

# Outline of Some of the 1016255 Credentials of Christianity

The true religion treats of God, Who is all Mystery, dwelling in light inaccessible; the true religion therefore necessarily deals with mysteries. Even as a god whom no mystery enfolds would by that very fact—be proven to be a false god, so a religion, which no mystery attends, is by that very fact, proven to be the religion of man and not of God.

On the one hand, Christianity claims to be a supernatural religion; it involves truths that are beyond and sometimes contrary to the physical laws of the universe; v. g. (a) the deity and the virgin birth of Christ; (b) certain wonders which He worked like the multiplication of the loaves; (c) his physical resurrection from the dead; (d) the future union of man's soul with his Creator in eternity. All these are truths which no scientific discovery or material progress can ever strip of the supernatural without denying the facts themselves, or at least essentially changing their intrinsic nature.

On the other hand, the Founder of Christianity was a crucified Jew, most of its disseminators were despised, illiterate men; its doctrines were radically opposed to human pride, passion and the religious ideals of the Empire; acceptance of them meant self-denial, suffering and in countless instances—death. It is then a fair question to ask: With no human incentives to offer, what could have persuaded millions (among whom were some of the brightest intellects of the Empire) to accept Christianity, to be tortured and to die for it? Absolutely nothing but the soundest credentials, the strongest and most irrefutable

## PROOFS OF DIVINITY.

Most unbelievers know nothing of the surprising chain of proofs upon which Christianity rests. But only those who have studied its credentials are competent to decide as to its veracity. Here are a few brief indications:

### EVIDENCE ACCEPTED BY ALL CATHOLICS AND MILLIONS OF PROTESTANTS

Jesus Christ (a) fulfilled the ancient prophecies which described minutely events before His birth, during His life, after His death; (b) He invented the most sublime religious and moral doctrines that the world has ever known; (c) He performed miracles which nineteen centuries have been unable to explain, much less reproduce; (d) the most stupendous historical proofs are available to show that after death, He raised Himself to life; (e) He conquered the pagan world with doctrines of purity, humility, charity that were sheer madness to them;

(f) millions in every age have worshipped Him as their God; (g) His religion made the most drastic change in mankind of which the world's history has a record; (h) His religion was propagated without human means or resources and chiefly by twelve ignorant Jewish fishermen; (i) His religion has survived the attacks of nineteen hundred years and still holds in loving bondage more than half a billion hearts today—such facts must be given due weight before any one can properly answer the question "Was Jesus Christ God?" Is Christianity divine?

Take up any one of the very many proofs of the divinity of Jesus Christ. Understand it, explain it, develop it, and you have a granite rock upon which to build your faith. Take up a half dozen or more of these proofs, cement them together, and you have a veritable rock of Gibraltar, against which God's enemies are as powerless as a man beating out his own brains against a wall of solid brass.

Quite obviously these arguments, or some of them, depend upon the historical value of the gospels, the reliability of which is supported by the strongest evidence. For example, the testimony of early Christian writers such as Justin, Tatian, Ireneus and Papias, shows that the Gospels are *genuine*. On every point where they come in contact with Josephus and other secular historians, they are proven to be substantially *accurate*. Their *veracity* is also confirmed by the Acts of the Apostles, a book of recognized historical authority.

If there is such a thing possible as reliable history, then the four Gospels must be classified as such. If the four Gospels are not reliable history, then no such thing as reliable history is possible,—and Caesar, Cicero, Nero, must be put down as imaginary, mythical characters.

### THE ARGUMENT FROM PROPHECIES

The Old Testament is replete with Messianic prophecies which, as careful study shows, find their fulfillment in Christ. This is true notably with regard to the prophecy of "The Lord's Servant." (Isaias lii:13) and with regard to the prophecies in the Psalm of the Crucifixion (Psalm 21). Indeed these prophecies re-enforce one another. An isolated fulfillment might be explained as a coincidence, but when many prophecies all point to the same conclusion, they demonstrate it with cumulative force.

### ARGUMENT FROM HISTORY

Historical records demonstrate that Christianity was spread over the civilized world under the eyes of observant critics. It is the most remarkable phenomenon in human history. And when we take into account the immense difficulties this religion had to encounter and its utter poverty of human resources, we cannot sincerely deny that these facts point to its divine origin.

Christianity was the most startling innovation in the history of the world; humanly speaking, it accomplished the impossible; for it changed the moral, religious, social face of the civilized world. No combination of human factors could ever have accomplished this. A most delicate plant could more easily grow on asphalt pavement than the spiritual doctrines of Jesus Christ take root in the pagan sensual world which was its soil. How this was actually brought about reads more like a novel than a calm, careful, dispassionate recital of historic truth.

### THE CLAIMS OF CHRIST

Modern skeptics, unable to refute the argument that the universally acknowledged perfections of Christ prove Him to be God (unless He be branded the greatest falsifier, impostor of the ages) pretend that when Christ claimed to be God, He was employing symbolism or figures of speech. But the nature of his claims to divine, supernatural prerogatives, his demands for men's adoration, as well as the Jews' interpretation of those claims—disprove this hypothesis.

*Had Christ claimed to be a son of God by adoption, the Jews would not have condemned Him for blasphemy, for so doing. St. John the evangelist, who wrote his gospel expressly to uphold the deity of Jesus Christ,—brands those who deny that truth,—with the opprobrious name of anti-Christ.*

As a matter of fact, if a mere man made these claims—what would you think of him?

1. "All things whatsoever the Father hath are Mine."—(Jn. 16-15).

2. "I am the light of the world."—(Jn. 8-12).

3. "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in Me, although he be dead shall live."—(Jn. 11-25).

4. "I am the way, the truth and the life."—(Jn. 14-6).

5. "All power is given Me in heaven and in earth."—(Matt. 28-18).

6. "Going therefore teach ye all nations, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the World."—(Matt. 28-20).

7. "What things soever the Father doth, these the Son also doth in like manner. For as the Father raiseth up the dead and giveth life, so the Son also giveth life to whom He will that all may honor the Son as they do the Father."—(Jn. 5-19).

*Hence Christ is either God or he would have been the greatest impostor known to history. But admitting His marvelous character, wisdom, integrity, His deity follows as an inevitable consequence.*

(f) millions in every age have worshipped Him as their God; (g) His religion made the most drastic change in mankind of which the world's history has a record; (h) His religion was propagated without human means or resources and chiefly by twelve ignorant Jewish fishermen; (i) His religion has survived the attacks of nineteen hundred years and still holds in loving bondage more than half a billion hearts today—such facts must be given due weight before any one can properly answer the question “Was Jesus Christ God?” Is Christianity divine?

Take up any one of the very many proofs of the divinity of Jesus Christ. Understand it, explain it, develop it, and you have a granite rock upon which to build your faith. Take up a half dozen or more of these proofs, cement them together, and you have a veritable rock of Gibraltar, against which God's enemies are as powerless as a man beating out his own brains against a wall of solid brass.

Quite obviously these arguments, or some of them, depend upon the historical value of the gospels, the reliability of which is supported by the strongest evidence. For example, the testimony of early Christian writers such as Justin, Tatian, Ireneus and Papias, shows that the Gospels are *genuine*. On every point where they come in contact with Josephus and other secular historians, they are proven to be substantially *accurate*. Their *veracity* is also confirmed by the Acts of the Apostles, a book of recognized historical authority.

If there is such a thing possible as reliable history, then the four Gospels must be classified as such. If the four Gospels are not reliable history, then no such thing as reliable history is possible,—and Caesar, Cicero, Nero, must be put down as imaginary, mythical characters.

### THE ARGUMENT FROM PROPHECIES

The Old Testament is replete with Messianic prophecies which, as careful study shows, find their fulfillment in Christ. This is true notably with regard to the prophecy of “The Lord's Servant.” (Isaias lii:13) and with regard to the prophecies in the Psalm of the Crucifixion (Psalm 21). Indeed these prophecies re-enforce one another. An isolated fulfillment might be explained as a coincidence, but when many prophecies all point to the same conclusion, they demonstrate it with cumulative force.

### ARGUMENT FROM HISTORY

Historical records demonstrate that Christianity was spread over the civilized world under the eyes of observant critics. It is the most remarkable phenomenon in human history. And when we take into account the immense difficulties this religion had to encounter and its utter poverty of human resources, we cannot sincerely deny that these facts point to its divine origin.

As smoke denotes the presence of fire; as thunder indicates the nearness of lightning, so miracles show that God or one of God's agents, has been at work.

### *WHICH STULTIFIES THE INTELLIGENCE?*

To say "I only believe what I can see or come in contact with through my physical senses"; or to reason thus; if God has seen fit to reveal a special or super-sensible religion, I as His creature am bound to accept it. But if God really wished to thus reveal Himself to me more intimately than through mere nature—then humanly speaking, He had to use miracles; otherwise I could not be sure that He had really spoken. The practical question for me therefore is: Have I historical evidence to prove that God has thus revealed Himself? The affirmative can be proven by an appeal to the Four Gospels taken **MERELY AS RELIABLE HISTORY**; and upon these we can construct a faith that is absolutely logical and entirely reasonable.

Two supplementary arguments in favor of Christianity are drawn from its remarkable adaptation to human nature and its super-excellence when contrasted with other religious systems.

### *CHRISTIANITY ADAPTED TO HUMAN NATURE.*

It cannot be denied that Christianity appeals strongly to every class. It is esteemed, on the one hand, by the poor and ignorant; on the other, by those possessed of culture and scholarship. It can be understood sufficiently by little children and at the same time, it wins the reverent admiration of the learned. Not only is this true at the present time, but it has always been true. The only adequate explanation of this is that Christianity responds admirably to the needs of the human soul. It alone enables men to face those four great overwhelming facts of human experience—Sorrow, Sin, Death and Eternity.

### *CHRISTIANITY AND OTHER RELIGIONS*

Compared with other religions, Christianity stands out in strong relief, in a class by itself. The comparative study of religion, instead of injuring, has really advanced the cause of Christianity. For Christianity towers above and excels them, at the same time remaining free from their absurdities and contradictions. It offers the contrast that might be expected between the work of man and the work of God. It is the only religion that the world has ever known that has been, is, and will ever be universal, suitable for every age and race and country; competent to offer the solution of every vital human problem; to be man's guide in this life and his hope for the next.

(Above compiled from various sources; write for further information and FREE literature on any subject to the Catholic Truth Society of Oregon, 304 McKay building, Portland, Oregon.)

# The Physical Resurrection of Christ

Catholics believe that "Christ suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified (actually), died and was buried"; and since we accept Him as God, we unequivocally assume that "on the third day He arose again from the dead." Hence no mystical or figurative resurrection will satisfy our concept of it. Although the risen Christ was endowed with immortality, impassibility, etc., it was his real, actual physical body that rose. From many reasons for thus believing, these three may be singled out: (1) Direct, unmistakable evidence contained in the four gospels, which at the lowest appraisal, are at least reliable history; (2) Nineteen centuries of innumerable and unimpeachable witnesses who have testified to this truth; (3) Christianity itself, viewed as a tangible fact, and therefore the result of some definite tangible cause.

## WHAT THE GOSPELS PROVE

Gospel history testifies that after Christ had hung three hours upon the cross; after all his blood had flowed from his open wounds, He expired. Officially pronounced dead by the Roman Centurian, He was placed in a rock-sepulchre, securely sealed by his bitterest enemies, carefully guarded by Roman soldiers. No one saw Christ rise, but hundreds saw Him alive after He had been dead. These conversed with Him, ate with Him, examined His wounds, associated with Him for forty days; according to St. Paul, five hundred saw Him at one time.

## UNIMPEACHABLE WITNESSES

(1) Nineteen centuries of believers in Christ's resurrection constitute an army of witnesses; so also do nineteen centuries of unbelievers, whose crushing failure to disprove this historical truth, makes them irrefutable though unwilling witnesses in its favor.

(2) Thousands of stubborn Jews who were converted when the apostles preached the resurrection; but, without drastic proofs of it, to persuade this multitude to adore One whom they had just crucified—this would be absolutely impossible.

(3) Multitudes from many nations of pagans and gentiles converted when ignorant fishermen preached the resurrection, which would have been impossible had it not been supported by rock-ribbed proof.

(4) Vast numbers among the proud, rich, sensual Romans, who in believing the resurrection had to sacrifice pride, luxury, sensuality, often life itself. Other religions and cults have attracted members by appealing to such passions, but Christianity promised men naught on earth but self-denial, hardship and death.

(5) The very enemies who had crucified Christ but who could do nothing except forbid his Apostles to teach men that He had risen. If there had been any way of disproving this historical fact, they would have exhausted their resources to accomplish it.

(6) The twelve Apostles who from being incredulous, cowardly, ignorant fishermen became moral giants and martyrs, who attributed their own miraculous change to—and based all their preaching upon—Christ's physical resurrection.

## A BUILDING WITHOUT A FOUNDATION?

Christianity itself, like some great stone building, must have had a real foundation. As a twenty-story building could not be suspended in air, so Christianity—without its foundation, could not exist. But the foundation of Christianity is Christ risen, not symbolically but verily. **IN FACT CHRISTIANITY, WITHOUT THE PHYSICAL RESURRECTION WOULD BE A FAR GREATER MIRACLE THAN THAT STUPENDOUS HISTORICAL FACT ITSELF.**

(Write for further information and FREE literature on any subject to Catholic Truth Society, 304 McKay Bldg., Portland, Oregon.)