

Review: John Montgomery, *History, Law and Christianity*, Canadian Institute for Law, Theology, and Public Policy Inc., Edmonton, AB, 1964, (June 2002 edn.)

Pages: 131

A New Perspective on Evidence

Arguing from a legal standpoint as to the historicity of the Bible is a powerful concept, for no one can deny a functioning legal system is based on testimony, so the question becomes, “is it trustworthy?”

The author covers internal and external tests of both witnesses and documents, concluding there was no motive for the Apostles to lie, and if they did it would have quickly been exposed.

The tactics of new atheism are also exposed; simply writing of source documents; re-imagining Jesus under a modern (‘woke’) paradigm, and simply denying miracles can happen.

The only negative are source document errors, e.g., assuming the BC ‘Septaugint’ and mythical ‘Q’ gospel were real.

Foreword (pp. 9-12)

Both historical scholarship and legal proof centre on *evidence*.

I) Who Is Jesus Christ? (pp. 15-18)

II) Four Historical-Philosophical Errors (pp. 19-23)

1. Raising up modern authorities.
2. Writing off primary documents.

3. Begging the question: miracles didn't happen because miracles can't happen.

4. Essene Messiah Syndrome: Jesus was only a Messiah in the sense of a revolutionary or teacher of righteousness alone.

III) Are the New Testament Documents Historically Trustworthy? **(pp. 24-36)**

Luke and Acts should be dated before AD64 since no mention is made of Paul's death under the Neronian persecution.

Form Criticism (*formgeschichtliche Methode*) is a rationalist philosophy which seeks to "get behind" the NT documents.

IV) God Closes In (pp. 37-49)

In modern times the tendency is to make a Jesus in the image of now, rather than his true historical person.

Docetists claimed Jesus only seemed to be man (*δοκεῖν*). The Virginia Company wanted children as tobacco plantation workers, and to promote family life in the colony.

Paul's letters are dated AD51-62.

V) An Historian's Appeal (pp. 50-64)

"What greater retreat from reality is there than a belief in one's divinity, if one is not in fact God?"

Zealots were expecting a Messiah to arrive with sword in hand.

In AD44, Theudas claimed he would divide Jordan, and in AD54 an Egyptian messiah gathered a crowd of 30K Jews.

All historical events are unique and thus perfectly rare.

Mathematics and logic alone can give absolute certainty.

VI) Christianity Juridically Defended (pp. 65-102)

Ancient documents are to be received as evidence if they have been maintained in “reasonable custody”.

Do witnesses have any internal defects?

Are there external motives to falsify evidence?

Are there internal or external defects in the testimony?

Continental law does not have a hearsay rule.

If Descartes’s hypothesis God were an Evil Genius were true, no one would be able to detect his deceit anyway.

Appendices (pp. 103-124)