

we to determine this question? The testimony, to be secure, must be of the nature of a continuous and complete arch. It must rest upon two opposite supports, which must be united by a continuous span. There must be at least the two independent witnesses, and they must agree together and unite in one. If matters are to be believed which surpass and contradict our experience, there must be that which shall make them antecedently probable, and that which shall tend to confirm their antecedent occurrence. There must be prior conditions and posterior indications of truth. Nothing short of this would render credible what is naturally and inherently incredible because impossible.

For instance, if a person were to appear among us now who should lay claim to raising the dead, we should obviously not believe him; and we should be justified in not believing him, because there is no reason why we should believe him, or why such a one should so appear. We can conceive circumstances under which for a time it would be difficult to detect and expose his imposture; but after a while these would vanish before the test of experiment and scientific demonstration. In what respect then were matters different in the case of our Lord? Perhaps it will be better to begin with the subsequent indications of reality. We have four independent witnesses in the evangelists. They are independent, because they are sufficiently different to prove them so. They cannot by any process of combination be reduced to less than three, even if as four they do not stand out as separate and distinct. It is true that the testimony of the evangelists does not reach demonstrably to the time of Christ; but if the Gospels are genuine, that is by the persons whose names they bear, their testimony unquestionably runs up to the time of His ministry. It is really more incredible and unlikely that the narrative of the raising of Lazarus, *e.g.*, should have been written late in the second century than that being what it is, it should have been the work of an eye-witness—conceding, of course, the abstract possibility of its being so. That is to say, admit provisionally the abstract possibility of the historic truth of the Gospel history, and, knowing what we do of the