

Teacher Training.

CHRISTIAN EVIDENCES.

TEXT-BOOK : REDFORD'S "PRIMER OF CHRISTIAN EVIDENCES."

ANALYSIS, NOTES AND ADDITIONS, by Rev. Professor Ross, B. D., Presbyterian College,
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THE EVIDENCE OF JESUS CHRIST.

(Continued).

- V. **Jesus Christ as a worker of miracles stood above all others :** A miracle is an event which the forces of nature cannot of themselves produce, and which must therefore be referred to a supernatural agency. To one who believes in a personal God, miracles are possible, consistent with the order of nature, capable of being proved by testimony, and of being connected with the agency of God. (1) Christ's miracles fit naturally into His unique character and the work which He prescribes for Himself. (2) There are certain features of the gospel narrative that undesignedly support the truth of Christ's reported miracles. (a) Jesus frequently told those who were healed not to make the cure publicly known. There could be no reason for inventing these injunctions especially as they are said to have been disregarded. (b) He often cautioned his hearers against over-estimating miracles. No one composing stories of miracles would introduce an apparent disparagement of them. (c) The teaching and the miracles of Christ are often inseparably linked together. Luke 7: 22 ; 14: 5. (d) No miracles are attributed to John the Baptist nor to Jesus before His baptism. Why this reserve (in striking contrast to the apocryphal gospels) if the miracles are pure inventions? [Fisher]. (3) The main evidence for the miracles is presented in the arguments for the resurrection of Christ, which see. (4) The evidential value of the miracles of Jesus. [Text book 21-22].
- VI. **The crowning miracle and chief credential of Christ's divine mission in His Resurrection :** The writers of the New Testament stake their own veracity and the existence of Christianity on the truth of it. 1. *The positive evidence for it :* (1) Many witnesses declared that they saw Him and conversed with Him after He was risen [Text book 22]. This is the only case in history where such a claim has been made. (2) One of these witnesses was at first a persecutor of the Christians. We have four of his letters, unchallenged by any, written within twenty-eight years of the resurrection, which show that all Christians then believed it and admitted that the Church was founded on that belief. (3) The effect produced on the witnesses. Their belief in this miracle changed the whole course of their life; they passed the remainder of it in extraordinary toils and privations in order to make the resurrection known, and most of them suffered death to prove their faith in it. So that to believe them deceived or deceivers is a greater violation of probability and contradiction of experience than to believe in the resurrection. 2. *The negative evidence for it :* (1) The early enemies of Christianity were unable to disprove the fact which was everywhere openly preached by Christians. (2) Modern unbelief has failed to account for the universal belief of it which can be traced to the very beginnings of Christianity. "There are only three possible alternatives, either (a) Jesus actually rose from the dead; or (b) the belief in His resurrection was the result of deliberate fraud; or (c) the original followers of Jesus were the victims of some species of delusion." [Row]. Only the last deserves attention. It means that the appearances of Jesus were the creation of excited nerves and ardent expectations. It is confuted by (a) The empty tomb. (b) The shortness of the time between the crucifixion and the first appearance. (c) The sudden discontinuance, in six weeks, of the appearances, except the one to Paul. (d) The depressed and disappointed state of the disciples when the appearances occurred; the very opposite of the usual conditions of mental hallucination, viz., prepossession, fixed idea, and expectancy. (e) The simple, earnest sobriety of the narratives. (f) The erection, duration, and work of the church. A belief in mere marvels has never accomplished anything. The resurrection therefore remains a historical fact through which God sealed the claims of Jesus as divine truth.