

TRIAL OF THE WITNESSES

TO THE

RESURRECTION OF JESUS.

A Legal Argument by Rt. Rev. Thomas Sherlock, D. D.,
Bishop of London, 1729.—Revised.

There were, a long time since, some gentlemen belonging to the Inns of Court, *i. e.*, belonging to the law, met together, not by design but promiscuously; and, as is natural in such cases, the discourse was various. Among other things, they fell upon the trial of Woolston, and his conviction, which had taken place some few days before. That led to a debate as to how the law stood in such cases; what punishment it inflicted, and in general, whether the law ought to interpose in controversies of this kind. They were not agreed upon these points. One, who maintained the side favorable to Woolston, discovered a great liking for his discourses against the miracles of Christ, and seemed to think his arguments unanswerable; to which another replied, "I wonder that one of your abilities, and one bred to the profession of the law, which teaches us to consider the nature of evidence, and its proper weight, can be of that opinion. I am sure that you would be unwilling to determine a property of five shillings, upon such evidence as you now think material enough to overthrow the miracles of Christ."

This speech determined the conversation for the evening to this subject. The dispute ran through almost all the particulars mentioned in Woolston's pieces. These two gentlemen, at the request of the company, entered into an agreement to hold a controversy

upon the evidences concerning the resurrection of Jesus. A judge and a jury were appointed for that day fortnight.

At the appointed time they met. The judge called upon the jury to take their seats, and invited the gentlemen to commence; calling upon Mr. A., the gentleman who stood counsel for Woolston, to open the case.

To which Mr. A. demurred and said, May it please your Lordship, I conceive the gentleman on the other side ought to begin, and lay the evidence which he intends to maintain, before the court. Till that is done, it is no use for me to object. I may perhaps object to that which he will not admit to be any part of his evidence; and therefore, I apprehend the evidence ought in the first place to be distinctly stated.

JUDGE.—Mr. B., what say you to that?

Mr. B., (*Counsel on the other side.*)—My Lord, if the evidences I am to maintain, were to support any new claim; if I were to gain anything which I am not already possessed of, the gentleman would be in the right; but the evidence is old and is matter of record, and I have been long in possession of all that I claim under it. If the gentleman has anything to say to dispossess me, let him produce it, otherwise, I have no reason to bring my own title into question; and this I

take to be the known method of proceeding in such cases. No man is obliged to produce his title to his possession before it is questioned; it is sufficient if he maintain it when it is called in question.

Mr. A.—Surely, my Lord, the gentleman mistakes the case. I can never admit myself to be out of possession of my understanding and reason; and since he would put me out of this possession and compel me to admit things incredible in virtue of the evidence he maintains, he ought to set forth his claims, or leave the world to be directed by common sense.

JUDGE.—Sir, you say right, upon the supposition that the truth of the christian religion were the point in judgment. In that case it would be necessary to produce the evidence for the christian religion; but the matter now before the court, is whether the objections produced by Mr. Woolston, are of weight to overthrow the evidences of Christ's resurrection; you see then that the evidence of the resurrection is supposed to be what it really is, on both sides, and the thing immediately in judgment, is the value of the objections, and these must be set forth. The court will be bound to take notice of the evidence, which is admitted as a fact on both sides. Go in Mr. A.

Mr. A.—My Lord, I submit to the direction of the court. I cannot but observe that the gentleman on the other side, unwilling as he seems to be to state his evidence, did not forget to lay claim to prescription; which is, perhaps, in truth, though he has too much skill to own it, the very strength of his cause. I do allow that the gentleman maintains nothing but what his father and grandfather and his remoter ancestors, beyond time of man's memory, maintained before him. I allow too, that prescription in many cases makes a good title; but it must always be with this condition, that the

thing is capable of being prescribed for; and I insist that prescription cannot run against reason and common sense.

Custom may be pleaded by prescription; but if upon showing the custom, anything appears unreasonable in it, the prescription fails; for length of time works nothing towards the establishing anything that could never have a legal commencement. If this objection will overthrow all prescriptions for customs, the mischief of which extends to one poor village only, and affects them in no greater a concern than their right of common upon a ragged mountain, shall it not more certainly prevail, when the interest of mankind is concerned, in this life, and his hopes for the future? Besides, if prescription must be allowed in this case, how will you deal with it in others? What will you say to the ancient Persians, and their fire altars? Nay, what to the Turks, who have been long enough to plead.

Mr. B.—I beg pardon for interrupting the gentleman, but it may save him trouble. He is going into his favorite common-place, and has brought us from Persia to Turkey already; and if he goes on, I know that we must follow him round the globe. To save us from this long journey, I will wave all advantage arising from the antiquity of the resurrection, and the general belief in regard to it; and am content to consider it as a fact which happened last year, and was never heard of, either by the gentleman's grandfather, or by mine.

Mr. A.—I should not have taken so long a journey as the gentleman imagines. Nor indeed, need any man go far from home to find instances to the purpose I was intending; but since this advantage is quitted, I am as willing to spare my pains, as the gentleman is desirous that I should,—and yet, I suspect some art even in this concession, fair and candid as it seems to be. For I am persuaded that one reason,

perhaps the main reason, why men believe this history of Jesus, is, that they cannot conceive that any one should attempt, much less succeed in such an attempt as this, upon the foundation of mere human wisdom and cunning; and it is worth while to go round the globe, as the gentleman expressed himself, to see various instances of the like kind, in order to remove this prejudice; but I stand corrected, and will go directly to the point at issue.

Mr. B.—My Lord, the gentleman, in justification of his first argument, has entered upon another of a very different kind. I think he is sensible of it, and seeming to yield up one of his popular topics, is artfully getting rid of another, which has made a very good figure in many late writings, but which will not bear the test in any place where he who maintains it may be asked questions. The mere antiquity of the resurrection I give up; for if the evidence was not good at first, it cannot be good now. The gentleman is willing, he says, to spare us his history of ancient errors; and intimates, that upon this account he passes over many instances of fraud, that were like in circumstances to the case before us. By no means, my Lord, let them be passed over. I would not have the main strength of his cause betrayed in complaisance to me. Nothing can be more material, than to show a fraud of this kind, that has prevailed universally in the world.

Christ proclaimed himself a prophet; and put the proof of his mission on this,—that he should die openly and publicly, and rise again the third day. This surely was one of the hardest plots in the world to be managed; and if there be one instance of this kind, or in any degree like it, let it be produced.

Mr. A.—My Lord, there has hardly been an instance of false religion in the world, but has also afforded a like in-

stance to this before, viz: Have not all pretended to inspiration? Upon what footing did Pythagoras, Numa, and others set up? Did they not all converse with the gods, and pretend to deliver oracles?

Mr. B.—This only shows that revelation is, by the common consent of mankind, the very best foundation of religion; and therefore, every impostor pretends to it; but is a man's hiding himself in a cave for some years, and then coming out into the world, to be compared to a man dying and rising to life again? So far from it, that you and I, and every other man may do the one; but no man can do the other.

Mr. A.—Sir, I suppose that it will be allowed to be as great a thing to go to heaven and converse with angels and with God, and to come down to the earth again; as it is to die and rise again. Now this very thing Mahomet pretended to do; can you deny this?

Mr. B.—Deny it sir? No, but tell us who went with Mahomet? Who were his witnesses? I expect before we have done, to hear of the guards set over the sepulchre of Christ, and the seal of the stone. What guard watched Mahomet in his going, or his returning? What seals and credentials had he? He himself pretends to none. His followers pretended to nothing but his own word. We are now to consider the evidences of Christ's resurrection, and you think to parallel it by producing a case, for which no one even pretended there was any evidence. You have Mahomet's word, and no man ever told a lie, but you had his word for the truth of what he said; and therefore you need not go round the globe to find such instances as these. But this story, it is said, has gained great credit, and is received by many nations. Very well, and how was it received? Was not every man converted to it with the sword at his throat? In our case, every witness to the resurrection, and every believer of

it was hourly exposed to death. In the other case, whoever refused to believe, died; or what was as bad, lived a wretched, conquered slave. Will you pretend these cases to be alike? One case there was within our own memory, which in some circumstances, came near to the case now before us. The French prophets put the credit of their mission upon the resurrection of Dr. Emmes, and gave public notice of it; if the gentleman chuses to make use of this instance, it is at his service.

MR. A.—The instance of Dr. Emmes is so far to the purpose, that it shows to what length enthusiasm will carry men. Why might not the same thing happen at Jerusalem, which happened a few years ago in our own country?

Matthew and John, and the rest of them, managed that affair with more dexterity than the French prophets; so that the resurrection of Jesus gained credit in the world, while the French prophets sank under their wretched and ridiculous pretensions. That is all the difference.

MR. B.—Is it so? And a very wide difference, I promise you. In one case, every thing happened that was proper to convince the world of the truth of the resurrection; in the other, the event manifested the cheat; and upon the view of these circumstances you think it sufficient to say, with great coolness, “that is all the difference.” Why, what difference do you expect between truth and falsehood? What distinction!

JUDGE.—Gentlemen, you forget that you are falling into dialogue. The evidence wanted is upon the resurrection of Jesus, and must be taken as it is. These witnesses are accused of giving false evidence on the one side; the other side contending for the truthfulness of their evidence, therefore, come to the point, and let us hear both the detractions and the justifications.

MR. A.—I am now to disclose to

you a scene of all others the most surprising. “The resurrection has been long talked of, and to the amazement of every one who can think freely, has been believed through all ages of the church.” This general belief creates in most minds a presumption that it was founded on good evidence. In other cases, the evidence supports the credit of the history; but here the evidence itself is presumed only upon the credit which the story has gained. I wish the books dispersed against Jesus by the ancient Jews had not been lost; for they would have given us a clear insight into this contrivance. But it is happy for us, that the very account given us by the pretended witnesses of this fact is sufficient to destroy the credit of it. The resurrection was not a thing contrived for its own sake. No! it was undertaken to support great views, and for the sake of great consequences that were to attend it. It will be necessary therefore to lay before you those views, that you may better judge of this part of the contrivance when you have the whole scene before you.

The Jews were a weak, superstitious people; and, as is common amongst such people, gave great credit to some traditinary prophecies about their own country. They had besides, some old books among them, which they esteemed to be the writings of certain prophets, who had formerly lived among them, and whose memory they had in great veneration. From such old books, and such traditions, they formed many extravagant expectations, and among the rest, one was, that a great victorious prince should arise some time or other, and subdue all their enemies, and make them Lords of the world. *In Augustus’s time they were in a low state, reduced under the Roman yoke; and as they never wanted a deliverer more, so the eagerness of

* See Scenes of Literal Prophecy, page 26.

this hope, as it happens to weak minds, turned into a firm conviction that he would soon come. This proved a temptation to some bold, and some cunning men, to personate the prince so much expected; and

“Nothing is more natural and common to promote rebellion, than to ground them on new prophecies, or new interpretation of old ones; prophecies being suited to the vulgar superstitions, and operating with the force of religion.”—*Scenes of Literal Prophecy*, page 27.

Accordingly, many such impostors arose, pretending to be the victorious prince expected; and they and those who followed them perished in the folly of their attempt. But Jesus, knowing that victories and triumphs are not things to be counterfeited; that the people were to be rescued from the Roman yoke by sleight of hand; and having no hope of being able to cope with the Emperor of Rome in good earnest, took another and more successful method to carry out his design. He took upon him to be the prince foretold by the ancient prophets; but when he came he insisted that the true sense of the prophecies had been mistaken; that they related not to the kingdoms of this world, but to the kingdom of heaven; that the Messiah was not to be a conquering prince, but a suffering one; that he was not to come with conquering horses of war, and chariots of war, but was to be meek and lowly, and riding on an ass. By this means he secured the common and necessary foundation for a new revelation, which is to be built upon a preceding revelation.* To carry on this design, he made choice of twelve men, poor and uneducated, and of such understandings as gave rise to no jealousy that they would discover the plot; and what is most wonderful, and shows their ability, whilst the master was preaching the kingdom of heaven, these poor men, not weaned from the prejudice of their

country, expected every day that he would declare himself king, and were quarreling which should be the first minister. This expectation kept them constant to their master. I must observe farther, that the Jews were under strange apprehensions of supernatural powers; and as their own religion was founded on the belief of certain miracles, said to be worked by their law-giver, Moses, so were they ever running after wonders and miracles, and ready to take up stories of this kind. Now as something extraordinary was necessary to support the pretensions of Jesus, he dexterously laid hold on the weakness of the people; and set up to be a wonder-worker. His disciples were well qualified to receive this impression; they saw, or thought they saw, many strange things, and were able to spread the fame and report of them abroad.

This conduct had the desired success. The whole country was alarmed, and full of the news of a great prophet's being come among them. They were too full of their own imagination, to attend to the notion of a kingdom of heaven. Here was one mighty in deed and in word; and they concluded, he was the very prince their nation expected. Accordingly, they once attempted to set him up for a king; and at another time attended him in triumph to Jerusalem. This natural consequence opens the natural design of the attempt. If things had gone on successfully to the end, it is probable the kingdom of this Jesus would have been built upon the ruins of the Roman power; but it did not go on successfully, and therefore failed.

MR. B.—The gentleman commences by telling us that the books written against Jesus were very plain in regard to the deception practiced. I should like to ask the gentleman now, how he knows there ever were such books? And, since if there ever were any they are lost, how he knows what they con-

* Discourse of the Grounds, &c., chap. 12: 4.

tained? I doubt not I shall have frequent occasion to ask such questions. It would be a sufficient answer to the whole, to repeat the several suppositions that have been made, and to call for the evidence upon which they stand. This would plainly discover the every part of the story to be mere fiction; but since the gentleman seems to have endeavored to bring under one view, the many insinuations which have of late been circulated by different hands, and to work the whole into a consistent scheme; I will, if your patience shall permit, examine this plot, and see to whom the honor of this contrivance belongs.

The gentleman begins with expressing "his amazement, that the resurrection has been believed in all ages of the church." If you ask him, why? He must answer; because the account of it is a forgery: for it is no amazement to him surely, that a true account should be well received; so that this remark proceeds from confidence rather than amazement, and amounts only to this, that he is sure there is no resurrection; and I am sure this is no evidence there was none. Whether he is mistaken in his confidence, or I in mine, the court must judge. The gentleman's observation, that the general belief of the resurrection creates a presumption that it stands upon good authority, and therefore people look no further but follow their fathers, as their fathers followed their grandfathers before them, is in a great measure true; but it is a truth nothing to the purpose. He admits that the resurrection has been believed in all ages of the church, that is, from the very time of the resurrection; what then prevailed with those who first believed it. They certainly did not follow the example of their fathers. Here then is the point. How did this fact gain credit in the world at first? Credit it has gained without doubt. If the multitude at present go into this belief through pre-

judice, example, and for company sake, they do no more in this case, than they do in all cases; and it cannot be denied, but the truth may be received through prejudice (as it is called) *i. e.* without examining the proof or merits of the cause, as well as the falsehood. What general truth is there, the merits of which all the world, or the hundredth part of it has examined? It is smartly said, somewhere, that "the priest only continues what the nurse began;" but the life of the remark consists in the quaintness of the antithesis between the nurse and the priest, and owes its support more to sound than to sense. For is it possible that children should not hear something of the common opinion of their country, whether they be true or false? Perhaps every man learned from his nurse, that two and two make four; and if she divide an apple among her children, she instills into them the prejudice that the whole is equal to its parts, and all the parts equal to the whole; and yet Sir Isaac Newton (shame on him) has erected such a vast building upon this nursery-learning. There never was, nor never will be a religion, whether true or false, publicly owned in any country, but children have heard, and ever will hear more or less of it from those who are placed about them. As this is the case, whether the religion be true or false, it is highly absurd to lay stress on this observation, when the question is about the truth of any religion; for the observation is indifferent to both sides of the question.

We have, I think, got through the common-place learning, which must forever, it seems, attend upon questions of this nature, and are coming to the true merits of the cause.

Here, the gentleman on the other side thought better to begin with an account of the people of the Jews: the people in whose country the fact is laid, who were originally, and in some respects principally, concerned in its consequences.

They were, he says, a weak, superstitious people, and lived under the influence of certain pretended prophecies; that upon this ground they had, some time before the appearance of Jesus Christ, conceived great expectations of the coming of a victorious prince, who should deliver them from the Roman yoke, and make them all kings and princes. He goes on to observe, how liable the people were, in this state of things, to be imposed on, and led into rebellion, by any one who was bold enough to take upon him to personate the prince expected. He observes further, that in fact many such impostors did arise, and deceived multitudes to their ruin and destruction.

I have laid these things together, because I do not intend to dispute these matters with the gentleman, whether the Jews were a weak and superstitious people, it being immaterial to the present question, it is enough for the gentleman's argument, if I allow the fact to be as he has stated it; and they were often deluded.

This foundation being laid, it was natural to expect, and I believe that your Lordship, and that every one did expect, that the gentleman would go on to show, that Jesus laid hold of this opportunity, struck in with the opinion of the people, and professed himself to be the prince who was to work their deliverance; but so far it seems, is this from being the case, that the charge upon Jesus is, that he took the contrary part, and set up in opposition to all the popular notions and prejudices of his country; and interpreted the prophecies quite differently to his countrymen, and entirely blasted their hopes, in reference to the warlike and victorious prince they had been taught to look for.

I know not how to bring the gentleman's premises to any agreement; they seem to be greatly at variance at present. If it be the likeliest method for an impostor to succeed, to build on the pop-

ular opinions and prophecies of the people; then surely an impostor cannot possibly take a worse method than to set up in opposition to all the prejudices of the community. Where then was the art and cunning of taking this method? Could anything be expected from it, but hatred, contempt, and persecution? And did Christ in fact meet with any other treatment from the Jews? Yet when he found, as the gentleman admits that he did, that he must perish in this attempt, did he change his method? Did he come about, and drop any intimations agreeable to the notions of the people? It is not pretended. This which in any other case that ever happened, would be taken to be a plain mark of great honesty, or great stupidity, or of both, is by my opponent called art, policy, or cunning.

It seems that Jesus dared not set up to be the victorious prince expected, for victories are not to be counterfeited. I hope it was no crime in him that he did not assume this false character, and try to abuse the credulity of the people. If he had done so, it certainly would have been a crime; and in this point, at least, he is innocent. I do not suppose that it is imagined that the Jews were well founded in the idea of a temporal prince; and therefore, when Christ opposed this conceit at the manifest hazard of his own life, as he certainly did, having truth on his side, so the presumption is, that it was for the sake of truth that he exposed himself. No, he wanted, we are told, the common, the necessary foundation for a new revelation,—the authority of an old one, to build on. Very well; I will not enquire how common, or how necessary to a new revelation is this foundation; [the authority of an old one, to build on;] for be that case as it will, it is evident that in the method Christ took he had not, nor could have, the supposed advantage of such foundation. For

why is this foundation necessary? A friend of the gentleman's shall tell you.

* "Because it must be difficult, if not impossible, to introduce among men (who in all civilized countries are bred up in the belief of some revealed religion), a revealed religion wholly new, or that has no reference to a former one; for that would be to combat all men in too many respects, and not to proceed on a sufficient number of principles necessary to be assented to by those, on whom the first impressions of a new religion are proposed to be made."—*Discourse of the Grounds*, page 24.

You see now the necessity of this foundation; it is that the new teacher may have the advantage of old popular opinions, and fit himself to the prejudices of the people. Had Christ any such advantage, or did he seek any such? The people expected a victorious prince; he told them they were mistaken. They held as sacred the traditions of the elders, he told them those traditions made the law of God of none effect. They valued themselves for being the favored people of God; he told them, that people from all quarters of the world should be the people of God, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom. They thought God could only be worshiped at Jerusalem; he told them God might and should be worshiped everywhere. They were superstitious in the observance of the Sabbath; he, according to their reckoning, broke it frequently; in a word, their washing of hands and pots, their superstitious distinctions of meats, their prayers in public, their villanies in secret, were all reprov'd, expos'd by him; and the cry ran strongly against him, that he came to destroy the law and the prophets. And now, sir, what advantage had Christ of your common foundation? What sufficient number of principles owned by the people, did he build on? If he adhered to the old revelation in the true sense, or which is sufficient to the present argument, in a sense not received by the people, it was, in truth,

the greatest struggle and difficulty he had to contend with; and therefore what could tempt him, but purely a regard to truth, to take upon himself so many difficulties which might have been avoided, could he have been silent in regard to the old revelation; and left the people to their own imaginations, as they are left now?

To carry on the plot, we are told, that the next thing which Jesus did, was to make choice of proper persons to be his disciples. The gentleman has given us their character; but, as I suppose he has more employment for them before he has done with them, I prefer, to defer the consideration of their abilities and conduct, till I hear what work he has for them to do. I would only observe, that the plot differs from all others that I ever heard of. Impostors generally take advantage of the prejudices of the people; generally too, they make choice of cunning dextrous fellows to manage under them; but in this case, Jesus opposed all the notions of the people, and made choice of simpletons, it seems, to conduct his contrivances.

What designs, what real end was being carried on all this while? The gentleman tells us, that the very thing disclaimed, the temporal kingdom, was the real thing aimed at under this disguise. He told the people there was no foundation to expect a temporal deliverer, warned them against all those who should set up such pretensions. He declared that there was no ground from the ancient prophecies, to expect such a prince; and yet by these very means he was working his way to an opportunity of declaring himself to be the very prince the people wanted.

We are still upon the marvelous; every step opens new wonders. I do not blame my opponent; for what but this can be imagined, to give any account of these measures imputed to Christ? Be this never so unlikely, yet this is the only thing that can be

said, had Christ been charged with enthusiasm, it would not have been necessary to assign a reason for his conduct: madness is unaccountable. But when design, cunning, and fraud are made the charges, and carried to such a height, as to suppose him to be a party to a sham resurrection for himself; it is necessary to say, to what end this cunning tended? It was, we are told, to a kingdom; and indeed the temptation was little enough, considering that the chief promoter of the plot was to be crucified for his pains; but were the means made use of at all probable to attain the end? Yes, says the gentleman, that cannot be disputed; for they had really this effect. The people would have made him king. Very well; why was he not king then? Why, it happened unluckily that he would not accept the offer, but withdrew himself from the multitude, and lay concealed until they were dispersed.

It will be said, perhaps, that Jesus was a better judge of affairs than the people, and knew that it was not time to accept the offer. Be it so. Let us see what then follows. The government was alarmed, and Jesus was looked upon as a person dangerous to the state; and he had discernment enough to see, that his death was determined and inevitable. What then does he do? Why, to make the best of a bad case, and to save the benefit of his undertaking to those who were to succeed him, he pretends to prophesy of his death, which he knew could not be avoided; and further that he should rise again the third day.—Men do not use to play tricks in *articulo mortis*; and this plot had nothing common; but what if it should appear, that after the foretelling of his death, (through despair of fortune it is said), he had the opportunity of setting up as king, and refused the opportunity? Men in despair lay hold on the least help, and never refuse the greatest. Now the case was really so; after he had fore-

told his crucifixion, he came to Jerusalem in the triumphant manner the gentleman mentioned: the people strewed his way with bows and flowers, and were all devoted to him—the Jewish governors lay still for fear of the people. Why was not this opportunity laid hold on to seize the kingdom, or at least to secure himself from the ignominious death he expected? For whose sake did he contrive this plot of his resurrection? Wife and children he had none; his nearest relatives gave little credit to him; his disciples were not fit to be trusted with the secret, nor capable of managing any advantage that could arise from it. However, the gentleman tells us, a kingdom has arisen out of this plot, a kingdom of priests. When did it arise? Some hundred years after the death of Christ, in opposition to his will, and almost to the subversion of his religion, and yet, we are told, this kingdom was the thing he had in view.

I am apt to think the gentleman is persuaded, that the dominion he complains of is contrary to the spirit of the gospel; I am sure some of his friends have taken great pains to prove it so, how then can it be charged as the intention of the gospel to introduce it? Whatever the case was, it cannot surely be suspected, that Christ died to make popes and cardinals. The alterations which have happened in the doctrines and practices of churches, since the christian religion was settled by those who had an authentic right or commission to settle it, are quite out of the question, when the enquiry is about the truth of the christian religion.

Christ and his apostles did not vouch for the truth of all that should be taught in the church in future times. Nay, they foretold and forewarned the world against such corrupt teachers. It is therefore absurd to challenge the religion of Christ, because of the corruptions which have spread among christians, the gospel has no more con-

cern with them, and ought no more to be charged with them, than with the doctrines of the Alcoran.

There is but one observation more, I think, which the gentleman made under this head. Jesus, he says, referred to the authority of ancient prophecies to prove that the Messiah was to die and rise again. The ancient books referred to are extant, and no such prophecies, he says, are to be found.

Whether the gentleman can find these prophecies, or no, is not material to the present question; it is admitted, that Christ foretold his own death and resurrection; if then the resurrection was managed by fraud, Christ was certainly in the fraud himself, by foretelling the fraud that was to happen. Disprove therefore the resurrection, and we shall have no further need for prophecy. On the other hand; by foretelling the resurrection, he certainly put the proof of his mission on the truth of the event. Whether it be the character of the Messiah in the ancient prophets or no, that he should die and rise again, without doubt Jesus is not the Messiah, if he did not rise again; for by his own prophecy he made it part of the character of the Messiah. If the event justified the prediction, it is such an evidence that no man of sense and reason can reject. One would naturally think, that the foretelling his resurrection, and giving such public notice to expect it, that his keenest enemies were fully apprised of it, carried with it the fullest mark of sincere dealing. It thus stands far clear of the suspicion of fraud. Had it proceeded from enthusiasm, and a heated imagination, the dead body at least would have rested in the grave, and without further evidence have confuted such pretensions; and, since the dead body was not only carried openly to the grave, but was there watched and guarded, and yet could never afterwards be found, as a dead body, there must of necessity have been either a

real miracle, or a great fraud in this case. Enthusiasm dies with the man and has no operation on his dead body; therefore there is no medium; you must either admit the miracle or prove the fraud.

JUDGE.—Mr. A., you are at liberty either to reply to what has been said under this head, or to go on with the cause.

MR. A.—My Lord, the observations I laid before you, were but introductory to the main evidences on which the merits of the cause must rest. The gentleman concluded, there must be a real miracle, or a great fraud; a fraud he means, to which Jesus in his lifetime was a party. There is, he says, no medium. I beg his pardon. Why might it not be an enthusiasm in the matter which occasioned the prediction and fraud in the servants who put it in execution?

MR. B.—My Lord, this is a new matter, and not a reply. The gentleman opened this transaction as a fraud from one end to the other. Now, he supposes Christ to have been an honest, poor enthusiast, and the disciples to be only cheats.

JUDGE.—Sir, if you go to new matter, the counsel on the other side will be permitted to answer.

MR. A.—My Lord, I have no such intention, I was observing, that the account I gave of Jesus, was only to introduce the evidence that is to be laid before the court. It cannot be expected that I should know all the secret contrivances of this plot; especially as we have but short accounts of the affair; and those too, conveyed to us through the hands of parties friendly to the plot. In such a case, it is enough if we can imagine what the views probably were; and in such case too, it must be easy for a gentleman of parts to raise contrary imaginations, and to argue plausibly from them. The gentleman has rightly observed, that if the resurrection be a fraud, there is an end of all pretensions, good or bad,

that were to be supported by it; therefore I shall go on to prove this fraud, which is one main part of the cause now to be determined.

I beg leave to remind you, that Jesus in his lifetime, foretold his death, and that he should rise again the third day. The first part of his prediction was accomplished; he died upon the cross, and was buried, which is a well known story.

MR. B.—My Lord, I desire to know whether the gentleman charges any fraud upon this part of the history. Perhaps he may be of opinion by and by, that there was a sleight of hand in the crucifixion, and that Christ only counterfeited death.

MR. A.—No, no; have no such fears; he was not crucified by his disciples, but by the Romans through the Jews; and they were in very good earnest. I will prove beyond contradiction, that the dead body was fairly laid in the tomb, and the tomb sealed up; and it will be well for you, if you can get it as fairly out again.

JUDGE.—Go on with your evidence.

MR. A.—The crucifixion being over, the dead body conveyed to the sepulchre, there seemed to be an end of the whole design; but the Governors of the Jews, watchful for the safety of the people, called to mind that Jesus in his lifetime had said that he would rise again on the third day. It may seem strange at first sight, that they should give heed to such a prophecy; so big with confidence and presumption, and which, to the common sense of mankind, carried its confutation along with it. And “there is no other nation in the world, which would not have slighted such a vain prognostication of a known impostor.” But they had notice to be watchful. It was not long before that the people “had like to have been fatally deluded, and imposed on by him, in the pretended resuscitation of Lazarus,” in which they had fully discovered the cheat,

and though Jesus was dead, yet he had many disciples alive, who were ready to combine in any fraud to verify any prediction of their master. Should they succeed, the rulers foresaw the consequences in this case would be more fatal, than those which they had so narrowly escaped a short time before. Upon this account they addressed themselves to the Roman governor; told him how the case was; and desired that he would grant them a guard to watch the sepulchre; that the service would not be long; for the prediction limited the resurrection to the third day; and when that was over, the soldiers might be released from their duty. Pilate granted the request; and a guard was accordingly placed to watch.

This was not all. The chief priests took another method to prevent all frauds, and it was the best that could possibly be taken; which was to seal up the door of the sepulchre, to make themselves sure of the safety of Jesus, this sealing being a covenant. The parties to this covenant could be no other than Pilate on the one side and the apostles on the other. To prove this no special agreement need be shown. On one side there was a concern to see the prediction fulfilled; on the other, to prevent fraud in fulfilling it. The sum of their agreement was this, that the seals should be opened at the time appointed for the resurrection, that all parties might see and be satisfied, whether the dead body was come to life, or not.

What now would any reasonable man expect from these circumstances? Why that the chief priests for the people, and the apostles for the christians, met at the appointed time, opened the seals, and the matter in dispute was settled beyond doubt? See how it happened. The seals were broken; the body stolen away in the night by the disciples; none of the chief priests summoned to see the seals opened. The guards, when examined, were forced to confess

the truth, though joined with an acknowledgement of their guilt, which made them liable to be punished by Pilate; they confessed that they were asleep, and in the meantime that the body was stolen away by the disciples.

This evidence of the Roman soldiers, and the far stronger evidence arising from the breaking up the seals, are sufficient proofs of fraud.

There is another circumstance in the case of equal weight. Though the seals did not prevent the cheat entirely, yet they effectually falsified the prediction. According to the prediction, Jesus was to rise the third day, or after the third day. At this time the chief priests intended to be present, and probably with a multitude. This made it impossible to play any tricks at that time, and therefore the apostles were forced to hasten the plot; and accordingly the resurrection happened a day before its time, for the body was buried on the Friday, and was gone early on Sunday morning.

These are plain facts; facts drawn from the accounts given us by friends to the belief of the resurrection. The gentleman will not call this imagination, or complain that I have given schemes instead of evidence.

MR. B.—My Lord, I am now to consider that part of the argument upon which the gentleman lays the greatest stress. He has given us the evidence; mere evidence, he says, unmixed and clear of all schemes and imaginations. In one thing indeed he has been as good as his word. He has proved beyond contradiction, that Christ died, and was laid in the sepulchre; for without doubt when the Jews sealed the stone, they took care that the body was there; otherwise, their precaution was useless. He has proved too, that the prediction of Christ concerning his own resurrection, was a thing publicly known in all Jerusalem; for he owns that this gave occasion for the care taken to prevent any fraud. If this

open prediction implies a fraudulent design, the evidence is strong with the gentleman; but if it shall appear to be what it really was, the greatest mark that could be given of sincerity in the whole affair, the evidence will still be as strong, but the weight of it will fall on the wrong side for the gentleman's purpose.

In the next place, the gentleman seems to be at a great loss how to account for the chief priests giving heed to the prediction of the resurrection, by the care they took to prevent it. He thinks the thing in itself was too extravagant and absurd to deserve any regard; and that no one would have regarded the prediction in any other time or place. I agree with the gentleman entirely. I demand of him a reason why the chief priests were under any concern about this prediction. Was it because they had plainly discovered him to be an impostor and cheat? It is impossible. This reason would have convinced them of the folly of the prediction. It must, therefore, be that they had discovered something in the life of Christ, which raised their jealousy, and made them listen to a prophecy in his case, which in any other would have been despised, and what could this be but the secret conviction they were under by the mighty miracles which he performed. This care of the chief priests over his dead body, is a lasting testimony of the mighty works Jesus did in his lifetime; for had the Jews been persuaded that he performed no wonders in his life, I think they would not have been afraid of one being performed after his death. The gentleman is of another mind. He says they had discovered a plain cheat in the case of Lazarus whom Christ had pretended to raise from the dead; so they took care to guard against a like cheat.

I begin now to want evidence; I am forbidden to call this imagination. What else to call it I know not.

There is not the least intimation given from history, that there was any cheat in the case of Lazarus, or that any one suspected a cheat. Lazarus lived in the country after he was raised from the dead, and though his life was secretly sought after, yet nobody had the courage to call him to trial for his part of the cheat. It may be said that the rulers were terrified. Very well; they were not terrified when they had Christ in their possession. Why did they not object the cheat to Christ? when they brought him to trial; it would have served their purpose, but instead, they accuse him of a design to pull down their temple, to destroy their law, and of blasphemy; but not one word of any fraud in the case of Lazarus, or in any other case.

But, let us take the case to be as the gentleman states it, that the cheat, in the case of Lazarus, was detected; what consequences are to be expected? In all other cases impostors, once discovered, grow odious, and quite incapable of doing further mischief: so little are they regarded, that even when they tell the truth, they are neglected. Was it so in this case? No, the gentleman says, the Jews were the more careful that Christ should not cheat them in his own resurrection. Surely this was a most singular case. When the people thought him a prophet, the chief priests sought to kill him, and thought his death would put an end to his pretensions: when they and the people discovered him to be a cheat, then they thought him not safe, even when he was dead, but were afraid he should prove a true prophet, and according to his own prediction, rise again, a most preposterous fear.

In the next place, the gentleman tells us how proper the care was the chief priests took. I agree with him, human policy could not invent a more proper method to prevent all fraud. They delivered the sepulchre, with the dead body in it, to the custody of

Roman soldiers, who had orders from their officers to watch the sepulchre. Their care went further still, they sealed the door of the sepulchre.

The gentleman says, seals mean a covenant. Let it be as he says. What then?

Why then, it seems that the apostles and chief priests were in a covenant that there should be no resurrection, at least no opening of the door, till they met together at the appointed time to unseal the door.

Your lordship, and the court, will now consider the probability of this supposition. When Christ was seized and carried to his trial, his apostles fled, and hid themselves for fear of the Jews. Peter followed him, but his courage failed him and he denied his master, Christ. After his death, his disciples were so far from being ready to engage for his resurrection, or to enter into terms for the manner in which it should be done, that they themselves did not believe it would ever be. They gave over all hopes of it; and far from entering into engagements with the chief priests, their whole concern was to keep themselves concealed from them. This was well known. Now can any man in his right senses, think that the disciples, under these circumstances, entered into covenant with the Jews? I believe the gentleman does not think it, and for that reason says, that seals so used import a covenant without a special agreement. Be it so; and it must then be admitted, that the apostles were no more concerned in these seals, than any other man in the country, and no more answerable for them; for the covenant reached to all others as well as to them, since they were under no special contract.

The Jews, it is plain, were very solicitous about this event. For this reason they obtained a guard from Pilate; and when they had, they were still suspicious lest their guards should deceive them. To secure this point,

they sealed the door, and required of the guards to deliver up the sepulchre sealed as it was. This is the true account of the circumstances, do but consider it in a parallel case. Suppose a prince should set a guard over his treasury; and the officer who set the guard should seal the door, and say to the soldiers, you shall be answerable if I find that seal broken. Would not all the world understand the seal to be fixed to guard against the soldiers as others, this is in all such cases a necessary care; you may place guards, but when you do, all is in their power.—*Et quis custodes custodiat—ipsos.*

It seems, that notwithstanding all this care, the seals were broken, and the body gone. If you complain of this, sir, demand satisfaction of your guards. They only are responsible for it. The disciples had no more to do in it than you or I. The guards, the gentleman says, have confessed the truth, and owned that they were asleep, and the disciples in the meantime stole away the body. I wish the guards were in court, I would ask them, how they were so prompt in relating what happened while they were asleep; what induced them to believe that the body was stolen at all? Since they are not to be had, I ask the gentleman the same questions; and whether he has any authorities in point, to shew that ever any man was admitted into any court, as a witness to prove a fact which happened when he was asleep—as this story has no evidence to support it, so neither has it any probability.

The gentleman has given you the character of the disciples, that they were weak, ignorant men, full of the popular prejudices of their country: which stuck close to them, notwithstanding their long acquaintance with their master. The apostles are not much wronged in this account. Is it likely that such men should engage in so desperate a design as to steal away the body, in opposition to the combined

power of the Jews and Romans? What good could the dead body do them? Or if it could have done them any, what hope had they to succeed in their attempt? A dead body is not to be removed by sleight of hand; it requires many hands to remove it. Besides, the great stone at the mouth of the sepulchre was to be removed, which could not be done silently, or by mere walking on tip-toes to prevent discovery; so if the guard had really been asleep, there was no encouragement to go on this enterprise, for it is hardly possible to suppose, but that rolling away the stone, moving the body, the hurry and confusion in carrying it off, must awaken them.

Supposing the thing to have been practicable, the attempt was such as the disciples consistently with their own notions could not undertake. The gentleman says, they continued all their master's lifetime to expect to see him a temporal prince; and a friend of the gentleman's* has observed, what is equally true, that they had the same expectation after his death. Consider their case. Their master was dead; and they are to contrive to steal away his body. For what? Did they expect to make a king of his dead body, if they could get it into their power? Or did they think, if they had it, they could raise it to life again? If they trusted so far to their master's prediction, as to expect his resurrection, could they think the resurrection depended upon the possession of the dead body? It is in all these views absurd; but the gentleman supposes that they meant to carry on the designs for themselves in their master's name, if they could but have persuaded the people he had risen from the dead; but he does not consider, that by this supposition he strips the disciples of every part of their character at once, and presents to us a different set of men from the former in every respect.

* Discourse of the Grounds, page 33.

The former disciples were plain, weak men; according to my opponent, but these are bold, hardy, cunning, and contriving. The former were full of the superstitions of their country, and expected a prince from the authority of their prophets; but these are despisers of the prophets, and of the notions of their countrymen, and are designing men, to turn these fables to their own advantage: for it cannot be supposed that they believed the prophets, and at the same time thought to accomplish, or defeat them, by so manifest a cheat, to which they themselves, at least, were conscious.

Let us take leave of these suppositions and see how true the evidence in the case stands. Guards were placed, and they did their duty; but what are guards against the power of God! An angel of God opened the sepulchre; the guards saw him, and became as dead men. This account they gave to the chief priests; who still persisting in their obstinacy, bribed the guards to tell a contradictory story, of their being asleep and the body stolen.

I cannot but observe to your lordship, that all these circumstances, so much questioned and suspected, were necessary circumstances, supposing the resurrection to be true. The seal was broken, the body came out of the sepulchre, the guards were placed in vain to prevent it; be it so: I desire to know whether the gentleman thinks that the seals put God under covenant; or could prescribe to him a method of performing this great work? Or whether he thinks the guards were placed to maintain the seal, in opposition to the power of God? If he will maintain either of these points, then the opening of the seals, notwithstanding the guard set upon them, will be an evidence, not of the fraud, but of the power of the resurrection; and the guards will have nothing to answer for, but only this, that they were not stronger than God. The seal was a proper check

upon the guards; the Jews had no other meaning in it; they could not be so stupid as to imagine that they could by this contrivance disappoint the designs of Providence. And it is surprising to hear these circumstances made use of to prove the resurrection to be a fraud, which yet could not but happen, supposing the resurrection to be true.

There is another circumstance still, which the gentleman reckons very material, and upon which, I find, great stress is laid. The resurrection happened, we are told, a day sooner than the prediction imported. The reason assigned for it is, that the execution of the plot at the time appointed, was rendered impracticable, because the chief priests, and probably great numbers of the people, were prepared to visit the sepulchre at that time; and therefore the disciples were under the necessity of hastening this plot.

This observation is entirely inconsistent with the supposition upon which the reasoning stands. The gentleman has all along supposed the resurrection to have been managed by fraud, and not by violence. If there had been an opportunity of using violence it would have been insignificant. Beating the guards, and removing the dead body by force, would have destroyed all pretences to a resurrection. Now surely the guards, supposing them not to be sufficient to withstand all violence, were at least sufficient to prevent, or to discover fraud. What occasion to hasten the plot for fear of numbers meeting at the tomb, since there were numbers always present sufficient to discover any fraud; the only method that could be used in the case?

Suppose then we could not give a satisfactory account of the way of reckoning the time from the crucifixion to the resurrection; yet this we can say, that the resurrection happened during the time the guards had the sepulchre in keeping; and it is impos-

sible to imagine what opportunity this could give to fraud. Had the time been delayed, the guards removed, and then a resurrection pretended, it might with some color of reason, have been said, why did he not come within his time? Why did he choose to alter his time, after all the witnesses were withdrawn, who had been patiently awaiting the appointed hour? But what now is objected? You think it too soon, but were not your guards at the door when he came? Did they not see what happened? And what other satisfaction could you have had, supposing he had come a day later?

By saying this, I do not mean to decline the gentleman's objection, which is founded upon a mistake of a way of speaking, common to the Jews and other people, who, when they name any number of days and years, include the first and the last to make up the number of days or years referred to. Christ, alluding to his own resurrection, says, in three days will I raise it up. The angels report his prediction thus, the son of man shall be crucified, and the third day rise again. Elsewhere it is said, after three days; and again that he was to be in the bowels of the earth three days and three nights. Their expressions are equivalent to each other; for we reckon by so many days. If you agree to a thing ten days hence, you stipulate for forbearance for the nights as well as days, and so two days and two nights are the same thing. That the expression, "after three days," means inclusive days, is proved by Grotius on Matthew, xxvii. 63, and by others. The prediction therefore was, that he would rise on the third day. He was crucified on Friday, and buried. He lay in the grave all the Saturday, and rose on Sunday morning. But the gentleman thinks that he ought not to have risen until Monday. Pray try what the use of common language requires to be understood in like case. Suppose you

were told that your friend sickened on Friday, was let blood on Saturday, and the third day he died; what day would you think he died on? If you have any doubt about it, put the question to the first plain man you meet, and he will resolve it. The Jews could have no doubt in this case; for so they practiced in one of the highest points of their law, every male child was to be circumcised on the eighth day. How did they reckon their days? Why, the day of the birth was one, and the day of circumcision another; and though the child was born towards the end of the first day, he was capable of circumcision on any time of the eighth, and therefore it is not new or strange, that the third day, in our case, should be reckoned into the number, though Christ rose at the very beginning of it. It is more strange to reckon whole years in this manner; and yet Ptolemy's Canon, the most valuable of ancient chronology, next to the Bible, now extant, says, "If a king lived over the first day of a year, and died the week after, the whole year is reckoned to his reign."

I have now come through the several objections upon this head. What credit they may gain in this age I know not; but it is plain they had no credit when they were first spread abroad; nay, it is evident that the very persons who set abroad this story of the body being stolen, did not believe it themselves. And not to insist here upon the plain fact, which was, that the guards were hired to tell this lie by the chief priests, it will appear from the after conduct of the chief priests themselves; that they were conscious that the story was false. Not long after the resurrection of Christ, even before those who had murdered him, what did the chief priests do? They seized upon the apostles, they threatened them, they beat them, they scourged them; and all this to stop their mouths, insisting that they should

say no more of the matter. Why did they not, when they had the disciples in their power, charge them directly with their notorious cheat in stealing the body, and expose them to the people as impostors? This had been much more to their purpose, than all their menaces and ill usages; and would more effectually have undeceived the people, but of this not one word is said. They try to murder them, and do actually prevail upon Herod to put one of them to death; but not so much as a charge against them of any fraud in the resurrection. Their orator Tertullus, who could not have missed so fine a topic of declamation, had there been but a suspicion to support it, is quite silent on this head, and is content to flourish on the common-place cry of sedition and heresy, profaning the temple, and the like; very trifles to his cause, in comparison to the other accusations, had there been any ground to make use of it. And yet as it happened, we are sure the very question of the resurrection came under debate; for Festus tells King Agrippa, that the Jews had certain questions against Paul, of one Jesus which was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive. After this, Agrippa hears Paul himself; and had he suspected, much less had he been convinced that there was a cheat in the resurrection, he would hardly have said to Paul at the end of the conference, "almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian."

Let us see what the council and senate of the children of Israel thought of this matter, in the most solemn and serious deliberations they ever had about it. Not long after the resurrection, the apostles were taken; the high priest thought the matter of that weight, that he summoned the council and senate of the children of Israel. The apostles were brought before them, and were permitted to make their defence. Part of the defence is in these words; "The God of our Fathers

raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree." The defence was indeed a heavy one against the senate, and in the warmth of their anger, their first resolution was to slay them all; but Gamaliel, one of the council, stood up, and told them that the matter deserved more consideration. He recounted to them the history of several impostors who had perished, and concluded with respect to the apostles before them; "If their work be of men, it will come to naught; but if it be of God ye cannot overthrow it, lest haply ye be found to fight against God." The council agreed to this advice, and after some ill treatment, the apostles were discharged. I ask now, could Gamaliel have given this advice, and suppose that the hand of God might be with the apostles, if he had known that there was a cheat discovered in the resurrection? Could the senate have followed this advice of Gamaliel's, had they believed the discovery of a cheat? Do you think there was not one man among them wise enough to say,—how can you suppose God to have anything to do in this affair, when the resurrection of Jesus, upon which all depends, was a notorious cheat, and manifestly proved to be so? I should but lessen the weight of this authority by saying more, so will let it rest here, and give way for the gentleman to go on with his accusations.

MR. A.—My lord, we are now to enter upon the last and main article of this case; the nature of the evidence on which the credit of the resurrection stands. Before I enquire into the qualifications of the particular witnesses whose words we are desired to take in this case; I would ask, why this evidence, which manifestly relates to the most essential point of christianity, was not put beyond all exception? Many of the miracles of Christ are said to have been done in the streets, nay, even in the temple, under the observa-

tion of all the world. The like is not so much as pretended as to this; nay, we have it upon the authority of Peter, the ringleader of the apostles, that Christ appeared not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God. (Acts x. 41.) Why picking and culling of witnesses in this case more than any other? Does it not import some suspicion, raise some jealousy, that this case would not bear the public light? I would ask more particularly, why did not Jesus after his resurrection appear openly to the chief priests and rulers of the Jews? Since his commission related to them in an especial manner, why were his credentials not laid before them? The resurrection is acknowledged to be the chief proof of his mission, why then was it concealed from those who were more than all others concerned in the event of his mission? Suppose an ambassador from some foreign prince should come into England, make his public entry through the city, pay and receive visits; and at last, refuse to show any letters of credence, or to wait on the King, what would you think of him? What you think in the one case you must think in the other, for there is no difference between them.

We must take the evidence as it is. It was thought proper in this case, to have select, chosen witnesses; and we must now consider who they were and what reason we have to take their word. The first witness was an angel or angels. They appeared like men to some women who went early to the sepulchre. If they appeared like men, why are we to take them for angels? The women saw men, and therefore can only testify to the seeing men; but I suppose it is the women's judgment and not their evidence that we are to follow in this case. Here then we have the story of one apparition to support the credit of another apparition; and the first apparition hath not even the evidence of the women to

support it, but is grounded upon their superstition, ignorance, and fear. Every country can afford a hundred instances of the kind; and there is this common to them all, that as learning and common sense prevail in any country, they die away and are no more heard of.

The next witnesses are the women themselves. The wisest men can hardly guard themselves against the fears of superstition; poor silly women therefore in this case must needs be unexceptionable witnesses, and fit to be admitted into the number of the chosen witnesses to attest this fact. One part of the account given of them is very rational, that they were surprised and frightened beyond measure; and I leave it to your lordship and the court to judge, how well qualified they were to give a just relation of what passed.

After this, Jesus appeared to two of his disciples as they were upon a journey. He joins them, and introduces a discourse about himself; and spent much time, till it began to grow dark, in expounding the prophecies relating to the death and resurrection of the Messiah; all this while the disciples knew him not.

But going into a house to lodge together, at supper he broke bread, and gave it to them; immediately they knew him; immediately he vanished. Here then are two witnesses more: but what will you call them? Eye witnesses? Why, their eyes were open, and they had their senses, when he reasoned with them and they knew him not. So far, therefore, they are witnesses that it was not he. Tell us, therefore, upon what account you reject the evidence of the senses before the breaking the bread, and insist upon it afterwards? And why did Jesus vanish as soon as known; which has more of the air of an apparition, than of the appearance of a real man restored to life?

Cleopas, who was one of these two disciples, finds out the apostles, to make the report to them of what had passed. No sooner was the story told, than Jesus appears among them. They were all frightened and confounded, and thought they saw a spectre. He rebukes them for infidelity, and their slowness in believing in the prophecies concerning his resurrection: and though he refused before that to let the woman touch him, a circumstance which I ought not to have omitted, he now invites the apostles to handle him, to examine his hands and feet; and search the wounds of the cross. What body was it they examined? The same that came in when the doors were shut; the same that vanished from the two disciples; the same that the woman might not touch; in a word, a body quite different from a human body, which we know cannot pass through walls, or appear or disappear at pleasure. What then could their eyes or hands inform them of in this case? Besides; is it credible that God should raise a body imperfectly, with the very wounds in it of which it died? Or if the wounds were such as destroyed before, how could a natural body subsist with them afterward?

There are more appearances of Jesus recorded, but so much of the same kind, so liable to the same objections, that I will not trouble your lordship and the court with a distinct enumeration of them.

It may seem surprising to you, perhaps, that a matter of this moment was trusted upon such evidence as this: but it will be still more surprising to consider that the several nations who received the gospel, and submitted to the faith of this article had not even this evidence: for what people or nation had the evidence of the angels, the women, or even all of the apostles? So far from it, that every country had its single apostle, and received the faith upon the credit of his evidence

alone. And if you examine the thing to the bottom, our belief was originally built upon the word of one man.

I shall trouble you, sir, with but one observation more, which is this: that although in common life we act in a thousand instances upon the faith and testimony of others; the reason for so doing is not the same in the case before us. In common affairs, a reasonable degree of evidence ought to determine every man. For every possibility of a thing, is a support to the evidence; but when the circumstance testified to is contrary to the order of nature; and, at first sight at least, impossible, what evidence can be sufficient to overturn the constant evidences of nature, which she gives us in the constant method of her operations? If a man tells me he has been to France, I should give a reason for not believing him; but if he tells me that he comes from the grave, what reason can he give why I should believe him? In the case before us, since the body raised from the grave differed from common natural bodies, as we have before seen; how can I be assured that the apostles' senses qualified them to judge of this body, whether it was the same, or not the same which was buried? They handled the body, which yet could pass through doors and walls; they saw it, and sometimes knew it, at other times knew it not. In a word, it seems to be a case exempt from human evidence. Men have limited senses, and a limited reason; and when they act within their limits, we may give credit to them; but when they talk of things removed beyond their reason, we must quit our own, if we believe theirs.

MR. B.—My lord, in answering the objections under this head, I shall change the order in which the gentleman placed them.

He began with complaining, that Christ did not appear publicly to the Jews after his resurrection, and especially to the chief priests and rulers;

and seemed to argue, as if such evidence would have put the matter in question out of all doubt. He concluded, however, with an observation, to prove that no evidence in this case can be sufficient; that a resurrection is a thing in nature impossible, at least impossible to be proved to the satisfaction of any rational enquirer. If this be the case, why does he require more evidence, since none can be sufficient? Or to what purpose is it to vindicate the particular evidence of the resurrection of Christ, so long as this general prejudice, that a resurrection is incapable of being proved, remains unremoved? I am under a necessity therefore to consider this observation in the first place, that it may not lie a dead weight upon all I have to offer in support of the evidence of Christ's resurrection.

The gentleman admits it to be reasonable in many cases to act upon the testimony and credit of others; but this he thinks should be confined to such cases; where the thing testified is probable, possible, and according to the usual courses of nature.

The gentleman does not, I presume, pretend to know the extent of all natural possibilities, much less will he suppose them to be generally known; and therefore his meaning must be, that the testimony of witnesses is to be received only in cases which appear to us to be possible. In any other sense we can have no dispute; for mere impossibilities which can never exist, can never be proved. Taking the observation in this sense, the proposition is this: that the testimony of others is not to be admitted, but in such matters as appear probable or at least possible to our conceptions. For instance: a man who lives in a warm climate and never saw ice, ought upon no evidence whatever, to believe that rivers freeze and grow hard in cold countries; for this would be to such improbable, contrary to the usual course of nature, and

impossible according to his notion of things, and yet we all know such is the case. Now what has the gentleman said, upon this occasion, against the resurrection, more than any man might say, who never saw ice, against an hundred witnesses, who assert that water turns to ice in cold climates.

It is very true, that men do not so easily believe upon the testimony of others, things which to them seem improbable; but the reason is not, because the thing itself admits of no evidence, but because the hearers' preconceived notions outweigh the credit of the reporter, and makes his veracity to be called in question.

Now suppose a man should tell you that he was come from the dead: you would be apt to suspect his evidence; but what would you suspect? That he was not alive when you heard him, saw him, felt him, and conversed with him? You could not suspect this, without giving up all your senses, and acting in this case as you act in no other; but you would question whether the man had ever been dead. Would you say, that it is incapable of being made plain by human testimony, that this or that man died a year ago? It cannot be said. Evidence in this case is admitted in all courts perpetually.

Consider it the other way. Suppose you saw a man publicly executed, his body afterward wounded by the executioner, and carried and laid in the grave; that after this you should be told, that the man had come to life again: what would you suspect in this case? Not that the man had never been dead; for that you saw yourself; but you would suspect whether he was now alive. Would you say, this case excludes all human testimony; and that men could not at all discern, whether one with whom they conversed familiarly, was alive or no? Upon what grounds could you say this? A man rising from the grave is an object of sense, and can give the same evi-

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dence of his being alive, as any other man in the world can give, so that a resurrection considered only as a fact to be proved by evidence, is a plain case; it requires no greater ability in the witnesses, than that they be able to distinguish between a man dead, and a man alive; a point, in which a man, every man, I believe, considers himself a judge.

I admit that this case, and others of like nature, require more evidence to give them credit than ordinary cases do, you may therefore require more evidence in these than in other cases; but it is absurd to say, that such cases admit no evidence, when the things in question are manifestly objects of sense.

I admit further, that the gentleman has rightly stated the difficulty upon the foot of common prejudice; and that it rises from hence, that such cases appear to be contrary to the course of nature. I desire him to consider what the course of nature is. Every man, from the lowest countryman to the highest philosopher, frames to himself from his experience and observation, a notion of the course of nature; and is ready to say of every thing reported to him that contradicts his experience, that it is contrary to nature; but will the gentleman say that everything is impossible, or even improbable, that contradicts the notion which these men form to themselves of the course of nature? I think he will not say it, and if he will, he must say that water can never freeze, for it is absolutely inconsistent with the notions which men have of the course of nature, who live in the warm climates. Hence it appears, that when men talk of the course of nature, they really talk of their own prejudices and imaginations, and that sense and reason are not so much concerned in the case as the gentleman imagines. I ask, is it from the evidence of use, or reason, that people of warm climates think it contrary to nature, that water should grow solid and be-

come ice? As for sense, they see indeed that water with them is always liquid, but none of their senses tell them that it can never grow solid. As for reason, it can never so inform them, for right reason can never contradict the truth of things. Our senses then inform us rightly what the usual course of things is; but when we conclude that things cannot be otherwise, we outrun the information of our sense, and the conclusion stands upon prejudice, and not upon reason. Such conclusions form what is generally called the course of nature; and when men upon evidence and information admit things contrary to this presupposed course of nature, they do not, as the gentleman expresses it, quit their own sense and reason, but, in truth, they quit their own mistakes and prejudices.

In the case before us, the case of the resurrection, the great difficulty arises from the like prejudice. We all know by experience that all men die, and rise no more, therefore we conclude, that for a dead man to rise to life again, is contrary to the course of nature: and certainly it is contrary to the settled course of things. But if we argue from hence, that it is repugnant to the real laws of nature, and impossible on that account, we argue without any foundation to support us either from our senses or our reason. We cannot learn from our eyes, or feelings, or any other sense, that it is impossible for a dead body to rise again. If we learn it at all, it must be from our reason; and yet what one maxim of reason is contradicted by the supposition of a resurrection? For my own part, when I consider how I live; that all the animal motions necessary to my life are independent of my will; that my heart beats without my consent, and without my directions; that digestion and nutrition are performed by methods to which I am not conscious; that my

blood moves in a perpetual round; which is contrary to all known laws of motion, I cannot but think that the preservation of my life, in every moment of it, is as great an act of power as is necessary to raise the dead. Whoever reflects upon his own being, and acknowledges that he owes it to a superior power, must needs think that the same power which gave life to senseless matter at first, and set all the springs and movements going at the beginning, can restore life to a dead body. For surely it is not a greater thing to give life to a body once dead, than to a body that never was alive.

In the next place must be considered the difficulties which the gentleman has laid before you with regard to Christ's body after the resurrection. He has produced some passages which, he thinks imply, that the body was not a real or natural body, but a mere phantom or apparition: and thence concludes, that being no real object of sense, there can be no evidence in the case.

Presumptions are of no weight against positive evidence; and every account of the resurrection assures us, that the body of Christ was seen, felt, and handled by several persons, who were called upon by Christ so to do, that they might be assured he had flesh and bones, and was not a mere spectre, as they, in their first surprise, imagined him to be. It is impossible that they, who give this account, should mean by anything that they report, to imply that he had no real body. It is certain then, that when the gentleman makes use of what they say to this purpose, he uses their sayings contrary to their meaning; for it is not pretended that they say, that Christ had not a real body after the resurrection; nor is it pretended they had any such thoughts, except only upon the first surprise of seeing him, and before they had examined him with their eyes and hands; but something they have said, which

the gentleman, according to his notions of philosophy, thinks, implies that the body was not real. To clear this point, therefore, I must lay before you the passages referred to, and consider how justly the gentleman reasons from them.

The first passage relates to Mary Magdalene, who, the first time she saw Jesus, was going to embrace his feet, as the custom of the country was. Christ said to her, "touch me not, for I have not yet ascended to my father, but go to my brethren and tell them," &c.—John xx. 17. From this verse the gentleman concludes, that Christ's body was not such a one as would bear the touch; but how does he infer this? Is it from these words, "Touch me not?" It cannot be: for thousands say it every day, without giving the least suspicion that their bodies are not capable of being touched. The conclusion then must be built upon those other words, "for I have not yet ascended to my father." What have these words to do with the reality of his body? It might or might not be real, for anything that is then said. There is a difficulty in these words, and it may be hard to give the true sense of them; but there is no difficulty in seeing that they have no relation to the nature of Christ's body: for of his body nothing is said. The natural sense of the place, as I collect by comparing this passage with Matt. xxviii. 9, is this: Mary Magdalene, upon seeing Jesus, fell at his feet, and laid hold of them, and held them as if she meant not to let them go. Christ said to her, "Touch me not, or hang not about me now, you will have other opportunities of seeing me, for I go not yet to my father; lose no time then, but go quickly with my message to my brethren." I am not concerned to support this particular interpretation of the passage; it is sufficient to my purpose, to show that the words cannot possibly relate to the nature of Christ's body one way or other.

The next passage relates to Christ's
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joining two of his disciples upon the road, and conversing with them without being known by them: it grew dark, they pressed him to stay with them that night; he went in with them, broke bread, blessed it, and gave it to them, and then they knew him; and immediately he disappeared.

I shall now examine the other part of this story, and enquire whether they afford any ground to conclude that the body of Christ was not a real one. Had this history been related of any other person, I think no such suspicion could have arisen; for what is there unnatural in this account? Two men meet an acquaintance whom they thought dead; they converse with him for some time without knowing who he was: the very persuasion of his being dead which they held, contributed greatly to their not knowing him; besides, he appeared in a habit and form different from what he used when he conversed with them; he appeared to them on a journey, and walked with them side by side; in which situation no one of the company has a full view of each other. Afterward, when they were at supper together and the lights brought in, they plainly discerned who he was. Upon this occasion, the gentleman asks what sort of witnesses these are; eye witnesses? No. Before supper they were eye witnesses, says the gentleman, that the person whom they saw was not Christ; and then he demands a reason for our rejecting the evidence of their senses when they did not know Christ, and insisting on it when they did.

It is no uncommon thing for men to catch themselves and others by such acute questions, and to be led out of the road of truth and common sense. I beg leave to tell the gentleman a short story, and then ask him his own question. A certain gentleman who had been some years abroad, happened in his return to England through Paris to meet his own sister there. She not expecting to see him there, nor he to

see her, they conversed together with other company, at a public house, for a great part of a day, without knowing each other. At last the lady began to show signs of disorder; and could hardly be held from fainting, when she cried out, "Oh my brother!" Suppose now this lady were to depose upon oath in a court of justice, that she saw her brother at Paris; I would ask the gentleman, whether he would object to the evidence, and say that she was as good an eye witness that her brother was not there, as that he was; and demand of the court, why they rejected the evidence of her senses when she did not know her brother, and were ready to believe it when she did? When the question is answered in this case, I desire only to have the benefit of it in the case now before you. If you shall be of opinion that there was some extraordinary power used on this occasion, and incline to think that the expression, (their eyes were holden), imports as much; then the case will fall under the next article, in which we are to consider Christ's vanishing out of sight; his going out and coming in when the doors were shut, and such like passages; which, as they fall under one consideration, so shall I speak to them together.

It is necessary to see first what the apostles distinctly affirm in their accounts of these facts; for I think there has been more said for them, than they ever said for themselves. In one place, (Luke xxiv. 31), it is said he vanished out of their sight, which translation is corrected in our bible or the margin, thus "he ceased to be seen of them." And the original imports no more.

It is said in another place, that the disciples being together, and the doors shut, Jesus came and stood in the midst of them. How he came is not said; much less is it said that he came through the door, or the key hole; and for anything that is said to the contrary, he might come in at the door,

though the disciples saw not the door open, nor him, till he was in their midst. The gentleman thinks these passages prove that the disciples saw no real body, but an apparition. I am afraid the gentleman after all his contempt of apparitions, and the superstitions on which they are founded, is fallen into the snare himself, and arguing upon no better principles than the common notions which the vulgar have of apparitions. Why else does he imagine these passages to be inconsistent with the reality of Christ's body? Is there no way for a real body to disappear? Try the experiment now? Do but put out the candles and we shall all disappear; so intercepting the rays of light from any particular body would make that disappear. Perhaps something like this was the case; or perhaps something else, of which we know nothing. Be the case what it will, the gentleman's conclusions are not founded on true philosophy: for it does not follow that a body is not real, because I lose sight of it suddenly. I shall be told perhaps, that this way of accounting for these passages, is as wonderful, and as much out of the common course of things, as the other. Perhaps so; and what then? Surely the gentleman does not expect, that in order to prove the reality of the greatest miracle that ever was, I should show there was nothing very remarkable or miraculous in it, but the thing happened according to the ordinary course of things? My only concern is to show, that these passages do not infer that the body of Christ after the resurrection was no real body. I wonder the gentleman did not go further in his argument, and prove that Christ, before his death, had no real body; for we read, that when the multitude would have thrown him down a precipice, he went through the midst of them unseen. Nothing happened after his resurrection more unaccountable than this that happened before it; and if the argument be good

at all, it will be good to prove there never was such a man as Jesus in the world

Hitherto we have been called upon to prove the reality of Christ's body, that it was the same after the resurrection as before; but the next objection complains, that the body was too much the same with that which was buried: for the gentleman thinks it had the same wounds open and uncured, of which it died. This idea is based upon the words used to Thomas: "Reach hither thy hand and thrust it into my side."—John xx. 27.

Is it here affirmed that Thoms actually put his hands into the wounds, and saw them fresh and bleeding? Nothing like it. It is supposed from the words of Christ; for if he had no wounds, he would not have told Thomas to probe them. Now the meaning of Christ will best appear by the account of the occasion he had to use this speech. He had appeared to his disciples, in the absence of Thomas, and shown them his feet and hands, which still had the imprint of the nails: the disciples report this to Thomas; he thought the thing impossible, and expressed his unbelief, as men are apt to do when they are positive, in a very extravagant manner. "You say you have seen the print of the nails; I will not believe it, except I put my finger in the print of the nails, and thrust my hands into his side." In the first place, there is nothing said of open wounds; Thomas talks only of putting his finger into the print, that is, the scar of the nails, and of thrusting his hand into his side; and in common speech to thrust a hand into any one's side, does not signify to thrust it through the side into the bowels.

Upon this interpretation of the words, which is a plain and material one, the gentleman's objection is quite gone; but suppose Thomas to mean what the gentleman means; in that

case the Savior's words are a severe reproach to him for his infidelity : here says Christ, are my hands and my side; take the satisfaction you require, repeating to him his own words, and calling him to his own conditions; which to a man beginning to see his extravagance, is of all rebuke the severest.

Such forms of speech are used on many occasions, and are never understood to import that the thing proposed is proper, or always practicable.

When the Grecian women reproached their sons with cowardice, and calling to them as they were flying from the enemy, to come and hide them once more, like children as they were in their mothers' wombs; he would have been ridiculous who had asked the question, whether the women really thought that they could take their sons into their wombs again.

I have now gone through the objections which were necessary to be removed before I could state the evidence in this case. I am sensible that I have taken up too much of your time; but I have this to say in excuse; that objections built upon popular notions and prejudices, are easily conveyed to the mind in a few words; and so conveyed make strong impressions: but whosoever answers the objection, must encounter all the notions to which they are allied, and to which they owe their strength, and it is well if with many words he can find admittance.

I come now to consider the evidence on which our belief of the resurrection stands; and here I am stopped again, a general exception is taken to the evidence, that it is imperfect, unfair; and a question is asked, why did not Christ appear publicly to all the people, especially to the magistrates? Why were some witnesses culled out, and others excluded? It may perhaps be sufficient to say, that where there are witnesses enough, no judge, no jury complain for want of more; and, therefore, if the witnesses we have are sufficient,

it is no objection that we have not others, and more. If three credible men attest a will, which are as many as the law requires, would any body ask, why were not all the town called to set their hands? But why were these witnesses culled and chosen out? Why? For this reason, that they might be good ones. Does not every wise man choose proper witnesses to his deed and to his will? And does not a good choice of witnesses give strength to every deed? How comes it to pass then, that the very thing which shuts out all suspicion in other cases, should in this case only, be of all others, the most suspicious thing itself?

What reason there is to make any complaints on behalf of the Jews, may be judged, in part, from what has already appeared. Christ suffered openly in their sight; and they were so well apprised of his prediction that he should rise again, that they set a guard on his sepulchre; and from their guards they learned the truth. Every soldier was to them a witness, of the resurrection, of their own choosing. After this, they had not *one* apostle, (which the gentleman observes was the case of other people), but *all* the apostles, and many other witnesses with them, and in their power. The apostles testified the resurrection to them; not only to the people, but to the ELDERS OF ISRAEL, assembled in senate. To support their evidence, they were enabled to work, and did work miracles openly in the name of Christ. These people therefore, have the least reason to complain; and had of all others the fullest evidence, and in some respects such as none but themselves could have, for they only were keepers of the sepulchre. I believe, if the gentleman were to choose an evidence to his own satisfaction in the like case, he would desire no more than to keep the sepulchre, with a number of guards.

The argument goes still further. It is said that Jesus was sent with a

special mission to the Jews; that he was their Messiah; and as his resurrection was his main credential, he ought to have appeared publicly to the rulers of the Jews after his resurrection; that in doing otherwise, he acted like an ambassador pretending authority from his prince but refusing to show his letters of credence.

I was afraid, when I suffered myself to be drawn into this argument, that I should be led into matters fitter to be decided by men of another profession, than by lawyers; but since there is no help now, I will lay before you what appears to me to be the natural and plain account of this matter; leaving it to others, who are better qualified, to give a fuller answer to the objection.

It appears to me, by the accounts we have of Jesus, that he had two distinct offices: one, as the Messiah particularly promised to the Jews; another, as he was to be the great high priest of the world. With respect to the first office, he is called (Heb. iii 1st) the apostle of the Hebrews; (Romans xv. 8); the minister of the circumcision; and of himself, he says, (Matt. xv. 24), "I am not sent, but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Accordingly when he sent out his apostles in his life-time to preach, he expressly forbids them to go to the Gentiles or Samaritans; but says, (Matt. x. 5, 6,) "go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Christ continued in the discharge of this office during the time of his natural life, till he was finally rejected by the Jews. And it is observable, that the last time he spoke to the people, according to Matthew's account, he solemnly took leave of them, and closed his commission. He had been long among them publishing glad tidings; but when all his preachings, all his miracles, had proved to be in vain, the last thing he did was to denounce the woes they had brought upon themselves. The twenty-third chapter of Matthew recites these woes; and at

the end of his denunciations Christ takes this passionate leave of Jerusalem:

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how oft would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."

It is remarkable, that this passage, as recorded by Matthew and Luke twice over, is determined, by the circumstances, to refer to the near approach of his own death, and the extreme hatred of the Jews to him: and therefore those words, "Ye shall not see me henceforth," are to be dated from the time of his death.

Let me now ask, whether, in this state of things, any farther credentials of Christ's mission to the Jews could be demanded or expected? He was rejected, and with that rejection, the fate of the nation was determined also. What use then of more credentials? As to appearing to them after his resurrection, he could not do it consistently with his own prediction; "ye shall see me no more, till ye shall say blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." The Jews were not in this disposition after the resurrection, nor are they in that position yet.

The resurrection was the foundation of Christ's new commission, which extended to all the world. Then it was that he declared all power was given to him; through which power he delegated his disciples, to teach all nations. Since then, this commission, of which the resurrection was the foundation, extended to all the world alike. What ground is there to demand special and particular evidence to the Jews? The Emperor and Senate of Rome were a much more considerable part of the world, than the chief priests and the synagogue. Why does the gentleman object then, that Christ did not show

himself to Tiberius and his senate? And, as all men have an equal right in this case, why may not the same demand be made for every country: nay, for every age? Then the gentleman may bring the question nearer home, and ask, why Christ did not appear in England in King George's reign.

There is, to my apprehension, nothing more unreasonable, than to neglect and despise plain and sufficient evidence before us, and to sit down to imagine what kind of evidence would have pleased us; and then to make the want of such evidence an objection to the truth; which yet, if well considered, would be found to be well established.

The observation I have made upon the resurrection of Christ, naturally leads to another; which will help to account for the nature of the evidence we have on this great point. As the resurrection was the opening of a new commission, in which all the world had an interest; so the concern naturally was, to have a proper evidence to establish this truth, and which should be of equal weight to all. This did not depend upon the satisfaction given to private persons, but upon the conviction of those whose office it was to be to bear testimony to this truth in the world. In this sense, the apostles were chosen to be witnesses of the resurrection, because they were chosen to bear witness of it to the world; and not because they were admitted to see Christ after his resurrection; for the fact is otherwise. The gospel indeed designed to show the evidence on which the faith of the world was to rest, is very particular in setting forth the ocular demonstration which the apostles had of the resurrection; and mentions others, who saw Christ after his resurrection, only accidentally, and as the thread of the history led to it.

It is certain that there were many others who had this satisfaction as well as the apostles. St. Luke xxiv. 33 tells us, that when Christ appeared to

the eleven apostles, there were others with them. Who they were, or how many there were, he says not; but it appears in the Acts, that when an apostle was to be chosen in the room of Judas; and the chief qualification required was that he should be one capable of being a witness of the resurrection; that there were present an hundred and twenty so qualified. And St. Paul says, (Acts i. compare verses 15, 21, 22,) that Christ after his rising was seen by five hundred at once, many of whom were living when he appealed to their evidence. The gentleman is therefore mistaken, when he imagines that a few only were chosen to see Christ after he came from the grave. The truth of the matter is, that out of those who saw him, some were chosen to bear testimony to the world, and for that reason had the fullest demonstration of the truth, that they might be the better able to give satisfaction to others. What was there in this line of conduct to complain of? What to raise any jealousy or suspicion?

As to the witnesses themselves; the first the gentleman takes notice of, are the angels and the women. The mention of angels led naturally to apparitions; and the women were called silly women; and there is an end of their evidence. But to speak seriously: will the gentleman attempt to prove that there are no intelligent beings between God and man; or that they are not ministers of God; or that they were improperly employed in this great and wonderful work, the resurrection of Christ? Till some of these points are disproved, we may be at rest; for the angels were ministers, and not witnesses of the resurrection.

It is not upon the credit of the poor silly women that we believe angels were concerned in it, but upon the report of those who wrote the gospels, who deliver it as a truth known to themselves, and not merely as a report taken from the women.

For the women, what shall I say? Silly as they were, I hope at least they had eyes and ears, and could tell what they heard and saw. In this case they tell no more. They report that the body was not in the sepulchre; but so far from reporting the resurrection, it appears that they did not believe it, and were very anxious to find to what place the body was removed. Further, they were not employed; for, I think, the gentleman in another part observes rightly, that they were not sent to bear witness to any people. But, suppose them to be witnesses,—suppose them to be improper ones; the evidence of the men is not the worse, because some women saw the same things which they saw. If men only must be admitted, of them we have enough to establish the truth.

I will not spend your time in enumerating these witnesses, or in setting forth the demonstration they had of the truth which they report. These things are well known. If you question their sincerity; they lived miserably, and died the same, for the sake of the this truth. What greater evidence can a man give or require? And what is still more, they were not deceived in their expectations in being ill treated; for he who employed them, told them before hand, that the world would hate them, and treat them with contempt and cruelty.

Leaving these weighty and well known circumstances to your own reflection, I beg leave to lay before you another evidence, passed over in silence by the gentleman on the other side. He took notice that a resurrection was so extraordinary a thing, that no human evidence could support it. I am not sure that he is not in the right. If twenty men were to come into England with such a report from a distant country, perhaps they might not find twenty more here to believe their story; and I rather think the gentleman may be in the right, because in the present case I

see clearly, that the credit of the resurrection of Christ was not trusted to mere human evidence. To what evidence it was trusted, we find by his own declaration: "The spirit of truth which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me; and ye also [his apostles] shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning."—John xv. 26, 27. Therefore, though the apostles had conversed with him forty days after his resurrection, and had received his commission to go and teach all nations, he expressly forbids them from entering upon the work of the ministry, until they should receive power from above. St. Peter explains the evidence of the resurrection in this manner: "We [the apostles] are his witnesses of those things, and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them who obey him."—Acts v. 32.

What were the powers received by the apostles? Were they not the powers of wisdom and courage, by which they were enabled to appear before rulers and princes in the name of Christ?—The power of miracles, even raising the dead to life, by which they convinced the world that God was with them in what they said and did?

With respect to this evidence, St. John says, "If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater."—1 John v. 9. Add to this, that the apostles had the power to communicate these gifts unto others, even believers. Can you wonder that men believed the reality of those powers of which they were partakers, and became conscious to themselves? With respect to these communicated powers, I suppose St. John speaks, when he says, "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself."—1 John v. 10. Appealing not to an inward testimony of the Spirit, in the sense of some modern enthusiasts, but to the powers of the Spirit, which believers received,

and which were seen in the effects which followed.

It was objected that the apostles separated themselves to the work of the ministry, and one went into one country, another to another; and consequently, that the testimony of the resurrection, and the belief in it was originally received every where upon the testimony of one witness.

I will not examine this stated fact: suppose it to be so. Did this one witness go alone, when he was attended with the powers of heaven? Was not every blind man who was restored to sight, and every lame man who was enabled to walk, a new witness to the truth reported by the first? Besides, when the people of different countries came to compare notes, and found that they had all received the same account of Christ, and of his doctrines; then surely the evidence of these distant witnesses thus united, became stronger than if they had told their story together; for twelve men apart and separately examined, testifying to one and the same thing, form a much stronger proof for the truth of any fact, than twelve men who have never been separated agreeing together in one story.

If the same thing were to happen in our own time: if one or two were to come into this country, and report that a man was raised from the dead; and in consequence of it, teach nothing but that we ought to love God and our neighbor: if to confirm their report, they should, before our eyes, cure the blind, the deaf, the lame, and even raise the dead to life; if endowed with all these powers, they should live in poverty and distress, and patiently submit to all that scorn, contempt, and malice could contrive to distress them; and at last sacrifice even their lives in justification of the truth of their report; if upon enquiry we should find that all the countries in Europe had received the same account, supported by the same

marvels and attested in like manner by the sufferings, and confirmed by the blood of the witnesses: I would fain ask what any reasonable man would do in this case? Would he despise such evidence? I think he would not; and whoever thinks otherwise, must say, that a resurrection, though in its own nature possible, is yet such a thing, in which we ought not to believe God or man.

JUDGE.—Have you done sir?

MR. B.—Yes, my lord.

JUDGE.—Go on Mr. A., if you have anything to say in reply.

Mr. A.—My lord, I shall trouble you with very little. The objections and answers under this head, I shall leave to the judgment of the court; and beg leave only to make an observation or two upon the last part of the gentleman's argument.

First, with respect to the sufferings of the disciples of Jesus; and the argument drawn from thence for the truth of their doctrines and assertions. I beg leave to observe to you, that there is not a false religion, or pretence in the world, but can produce the same authority, and show many instances of men, who have suffered even to death for the truth of their several professions. If we consult only modern story, we shall find Papists suffering for popery, Protestants for their religion; and among the Protestants, every sect has had its martyrs: Quakers, Puritans, Fifth Monarchy Men, &c. In Henry the Eighth's time, England saw both Popish and Protestant martyrs. In Queen Mary's reign the rage fell upon Protestants. In queen Elizabeth's, Papists and Puritans were called sometimes, though rarely, to this trial. In later times, sometimes churchmen, sometimes dissenters, were persecuted. What must we say then? All these sufferers had not truth with them; and yet, if there be any weight in this argument from suffering, they have a right to plead it.

I may be told, perhaps, that men by their sufferings, though they do not prove their doctrine to be true, yet they prove at least their own sincerity: as if it were impossible for men to dissemble at the point of death! Alas! how many instances are there of men denying facts plainly proved, asserting facts plainly disproved even with the rope about their necks? Must all such pass for innocent sufferers,—sincere men? If not, it must be admitted, that a man's word at the point of death is not always to be relied on. Another observation I would make, is with respect to the evidence of the spirit, on which so much stress is laid. It has been hitherto insisted on, that the resurrection was a matter of fact, and such a fact, as was capable and proper to be supported by the evidence of sense. How comes it about, that this evidence, this which is the proper evidence, is given up as insufficient, and a new improper evidence introduced. Is it not surprising, that one great miracle should want a hundred more to prove it? Every miracle is an appeal to sense, and therefore admits of no evidence but that of sense. There is no connection between a miracle done this year and last year; it does not follow therefore, because Peter cured a lame man, (admitting that he did), that therefore Christ rose from the dead.

But yielding the gentleman all that he demands, what is it to us? They who had the witness within them, did perhaps very well to consult him, and to take his word; but how am I, or others who have not the witness in us, the better for it? If the first ages of the church saw all the wonders related by the gentleman, and believed, it shows at least, in his opinion, that this strong evidence was necessary to create the belief he requires. Why then does he require this belief of us, who have not this evidence.

Now, my lord, I think my views of the resurrection have been clearly made

out, I shall therefore leave it in the hands of the jury, to give their verdict, feeling sure that their verdict will be in my favor.

JUDGE.—Gentlemen of the jury. The question before you is, whether the witnesses of the resurrection of Christ are or are not guilty of giving false evidence.

Two sorts of objections, or accusations, are brought against them. One charges fraud and deceit on the transaction itself; the other charges that the evidence is forged, and insufficient to support the credit of so extraordinary an event.

To adjust this difficulty, I must observe to you, that the evidence now under consideration, was not a private evidence of the spirit, or any inward light, like to that which the Quakers in our time pretend to; but an evidence appearing in the manifest and visible works of the Spirit: and this evidence was capable of being transmitted, and actually has been transmitted to us upon unquestionable authority: and to admit the evidence to have been good in the first ages, and not in this, seems to me to be a contradiction to the rules of reasoning; for if we see enough to judge that the first ages had reason to believe, we must needs see at the same time, that it is reasonable for us also to believe. As the present question relates only to the nature of the evidence, it was not necessary to produce from history the instances to show in how plentiful a manner this evidence was granted to the church. Whoever wants this satisfaction, may easily have it.

Gentlemen of the jury, you have had laid before you the substance of what has been said on both sides. You are now to consider of it and give your verdict.

The jury consulted together, and the foreman arose and said.

FOREMAN.—My lord, we are ready to give our verdict.

JUDGE.—Are you all agreed?	in the case of the resurrection of Jesus,
JURY.—Yes.	or not guilty?
JUDGE.—Who shall speak for you?	FOREMAN.—Not guilty.
JURY.—Our foreman.	JUDGE.—Very well. And now,
JUDGE.—What say you? Are the	gentlemen, I resign my commission,
apostles guilty of giving false evidence	and remain your humble servant.

THE RESURRECTION.

Sad was the day when the Savior was buried,
 Dark hung the clouds o'er the City of God;
 Weeping, the grief-laden women who tarried
 Near to the way which a brother had trod.

Harsh were the woes which Jerusalem felt,
 When Jesus, bowed low to the power of death;
 But sadder the woe when disciples were knelt,
 And prayed but for strength with sigh-laden breath.

Weep, weep for thy hopes seem broken and dead;
 Rests now thy Lord in the grasp of the grave,—
 What meaneth the angel—'The Savior hath fled?'
 Ah! risen—Redeemer—his people to save!

Hark! 'Tis the shout of the cohorts of heaven,
 Jesus has broken the power of death;
 Man though once lost to the glory of Eden,
 May live once again with God-given breath.

'Come then, our Lord, with the keys of the Prison;
 Loosen the bonds which thy people enfold;
 'Then when thy witnesses all have arisen,*
 Bless with one Shepherd, one people one fold.

J.

EPITOME OF THE FAITH AND DOCTRINES

OF THE

REORGANIZED CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER DAY SAINTS.

We believe in God the Eternal Father, and in His Son Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost. Matt. 28:19. 1 John 1:3. St. John 11:26.

We believe that men will be punished for their own sins, and not for Adam's transgression. Ecc. 12:14. Matt. 16:27. 1 Cor. 3:13. Rev. 20:12-15.

We believe that through the atonement of Christ, all men may be saved, by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the gospel. 1 Cor. 15:3. 2 Tim. 1:10. Rom. 8:1-6.

We believe that these ordinances are:

(1st.) Faith in God and in the Lord Jesus Christ. Heb. 11:6. 1 Peter 1:21. 1 Tim. 4:10. John 3:16, 18, 36. Mark 11:22. John 14:1.

(2d.) Repentance. Matt. 3:2, 8, 11. Luke 13:3; 24:47. Ezek. 18:30. Mark 1:5, 15. Acts 2:38. Romans 2:4. 2 Cor. 7:10.

(3rd.) Baptism by immersion, for the remission of sins. Matt. 3:13-15. Mark 1:4, 5. Luke 3:3. John 3:5. Acts 2:38; 22:16; 2:41; 6:12, 37, 38. Mark 16:16. Col. 2:12. Romans 6:4, 5. John 3:23. Acts 8:38, 39.

(4th.) Laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost. Deut. 34:9. John 20:21, 22. Acts 8:17; 19:6. 1 Tim. 4:14. Acts 9:17. 1 Cor. 12:3. Acts 19:1-6.

(5th.) We believe in the Resurrection of the Body; that the dead in Christ will rise first, and the rest of the dead will not live again until the thousand years are expired. Job 19:25, 26. Dan. 12:2. 1 Cor. 15:42. 1 Thess. 4:16. Rev. 20:6. Acts 17:31. Phil. 3:21. John 11:24. Isaiah 26:19. Ps. 17:15.

(6th.) We believe in the doctrine of Eternal Judgment, which provides that men shall be judged, rewarded, or punished, according to the degree of good, or evil, they shall have done. Rev. 20:12. Ecc. 3:17. Matt. 16:27. 2 Cor. 5:10. 2 Peter 2:4, 13, 17.

We believe that a man must be Called of God, and ordained by the Laying on of Hands of those who are in authority, to entitle him to preach the Gospel, and Administer in the Ordinances thereof. Heb. 5:1, 5, 6, 8. Acts 1:24, 25; 14:23. Eph. 4:11. John 15:16.

We believe in the same kind of organization that existed in the primitive church, viz: Apostles, Prophets, Pastors, Teachers, Evangelists, &c. 1 Cor. 12:28. Matt. 10:1. Acts 6:4. Eph. 4:11; 2:20. Titus 1:5.

We believe that in the Bible is contained the word of God, so far as it is translated correctly. We believe that the canon of scripture is not full, but that God, by His Spirit, will continue to reveal His word to man until the end of time. Job 32:8. He-

brews 13:9. Proverbs 29:18. Amos 3:7. Jeremiah 23:4; 31:31, 34; 33:6. Psalms 85:10, 11. Luke 17:26. Rev. 14:6; 7; 19:10.

We believe in the powers and gifts of the everlasting gospel, viz: the gift of faith, discerning of spirits, prophecy, revelation, visions, healing, tongues, and the interpretation of tongues, wisdom, charity, brotherly love, &c. 1 Cor. 12:1-11; 14:26. John 14:24. Acts 2:3. Mat. 28:19, 20. Mark 16:16.

We believe that Marriage is ordained of God; and that the law of God provides for but one companion in wedlock, for either man or woman,—except in cases where the contract of marriage is broken by death or transgression. Genesis 2:18, 21-24; 7:1, 7, 13. Proverbs 5:15-21. Malachi 2:14, 15. Matthew 19:4-6. 1 Cor. 7:2. Hebrews 13:4. Doctrine and Covenants, sec. 42:7; 49:3.

We believe that the doctrines of a plurality and a community of wives are heresies, and are opposed to the law of God. Gen. 4:19, 23, 24; 7:9; 22:2, in connection Gal. 4th and 5th c. Gen. 21:8-10. Mal. 2:14, 15. Matt. 19:3-9. The BOOK OF MORMON says: "Wherefore, my brethren, hear me, and hearken to the word of the Lord: For there shall not any man among you have save it be ONE WIFE, and concubines he shall have none, for I, the Lord God, delighteth in the chastity of women. And whoredoms are an abomination before me, saith the Lord of hosts."—Jacob 2:6, 7, 8, 9.

We believe that in all matters of controversy upon the duty of man toward God, and in reference to preparation and fitness for the world to come, the word of God should be decisive and the end of dispute; and that when God directs, man should obey.

We believe that the religion of Jesus Christ, as taught in the New Testament Scriptures, will, if its precepts are accepted and obeyed, make men and women better in the domestic circle, and better citizens of town, county and state, and consequently better fitted for the change which cometh at death.

We believe that men should worship God in "Spirit and in truth;" and that such worship does not require a violation of the constitutional law of the land. John 4:21-24. Doctrine and Covenants, sec. 58, par. 5.

We claim the privilege of worshipping Almighty God according to the dictates of our conscience, and allow all men the same privilege, let them worship how, where, or what they may.