!

In the second place, in courts of chancery or, to use the more common term, equity, the oath of a single witness is never allowed to outweigh the testimony of a defendant. If the most learned critic in the known world were to accuse the Christian Gospel of error as touching historic fact, the Christian, being the defendant in the case, is accepted as the more authoritative witness and his unsupported oath outweighs that of the plaintiff. To this extent the Christian church has long been deprived of equity in its dealings with the unregenerate scholarship of the modern world. Quoting again from Thayer,

“Cases on Evidence,” we call the reader’s attention to the refutation in equity of the stock argument concerning the fact that Jesus Christ Himself has written none of His Gospel, and therefore the Christian records depend entirely upon the memory of the apostles. In the noted case, cited by Thayer, of Glynn versus the Bank of England, the Lord Chancellor sitting on this case in equity calls attention to the fact,

“It would be of mischievous consequence to lay down a different rule of evidence in equity from what it would be at law. The rules of evidence in general are the same in both courts as to the matter of fact; and this is a demand at law.”

Concerning this famous case above cited, the Lord Chancellor proceeds with this statement,

“The rule is that a man cannot make evidence for himself. What he writes or says for himself cannot be evidence of his right, and consequently cannot be for his representatives claiming in his right and place.”

With that wisdom inherent because of His deity, the Lord Jesus Christ anticipated the weakness of a case drawn up autobiographically. Any evidence written by Christ Himself concerning His own claims in the matter of Christianity does not have the force and power of the evidence of independent eyewitnesses written in His behalf.

If we might digress from this thought before we reach its conclusion, we would point out the humor of this matter in regard to criticism. The gentlemen who humbly denominate themselves higher critical scholars should read this rule, namely, "that a man cannot make evidence for himself." As the famous Disraeli once remarked about an opponent, "He relies upon his memory for his wit and his imagination for his facts." All the writings that higher criticism can pour forth from the subsidized presses of infidelity are utterly valueless as evidence for their case, and carry no power of conviction, being useless under the burden of the fact that "a man cannot make evidence for himself." This is the only sort of evidence higher criticism has ever presented, namely—such as the critics manufacture for themselves.

To return, then, to the force of this legal decision, we read further in the decision in the case of Glynn versus the Bank of England, that the Lord Chancellor called into consultation Lord Raymond, who was chief justice of the King's Bench. They then uttered as a dictum which has never been set aside as far as legal records go, a rather surprising fact. We give it in these exact words:

"It is true there are several instances where such books *entered by servants* and used to make the entries have been admitted at law, they being dead."

Specifically, the set of books kept by an individual with the purpose of preferring a case for himself would be questioned in a court of equity if unsupported by any other testimony. Conversely, a set of books kept *by employees* of such a person who are presumed to have no purpose of gain in falsifying such a record, are accepted on their face value by courts of chancery. Therefore the critical procedure has deprived the Christian church of its clear rights in equity. The writing apostles thus have the same legal standing that would be accorded to book-keepers or accountants, whose books were offered in court as evidence. Jesus did not write His own claims and offer His own defence, but brings forth the record of men whose specific function was keeping those records! Had the Son of God written of Himself, as the critics, in their ignorance of the rules of equity demand, the record would have been of no legal value, as "a man cannot make evidence for himself."

Aside from this the New Testament writers have also been deprived of the common assumption of charity dealt with in our previous discussion. This is the deepest injustice, legally speaking, that criticism has perpetrated upon the church of Christ and the individual believer. If it be true that "the judgments of law are the assumption of charity," infidelity has violated the very

letter and spirit, as well as the ethics incorporated in the law of evidence.

We would therefore argue that the critical procedure is not only illegal and unjust, but is also unscholarly. Men who pride themselves on the depth and breadth of their learning to the extent that they can set aside the unanimous testimony of capable eyewitnesses, should be thoroughly familiar with the laws of evidence before they assail the New Testament documents before the court of public opinion. The alleged scholarship of higher criticism, however, if carefully examined, turns out to be the dogmatic assumptions of men whose self-satisfaction in their own learning is their primary claim to recognition. As a result of this illegal, unjust, and unscholarly procedure, certain specific and definite acts of injustice must be laid at the door of criticism.

First, suspicion has been directed at the New Testament writers as a *body* by this unlawful procedure. Criticism treats the entire New Testament as the production of a united body of men who have conspired to fabricate a fraud. Cross-examining the witnesses on the basis of their written records, however, we find that they often disagree among themselves as to minor details which they as individuals consider essential, thus preserving their individual identity. So Paul the Apostle battled manfully against Peter the Apostle, concerning a ques-

tion of conformity to the Mosaic law at the expense of surrendering a principle of grace. Paul tells in his own record how he contended with Peter concerning this matter, and there was a wide difference of opinion between these two men.

Indeed, so deep was the disagreement of some of these New Testament witnesses on certain matters, that on one occasion an evangelistic party of apostles split up and went their several ways, each to follow his own conscience and understanding of the Christian procedure. Yet they remained a unit in their appeal to the world to receive Christ as a Savior. There was no conspiracy resulting in the fabrication of a fraud, but rather honest and sincere men seeking to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit according to their understanding of the Christian doctrine.

Thus these men, in the eyes of the law, cannot be dealt with as a body. Rather, legally they become independent historians. Therefore in court procedure their records and testimonies must be dealt with on the basis of their individual methods. If these independent testimonies coincide in their main details, the court rules that the case is established beyond question, unless fresh evidence is later adduced to show that these witnesses falsified in fact in their original presentation.

It must be noted also that these independent historians did not sit down after mature consultation, to write the record of Christianity in collaboration. They wrote from different sections of the world and at different periods of time. The writing of their evidence has a time-spread of approximately fifty years. During that time there is no slightest proof that they ever collaborated, even by casual discussion on the details of the records each was writing, had written, or planned to write.

In the light of this fact not only the law but the principles of literature entitle each independent historian to the support of any or all of the others. As an exact parallel, the historian Josephus, whose traditional date is from 37 A.D. to 95 A.D., is often compared to Tacitus, who is about twenty years later, namely, from 55 A.D. to 117. In innumerable cases, Josephus is called into court in support of Tacitus, and vice versa. When Tacitus agrees in details that are introduced by Josephus, then Josephus is vindicated. When Tacitus in turn is questioned, Josephus is cited in his defense and aid. In like manner Polybius, who lived from 205 B.C. to 123, is brought forward as a supporting witness for Livy, who came more than a hundred years later, namely, 59 B.C. to 17 A.D.

Nobody questions the honesty and equity of such citations. No scholar casts doubt upon the accuracy of ei-

ther historian because he ignores certain details counted important by a predecessor or successor, but the independent narratives of these separate historians are woven into one complete presentation of the history which they record. Why is this simple principle, recognized in law and history, refused in the criticism of New Testament evidence? Why does criticism depart from the laws of equity and right procedure to treat the New Testament as a dishonest fabrication produced by conniving conspirators in perpetrating a hoax to defraud future ages? The question reduces the procedure of criticism to the basis of absurdity.

Equity, then, would demand that the testimony of each New Testament writer be dealt with individually. Unless that testimony can be overthrown in a manner that has never even been attempted up to the present writing, those records must be accepted as accurate and credible until disproved by the objector. This the objector has never yet succeeded in doing.

Another demand of equity overlooked in the bitter campaign of injustice directed against the New Testament text, is that the common law applied to historians should prevail also in this inquiry. That common law may be divided into two statements. First, "the silence of a writer on one detail shall not deduct from his general veracity." To illustrate this point, an historian might be interested in depicting the outcome of a great

battle. Pressing on to the conclusion that he desires to make in the course of his narrative, he may leave out certain details essential to a full comprehension of the battle, but which are only incidental to the historian's purpose in writing. His silence on those details does not in any sense detract from the value of his conclusions, or the authoritative nature of his work. *As touching those points on which he is not silent*, his evidence is acceptable until disproved.

The second point is that "the record of one historian must be admitted in corroboration of other historians who deal with the same fact, matter, or period." To apply these rules to our New Testament narratives, we might note that in the record of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, Matthew adds certain details that Luke ignores. Luke in turn introduces some incidents of which Matthew says nothing. In this same manner Mark and John are silent on points covered by the other two, as they in turn each say nothing of incidents and details noted by Mark and John. However, all four narrators *agree upon the fact* of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, as God's means of saving a world from its sin. The silence of one of the Gospel writers on any single detail of the crucifixion does not detract from his general veracity, in a legal sense of that word.

Further, the record of any one of the other three or all combined must be admitted in corroboration of the statements of the fourth concerning the crucifixion. This rule applies to every section of the entire New Testament, as well as to all the events and incidents written by any of the narrators. This procedure, common to law and scholarship, is presumed to be known to all men of education and learning. The fact that it has been ignored or even reversed in its application to the New Testament text, makes of the objector to Christianity a special pleader laboring to establish a falsehood! The charge made against the New Testament writers, that they have collaborated to perpetrate a fraud, rebounds in the face of criticism to smear this school with the brush wherewith they had hoped to tar the apostles.

The great strength of Christianity is thus manifested in two unmistakable ways. Primarily, Christianity is attested because it has survived all this injustice and prejudice, and is established today upon a firmer foundation than it has ever possessed in all past time. But even of more importance is the fact that we Christians not only are *willing*, but also are *able* to establish the credibility of our writers and their records.

We hasten to remind the reader that legally we are under no compulsion to do so. However, it is a delight

to us to show the strength of our case. In the language of law, we are willing to forsake our impregnable position as the reus, and become the actor in the case whenever Christian testimony is assailed. *Undoubtedly Christian apologetics constitute the strongest body of evidence as touching any single subject in human possession.* This evidence was compiled by eyewitnesses who had nothing to gain in falsifying their record. In fact, the integrity and honesty of these witnesses is manifested by the fact that they died unusually painful deaths rather than change a word or a statement in the facts that they had recorded! It is clearly evident that the argument of personal gain cannot enter into the question here, for humanly speaking, the writers would have been immeasurably advanced in their own personal fortunes by denying the facts which they wrote.

Instead, they beggared themselves, forfeiting estate and freedom. They languished in jail and perished by violence for the privilege of testifying to the truth of their statements. To repudiate the record that they have left is to confess ignorance of the entire body of evidence incorporated in the sources of Christian apologetics. So certain are we that the record of the New Testament can be sustained, that we are willing now in this present inquiry to forsake the role of reus and take upon ourselves

the position of the actor and demonstrate the impregnable foundation of the Christian revelation.

In preparation for this step, however, we return to a citation of law. The fact of law that we notice at this point is given in these words:

“The credit due to the testimony of witnesses depends upon: firstly, their honesty; secondly, their ability; thirdly, their number and the consistency of their testimony; fourthly, the conformity of their testimony with experience; and fifthly, the coincidence of their testimony with collateral circumstances.”

As we proceed with this study we will try the writers of the New Testament text by this five-fold demand of the law of evidence. We do not wish to descend to the low depths of comedy, or else we would dare the critic to subject himself to this five-fold test, and see the credibility of his theoretical deductions in the light of the demands of law. But because the writers of the New Testament are honest, able, numerous, and consistent, because their testimony conforms with experience as well as with circumstance, we dare to subject them to the acid test of the law governing the presentation of witnesses. This is perhaps one of the most thrilling studies that a student of apologetics can make. At the end of that study the honest investigator will find his personal salvation. No man can come with an unprejudiced desire to know the truth of the matter and follow this highway

of investigation to its logical conclusion without falling in with the purpose of John's writing and accepting Christ as a Savior.

These men, who are the New Testament writers, wrote primarily to declare that Christ died to save sinners. They incorporated in their testimony a basic fact of equal importance, namely, that Jesus did not stay dead, but that He rose again from the grave. Upon this historical fact they predicate their premise, that only through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ can men find heaven. Their conclusion, vindicated by history, is that many do so find redemption, thus submitting their record to the acid test of human experience.

Now, aside from the presumption of charity that is resident in the law, how credible is their story? If you will allow the personal testimony of the author to creep in, he would like to say that this is undoubtedly the most important question of the hour. After twenty-five years of study in apologetics, and after a careful study of all that has been written on both sides of this question, the author is so certain of the credibility of the Gospel witnesses that he is willing to base his hope of eternal life upon the outcome of such a study.

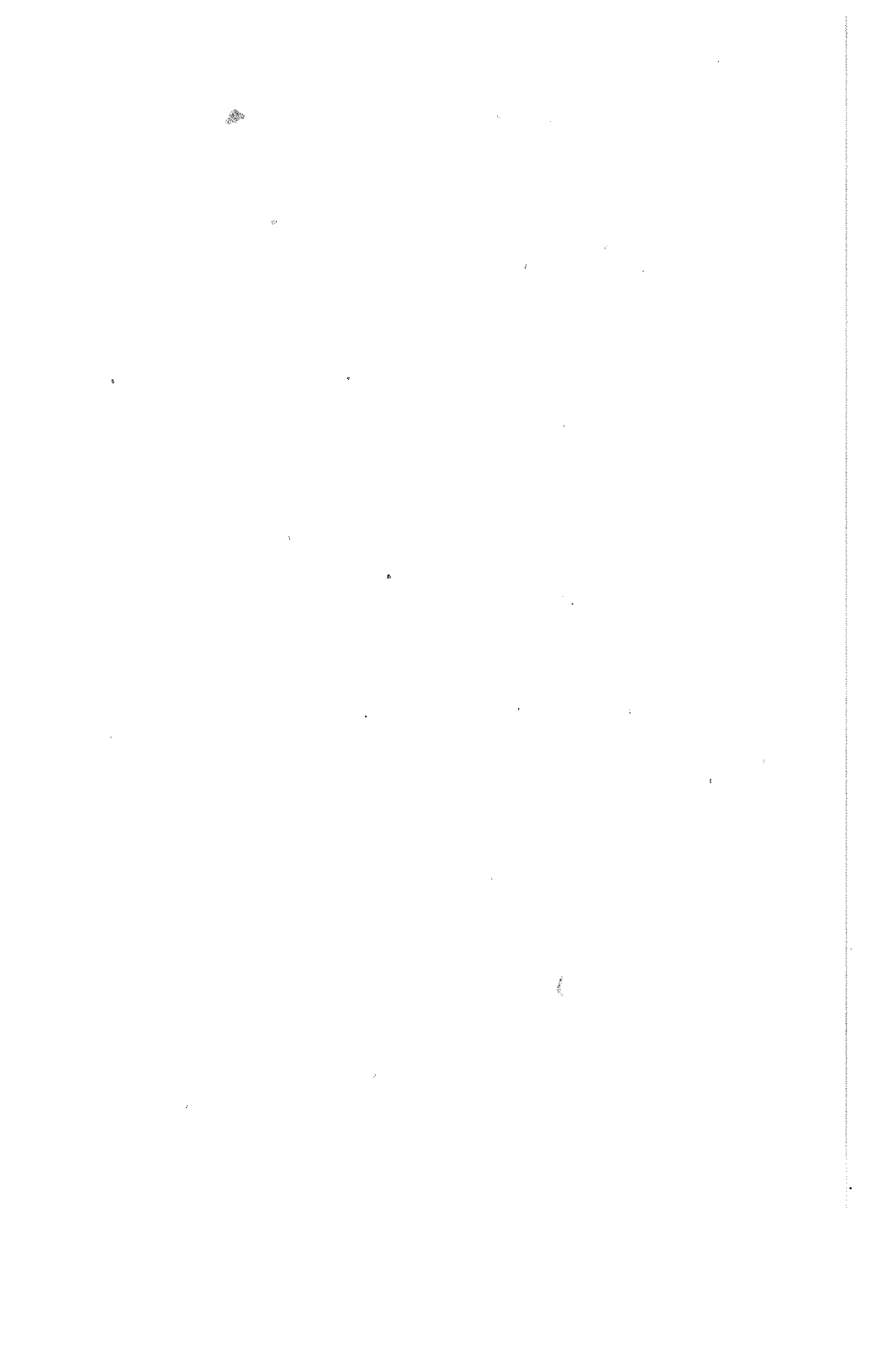
The whole world that is alive to the issue is asking, "Is the Gospel record credible?" If it is credible, there

is salvation for the lost in and through the redeeming work of Jesus Christ.

If the New Testament record is a fraud, there is no hope of heaven for the living or the dead.

In our last chapter we will present the evidence of the credibility of these writers and by this means show the infallible foundation of Christian revelation.

*The Firm Foundation of the
Christian Revelation*



CHAPTER IV

THE FIRM FOUNDATION OF THE CHRISTIAN REVELATION

FOR many centuries believing men and women have been content to rest their hope of salvation upon a set of documents commonly called the New Testament. The word "testament" or "covenant" is a familiar term in our legal parlance, and refers to a document known to laymen under the term of "will." The name derives from the fact that when the Lord Jesus Christ left this earth to share the throne of God in heaven, there to abide until the time of His return to inaugurate His millennial reign, He bequeathed to mankind, on certain conditions, the priceless gift of eternal life. Jesus Christ is the testator of salvation and those who accept the condition of His last will and testament become the heirs of eternity.

It is an established principle of law that items of value bequeathed by a testator must be accepted on the terms of the testament, *or else all interest in them must be surrendered.* Honest Christians, who have ever been actuated by principles of honor and integrity, have so

accepted the gift of God, which is eternal life, according to the clear demands of the last will and testament of His Son, Jesus Christ. There is, however, in our day a combined group of usurpers who would steal from the natural heirs the benefits of eternal life, and who denominate themselves "higher critics." They unite to scoff at such simplicity as is manifested by honest Christians, who seek to obey the conditions set forth in the documents that guarantee us a spiritual possession. They deride the simplicity of our obedience to the record by applying to us such terms as "child-like faith" and "ignorant credulity."

This group of men, by their own statement, set themselves "to investigate in scholarly fashion" the New Testament claims. It is not exactly clear just why these claims needed investigation. People who come with honesty of purpose to the perusal of those documents, and who yield their hearts in obedience to God Almighty by accepting the demands levied upon them by those writings, have ever been content with the result. Only those who reject the Lord Jesus Christ as the incarnation of God and the sufficient Saviour of men have found it necessary to dispose of the demands of the New Testament, in order that they might themselves be justified in their infidelity.

For this reason this alleged scholarly investigation was begun under the prejudice of minds which had pre-conceived the untrustworthiness of the subject matter they were investigating. This fact, namely, that the investigation was conducted by men who were enemies of the faith, and who dealt arbitrarily, by their own rules, with the text of the Scripture, makes the result of these investigations even more remarkable. After generations of the most unscrupulous scrutiny the text still stands unimpaired! The methods used to deride and question the credibility of the evidence of Christianity in the New Testament can only be defined as vicious. Yet that text and those evidences emerge from this "trial by combat" with their armor undented and their position unshaken.

In the course of these studies we have been investigating the value and authority of these evidences under the clear demands of the legal code of our generation. In this investigation we have so far found the New Testament unimpeachable. To conclude our study of the text in the light of the law of evidence, we present the last legal demand that we shall study in this brief presentation. For the sake of emphasis we repeat the last cited law of evidence that we dealt with in the previous study.

"The credit due to the testimony of witnesses depends upon: firstly, their honesty; secondly, their ability; third-

ly, their number and the consistency of their testimony; fourthly, the conformity of their testimony with experience; and fifthly, the coincidence of their testimony with collateral circumstances.”

It is at once apparent to those who have studied the laws of evidence, and are even casually acquainted with the tremendous body of information and fact contained in the pages of the New Testament, that a book could be written upon each of these five points. We shall, however, limit ourselves in the span of this present chapter to a brief consideration of this five-fold premise and bring our presentation to a speedy conclusion.

To one who enters for the first time into the question of the credibility of Christian evidence, it might not seem safe to try the apostles and their writings by these tests. May we remind the reader that we are not concerned in establishing a case that has no merit, value, nor historical standing. If it is possible to discredit the writing apostles by any honest, legal, and historical means, we shall be the first to cry, “Away with them!” If we have been deceived by the witnesses from whom we have inherited the New Testament text, we are of all men most miserable. If our faith in Christ is good for this life alone, we might as well have lived among any other false religious influence, as far as eternity is concerned. Therefore with boldness the Christian should face the issue and determine the credibility and value

of his evidences before he trusts his eternal welfare upon their foundation.

As to the honesty of the writers who appear to testify for the life and work of Jesus Christ, it is only legal and just to remark that they are entitled to the benefit of an acknowledged human trait. This is, namely, that "men are apt to speak truth when they have no prevailing motive or inducement to the contrary." In the eyes of the law this presumption is universal. It is legally applicable even to men who are objects of suspicion, or whose interests are best served by coloring their own testimony. Whatever a man states under oath on the witness stand is presumed to be fair, truthful, honest, and accurate, unless it can be shown by positive evidence to have been otherwise.

In the case of Hamilton versus the People, the question of a witness' reputation for truth and veracity was raised, and the issue of this trial turned upon the credibility of this witness. The questions as put to the impeaching and supporting witnesses related first to the reputation for truth and veracity of the assailed witness, and secondly, whether from that known reputation they would believe him under oath. In the course of this noted appeal it was decided and settled that a court is not bound to disregard a witness *entirely*, even if he fal-

sifies in some matters! A witness, who for his own self-interest may color his testimony in minor details, *may still be telling the truth as to the major fact upon which he gives evidence.*

Again, in the case of Holt versus Moulton it was sought to discredit a witness by proof of his general delinquency of character, but the court decided, "In attempting to impeach the character of a witness for veracity, the inquiries must be confined solely to his general reputation for truth." Under the rule by which we are proceeding, the honesty of a witness is *presumed*, and he is given the benefit of the doubt unless actual evidence can be advanced to show that he was untruthful in his statement of fact.

If this is true of the men of our day, how much more so does it apply to the writing apostles? In the first place, we defy any living person to prove by any legal or credible evidence that the writers of the New Testament were lacking in honesty of purpose or veracity of statement. In their voluminous writings they have never been convicted of one single minor untruth. The amazing value of their record is enhanced and their honesty illuminated by the further fact that their testimony as given is contrary to all their own worldly interests. They appear before the court of the universe to testify that

Christ died and rose from the dead, and that only through faith in Him can men find salvation.

The value of their testimony turns first of all upon their honesty. Therefore it is not out of order to note the fact that they persisted in this position without retraction, in the face of the greatest and most forceful inducements to change their statements that ever bore upon mankind.

In the first place, there were heavy discouragements that darkened every hour of their living.

When they sought to convince men by their message and convert them to a new way of living, they saw their work undone by bitter and implacable enemies.

They suffered heartbreak, in seeing a hell-bound generation turn away from the illumination that would have directed their path to heaven and eternal redemption.

In addition to this, they suffered the personal loss of their estate, their citizenship, and their family life.

Beggared to the point of destitution, separated from loved ones and home, for the sake of their witness, they became wanderers on the face of the earth.

Finally, upon them beat the most appalling terrors that the human mind can conceive. They were imper-

iled by day and night, on land or on sea. They suffered such agony as it is impossible to convey by the written word, in body, in mind, and in spirit; and yet through it all they persisted in their unanimous evidence, *exactly as it first was given.*

In the name of human conscience and common sense, what inducement had these men to lie? In the eyes of the law the exact contrary is established, when we note the salient factors that are incorporated in their unanimous testimony. First, their Lord and Master, for Whose sake they bore all this, had recently perished as a malefactor under sentence of a public tribunal. They were not enlisted in the service of some notable lord, whose power and popularity made their course easy. Instead, they served a Man Who had died a death of ignominy and shame, being condemned by the highest court of His day. Their case is exactly parallel with the hypothetical one of some modern group who should attempt to convert America to accept, as God and Savior, a murderer who had perished in the electric chair. Certainly, there was no inducement for these men to so color their narrative and twist their testimony as to erect this kind of a Savior for their generation.

In the second place, the teachings of their Lord and Master sought to overthrow the religions of the world.

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In announcing the basic premises of their revelation they erected against themselves a barrier of hatred and opposition from every fanatical group of idolatry that the ancient world knew. Every powerful cult and every group of constituted priests, from those of Israel to the servants of Diana of the Ephesians, formed a phalanx to persecute and slay these men. If these men were false witnesses, they were so feeble-minded as to have deserved incarceration in a home for the mentally incompetent, for offering a record that consisted of such falsehood.

In the third place, they faced the opposition of the laws of every country of their generation. Not only the general laws of Rome, and the accepted code of Israel, were against the apostles; but special laws were passed making it a matter of public duty to harm and even slay these witnesses to the Gospel of the Son of God. Men do not customarily face this kind of united opposition in the defense of that which they know to be false.

Finally, the most subtle but perhaps the most powerful factor against the probability of their falsehood, is found in the fact that "the fashion of the world" was against them. It is impossible to over-emphasize the

power that is resident in current thought and mass psychology. It is a bold man indeed who goes against the current of common assertion or fashion of the thinking of his day. Well might we ask, "What inducement had these witnesses to deceive?" If they persisted in the testimony they had erected, their reward could only be contempt, opposition, reviling, persecution, stripes, imprisonment, torment, and a cruel and painful death. It is a matter of history that this is just the reward that they received. They died on wooden crosses, they were torn asunder by wild beasts, they were sawed into fragments and murdered by every fiendish, diabolical and painful means that degenerate intelligence could conceive. Yet as each of them perished thus miserably, the survivors redoubled their efforts and persisted.

No military annals contain a record of such heroism and manhood.

In case these witnesses had been mistaken at the beginning of their efforts, every human motive would have led them to review the evidence and to hope for an excuse to confess error and so save their lives. Therefore from the standpoint of conduct, of historical record, of human psychology, and the presumption of law, their honesty is unquestionable. Please remember that these

were very ordinary men. They were not super-men in any sense of the word. Born of women, with flesh as tender as yours, equally susceptible to pain and subject to fear and discouragement, human beings from the ordinary walks of laboring life achieved heights of heroism that the world had never seen before and has not witnessed since.

They were *good* men.

They had no desire to deceive and defraud humanity in the testimony that they gave.

As we read their writings it becomes increasingly apparent that these are *holy words* indeed.

Well might men call them the "Holy Scriptures" and the "Holy Bible," even if God's Spirit had not been the Author of the contents of this book. Bad men do not invent such doctrines as are found in the New Testament. Liars and deceivers, false witnesses whose dishonesty of purpose is apparent, are not instructing men in the forsaking of falsehood and pleading for a life of honesty and honor. Bad men are not calling others to repentance of sins done in the flesh. Men of no honesty and repute are not preaching self-denial, abhorrence of sin, self-sacrifice, and a forsaking of the world. A standard of perfect purity of living, such as is erected in the New Testament, could not be set up by men who were

themselves sinful and unclean. Bad men are not risking their lives to proclaim the certainty of judgment and hell for the wicked, and offering a means of salvation to those who will accept and receive. It becomes strikingly apparent, then, that infidelity's last refuge, which charged the apostles with being deceivers and false witnesses, is utterly demolished by the facts in the case.

They were good witnesses.

Under the law of the credibility of a witness, they are entitled to absolute acceptance as to their lightest word, if their honesty is established by their conduct and their teachings.

Their case is equally strong when we come to the second demand concerning the credit due to a witness. That is their ability. In a certain sense, we have already covered this item in part when we presented the background, the training, the source of the material, and the natural skill of these witnesses. In fact, in point of law it would be enough to show that they were eyewitnesses to the events concerning which they have written. If men who were alive, and took an active and leading part in the stirring events of the New Testament drama, are not able witnesses, who in all history can qualify under the meaning of that term?

There is no need, however, for discussion or argument here, for the law of evidence establishes in un-

questionable terms what is meant by the ability of a witness. To establish upon a firm basis the credit due to the apostles on the score of their ability to testify, we here cite that law:

“Legally the ability of a witness depends upon (1) the opportunity which he has had for observing the facts, (2) the accuracy of his powers of discerning, (3) and the faithfulness of his memory in retaining the facts once observed and by him known.”

Concerning the opportunity that the apostles had for observing the facts of which they write, they certainly stand in an enviable position. No amount of theoretical disputation springing out of the opinions of modern learning can set aside the simple and sincere statement, “I was there.” Therefore, presuming that they were of average intelligence, the case is complete for the records inscribed by the New Testament writers, and is final against those who today would dispute their authority.

The question of the accuracy of the powers of discerning are also dealt with in law in many interesting cases which are a matter of record. As an illustration, in the case of Bell versus Rinner, the question presented by the record was whether “the credibility of a competent witness may be impeached by general evidence that the witness is not possessed of ordinary intelligence or powers of mind.” The decision of the court

in this matter was rather startling in the eyes of the laity. The final statement made when judgment was rendered, is that "neither the veracity nor credit of a witness is necessarily impeached by proving that he is possessed of a weak intellect." Although it is possible that such a person may be imposed upon by a crafty party, or his observations may be less accurate and his memory less reliable than those of a person of strong powers of mind, he may still be legally credible *as touching a particular incident to which he was a party or of which he was an eyewitness!* The court decided it would not only be unfair in practice but would be entirely impracticable to permit the parties on the trial of a case to go into general proof as to the strength of the mental capacity of the several witnesses. If the credibility of a witness is to be credited in proportion to his strength of intellect, the collateral issues involved in every dispute before the court would become so numerous that the main objective of the trial would be lost sight of. Therefore a person who was present during the process of the transaction of a fact or an event may testify to what he saw and witnessed on that occasion, and his testimony must be accepted as credible because of his opportunity for observing the facts.

In the case of Thayer versus Boyle, evidence of immorality in the conduct of a witness was excluded on the

grounds that "evidence to impeach the witness must be given directly as touching his veracity concerning the fact at issue." There is, therefore, a distinction between the mode of attacking the general credit of a witness and his credit in the particular cause.

Even further, in the case of Evans versus Hettrich, it was held incompetent to prove for the purpose of attacking the credibility of a witness, that he is subject to fits of derangement, if he is sane at the time of giving his testimony.

In other words, the strength of the apostles' authority is enhanced by every appeal to the cold logic of the legal demands of modern court process. It has never been argued or successfully charged that the apostles were of less than average intelligence. Conceding them the minimum normal supply of mental competence which is the average of humanity, they have final authority in the matter of the Christian witness.

As to the faithfulness of their memory in retaining the facts once observed and by them known, it might be well to cite the case of Goodwin versus Goodwin. The decision in this case was so important in the face of our inquiry that we cite it in the exact words of the court:

"No authority has been produced to justify, and we know of no practice to sanction, the introduction of testimony *not to impeach the veracity* . . . but the *memory* of the witness."

Therefore the entire argument of higher criticism, which is by them presumed to be one of their strongest points, namely, that "the lapse of time between the events of the life of Jesus and the original inscription of those events by the apostles was so great as to weaken their memory of those events," would be at once ruled out in any honest and honorable court. If men of questionable mental capacity are acceptable witnesses as touching a fact which they had opportunity for observing; and if the faithfulness of their memory is not questionable in the presentation of that fact, there is no manner or method by which the record of the New Testament can be upset in our day.

Incidentally, since we are honest and bold enough to submit the apostles to these demands of the law of evidence, why not challenge the modern critic to prove his qualifications under this three-fold demand?

What opportunity has the modern critic had for observing the facts?

None whatever!

Of what value would the accuracy of the powers of the modern critic be in discerning these facts?

None whatever!

Since the natural man understandeth not the things of the Spirit of God, and since only those possessed by

the Holy Spirit can correctly interpret the statements of the Spirit, there is no unsaved man who is an acceptable witness concerning the facts and effects of Christianity!

As to the faithfulness of a modern critic in retaining the memory of the facts of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, it is too silly to inquire. The law says that the faithfulness of the memory must be concerning events *once observed and by the witnesses known*. The only proper designation and distinctive phrase in the English language properly to denote the crassness of the higher critical contentions, is the good old, blunt, Anglo-Saxon word, "blatant." The farther we go into this inquiry, the more profoundly manifest is the credibility of the apostles and the lack of it in their enemies!

The third demand of the law is also satisfactorily met. This deals with the number of witnesses and the consistency of their testimony. The requisite number was established by Israel's law—"Out of the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established." In the case that we present for the accuracy of the Christian revelation, we have *seven* competent, qualified witnesses. In addition to the four Gospel narrators, Paul the Apostle has given us a lengthy and weighty record of the events of those days. Accompanying him as writ-

ing apostles are Peter, James, and Jude. We could then produce, according to the law's demand, a satisfactory number of witnesses.

When we come to the question of the consistency of their testimony we are on firm ground indeed. We do not mean that there is an undeviating element of rehearsed unanimity in the record, for this would cast suspicion concerning the collusion of the witnesses upon their united story. When seven men tell the same tale in strict verbal agreement, the suspicion of the court is justifiably aroused. There are, however, in the records of these seven qualified eye-witnesses, sufficient minor discrepancies to show that there has been no collusion in the production of their testimony.

Concerning the consistency of that testimony, however, it is enough to note that without such collusion the records of these seven men agree in more than two thousand separate details and particulars. According to the law of probability, the possibility of accidental coincidence of seven men agreeing without deviation on two thousand details in an unplanned presentation of fact, equals one to infinity. But if concert, agreement, and collusion among the witnesses are excluded, then no cause exists or remains for their consistency and unanimity, except the reality of the facts they relate. This every honest investigator must accept.

We come, then, to the fourth demand, the conformity of their testimony with experience. It is here that their strength and power are manifested as most positive and conclusive. It is rather childish to hear men who pride themselves upon their learning, objecting in these modern times to the record of certain miracles in the Scripture. Of course the only rebuttal that the modern critic can advance is the statement that these miracles "are contrary to natural law". Once again we cite a fact of legal procedure that upsets this position of the critic and makes his protest of no avail.

"But the law cannot permit clear and unimpeachable evidence to be set aside on the basis that it does not coincide with the *lack of experience* of the objector."

As an illustration of the meaning of that clause we might advance the acceptable illustration that if seven men testified they had seen a lion in the back alleys of a city, their word would carry more weight in court than that of seven hundred men who testified that they *had not* seen one! All the writers of the New Testament record the fact that they had seen miracles performed by God Almighty when He walked the earth in the days of His flesh.

It is childish ignorance for the critic to reply, "I never saw a miracle." God is not walking the earth in the form of human flesh in these days, as He did in that

time of history wherewith the apostles deal. We may argue legally and logically from the facts in the record that if Jesus Christ were here now, men *would* see miracles even as they observed them in the days of His visitation. Therefore we are restricted in our evidence to that which is germane to the times and events which are under inquiry.

We once heard of a man who said at a banquet in an eastern city that he did not believe in foreign missions. He stated that he had been in India seven months and never saw a missionary.

A quiet little man arose at the end of the table and said, "What were you doing in India?"

The speaker replied, "I was hunting tigers."

The questioner then said, "I was a missionary in India twenty years, and I never saw a tiger!" It seems apparent that men see what they are looking for, provided the thing is there to be seen.

However, to come back to the point at issue, the conformity of the testimony of the Gospel narrators with the experience of their day is the point in fact.

That conformity is most positive and conclusive.

In the miracles recorded by the apostles, first of all, the facts were plain.

They were also intelligible.

Further, they transpired in public view.

Finally, they were such as no person of ordinary intelligence would be likely to mistake.

Here, for instance, is the case of a lame man. The man was known to the entire population of the little town of which he was a citizen. The older ones had seen him grow from childhood with withered limbs and useless feet. In the sight of competent, sane, qualified witnesses who knew the background of this afflicted man, Jesus Christ healed the victim of this nameless disease and enabled him to walk and leap and run. Here, then, is the record of a miracle that transpired in public before competent witnesses who were intelligent. It dealt with a matter concerning which no sane person could possibly be mistaken.

The same thing is true of the healing of the blind, and also of the feeding of the thousands with the multiplied loaves and fishes. We are dealing now with facts known to all of the local community for years where these events transpired. If, then, the experience of that generation finds the record of the apostles to be in conformity with the positive and conclusive observations of men who were then alive to see these things done, there is no present way of upsetting the record of that

generation. Any impeachment of the credibility of the evidence that touches the miracles of the New Testament text legally, must have sprung out of the generation that witnessed the event. In fact, though the critic has not awakened to the situation, he is too late by almost two thousand years to question the issue, unless he has produced new evidence, which is certainly wanting at this present hour. Before we leave this point, may we introduce a quotation from Greenleaf that is pertinent and germane:

“A miracle is improbable when we perceive no sufficient cause in reference to His creatures why the Deity should vary His modes of operation; it ceases to be so when such cause is assigned.”

For the purpose of establishing the supernatural nature and deity of His Son, Who is our Lord Jesus Christ, the heavenly Father varied His mode of operation. This premise causes a miracle to be probable, according to this master of law.

There remains, then, only the coincidence of these witnesses with contemporary and collateral facts and circumstances. It is sufficient under this clause to establish the fact that the general trend and movement of the narrative as written by the apostles, coincides with the contemporary history of the times and era in which they live. Let not the reader be deceived by the gen-

eralities and broad statements of modern criticism. It is an indisputable certainty that no single historical error has ever been found in the writings of the New Testament text. The life work of the great apologist, Sir William Ramsay, is in itself sufficient to erect a basis of credibility in point of contemporary history, that time will never be able to set aside. After forty years of excavation and research in Asia Minor, the eminent Dr. Ramsay became established in the eyes of the archaeological world as the supreme authority on the history of the apostolic era. In his latest book, "The Trustworthiness of the New Testament in the Light of Recent Discovery," Sir William Ramsay has established and demonstrated historical infallibility for the writers of the New Testament text.

When we come to collateral circumstances, however, we re-enter a field of legal phraseology which may require some definition.

"The test of whether a fact inquired of in cross-examination is collateral is this: Would the examining party be entitled to prove it as part of his case contending to establish his plea?"

We will take, as an instance, the account given in the Gospels of the conversion of Matthew Levi. It is recounted that after Matthew had forsaken his somewhat nefarious calling, and had become a disciple of the Lord

Jesus, he gave a feast at his home and called together those who had been his fellow publicans. Thus he sought to bring them in touch with a higher and better way of living.

This, then, is collateral evidence of the conversion of Matthew. The proper inquiry now becomes one of motive, circumstance, and general experience. The question really is, "Would a converted man naturally so do?" The whole weight and burden of Christian history bears upon this action of Matthew. Indeed, one of the characteristics of Christianity is the fact that a man who has found Christ as a Savior is never satisfied until he has introduced the Lord to his intimate circle of friends. It may safely be said that an alleged conversion that does not result in a desire to win others to the same happiness of life that Christianity imparts, is highly questionable, and we may doubt its reality.

In recounting the miracles of healing, the collateral facts would concern themselves with the knowledge of the populace concerning the past history of the person healed from the specific sickness, and their satisfaction with the reality of the cure alleged. As an instance, is it reasonable to suppose that the family and friends of a certain blind man could be sure that he was unable to see before the miracle of healing? Then, following his cure by Jesus Christ, the collateral evidence would

be as to whether they noted a change in his physical condition, and could testify as to his ability to discern objects with the physical eye. In plain words, the collateral facts and circumstances that are correlated into the general account of the Gospel narrative are almost innumerable. There are something over five thousand collateral details that cluster about the entire New Testament record. It is a stupendous and crushing argument for the credibility of the text as we possess it today, *that no single collateral fact or circumstance has ever collapsed under the intense scrutiny of critical inspection.*

Well indeed did the Apostle Peter, himself an eyewitness of these events, express his own wonder over the miracle of Holy Scripture by crying out, "We have also a word of prophecy made more sure."

Almighty God never intended that the power and authority of His revelation should depend upon any set of rules or body of wisdom erected by fallible humanity. However, if God Almighty is and was the Author of Holy Writ, it is natural to presume that He Himself would be careful to maintain that revelation and writing in such a form as would harmonize with the demands of intelligence, when men search it from the standpoint of evidence. There is no book of ancient philosophy, no cosmogony or set of human documents

from far antiquity, that can meet the rigid and stern demands erected by the procedure of our modern courts and the acknowledged laws of evidence. But again, the child of God, who has accepted the Scriptures in simple faith in the Heavenly Father, is justified in his position by an inquiry into the stability of the Christian evidence.

Let the reader decide for himself once and for all whether he will accept and act upon the accredited, authorized, established testimony of eyewitnesses and therein find everlasting life, or follow the will-of-the-wisp of human critical learning to perish in the swamps of despair and partake of death eternal.

To guide you in that decision, allow us to remind you again that every writer of the New Testament text has confirmed his testimony by a sacred and solemn affidavit.

Paul the Apostle, as he takes the witness stand, solemnly raises his hand to the Deity and says, "Before God I lie not."

In testifying to the Church of Galatia he uses the strongest terms possible in his day when he says, "I certify (guarantee or take affidavit) you, brethren, that the gospel which is preached of me is not after men. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ."

James identified and accredited himself by calling upon the person of the Godhead, and establishing himself as a servant of God and Jesus Christ. Peter, in both of his epistles, appeals to the Triune God as the authority for his boldness in setting forth the facts concerning the Lord Jesus.

So also Jude identifies himself as a member of the family of Christ; and calls upon God the Heavenly Father to witness to his veracity in his opening salutation.

These things told to you by competent witnesses and established by a very sacred oath, were written that you might believe, and have everlasting life in Jesus Christ's Name.

Conceding that you are competent, of average intelligence, qualified to reason to a sane conclusion, we are bold to suggest that if you will simply read the Gospel narrative, your own interest and desire will impel you to act thereon and receive the Lord Jesus Christ as your personal Savior from sin.

