

# Theology on the Web.org.uk

*Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible*

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

---

A table of contents for *Bibliotheca Sacra* can be found here:

[https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles\\_bib-sacra\\_01.php](https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_bib-sacra_01.php)

## ARTICLE III.

THE TESTIMONY OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO  
THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST.

BY MR. WILLIAM HOULISTON,  
MINNEAPOLIS, MINN.

THE testimony of Paul to the fact of Christ's bodily resurrection differs from all other testimony relating to it, in two very essential points which give to it its peculiar force, and against which the common objections and arguments of the skeptic or critic do not apply, and fall impotently to the ground.

The first point of difference is that the writings of Paul are not history or a mere record of events, that they are not written as such nor with any such purpose in view; and this is of tremendous importance in the discussion. Many motives may operate upon the mind of the historian in the narration of events to prompt or incline him, consciously or unconsciously, to exaggerate, misstate, or utterly to misrepresent or falsify facts. He may be prejudiced, his mind may have a bias in a certain direction; he may even be hostile to the facts in the case. He usually has a philosophy of events or of history to which he is apt to be wedded, and in behalf of which he may be easily tempted to distort, to suppress, or even to deny a fact.

The historian is also liable to be influenced by a desire to interest his readers, to inflame their imagination and excite their wonder. There are few historians who have escaped

criticism on some or all of these points. In short, the motive of self-interest is at least liable to obtrude itself, and influence the statements of the historian either in the coloring of the facts or in their actual substance.

But Paul's writings are letters, not history, and as such not exposed to these influences or open to such criticism. Moreover, they were intended for and written directly to his contemporaries; and this is our second point in support of the peculiar validity and force of his testimony. The men or churches to whom the letters were written were in a position to know and appreciate the character of the writer, his ability, and the validity and trustworthiness of his statement of facts. They can also be reasonably presumed to have been more or less conversant with contemporaneous events, and with the happenings and the popular talk current within a period not exceeding twenty-five or twenty-six years before the first letter to the Corinthians was written, in which Paul's chief testimony to the event appears, and within this period the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ had occurred; for the crucifixion occurred in A.D. 33, and the letter was written in A.D. 59. Furthermore, those to whom the letter was addressed had access at the time, either by letter or in person, to the little less than five hundred surviving eyewitnesses to the resurrection of Christ, if they wanted or needed confirmatory testimony to so stupendous and, to the temper of the popular mind at least, so incredible an event.

Again, the testimony of Paul to the fact of the resurrection, to which special reference is here made, occurs in the fifteenth chapter of this first letter to the church which he had established at Corinth. This also has an important bearing on the quality of the testimony; for it was no private letter, but an open letter to the public congregations, designed

and requested to be read to them when they assembled together, and Corinth at this time was the Roman capital of all Greece, a center of commerce and art and the busiest and most populous city of them all. It had also charge of the Isthmian games, and is said to have been always crowded with strangers. To proclaim, therefore, this stupendous event at the public gatherings of these Christian assemblies in such a city was a direct and fearless challenge to the world, at one of its busiest and wealthiest, shrewdest and most cultured centers (if indeed it was not the leading city in most of these respects), to dispute his testimony.

Ancient Corinth had been sacked and destroyed by the Roman soldiers under their General Mummius in 146 B.C., and was rebuilt by Julius Cæsar in 46 B.C., and this was the Corinth of the apostle's time. With reference to this new city, C. Merrivale says: "Corinth rapidly rose under these auspices, became a center of commerce and art, and took the lead of all the cities of European Hellas. Here was established the seat of the Roman Government of Achaia, and its population, though the representations of it which have reached us are extravagant, undoubtedly exceeded that of any of the rival cities of Greece."

Lest a false impression might be formed here in the mind of the reader from the above quotation, to the effect that the population of Corinth at this time was largely or chiefly Roman, it may be well to say that in the original civic structure of the restored city, only, was this true, for it soon attracted to itself Greeks from all over the land, was thoroughly Hellenized, and became a Greek city — one of the free cities of Greece; that is to say, one of the cities which were proclaimed free by the Roman Emperors, and whose government was autonomous, or uncontrolled by the Roman governors of the

province. But, what is more important in this discussion, there was a large Jewish element in the population of Corinth. Mommsen, speaking of the importance and the status of the Jewish element of the population at the founding and development of the newer cities of Greece in Asia Minor, informs us that they, the Jews, enjoyed special privileges; that they were organized into separate independent bodies; that they were governed by laws and customs of their own; that among all the elements of population in these cities, the Jews, alone, were allowed to form, so to speak, a community within a community, and while the other burgesses were ruled by the burgess body, the Jews, up to a certain degree, governed themselves. He also says: "Beyond doubt there were independently organized bodies of Jews in all the new Hellenic foundations and withal in *numerous old Hellenic towns, even in Hellas proper, e.g. in Corinth*" (my italics). And, in addition to these resident Jews in Corinth, there were also the large number of trafficking Jews who were constantly passing through the city.

Now, here was this large Jewish population, most of them no doubt hostile to this new religion, and a large proportion of whom must have had knowledge either personally or by hearsay of the crucifixion of Christ, and of its attendant circumstances, for only twenty-three or twenty-four brief years had elapsed since it took place in the sacred city, and it was no obscure and unimportant event in the city at the time, as some would have us believe, as will be shown later on.

Yet here in this city of Corinth, in the midst of this population, and under such circumstances, Paul testified in this fifteenth chapter of his letter to the Corinthian Church, that he personally saw Jesus after the resurrection from the dead; that he had also been seen by Peter, — Peter, who was not

only a colaborer with Him in the gospel ministry, but with whom he had spent fifteen days in the closest intimacy at Peter's own house in Jerusalem on one occasion, and with whom, fourteen years afterward, he had sat in council in the same city, when James "the Lord's brother" presided over the same.

To have ventured to make or to publish such a statement in a center so intelligent and wide-awake, and, so far as the Jews there were concerned, so hostile to the new faith, and in the face of such facilities and opportunities for proving and exposing its falsity, if it were not a fact, was to have invited prompt defeat, and, when we consider the indisputable mental acumen, as well as the fine moral fiber, and the integrity that characterized the great apostle, which have not to be accepted upon the mere statement of some historian, but are quite apparent in his own writings, it is obvious that nothing but a profound conviction of the fact of the resurrection, and its transcendent importance, could have prompted him to declare it not only in this letter, but in multiplied places in all his writings, — a conviction, too, which did not rest alone on his own individual consciousness, but upon the testimony of Peter and others with whom he was in constant association, some of whom were eyewitnesses to the fact. Did not this same apostle some years before he dictated this letter suffer stoning in the streets of Iconium, when he was dragged, unconscious, out of the city? Did he not suffer scourging on several occasions, and imprisonment, and finally execution under the axe for this conviction; and, if it were not based on a fact, how can one reasonably account for such conduct in such a man? He was no fool, as his own writings, his career, and his achievements amply testify.

Those whose skepticism concerning the so-called super-

natural in the universe, and whose lack of so essential an element as faith in the psychological constitution of man, impel them to reject this testimony, evince a state of mind utterly inaccessible to evidence. It is possible, indeed, to adopt, maintain, and cultivate a spirit of unbelief, and an attitude of hostile resistance to certain forms of truth, so as to make conviction and conversion to these truths hopeless and impossible. There is a type of mind liable to this infirmity. But it is not especially "modern," however disposed it may be to label itself the "modern mind." Every century has contributed its share, except perhaps during the mental eclipse of the dark ages, when men were not allowed to think. Celsus, Porphyry, and Julian called "the apostate," are conspicuous examples of it in the earlier centuries, and, even in apostolic times, when the very foundations of the Christian church were being laid, the great apostle to the Gentiles, whose testimony has been here discussed, frequently encountered them, and had to combat their pretentious, aggressive, and noisy criticisms, and refers to them in his letters in various forms of language not very complimentary to them, but which nevertheless shows his marvelous insight into their characters, and of whose psychological constitution he sometimes gives us an exceedingly illuminating analysis, as does also Peter.

We have just intimated that the crucifixion of Christ has a place in this discussion, especially in its bearing upon the question of publicity, or the extent to which these events, the crucifixion and the resurrection, were matters of common knowledge and report in the city of Jerusalem and vicinity, at the time of their occurrence. To get to the facts regarding this question the only source of information is furnished by the Gospels. Profane history is silent about the career of

Jesus. The public career of Jesus did not extend beyond three years. It was neither political nor military. It was not associated with the ruling hierarchy, nor in sympathy with that body. It was entirely outside the industrial, commercial, and economical interests of the country where it was passed. It had not in it, therefore, any of the material which interests the general historian or which constitutes the bulk of the matter of which history is made. His followers at the time of his crucifixion were not even organized into a religious sect. What, indeed, was there in the career of this man to attract the notice of the profane historian or annalist of the time? What if Jesus did perform miracles? There was nothing in this of itself to excite their wonder. Oracular messages, prodigies of all kinds, signs and wonders, were always in the mind, at least, of all the people from the peasant up through every stratum of society to the kings on the throne. There was nothing in the miracle-working of Jesus to excite more than a temporary curiosity upon the average person, and certainly none to engage the serious attention of, or to become a subject of record for, the secular historian. It is therefore impossible to discover the logic of discrediting the gospel historian, because of the indifference or silence of the profane historian with reference to the career of Jesus. To him His person and career were quite negligible facts. The position and attitude of the gospel historian was entirely different. It was one of interest in, and of sympathy with, Jesus and his career. Matthew and John, at least, were of the twelve apostles. They were his followers and constant friends during his ministry. They saw him at close range, and were eyewitnesses of what he did. They knew him — his spirit and his life — and they loved him. Who of the



two classes of historians might be best expected to know the facts, the exact facts, and all of the facts concerning him?

Now, in spite of the inclination to proceed at once to the examination of the gospel story for testimony upon these matters, it may be expedient at this point to say a few words in defense of the validity of gospel history, for the benefit of any whose minds may have been disturbed by modern Biblical criticism, and a certain very pretentious and arrogant scholarship in these times. For, if the Gospels are to be the sources of evidence, it is obvious that they are useless, and we have no argument, if they are false and untrustworthy; and it may be said parenthetically that it is this obvious fact that makes the radical critic so insistent and so consistent in denying the authenticity and historicity of writings which contravene his theories. Only a word or two, however, will be said here on this point, to reassure the mind of the disturbed or misled reader, leaving the subject for ampler discussion in other connections.

It may be sufficient to say that a number of men of the highest scholarship in the world, and of profound scientific knowledge, distinguished men, are utterly demolishing the positions taken and the theories promulgated by the critics.

The writings of Luke (his Gospel and his Acts of the Apostles) have received the brunt of the assault made upon the New Testament by the critics, and have come in for the largest share of doubt and distrust, and it seems almost like a sort of divine irony in the administration of Providence that the researches and revelations recently made in the field of history and archæology, as related to apostolic times, have especially focused their testimony in vindication of the remarkable accuracy and exactness of the statements of this writer Luke, wherever these statements are susceptible of

verification by such testimony. Of the many passages in Luke's Gospel heretofore relied upon by the critics as proving his unreliability when put to the test of comparison with contemporary history, there remains but one not yet fully verified. In due time this passage will also be cleared up. Professor Harnack, than whom there is no more competent authority in the world to-day, gives Luke the highest standing for exactness and accuracy of detail in his writings. A recent writer, speaking of Professor Harnack, says that he "has ransacked every nook and cranny of the whole world, and gathered up every scrap of information that could be found" on the subject of early church history, and of the contemporaneous history of the Roman world. He is now engaged in producing a work on the subject which will take twenty years to complete, and which will fill eighty volumes. And Harnack began his career as a higher critic, and is no Christian apologist. The opinion of such a man is entitled to profound respect. The temptation is strong at this point to give some illustrations of the singular accuracy of Luke, and of the defeat of his critics, but this would carry us too far afield, so we must return to our theme.

Let us examine, therefore, somewhat into the facts and circumstances attending the career of Jesus which throw light upon the question as to his popularity, and the extent to which his life and character gripped the popular mind, so as to determine the further question as to how far his arrest, his arraignment before Caiaphas, and then Herod, and then Pilate, and his final execution, including his resurrection, which followed in less than thirty-seven hours thereafter, and not three days as we reckon time, were matters of common knowledge and interest among the people of Jerusalem, and even beyond the city; the intention being to show that every-

body, generally speaking, in the city, knew these things, and that they awakened general attention.

If this can be made clear, it will support the further argument that at the time Paul proclaimed the resurrection of Christ in his first letter to the Corinthians, there were thousands of people living in Jerusalem to affirm or deny the fact of popular current rumor of the event at the time of its occurrence, and possibly many who had been eyewitnesses of the fact itself, for it is not unlikely that, of the "over five hundred" eyewitnesses to whom Paul refers in this letter as still living when he wrote, many of them were in the sacred city.

Before examining into the career of Jesus with this object in view, however, the writer wishes to remark that he is very well aware that the crucifixion of Christ, and his resurrection, are two very different things, and two entirely distinct questions, and that the proof of the former would not constitute or carry with it a proof of the latter, nor compel acceptance of it. He is also aware that the eyewitnesses to the fact of Christ's resurrection, in the flesh, were few in number and select, and were chosen by himself as witnesses thereto; that those who had actual knowledge of the resurrection were few compared with those who had knowledge of the crucifixion. He is not here attempting to prove the resurrection by the crucifixion, but he is attempting to show that the crucifixion and its attendant circumstances, including the resurrection, on the assumption of its truth, was no obscure and insignificant event to the Jewish population at Jerusalem at the time of its occurrence, but was widely known and of striking and memorable interest to the whole people. And it must not be overlooked that the gospel narratives record both the crucifixion and the resurrection without

a break in the story, and that the intimacy of the two facts is such that whatever evidence may be claimed from the Gospels with respect to the general publicity of the former fact, may also be claimed for the publicity of the reports, at least, of the latter, which promptly followed the crucifixion.

The fact that a man who was publicly executed, thrust through with a soldier's spear, dead without question, and entombed, should break from the tomb, reappear in the flesh, and converse with his disciples repeatedly during a period of over a month, not to one person only, but to several in succession, then to groups of persons, and at last to over five hundred at once, was a phenomenon too rare, even in a day of frequent prodigies and supernatural manifestations, not to set in motion startling and interesting rumors that would travel far and wide among the population of the city and produce a very memorable impression. Dead men do not come to life every day, and when one who for between two and three years was so much in the public eye, and had been publicly executed with so much clamor and excitement, was reported to be risen from the tomb, and to be alive in the flesh, — this, certainly, would be the result.

When, therefore, Paul in his Corinthian letter reiterated his proclamation of the event, not yet twenty-four years in the past, there were without doubt thousands of people still living in Jerusalem to whom these hostile and astute Jews of Corinth might have appealed to deny the existence of any such rumors at the time of the crucifixion, or any knowledge of them among the people at the time of this letter, and thus silence his testimony; so that he was taking great chances of being exposed and discredited, if he was not telling the truth, and bearing witness to a stupendous and well-attested fact.

For, Christ at the time of his crucifixion was no obscure

and unimportant person in the city of Jerusalem. He had just concluded a ministry extending from two to three years, conducted in the streets and highways, the courts of the temple, and other public places of the city, as well as the plains and hillsides of Galilee, and the towns and shores of the Galilean sea. The crowds who listened to his discourses and teaching were frequently numbered by the thousands; one instance being recorded of over five thousand adults, and another of four thousand besides women and children, and another where the crowd was so dense and eager that the people are said to have "trod one upon another." Matthew (chap. iv. 24, 25) tells us that "his fame went throughout all Syria"; that "there followed him great multitudes of people, from Galilee, and from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem, and from Judæa, and from beyond Jordan." He had been tracked by Pharisees, scribes, and lawyers, and emissaries of the great Sanhedrin, who laid traps for him, and sought "to entangle him in his speech," and betray him into some treasonable utterance, or some utterance that might have been given a treasonable construction, that by this means they might compass his destruction, so greatly did they fear his increasing popularity, — a popularity sometimes so vehement and demonstrative that he was forced to withdraw himself hastily lest "they should take him by force and make him a king," — a popularity that just five days before his crucifixion provoked that extraordinary demonstration known as his "triumphal entry into Jerusalem," where palm branches, and the outer garments of the multitude, were strewn before his path, and the "hosannas of those that went before him, and of those which followed," echoed through the valleys of the Kedron and Hinnom, and over the brows of Olivet and the temple-crowned heights of Moriah, — a dem-

onstration of popularity so great that it provoked from the alarmed Pharisees the cry of dismay, "Behold how ye prevail nothing: lo, the world has gone after him."

No doubt executions under the Roman tribunals were very frequent and common, for Rome was very jealous and watchful of her power in all her provinces, and human life was cheap in those days; an ordinary execution attracted no public attention, and made no impression upon the community, but the crucifixion of Jesus did not belong to this class. It was of tremendous interest to all classes in Jerusalem, from the great hierarchic establishment of the Jews, and the office and government of the Roman procurator, to the humblest citizen. The significant words addressed to Jesus by Cleopas on the way to Emmaus, after the resurrection, when he appeared to the two disciples as they journeyed, and joined company with them, suggests the widespread knowledge of, and interest in, the event on the part of nearly every one in Jerusalem, "Art thou only a *stranger* in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in those days?" The words, also, of Paul in his memorable speech before Herod Agrippa II. in the judgment hall of the Roman procurator at Cæsarea are suggestive of the same thing, "For the king knoweth of these things, before whom I speak freely: for I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him, for this thing *was not done in a corner*" (my italics), a suggestive form of expression tantamount to a strong declaration of the wide publicity, and knowledge of the event among the people.

Now let us take a brief and rapid survey of the circumstances attending the crucifixion. It had taken place on Friday of Passover week. From noon until three o'clock in the afternoon there had been darkness over the land. About the

latter hour Jesus, hanging on the cross, uttered a loud cry and expired. Simultaneously with this cry a violent tremor of the earth occurred which rent the rocks in the vicinity, and the heavy veil of gold and purple which hung before the inner sanctuary of the temple was "rent in twain from the top to the bottom." The centurion in charge of the quaternion guard of Roman soldiers which had been detailed for duty on this occasion, impressed by this loud cry, so unexpected and incomprehensible in an exhausted and dying man, and with the terrestrial disturbance and other phenomena accompanying the execution, as well as and perhaps chiefly by the dignified, and at the same time meek and patient, spirit of the tortured victim, exclaimed, 'Certainly this was a righteous man, this was a son of God.'

Less than three hours, possibly only two, remained to close the day and usher in the Sabbath, which began at six o'clock the same evening. The bodies of the three victims must, according to Jewish law and custom, be removed to prevent ceremonial defilement of the Sabbath, especially this Sabbath, "for it was a high day," — the great Passover Sabbath.

The Jews, therefore, punctilious in their deference to the ceremonials of their religion, sent and made an appeal to Pilate that the soldiers might be ordered to break the legs of the victims, so as to hasten their death and removal. The order was accordingly given and carried out, except in the case of Jesus, whom the soldiers found to be already dead. This brutality, for which a heavy club was used, with its violent shock to the nerves, and resulting agony, supplementing as it did the torture and exhaustion of suspension on the cross, usually accomplished its purpose, and the bodies of the dead victims, if not left, as they often were, to the desiccating

action of the dry atmosphere and scorching heat of a Syrian sun, and to the carnivorous birds of prey, and the prowling jackals of the night, were hurried off, as they would likely have been at this season of the year, to the Valley of Hinnom, that runs around the southern slope of Moriah, and ignominiously buried beneath the dust and ash heaps of that dismal place, where usually the bodies of criminals were cast. This was what the Jews expected.

In the meantime Joseph of the Jewish city of Arimathæa, "a rich man," and an "honorable counsellor," who had taken part in the council at which Jesus had been condemned to death by the chief priests and rulers, but who had refused his vote for the accomplishment of this infamous murder, anticipating this, hastily secured an audience with Pilate, and his permission to take the body of Jesus and give it burial.

This done he returned to the place of execution, and met Nicodemus, who was there quite likely by appointment, and accompanied no doubt with some of his servants, or some hired helpers, for he had brought with him "an hundred pounds weight" of spices to embalm the body of Jesus, and was a rich man also, a ruler of the Jews, and, secretly at first but now openly, a disciple of Jesus, as was also Joseph.

Many also of the loving and brave women disciples were there. They had witnessed the crucifixion from a distance, and, when it was over, drew near to the cross to pay a last tribute of love, and to render such help as might be required of them. Blessed women; some of their names have come down to us on the sacred record. We could wish that we had been made familiar with the names of them all, but we have at least the names of Mary of Magdala, Mary the mother of James the Younger and Joses, Salome the wife of Zebedee, and Johanna the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward.



Neither the scoffs nor insults of the murderous crowd nor the danger of personal injury could deter them from expressing their sorrow and sympathy. But the men,— where were they? Apart from Joseph and Nicodemus, the record mentions none of them but John. It would almost seem as if an ardent love was the only antidote for cowardice, and in this the women excel. The body was taken down, and probably at once removed from the public highway to the “near-by garden” where was Joseph’s tomb,— a tomb excavated in the side of a hill, and designed for himself. There, aided probably by some of the women, it was tenderly washed from the blood and sweat, and the grime of the dusty highway. Then it was embalmed, after the crude manner practiced by the Jews,— enwrapped around and around with wide bands of white linen brought for the purpose, while the spices, the myrrh and the aloes, were bountifully scattered over the body and between the bands of linen. This done it was laid in the tomb, and the stone prepared for it was rolled over the opening.

This circumstance came to the knowledge of the Priests and Pharisees. A hasty consultation was held together, at which it was recalled that Jesus— this enemy of their hypocritical pretension and power— had vaguely hinted that if his body should be destroyed by them he would raise it up again from the dead the third day thereafter. Alarmed, therefore, not at the possibility of his resurrection, in which they did not believe, but that his disciples might come under cover of night, take the body from the tomb, and, concealing it somewhere, report that Jesus had risen from the dead, and thus involve them in further and more serious trouble with the people, whose sympathy with Jesus they feared, they decided to send a deputation to Pilate setting forth their fears,

and make an appeal to him for the assistance of some soldiery to prevent it.

On the Sabbath morning the deputation was sent, and made its complaint and appeal to Pilate, who disdainfully dismissed it with scarce a hearing in these curt words, "Ye have a guard: go your way, make it [the tomb] as sure as ye can." Possibly the guard referred to was the same which, the day before, was doing duty at the place of execution, and which he placed at their disposal, or to the guard which habitually did duty in the outer court of the temple to keep order, and especially on the occasion of the Jewish feasts.

The guard at any rate was secured, and placed in charge of the tomb, the stone against which was sealed to secure its inviolability, in the usual way; that is to say, a strong cord was stretched across the stone from one side to the other and sealed to the adjacent rock. Everything was then quiet and peaceful, after the manner of burial places, all through the night and the next day—the Passover Sabbath day—but, in the early morning of the following day, something startling happened. First, an earthquake. This was the befitting announcement of the resurrection hour. On the previous Friday at three o'clock in the afternoon, at the moment when Jesus expired, there was an earthquake. Now at the dawn of Sunday, the third day, the moment of his resurrection from the dead, another earthquake. Then, a great angel flashing with celestial splendor alighted before the tomb. In an instant the great stone which closed its mouth was thrown back, to expose its emptiness in testimony of the truth of his own words, and of ancient prophecy, that the third day he should rise from the dead, and thus demonstrate his power over death and the grave.

A few feet away, appalled with fright, indeed rendered

unconscious by the vision and power of the angel, lay the prostrate Roman guard; for it is difficult to get any other meaning out of the words of Matthew, "They trembled and became as dead men." How long they remained unconscious will never be known, but when consciousness returned they observed that the tomb was open, and the body no longer there. Their job was over, and their lives in peril, so they fled from the spot into the city, and some of them "told the high priests all the things which had happened." A council of the priests and elders was held, and it was resolved to bribe the soldiers who composed the guard. This was done, "and they gave the soldiers *arguria ikana*,"—a satisfactory number of shekels to say that "the disciples came by night and stole the body away." This they could be easily persuaded to do not only on account of the "valuable consideration," but by reason of the fact that, being unconscious at the time of the disappearance of the body, they really knew not what happened to it, and of the further fact that, by doing so, they were promised by the priests protection from the penalty of what would appear to the governor a flagrant breach of military duty. Indeed, there was probably no doubt in their minds that the "persuasion" of the governor could as easily and certainly be effected by a correspondingly "satisfactory number of shekels."

Immediately after the angelic visit, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joses, approached the tomb, bringing with them prepared aromatics which they intended to lavish upon the body of their beloved Lord, and were saying to each other, "Who will roll us away the stone?" when they observed that the tomb was already open. Stooping down they saw a youth sitting on the right side, clothed in a white robe, and they were struck with awe. Addressing

them, the angel said, "Be not amazed: ye seek Jesus, the Nazarene which hath been crucified: he is risen; he is not here: behold the place where they laid him." They were then charged by the angel with a message to the disciples, including Peter, to meet him in Galilee, and then, trembling and amazed, they left, to deliver the message, but Jesus met them on the way; addressed to them a few words intended to allay their fears, and repeated to them the angel's message.

After hastily announcing to the disciples the fact of the resurrection, and delivering to them the message, Mary of Magdala must have immediately retraced her steps to the tomb, either accompanied or closely followed by Peter and John. She was evidently still anxious, not fully persuaded, and still clinging apparently to the conception that the body, at least, of the Lord should still occupy the tomb. She saw it was not there, and turned back to say to Peter and John, who had now reached the spot, "They have taken the Lord out of the sepulcher, and we know not where they have laid him." Approaching the tomb, Peter and John assured themselves by personal observation that the body was not there, and, thus confirmed, they believed Mary's statement and returned by themselves, leaving Mary, who still lingered by the tomb in tears. Then occurred that touching incident recorded in the Gospel of John alone. Two angels from the tomb addressed her, "Woman, why weepest thou?" She replied, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him." Then, turning back instinctively, she beholds Jesus; but, either because of her tears or because "her eyes were holden," she did not recognize him. Jesus says to her, "Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou?" Supposing him to be the keeper of the garden, she replies, "Sir, if thou hast borne him hence, tell me where

thou hast laid him, and I will take him away." To this simple and pathetic inquiry Jesus' only reply was to speak her name with tenderness, and in a tone so familiar, "Mary," that her recognition of him was complete. All she could say was, "Rabboni," and started to throw herself at his feet.

In the course of the day, and possibly within a few moments after this interview with Mary, He must have appeared to Peter. No specific account is given of this meeting between Jesus and Peter by any of the gospel historians, but it is so distinctly and graphically intimated in Luke's narrative of the Lord's manifestation of himself to Cleopas and his companion disciple at the conclusion of their journey from Jerusalem to Emmaus that it is effectively established. Cleopas and his companion had left Jerusalem that same afternoon, perplexed and despondent under the bewildering shadows cast upon their minds and spirits by the events of the preceding two days. Emmaus, a village between seven and eight miles from Jerusalem, was, quite likely, where these two disciples dwelt. They had been following Jesus in loving and trustful discipleship for some time, but his unexpected and tragic death had broken off this fellowship, and staggered their faith. At some convenient point in the road Jesus met them, and, inquiring sympathetically with regard to their conversation and the cause of their dejection, joins them. Every one familiar with the Bible knows the interesting narrative, and it is needless to repeat it here. It is sufficient to recall the fact that when the Lord cleared their vision so that they recognized him, and he disappeared, they were seized with such joyful surprise that, after a few interesting comments upon their experiences with Jesus on the road, they immediately returned to Jerusalem to tell the apostles about it.

Reaching the city at a late hour, and finding the eleven and some other disciples assembled together, they were about to narrate their experience, but before they could utter a word, some one among the assembled disciples greets them with the excited remark, "The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon [Peter]!"

Then they began to interchange experiences, and while they were doing so Jesus appeared in their midst with the greeting, "Peace be unto you"; and "they were terrified, and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit," says Luke, but Jesus gently remonstrates with them for their needless fear and trouble of mind, and shows them his pierced hands and feet to attest his bodily presence, appealing to their reason in these words, "For a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have."

It is perhaps useful to say, in passing, that these words from the Saviour's own lips ought to, and for those who respect the veracity of Scripture do, set at rest forever the question of the bodily resurrection of Jesus, which is or was the first fruits and earnest of the bodily resurrection of the race as clearly taught by Christ and the apostles.

Now at this point it ought to be recalled to the attention of the reader that all these manifestations of the risen Christ, referred to in the preceding pages, occurred on the same Passover Sunday, within a space of eighteen or nineteen hours, and in less than three days from the moment when he expired on the cross. The fact, therefore, of his crucifixion and the rumors of his resurrection from the dead were closely connected in point of time, and the popular interest in the latter could not possibly be less than their interest in the former, so that these rumors would travel far and fast

through the city now thronged with Jews from all over the land, and from many parts of the Roman world.

Jerusalem may have lacked a *Morning Chronicle* or an *Evening News*; but it had, no doubt, other means more or less effective of circulating news, and especially sensational news such as this was. There was, at least, the open market place, the various marts of trade, the outer courts of the temple, the corners of the street, and the gossips, if not the professional purveyors of news and the idlers of the city.

These manifestations of the risen Lord were repeated at intervals during the forty days preceding his ascension; for example, at Jerusalem eight days after his resurrection, when he appeared to the eleven, including Thomas; then on the shore of the Lake of Tiberius, or Sea of Galilee, to Peter, Thomas, Nathaniel, and James and John; then either on one of the mountains of Galilee, according to appointment, or at Bethany on the eastern decline of the Mount of Olives, in the presence of five hundred disciples, whence he made his ascension into heaven.

Finally, just fifty days after the resurrection, on the morning of Pentecost in the city of Jerusalem, occurred the wonderful linguistic phenomenon resulting in such a spirit-filled proclamation of the resurrection of Jesus, by Peter and his associates, that three thousand were converted, baptized into the faith and fellowship of the nascent Christian church, and became at once witnesses to and enthusiastic heralds of the resurrection wherever they went.

In recapitulation it is important to notice the following facts:—

Paul's testimony is presented to us not as history, nor narrative, nor a record of events, nor biography, but as a letter written to his contemporaries, an open letter, intended

and requested to be read publicly before the Christian assemblies of the church which he had organized at Corinth, and not open to assault or any question of its authenticity, nor, considering the obvious character and ability of the apostle, as to the truthfulness of his statements; that in its reference to the resurrection of Jesus, his first letter to the Corinthians spoke of an event not yet twenty-five years in the past, at a time when there were thousands of persons then living who had knowledge of it through the rumors which were extensively circulated at the time of its occurrence; that this testimony was given at a time, too, when there were five hundred persons, more or less, still living who had been eyewitnesses to the fact; that Paul not only "went everywhere preaching Christ and the resurrection," as stated by Luke in the Acts of the Apostles, but bore emphatic testimony to the resurrection of Jesus in this public letter to the church at Corinth, which was the Roman capital of Greece, and the wealthiest, busiest, most populous, and at this time the most cultured city of European Hellas, and thus practically challenged the world at its most intellectual center to dispute his words; that he does not base his testimony alone on his own personal experience on "the road to Damascus," when he was vouchsafed a vision of the risen Lord, and received his evangelizing commission, lest any one might doubt the soundness of his mind or nerves on that occasion, but upon the additional and corroborative testimony of several of the apostles who had seen and spoken with the risen Lord, and with whom he was intimately associated in the evangelization of the Roman world; that he was no neurasthenic, but a man of sound nerves, strong mentality, great achievement, and indomitable purpose, noble and true to the highest degree in character; that he gave the most unde-



niable proofs of the strength and tenacity of his conviction by the sufferings to which he deliberately exposed himself, and which he repeatedly endured, giving his life to the executioner as his final testimony. The influence of his life and writings upon the world are second only to the influence of the life and sayings of the Lord himself, and no one may doubt that he has done more than any other man to formulate and systematize the faith of Christendom.

This testimony of Paul, therefore, to the corporeal resurrection of Jesus Christ, which is the basic fact in the whole system of Christian truth, as he has admirably argued in this immortal fifteenth chapter of First Corinthians, became an impregnable fortress set for the defense of the whole system of Christian faith; for, being the supreme miracle in the life and career of Jesus, if it defiantly stands the assaults of the enemies of Christian truth, so stands with it any and all the miracles and supernatural phenomena in His career recorded in the Gospels, and to demolish this fortress of testimony, and silence its batteries will take heavier artillery than can be found in the camps of modern Biblical criticism, and more powerful and effective ammunition than flimsy critical theories clothed in academic and polished language with a pyrotechnical display of scientific terms. It will also take more than bare, unsupported, and reiterated denial of historical facts; more than the persistent assumption of the unproved and unprovable hypothesis of evolution, and the theory of the constancy, immutability, and infrangibility of the laws of the physical universe.